

# PRIMARY TEACHER EDUCATION IN MALAWI: INSIGHTS INTO PRACTICE AND POLICY

Multi-Site Teacher Education  
Research Project (MUSTER)

*Country Report Three*

*Demis Kunje with Keith Lewin and Janet Stuart*

March 2003

## **Educational Papers**

---

### **Department for International Development: Educational Papers**

This is one of a series of Education Papers issued by the Policy Division of the Department For International Development. Each paper represents a study or piece of commissioned research on some aspects of education and training in developing countries. Most of the studies were undertaken in order to provide informed judgements from which policy decisions could be drawn, but in each case it has become apparent that the material produced would be of interest to a wider audience, particularly those whose work focuses on developing countries.

Each paper is numbered serially, and further copies can be obtained through DFID Education Publication Despatch, PO Box 190, Sevenoaks, TN14 5EL, UK – subject to availability. A full list appears overleaf.

Although these papers are issued by DFID, the views expressed in them are entirely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent DFID's own policies or views. Any discussion of their content should therefore be addressed to the authors and not to DFID.

## **Address for Correspondence**

---

Centre for International Education  
University of Sussex Institute of Education,  
Falmer,  
Brighton,  
Sussex  
BN1 9RG \_ UK

T +44 +1273 678464  
E [cie@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:cie@sussex.ac.uk)  
F +44 +1273 678568  
W [www.sussex.ac.uk/usie/cie](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/usie/cie)

© Demis Kunje Keith Lewin and Janet Stuart  
March 2003

Front Cover Photograph: *Janet Stuart*

## Educational Papers

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>No.1 <b>SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: A SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH EVIDENCE.</b><br/>D Pennycuik (1993)<br/>ISBN: 0 90250 061 9</p>                | <p>No. 7 <b>PLANNING AND FINANCING SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA.</b><br/>P Penrose (1993)<br/>ISBN: 0 90250 067 8</p>   |
| <p>No. 2 <b>EDUCATIONAL COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS.</b><br/>J Hough (1993)<br/>ISBN: 0 90250 062 7</p>  | <p>No. 8 Not allocated</p>   |
| <p>No.3 <b>REDUCING THE COST OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION.</b><br/>L Gray, M Fletcher, P Foster, M King, A M Warrender (1993)<br/>ISBN: 0 90250 063 5</p> | <p>No.9 <b>FACTORS AFFECTING FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION IN SEVEN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.</b><br/>C Brock, N Cammish (1991) (revised 1997).<br/>ISBN: 1 86192 065 2</p>          |
| <p>No. 4 <b>REPORT ON READING ENGLISH IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MALAWI.</b><br/>E Williams (1993) Out of Print – Available on CD-Rom and DFID website</p>              | <p>No.10 <b>USING LITERACY: A NEW APPROACH TO POST-LITERACY METHODS.</b><br/>A Rogers (1994) Out of Print – Available on CD-ROM and DFID website. Updated and reissued on No 29.</p> |
| <p>No. 5 <b>REPORT ON READING ENGLISH IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ZAMBIA.</b><br/>E Williams (1993) Out of Print – Available on CD-Rom and DFID website</p>              | <p>No.11 <b>EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR THE INFORMAL SECTOR.</b><br/>K King, S McGrath, F Leach, R Carr-Hill (1994)<br/>ISBN: 1 86192 090 3</p>                                       |
| <p>See also No. 24, which updates and synthesises No's 4 and 5.</p>  | <p>No.12 <b>MULTI-GRADE TEACHING: A REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND PRACTICE.</b><br/>A Little (1995)<br/>ISBN: 0 90250 058 9</p>   |
| <p>No. 6 <b>EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT: THE ISSUES AND THE EVIDENCE.</b><br/>K Lewin (1993)<br/>ISBN: 0 90250 066 X</p>   |  |

## Educational Papers

---

- No.13 **DISTANCE EDUCATION IN ENGINEERING FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.**  
T Bilham, R Gilmour (1995)  
Out of Print – Available on CD-ROM and DFID website.
- No.14 **HEALTH & HIV/AIDS EDUCATION IN PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AFRICA & ASIA.**  
E Barnett, K de Koning, V Francis (1995)  
ISBN: 0 90250 069 4
- No.15 **LABOUR MARKET SIGNALS & INDICATORS.**  
L Gray, AM Warrender, P Davies, G Hurley, C Manton (1995) Out of Print – Available on CD-ROM and DFID website.
- No.16 **IN-SERVICE SUPPORT FOR A TECHNOLOGICAL APPROACH TO SCIENCE EDUCATION.**  
F Lubben, R Campbell, B Dlamini (1995)  
ISBN: 0 90250 071 6
- No.17 **ACTION RESEARCH REPORT ON “REFLECT” METHOD OF TEACHING LITERACY.**  
D Archer, S Cottingham (1996)  
ISBN: 0 90250 072 4
- No.18 **THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF ARTISANS FOR THE INFORMAL SECTOR IN TANZANIA.**  
D Kent, P Mushi (1996)  
ISBN: 0 90250 074 0
- No.19 **GENDER, EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT - A PARTIALLY ANNOTATED AND SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY.**  
C Brock, N Cammish (1997)  
Out of Print – Available on CD-ROM and DFID website.
- No.20 **CONTEXTUALISING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS USING AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE.**  
P Taylor, A Mulhall (Vols 1 & 2) (1997) Vol 1 ISBN: 1 861920 45 8  
Vol 2 ISBN: 1 86192 050 4
- No.21 **GENDER AND SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN.**  
P Kutnick, V Jules, A Layne (1997)  
ISBN: 1 86192 080 6
- No.22 **SCHOOL-BASED UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN FOUR COUNTRIES: A COMMONWEALTH STUDY.**  
R Bourne, J Gundara, A Dev, N Ratsoma, M Rukanda, A Smith, U Birthistle (1997)  
ISBN: 1 86192 095 4
- No.23 **GIRLS AND BASIC EDUCATION: A CULTURAL ENQUIRY.**  
D Stephens (1998)  
ISBN: 1 86192 036 9
- No.24 **INVESTIGATING BILINGUAL LITERACY: EVIDENCE FROM MALAWI AND ZAMBIA.**  
E Williams (1998)  
ISBN: 1 86192 041 5
- No.25

## Educational Papers

---

- No.25 **PROMOTING GIRLS' EDUCATION IN AFRICA.**  
N Swainson, S Bendera, R Gordon,  
E Kadzamira (1998)  
ISBN: 1 86192 046 6
- No.26 **GETTING BOOKS TO SCHOOL PUPILS IN AFRICA.**  
D Rosenberg, W Amaral, C Odini,  
T Radebe, A Sidibé (1998)  
ISBN: 1 86192 051 2
- No.27 **COST SHARING IN EDUCATION.**  
P Penrose (1998)  
ISBN: 1 86192 056 3
- No.28 **VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN TANZANIA AND ZIMBABWE IN THE CONTEXT OF ECONOMIC REFORM.**  
P Bennell (1999)  
ISBN: 1 86192 061 X
- No.29 **RE-DEFINING POST-LITERACY IN A CHANGING WORLD.**  
A Rogers, B Maddox, J Millican,  
K Newell Jones, U Papen,  
A Robinson-Pant (1999)  
ISBN: 1 86192 069 5
- No.30 **IN SERVICE FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA.**  
M Monk (1999)  
ISBN: 1 86192 074 1
- No.31 **PRODUCTION OF LOCALLY GENERATED TRAINING MATERIALS.**  
I Carter (1999)  
ISBN: 1 86192 079 2
- No.32 **SECTOR WIDE APPROACHES TO EDUCATION.**  
M Ratcliffe, M Macrae (1999)  
ISBN: 1 86192 131 4
- No.33 **DISTANCE EDUCATION PRACTICE: TRAINING & REWARDING AUTHORS.**  
H Perraton, C Creed (1999)  
ISBN: 1 86192 136 5
- No.34 **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHER RESOURCE CENTRE STRATEGY.**  
Ed. G Knamiller, G Fairhurst (1999)  
ISBN: 1 86192 141 1
- No.35 **EVALUATING IMPACTS (OF EDUCATION PROJECTS & PROGRAMMES).**  
Ed. V McKay, C Treffgarne (1999)  
ISBN: 1 86192 191 8
- No.36 **AFRICAN JOURNALS – A SURVEY OF THEIR USAGE IN AFRICAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES.**  
A Alemna, V Chifwepa,  
D Rosenberg (1999)  
ISBN: 1 86192 157 8
- No.37 **MONITORING THE PERFORMANCE OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.**  
R Carr-Hill, M Hopkins, A Riddell,  
J Lintott (1999)  
ISBN: 1 86192 224 8
- No.38

## Educational Papers

---

- No.38 **TOWARDS RESPONSIVE SCHOOLS – SUPPORTING BETTER SCHOOLING FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN**  
(case studies from Save the Children).  
M Molteno, K Ogadhoh, E Cain,  
B Crumpton (2000)  
ISBN: to be confirmed
- No.39 **PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION OF THE ABUSE OF GIRLS IN ZIMBABWEAN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS.**  
F Leach, P Machankanja with  
J Mandoga (2000)  
ISBN: 1 86192 279 5
- No.40 **THE IMPACT OF TRAINING ON WOMEN’S MICRO-ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT**  
F Leach, S Abdulla, H Appleton,  
J el-Bushra, N Cardenas, K Kebede,  
V Lewis, S Sitaram (2000)  
ISBN: 1 86192 284 1
- No.41 **THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: ASSESSING LITERACY AND NUMERACY IN MALAWI AND SRI LANKA.**  
D Johnson, J Hayter,  
P Broadfoot (2000)  
ISBN: 1 86192 313 9
- No.42 **LEARNING TO COMPETE: EDUCATION, TRAINING & ENTERPRISE IN GHANA, KENYA & SOUTH AFRICA.**  
D Afenyadu, K King, S McGrath,  
H Oketch, C Rogerson, K Visser (1999)  
ISBN: 1 86192 314 7
- No.43 **COMPUTERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: COSTS AND OTHER ISSUES.**  
A Cawthera (2001)  
ISBN 1 86192 418 6
- No.44 **THE IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS ON THE UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA: DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC RESPONSE.**  
B Chilisa, P Bennell, K Hyde (2001)  
ISBN: 1 86192 467 4
- No.45 **THE IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS ON PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN BOTSWANA: DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC RESPONSE.**  
P Bennell, B Chilisa, K Hyde,  
A Makgothi, E Molobe,  
L Mpotokwane (2001)  
ISBN: 1 86192 468 2
- No.46 **EDUCATION FOR ALL: POLICY AND PLANNING - LESSONS FROM SRI LANKA.**  
A Little (2003)  
ISBN: 1 86192 552 0
- No.47 **REACHING THE POOR - THE COSTS OF SENDING CHILDREN TO SCHOOL**  
S Boyle, A Brock, J Mace,  
M Sibbons (2003)  
ISBN: 1 86192 361 9

## Educational Papers

---

No.48 **CHILD LABOUR AND ITS  
IMPACT ON CHILDREN'S  
ACCESS TO AND  
PARTICIPATION IN PRIMARY  
EDUCATION - A CASE STUDY  
FROM TANZANIA**  
by H.A Dachi and R.M Garrett  
(2003)

ISBN: 1 86192 536 0

*NOW AVAILABLE – CD-ROM*  
containing full texts of Papers 1-42

Other DFID Educational Studies Also Available:

**REDRESSING GENDER INEQUALITIES IN  
EDUCATION.** N Swainson (1995)

**FACTORS AFFECTING GIRLS' ACCESS TO  
SCHOOLING IN NIGER.** S Wynd (1995)

**EDUCATION FOR RECONSTRUCTION.**  
D Phillips, N Arnhold, J Bekker, N Kersh,  
E McLeish (1996)

**AFRICAN JOURNAL DISTRIBUTION  
PROGRAMME: EVALUATION OF 1994 PILOT  
PROJECT.** D Rosenberg (1996)

**TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION IN  
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.** R Garrett (1999)

**A MODEL OF BEST PRACTICE AT LORETO  
DAY SCHOOL, SEALDAH, CALCUTTA.**  
T Jessop (1998)

**LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL.**  
DFID Policy Paper (1999)

**THE CHALLENGE OF UNIVERSAL  
PRIMARY EDUCATION.**  
DFID Target Strategy Paper (2001)

**CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL.**  
DFID Issues Paper (2001)

All publications are available free of charge from DFID Education Publications  
Despatch, PO Box 190, Sevenoaks, TN14 5EL, or by email from [dfidpubs@eclogistics.co.uk](mailto:dfidpubs@eclogistics.co.uk)

## Acknowledgements

---

This report would not have been possible without the cooperation and assistance of many colleagues who gave freely of their time and insights during the conception of the MUSTER research, the collection of data, and the analysis and presentation of the material in synthesis of the many sub-studies conducted. Our thanks are due to them and to the MoEST for approving this programme of research.

The MUSTER team in Malawi consisted of:

Demis Kunje

Joseph Chimombo

Shadrack Chirembo

The staff of the Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT) provided the infrastructure which supported this work. Keith Lewin, Janet Stuart and Alison Croft worked in Malawi on various aspects of the research directly with CERT members and contributed insights to the drafting of this report. Keith Gristock (DFID) and Ken Longden (DFID formerly British Council) offered advice and support over the course of the research.

We hope this final report does justice to the work undertaken, often with considerable operational difficulties. This research stands as the first comprehensive, empirical study of teacher education in Malawi and is a credit to the persistence and insight of all those involved.



## Contents

Acknowledgements	i	3.3 Career intentions, ambitions and expectations	24
Abbreviations	v	3.4 Concluding observations	25
Preface	vi	4 The Intended Curriculum	29
Executive Summary	vii	4.1 The Intended curriculum	29
1.0 Introduction	vii	4.2 Aims, general objectives and underlying philosophy of MIITEP	29
2.0 The Research Framework	vii	4.3 Content	31
3.0 Research Methods	viii	4.4 Assessment	35
4.0 Findings	x	4.5 Observations on the curriculum strategy and its coherence	36
4.1 Entrants	xi	5 Teaching In The College Classroom	39
4.2 Curriculum and Delivery	xii	5.1 English	39
4.3 Assessment Strategy and Achievement	xiii	5.2 Maths	40
4.4 Colleges and Staff	xiv	5.3 Science	42
4.5 Newly Qualified Teachers	xv	5.4 Foundation Studies	43
4.6 Supply and Demand	xv	5.5 College Teaching Practice	44
4.7 Financing Teacher Education	xv	5.6 Final revision block	45
5.0 General Recommendations	xvi	5.7 Concluding discussion	45
5.1 Policy Issues	xvii	6 The Curriculum As Implemented During School-Based Training	47
5.2 College Issues	xvii	6.1 School support	47
5.3 Curriculum and Assessment Issues	xviii	6.2 Teaching and learning materials	48
5.4 Some Specific Recommendations	xix	6.3 Class partners	48
1 Introduction To The Research	1	6.4 Class allocation and school-based workshops	49
1.1 Introduction	1	6.5 School management	50
1.2 The research framework	2	6.6 Supervision by head teachers	52
1.3 A note on research methods	3	6.7 External supervision by PEAs	53
1.4 Some limitations of the research	6	6.8 External supervision by college tutors	54
1.5 The Organisation of the Report	7	6.9 Zonal workshops	55
2 The Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Programme In Context	9	6.10 Assignments and projects	56
2.1 Context	9	6.11 Concluding observations	57
2.2 The training system and the development of MIITEP	13	7 Patterns Of Assessment And Achievement	61
3 The Characteristics Of Students	17	7.1 Examinations, assignments and projects	61
3.1 Characteristics of MIITEP trainees	17		
3.2 Some qualitative insights into students images and expectations	20		

## Contents - Continued

7.2 Examination analysis	62	12.5Colleges and staff	113
7.3 Assessment of teaching practice	64	12.6Newly Qualified Teachers	114
7.4 Some achievement results	66	12.7Supply and demand	115
7.5 Concluding observations	70	12.8Financing teacher education	115
		12.9Postscript (2002)	116
8 The Colleges And Their Tutors	73	12.10 General recommendations	118
8.1 The colleges	73	12.11 Some specific recommendations	121
8.2 College management	74		
8.3 Classrooms and libraries	75	References	123
8.4 Utilisation of staff and space.	76		
8.5 The tutors	77	MUSTER Discussion Paper Series	124
8.6 Perceptions of a good teacher	79	MUSTER Research Reports	126
8.7 Views of the college and its courses	80		
8.8 Views of training and knowledge	81	Tables	
8.9 Concluding remarks	81	1.1Sample of Tutors and Lessons Observed	4
		2.1Number of Lecturers in Colleges and Nominal Student Capacity 1999	13
9 The Newly Qualified Teacher	85	2.2Structure of the MIITEP Programme	14
9.1 Posting	85	2.3Distribution of MIITEP Trainees across Cohorts	15
9.2 Utilisation in schools	85	3.1Age Distribution of Trainees (Entry Sample)	18
9.3 Views of NQTs on their classroom practice	87	3.2Percentage of Students Speaking Different Languages at Home	19
9.4 Concluding Remarks	88	3.3Qualifications of MIITEP Trainees	20
		4.1Organisation of Content	32
10 Analysis Of Teacher Supply And Demand	91	4.2Assessment	35
10.1 Teacher supply	91	6.1Mode of Support	51
10.2 The demand for new teachers	92	7.1English Cohort 6 and Cohort 2 Test Results	68
10.3 A simulation	97	7.2Mathematics Cohort 6 and Cohort 2 Results	69
10.4 Some observations	99	7.3The MIITEP Certificate Examination Results for Cohort 1	69
		7.4Percentage of Students and Level of Performance in Four Subjects	70
11 Financing Teacher Education	101	7.5Percentage of Students and Level of Performance in TP	70
11.1 The Cost of MIITEP	101	8.1College Student/Staff Ratio	77
11.2 Costs per trainee	102		
11.3 Comparisons with alternatives	106		
11.4 Some conclusions	107		
12 Concluding Remarks	109		
12.1 Introduction	109		
12.2 Entrants	111		
12.3 Curriculum and delivery	111		
12.4 Assessment strategy and achievement	113		

**Contents - Continued**

8.2	Number of Tutors and Qualifications	77
8.3	Age Ranges For Tutors	78
9.1	Assistance from School Management (% responding)	86
9.2	Difficulties Encountered (% responding)	87
10.1	Pass Rates for Different Types of Schools 1997	91
10.2	Enrolments by Cohort for Different Colleges	93
10.3	Repetition and Drop Out Rates by Grade 1997	95
10.4	Teacher Demand	96
11.1	MIITEP Planned Costs – World Bank Supported Elements	101
11.2	Projected Cost of Training – Cost per Trainee	103
11.3	Distribution of Costs per Student over Two Years	105
11.4	Comparison between Different Modes of Training	107

## Figures

1	Primary Enrolments	11
2	Recurrent Allocation to Education	12
3	MIITEP Trainees by Sex (Project Data)	18
4	Assessment of Teaching Practice Form	67
5	Simulation 1	98
6	Simulation 2	99

## Abbreviations

---

BTC	<i>Blantyre Teaching College</i>	MIITEP	<i>Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Programme</i>
CDSS	<i>Community Day Secondary Schools</i>	MoEST	<i>Ministry of Education, Science and Technology</i>
CERT	<i>Centre for Educational Research and Training</i>	MSCE	<i>Malawi School Certificate of Education</i>
DEO	<i>District Education Officer</i>	MSSSP	<i>Malawi School Support Systems Project</i>
DFID	<i>Department for International Development, UK (formerly ODA)</i>	MUSTER	<i>Multi-Site Teacher Education Project</i>
EDMU	<i>Education Development and Management Unit</i>	NQT	<i>Newly Qualified Teacher</i>
FPE	<i>Free Primary Education</i>	PEA	<i>Primary Education Advisor</i>
GTZ	<i>Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</i>	PIF	<i>Policy and Investment Framework</i>
HDI	<i>Human Development Index</i>	PTR	<i>Pupil-teacher Ratio</i>
JCE	<i>Junior Certificate of Education</i>	TDU	<i>Teacher Development Unit</i>
MANEB	<i>Malawi National Examination Board</i>	TTC	<i>Teacher Training College</i>
MASTEP	<i>Malawi Special Distance Teacher Education Programme</i>	UNDP	<i>United Nations Development Programme</i>
MCDE	<i>Malawi College of Distance Education</i>		

## Preface

---

### The Multi-Site Teacher Education Research Project (MUSTER)

MUSTER has been a collaborative research project co-ordinated from the Centre for International Education at the University of Sussex Institute of Education. It was developed in partnership with:

- The Institute of Education, University of Cape Coast, Ghana.
- The Institute of Education, The National University of Lesotho.
- The Centre for Educational Research and Training, University of Malawi.
- The Faculty of Education, University of Durban-Westville, South Africa.
- The School of Education, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine's Campus, Trinidad.

Financial support has been provided over four years by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID).

The Multi-Site Teacher Education Research project (MUSTER) has explored initial teacher education in five countries – Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, and Trinidad and Tobago. National research teams have collected and analysed data on key dimensions of the training process including the characteristics of those selected for training, the curriculum processes they experience, the perspectives and working practices of those who train teachers, the outcomes of training, the reflections of newly trained teachers in schools, analysis of supply and demand for new teachers, and projections of the resource and cost implications of meeting national targets to universalise primary schooling.

MUSTER has been designed to provide opportunities to build national research and evaluation capacity in teacher education through active engagement with the research process from design, through data collection, to analysis and joint publication. Principal researchers have led teams in each country and have been supported by Sussex faculty and graduate researchers.

This volume is one of a series of Country Reports summarising the findings from each country. The more detailed studies on which these are based have been published in a series of 35 Discussion Papers, which are listed at the end of the report.

## **Executive Summary**

---

### **1.0 Introduction**

Malawi announced free primary education in 1994 soon after the transition to multi-party democracy. As a result numbers enrolled in primary schools increased rapidly from about 1.9 million to 2.8 million creating an unprecedented demand for new teachers. The Malawi government responded by introducing an emergency training programme for newly recruited untrained teachers. The existing full-time pre-career College-based training system was replaced by the Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Programme (MIITEP), comprising a total of four months College-based training and 20 months supervised teaching in schools. This, slightly adapted, remains the only method of training primary teachers.

This programme of research was designed to explore different aspects of MIITEP within the framework provided by the Multi-Site Teacher Education Project (MUSTER), an initiative co-ordinated from the University of Sussex and financially supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). The Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT) in Zomba designed an extensive programme of data collection and analysis to explore the characteristics of those participating in MIITEP, their experiences of the training programme both in College and in school, their reflections after training once they had become qualified, and supply and demand and cost issues.

Insights into MIITEP are important both for Malawi and for other countries which have the problem of training large numbers of primary teachers to meet the demands created by commitments to Education for All. It is a mixed-mode programme based on two short residential periods separated by a lengthy school-based programme supported at a distance and through local in-service seminars. It is capable of training large numbers at lower costs than conventional college-based systems.

The results of this research provide an empirical base for policy discussions about how teacher education should develop in the future. Enrolment growth has to be complemented by a supply of trained teachers of sufficient quality and quantity to meet demand and keep pupil-teacher ratios at appropriate levels. This must be achieved at sustainable levels of costs.

### **2.0 The Research Framework**

The framework developed to organise this research emerged from a preliminary MUSTER workshop. This identified three main phases of training activity - inputs, processes and outputs. These were interrelated to a set of cross-cutting issues concerned with the characteristics of those becoming teachers, the nature of the curriculum they experienced, the qualities of the trainers and their institutional base, and the costs and resources needed to meet demand for new teachers. The key research questions that emerged are summarised below.

## Executive Summary

---

- (1) What are the characteristics of untrained teachers as they enter college?
- (2) What is the curriculum like and how is it delivered in colleges?
- (3) How is school-based training executed and experienced?
- (4) What are the characteristics of College Tutors and what conditions do they work under?
- (5) What are the reflections of newly qualified teachers on the value of MIITEP and what support do they receive post-training?
- (6) What are the patterns of supply and demand for new primary teachers and how sustainable are the costs of MIITEP?

### 3.0 Research Methods

A wide range of methods were used to collect data on the research questions. Survey instruments were used to establish the characteristics and perspectives on training and teaching of those beginning MIITEP, those completing the programme, and those who had been teaching for six months after qualifying. Intensive fieldwork took place in two colleges. This involved interviews with staff designed to illuminate patterns of career development and training of tutors, their attitudes to training, their perceptions of good teaching and of the qualities of trainees, their espoused theories, and their working practices. Observations of the training process were conducted to establish how tutors organised learning and teaching, and how this compared with approaches advocated in curriculum materials. Focus group discussions were conducted with students at each college and centred around the status of teachers in the community, students' previous teaching experience, their learning experiences in college and their preparedness as teachers. The data was triangulated with data from questionnaires and observations to add to the authenticity of its interpretation.

School-based fieldwork was arranged in three periods to complement the college-based data collection. Student trainees were interviewed and observed teaching to gain insight into their performance and the nature of support they received from schools. A classroom observation schedule was used and focus group discussions were conducted to find out how the students were coping in their work and to establish their aspirations and fears about college work. In addition a selection of head teachers and Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) were interviewed to explore how the school-based elements of MIITEP were working and how training might be improved.

Interviews were conducted at the Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB) to gain insight into aspects of the assessment system and the performance of student teachers. Some testing was undertaken in the colleges, and MANEB examination papers and results were analysed. An analysis of curriculum materials was also undertaken focusing on the five student Handbooks, a Teacher Trainers Source Book, and an opportunistic sample of end-of-course examinations, assignments and projects. This provided a systematic overview of content and its organisation, and allowed judgements to be made of the appropriateness and cognitive demand levels of parts of the programme.

## Executive Summary

---

Data on costs was collected from the MoEST, the TDU, Divisional offices and from college level scrutiny of accounts. Principals and bursars were interviewed. National accounts and contributions from external agencies were scrutinized to build up a picture of how resources were allocated and how they were disbursed. Alongside this, enrolment and other school census data was used to develop models of supply and demand that could be used to project future training needs.

The research took place during a period of rapid change in many areas. Political transition to multiparty government had created high expectations of educational reforms and Free Primary Education. Inevitably not all that was promised could be delivered in the short term. MIITEP suffered from a long period of gestation where much of the infrastructure and many of the inputs necessary to make it a reality were slow to materialise. The research was conducted against a backdrop of some confusion about chains of responsibility for different aspects of MIITEP, lagged development of MIITEP materials, weak and sometimes contradictory flows of information about what was supposed to be happening and when, and irregular flows of finance to support both college and school-based activities. Attempts to decentralise educational administration added to the turbulence surrounding MIITEP, as did the changing form of the national Plan Implementation Framework (PIF).

This research commenced in 1998 after MIITEP was developed and cohorts of trainees were selected, but before it reached full-scale implementation. Fieldwork had to be adapted to the exigencies of the changing timetable for MIITEP. Often planned activities were rescheduled at short notice, or simply cancelled, making it difficult to follow a systematic data collection plan. The time scale of the research could not allow longitudinal samples for purposes of exploring change over time as a result of training, and cross-sectional data was the only realistic option.

Further difficulties arose from the incomplete, inaccurate, and sometimes non-existent records held by colleges, schools, district offices, and central agencies on MIITEP trainees. Tracing students into schools was very problematic. Profiling some of the characteristics of the cohorts was possible from the central data base, though this suffered from infrequent updating. It was also clear from interviews and fieldwork that in the early stages the MIITEP system was only partially understood by trainers and trainees. Some trainees had difficulties expressing themselves, and addressing general issues and broad debates about the nature of their training, and this posed problems in interpreting the data.

Finally, the MIITEP programme stalled in 1999 when funds were exhausted in advance of the scheduled completion dates and the return of the sixth cohort of students to college was delayed. Teacher training was effectively suspended for about two years whilst the arrangements were renegotiated. The programme resumed in a modified form towards the latter part of 2001.



## Executive Summary

---

### 4.0 Findings

MIITEP is a large scale programme. It was conceived to address a crisis of teacher supply which remains with the primary school system. Free Primary Education policy created unprecedented demand and children enrolled en masse. It quickly became clear that there were not enough teachers, children needed classrooms and books, and school managers needed to be equipped with new skills. The Government of Malawi secured external assistance to reshape teacher education to meet the needs, and MIITEP was born.

There were many constraints which need recognising before passing judgement on MIITEP's strengths and weaknesses and making suggestions for the future. First, MIITEP was designed to include large elements of school-based training. Many Malawian primary schools have insufficient desks and chairs, lack classrooms, and possess few learning materials such as textbooks, teachers' guides and even blackboards. Many also have half or more of their staff untrained. In the lower grades, many pupils do not have pencils or exercise books; infant grades sometimes practise writing in the sand. The diversity within one class is enormous. Pupil absenteeism is high, and many are ill-nourished. Neither the college classes nor the Handbooks developed for MIITEP could easily focus on helping students deal with these kinds of conditions, especially since college tutors have had little direct experience themselves of teaching in such impoverished learning environments.

Second, heads were expected to co-ordinate school-based training after short introductions to MIITEP. This co-ordination included, for example, pairing the trainees with more experienced teachers, (though in over half Malawi primary schools less than 50% of the staff are qualified), organising training sessions, supervising trainees regularly, and sending in reports. Most heads were unprepared for the role and many thought they should be paid extra. In practice, they checked the trainees' lesson plans daily, but delegated or ignored much of the rest. Pairing seemed ad hoc, and often more directed to reducing teaching loads than to professional development. The trainees did not, on the whole, feel the school had given them much support, and perhaps many schools could not.

Third, the PEAs were supposed to supervise and report on the trainees regularly, and to run 12 zonal workshops for each cohort, on the top of their other in-service responsibilities. At the time of the study the PEAs were newly appointed, had received little training, the Teachers Development Centres (TDCs) were not built, and transport to schools was difficult. Many zonal seminars did not take place because of lack of available funds. Those that did were rated by both trainees and observers as useful, practical, and participatory. Not only did trainees get information and skills that could be immediately applied in their classrooms, but they could share ideas and experiences with each other. It seems most students had only one or two visits whilst in school. Exceptionally, one team of PEAs we identified had managed to visit some students several times, giving effective formative

## Executive Summary

---

feedback before allocating a final grade, showing what was possible. Since then, all PEAs have been issued with motorbikes, building is underway, including houses for PEAs in their zone, and they have received training through the Malawi Schools Support System Programme (MSSSP). The situation may be improving.

Fourth, college tutors were supposed to visit trainees five times during the 20 months in school. The regime devised was impossible to execute. The first cohorts followed each other directly into college, no funds were available for travel or subsistence, and tutors were not released from teaching until the first cohorts had been many months in schools. A period of four weeks was available with a limited number of vehicles for transport. Tutors could only spend a brief time in each school, perhaps seeing only part of a lesson, and having little opportunity to give feedback. Yet a grade had to be given. Tutors were not always able to see their own students, and many were not visited. Under this system, assessment could hardly be more than a ritual. If no mark could be reported from the field, the mark given for the one lesson taught by each trainee in the demonstration school during the college period was used. Almost all trainees passed teaching practice with good grades. It is unlikely this reflected a considered judgement of teaching competencies.

Fifth, MIITEP was a huge, elaborate scheme devised to meet a crisis, without sufficient time to put into place the necessary administrative infrastructures. Capacity was stretched to the point where many trainees' records were incomplete and it was not known where they were; colleges kept no continuous records of student performance, zonal activities were constantly rescheduled at short notice or cancelled, and learning materials were late in production and delivery. There clearly were considerable problems with the disbursement of funds arising both from the time-scale and accountability attached to external funding, and complex and inefficient internal allocation procedures. A key complementary training element - the Malawi Schools Support System Programme (MSSSP) – which was to train principals and PEAs in management and supervision, began some time after MIITEP itself.

In the round, it was not surprising that plans were often not realised and that for much of the time MIITEP existed within a culture of crisis management, rather than systematic and evolutionary programme development and consolidation. Though it is easy to agree that both new structures for teacher education were needed to meet unprecedented demand, and new content and methods were essential to train more effective teachers, attempting system-wide innovation of both at the same time was more than ambitious.

The findings in relation to the research questions are summarised below.

### 4.1 Entrants

The analysis of the qualities of MIITEP trainees highlights the need to take these into

## Executive Summary

---

account in the formulation of the structure of the teacher education curriculum. Trainees have high average ages for initial training, come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds often with limited cultural capital, have low levels of educational achievement, in many cases no more than Junior Certificate, and are not conspicuously proficient in the medium of instruction. Almost all had substantial experience as untrained teachers. Trainees' experience of primary schooling, and their perspectives on effective teachers and the teaching profession, suggested fairly restricted images of pedagogy and limited engagement with new ways of conceptualising relationships between teachers and learners in the primary school. Trainees often undervalued their experience as untrained teachers, as if their practical knowledge was subordinate, if not irrelevant, to the task of acquiring formal status as a trained teacher.

All these characteristics carry messages for the curriculum and its realisation. MIITEP students are adult learners with weak study and language skills. They are diverse, and would benefit from a recognition of their different strengths and weaknesses. They bring with them to MIITEP insights into teaching and learning which may not be theorised but are nevertheless grounded in classroom experience. However it seems that this is rarely recognised explicitly either in curriculum materials or in college practice.

### 4.2 Curriculum and Delivery

The MIITEP curriculum is a combination of subject content knowledge and pedagogic content knowledge. The curriculum clearly has its antecedents in previous teacher education programmes in Malawi and much of its content and organisation is recognisably similar. However, it is taught in considerably less time than the programmes which preceded it. Overall impressions lead to the conclusions that though MIITEP espouses student-centred and participatory pedagogy, the Handbooks project much more closed and didactic approaches to learning within specific units. The balance between subject content and pedagogic content is inconsistent. Much of the material in the Handbooks can be approached as facts to be learned, and the assessment regime reinforces this recall-based orientation of the curriculum in practice. School-based practice, and the experiential base of trainees, is peripheral rather than central to the curriculum. There is no differentiation to reflect the different needs of JC and MSCE holders. Important omissions include adequate treatment of study and communication skills, language up-grading and code switching, gender issues, and classroom pedagogy for very large class sizes with poor resources.

The curriculum in action in the colleges appears to be inefficiently delivered. Observational studies indicate that teaching time is often shortened by class administration and poor time keeping. Class sizes can be unnecessarily large and often exceed 80 students as a result of doubling up groups. This is despite relatively low student-staff ratios. Teaching loads of lecturers appear to be between 8 and 12 periods a week. Much lecturing is undertaken in a

## Executive Summary

---

transmission style where information is projected with few opportunities for students to engage in debate and reflection. Questions were often informational and recall-based and much of the teaching appeared examination-driven, rarely departing from material likely to be found in assessment tasks. Few attempts seem to be made to capitalise on trainees' insights into learning and teaching based on their experience in schools. Professional development issues were invariably approached in a compartmentalised way, as were other areas of the curriculum. There were few occasions where trainees seemed to be treated as future colleagues, rather than subordinate learners in a similar position to secondary school students.

School-based activities were compromised by the levels of support actually provided by schools. With some exceptions these were often minimal, perhaps predictably given the numbers of untrained teachers in schools and the general scarcity of resources. It was the exceptional head who systematically provided support, and most heads felt inadequately prepared for their roles. Though MIITEP trainees are expected to develop professionally during school-based work, and many appeared to, there was evidence that they were ill-prepared for this without more support than most received. Few resources were available to most apart from the Handbooks. The assessment regime of assignments and projects was largely unsupported in practice, and students generally received no feedback on what they produced. Women with family responsibilities may have been especially disadvantaged by the workload generated by the extensive assessment regime. The proposed schedule of visits from college tutors did not and could not happen. At best students tended to be visited once and assessed for teaching practice. The school-based element of the curriculum was severely handicapped by irregular and inadequate flows of resources for zonal workshops, travel etc., and delays in the development of complementary inputs from MSSSP and elsewhere. Despite all this MIITEP trainees appeared to value the inputs and support they did receive.

### 4.3 Assessment Strategy and Achievement

The assessment regime of MIITEP is extensive and demanding and has many elements. In summary, the written examinations do cover material from the MIITEP Handbooks but rarely stretch beyond this. Their coverage of subject specific content knowledge and pedagogic content knowledge is problematic and variable. Nowhere are students asked to integrate their knowledge and understanding, not even between Foundations Studies and the curriculum subjects. The exams vary in their degree of content validity, and poor test items pointed to the need for improvement in test construction. Most examination items require only low level cognitive performance based on recalling material directly from the Handbooks. The occasional question on gender is the only example of integrating broader objectives into the subject-based assessment. The assessment of assignments and projects appears to miss opportunities to assess how students are actually applying knowledge and understanding to their own classroom situations. The assessment of teaching practice in

## Executive Summary

---

schools adds little variance to the overall score, is unreliable, and is generally not credited with much validity.

Data on performance is disappointing. What indications there are suggest that even after training mathematics and English competencies remain low. Though most students obtain pass grades on end-of-programme examinations the real level of achievement that this represents must be a cause for concern. So also must be the fact that teaching practice grades are consistently high, though judgemental data from our research suggests that many new teachers have not mastered a full range of classroom competencies.

### 4.4 Colleges and Staff

The college system is in an advanced state of deterioration, with staff working under very difficult conditions and achieving what they can against multiple adversities. College infrastructure varies from barely adequate to totally unsatisfactory. A combination of policy neglect, lack of maintenance, erratic and minimal funding, unstable staffing, and indifferent leadership appear to have resulted in impoverished institutions with low morale and poor quality learning environments. If MIITEP or its successors are to use the colleges as an institutional base, whatever the quality of their planning and curriculum materials effectiveness will be compromised by very poor quality learning environments.

The general budgetary system for the colleges simply does not work and makes any kind of regular functioning difficult if not impossible. Partly as a result of the irregular patterns of finance, and MIITEP scheduling and changes in policy, patterns of utilisation of staff are not very efficient and college capacity is under-utilised. The main constraint on increased enrolment lies in boarding facilities. Current arrangements also tend to exclude those with child care responsibilities from residential status, with consequences for their learning.

College lecturers as a group are relatively old and many are within a few years of qualifying for retirement. Their numbers have been dwindling. This creates an opportunity to renew the cadre within a medium term plan for the development of teacher education. There is currently no coherent staff development programme. The perceptions lecturers have of good teachers, their view of the curriculum, trainees and the nature of the training task rest uneasily with much of the rhetoric of MIITEP. Clearly they have yet to be largely converted to ideas of student-centred learning (their practice displays only glimpses of what it might be), and they transmit rather different messages through their practice of the nature of the 'real' curriculum of teacher education. The colleges continue to function and staff do communicate some of their skill and enthusiasm to trainees, many of whom seem to value their college experience. This is a tribute to those who remain motivated to make something out of very adverse conditions.

## **Executive Summary**

---

### **4.5 Newly Qualified Teachers**

NQTs are often rapidly integrated into schools as normal teachers and some even receive rapid promotion. The arrangements made at school level for induction clearly vary widely, from helpful and supportive to non-existent. It is surprising that some of the things named by NQTs as useful either at school level or in zonal workshops, are things that MIITEP should have provided them with e.g. lesson planning, record keeping. A significant minority of NQTs indicate a wish to transfer schools soon after completing MIITEP. There were signs of a distance between the school and community in many of the responses of NQTs. Accommodation, feeding, transport and salary payments all figured highly as sources of problems. Though basic learning materials are available to most NQTs in their schools more generous provision seems a rarity. The college curriculum needs to recognise this reality of the professional environment of NQTs. MIITEP NQTs mostly do return to the schools they have been working in and are therefore presumably less in need of induction than those going to new schools. However, links which might smooth the transition from student teacher to qualified teacher seems tenuous. At the very least, print material extending the Handbooks into the first year of teaching might be helpful, especially if direct entry into MIITEP is contemplated as an option for the future. This could easily be integrated with the support that the MSSSP or its successors provide for school development.

### **4.6 Supply and Demand**

The requirements of PIF, teacher migration to the increased number of public and private secondary schools, attrition due to HIV/AIDS, reduced drop out, and expansion in the size of the school age cohort have all contributed to increased demand. Up to 10,000 teachers a year are needed to meet demand if PIF targets are to be met. This projection of annual demand was based on the assumption that MIITEP continued to function with successive cohorts. MIITEP enrolment was suspended after cohort 6, thus creating a backlog of demand. This suggests that demand probably now exceeds 10,000 a year if pupil-teacher ratios are not to rise further, or enrolment rates to drop. These levels of demand for new teachers can only be met by maintaining recruitment of JC holders. This is even more true now than in the past as a result of the rapid increase in enrolments in public and private secondary schools which will attract MSCE holders interested in teaching. If PIF and International Development Targets to which the Government of Malawi is committed are to be met, this requires high volume training for primary school teachers.

### **4.7 Financing Teacher Education**

The best estimates available from this analysis suggest that recurrent costs of MIITEP as currently configured are about MK25,000 (US\$590 at 1999 prices) per two-year trained teacher. This writes off the costs of development, training of trainers, induction of heads and

## Executive Summary

---

PEAs, and technical cooperation assistance, all of which have been substantial. If various cost savings were introduced, whilst maintaining the basic form of MIITEP, costs could be reduced to more sustainable levels. If school-based supervision was mainly undertaken by PEAs and school staff (recognising that college staff cannot make all the scheduled visits anyway), and a contribution to boarding costs were made by trainees, costs could fall to about MK15,500 (US\$370 at 1999 prices). Two alternative patterns of training have been considered. These are one year full-time residential + one year school-based, and two year full-time residential with 16 weeks supported teaching practice. These would cost a minimum of twice as much as MIITEP and a maximum of four and a half times, excluding the costs of transition and development which would be very substantial.

MIITEP, or structurally similar programmes, are the only way of affording to meet demand. Other alternatives appear to require unsupportable levels of new investment and recurrent costs, or the abandonment of key PIF targets. MIITEP, or its successor, needs to improve its quality and the effectiveness of its delivery. This is likely to be most effective if it is cast within a medium term development strategy for teacher education (including secondary since the two inevitably interact). This should include consideration of career progression for primary teachers beyond the MIITEP qualification. It is conceivable that a MIITEP initial qualification, followed several years later by intensive professional development programmes for selected primary teachers, might be both affordable and the most realistic strategy to improve the effectiveness of primary schools and enhance the professional leadership of primary teachers.

The commitments in the PIF are an indication of the importance that is now attached to teacher education. They are generally consistent with the analysis in this report and its conclusions. So also are the preliminary recommendations of the Task Force. However, many of the items in the PIF have yet to have the mechanisms for implementation adequately detailed, and the Teacher Education Task Force recommendations need to be converted into realities. This is the immediate challenge.

### 5.0 General Recommendations

Our analysis identifies several critical areas where new policy related to primary teacher education is needed. To be meaningful, decisions on policy cannot be separated from programmed activities and their associated resource requirements. Firm medium term decisions are needed on the future of teacher education. Without these there will be cumulative damage to the quality of primary schooling and a deterioration in performance against most if not all the relevant PIF indicators.

Despite the evidence of under-performance and many problems in implementation, the research indicates that MIITEP could be reinvigorated and modified in ways which could

## **Executive Summary**

---

reduce costs, maintain output, and encourage a focus on achievable goals that would improve quality. A strategy to achieve this would address the following issues systematically as an integrated set of concerns in several arenas.

### **5.1 Policy Issues**

A consistent medium term plan for teacher education does not exist. Clear commitments are needed which allow enrolment planning, accumulation of expertise, the development of efficient and effective institutional infrastructure, and systematic quality improvement.

A consensus is needed on the level of demand for primary teacher training. This invites a choice between methods that can produce trained teachers in sufficient quantity to meet demand, and those which might improve quality but will dramatically reduce the number of pupils with access to teachers with any training at all.

The arrangements for the co-financing of primary teacher education between the MoEST and its partners need agreement. Predictable flows of external assistance are needed over an appropriate period. Without these it is unlikely that PIF targets are feasible.

Current practice in funding the operational expenditure of the TTCs creates bottlenecks in the flow of funds and unrealistic allocations for learning and teaching infrastructure. It absorbs wholly disproportionate amounts of senior management time. It is unclear why more simplified and predictable arrangements cannot be put in place for the small number of TTCs.

### **5.2 College Issues**

A window of opportunity exists to renew the cadre of teacher educators, rehabilitate buildings and infrastructure, and generate developmental TTCs that could have a real impact on the quality of learning and teaching. Without a substantial programme to identify, train and appoint a new generation of College lecturers the capacity of the primary TTCs will degrade rapidly as a result of attrition amongst existing faculty. It should be accompanied by targeted staff development for existing faculty far enough from retirement for investment in new skills to be worthwhile.

Current salary levels do not seem sufficient to attract and retain high quality staff to TTCs for this purpose. If it is intended to up-grade the education level of lecturers and re-profile lecturers' jobs towards a more demanding set of professional responsibilities then greater incentives and rewards will have to be considered.



## Executive Summary

---

The learning environment in the TTCs is generally inadequate to support quality teacher education. It also demoralises staff and trainees. Needs differ but with imaginable amounts of investment in rehabilitation, extension of facilities, and appropriate re-equipment, a transformation is possible.

Further, the TTCs could be staffed and resourced to be regionally located centres for professional development as well as initial training. They could complement TDCs and other facilities in a way that is not currently possible. They could take on developmental responsibilities with others (e.g. PEAs) to improve access, retention and quality in clusters of schools associated with the TTCs. This could generate new synergies and closer links between TTC staff and the realities of the schools for which they are preparing trainees.

Strategic support to revitalise College management and re-orientate it towards effective learning and teaching is critical. Without stable and purposeful leadership directed towards clear goals institutional development will be unpredictable and sporadic. Turnover of College principals is high, new appointments have no initial or subsequent management training, and external sources of advice and support are unclear. No TTC appears to have a strategic plan which would create direction and focus energy towards agreed goals. TTCs will only establish themselves as centres of excellence if senior management teams have the skills and commitment to make this a reality.

### 5.3 Curriculum and Assessment Issues

College curricula are established and materials have been developed. In the short term there would seem no realistic alternative but to continue using the MIITEP Handbooks which are the main resource. If there is some assurance of their use beyond cohort 7 it becomes attractive to address areas of weakness or omission in the curriculum and support enrichment e.g. language and study skills, mathematics.

The current system of field support is over-ambitious and demonstrably ineffective. In particular College visiting of trainees in school often does not occur and when it does can be fragmented, incomplete, and focused solely on assessment. The logistics preclude frequent visiting with a developmental purpose. These realities lead to the suggestion that these field support activities are reconsidered and integrated into the normal work of PEAs. This can and should be complemented by support from Head teachers who have a responsibility for managing, developing, and appraising all their staff. Modifying the arrangements as suggested would release TTC staff to concentrate on College-based quality improvement, and development activity focused on the area local to the TTC, and would increase efficiency and reduce costs by eliminating duplication. TTC staff might also play a role in training and professional support for PEAs.

## Executive Summary

---

The load created by the assessment strategy adopted is substantial. It is not clearly justified by the contribution it makes to effective professional development, or the selection of those unsuited to teaching. Final examinations are expensive. It is important that they are reliable and valid indicators of learning. Modest investments in quality improvement in this area should pay dividends.

The analysis reported in this paper does identify exciting possibilities for ways forward that would transform what is a deteriorating situation in primary teacher education. The MUSTER studies indicate both the strengths and weaknesses of the current system. What has been achieved should not be undervalued, nor should the difficulty of the task ahead be under-estimated. The TTC system is small, it can be transformed with vision and insight. This is critical to the main planks of MOEST policy on primary education development.

Below we collect together a set of specific recommendations arising from the MUSTER studies

### 5.4 Some Specific Recommendations

1. If demand for new teachers is to be met JC holders will have to be recruited alongside MSCE holders. The MoEST should recruit failed MSCE candidates as untrained teachers with a view of allowing them to upgrade as they wait to be enrolled in teacher training programmes. If and when the supply of MSCE students is adequate then recruitment from JC could be phased out.
2. The curriculum for JC holders should be differentiated from that for MSCE holders to recognise their weaker academic backgrounds, poorer study and communication skills, and language competence.
3. Some consideration should be given to reducing the length of pre-training experience as untrained teachers. This may or may not be applied differently to JC and MSCE holders.
4. Previous experience and practical knowledge should be recognised more explicitly in the curriculum and in its implementation. So also should the fact that trainees are adult learners.
5. Colleges need extensive refurbishing in appropriate ways. Laboratories, libraries, classrooms and hostels all need some repairs and new equipment that reflect the needs of the training curriculum.

## Executive Summary

---

6. Training activities for school-based work need to be revised to reflect realistic levels of activity and resources. This implies simplification, a reduction in the total work load, adaptation to the capacities of supporting staff, and adequate learning material support. The Handbooks have proved very useful. It may be that additional print material to support school-based work (and NQTs) can be justified.
7. School-based assignments and projects should be reconceived to take advantage of linking theory and practice, and focused on core learning outcomes for school-based work. This suggest simplification and reduction in the number of tasks.
8. The length of school-based training may be longer than is necessary for initial qualification, given what can realistically be achieved. The balance between school-based work and college-based work may need reconsideration.
9. School-based resources are scarce. School development programmes should consider how these might be enhanced to improve learning and to support trainees on school-based work.
10. Zonal seminars should be continued and supported through print material and training of trainers. Their costs must be kept within sustainable limits.
11. It has proved impossible to maintain the distance mode of learning in MIITEP in an interactive way. This should be reconceived using more local support mechanisms.
12. The teacher education curriculum needs revision to reflect the actual characteristics of trainees and their needs. It is overloaded, inconsistent in emphasis between subject and pedagogic skills, and its assessment needs refining
13. The cadre of college tutors needs renewing within the context of a medium term plan. Existing tutors' effectiveness could be enhanced by a systematic staff development programme designed to upgrade qualifications, competence and professional engagement.
15. A medium term plan is needed for both primary and secondary teacher education so that resources can be identified, the institutional bases developed, personnel prepared and recruited, and systems established in a timely and well conceived manner.

## **Executive Summary**

---

16. Co-ordination with sources of external support for teacher education is essential. The dialogue between the MoEST and development agencies on support for teacher education should be focused and specific. Medium term commitments of resources are needed to underpin development and delivery. The MoEST needs to learn from its experience of MITTEP disbursement problems and devise structures that will deliver financial and other resources as and when needed.

## Chapter One

## 1 Introduction to the Research

### 1.1 Introduction

Malawi announced free primary education (FPE) in 1994 soon after the transition to multi-party democracy. As a result numbers enrolled in primary schools increased rapidly from about 1.9 million to 2.8 million, creating an unprecedented demand for new teachers. The Malawi government responded by introducing an emergency training programme for newly recruited untrained teachers. The existing full-time pre-career College-based training system was replaced by the Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Programme (MIITEP), which remains the only method of training primary teachers.

This programme of research was designed to explore different aspects of MIITEP within the framework provided by the Multi-Site Teacher Education Project (MUSTER), an initiative co-ordinated from the University of Sussex and financially supported by DFID. The Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT) in Zomba designed an extensive programme of data collection and analysis to explore the characteristics of those participating in MIITEP, their experiences of the training programme both in College and in school, their reflections post-training once they had become qualified, and supply and demand and cost issues.

Insights into MIITEP are important both for Malawi and for other countries which have the problem of training large numbers of primary teachers to meet the demands created by commitments to Education for All. It is a mixed-mode programme based on two short residential periods separated by a lengthy school-based programme supported at a distance and through local in-service seminars. It is capable of training large numbers at lower costs than conventional college-based systems. Its development raises many questions such as: how should college-based curricula be adapted to the needs of trainees who have experience of teaching as untrained teachers? are the college-based periods sufficient to up-grade content and enhance pedagogic skill? how effective is the support for school-based work? is the assessment regime appropriate? do those who qualify value the training they receive? are the costs sustainable?

The results of this research provide insights into these and other questions, and provide an empirical base for policy discussions about how teacher education should develop in the future. Effective teacher education is at the core of Education for All policy and the long-term success of FPE in Malawi. Enrolment growth has to be complemented by a supply of trained teachers of sufficient quality and quantity to meet demand and keep pupil-teacher ratios at appropriate levels. This must be achieved at sustainable levels of cost and in ways that recognise the constraints and possibilities created by existing and imaginable levels of infrastructural support, training capacity, and administrative efficiency.

## 1 Introduction to the Research

---

### 1.2 The research framework

The framework developed to organise this research emerged from a preliminary MUSTER workshop at Sussex. This identified three main phases of training activity - inputs, process and outputs - and interrelated these to a set of cross-cutting issues concerned with the characteristics of those becoming teachers, the nature of the curriculum they experienced, the qualities of the trainers and their institutional base, and the costs and resources needed to meet demand for new teachers. The key research questions that emerged are summarised below.

(1) What are the characteristics of untrained teachers as they enter college?

The first cohorts of trainees for MIITEP were recruited under pressing circumstances and began teaching as untrained teachers with minimal preparation whilst waiting for MIITEP to commence. They included both Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) and Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) holders who were placed in a wide range of schools throughout the Malawi education system. The skills, experiences and perspectives that they bring with them to training are different to those of direct entrants into Colleges from the school system.

(2) What is the curriculum like and how is it delivered in colleges?

MIITEP developed a new curriculum which was intended to enable trained teachers to teach more effectively in Malawi primary schools, using a new range of methods associated with the reform of the primary school curriculum for FPE. In principle the curriculum needed to recognise the realities of Malawian primary schools, where class sizes often exceed 70, repetition and drop out rates can be very high and attendance irregular, and learning resources are in short supply. An analysis of the curriculum and how it is delivered should help to illuminate the extent to which the MIITEP curriculum is well conceived and effectively implemented.

(3) How is school-based training executed and experienced?

MIITEP consists of two major components: a residential component and school-based training. The school-based training takes the majority of the time on the programme. Many activities e.g. the training of resource persons at zonal level, the provision of learning materials, the organising of zonal seminars, and supervisory visits by tutors, were planned to support the school-based elements of MIITEP. Schools were given substantial responsibilities to guide the trainees' development, notwithstanding the fact that many schools had as many untrained as trained teachers. It is important to understand which parts of the school-based programmes worked and which were problematic and why.

## 1 Introduction to the Research

---

(4) What are the characteristics of College Tutors and what conditions do they work under?

College tutors are at the centre of the training process. Their qualification, competence, skill and motivation determine how the curriculum is realised and whether this is consistent with the intentions of those who designed the programme. Tutors were invited by MIITEP to adopt new working patterns and more effective methods of training in the College classroom and different patterns of support for trainees in the field. This part of the research examines the extent to which changes have occurred.

(5) What are the reflections of newly qualified teachers on the value of MIITEP and what support do they receive post training?

Some insight into the effectiveness of MIITEP training can be obtained from those who have completed the programme by following them into their schools. The researchers interviewed a number of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) to determine the extent to which training had informed their practice and the kind of support they received early in their teaching career from the schools in which they worked.

(6) What are the patterns of supply and demand for new primary teachers and how sustainable are the costs of MIITEP?

MIITEP was necessary because of the inability of conventional modes of training to meet the demand for teachers created by FPE. Its start-up costs were justified by the prospect of high-volume training at sustainable levels of cost. Its future will partly be determined by how demand for new teachers is changing and by whether its operating costs are supportable in the long term. Analysis of these aspects is an essential element of discussion about future policy on teacher education.

### 1.3 A note on research methods

A wide range of research methods were used to collect data on the research questions. Details of specific sub-studies are to be found in the relevant research reports. The main research activities are detailed below.

#### 1.3.1 College-based fieldwork

Two contrasting colleges were selected for study. St. Joseph's is an all-female college, with good modern buildings, in a rural area, owned by the Catholic Church. Blantyre Teachers College (BTC) is an old, somewhat run-down, government college taking both men and women, in a peri-urban area.

## 1 Introduction to the Research

In October 1998, ten members of staff in each college were interviewed and observed teaching. The sampling took into consideration age, subject specialisation, gender and qualifications. The interviews focussed on training and career development, perspectives on their job, their perceptions of teacher education and of the changes taking place, and their views of students. In the classrooms, timed and detailed notes were made about what the tutor and the students were doing. Table 1.1 below shows the sample.

Table 1.1: Sample of Tutors and Lessons Observed

Subject	Younger		Older		Totals
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Fdn. studies	2	-	-	2	4
English	2	1	2	-	5
Maths	2	-	2	-	4
Science	-	1	1	1	3
Social Studies	-	-	1	-	1
Home Econ	-	1	-	-	1
Creative Arts	-	1	1	-	2
Totals	6	4	7	3	20

The analysis of the classroom observations was used to show patterns of how tutors interpreted the curriculum, to exemplify typical interaction sequences, and highlight some aspects of teaching and learning in the colleges. The interview data was organised in themes broadly related to the interview questions.

Two focus group discussions were conducted with Cohort 6 students at each college. Students were selected to represent JCE and MSCE holders, and were chosen from different college groups. The discussions centred around the status of teachers in the community, students' previous teaching experience, their learning in the college, and their preparedness as teachers. This set of data was triangulated with other data from questionnaires and observations.

### 1.3.2 Surveys of different cohorts

Questionnaires were developed to survey samples of trainees entering and exiting from MIITEP, and of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs). These included items on the characteristics of trainees (e.g. age, sex, religious affiliation, qualifications, family background), their experience of the training programme, their perceptions of teaching and the teaching profession, and their aspirations for the future. The survey data was analysed using SPSS.



## 1 Introduction to the Research

---

The entry questionnaire was administered to a sample of 176 Cohort 6 students, 96 from Blantyre Teachers College (BTC) and 80 from St. Joseph's Teachers College, in October 1998. At this time the students had been in college for 3-4 weeks and had just finished undergoing college orientation.

The exit questionnaire was administered to 184 Cohort 2 students in October 1999. At that time BTC was undergoing repairs, and some students had been relocated to the all-male Montfort college nearby. There were 9 from St. Montfort, 83 from St. Joseph's and 92 from BTC.

In May 2000, with the help of the Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) in five districts, 64 NQTs were identified who completed a similar questionnaire, including basic data about the schools they were teaching at, experiences in school since returning from college, evaluation of their training, and future career plans.

### 1.3.3 Other data from students

- a) Educational Autobiographies: From the students completing the entry questionnaire, 22 from each college were asked to compose a short educational autobiography, focussing on their best and worst memories of schooling, and their career expectations.
- b) Achievement Tests. Tests in English and mathematics were devised to try to measure the amount of learning achieved over the two years. These were administered to similar samples of Cohorts 6 and 2 as were surveyed.

### 1.3.4 School-based fieldwork

Visits to schools were undertaken to explore aspects of the field-based training. During the first round of visits 27 Cohort 6 students in 11 schools were interviewed and observed teaching two lessons each. This gave some baseline information on their standard of teaching and the nature of the support given to them in schools. The MIITEP Classroom Observation sheet was used to check performance on 25 skills. Focus group discussions were conducted to find out how the students were coping in their work, and what their aspirations and fears about college work were. In addition, 11 head teachers and six PEAs were interviewed to find out what kind of support they were able to give to the students, and what problems they faced in doing so. They were also asked to suggest what training the students needed.

Further visits took place during 2000, to observe zonal meetings for Cohorts 3 and 4, check the progress of Cohort 6 students, interview head teachers and PEAs about school-based training, and to collect data from Cohort 1 NQTs. Fifteen of these, in 10 schools, were

## **1 Introduction to the Research**

---

interviewed and observed teaching. The interviews centred on their current status as new teachers at the schools, how they perceived their course in relation to actual practice, and their careers plans.

### **1.3.5 Documentary analysis**

Interviews were conducted at MANEB in February 1999 to explore aspects of assessment of student teachers under MIITEP. Using an opportunistic sample of end-of-course examinations, assignments and projects from Cohorts 1 and 5, a systematic analysis was undertaken to determine the nature of the content in scope, appropriateness and cognitive demand levels. The results of the final examinations for Cohort 1 were analysed to gain insight into the performance of students in individual subjects.

Curriculum materials, in the form of the five Student Handbooks, were analysed to evaluate the aims, objectives, content, assessment methods, recommended pedagogy and resources.

### **1.3.6 Analysis of Costs**

A preliminary visit to the two Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) was made in December 1998 to establish funding and expenditure patterns in teacher education. Then in February 1999 interviews were held with key informants in the Ministry of Education Headquarters, at two Divisional Offices, at two TTCs and with representatives of donors directly involved in the funding of MIITEP activities. Available documents in the accounts section were also analysed.

In the Ministry Headquarters the interviews were held with the Director responsible for higher education, the Director of primary education and the chief accountant. At the Divisional Office the interviews were held with Divisional Managers and the accountants. At the TTCs the interviews were held with principals and the bursars.

## **1.4 Some limitations of the research**

This research took place during a period of rapid change in many areas. Political transition to multiparty government created high expectations of educational reforms and FPE. Inevitably not all that was promised could be delivered in the short term. MIITEP suffered from a long period of gestation where much of the infrastructure and many of the inputs necessary to make it a reality were slow to materialise. In particular, the Malawi School Support Systems Project (MSSSP) was not able to train the PEAs in time to support school-based training for the initial cohorts. The research was conducted against a backdrop of some confusion of chains of responsibility for different aspects of MIITEP, lagged development of MIITEP materials, weak and sometimes contradictory flows of information

## 1 Introduction to the Research

---

about what was supposed to be happening and when, and irregular flows of finance to support both college and school-based activities. Attempts to decentralise educational administration added to the turbulence surrounding MIITEP, as did the changing form of the national Policy and Investment Framework (PIF).

This research commenced in 1998, after MIITEP was developed and the cohorts of trainees selected, but before it reached full-scale implementation. Consequently, the fieldwork had to be adapted to the exigencies of the changing timetable for MIITEP. Often planned activities were rescheduled at short notice, or simply cancelled, making it difficult to follow a systematic data collection plan. Another consequence of the unpredictability of MIITEP events, and the time-scale over which the research was conducted, was that it was impossible to use longitudinal samples for exploring changes over time as a result of training, and cross-sectional data was the only realistic option.

Further difficulties arose from the incomplete, inaccurate, and sometimes non-existent records held by colleges, schools, district offices, and central agencies on MIITEP trainees. Tracing students into schools was very problematic. Profiling some of the characteristics of the cohorts was possible from the central data base, though this suffered from infrequent updating. It was also clear from interviews and fieldwork that, certainly in the early stages, the MIITEP system was only partially understood by trainers and trainees. Initial orientation courses to explain the new system appear to have had some impact, but could not have been expected to embed a full understanding in the various groups of stakeholders, given the short exposure provided. This limited some discussions of MIITEP. So also did the fact that some trainees had difficulties expressing themselves and addressing general issues about the nature of their training.

Finally, the completion of cohort 6 was delayed when funds allocated to MIITEP were exhausted in advance of the scheduled completion dates. From 1999 MIITEP training was severely disrupted by funding problems and an inability to reach agreement about the enrolment of new cohorts. The enrolment of the planned Cohort 7 did not take place until mid-2001. In the meantime support for the school-based components dwindled. College capacity was greatly under-utilised and tutor morale adversely affected.

### 1.5 The Organisation of the Report

The report is divided into twelve chapters. This chapter has outlined the research framework. Chapter 2 reviews the national context in which MIITEP was developed and provides an overview of the MIITEP training system. Subsequent sections are based on the data collected for the MUSTER research. Chapter 3 analyses the characteristics of trainees in order to profile their biographical and educational status, and comments on the perspectives they bring from their previous experience of primary education. Chapter 4 presents an

## **1 Introduction to the Research**

---

analysis of the MIITEP curriculum based on its materials. This explores curriculum at the level of intentions. Chapters 5 and 6 give insights into the curriculum in action, firstly focusing on what happens in the colleges and secondly during the school-based element of training. Chapter 7 reviews patterns of assessment and achievement. Chapter 8 describes the conditions in the colleges, reviews the utilisation of staff and space, and collates information on college tutors and their views on training. Chapter 9 collects together information on the experiences of a sample of NQTs. Chapter 10 undertakes an analysis of supply and demand for new teachers and Chapter 11 considers the costs of teacher education associated with MIITEP and commonly suggested alternatives. The last chapter collects together conclusions from the study and identifies recommendations that arise.

## Chapter Two

# 2 The Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Programme in Context

This chapter locates MIITEP in the socio-economic context of Malawi and its education system. It then details the recent development of teacher education and outlines the main characteristics of MIITEP. The concluding remarks collect together some implications arising from this profile.

### 2.1 Context

Malawi is a landlocked country in South Eastern Africa. The country covers a total area of 119,000 square kilometres, of which 20% is lake, and is bordered by Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia. It is one of the poorest countries in Africa with a GNP per capita of \$US 170 in 1995 (\$750 PPP). Adult illiteracy is estimated at 44% and is much greater amongst women than men (58% to 28%). Child mortality is amongst the highest in the world (234/1000 for children under 5 years). Malawi has a population of somewhat less than 10 million. Population growth was in excess of 3% but is now believed to have fallen to 2% or less as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The demographic consequence of the past rapid population growth in Malawi is that the population dependency ratio is very high. Over 45% of the population is under 15 years old. Most of the population is rural (85%) and is agriculturally dependent. Many households in rural areas cannot provide enough food for their families. Institutions providing health, nutritional and educational services are also unable to satisfy the demands on them. Thus, it is common in Malawi for children to become economically active by as early as the age of 15; they may contribute to household income by working in subsistence agriculture from an even earlier age.

Thirty-five years after independence, living conditions in Malawi remain amongst the worst in the world. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report of 1995 ranked the country 157 out of 174 countries in terms of its Human Development Index (HDI), a composite of life expectancy, educational attainment and income indicators. The situation seems to have worsened since then and in 1998 the HDI rank fell to 161 out of the 174 countries. The country has no exploitable mineral resources and relies heavily on agricultural produce for its foreign earnings. In 1993 it was estimated that 60% of the rural population and 65% of the urban population were living in poverty. Road infrastructure and public transportation are poor and the most common mode of travel for most Malawians is by foot. These conditions are changing but at a very slow rate as the economy suffers from macro-economic instability, external shocks, and adverse terms of trade. The education system operates in a context of very low levels of resources for public services, weak infrastructure, and acute shortages of skilled staff. It is also heavily dependent on external assistance for any new development activity.

The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MoEST) has administrative, financial and academic control over primary, secondary, tertiary and distance education as well as the

## **2 The Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Programme in Context**

---

training of primary school teachers. The MoEST plans and administers the system as a whole from the capital, Lilongwe. Below this, recent efforts to decentralise education services have resulted in six divisions each headed by a division manager. The divisions are organised into 32 education districts of which four are urban. These take responsibility for the schools. Teacher education institutions at primary level were made accountable to Divisional offices, but the creation of a Teacher Education Division in the MoEST under a Director now provides a direct link into the central administrative structures.

Historically Malawi has had some of the lowest enrolment rates in Sub-Saharan Africa. Gross enrolment rates averaged about 65% in the early 1990s and repeaters occupied 15-20% of all primary school places. It appears that more than 20% of grade 1 pupils drop out before reaching grade 2. The number of pupils enrolled in grade 8, the end of the primary system, is currently about 17% of the number enrolled in grade 1, giving some idea of the magnitude of the attrition resulting from drop-out. Over the last two decades the transition rate into secondary schools from primary has rarely exceeded 10%. In 1996 about 120,000 pupils were in the final grade of primary schools and were competing for about 8000 new places in government secondary schools. Correcting this for repeaters gives a nominal transition rate of about 9%. The secondary gross enrolment rate was estimated at about 4% in 1985 and had only reached 6% by 1995 (UNESCO 1998:141).

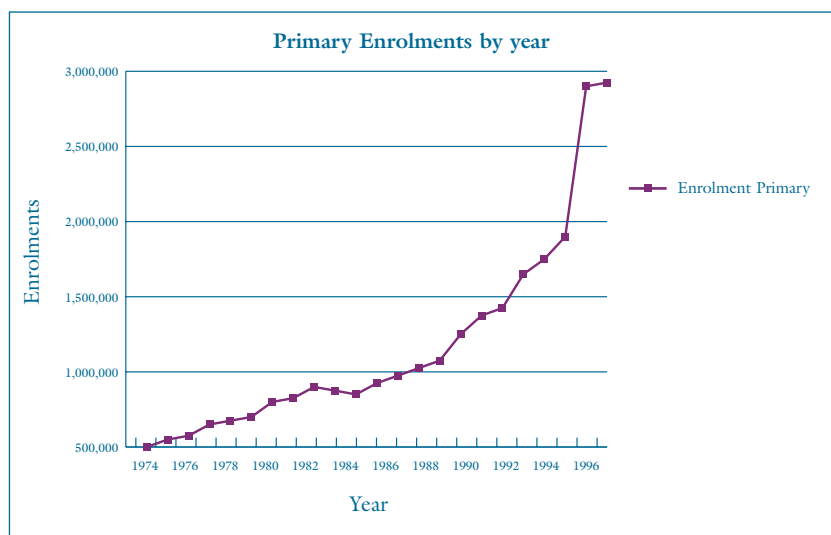
In 1994 the Malawi government adopted a policy of Free Primary Education designed to universalise access. This resulted in a massive increase in the number of primary students – from about 1.9 million to about 3 million. Although government policy has been to increase the share of the national education budget allocated to the primary sector, the sharp increase in the primary school population has placed severe constraints on the financing of the primary school system and has generated a massive demand for increased teacher training.

Structurally, Malawi's school system consists of eight years of primary schooling followed by four years of secondary. In principle all children are eligible for free primary schooling provided through more than 3700 primary schools. Progress through primary schools is determined by school promotion tests. In most grades repetition exceeds 15% and can be as high as 25%. Selection into secondary school is determined by the Malawi Primary School Leaving Examination. This allows less than 10% of those who sit to obtain conventional secondary school places in government or grant-aided secondary schools (44,000). Over 100,000 more are enrolled in Malawi College of Distance Education schools, which are of poorer quality, and largely supported by fee payments. At the end of secondary schooling the Malawi School Certificate examination controls access to post-school education and training. About 35% of pupils reaching this level pass these examinations in government schools but only 8% from Distance Education Centres. About 1000 students per year are admitted into university level courses at the University of Malawi.

## 2 The Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Programme in Context

Primary school enrolments increased from about 900,000 in 1984 to about 1.9 million in 1994. After the introduction of FPE in 1994 primary school enrolments peaked at over 3 million in 1994/5. Subsequently enrolments fell back to 2.9 million in 1995/6 and have now fallen to about 2.8 million (1999). Much of the expanded enrolment has been in grade 1 which increased from about 500,000 to over 1 million in the first year of implementation of FPE. In 1995/6 there were about 49,000 primary teachers in Malawi of whom many were unqualified. About 18,000 new unqualified primary teachers have been recruited - an increase in the total number of primary teachers by as much as 40% - to meet the demand for new teachers. These teachers are being paid at rates below those for fully qualified teachers (until they qualify). Nevertheless the budgetary impact of their salaries is substantial. The growth of primary school enrolments is shown below in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Primary Enrolments

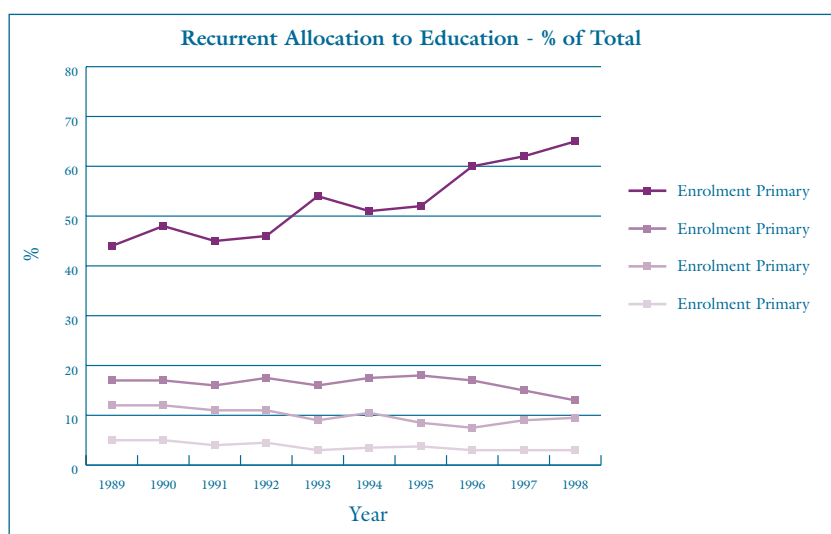


In 1985 Malawi allocated about 3.5% of its GNP to education. By 1997 this had risen to over 5%. The proportion of the public recurrent expenditure budget allocated to education has grown from about 11% in 1989 to 27% in 1994/5 and was projected at over 30% for 1998. Within these amounts primary education has seen its share increase from about 45% in 1990. Figure 2 shows these proportions. The effects of the recent emphasis on primary schools is evident. Currently (1998) about 66% of the total recurrent budget is allocated to primary and over half the capital budget. However, the large numbers of primary pupils mean that the allocation per pupil is still very small.

## 2 The Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Programme in Context

The central allocations for Teacher Training (historically about 4% of the education budget) include a TTC for secondary teachers as well as including the costs of the residential training during MIITEP. They exclude donor-supported costs to MIITEP. Government allocations to the TTCs fell as a percentage of the total recurrent budget from 1990. Since MIITEP is externally supported at a substantial level much of its funding flows through other budgets. As a result, total allocations to teacher education probably increased during the late 1990s (See Kunje and Lewin 2000).

Figure 2: Recurrent Allocation to Education



The PIF provides details of educational policy commitments which relate to primary schools and teacher education. Inter alia this indicates commitments to:

- A pupil-teacher ratio of 60:1 across the primary school system to be achieved through MIITEP training of approximately 20,000 teachers
- A class size of 60 pupils per class
- A substantial increase in secondary school places to achieve a transition rate of 30% into Form 1 and a planned increase of 6,000 secondary teachers by 2005 working in an integrated secondary school system.
- Upgrading of Teacher Training College staff to degree level to improve the quality of learning and teaching in Colleges
- Decentralisation of education delivery services including those related to in-service support of new teachers.



## 2 The Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Programme in Context

### 2.2 The training system and the development of MIITEP

The primary training system consists of six teacher-training colleges located in different parts of the country. All except two, which are associated with Churches, are government-owned, and all are responsible to the MoEST which provides the salaries of staff and stipends for trainees. Table 2.1 below shows the capacity of the primary college system in 1999. The TTCs had about 175 staff when the data was collected (1999). Staff student ratios varied from 11:1 to 21:1.

Table 2.1: Number of Lecturers in Colleges and Nominal Student Capacity 1999

College	Number of lecturers	Number of non-teaching staff	Capacity (Female)	Capacity (Male)	Capacity (Total)	Staff/Student Ratio
BTC	26	35	240	300	540	21
LTC	32			540	540	17
Karonga	28	25	100	200	300	11
Kasungu	28	6	200	400	600	21
St Joseph	23	20	300		300	13
St Montfort	38			450	450	12
Total	175	86	840	1890	2730	16

The MIITEP system shows both continuities and discontinuities with the past. Teacher education programmes in Malawi have undergone a number of structural changes in the last ten years, all in the direction of shortening and condensing the formal period of college-based training in order to meet increasing demand for new teachers.

At Independence in 1964, the 'normal' training programme was the two-year residential college course which took entrants with either a Junior Certificate or a Malawi School Certificate of Education, who qualified respectively as T3 or T2 teachers. In 1987 a 'crash' one-year in-service initial course was instituted in one college, to train unqualified but experienced teachers. This did not meet demand and as a result the Malawi Special Distance Teacher Education Programme (MASTEP) was set up in 1989 to train teachers on-the-job through a combination of short residential courses, local seminars, and distance learning methods. This was discontinued after 3 years, and replaced by a programme of one year's field training followed by one year's residential course in a college (Hauya 1997, Kunje and Lewin 2000). MIITEP is a successor to these innovations designed to address the explosion in demand for primary teachers since FPE.

In 1995 the new government entered into discussions with the World Bank and the German Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) about certifying the 'untrained

## 2 The Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Programme in Context

temporary teachers', about 20,000 of whom had been recruited as part of the FPE initiative. MoEST personnel were sent to look at other training programmes within the region (e.g. in Zambia and Zimbabwe) to see how similar problems had been tackled. The GTZ emerged as the professional training partner for MIITEP. Once the decision was taken, the programme was worked out, staffed and implemented by Malawians, with one or two German consultants. A Teacher Development Unit (TDU) was set up within the MoEST, and project implementation was co-ordinated from there.

The details of the MIITEP training system and aspects of its current status are described in detail in a number of documents (e.g. Bude et al 1995, GTZ 1995, DSE 1998, Malawi Integrated Inservice Teacher Education Programme 1997a, b and c, and 1998, Stuart and Kunje 2000, Kunje and Lewin 2000). In brief the programme consists of a one term residential course followed by four or five terms of supervised teaching in schools. In the sixth term trainees attend a one month residential block which includes final examinations. The original profile of planned activity is shown below.

Table 2.2: Structure of the MIITEP Programme

Time	Students Activities	Assessment
3 months	Resident in college	Exam; TP in demonstration school, assessed by tutor
20 months	Return to previous teaching post, attend zonal seminars; study by distance materials; receive support and supervision from HT, PEAs	Projects and assignments submitted; TP assessed by HT, PEAs, visiting tutors, TDU and MANEB
1 month	Resident in college for revision	Final exam

In essence trainees follow a conventional college-based programme in the first phase complete with a minimal teaching practice. Subsequently they return to schools (usually the ones where they have been teaching as untrained teachers) and follow a self-study programme based on tasks set by the Malawi National Examination Board (MANEB). The curriculum both in the colleges and during the school-based training is based on the Student Teacher Handbooks developed by MIITEP. In school they are supposed to receive advice and guidance from trained teachers, and college tutors are supposed to visit occasionally. They also have to attend zonal workshops and complete a series of assignments and projects which are sent to the Colleges for assessment. The last period in College is a residential block leading to a final examination. At the same time as changing the mode through which teacher training took place MIITEP materials make clear that the ambition is to produce teachers who will be more effective in the classroom and adopt new methods of teaching. The intention was that more emphasis would be given to pedagogic strategies that put the child at the centre of learning activities, reduced the amount of recall-based learning in favour of that focused at higher cognitive levels, and enhanced the achievement of basic skills related to literacy and numeracy.

## 2 The Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Programme in Context

MIITEP recruited cohorts from those enrolled in the emergency training programme in place between 1994-6. Six cohorts were selected by 1997 totalling about 15,000 trainees. Three subsequent cohorts (7, 8, and 9) were planned to train the remaining untrained teachers recruited at this time. Selection criteria for the first cohort were: the MSCE certificate, a minimum of two years' teaching experience (one year for females), and attendance at the initial orientation course. For the second and following cohorts, a JCE was accepted as an alternative, with priority given to those teaching longest. Table 2.3 shows the numbers of trainees in each cohort.

Table 2.3: Distribution of MIITEP Trainees across Cohorts

Cohort	Total
1	2330
2	2636
3	2526
4	2491
5	2494
6	2611
Total	15067
Untrained	8439
Grand Total	23506

As fieldwork was being conducted for this study the sixth cohort were beginning their training, and the others were at later stages. Cohort 1 was planned to complete in February 1999. This study used data from across the cohorts for different parts of the data collection.

In summary MIITEP functions in an environment where resources are scarce, infrastructure is weak and the demands placed on the training system are large. There was little investment in the College system during the previous decade, though there were several changes in the training curriculum and its pattern of delivery, each of which required adjustment to new practices. Though conceptually MIITEP is fairly simple, this belies the complexity associated with its implementation. A wide range of inputs are needed – teaching, supervision, handbooks, support for assignments, marking, school visits etc – all of which require co-ordinating and financing effectively and in a timely way. The remaining chapters in this report present insights from different parts of the data collected between 1997 and 2000, and investigate the extent to which the realisation of MIITEP matched its aspirations.



## Chapter Three

### 3 The Characteristics of Students

This chapter presents data on the characteristics of MIITEP trainees. It gives an insight into their ages, sex, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, and educational qualifications. It also illuminates some of their prior experiences related to teaching, and explores some of their perceptions about their future careers. It draws on survey data from two colleges, on insights from autobiographical work, and on national data.

#### 3.1 Characteristics of MIITEP trainees

The sample used in the first part of this analysis consisted of 176 students from MIITEP cohort 6. There were 96 (29 men and 67 women) from BTC, and 80 from the (all-female) St. Joseph's Teachers College. Because of the choice of colleges<sup>2</sup>, women are over-represented in the sample; only 39% of the students in cohort 6 are female, and across all the colleges only 30% of the available hostel space is allocated to females. The new Policy Investment Framework (PIF, 2000) on education envisages an increase in the proportion of women in teacher training by 2005 but it does not commit itself to a particular figure.

The distribution of trainees by sex for all cohorts in MIITEP is shown below (Figure 3) based on national data. Males outnumber females by 13,800 to 9,900 across all the cohorts. However, it is only amongst untrained teachers not in the MIITEP cohorts 1-6 that females outnumber males (by 4,600 to 3,800).

The age range of all the respondents was between twenty-one and thirty-five. Most (75%) were within the 23-27 age range. The mean age for females was 25.8 years and for males 26.8 years (Table 3.1). The apparently high average age of trainees on entry results from several factors. First, many trainees are likely to have experienced repetition during their school careers and may also have been over-age on entry to primary school. Those completing MSCE level qualifications, even in full-time schooling, can be as old as 20 in the Malawian system. Second, the arrangements to meet the needs of FPE resulted in the mass recruitment of untrained teachers in 1994 who then had to wait for opportunities to start MIITEP, whilst teaching as untrained teachers. The result is that most trainees have significant teaching experience, and many will have families of their own with young children. Critically, they are adult learners with experience whose learning needs may be thought different from teacher trainees in systems where entry to primary training is direct from senior secondary school.

<sup>2</sup> BTC has a relatively high number of female trainees, perhaps due to its urban location, and/or to the presence nearby of the all-male Montfort College.

### 3 The Characteristics of Students

Figure 3: MIITEP Trainees by Sex (Project Data)

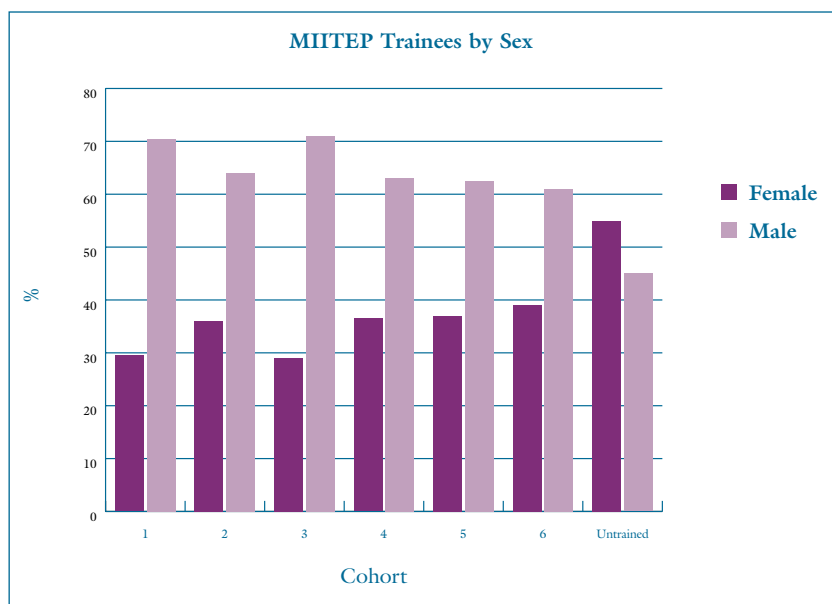


Table 3.1: Age Distribution of Trainees (Entry Sample)

Age range	No. of students	%
21-22	5	2.9
23-27	129	75.0
28-30	31	18.1
31-34	6	3.5
35	1	0.6

In terms of ethnicity, the largest groups of students in the two colleges we examined were Chewa (28.4%); Ngoni (27.7%) and Lomwe (21.6%). The Chewa comprised the largest group because they are the majority ethnic group in Malawi in general, and in the Central/Southern regions of Malawi in particular. Chichewa was by far the most frequently spoken language at home amongst these trainees, as shown in Table 3.2. The significance of this lies partly in the fact that the medium of instruction is English above grade 3, while the majority local language is used below this level. Schooling (and teacher training) therefore formally take place in a second (or third) language for almost all trainees and pupils.

Local language fluency is becoming more of an issue with the change in language policy to using mother-tongue in the lower standards. Formerly the medium of instruction at this level was Chichewa, but schools are now supposed to teach in the other Malawian languages

### 3 The Characteristics of Students

Table 3.2: Percentage of Students Speaking Different Languages at Home

Language	No. of students	%
Chichewa	146	83.0
Chitumbuka	13	7.8
Chilomwe	5	2.8
Chiyao	3	1.7
English	3	1.7
Chinkhonde	2	1.1
Chisena	2	1.1
Chingoni	1	0.6
Chilambya	1	0.6
Total	176	100.0

where appropriate. This has clear implication for the balance of recruitment to the teaching profession of speakers of various local languages.

Religious affiliation plays an important role in defining identity in Malawi. Two of the six training colleges remain affiliated to the Catholic church, though formal control over the Colleges was taken by the government in 1973. In the sample 41% of trainees were members of the Presbyterian Church of Central Africa and 29% were Catholic. About 15% were Seventh Day Adventists, and 3% Moslem. This may reflect the location of the colleges selected rather than a national distribution, but the under-representation of Moslems is noteworthy.<sup>3</sup>

The occupational backgrounds of trainees in the sample were predictably skewed in favour of agricultural livelihoods. About one-third indicated that their father was a farmer (38%). Other common categories were a teacher (12%), and a businessperson (10%). A few were clerical workers, drivers, field health assistants, church ministers, clinical officers, and nurses. The majority of the mothers of the student teachers were either farmers (33%) or housewives (30%). About 6% had mothers who were teachers and 6% businesspersons.

About 11% of the fathers of the student teachers had a qualification beyond MSCE. Nearly a third had a secondary school certificate and a quarter had a primary leaving certificate. A further 21% had no school qualifications. Very few of the mothers had post-secondary qualifications, and far fewer mothers than fathers had a secondary school certificate. Over a third of the mothers had a primary leaving certificate and 39% had no educational qualifications. Nearly 12% of trainees said their father was a teacher and over 6% that their mother was. Over 30% of the student teachers had taught for 1-3 years and over 66% for more than 3 years.

<sup>3</sup> Nationally Moslems make up 20% of the population, and they are concentrated in the Central Region where the sample colleges were sited. The virtual absence of Moslem trainees, even in the all-female college, requires further exploration.

### 3 The Characteristics of Students

Most of the trainees had passed their English and mathematics at JCE<sup>4</sup> but very few (less than a third) had taken MSCE<sup>5</sup> in English and out of these only a quarter had gained a grade 6 or higher. Approximately a fifth of them had taken mathematics and science at MSCE, and of these only a sixth in mathematics and a third in science had gained a grade 6 or higher. National data on the educational qualifications of all the MIITEP cohorts showed that only cohorts 1 and 3 had a large proportion of MSCE holders. Table 3.3 shows this.

Table 3.3: Qualifications of MIITEP Trainees

Cohort	GCE	JCE Dist. <sup>6</sup>	JCE Govt	MSCE Dist <sup>7</sup>	MSCE Govt	Other	Total
1	14	9	7	615	1659	25	2330
2		1654	880	55	44	1	2636
3	12	707	200	421	1166	17	2526
4	1	1717	645	75	47	2	2491
5	5	1117	447	248	663	9	2494
6		1776	646	63	112	8	2611
Total	32	6980	2825	1477	3691	62	15067
Untrained	1	5561	1928	314	611	24	8439
Grand Total							23506

#### 3.2 Some qualitative insights into students' images and expectations

It was possible to gain some insights into childhood experiences in the family, experiences in school, views of teacher training, and career intentions and ambitions. In addition to the survey instrument, 44 trainees completed autobiographies which were content-analysed to provide qualitative data. Difficult though it is to generalise from the results, the data does provide a glimpse of some of the characteristics and attitudes that trainees bring with them to training.

Many trainees through the autobiographies related experiences which indicated that they had not had entirely happy childhoods. Often they were from large families (in one case being one of thirteen children) and this sometimes seemed to create a yearning for love and attention from the mother. In some cases childhood was marred by losing a parent, and in several cases a parent had been imprisoned, which forced some to live with relatives. In most cases childhood was spent in farming families in rural areas. Christianity was also a common background factor. One student teacher writes of the importance of friends and play:

*I did not enjoy [school] because I had no friends. I was meeting different faces. As time goes on I enjoyed going to school because we played many games during break and even after class.*

<sup>4</sup> Junior School Certificate after two years secondary. Over 80% of all candidates pass this examination.

<sup>5</sup> Malawi School Certificate of Education

<sup>6</sup> JCE in the MCDE system.

<sup>7</sup> MSCE in the MCDE system



### 3 The Characteristics of Students

---

Another student teacher describes the type of play she engaged in:

*One ... which we were playing was about school. When our friends had come back from school they called us to teach us what the teacher was saying at school. I was taking a part of a pupil while others were teachers.*

There was one incident that occurred to a number of the student teachers during their childhood that stood out in their memories. This was the visit to the school by the Red Cross that led to misunderstanding and fear. As one student describes it:

*An event ... which I remember well is when the Red Cross members came to our school. We thought they came to take [our] blood. So then everybody run away and shouting ...*

Another occurrence which was less frightening and which remains in the minds of a number of student teachers is the President's crop inspection tour. In preparation for this tour the pupils had to practice traditional dances and this meant missing classes.

*We spent a lot of time for nothing (e.g.) practice traditional dancing instead of achieving learning. We missed a lot of [work] - almost three weeks - without entering the class.*

The childhood memories of at least some trainees appear to be ones of being frightened or feeling frustrated by not being able to learn.

Very few trainees attended nursery school. Some started school at the recommended age of six years, while others started as late as ten years old. Some said that they had no interest in school, having to travel long distances to school, which resulted in parents forcing them to attend against their wishes. Repetition of grades and transfers between several schools were also some of the experiences which soured attitudes toward schooling.

There were others who had happy memories of schooling, especially among those who were doing well in class. Teachers who had some influence on students are still remembered. There were many descriptions of the positive influence of teachers in both the autobiographies and in the questionnaire. One student teacher recalls:

*Most teachers were helping me when I had problems ... Another thing is the appearance. [A] teacher usually looks smart, intelligent, and they were looking so proud and happy when presenting lessons or instructions in class ... regardless of how much they receive.*

When asked 'What was the best thing about your primary schooling?' a large number of respondents referred to attending all the school activities and learning to write and speak English. The many references to the learning of English in the trainees' responses indicated

### 3 The Characteristics of Students

---

that they placed a high value on doing well in this subject. Good teachers were often categorised as those who were good at English:

*There was a certain teacher who taught me English, both reading and grammar ... The reason I speak a little bit good English [is] because of him, since he is the one who did foundation.*

*The English teacher is the one who has helped in that he was patient. He tried to help us in vocabulary by organising debating activities. If you have a problem he tried to help you until you know what to do. He was loved by more pupils.*

Achievement motivation featured strongly in the student teachers' writing. Doing well in exams and getting good positions was mentioned frequently. Promotion in the form of selection for secondary school was also something that featured regularly. The highlight of the primary school experience for many was when they were selected for secondary school. One female student teacher commented:

*The best thing was that when I reached Standard 8 I was selected for secondary education. I did not face the problem of repeating the same class.*

Social interaction in the form of sports, debates, group work and chatting with friends were also mentioned frequently as the best thing about primary schooling. Quizzes, singing songs, traditional dances, music, and drama were also noted but featured less often. The wearing of uniforms was also valued as an indicator of which school the children attended and was considered as a form of social recognition. There was an element of wishing to look smart and a belief that wearing a school uniform achieved this aim. A different form of social recognition was that which occurred within the school environment – appointment as group leader.

A good teacher was unambiguously identified by many as someone who provided encouragement. There were three different types of encouragement that these student teachers had experienced during their primary schooling. The first and most frequently mentioned type could be termed verbal encouragement where the teacher encouraged the children to work hard and helped them to solve problems. One student quoted her teacher's verbal encouragement to work hard as 'No sweet [with]out sweat'. The second type of encouragement was accompanied by rewards. A few students mentioned that their teachers gave them gifts when they had achieved something. The final type was encouragement accompanied by corporal punishment. This is despite the fact that a large proportion of these respondents also cited corporal punishment as the worst thing about primary schooling.

*I remember a male teacher who was teaching all the subjects ... He used to give us*

### 3 The Characteristics of Students

*assignments and when [we] failed he gave punishment to everyone who failed and because of his punishments I started to work harder*

Other qualities of a good teacher directly linked to encouragement were associated with the form of help that the teachers provide. The success of the student teacher in being selected for secondary school was often directly attributed to a good teacher's encouragement. Individual help was valued by a number of students and was not always directly linked to the student's studies. For instance, one teacher was remembered because he had bought a school uniform for the trainee. A large proportion of the respondents mentioned the 'hardworking teacher'. One female teacher was described as conducting afternoon classes even over the weekends. Another female teacher inspired a student who described her thus:

*My grade six teacher is the one who [gave] me a strong spirit of being a teacher because of the way she handled us in class. She used group/pair work, debate and other games in class. She was best in forming good English plays and our class was the best during that school session*

When the student teachers had the opportunity to indicate the worst thing about primary schooling a very large proportion responded with two words – corporal punishment. This was by far the most frequent response to the question. There was some contradiction and ambivalence in attitudes to corporal punishment. In response to the statement 'Corporal punishment should be available in schools' most disagreed. This fits in with the students' statements that corporal punishment was the worst thing about primary schooling. But as was evident from some students' descriptions of what makes a good teacher, the encouragement of a strict teacher who uses corporal punishment was seen as beneficial.

Hardship was also frequently mentioned by the student teachers as a negative aspect of their schooling. Parental lack of resources took its toll on these student teachers' early school experience. Many mentioned the inability to pay school fees or buy uniforms as factors that interfered with the smooth progression of their schooling. Being sent home from school because of the lack of uniform or school fees was a commonly mentioned experience. The death of parents, particularly the father, led to hardship for the students when school fees could not be paid. There was also the gender issue linked to the perceived unimportance of education for female children. A comment from a female student teacher illustrates both the attitudes to the education of females and the determination to pursue education at all costs:

*During my primary school I had a lot of problems which I was facing in our family. My [father] had three wives so he was trying only to educate our brothers, so my father was not paying our school fees – only our brothers. But I tried on my own to find school fees because I wanted to become a worker one day as I am today. This is through home study – now I have got my MSCE.*

### 3 The Characteristics of Students

---

Other hardships that were mentioned included lack of materials for teaching and learning and in some cases the lack of a classroom. Lack of resources, the absence of teachers, and the overall shortage of teachers were registered as sources of dissatisfaction for some during their primary schooling. Poor teachers and the quality of teaching in general was cited by some as the reason for their dislike of certain subjects e.g. arts, language and maths. Some students acknowledged that they had not understood the importance of schooling during their primary years, whilst others viewed the lack of promotion i.e. not being selected for secondary school, as a negative aspect of their primary education. Interestingly, only one student teacher perceived there to be no problem in her primary schooling. This student lived near the school and her father was a teacher.

In summary, the image of a good teacher tells us a lot about the disposition of students towards teaching. The good teacher is described as the one who encourages hard work among pupils, presents information clearly, is hardworking, kind and understanding. To most student teachers, the personality of the teacher matters much more than professional matters. The good teacher is also the one who dresses well. Professionally the students believe a good teacher communicates well with the class. Using teaching aids and giving assignments are taken as important attributes. A bad teacher has opposite attributes. Most frequently mentioned is the teacher who beats pupils for wrong doing or even for failing to produce class work. The bad teacher scolds pupils, is unkind to children, and fails to communicate or clarify points in lessons. Teachers who have love affairs with pupils are seen as transgressing educational ethics. Drunks are also taken as a disgrace to the profession. At this point, at the start of their teacher training, student teachers have already identified role models and begun to shape their educational philosophy.

#### 3.3 Career intentions, ambitions and expectations

New trainees were invited to recall the experiences which influenced them to join teaching. A few were honest enough to say they joined teaching because they needed a job and had merely responded to an advert. They had nothing else to do and this provided them with an opportunity to get employment. There are others who say they were self-motivated, answering to an internal call to become teachers. Most students however claim they had been influenced by other people to like and join teaching. Teachers seem to have exerted a lot of influence on most trainees. Others indicated they had been influenced by parents or friends to have a positive view of teaching. Two-thirds of the student teachers mentioned wanting to acquire or improve their teaching skills in order to teach more effectively as a reason for attending MIITEP. There were a few who also indicated that they wanted to become teachers in order to help the children or pupils. They perceive the advantages in becoming teachers in terms of the knowledge gained. Very few (less than 5%) mentioned the social status of the primary teacher as a motivation. A third of the sample mentioned the

### 3 The Characteristics of Students

---

teachers' salary as a disadvantage of becoming a teacher and there were a few who mentioned the poor resources and the low national recognition of the teacher.

Almost all the new student teachers said they would continue teaching and were aiming to qualify as teachers. Interestingly all expressed the desire to upgrade themselves academically and professionally. Half the student teachers who had written their autobiographies were aiming to become secondary school teachers or even college lecturers. All the student teachers were asked in the questionnaire to indicate which professional roles as teachers they would like. Nearly half of the sample indicated that they would like to be a primary school teacher, whilst a third indicated that they would like to be a primary school head teacher. A further third of the sample wanted to become secondary school teachers and a quarter wanted to become a teacher training college lecturer. This shows that, for some of the student teachers, primary teaching is not targeted as an end, but as a stepping stone to teaching at higher levels. Some students see the future from a global point of view. From past experience some student teachers look back at their plight during their teaching as unqualified teachers. They saw that unqualified teachers lacked assistance and encouragement from qualified teachers and now their vision is to qualify and go back to schools to help unqualified teachers. Other student teachers see themselves as major contributors to the development of the country. Over half the sample appeared to be willing to be posted anywhere in the country and the remainder were evenly split between those preferring urban and rural postings.

The student teachers in cohort 2, who were completing MIITEP, also predominantly saw themselves as continuing to work in primary schools. However large proportions (over 40%) had aspirations to teach in secondary and/or to study full-time to gain higher qualifications and move on. Further research should look at the extent to which salary scales that reward secondary teaching more than primary teaching may contribute to the flow of teachers from the primary to the secondary level.

#### 3.4 Concluding observations

A number of issues can be highlighted.

First, the mean age of trainees is high at over 26 years. MIITEP trainees are adult learners. Not only have all taught for several years as untrained teachers, with the majority having more than 3 years experience, but many also have direct experience of their own young children. These attributes carry implications for the teacher education curriculum. Both the pedagogical style appropriate to adult learners and the content of learning should reflect the age of learners and their prior experience.

### 3 The Characteristics of Students

---

Second, the majority of trainees nationally are men, as are most primary teachers. The MIITEP trainees have been recruited in about the same ratio as the existing primary teaching force (60:40 male:female). MIITEP alone will therefore have little impact on overall sex ratios amongst primary teachers. For further exploration of this issue see Croft (2000).

Third, responses from the sampled students indicate that most tribes were represented, albeit in proportions reflecting the location of the colleges chosen. Three languages predominate among these students. The new language policy, however, advocates teaching the infant section of the primary school in the mother tongue. This implies that the college curriculum should prepare students accordingly, and makes the posting system potentially less flexible.

Fourth, Malawi is a religious nation divided between a large majority who are Christian and a significant minority who are Moslem. Amongst the Christian group there are more than ten denominations with different characters. Religious affiliation may shape students' attitudes to teaching, and to pedagogy and epistemology, which also have curriculum implications for training.

Fifth, the family backgrounds of trainees are diverse. In common with the general population, the largest groups are from rural backgrounds and their parents are in agriculture-based livelihoods. A small minority have professional parents. Small but significant numbers have teachers in their families. The educational background of parents follows a similar pattern with relatively few having completed qualifications above secondary level. Thus most trainees bring to the training process rather limited experience of formal schooling, and of the modern sector.

Sixth, the level of educational qualification of trainees is low. The majority are JCE holders and have not completed a full MSCE certificate. Moreover their levels of achievement in mathematics and English suggest that both these core subjects are difficult for this group. The language results are particularly problematic since MIITEP is taught in English and the medium of instruction above infant level is English.

Seventh, the images that trainees have of their school experience are rich and varied. Some are positive and some are negative. Many have been influenced in their attitudes to teaching by particular role models of good teachers. The prior experiences, and the hopes and fears of trainees derived from their previous experience, all shape how they will respond to the teacher education curriculum.

Eighth, trainees' aspirations and expectations indicate a mixed set of reasons for enrolling in MIITEP, ranging from enthusiasm and commitment to lack of alternative employment.

---

### **3 The Characteristics of Students**

They also suggest that, for a proportion, primary teaching is a stepping stone to acquiring higher qualifications and teaching in secondary schools. This proportion appears to increase during the period of training.

All these observations, and those contained in the research reported in the MUSTER Discussion papers, have implications for MIITEP in action. We now turn to examine the curriculum as intended and as realised.





## Chapter Four

## 4 The Intended Curriculum

The chapter offers a descriptive analysis of the intended MIITEP curriculum with particular reference to the aims, content, pedagogy, teaching/learning resources and assessment strategies. The analysis is based mainly on the five student teacher Handbooks and associated documents. It provides a basis from which this study subsequently analyses the teacher preparation programme in action.

### 4.1 The Intended curriculum

Scrutiny of teacher education curriculum documents from the various programmes mounted over the last decade shows that there have not been fundamental changes in content and orientation, though length and structure have been modified. MIITEP, more than its predecessors, was designed with the intention of training teachers in new methods of teaching and learning. This was a result of FPE and the aims of the revised primary school curriculum which advocated more active and participatory learning methods. Two strands of thinking can be traced within the course which for convenience have been labelled 'traditional' and 'progressive'. Traditional approaches are teacher-centred, based on behaviourist assumptions, and have a relatively closed view of knowledge that sees the teacher as a technician. The progressive perspective contains some elements of interactive and constructivist thinking, is more learner-centred, less authoritarian and expects more of a teacher in terms of adapting the curriculum to the pupils.

### 4.2 Aims, general objectives and underlying philosophy of MIITEP

The only broad aim set out in the MIITEP documents themselves is to produce 'an effective teacher'. Implicitly, the purpose of the programme is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools by enabling unqualified teachers to undergo a training programme. In general, MIITEP broadly continues to reflect the list of 24 'National Objectives for Teacher Education', drawn up for the revised curriculum of 1990 (Hauya 1997: 48). These are phrased mainly in terms of 'to promote/develop/foster in the teacher' certain knowledge, skills and attitudes. Attitudinal objectives seem to predominate - over half the listed objectives focus on characteristics such as 'positive attitudes towards community development, appreciation of Malawian culture and values, the desire for continued professional growth' etc. There is also an emphasis on broad skills to enable the teacher to 'teach the primary school curriculum effectively'. It is interesting to note that only five objectives mention knowledge, the main ones being 'the basic theoretical and practical knowledge about the teaching profession'; 'principles of leadership' and 'an understanding of the machinery of the government'.

The predominant aims seem limited to producing a skilled technician who will deliver the curriculum effectively. Educating a teacher is seen as a matter of fostering appropriate attitudes and values, along with developing specific teaching skills. Giving the teachers a

## 4 The Intended Curriculum

---

sound knowledge base, in terms of either subject specific or professional understanding, is much less prominent. Nor is there any mention of reflection on practice. In one sense the curriculum is oriented towards preparing new teachers for a 'restricted' professional role.

This view is confirmed by material addressed to students in MIITEP Handbook 5, in a brief section on 'ethics' and 'professionalism'. There is an emphasis on attitudes, moral qualities and skills, rather than on understanding that will inform professional judgement. For example a good teacher is 'co-operative, honest, tolerant, responsible and trustworthy'; they can plan lessons, assess pupils and manage a class. As far as knowledge goes, they must 'know the subject matter well', and 'know the conditions of service and code of conduct expected of a teacher'.

There are some traces of alternative perceptions of the teachers and of their training, most clearly stated in the 'Teacher Trainer's Source Book' published by the TDU. This was produced as a resource for the 'trainers of trainers', that is, for those conducting workshops for the college tutors, Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) and head teachers. The introduction in this Source Book notes that 'teaching and learning need to become much more activity-based and participatory' in Malawian classrooms; it suggests teachers will have to become skilful 'facilitators of learning' in spite of lack of resources, and they should integrate subjects and address equity issues. It suggests that the teacher is expected to 'function as an agent of change in the classroom' (p.2), thus anticipating a more 'extended' professional role.

This trainers' book also has sections on the principles of adult education (p.8), on action research (p.53) and on professionalism (p.58). This seems to indicate a more discursive stance, a more interactive view of learning, and a wider professional role for the teacher. Such an approach could and should recognise the prior teaching experience of the student-teachers and address more specifically the problems found in Malawian classrooms.

By contrast with this material for advisors, much of the material in the student and teacher Handbooks seems to be based on a behaviourist view of learning and on an authoritarian view of professional knowledge as something that can be transmitted to students without any problems. It presumes that this store of knowledge will provide a correct set of methods for teaching, which will enable new teachers to deliver the curriculum more effectively. The philosophy espoused in the advisors' materials seems to change as it is translated into learning material for trainees and become less progressive and more traditional.

## 4 The Intended Curriculum

---

The introduction to each of the trainees' Handbooks highlights new approaches and suggest teachers should:

- promote active learning
- use local resources
- educate pupils about population and environmental issues
- be gender sensitive
- teach about democracy and human rights
- value practical activities
- should be sensitive to pupils with special needs
- teach about HIV/AIDS
- use local 'cultural capital' especially in science and technology

All these seem to be drawn from a progressive perspective. But in contrast the specific objectives set out in the individual units seem to be drawn mostly from the 'traditional' approach. The objectives for Foundation Studies, for example, reflect very closely the objectives of the 2-year, 1-year and MASTEP foundations course, showing that there has been no change of approach in this area. The English and Mathematics unit objectives are largely framed in terms of being able to teach specific curriculum topics and skills, while the science units are strongly content-based. The objectives cover mainly knowledge and comprehension, with some application in some subject areas and in the methods; no 'higher level' skills are stressed.

### 4.3 Content

The content of MIITEP training is presented in the five Handbooks. These are based on the subjects taught in the primary schools plus Foundation Studies. Table 4.1 below sets out the number of units devoted to each subject, both in the college and school-based parts of the course. This gives a broad picture of the balance of the curriculum. It also shows that the proportion of time allocated in College closely matches the overall proportions of the text materials.

The overall emphasis is on subject-related studies, and these are confined to those that the trainees will have to teach. Professional studies takes up only one sixth of the whole time. Teaching methods, however, form part of the subject studies. There is no general or personal education, not even communication or study skills, although the trainees enter with low grades in school-leaving qualifications, suggesting they are not proficient students. An analysis of the content shows that it is heavily compartmentalised into subjects; there are few common themes. Cross-cutting topics mentioned in the objectives, such as gender, population, HIV/AIDS, democracy and human rights are tucked away in separate units in Foundations, Science or Social Studies, and do not seem to permeate the course more generally.

## 4 The Intended Curriculum

Table 4.1: Organisation of Content

Category	Subject	No. of units Coll+SB=Total	% of whole	% at college
Core subjects Category A	Foundation Studies	45+32=77	16.3	16.7
	English	40+26=66	13.9	13.3
	Maths	36+22=58	12.3	10
	Science & Health Education	35+18=53	11.2	10
	Social & General Studies	17+24=41	8.6	10
	Chichewa	24+16=40	8.4	6.7
Category B	Agriculture	16+14=30	6.3	6.7
	Home Economics and Needle craft	16+13=29	6.1	6.7
	Physical Education	13+9=22	4.6	3.3
	Religious Education	12+9=21	4.4	3.3
	Music	12+7=19	4	3.3
	Creative arts	10+7=17	3.6	3.3
	TP			6.7
<b>Totals</b>	<b>Twelve subjects</b>	<b>276+197=473</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Considerable differences are found between subjects when the kinds of knowledge presented are examined. The English and Mathematics units, for example, focus on curriculum and pedagogical content knowledge, and the English course is explicitly aimed at skills development. In contrast, science materials are heavily content-based with minimal attention to pedagogical knowledge or skills. The Foundations courses cover rather briefly general pedagogic knowledge and skills, knowledge of learners, of educational contexts and educational aims and values, in that order of priority as measured by unit time.

The following sub-sections give some details of the topics covered in these four subjects. The prominence given to behavioural objectives shows clearly the underlying assumptions about learning on which the course is based.

### 4.3.1 English

The course begins with five units on curriculum and general pedagogic knowledge; this includes how to write lesson plans, schemes of work and records of English lessons. The rest of the units during the College period are all focused on how to teach aspects of the primary school curriculum, including identifying pupil errors, testing and remedial work. The only exceptions to this pattern are three units on ‘phonology’ and ‘phonetics’, and three more in Book 3 on English Study for Professional Purposes. These are the only units aimed at improving the student’s own English language competence.

## 4 The Intended Curriculum

---

The school-based units recapitulate and expand on selected topics from the college course, focusing directly on how one can use these in one's class. For example, 'oral communicative language teaching techniques' are explained again, and the student is given detailed examples of how to carry these out with the pupils. The zonal seminars cover such topics as making visual aids, songs and rhymes, pre-reading activities and 'wide reading'.

The specific objectives are almost all phrased in practical terms starting with what the students should be able to do, such as:

- teach pre-reading activities
- use dialogue/pair work/role play etc for language practice
- make and use phonic charts for teaching, reading questions
- identify errors in pupils' written work

### 4.3.2 Mathematics

Almost all the mathematics units concentrate on pedagogical content knowledge, here set out as how to teach the primary mathematics syllabus. The one exception is a unit on the history of numbers. There are no units on lesson planning or scheming. The zonal seminars are devoted to teaching and learning aids which can be bought or made. As in English most of the school-based units are expansions of selected topics already covered, but some new concepts are introduced, using formal language; there seems to be much emphasis on definitions and terminology that the teacher should know, and less on how to make things simple for pupils. There is nothing on the theory of mathematics education.

Almost all the unit objectives in the college period are phrased in terms of what the student will know and be able to teach e.g.

- define subtraction, teach subtraction of numbers with regrouping
- define cash account; teach how to enter transactions and balance the account
- define and classify geometric shapes; teach modelling, naming and drawing geometric shapes.

In the self-study units, the objectives are phrased as: 'should be able to teach .....

### 4.3.3 Science

The first 9 units look at curriculum and general pedagogic knowledge in the context of teaching science; they review lesson planning and scheming, but also discuss the teaching of scientific skills and attitudes, with use of equipment and resources, and safety measures. The rest of the units, by contrast with other main subjects, focus entirely on content knowledge: physics and chemistry during the college period; biology and health education during the school-based period. While the science is clearly intended to be taught at colleges in practical ways that student teachers could later use in primary schools (if they had the resources) there

## 4 The Intended Curriculum

---

are no units on aspects of science education, such as children's misconceptions in science or the development of scientific concepts.

The first nine units combine cognitive objectives with practical ones, so that after stating and explaining a topic the students are expected to do something e.g. write a lesson plan, construct a nature table, improvise some apparatus etc.. In the rest of the units the objectives are all variations on the themes of:

- Explain meanings, applications of .....
- State examples, factors, uses of.....
- Perform activities, on what factors can do.....

### 4.3.4 Foundations Studies

The first part of the residential course is mainly concerned with general pedagogical knowledge, comprising the technical and professional skills of writing lesson plans, formulating objectives, drawing up schemes of work and keeping records, as well as introductions to different kinds of teaching methods and how to improvise and use various kinds of teaching/learning aids. The second part focuses on the knowledge of learners, such as child development and theories of learning, combined in some units with more general pedagogic knowledge, for example, how to handle children with different learning abilities. Four units follow on testing.

Books 4 and 5 are more school-related, focusing on practical concerns, such as management and administration of schools, keeping records, school and the community relationships, professional ethics and conditions of service. Other units look at general pedagogic knowledge, mainly classroom management skills. Information about the classroom tends to be stronger on rhetoric than on reality i.e. saying what 'should' happen in good practice, rather than focussing on problems and how to deal with them. There are no suggestions for carrying out enquiry-based work into one's own classroom.

The zonal seminars deal with administering tests, working with colleagues, and policy matters; the last two suggestions take up the issues of gender, and population and environment, in an apparent nod towards the general objectives.

The specific objectives for each unit are typically phrased to emphasis theoretical rather than practical knowledge, even when skills are involved e.g. in studying learners students shall be able to:

- define intelligence, maturation, individual difference, motivation etc
- state how each factor of x influences y
- explain uses of concepts like transfer, discovery, concept learning in the learning process

## 4 The Intended Curriculum

- discuss child development etc how learning takes place, aspects of child development, what children at certain stage can do etc, how to handle children with learning difficulties

Only in the unit on resources are trainees asked actually to make things. Even the units on tests are phrased as: ‘explain/describe the types, purposes, advantages, and ways of constructing tests’, rather than in terms of designing exemplars. Such objectives can all be achieved on a formal level, through learning by rote the information given in the text. The relationship between theory and practice seems rather tenuous. It is left to the trainees to bring the two together.

### 4.4 Assessment

The official documentation states that candidates will be awarded a certificate if they pass English, Mathematics, Science and Health Education, Foundation Studies and Teaching Practice plus one other subject from Category A (General Studies, Agriculture, Chichewa and Home Economics) and one from Category B (Music, PE, Creative Arts, R.E). A formal written assessment is set by MANEB and marked by tutors under their guidance. The regulations are set out below:

Table 4.2: Assessment

Timing	Method	Weighting	Comment
End of residential block	Written examinations in all subjects	25%	
During school-based	12 assignments (1 per subject) In Category B subjects: 4 projects	15%	Grades include course work assignments, projects and TP
End of course	Final exams in main and category A subjects	60%	

A Teaching Practice (TP) grade is given during the residential block, for a lesson taught in the demonstration school, but the main grade is given during the field-based part of the course. A moderation team from different TTCs including staff from MANEB and TDU visit a sample of trainees to check consistency in TP grades.

Within each unit in the Handbooks there are short questions, designed to check recall and understanding. At the end of each unit there is a unit assessment which according to the writers’ guide lines should comprise an activity for each of the unit objectives, though this is not carried out for all the units. No other guideline is given to tutors for checking students’ on-going learning. In the self-study units there are similar short assessment exercises, with answers given at the end. No reference is made to the MANEB-set assignments and projects to be done during this time.

## 4 The Intended Curriculum

---

Principals and tutors in the colleges indicated that there was no assessment policy either at the departmental or institutional level. Examinations Committees existed but under MIITEP they do not seem to function. Tutors are not required to keep any progress records for students. This seems a serious omission and calls into question the quality of the implementation of the course.

### 4.5 Observations on the curriculum strategy and its coherence

A number of points stand out from this discussion and the more extensive analysis included in various MUSTER background Discussion Papers. In summary these include:

First, the Handbooks for trainees are a central feature of MIITEP: they set out the objectives, contain most of the content, structure the pedagogy and constitute the main teaching/learning resource. Academic assessment is based on the Handbooks. There is a major discrepancy between the progressive philosophy expressed in some of the general aims, and the more traditional approach that is apparent in many of the units. Overall, MIITEP advocates student-centred and participatory learning methods that should produce an innovative, 'progressive' and professional teacher. This contrasts with the tight behavioural objectives, and the closed, didactic nature of much of the learning material.

Second, the place of subject content knowledge in this programme is ambiguous. There is little in the general aims and objectives about teachers having a good understanding of their subject, yet students clearly need upgrading in order to feel confident in the classroom. Analysis shows up important differences between subject areas in this respect. In English students are taught a series of pedagogic skills fitted around the primary English syllabus, while in science they are taught mainly subject content. In maths the two are taught together. There is confusion here.

Third, the aims and general objectives which set out the 'progressive vision' of MIITEP are poorly reflected in the assessment patterns as a whole. The written exams and assignments are closely matched to the content of the Handbooks and set up to test the kinds of lower level skills mentioned in the specific objectives. The exams test mainly recall, since many of the comprehension and application questions can be answered by memorising the examples given in the Handbooks. The emphasis on innovation and on learner-centred attitudes and skills is ignored, in spite of the 20 months school-based training which could have been used to develop and assess these through different kinds of project and portfolio work. The Teaching Practice grades form an almost invisible part of the assessment, being subsumed within the 15% of marks given to coursework. It seems paradoxical that the exams attempt to test pedagogic knowledge and skills, while the school-based assignments test subject content knowledge: the reverse would seem more appropriate.



---

## 4 The Intended Curriculum

---

Fourth, in a wider context other mismatches appear. The course was designed for MSCE holders and has not been adapted to the needs of those with only JCE. In view of the school-based period, when assignments have to be done at a distance, students should have been prepared extensively for self-study and independent learning, but this is not built into any part of the course.

Fifth, the curriculum in shape and content differs little from that formerly taught in the colleges to school-leavers with no teaching experience, yet the MIITEP students have all taught, often for extended periods. The curriculum does not recognise this and often seems to be treating the students as ‘empty vessels’ into which knowledge must be poured. The course tries to cover nearly as much material as previous programmes, much of it during the 3-month residential block. This seems unrealistic.

Sixth, there appear to be omissions of important issues in the curriculum despite the fact that it is currently overloaded. The most obvious of these include concerted attention to study skills, communication skills (especially in relation to young pupils), basic English (given that many have poor competence in the medium of instruction), gender, and how to manage large classes of 70 or more with few resources (the reality for most newly qualified teachers).

Finally, the change to school-based training remains at the level of rhetoric. Significantly, the colleges have tried to retain an element of the traditional ‘teaching practice’ within the residential block, even though time is so limited that this gives little opportunity for real skill development. In a school-based course, this aspect should be handled entirely at the school level, yet such a shift of emphasis is not reflected in the curriculum as a whole, especially in the assessment weighting. As we will see there seems little confidence amongst key stakeholders that most schools can support and deliver effective training. If so, a school-based approach needs careful consideration as to how it can meet the needs of trainees.

We now move to consider learning and teaching in the College-based elements of MIITEP.



## Chapter Five

**5 Teaching in the College Classroom**

This chapter offers some illustrations of how the curriculum was actually delivered, based on observations of lessons in two colleges in four core subjects. It shows how tutors used the textbook, exemplifies typical interaction sequences, and highlights some aspects of teaching and learning that went on in the colleges. Some illustrative examples of lesson analysis are given in the text; Stuart and Kunje (2000) contains more detailed analysis.

## 5.1 English

We selected four English tutors for observation, two from each college. At St. Joseph's we were invited to observe a further English lesson, making five in all. All the English Units in the Handbooks focus on teaching the students methods and skills: the how to rather than the what. In Shulman's (1987) terms, there is little knowledge base involved, apart from some knowledge of the primary school curriculum. The Units are structured around teaching these skills. The pedagogy involves explanation, discussion, demonstration, role-play, and other student activities, usually in groups. The classroom interaction is almost all oral and there is very little reading or writing either suggested or carried out.

One of the lessons we observed was on 'different kinds of questioning'. It was the only one we saw where the tutor had made the students prepare beforehand. An introductory sequence reviewed 'comprehension questions' and followed the material given in the Handbook closely. Trainees were engaged in a whole class question and answer session about the different kinds of questions they could ask of school pupils. Questions were either answered by individuals or in chorus with single word or short phrases repeated from the Handbook. After this the lecturer arranged for two groups to perform short role-plays demonstrating the use of different kinds of questions to a primary class. Unusually the lecturer then departed from the text and spent the last ten minutes explaining a structured way of 'teaching spelling and dictation'. He told the students although it was not in the Handbook it was a useful strategy. Unfortunately he had to go very fast and although it provoked some questions from students there was no time to discuss them. This lecturer had been a tutor for many years, and both the role-play and this last topic probably came from his own repertoire of teaching approaches. This lesson departed more than any of the others observed from a fairly standard lecturing pattern.

A second lesson observed was on reading skills. This involved four classes which were combined in a large hall because of staff shortages, making a group of over a hundred. Having listed the six reading skills given in the Handbook, the lecturer demonstrated three of them, playing a teacher's role and calling on students to act as the pupils. Pupil textbooks were handed out, one between 5-6 students. The lesson was fast-paced, and delivered in a lively, humorous manner which kept students' attention. A good number responded, sometimes in chorus, and the tutor tried to alternate between male and female – more men

## 5 Teaching in the College Classroom

---

than women made individual responses even though they were a minority in the class. The lesson was focused entirely on methods, and the implication was that there was only one right way to do things. There was no discussion of the rationale behind the skills, and one hour appeared far too short to comprehend and practise teaching the complex skills discussed.

A third lesson on pre-reading activities was based on material in the Handbook which showed six different kinds of pre-reading activities with full illustrations e.g. matching shapes, jigsaw puzzles. It was suggested students should discuss these and then do certain activities from the Teacher's Guide for Std. 1. However, in this lesson the lecturer interpreted these suggestions in a traditional, transmission style, way. The lesson as delivered consisted almost entirely of the tutor talking, writing definitions, purposes and examples on the board, while the students mainly listened, watched and copied. There were about 25 student responses during the lesson, mainly single words or phrases. The tutor distributed some copies of the Teacher's Guide, but no opportunity was given for students to practise or even talk about the activities. Five minutes was spent explaining the concept of making a jigsaw, using a large picture of a housefly (apparently a biology teaching aid, too valuable to cut up). There were no concrete examples to handle, making it difficult for trainees to understand the concept of a jigsaw puzzle.

In general lecturers commonly started with a recap of the previous lesson, but none reviewed the current lesson at the end, nor used the short exercises in the Handbook to check students' learning. Most lessons ended abruptly without summaries, and without guidance for preparing for the next lesson. There was no evaluation. It was therefore difficult to judge how much students had actually absorbed, whether they understood the rationale behind the methods, and whether they would be able to apply them in a real classroom. Students were seldom invited to link the activities to their own recent teaching experience.

### 5.2 Maths

Four mathematics lessons were observed. In all of these the tutors observed followed the Handbooks closely, trying to combine content knowledge with pedagogic content knowledge. This did not seem to be successfully achieved.

A lesson on 'Introducing Money' in an infant class illustrates many key aspects of the way the curriculum was being delivered. Most of the lesson was a kind of demonstration, whereby trainees were taught as though they were pupils. The dominant mode of interaction was question and (closed) answer, with students giving just one-word responses, though there were also a few coins to handle. Twice trainees were put briefly into groups to carry out some of the pupil activities, such as writing down all the coins that could make up 50 tambala, or doing 'brass rubbings' of coins to show the pictures. The only mention of

## 5 Teaching in the College Classroom

---

pedagogy came in short comments from the tutor, one of which seems to sum up his own theory of teaching:

*Put pupils into groups to write the amounts until you are convinced they can do it. If you demonstrate first, the pupils will be able to do it.*

In a similar way, the tutor apparently believed that through his demonstrations, the student teachers were learning to teach the topic.

By treating the students as ‘empty vessels’ the tutor appeared to be modelling for them a recommended approach to pupils. Most of the students there must have taught this topic from the primary curriculum, but the tutor took them straight through the whole unit, without asking them about how they had done it, nor what problems they had encountered. Equally, the tutor did not suggest how they might find out whether the pupils were used to handling coins - which is likely at least in urban areas.

This lesson also showed how knowledge is ‘packaged’ into different subjects. The exercises involved writing as well as addition, but no link was made to language development, though there were units in English about matching and recognising patterns which were relevant to this topic. The last sequence also indicated a weak grasp of broader issues. The tutor showed a cartoon with the caption ‘some people think money is the most important thing in the world’. This was included in the learning material to provoke a discussion about values. However, the question and answer that followed involved chorus responses ‘why is money important’ – ‘It makes people happy’; ‘To be healthy you need?’ – ‘money’; ‘To have job satisfaction as a teacher you need?’ ‘money’; ‘For a baby to grow you need?’ – ‘money’; ‘People say that money is the most important thing there is. Is that true?’ ‘Yes’. The point seem to have been missed.

Two lessons were observed on ‘Cash Accounts’. These demonstrated some of the limits and opportunities of the text in the hands of teachers with different approaches. The first lesson was very teacher-centred. Almost half the time was spent explaining. Most of the remainder of the time involved writing on the board, reading from the Handbook, or posing questions to which there was an expected right answer. Student activity was limited to responding - either individually or in chorus - copying from the board or looking at the text. By contrast, the second lesson was more varied and involved the students much more; at four different stages they were asked to write or discuss something, thus ensuring a degree of activity, while the tutor circulated, watching, listening and supervising. Questioning encouraged the students to produce non-standard responses - such as ‘begging, stealing’ for ways of getting money - which were then discussed. The tutor dissuaded trainees from getting answers from the Handbook while they worked through the exercise. This tutor was one of the few to address students by name and to use groupwork effectively.

## 5 Teaching in the College Classroom

---

### 5.3 Science

We observed three physics lessons and one home economics lesson, which was taught by a member of the science department.

In the physics lessons, which were broadly similar, the students were mainly involved in watching the demonstrations, carrying out experiments and listening to explanations. The physics lessons - on heat transfer, pulleys and light - all followed the outline given in the Handbooks as closely as they could, given the lack of equipment. In the lesson on pulleys there were sufficient materials for four groups of students to carry out one experiment. Experiments on heat transfer were mostly demonstrated by the tutor; even when group work was arranged. There were only two beakers and burners among 50 students, so most had to watch passively. It was even doubtful whether they could all see what was happening. There was no lab technician to prepare materials, most of which came from the tutor's home.

Considerable time was spent in these lessons on just moving about the laboratories or waiting for tutors to set up apparatus. Of concern was the absence of discussion amongst the students in the groups on what they were doing. When a tutor included an experiment that was not in the book, it aroused a lot of interest. The lesson was lively, and most of the students seemed to understand the main ideas, though they were not asked to write down their own summaries of the experiments. Typically, the students participated but did not initiate any debate or activity and nor was opportunity for debate provided by the tutors. The learning situation apparently demanded little mental involvement. Tutors explained and instructed. The students listened, did what they were told and waited when they were not engaged.

One of the Handbook activities done by the students involved a misconception that the tutor did not challenge. The students had to pass a board-duster from one to another, to demonstrate how energy is passed on from one molecule to another. In such a model the molecule which initially had energy would be left with no energy after the transfer, but the tutor did not explore this.

As mentioned earlier, the science units were aimed at teaching scientific knowledge, rather than showing the students how to teach primary science. The tutors did mention in passing certain aspects of classroom practice, such as safety measures, or how to involve a school class, but there was no deliberate preparation for science teaching, either through practising of skills or through discussion of how children learn science.

## 5 Teaching in the College Classroom

---

### 5.4 Foundation Studies

We observed four lessons, two in each college. Although they covered different topics, they all used group work in different ways, and can be compared pedagogically.

Part of the Foundation Studies syllabus focuses on ‘knowledge of learners and their characteristics’. The suggested pedagogy includes group and class discussions; and occasionally students are asked to write their own notes. The units are structured around topics, which mainly comprise lists of definitions and theoretical facts. In spite of the rhetoric about eliciting students’ ideas, the Handbook’s assumption here seems to reflect a contradictory transmission style.

For example, rather than asking students to come up with their own ideas before referring to the text, one tutor went through the text with the students, explaining the points. But when the tutor wrote on the board the stages were labelled differently from the headings in the book, which may have confused students. This lesson illustrated well the tutor’s apparent reluctance to draw on the students’ own lived experience and practical knowledge, and the consequent divorce of theory from practice. Talking about young children, he said at one point: ‘You as mothers know ...’ but then he told them what in theory they should know rather than eliciting their own practical knowledge. The style was to follow the text closely. In this case assertions that the young child ‘is ego-centric, engages in solitary play’, derived from studies in other cultures, were not questioned. Similarly ‘Children ask a lot of questions’ also passed without comment – yet this may not be a universal attribute across all cultures with different traditions. This could have offered an opportunity to discuss aspects of the child-centred pedagogy MIITEP promotes, and its appropriateness in different cultural contexts. It appeared that in this lesson theory was being taught for its own sake, quite divorced from the real world of the classroom.

One tutor was able to adapt the material to a more participatory approach and produced a rather different kind of lesson, albeit on a more practical topic, with the objective: ‘to identify and discuss different kinds of intellectual learning difficulties and describe how to handle such children’. The unit itself was well-focused and short enough to be covered in an hour; the lesson followed the structure suggested in the Handbook quite closely, including group work. The class appeared familiar with group work and participated well in the discussion. During the group leaders’ reports, the tutor probed, and encouraged other students to reply, leading to cross-group discussion. This lesson was the closest that we observed to the ‘participatory’ mode espoused by the Handbook. At the very end of the lesson, the students were beginning to talk about their own experience, and to ask questions based on it, which shows that, with different handling, a dialogue might be established.

## 5 Teaching in the College Classroom

---

### 5.5 College Teaching Practice

Teaching practice is given two hours every week on the residential course timetable. Students go to the nearby demonstration school(s) to practise teaching and in some cases pupils also come to the college.

Tutors give each student a topic in a given subject in a particular grade to prepare. (Only grades 1 to 7 are used, since grade 8 is an examination year.) The student then consults the teacher in charge of that grade to organise teaching and learning materials such as teacher's guides and textbooks. Each group of students visit a classroom together and observe each other teach. The tutor responsible for each group is supposed to supervise at most four students in one session of two hours. So at the end of the teaching practice each student will have observed at least nine colleagues teach different subjects in different grades, and will themselves have taught one or possibly two 30-minute periods.

After each two-hour session the group returns to the college and discusses together with their tutor the strong points and the weak points of each lesson. The tutor awards a grade to each of the students who taught that day. The assessment instrument uses a traditional observation form (see Chapter 7, Figure 4) with 25 different skills or aspects of the lesson to mark on a range of 0-4. The marks are then converted into grades A to E, where A is the highest and E is the lowest grade; generally students get high grades of B or above. Only very few get grades below C-, which is designated as 'fair'.

Teaching practice at the college is fraught with problems. First, the schools and college calendars are not synchronized, which cuts the number of weeks available. This means that a student is given a grade from one teaching session only. Sometimes these grades are given by school teachers who are not trained to do so. Tutors agree that this practice is ineffective because there is no micro-teaching or peer teaching to adequately prepare the students for the task. The grade given during this teaching practice does not carry much weight towards the final grade of the student. It is only counted in the event of a student failing teaching practice during the school-based component. As a result this activity is not taken seriously and hence some tutors decide to leave the task of supervising to school teachers. In addition the classes used in the schools are small and have adequate equipment while in reality the students will teach overcrowded classes with a few teaching/learning aids. Data on trainees' schools (Kunje and Lewin 2000) show that only 18% of the students had been in schools where there were enough classrooms for more than two-thirds of the pupils. In 44% of the cases the students were teaching in schools with pupil-teacher ratios above 1:60. Only 15% had been teaching in school where pupil-teacher ratios were below 1:40.

Discussions after each session do provide opportunities for students to look critically at their own practice. In addition each student observes nine other students teach, providing



## 5 Teaching in the College Classroom

---

opportunities to learn from others. However the discussions that follow appear to be low key with very little participation from most students and a limited amount of analysis from tutors. Nevertheless, feedback from students indicates that this brief teaching practice is valued.

### 5.6 Final revision block

During this period the timetable and organisation was similar to that during the first residential block. Departments drew up lists of topics they considered needed revision, based partly on what had not been fully covered earlier. Since few zonal seminars had taken place for this cohort, there was too much to cover in the allotted time. Teaching styles appeared to be similar to those used during the first residential period, but with a focus on getting through material likely to be examined. The internal TP at the demonstration schools continued to take place one morning a week. This was for students who had not been given a TP grade while in the schools.

Whilst observing these activities it became clear that female students who had babies were particularly disadvantaged because they were not allowed to live in the hostels. They had to find lodging outside, and commute to and from college. These added burdens consumed part of their revision time. In cohort 2, some 30-40 women were in this position. The message about equal opportunities did not seem to have reached the college administration.

### 5.7 Concluding discussion

From these observations we can see that while the subjects are taught very much as set out in the Handbooks, individual tutors can and do adapt the 'units' to their own personal practice and style. However, they seldom depart far from the actual content - even when it is shallow or misleading - but some make more effort to get closer to the espoused participatory approach than others.

The classroom's eye view raises some new questions concerning the way teaching was organised.

First, there is too much material to cover, and tutors tended to try to cover all the units rather than ensure the students had fully understood. To make matters worse, many lessons started late due to slow movement of students between rooms. Some tutors, especially at St. Joseph's, gave extra classes in the evenings to try to catch up.

Second, many classes were doubled up creating groups of 80 or more. This has to be seen against average lecturers' teaching loads of between 8 and 12 periods per week. Smaller classes would have made interactive teaching easier.

## 5 Teaching in the College Classroom

---

Third, in the case where students had been told to prepare for the lesson, the proceedings were much livelier. There was certainly scope for lecturers to plan ahead more frequently and set tasks for trainees in advance of teaching so they could come to class prepared to participate in debate and discussion. In such residential settings, the evenings were available for study. However, the libraries were closed at that time, and students seemed to lack study skills.

Fourth, the overall impression was that the college-based programme was predominantly about transmitting knowledge, rather than facilitating professional learning through reflection on theory and practice. There was almost no encouragement for students to argue or challenge. The knowledge which was accorded high status was that found in books or given by tutors, while personal practical knowledge, was devalued. Tutors appeared to treat the mature trainees as ‘empty vessels’. They neither used nor valued the students’ years of teaching, or indeed their experiences as citizens and parents. Both tutors and students shared this view, so to that extent there was a consistency of expectations. The section in the Teacher Trainers Source Book about principles of Adult Learning, stressing ways of respecting and building on prior learning, seemed largely ignored.

Fifth, there may be several reasons for the lack of attention to trainees’ experience as well as the shortage of time. Most tutors felt that trainees’ experience was of little use; students themselves believed they had come to learn the ‘right way to teach’; and they found it difficult to analyse their experiences and discuss them meaningfully, especially in a foreign language.

Sixth, the overall resemblance of college work to traditional secondary school teaching was noticeable, and may reflect many tutors’ training and experience. Methods used were mainly exposition by the tutor intermingled with question-and-answer sessions, with some rudimentary group work. Questions were generally low-level and often closed; students would answer in one word, sometimes in chorus. Some tutors gave students notes. Continuous assessment, such as it was, took the form of exercises or tests rather than essay or project work.

Finally, much of the teaching appeared exam-driven, with students and tutors evidencing more concern about passing these hurdles than about teaching better when they returned to school. Even the teaching practice sessions seemed more concerned about grades than about learning new methods.

The next chapter considers evidence from the school-based elements of MIITEP.

## 6 The Curriculum as Implemented During School Based Training

### Chapter Six

This chapter reports the findings of our study on the activities of MIITEP during school-based training. The focus was on the support the schools rendered to the students to enable them to acquire teaching skills and at the same time prepare for their final examinations. Specifically the chapter reports on the school enabling conditions, supervision carried out by head teachers, PEAs and college tutors, zonal meetings and the distance education mode. The aggregated experiences by students, head teachers, PEAs and tutors in their various tasks are then considered to give an indication of how school-based training has impinged upon students' learning.

#### 6.1 School support

The Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Programme (MIITEP) assumes that the school will provide enough support to enable the student teacher to acquire the practical knowledge and skills needed to become an effective teacher during school-based practice. Student teachers spend 20 of the 24 months of training in the school. They are expected to fulfil a number of activities as part of the training. This includes teaching, writing projects and assignments and attending zonal workshops. At the same time the school is expected to provide a conducive environment for training. The head teacher has the responsibility of initiating workshops where all matters concerning the problems of the students can be discussed for the benefit of the students.

The school is supposed to provide teaching and learning materials, such as chalkboards and teachers' guides, so that the students can gain experience of using them and learn how to make the most out of the available materials. Qualified teachers at the school are the most vital training resource at the school and therefore are expected to take a major role in the training processes. According to TDU (1996)

*... Experienced teachers are expected to assist the students in their day to day work whenever possible. Some experienced teachers may be assigned by the head to supervise the teaching of some MIITEP students in the school.*

The reality on the ground is very different. Untrained teachers are often in schools with few trained teachers. Our data indicates that about two-thirds of untrained teachers are located in schools which have more than 50% untrained teachers. 2% are where there are no trained teachers, 23% where there are 1 or 2, and 39% where there are 3-5 trained teachers. Looked at another way 13% are in schools where more than 80% of teachers are untrained, and 48% where more than 60% are untrained. Only 5% are in schools where there are less than 20% untrained staff.

## **6 The Curriculum as Implemented During School Based Training**

In addition, for the school to offer any kind of support to students the head teacher and the qualified teachers needed to appreciate how crucial their roles were in the programme. Several workshops and seminars were organised at the outset of the programme to sensitise the head and their deputies to the philosophy underlying school-based support to students. A national training programme for heads was later developed under the Malawi Schools Support System Project (MSSSP), which included ways of supervising trainees.

### **6.2 Teaching and learning materials**

Our data indicates that many of the schools lack adequate teaching and learning materials to support students and other teachers in their work. Basic materials like teachers' guides, chart paper and pens were lacking in most schools in the sample we visited. Some students were even without the right Handbooks for some months during the school-based period. The students had to learn how to 'scrounge' whatever materials were required - a useful skill but not one for which they were prepared. This set them asking around trying hard to acquire teaching materials from unexpected quarters. When they were unsuccessful they went ahead and taught without teaching and learning aids. On a positive note it can be said that the dire conditions in the schools compelled them to learn to be resourceful.

Head teachers generally found themselves unable to do anything about the lack of teaching materials in the schools; this was one of the elements which frustrated and undermined their ability to support training at the school level. Most head teachers felt the need to be seen to be doing something about teaching and learning materials but indicated that this was beyond their capacity. The result was that their commitment varied, as they saw themselves as having little power to take remedial measures.

The problem of teaching resources can be seen as falling into two parts: those that are an essential minimum e.g. teachers guides, student Handbooks, text books, syllabuses, basic classroom equipment; and those that are desirable e.g. additional reading material, non-essential consumables, models. The former are difficult to substitute and would seem to be necessary for systematic support. The latter may be improvised or worked around. Teacher Development Centres (TDCs) could help provide examples of what it is possible to do with few resources.

### **6.3 Class partners**

Staffing conditions at the schools was also one of the factors determining how much the schools could organise support from qualified teachers. In six out of thirteen schools visited, untrained teachers outnumbered qualified teachers. The conditions at the schools were such that it was possible in theory to provide different forms of support from the qualified teachers. However this proved difficult to realise because of the inability or unwillingness of

## **6 The Curriculum as Implemented During School Based Training**

most heads teachers to organise support systematically. In all but one school, teachers were paired i.e. two classes of the same grade were combined to make one larger class with two teachers. However the pairing was organised to reduce the load of all the teachers so that instead of teaching 45 periods per week, they had half or less of a teaching load, depending on the number of teachers per class. This clearly was not a training strategy to benefit the students. The partner was not obliged to stay on in the classroom while the student was teaching and vice versa. That is why most students were paired at random either with qualified teachers or fellow students.

There were some benefits from the lighter teaching loads resulting from pairing. Firstly, the students had time to concentrate on other MIITEP activities such as reading, and writing assignments and projects. Secondly, they had time to reflect on the day's work and had more time for planning the next day's work. Thirdly, taking into account the resource constraints, the students had more time to search for the teaching/learning aids which they needed. Teaching half a load also gave the students the opportunity to mark pupils' work and cope with the large numbers of pupils involved, and time to observe their partners teach. This could help gain practical skills and improve their class management. A final advantage accruing from pairing teachers in a class was that students were able to choose which subjects they wanted to teach first so that after gaining confidence they could switch to the remaining subjects. Students were teaching 4 to 5 subjects out of a possible 9. This arrangement allows a student to learn how to teach in phases drawing from the experiences of other teachers. However in schools where pairing was not possible because of low staffing levels students had to teach full loads.

Different students were experiencing different classroom conditions. In general not much had been organised to maximise their learning. Potentially, opportunities existed for qualified teachers to observe students or students to observe the other teachers and discuss classroom issues but little was done in this area. It appears students, qualified teachers and head teachers were not sufficiently knowledgeable on how best the existing classroom setting could be utilised to benefit the student. Part of the problem seemed to be that the respective roles of students and qualified teachers were not clear and that supportive trainer-student relationships arose more by chance than design. Though it was possible for class partners to arrange their own programme of support without waiting for the head to institute a school-wide approach, this did not seem to happen very much. Croft's study discusses in more detail how trainees can be supported when they team-teach with a qualified teacher. (Croft, 2002).

### **6.4 Class allocation and school-based workshops**

The pattern of class allocation is important in facilitating the training of students in school. The TDU recommended that students should be given the junior section and not the infant

## **6 The Curriculum as Implemented During School Based Training**

or senior sections. The idea was to let students handle classes where neither class management nor content would be too difficult for them. Class management is assumed to be most difficult in the large classes found in the infant section, and content increasingly complex in the senior section. However staffing conditions did not permit head teachers to confine students to grades 3 – 5. The head teachers claimed they allocate students to classes according to the competence of the teachers, interest and other prevailing conditions in the same way as for qualified teachers.

Although heads were aware of the guidelines on class allocation, consideration of other factors often prevented them from acting according to the suggestions. In situations where students greatly outnumbered qualified teachers it was not possible to concentrate all students in the junior section only. The head teachers then tended to have the final say as to who was to be allocated to particular classes without consultation with the students.

Only two schools in the sample had conducted any workshops aimed at helping students during the term. In the other cases the head teachers said they had done something like this in the past but not in the present school session. Head teachers claimed there was too much work and too many students; they preferred to talk to individuals informally, focusing on the problems of the individuals. Organising activities for students was regarded as extra work as long as these required the head teachers' physical presence.

Table 6.1 gives a summary of pairing, class allocation and workshop activity in the sample schools.

In sum the table shows that only in one school was there no pairing of teachers. This was mainly because the school was a junior school where staffing could only allow one teacher per class. In the other schools staffing levels were such that teachers could be paired. The pairing was done at random in almost all the schools without regard to whether one was an untrained teacher or the other was a trained teacher. Most head teachers seemed to dictate where a teacher was going to teach without discussion. Those who did discuss also seemed to be those who were also able to organise workshops for the students.

### **6.5 School management**

One area where the schools did better in training students was on management issues. In all the schools, students were given responsibilities in the various school committees. Some headed and others belonged to committees such as examination committees, discipline committees, sports committees, grounds and labour committees and even school development committees. In these groups students were able to learn the realities of running a school from different aspects. At one of the schools a student was acting as an advisor to the head teacher. Firstly the student was quite articulate in the English language and in his

## 6 The Curriculum as Implemented During School Based Training

Table 6.1: Mode of Support

Schools	Untrained- Untrained Pairing	Qualified- Untrained Pairing	Random Pairing	No Pairing	Class Allocation Agreed	Workshops
1 Ntenjera			✓			
2 Chiraweni			✓			
3 Mbayani			✓		✓	✓
4 Naotcha		✓				
5 Malimba			✓			
6 Pamdule		✓			✓	✓
7 Thanga			✓			
8 Kap 1			✓			
9 Kap 2			✓			
10 Dedza	✓		✓			
11 Linthipe		✓				
12 Kakolo				✓	✓	
13 Mtonya			✓			

presentations. Secondly the student had stayed at the school for six years teaching in a senior class. Thirdly the head teacher was new at the school and therefore needed old hands to help her get a feel for the school culture. The head had, for example, asked the student to design and display all the information posters in the head teacher's office and he was consulted on student teacher issues.

In some schools students were asked to conduct assemblies for the whole school. This involvement gave students first-hand experience on how to go about the day-to-day management of schools. In this regard, school-based training was seen to make a positive contribution to the overall preparation of the teacher under MIITEP. However it should be borne in mind that this support was not offered as a deliberate training strategy but rather as a way of easing pressure on all the teachers by distributing duties evenly.

There are examples of students who have been accepted in the local communities and given various responsibilities. Some students worked as church choir masters, church elders, sports coaches for community sports teams and in other capacities. Such kinds of experience provided a basis for learning how to establish relations between schools and communities.

Students' records gave an indication of what they were doing in addition to the teaching itself. We found that the students had files and notebooks in which they were keeping track of what they were doing in their teaching. Most students had time-tables which indicated the class and the subjects they were teaching. We also had occasion to inspect their schemes of work, lesson plans, progress records, attendance registers, seating plans, and daily diaries.

## **6 The Curriculum as Implemented During School Based Training**

Of all these records only the daily diaries were not attended to satisfactorily.

In sum the students were kept busy teaching and attending to school matters. There was not much time to do college assignments at the school. Very few were treated as students or seen to require the schools' attention to improve their teaching. Apart from occasional supervision by the head and others, students had to survive on their own in the classroom, learning as they went.

### **6.6 Supervision by head teachers**

Under MIITEP head teachers are expected to organise enabling conditions for student teachers, and supervise each student four times a week with the help of qualified teachers. Our visits to the schools showed that the head teachers are aware that they needed to help untrained teachers but what they actually managed to do did not seem to satisfy the needs of the students.

All except one had been oriented into the requirements of MIITEP by both TDU and PEAs. Half of the head teachers had set up a supervision timetable. Almost all also solicited the help of deputy heads and other senior teachers in the task. However, when we visited the schools in the middle of the term most heads had not yet started supervising the students as per the timetable. They claimed they had supervised cohort 1 and 2 in the previous term but had not yet done so for the other cohorts. One head teacher said

*We have not supervised any cohort this term but now that cohort 3 is going for revision and final examinations we will get to them.*

This is an indication that this task is seen as a fulfilment of a requirement without regard to what supervision is supposed to achieve. The head teachers supervise formally at the end of the school-based period, meaning that the student is not given time to use what the head teachers have discussed.

Most heads only managed to visit each student once or twice in the term, yet according to TDU, head teachers, deputy head teachers and other teachers were expected to visit each student four periods a week. Clearly this was not happening according to plan. Perhaps the demand was unrealistic. If we take the example of one of the schools with five qualified teachers and ten students it means that forty periods per week were to be devoted to supervising students and at the same time these teachers had other classes to attend to.

Such activity needed careful planning as well as commitment on the part of qualified teachers in order for it to work well. In one school visited as part of a separate MUSTER study, the head teacher had found that using the official observation forms was cumbersome, but had



## **6 The Curriculum as Implemented During School Based Training**

given each trainee their own supervision book, where comments were noted fairly regularly (Croft, personal communication). In other places, it seems, head teachers drew up plans but many did not fulfil them. At that stage of the project there was no penalty for not carrying out MIITEP work properly.

### **6.7 External supervision by PEAs**

Apart from head teachers, PEAs were the key players in student supervision as they were in close proximity to schools. According to the TDU (1996), PEAs are expected to orient and advise head teachers in the activities of MIITEP, supervise students in schools by identifying weaknesses and providing steps for remedy, assist students in preparing teaching/learning aids and keep track of students' progress. PEAs are also expected to visit each student in his/her zone at least twice a month. But this seems to be a daunting task for PEAs considering that they (PEAs) have other duties to perform besides MIITEP tasks. These include supervising qualified teachers, inspecting schools, maintaining Teacher Resource Centres and organising in-service seminars for both head teachers and qualified teachers. Apart from these tasks PEAs are requested from time to time to attend workshops and seminars e.g. AIDS, gender, environmental issues etc. which are not always scheduled well in advance. So supervising each student twice a month seems difficult to achieve, given the large numbers in each zone.

Only in one school did we discern evidence of real supervision. There were three PEAs in this zone and they had visited the school three times. Each time they were drawing attention to specific areas and also making reference to previous discussions. In this particular case the PEAs never gave a grade but promised to come another time to assess.

Most students were awarded very high marks and only very few were awarded low grades. None of the students in our sample had been given a failing grade, as was apparent when we worked together with the PEAs to collect data on classroom performance. This is borne out by the overall grades given in the end-of-course examinations in teaching practice for cohort 1. Most students (>60%) got grade B, which designates very good performance and only one person per college in the cohort was given a failing grade.

We also came across conflicting advice given by PEAs, tutors and heads. PEAs advised students to work together and help each other but the head teachers said each one should work alone especially on marking pupils' work. In college, tutors told all students not to indicate the particular learning tasks in detail in schemes of work, while PEAs said they should write down the examples they were to use. At the school level students follow what the PEAs tell them. Some of these conflicts may emanate from what the Ministry asks the PEAs to do during workshops, basing their advice on the practicality of the issue. Tutors may perhaps be less concerned with practical realities.

## **6 The Curriculum as Implemented During School Based Training**

An important point to note is that students regard all supervision visits as important and beneficial. They wait for long periods without such visits and therefore welcome and cherish any supervision as long as they are guided and given a grade which ensures a contribution toward a final mark. A visit is also evidence that they are still remembered by MIITEP after they have left the college.

### **6.8 External supervision by college tutors**

Under MIITEP tutors are expected to visit every student teacher at least 5 times during the 5 terms of school-based training. During these visits they are supposed to observe and then assess the student teachers' performance. This means that every tutor needs to visit each student once per term. If we take the case of one college as an example, there were 20 tutors and 300 students. This means a tutor needs to set aside up to 15 days in the term to be able to visit all the students assigned to him or her for one cohort. If the students are scattered across distant schools as is often the case, then more days are likely to be needed. Under MIITEP there was no clear indication as to when during the course the tutors would go for the supervision or how this could be fitted in with teaching and other obligations.

The proposed supervision regime is simply untenable. Cohorts are enrolled sequentially. While one cohort is in college up to five cohorts are in school. If all are to be visited then up to 75 visits a term would be required.

According to TDU guidelines (1996), and the tutors' perspective, supervision is taken to mean that tutors work formatively with their student teachers. Among other things they are supposed to observe their student teachers teach, note strong and weak points in the lesson and then suggest ways the student can improve the weak areas. They are supposed to help the students in class management, organisational skills, preparation and use of teaching and learning materials, and writing schemes of work and lesson plans. These tutors are supposed to sit down with their students and discuss any problems which they (students) may be facing in the course of their training such as the lack of teachers' guides, paper etc. and they should endeavour to provide such materials to students. In other words the tutors are supposed to provide academic/professional, material and moral support to the students, some of whom are located in very remote areas. In order to carry out such demanding tasks effectively it is recommended that tutors spend the whole day at a school.

As noted above not all students can be visited at the frequency intended. The number of visits needed is simply too large. Even with a greatly reduced schedule that might be practical, several factors militate against this happening. Most obviously logistics are a serious problem because of the widely dispersed placement of students, the inadequate number of vehicles, and the costs which can easily exceed all other teaching costs. The college supervision regime has to be re-examined and reshaped into a manageable programme.

## **6 The Curriculum as Implemented During School Based Training**

Alternatively school-based supervision should become the complete responsibility of PEAs and/or heads and college-based supervision should be abandoned. Other ways would have to be found of helping tutors maintain a connection with the contemporary situation in primary schools.<sup>8</sup>

### **6.9 Zonal workshops**

Each cohort was expected to attend 12 zonal workshops and PEAs were charged with the task of organising these and acting as facilitators. These workshops were meant to provide opportunities for students to continue studying the curriculum as laid out in the student Handbooks. There were specific topics which had been selected to be studied in the workshops. Further, the workshops were also meant to provide opportunities for students and PEAs to look at issues of interest that they experienced during school-based training. The TDU provided a guide as to what topics each workshop should focus on. Each workshop was designed to last one day.

The TDU provided funding for workshops through the Education Development and Management Unit (EDMU). These funds were to be used for transport and meal allowances for students. During one of our visits the TDU had just received and released funds for the third and fourth zonal workshops for cohorts 3 and 4. This was rather disturbing because cohort 3 was due to go back to college for revision and final examinations at this time. This means that there were eight outstanding workshops and less than one month to conduct them before college-based revision and examinations. It was certain that these would not take place. In general we noted that for unknown reasons funding for zonal workshops was slow and irregular, with students attending at most five workshops only during the entire 20 months of school-based training. This greatly undermined the smooth running of MIITEP and complicated the delivery of other activities such as revision and examinations.

The zonal workshops we observed were in keeping with the spirit of MIITEP and participatory methods were used. Thus the methods used to explore the topic 'How to prepare Science and Health Education Charts' involved discussions, group work and presentations by groups. Students used improvised paper such as recycled paper and old calendars for chart paper. Tomato leaves were used to provide green colour and brick soil was used to provide red colour. Students took these materials back to their respective schools. All students interviewed indicated that these workshops were of great value and lamented that there were too few of them. There was anxiety as to what would happen about the topics they had not covered since these were to be included in the final examinations.

---

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that the subsistence allowances received by college tutors during teaching practice supervision formed a significant addition to their low salaries. Without a pay increase to compensate, their commitment to working within such a reformed system might be reduced still further.

## **6 The Curriculum as Implemented During School Based Training**

### **6.10 Assignments and projects**

The distance mode of training consisted of assignments and project write-ups. For each of the 12 subjects there was one assignment. There was also one project write-up per subject in Music, Creative Arts, Religious Education and Physical Education. All the 16 tasks were to be undertaken over 20 months while the students were also involved in teaching and reading, and at the end in preparation for the final course examinations. This activity was termed the 'distance education mode' because the scripts were forwarded to colleges for marking. However, there was no other communication with the colleges to warrant the designation.

During our visit to the schools we enquired about how far the assignments had been done and what assistance they had received from the school environment. Students were expected to find information, synthesise it and present it in a report form. They read different materials in addition to the handbooks. They discussed aspects of the projects with different resource persons at the school and outside the school environment. Priests, government officials, relatives and other persons were consulted. In many cases students worked together, even travelling to other schools to meet with students of the same cohorts. However students in urban areas seemed to have had better access to information than those in rural areas. Students in isolated schools had problems getting assistance from outsiders because resource persons outside the school are rarely found in such areas. Students found the work rather difficult because of lack of information. Music presented the greatest challenge because not much had been covered in college due to lack of music tutors. Despite this most students thought they would get good grades in the assignments and projects.

Another important finding was that the school was not of great help to students in writing the assignments and projects. Apart from assistance given by some qualified teachers in some schools, the schools themselves did not have much to offer. They have no libraries and the few books available were not relevant to the work on hand. Only teachers' guides were mentioned as very useful in some of the write-ups. Students complained of lack of even basic materials such as paper for writing the assignments. Head teachers and qualified teachers were sometimes mentioned as being of assistance. In most cases the qualified teachers were not ready, or willing to assist, saying they were not familiar with the new teacher training programme and the exercises involved. While the school offered little support it was also apparent that preparation for these tasks at college was not adequate. Little guidance had been given on how to source information and how to present their findings. This caused a lot of anxiety among students and as a result students tended to copy each other's work. College tutors reported that most students lost marks because of plagiarism. In some cases the language was so good it was clear others had written the work for the students. One of the reasons for this was perhaps the low levels of articulation in the English language. It was noted that many students presented scanty material, lacking detail because of language

## **6 The Curriculum as Implemented During School Based Training**

problems. As a result most students failed to score the high marks they had expected.

We noted that the nature of the assignments and projects was neither investigative nor drew on the classroom/school experience of the students. Students were merely required to arrive at factual information by way of asking other people or reading extra materials apart from the student Handbooks. Here MIITEP lost the opportunity to train students in research that would deepen their understanding of the theories and teaching methods being advocated in the course. There is a window of opportunity to regain real integration between theory and practice through the design of appropriate assignments and projects.

Another aspect of the distance education mode which emerged strongly in the research was that the home environment was not appropriate for conducting such an academic exercise. Household chores and family issues prevented students from concentrating on MIITEP work. In almost all areas working at night is not easy because of poor lighting facilities. This is more pronounced in rural areas where life is more taxing than in urban areas. Students had to travel long distances to collect information which cost money. Time to work on MIITEP tasks seems to have been a rare resource for most students. The only time they could do this work was during the holidays. Further research is needed to see how far certain groups, such as women with their multiple roles, and those living in remote areas, are disadvantaged by such a mode of distance learning.

### **6.11 Concluding observations**

The first point is that MIITEP's school-based training was implemented without recognising fully the diversity of professional support available in different school settings and the widely different levels of material provision. The MSSSP was not yet in place, many heads could not meet the needs of trainees, and some seemed unwilling to invest significant amounts of time in MIITEP support activities. There were unrealistic expectations of heads, PEAs and tutors of the amount and quality of supervision that could be achieved. Scarcity of materials in schools and at zonal level to support school-based training compounded these problems, as did irregular funding.

Second, MIITEP students are expected to have the basic qualifications and background to develop professionally during the distance phase of the programme. This may be optimistic for some, given what is known about their academic level and the professional cultures of which they are a part. Comments like 'students are lazy or absent themselves at the smallest pretext' maybe signal lack of conviction or commitment by students; but this may also reflect norms within the schools where they are placed. Certainly there was evidence that some schools were unsupportive, though others appeared to do their best to encourage MIITEP trainees. What happened seemed to depend a lot on the extent to which the head took an interest.

## **6 The Curriculum as Implemented During School Based Training**

Third, it is important to remember that the behaviour of students during training is moulded by the way they are assessed. Project work and assignments were often poorly supported and there was little evidence that trainees received constructive feedback on what they did. The assessment regime for the school-based period does not seem to emphasise overall performance in school life and largely ignores such things as co-operation, commitment, leadership, citizenship, sustaining quality learning situations, resourcefulness and reflection. Moreover, some aspects of record keeping and pedagogic development are apparently avoided by excuses like: ‘we have no paper and notebooks to write lesson plans.’

Fourth, essential basic resources like syllabuses, text and reference books are often in short supply or absent. The Handbooks clearly serve as a critical resource and are widely available. Other material is much scarcer. More should be made available to support trainees and their supervisors.

Fifth, although there was an attempt to orient all head teachers on ways of supporting students, there was evidence both that this was insufficient for heads to internalise fully what was expected of them, and for them to see this as a normal aspect of their work. Many heads and deputies did not believe this was part of their job and felt that they were requested to do a lot more work than was reasonable. This compromised the effectiveness of the school-based training and some approached this task of supervision perfunctorily and only towards the end of the course. As a consequence the guidance was hurried and sometimes contradictory. The work of MSSSP and the introduction of TDCs may be changing the situation since they are together creating a more positive work atmosphere for both students and their various supervisors.

Sixth, trainees were often treated like any other teacher, and allocated classes in ways that ignored the MIITEP guidelines. Moreover in a large proportion of schools the number of trained teachers was small, making pairing with trained teachers difficult. Where pairing occurred it was often not characterised by peer observation and support. It was used as a device to reduce teaching loads in some cases, though some good practice was also found.

Seventh, the proposed schedule of supervisory school visits by college tutors is impossible to operate with several MIITEP cohorts enrolled. It is neither logistically or financially sustainable and needs to be radically reconceived, not least because when it does occur it can only be for assessment purposes and not formative guidance.

Eighth, the irregular and untimely disbursement of funds earmarked for particular activities adversely affected MIITEP seriously. The transport for PEAs which was promised was made available one year late and this fuelled disillusionment and helped to throw doubt on the future of the programme. Tutors visited their students once in the 20 months, towards the end of the course, partly because funds were not made available in good time. The tutors,

## **6 The Curriculum as Implemented During School Based Training**

PEAs and head teachers were asked to meet ambitious targets which had resource implications, when resources were not properly identified and when schedules of events had not been properly embedded in the overall structure of the course. The mechanisms for disbursement and accountability clearly did not work smoothly and were a major source of degradation of MIITEP.

Ninth, women students have special needs that are not explicitly recognised in school-based training. Many are expected to look after their families and at the same time attend to training tasks that require great personal effort in the absence of sustained school support. Traditionally Malawian women take on the bulk of family and societal chores and this also applies to female student teachers. Unsupportive school-based training may place women in more difficult circumstances than men. Their home and village life create difficult circumstances for them to engage fully in home study.

Finally, despite these problems pockets of limited success were registered. Zonal meetings were possible in areas where the schools were not far apart. Those who attended seemed to value the opportunity. Visits by some PEAs were regular and supportive. And some school heads clearly took an interest and encouraged other staff to do so too. In these cases commitment, good will and professionalism triumphed over adverse conditions.

Both in college and school-based training are influenced by assessment practices. We now turn to examine these.





## Chapter Seven **7 Patterns of Assessment and Achievement**

An analysis of the written assessment instruments was carried out, using an opportunity sample of final exam papers and project requirements for cohort 1, together with assignment questions for cohorts 1 and 5. As there was no access to marking schemes or example scripts it was difficult to know exactly what kind of answers were required. We looked at the coverage of the syllabus, the cognitive demands made, the extent to which the papers focussed on different domains of knowledge and skills, and finally tried to evaluate the relevance of the instruments to the wider aims and objectives. Data on achievement was analysed from cohort 1 examination results and from some tests devised for this study.

### 7.1 Examinations, assignments and projects

The final exam papers followed a common pattern: one-third of the questions tested subject-specific content knowledge and two-thirds tested pedagogic content knowledge, focussing on methods. Most questions were variations on the short-answer format, requiring the student to write between 1 – 5 lines, worth up to 10 marks, though some subjects required short essays. The cognitive level demanded within the content section was predominantly recall of knowledge or simple comprehension, though in the pedagogic section there were more apparent examples of application, such as ‘draw up a lesson plan on x’. Most of the exams were based very closely on the material in the Handbooks. It appears that the end-of-residential course tests followed a similar pattern.

Students complete one assignment in each of the 12 subjects during their school-based training. The formats are identical insofar as the students have to choose one question out of three. Some subjects opt for a structured essay format in which it is indicated what should be covered and how many marks are given for each point; other subjects set out structured questions. All the topics are covered in the Handbooks, usually but not always in Books 4 and 5; in some subjects all the necessary information is given in the units, so that the student only has to copy or paraphrase the text; in others they need to look more widely through the Handbooks and/or consult documents relating to the primary school curriculum; occasionally they would need other library sources. In most subjects the focus is on content rather than pedagogic knowledge. Overall the cognitive demands appear to be low, requiring students to find and report information at a fairly simple level of comprehension, with some application where pedagogical knowledge is being tested.

In four subjects - Creative Arts, Music, Physical Education and Religious Education - the terminal exam is replaced by a project, carried out during the school-based training period. These projects follow a similar format: students choose one option out of three and write an 8 – 10 page report on it, following detailed guidelines on both content and structure.

Analysis of the projects produced some rather unexpected results. In some ways these appear far more demanding than terminal exams, requiring a wide variety of physical and cognitive

## **7 Patterns of Assessment and Achievement**

---

skills. Examples are: to learn to drum, or to make clay models; to develop a personal programme to enhance football or netball skills, or to organise a community service project; to carry out local research into traditional dances or 'spirit possession'. Many of these seem to require a wide range of cognitive, personal and professional skills, including research methods, for which the college syllabus provides little or no training. There are some anomalies: none of the tasks are directly related to the students' work in the classroom, and they are assessed merely by written report, with no apparent requirement to produce artefacts or demonstrate acquired skills.

For both assignments and projects, it was noticeable the three questions often differed considerably within a paper, both in cognitive demand and with regard to the domain of knowledge, so that students who chose different options were being assessed on different things. When only one assignment/project is done during the course, this must reduce not only the validity and reliability of the assessment instrument, but also equity as far as the students are concerned.

Although there is uniformity in format across subjects, this hides some substantial discrepancies in content validity, coverage of domains of knowledge; and the level of cognitive demand. Below are some examples of differences between subjects, which are in some ways related to the different approaches outlined earlier.

### **7.2 Examination analysis**

#### **7.2.1 Foundation Studies**

This exam was different from the other in that it used multiple-choice questions, 'true/false items' and 'filling in blanks' as well as a short essay. This format allowed it to cover the syllabus widely, but apart from the essay the cognitive demands were very low. With over 70% of questions demanding only recall of knowledge, the quality of the test items was very poor, and the relevance of many of the items to the teacher's professional understanding and competence was questionable.

For assignments there were remarkable differences between those set for cohort 1, which required students to bring together ideas from several sections of the syllabus and apply them in new ways to their own or an imaginary school, and those set for cohort 5, which could have been answered simply by referring to specific units in the Handbooks. Other subject assignments do not appear to have changed their approach so radically between the two cohorts.

## **7 Patterns of Assessment and Achievement**

---

### **7.2.2 English**

These exam papers attempted to test students' own knowledge of English in the content section, though this is hardly touched on in the Handbooks: some of it may have been quite challenging to these students. The questions did not cover much of the syllabus but the items were well constructed and relevant to the classroom. Some of the questions appeared to require both real understanding and application, but others could have been answered by reference to examples given in specific units. Some assignment questions required the students to work with the pupil textbooks and teachers' guides. Though many of the questions appeared to have practical relevance, students were not asked to apply the ideas to their own classrooms and report back, which would have been a much more valid test of their skill than simply describing the hypothetical steps taken to teach X.

### **7.2.3 Mathematics**

This exam paper had reasonably wide coverage and the quality of the items was good. The cognitive demands appeared quite high, and in some items the level of mathematical understanding went well beyond what had been taught in the Handbook. In both the assignment and the exam paper, some attention was given to testing students' knowledge of learners with respect to mathematics, e.g an understanding of common misconceptions, which increases the relevance of these tests. However, these instruments, like the maths syllabus, use complex language about maths, which may increase the level of difficulty for students with poor linguistic skills. Many students reported problems with mathematics. Decisions need to be made about the level of mathematical knowledge required of primary school teachers, and how best to help them teach the primary syllabus.

### **7.2.4 Science**

Here the examination format was particularly unfortunate, as most of the science syllabus is about content, yet two-thirds of the exam questions had to be on pedagogy. Therefore coverage was poor. The cognitive level demanded was mainly recall, particularly as the items apparently requiring comprehension or application often used examples from the Handbooks, which could well have been remembered. Similarly the assignment items could all be answered by summarising or paraphrasing information from Handbooks.

In sum, this analysis suggests that the current assessment instruments test only a narrow range of subject specific objectives, rather than the general aims and objectives of the programme as a whole. It is obvious that written exams are poor vehicles for testing broad competencies, but the school-based assignments and projects could have offered opportunities for real application and for assessing the students' ability to integrate theory

## 7 Patterns of Assessment and Achievement

---

and practice. Instead, they were used simply to test the knowledge contained in the self-study Handbooks, as in traditional distance education, and in some cases the instruments were technically defective. While the projects are interesting, they do not seem very suitable for assessing professional practice. The analysis shows particularly how compartmentalised the course is; at no point do the students have to bring together their knowledge in an integrated and holistic way. The assessment may be closely matched to the content and to the teaching materials, but they are ill-suited to evaluating whether this programme is turning out 'effective' teachers, according to the broader criteria given in the aims.

In conclusion, it can be noted that the formal assessment methods are consistent with some aspects of the curriculum and not with others. In effect the exams test mainly recall, since many of the comprehension and application questions could be answered by memorising the examples given in the Handbooks.

On the other hand the aims and general objectives which set out the 'progressive vision' of MIITEP are poorly reflected in the assessment patterns as a whole. The emphasis on innovation and on learner-centred attitudes and skills is ignored, in spite of the 20 months school-based training which could have been used to develop and assess these through different kinds of project and portfolio work. The Teaching Practice grades form an almost invisible part of the assessment, being subsumed within the 15% of marks given to course work. The 'new approaches' mentioned as general objectives appear only in the written exams, so there is no assessment of whether the new teachers can or do use these ideas effectively in their teaching. It seems paradoxical that the exams attempt to test pedagogic knowledge and skills while the school-based assignments test subject content knowledge: the reverse would seem more appropriate.

### 7.3 Assessment of teaching practice

According to TDU, any candidate who fails teaching practice is not allowed to re-sit or repeat. Such a candidate is withdrawn from both the course and the teaching service. It is therefore crucial that the assessment of teaching practice be as reliable and as valid as possible. Under MIITEP, the teaching practice grade is arrived at by averaging a number of marks that are awarded at different times during the course using an observations schedule (Figure 4).

The first grade is awarded during the residential period. Tutors, and sometimes head teachers, observe a student teach once and for the first time at a demonstration school. This observation is intended to provide guidance to the student but a grade is awarded as well. This grade is important because it is used as a final grade in the event that no other grade from school-based training is available. Several points arise from such an eventuality. First the student is assessed prior to the designated 20 months teaching practice and training period

## 7 Patterns of Assessment and Achievement

Figure 4: Assessment of Teaching Practice Form

THE MALAWI NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS BOARD

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FORM						
Name of student.....		Date.....				
Reg. Number.....		Standard.....				
Name of College.....		Subject.....				
Name of School:.....		Time: From..... To.....				
EVALUATION ITEMS	MARKS					REMARKS
	0	1	2	3	4	
<b>1. Lesson Preparation</b>						
1.1. Clear definition of Teaching.						
1.2 Logical sequence of Teaching						
1.3 Suitability of Content						
1.4 Suitability of introduction and conclusion						
<b>2. Lesson Presentation</b>						
2.1 Appropriateness of introduction						
2.2 Logical presentation of content						
2.3 Use of chalk board						
2.4 Use of teaching and learning aids						
2.5 Pupils Participation						
2.6 Appropriateness of questions						
2.7 Clarity of instructions and explanations						
2.8 Mastery of subject matter						
2.9 Achievement of learning objectives (s)						
2.10 Appropriateness of conclusion						
2.11 Time Management						
<b>3. Classroom Management</b>						
3.1 Class control						
3.2 Organisation of pupils (group work, others)						
3.3 Teacher – pupil relationship						
3.4 Management of Teaching resources						
<b>4. Teacher presentability</b>						
4.1 Appropriateness of dress						
4.2 Punctuality						
<b>5. Upkeep of records</b>						
5.1 Attendance of Records						
5.2 Progress reports						
5.3 Teacher's Timetable						
5.4 MIITEPs Training record						
<b>Total Score:</b>	<b>Grade:</b>					
Name of Assessor.....	Signature.....					
Title:.....	Date:.....					
Name of Principal.....	Signature:.....					
Date:.....						

Ratings are defined as follows:

0 = not done, not observable or very poorly done, 1= weak, 2= adequate, 3 = good, 4 = outstanding

## 7 Patterns of Assessment and Achievement

---

in school. It is a grade which is arrived at even before the student has been given any chance to practice and improve. Further this grade has been awarded without the benefit of a moderator to give inter-judge reliability. It cannot show the actual gains a student has made during the course and therefore it is not a valid measure. It then seems that the policy of using such a grade on its own under any circumstances is ill-conceived and removes the efficacy and the essence of training on-the-job. Students may tend to believe that they already have a grade and that further assessment is unnecessary. It therefore does not seem sensible to award a grade with such importance attached to it at this time of their training. The way forward is to treat this process as formative and therefore it should focus on points which need to be improved upon later on in the schools.

The other grades are awarded during the 20 months of school-based training. In principle the head teacher and other qualified teachers compile marks for every student through a series of weekly supervisory classroom observations which are then averaged to give one grade at the end. This rarely seems to happen in practice from our observations. Similarly, in principle, the PEA visits a student several times to conduct supervision and a final grade is awarded. Several practices were identified and these depended upon the disposition of the PEAs and the time and resources available to them. Some PEAs combined supervision with assessment, and others awarded grades only after several supervisory visits. A common feature of all these grades was that they were arrived at by individuals who had no training in using the instruments and by using one instrument only. The use of individuals calls into question the reliability of the raters since these will seldom if ever be checked by any other competent persons.

Tutors are supposed to visit their students at least five times in the 20 months of school-based training to offer material and professional support. In reality the tutors were able to visit only once and therefore used such visits to assess rather than offer support. Again as shown earlier these visits were hurried and there was no provision for inter-rater discussion.

Finally a moderating team comprising members from TDU, TTCs, Divisional Offices and sometimes GTZ is supposed to visit a sample of students to assess their competence during school-based training. The purpose of the visit is provide an opportunity for all major departments involved in the training to assess the performance of students in the classroom so that this may act as a standard by which grades of all other trainers could then be moderated. This is somewhat hypothetical since the methods of transmitting the common standard to other assessors are unclear. In sum not all students are visited and so the final grade varies in composition from student to student, depending on how many times they have been assessed.

Several issues arise from the assessment as narrated above. Firstly it is clear that the grades are collected over a period of time. This then calls into question the averaging of the marks

## 7 Patterns of Assessment and Achievement

---

to form a summative grade. It appears unfair to add up formative marks and summative marks to form summative grades. A more valid grade should come from only summative marks awarded at the end by different trainers. Inclusion of marks at the beginning of the course in teaching practice is a misconception of what continuous assessment really means. It then seems that MIITEP should reformulate its teaching practice assessment strategy to reflect a more valid way of capturing the accumulated classroom skills demanded by the instrument.

Secondly the nature and the procedure followed in assessing student classroom skills calls into question the validity of the marks awarded. Inter-rater validity and construct validity have not been demonstrated. The evidence we have indicates that different assessors apply different standards. Marks collected individually are always suspect in regard to use of the instrument and personal bias. The classroom situation, the subject being taught and the focus of the material being taught are contextual, and therefore construct validity is difficult to achieve in a single lesson. It is very difficult for a single lesson to cover all the 25 criteria as required by the instrument. Using two or more judges at a time and conducting observations over a number of classroom periods would increase the reliability and validity of the assessment procedure, but would of course be difficult if not impossible to organise.

Thirdly, our study found that in general high scores are awarded most of the time and by most of the observers. This results in a lack of variance in scores, making it difficult to distinguish between students or to provide formative feedback. The high scores may be partly a function of the assessment sheet, which measures skills rather than holistic competence, or perhaps a reluctance on the part of assessors to fail students.

Fourth, the instrument used to assess teaching practice has a number of deficiencies. First it gives equal weighting to all skills, e.g. class control and appropriateness of dress. Second, there are no guiding descriptors related to assessment grades. Third, it is derived directly from the previous training curriculum and therefore does not incorporate the underlying ideas of MIITEP. It therefore falls short of a method that could profile teacher competencies in all but a superficial way. Given the importance of teaching practice and the expectation from school-based training in MIITEP, it seems reasonable to devote more thought to how students are going to be assessed, and reduce doubts over the reliability of the instrument and the validity of the results.

### 7.4 Some achievement results

It proved very difficult to collect reliable achievement data. Tests in English and Mathematics were devised based on past JCE and MSCE items. These were applied to students from cohort 6 as they entered (in 1998), and cohort 2 as they left (in 1999). Thus these were different groups of students at different stages in their careers, but their entry

## 7 Patterns of Assessment and Achievement

profiles were broadly similar (see Table 3.3 in Chap. 3). We also obtained the final official results for the cohort 1 students from three colleges after they completed their final examinations.

The English test devised for this study focused on usage at JCE level and comprehension at a slightly higher (MSCE) level. As Table 7.1 shows, cohort 6 students averaged between 36.4% and 38.5%. Less than 14% of students managed to score above 50%. Cohort 2 students scored at similar levels (38.3% and 35.2%) despite having nearly completed the course. Clearly this result is a cause for concern. These students have all passed JCE English and all had been teaching for more than one year. Their English usage and understanding ought to have improved because of their continued use when communicating with colleagues and when teaching children. However the test results suggest that their competence in English was questionable. This indicates that many may have problems trying to follow a course whose mode of communication is English and are likely to have difficulty using English as the medium of instruction themselves.

Table 7.1: English Cohort 6 and Cohort 2 Test Results

College	Test	N	Min score (%)	Max score (%)	Mean score (%)	SD
BTC	Cohort 6	92	21	60	38.5	9.35
	Cohort 2	144	13	65	38.3	10.10
St. Joseph's	Cohort 6	73	16	75	36.4	10.60
	Cohort 2	78	15	64	35.2	10.60

The Mathematics test focused on basic principles of arithmetic, algebra and geometry which are covered at the JC and MSCE levels. The items typically required two to three operations to show that students recognised the principles involved and could perform the necessary operations to get a solution. The mean scores were very low for both cohorts as shown in Table 7.2 below. They varied between 7.6% and 23.2%. Cohort 2 did worse than cohort 6 despite having been in training for two years and having the benefit of MIITEP materials. These results may not be surprising in view of the fact that only 12% of cohort 6 students had passed mathematics at MSCE (though 85% claimed to have passed JCE mathematics). It may be that cohort 2 students performed worse because they were further away from learning secondary school mathematics than cohort 6 and may not have taught more than middle grade primary mathematics during school practice. The results do seem to suggest that mathematical capabilities are very modest amongst both groups. Further research, using different kinds of items, could usefully explore the depth of their understanding of the primary maths syllabus, which is rather different from what was being tested here.



## 7 Patterns of Assessment and Achievement

Table 7.2: Mathematics Cohort 6 and Cohort 2 Results

College	Test	N	Min score (%)	Max score (%)	Mean score (%)	SD
BTC	Cohort 6	80	0	53	13.2	9.1
	Cohort 2	101	0	36	7.6	6.4
St. Joseph's	Cohort 6	72	9	41	23.2	7.4
	Cohort 2	55	0	30	9.5	7.5

Further insight into performance as measured by MIITEP can be gained from the performance of cohort 1 students in the final examinations set by MANEB (see Table 7.3). There were a total of 2524 students who registered for the examinations in all the six colleges from cohort 1. Of these 81.2% of the students were successful. This completion rate was expected to increase slightly because some of those considered to have failed were appealing and in other cases marks contributing to the continuous assessment element of the overall score were lost and had to be replaced. Some of those who failed were also expected to resit. These pass rates are lower than those recorded in previous teacher training programmes.

Table 7.3: The MIITEP Certificate Examination Results for Cohort 1

Sex	No. entered	%	No. passed	%
Male	1795	71.1	1450	80.8
Female	729	28.9	599	82.1
Total	2524	100.0	2049	81.2

The level of performance in individual subjects is revealed by the actual grades awarded. According to MANEB grade A is equivalent to excellent performance, grade B indicates very good performance, grade C shows good performance and the next grade is F which is a fail. The majority of the students were awarded grade C in Foundation Studies, English, Mathematics and Chichewa on their overall assessments. It was possible to examine the pass rates in four subjects in 3 colleges for cohort 1 students, the majority of whom were MSCE holders. This is shown in Table 7.4

## 7 Patterns of Assessment and Achievement

Table 7.4: Percentage of Students and Level of Performance in Four Subjects

College F/studies	No. entered	GRADE				
		A	B	C	F	Absent
BTC	496	0.6	6.7	81.7	9.1	2.4
St. Joseph	278	0.7	7.6	85.3	6.3	-
St. Montfort	434	0.5	5.8	85.9	7.8	-
<b>Chichewa</b>						
BTC	496	0.4	5.8	79.6	12.3	2.2
St. Joseph	278	10.4	55.4	28.1	6.1	-
St. Montfort	434	-	2.5	86.8	11.3	-
<b>English</b>						
BTC	496	1.2	8.7	75	13.5	1.6
St. Joseph	278	1.1	13.3	77.3	8.3	-
St. Montfort	434	0.2	11.3	80.0	8.5	-
<b>Maths</b>						
BTC	496	0.6	7.1	75.4	15.3	1.6
St. Joseph	278	0.4	10.4	77.7	11.5	-
St. Montfort	434	0.2	6.5	81.8	11.5	-

In Chichewa the majority of students at St. Joseph's (65.8%) were awarded grades B and A while in the other two colleges the majority were awarded grade C. In all the subjects the failure rate ranged from 8.3% to 15.3% and only small minorities were marked absent.

In the case of teaching practice, as Table 7.5 shows, the results generated high grades. The majority of the students were awarded grades A and B suggesting that MIITEP considered these students to be very good or excellent in teaching practice. Almost none failed.

Table 7.5: Percentage of Students and Level of Performance in TP

College	N	Grade				
		% gaining A	% B	% C	% F	% Absent
BTC	496	15	52.6	27.6	1.6	9.1
St. Joseph	278	8.6	65.1	4.8	0.4	1.1
St. Montfort	434	6.2	46.1	39.6	0.2	4.4

### 7.5 Concluding observations

First the format of examinations across the subjects is the same and may have its rationale, but it also inhibits exploration of assessment methods more suited to the different subjects. The balance between subject-specific content knowledge and pedagogic content knowledge is problematic. Thus science is disadvantaged by the weighting given to pedagogy in the

## 7 Patterns of Assessment and Achievement

---

exams, since it hardly teaches this at all. Our scrutiny confirms the impression that the programme as a whole is extremely compartmentalised, and that this is true of the assessment regime. Nowhere are students asked to integrate their knowledge and understanding, not even between Foundation Studies and the curriculum subjects.

Second, the exams vary in the degree of content validity. Poor test items pointed to the need for improvement in test construction. There is some evidence of poor item construction which suggests that the piloting and pre-testing of the examination items should be improved. The assessment instruments draw on quite a narrow range of question types and tasks; this may be deliberate since it reflects historic practice and the expectations of examination setters and takers of the kinds of questions they will be asked. However this limits what can be assessed.

Third, most of the exams were found to require only low-level cognitive performance based on recalling material directly from the Handbooks. This analysis suggests that the current MIITEP assessment instruments test only a narrow range of subject-specific objectives, rather than the general aims and objectives of the programme as a whole. They are ill-suited to evaluating whether this programme is turning out 'effective' teachers, according to the criteria given at the front of each book. The occasional question on gender is the only example of integrating these objectives into the subject-based assessment.

Fourth, assignments and projects done at the school offer some range of choices. However these did not require students to use their teaching to integrate theory with practice. Often they also tested knowledge of material in the Handbooks. Here opportunities are missed for assessing how students are actually applying knowledge and understanding to their own classroom situations. Students could be asked to undertake different classroom tasks and activities, related to Handbook topics, and collect simple data on the results; this would indirectly test both content and pedagogic knowledge, and show whether they were capable of integrating theory and practice.

Fifth, the practical projects for Category B subjects are very interesting and demanding. However they often foreground the personal skill development of the trainee rather than practical professional pedagogic skills. Again, more classroom-focused work would test teaching effectiveness more adequately.

Sixth, procedural as well as questions of instrument quality call into question the reliability of the grades and the extent to which the costs of the exercise outweigh the benefits in the assessment of teaching practice in schools. The current system adds little variance to overall score, is unreliable, and is generally not credited with much validity. It does, however, carry much psychological importance among both students and tutors.

## **7 Patterns of Assessment and Achievement**

---

Seventh, there would appear to be important questions about the assessment of school-based work. Students get little preparation for these tasks, especially for the projects; there is little support for information gathering or writing up; and without moderation there are obvious opportunities for plagiarism and inaccurate reporting.

Eighth, the significance of the language(s) of instruction needs to be more fully addressed. To be effective teachers, the trainees must be fluent, confident and relatively accurate speakers of English, at least for teaching the upper primary standards. Nowhere is this adequately addressed or assessed.

Ninth, data on performance is disappointing. What indications there are suggest that after training mathematics and English competence remains low. Though most students obtain pass grades in the end of programme examinations, the real level of achievement that this represents must be a cause for concern. So also must be the fact that teaching practice grades are consistently high, though judgmental data from our research suggests that many new teachers have not mastered a full range of classroom competencies.

The research also considered the condition of the colleges which form the institutional base for MIITEP and the characteristics of those who teach in them. It is to this we now turn.

## Chapter Eight

## 8 The Colleges and Their Tutors

This chapter presents an overview of two of the colleges that constitute the institutional base for MIITEP. It comments on their physical condition, the management culture of which they are part, the state of classrooms and libraries, and their utilisation of staff and space. It then explores the tutors' characteristics in terms of their age, qualifications, career paths, and perceptions of good teachers, and their approach to training. This helps in the understanding of why the curriculum is delivered the way it is in the colleges. Data were collected from both surveys and interviews. A questionnaire was administered to all the relevant college tutors in two colleges. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with smaller groups of tutors drawn from the main subject areas and giving a balance of age, gender and qualifications. These interviews were intended to follow a modified life-history format (more details in Stuart and Kunje 2000). The interviews provided insights into the tutors' perceptions, while the survey provided some quantitative data.

### 8.1 The colleges

Data from two of the six colleges in Malawi gives a flavour of their character. St. Joseph's College is for women only; it was founded in 1932 by the Roman Catholic Church and is now funded by the Government through grants. Management is the responsibility of the church. At the time of fieldwork the Principal was a nun. The college is 15km away from the town of Dedza. It has a mixture of old and new buildings, many dating from the late 1980s, comprising a large assembly hall/refectory, hostels, laboratories and a library. Although students generally were proud of their facilities, the hostels were over-crowded, with some sleeping three to a room. The college stands in a well-tended park-like environment with plenty of open space and net-ball courts. Tutors' houses are strung about 100 metres away on one part of the college campus. Part of the campus is fenced. The college has a primary school about one kilometre away which is used during teaching practice when students are in residence.

In contrast Blantyre Teachers College is situated on the outskirts of the main commercial city. It was built in 1962 as a secondary school teacher training college and it is owned fully by the government. It has classrooms, a large library, laboratories, a large assembly hall, a refectory, a two-storey hostel complex and a separate administration block. The college buildings are becoming dilapidated, and lack many essential facilities; this has been exacerbated by frequent burglaries and acts of vandalism because the college is not fenced. Water supply and sanitation are unsatisfactory. Staff houses are situated 50 metres behind the teaching area. There is a large sports field just nearby. The college also has a primary school about 100 metres away for conducting teaching practice during residential periods.

Both colleges have been receiving their funding irregularly and in inadequate amounts. At the time of the study they had received only about 20% of their recurrent budgetary needs for the year and were receiving irregular tranches of funds following no discernible pattern.

## 8 The Colleges and Their Tutors

---

The colleges then had to go without essential resources for teaching and learning and for the upkeep of students. For example lack of light bulbs at BTC prevented students from studying at night. Food supplies were a continuous problem. Such conditions inevitably militated against the proper implementation of MIITEP.

### 8.2 College management

All colleges in Malawi are under the Ministry of Education and they are administered through divisional offices. This means they are subject to bureaucratic regulations and inefficiencies. For example tutors are recruited and posted to different colleges by the Ministry as and when the need arises. Simultaneously provision is made for eligible persons to apply directly to the Principal of a specific college, who will then forward their recommendations to the Ministry. This can lead to anomalies in recruitment and posting. Neither colleges nor principals have much power to develop their own aims or mission statements nor to develop effective medium term planning. The colleges have very limited autonomy apart from administration.

Alongside this bureaucratic arrangement there also exist some elements of collegial organisation and professional responsibility. Tutors are organised in departments led by a Head of Department whose duties include organising meetings, coordinating the work of the department, checking student results and inducting new members of staff. Individuals were also assigned to take up responsibilities such as Student Welfare Officer, Sports master, Teaching Practice Co-ordinator and Examinations Officer. The short length of the residential courses however militates against the building of smooth running organisations. Sometimes the schedules were not followed and departments relapsed into dysfunctional patterns of behaviour e.g. absenteeism, lack of co-ordination and co-operation. Most Heads of Departments were in acting positions and funding to departments was coming in irregular trickles.

The timetable was similar in both colleges mostly because the curriculum was specific regarding the number of hours allocated to each subject. There were six one-hour classes a day with a 90 minute or 2 hour lunch break. One morning each week was devoted to Teaching Practice in the nearby Demonstration Schools. After classes some students went to various activities including sports, clubs and societies and cleaning-up but most chose to remain free. Sometimes discos were held at weekends. In the evening students were scheduled to study in the classrooms but lack of bulbs at BTC made this impossible. At St. Joseph's students were able to study and some tutors were conducting 'catch-up' lectures after supper, though the library was never open in the evening. In the students' view, the residential periods were particularly valuable for exchanging ideas, learning that others had similar problems, and making friends from other communities.

## 8 The Colleges and Their Tutors

---

The main complaints from the students were the poor diet, which appeared to be inadequate nutritionally<sup>9</sup> and not being treated as adults. For example, regulations required students to ask permission to go and see their families; they had no access to telephones, and had to clean the premises daily. These kinds of restrictions seemed to undermine students' ability to accept new responsibilities and new ways of handling children since they were treated as children themselves. In some cases bureaucracy dictated that students returned to their various districts to collect their pay, thereby missing a number of days of course work. This is the context in which students were to learn how to teach under MIITEP.

Colleges suffer from the budget system under which they operate (Kunje and Lewin 2000). This falls within the cash budget system imposed by the Treasury which releases money according to macro-economic circumstances and the conditions attached to external general budgetary support. The situation is further complicated by the policy of decentralisation which has placed colleges under divisional offices which themselves have to wait for allocations to filter through from central government. The result is that month by month college administrations generally have little idea how much they will receive for non-salary operating expenditure and cannot therefore manage their affairs efficiently. Credit may or may not be extended by suppliers, utility bills may or may not be paid, preventative maintenance is unlikely to happen, and much time is invested in resolving repeated cash crises. Without stable annual budgeting backed by real cash flows it is difficult to see how the situation can improve.

### 8.3 Classrooms and libraries

The classrooms in both colleges were furnished with traditional heavy wooden desks or metal tables and chairs all arranged to face the front where there is a blackboard. Such furniture seemed cumbersome to move around for group work though it was possible to pre-arrange it when a room belonged to one particular department or tutor. There were also pin boards along the walls but the few displays on them did not seem to have been prepared by the students. This was understandable because there were few materials around to allow for that, yet students were constantly reminded to be creative and resourceful. There was little evidence that the MIITEP 'Teaching and Learning Using Locally-Available Resources' (TALULAR) philosophy was being put into practice. Laboratories were designed in the traditional fashion with built-in benches facing the blackboard in rows and others built-in along the walls. The equipment and apparatus present were old; consumables and glass apparatus were absent. At BTC there were only three glass beakers and the electric sockets had been vandalised, making the labs almost unusable. Old student-made models and dusty nature corners attested to the lack of involvement by the current cohort in creativity or preparing their own teaching and learning aids as MIITEP professed.

---

<sup>9</sup> The nuns at St. Josephs raised chickens both for fund-raising and for supplementing the diet.

## 8 The Colleges and Their Tutors

---

Libraries had small stocks of old books and magazines. The opening hours for the libraries were not synchronised with students' needs because the persons manning them went off duty when students were free. The tutors set little work that required the use of the library and therefore the libraries were mostly underused.

### 8.4 Utilisation of staff and space.

The utilisation of teaching staff is different in the two colleges, though in both the tutors had considerable marking to do for earlier cohorts, as discussed in Chapter 7. At St Joseph's staff average load is about 12 periods per week with a range from 8 to 18. Mathematics and science lecturers are most heavily loaded, and senior staff have the least teaching loads to compensate for their administrative responsibilities. In addition to teaching lecturers are required to supervise teaching practice two hours each week at the nearby demonstration schools. Each lecturer has at most 20 students to supervise in the three months period a cohort stays in college.

In contrast to St Joseph's, lecturers at BTC frequently combine two classes into one and so teach 6 or 7 one hour lectures per week on average. Some do more and some less. The most heavily loaded teach 13 hours per week and the least loaded teach 5 hours per week. Just like at St. Joseph's each lecturer at BTC is also required to supervise teaching practice two hours per week. According to the lecturer-student ratio at this college each lecturer has 24 students to supervise and each student has to be supervised once during the entire three months period.

At St. Joseph's there are 19 rooms which are meant for curriculum delivery. This figure includes classrooms, laboratories, lecture rooms and the library. In a day each classroom can be used for a total of six hours giving a maximum of 30 hours per week. Available teaching space at St. Joseph's is utilised less than half the maximum possible time. Occasional combining together two classes for teaching, non-use of some special rooms, and under-use of others account for this situation. Rooms like the language laboratory, the audio-visual centre and the library are very underused. In essence there is enough teaching space at the college to allow more than double the number of teaching periods. This means that the college can accommodate more than double the current number of students. The main constraint to this would be the amount of boarding space in the hostels which is limited to 300.

BTC makes a slightly more efficient use of its teaching space since it has less room in relation to the numbers of students. BTC could accommodate more students and make fuller use of teaching space if boarding facilities were expanded. However lack of adequate funding has meant that the site is not maintained and very run down. The rooms are not used during the night because there are no lights.



## 8 The Colleges and Their Tutors

### 8.5 The tutors

Staffing levels in the colleges vary. As Table 8.1 shows there were 175 tutors in the six colleges in 1999 and this gave student:staff ratios ranging from 11:1 to 21:1. The pattern of staffing does not reflect the application of standard student:staff ratios, because of the ongoing responsibility to supervise the teaching practice and mark the work of earlier cohorts.

Table 8.1: College Student/Staff Ratio

College	No. of staff	Student capacity	Staff : student ratio
BTC	26	540	21
LTC	32	540	17
Karonga	28	300	11
Kasungu	28	600	21
St. Joseph	23	300	12
St. Montfort	38	450	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>2730</b>	<b>16</b>

In the two sample colleges overall women comprised 36% of the staff (30% at St Joseph's, 40% at BTC). In this small sample there were as many women graduates as men. At the time of the survey both colleges were headed by women, one in an acting capacity. However in both colleges most of the other posts of responsibility were held by men with women having pastoral roles like warden or student advisor. For example, there were only three women Heads of Departments but five out of the 6 pastoral posts were held by women. At St. Joseph's, albeit an all-female college, the only senior management posts held by women were the Principal and Head of Foundations Studies – both of them were members of a religious order.

The tutors have a variety of qualifications ranging from certificates to graduate level degrees. Table 8.2 below shows the number of tutors and their qualifications in teachers' colleges from 1991 to 1996, the latest data available across all the colleges on qualifications.

Table 8.2: Number of Tutors and Qualifications

Qualifications	Number of staff				
	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96
Local Graduates	52	44	45	71	63
Local Diplomas	131	145	148	233	207
Other	8	9	12	19	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>289</b>

As shown above the majority of the tutors have diplomas obtained after two to three years of training post secondary schooling. In addition the majority of the tutors are concentrated

## 8 The Colleges and Their Tutors

in the 41-55 years age range with very few under 40 years of age. Table 8.3 below shows the age distribution of tutors in 1999 in 4 colleges.

Table 8.3: Age Ranges For Tutors

College	Age Range								Total
	20-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56+	
BTC	0	0	3	8	5	8	6	3	33
LTC	0	1	3	7	11	7	3	-	32
Kasungu	0	1	4	3	12	5	2	-	27
Karonga	0	0	1	2	9	12	4	-	28

The mandatory retirement age is 55 years and pensions become payable after 20 years service on resignation. Some staff have resigned to take up other forms of employment after 20 years service. Mostly these join private secondary schools as teachers and various NGOs as trainers. Over 12% of the tutors will reach mandatory retirement in the next few years. Apart from retirement and resignation the system also loses staff due to transfers to other posts, promotion and death but dismissals are rare. Data from three of the six colleges show that over half of the tutors have served for more than 20 years and are therefore eligible for retirement or pensionable resignation. In the mid 1990s the government was actively encouraging those eligible to retire.

It is worth noting that the great majority of tutors began as primary teachers before becoming tutors: 90% of the survey sample had taught in primary schools for periods ranging from 1 – 17 years. Of the interviewees, 17 out of 20 had gone through primary teacher training. Nearly half of the sample - mainly men - had also taught in secondary schools for periods ranging from one to twenty two years. Typically, a tutor's first qualification was a Teaching Certificate, upgraded later to a Diploma either in primary education or in secondary school teaching. A few had been specially trained as tutors through the Diploma in Primary Teacher Education, which ran for 2-3 years in the 1980s. Otherwise they had had no preparation for being a tutor, and had to draw on on their own primary training and experience once they became tutors. They received no formal orientation, though there was apparently quite a lot of informal induction from colleagues. The only continuing professional development was short workshops organised by the MoEST about changes in curriculum, apart from a very few who got scholarships to study overseas.

In sum, tutors appear to be a group who have had relevant professional experience but who were academically under-qualified for their job, having hit a ceiling at diploma level. Those who had done the Primary Teacher Education Diploma had clearly made good use of it, but without any continuing professional development to update their knowledge and skills, the ideas seemed to have become rather dated. Those who had taken subject-specific diplomas

## 8 The Colleges and Their Tutors

---

in secondary education were less well prepared. For the few who went further, the courses were not always as useful or relevant as they should have been, particularly when the training was overseas. This raises important issues about what kinds of further study is most appropriate, and the need for structures to become supportive of change. In interviews it became clear that a majority of tutors were not satisfied in their jobs and their morale was low. Most indicated that if they could get another job they would leave lecturing.

Thus the task of implementing the new MIITEP curriculum was given to a group of staff who were relatively 'old' in career terms, few of whom had been given the opportunity to study at undergraduate level or beyond, and whose working environment was deteriorating. However, many still had a very conscientious approach to their job, and evidenced strong commitment to their students. Some of their professional perspectives are summarised next.

### 8.6 Perceptions of a good teacher

Tutors' perceptions of a good teacher are a reflection of the tutors' training as well as their involvement in the previous courses. In interviews good teachers were overwhelmingly described in terms of classroom skills and of personal and professional attitudes. The 'knowledge base' of teaching figured far less prominently. Such comments as, 'knows the subject', 'is academically sound; knows what to do,' only came from about 15% of the comments (in both survey and interview data sets). Even among these, descriptions of meaningful knowledge such as 'understanding learners' needs' or 'can interpret curriculum' occur very infrequently. There is no mention of 'pedagogic content knowledge' and no one specifically mentioned 'knowing how to teach the subject'.

Instead the discourse is predominantly about skills, which to some extent reflects the teacher education curriculum. The respondents refer mainly to general skills such as 'uses a variety of teaching methods' and 'is well prepared'. Where specific, they tend to emphasise technical skills like planning lessons, writing schemes of work and keeping registers, making and using teaching and learning materials and monitoring pupils' progress. Interpersonal skills such as helping individuals especially slow learners, keeping pupils' interest and good communication, certainly figure in both data sets but less frequently. Only a handful of comments concerned 'active and participatory learning' or involving pupils in their own learning.

Among the professional and personal attitudes, the most common characteristics of a good teacher relate to commitment: 'dedicated' 'hardworking,' 'interested in the job' and 'enthusiastic'. Other professional aspects include being well organised and working co-operatively, and a group of comments around 'calm, patient, coping with stress' suggests some of the problems faced by teachers in Malawi. Many others refer in some way to relationships with children: good teachers are loving, friendly and interested in learners; they

## 8 The Colleges and Their Tutors

---

should be ready to help them, to listen and to encourage, and to be concerned with their well-being. Another common phrase especially at St. Joseph's, was that a good teacher is 'exemplary', meaning dresses well and behaves well, is punctual and acts as a role model for pupils. It is interesting that the tutors describe teachers in terms of discrete skills and attitudes: they do not use holistic images such as parent or facilitator. Though there is much stress on concern for children, the skills are more suggestive of traditional transmission teaching than the learner-centred, active participatory methods advocated by the revised primary curriculum and ostensibly, by MIITEP. Many of those interviewed seemed to see their role as akin to that of a secondary school teacher dealing with adolescents. Students were not regarded as future colleagues and peers, but rather as empty vessels to be filled.

### 8.7 Views of the college and its courses

Respondents appear quite satisfied with the college courses and with their own role in them. Nearly all of them disagree that 'most tutors do not know how much about teaching primary pupils' and 70% think that 'college courses are well designed to prepare students for primary teaching' despite evidence to the contrary from our other data. Most disagree that there is too much theory in the college course, and 70% do not think that the subject courses are difficult.

In interviews the complaints concerned mainly the length of the course. Tutors felt that they had to cram far too much into a short time and they wanted to return to the older form of a one-year or two-year residential training. Otherwise over 80% were satisfied that most of the curriculum did not need much revision. However 20% thought assessment needed a complete rethink, and 30% said the same about language.

Tutors in both colleges put the blame for low student achievement squarely on the students themselves, their poor language skills, low academic level and lack of motivation. Shortage of time, poor facilities and large teaching groups are seen as being only partly responsible, with St. Joseph's putting more emphasis on these factors than BTC. Notably few think poor library facilities are important, yet the libraries appeared inadequate and not friendly to students.

Tutors do not hold clear positive views about learner-centred teaching. They believe in teaching facts, and think a good memory is useful. Perhaps that is why they ask their students a lot of questions. They say students learn best in small groups and by asking questions, but few seem to organise their teaching that way. The tutors sound satisfied –perhaps even a little smug – about the curriculum: the college courses and their teaching are fine and if the students find things difficult it is due to their limitations. What might be considered surprising is that nowhere in the interviews or other data from tutors did they suggest ways of coping with the student problems they diagnosed. This perhaps reflects a perception of

## 8 The Colleges and Their Tutors

---

their own role as itself professionally restricted, and a lack of sense of agency which would have enabled them to try to change the situation.

### 8.8 Views of training and knowledge

Tutors had a predominantly technical view of training which appeared shared by most interviewees. This can be characterised as: ‘we tell the students what to do, let them practise it, and they should be able to do it’. Learning to teach often seemed to be treated as quite unproblematic: ‘when one has enough content plus teaching strategies one can disseminate it’; ‘they need residential training so we can shape them by our instruction and example’.

The evidence suggests that most tutors hold a ‘transmission’ or ‘banking’ view of professional teaching and learning rather than a ‘constructivist’ one. They seem to believe that there is a fixed body of public knowledge, including facts, definitions and teaching methods, which students need to learn before they can be considered trained. There was a common assumption that there is one right way to teach. One said, ‘students should do it the way I taught them’ and another, referring to mixed messages from teachers in the field, explained, ‘we tell them this is the truth’: A further assumption is made that such ‘knowledge’ can be applied directly in practice to any situation. Such comments form part of a wider picture. Students are not being asked to reflect on what they have seen or done, so they can be helped to understand it better and to improve but to learn ‘the right way’. Teaching is not viewed as a professional activity, where teachers must learn to use their own judgement as they respond to difficult, unique situations. ‘There is one pathway at the school that the teacher should follow.....’ it was said.

Few tutors seemed to be interested in educational innovation. Most disagreed strongly with the statement ‘Young lecturers have better ideas about teaching than old lecturers’. The professional atmosphere in the colleges appeared neither intellectually stimulating nor challenging. Asked in interviews to mention a book they had read recently, only four tutors could quote a title and author, and two just a title. Three others referred to textbooks they were using. One vaguely remembered a statistics book, another quoted resources from a workshop. Two said they ‘didn’t read these days’. There seems little support or incentive for them to develop their own knowledge and skills. This may be because of a combination of the tutors’ low level of education, the physical and intellectual isolation of the colleges, the shortage of relevant books and journals, the tutors’ workloads, and perhaps the lack of incentives in the form of opportunities for further study.

### 8.9 Concluding remarks

The overall impression of the colleges obtained from the data is of a system in an advanced state of deterioration with staff working under very difficult conditions achieving what they

## 8 The Colleges and Their Tutors

---

can. Although the colleges rehabilitated in the 1980s have good buildings, equipment and teaching/learning resources vary from barely adequate to totally unsatisfactory. A combination of policy neglect, lack of maintenance, erratic and minimal funding, unstable staffing, and indifferent leadership appear to have resulted in impoverished institutions with low morale and poor quality learning environments.

Several points stand out. First, there is a pressing need to invest in restoring the colleges' infrastructure and, in some cases, the plant. Laboratories are largely empty of relevant equipment, libraries have few recent books, there are few other learning resources, furniture is insufficient for student numbers, and basic services are often lacking. Some of the colleges do not at present offer pleasant living conditions or effective working environments. If MIITEP or its successors are to use the colleges as an institutional base, money must be spent on improvements.

Second, the general budgetary system for the colleges simply does not work and makes any kind of regular functioning difficult if not impossible. The system is relatively small, its costs are not excessive, and the procedures needed to ensure a regular flow of funds to allow normal functioning are easily imaginable, given the will to ensure this outcome.

Third, partly as a result of the irregular patterns of finance, and MIITEP scheduling and changes in policy, patterns of utilisation of staff are not very efficient and some practices have developed (e.g. doubling group sizes for work load not professional reasons) which would seem undesirable. Many principals have been acting and therefore lacking in authority, and have been in post for relatively short periods without a clear brief to develop a strategic plan or the wherewithal to implement any plan that might have emerged. Under these circumstances it is perhaps not surprising that management appears to have lacked purpose and effectiveness, not least because the task is exceedingly difficult without attention to the two points made above.

Fourth, college capacity is under-utilised in the sense that teaching space is not fully used. The main constraint on increased enrolment, (aside from the recurrent cost of supporting it) lies in boarding facilities. These effectively limit how many students can be admitted. Current arrangements also tend to exclude those with childcare responsibilities from residential status, with consequences for female recruitment.

Fifth, college lecturers as a group are relatively old and many are within a few years of qualifying for retirement. Their numbers have been dwindling. This creates an opportunity to renew the cadre which will only be grasped effectively if it occurs within a medium term plan for the development of teacher education, and those selected have appropriate skills and potential to develop with the assistance of a coherent staff development programme. The latter is conspicuous by its absence, though it is clear that current staff could benefit from

---

## 8 The Colleges and Their Tutors

---

focused attempts upgrade their knowledge and skills to reflect the many recent developments in the field of teacher education of which many are unaware.

Sixth, the perceptions lecturers have of good teachers, their view of the curriculum, trainees and the nature of the training task rest uneasily with much of the rhetoric of MIITEP. This is likely to be a partial explanation for some of the outcomes reported elsewhere in this research. These staff have reasons to express the views that they do and some of these may well be valid. Clearly they have yet to be largely converted to ideas of student-centred learning (their practice displays only glimpses of what it might be), and they transmit different messages through their practice of the nature of the 'real' curriculum of teacher education. One way or another there needs to be some convergence between the 'progressive' stance of MIITEP and the 'traditional' orientation of many teacher trainers. Whether this should arrive at a mid-point or lean more in one direction than the other is a key question for future curriculum development in which logically the tutors should participate alongside their primary school colleagues. The training programmes developed by MSSSP for PEAs and head teachers seems to have effectively opened up new views of how teachers learn; this might be useful experience for redesigning the conceptual framework within which teacher education is carried out.

Seventh, perhaps surprisingly the colleges continue to function and staff do communicate some of their skill and enthusiasm to trainees, many of whom seem to value their college experience. This is a tribute to those who remain motivated and who try to do a professional job in very adverse conditions.

Finally, the colleges and the college staff are manifestly not at present developmental centres deeply embedded in the problems of primary school quality, child development, curriculum innovation, and discourse on training. They could become so, given the right vision, commitment, and realistic resources.





## Chapter Nine

## 9 The Newly Qualified Teacher

This chapter examines what happened to the newly qualified teachers after training. The study used cohort 1 students as they were the only cohort who had completed the programme at the time of the our fieldwork. The new teachers had been teaching for six months in different schools. The sample came from five districts, three in the Southern Region and two in the Central Region. The selection of the students was opportunistic in the sense that PEAs had to locate students available in their zones to take part in the study.

### 9.1 Posting

In all there were 64 NQTs in the sample of which 35 (54%) were males and 29 (45%) were females. Most had MSCE certificates and they had taught in schools for two to five years before joining the course. The majority (81%) had gone back to the schools where they had been teaching as trainees. The others had requested transfer, or been moved at the behest of the District Education Officer (DEO) to newly established schools where there was need for qualified teachers. Some of the reasons for requesting transfer to other schools were family-related, e.g. for women it was mostly to follow their spouses to their work places. In some cases DEOs had placed NQTs in new schools to become heads, or to teach in new secondary schools. The system is in dire need of teachers at both levels, and the NQTs are utilized in various capacities as soon as they qualify, but DEOs interviewed pointed out that funds for moving teachers are not available and therefore most NQTs remain in their old schools.

It is interesting to note that after six months of teaching as NQTs a further 25% wanted to move. There were many varied reasons for seeking transfer, some citing that they had overstayed in one school, others mentioning housing, transport, family or health problems. A few wanted to move to schools where they could find materials to enable them to continue studying. However, the majority of the NQTs said they were happy to remain where they had been before qualifying.

### 9.2 Utilisation in schools

At the schools the NQTs are employed in various ways. The majority of them were teaching one class only ranging from grade 1 to grade 8. In the sample 19% were teaching in the infant section, 38% in the junior section and 42% in the senior section. A small proportion were required to teach other classes apart from their own. It is noteworthy that a considerable proportion of NQTs are teaching in the senior section which is normally assigned to experienced qualified teachers. The interviews also indicated that the NQTs are holding different management positions in the schools. One NQT in the sample was made head teacher. Almost all NQTs belonged to one or more management committee.

NQTs work under a wide range of classroom and school conditions. In our sample the number of pupils per class ranged from 10 to 412. The number of teaching periods per week

## 9 The Newly Qualified Teacher

for each NQT ranged from 9 to 45. This means that some NQTs are sharing their classes with other teachers, while others are teaching single-handed. Those sharing classes divide up their workload proportionally depending on the number of teachers per class. The number of mathematics and English textbooks available in the classes ranged from none to about one per pupil. In 15% of the cases the teachers had no tables or desks and in 88% of the cases the pupils had no chairs or desks. In 75% of the cases there was no storage space for books in the NQTs' classrooms.

NQTs receive assistance from a variety of sources. Table 9.1 below indicates how much assistance the NQTs said they received.

Table 9.1: Assistance from School Management (% responding)

OFFICERS	All the Help Needed	Some Help	A Little	None
PEAs	31.1	44.3	16.4	8.2
Head teachers	39.1	34.4	17.2	9.4
Qualified teachers	23.6	27.3	25.5	23.6
Others	-	4.7	-	95.3

The picture is mixed. About 30% of the NQTs felt they had full support from PEAs, head teachers and qualified teachers when they were settling in. But the table also suggests that many have only sporadic access to help from colleagues and those responsible for their well being.

At the school and zonal levels organised induction also seemed to occur in various ways. About 40% of the NQTs received some formal induction in the schools. However 69% of the NQTs said they had received induction at the zonal level. This shows that PEAs can reach out to new teachers through the TDCs where MSSSP is being implemented.

At the school those who went through some induction process indicated that the major emphasis was on how to write schemes of work, lesson plans, and record books (though this should have been covered in the MIITEP programme). In other cases head teachers included information about the schools and the communities, giving updates on the development taking place at the schools, or how to do continuous assessment. At the zonal level induction courses included: working with experienced teachers, class preparation, using teaching and learning materials, how to dress as teachers, gender issues, management of examinations and subject content issues. Of those who attended these zonal induction workshops most found them useful, despite the apparent replication of themes with those covered in MIITEP.

In the case of the community around the schools the majority found very little to appreciate and acknowledge. The great majority said they received no help from the surrounding communities. This could be true because the communities are usually not involved in school

## 9 The Newly Qualified Teacher

matters and they usually do not have the necessary resources to influence school matters. All the same most thought their relationship with the communities around them was positive.

The main problems encountered by NQTs can be seen in Table 9.2. They include receiving salaries, accommodation and transport to and from school, and feeding themselves adequately. These basic conditions need to be met if teachers are to perform effectively. About half of the NQTs still had some problems managing their pupils.

Table 9.2: Difficulties Encountered (% responding)

Problem	Many difficulties	A few difficulties	No difficulties
Accommodation	45.3	28.1	25.6
Language	1.6	10.9	85.9
Feeding Oneself	31.7	34.9	33.3
Parents	4.7	39.1	56.3
Colleagues	4.7	25.7	70.4
Pupils	4.7	43.9	51.6
Transport	29.7	25.0	45.4
Salary	53.2	33.9	13.9

### 9.3 Views of NQTs on their classroom practice

The performance of NQTs in the classroom is also a reflection of the conditions in which they are operating and the training they have had. About half of the NQTs had all the syllabuses and teachers' guides they needed. Only 5% claimed not to have any. However only 20% indicated that they had all the textbooks they needed. Few felt they had access to materials to make learning aids. Nearly 90% said they constantly referred to the MIITEP materials and other resources they brought from College.

There was some evidence that NQTs were using at least some of the teaching strategies that the colleges promoted. Question and answer, group work and demonstration were apparently used with varying degrees of frequency. Role-play was mentioned by 67% but rarely used. A few individuals said they used discussion and fieldwork as teaching strategies. The majority said they often used 'short answer' and 'filling in blank spaces' strategies to assess progress. About half said they used essays or projects as a means of assessing children. These assessment procedures are imposed upon the NQTs because the curriculum spells out what to use. There is little opportunity for teachers to vary the methods. The format of the end of primary schools examinations also has great influence on the testing procedures adopted by the teachers. On the whole the NQTs thought they were practising what they had learnt in the course. Over 90% thought their lesson planning, the content, teaching strategies, assessment procedures, and the use of teaching and learning aids reflected what had been advocated.

## 9 The Newly Qualified Teacher

---

### 9.4 Concluding Remarks

First, this glimpse into what happens to NQTs after they qualify produces a picture which leaves some things to be desired. Significant proportions either do not return to their training school or desire to move within the first year. This is not perhaps surprising given the condition of many of the schools. The reasons are mixed, and some may be changed by better practice, whereas others may not be.

Second, it is clear that NQTs are quickly integrated into schools as normal teachers and some even receive rapid promotion. The arrangements made at school level vary widely from helpful and supportive to weak. While most receive some induction, either at school level or in zonal workshops, it is surprising that some of the induction topics most valued by NQTs are things that MIITEP should have taught them, such as lesson planning and record keeping. More positively, the student teachers Handbooks appear to be a significant resource for the NQTs.

Third, there were signs of distance between the school and community in many of the responses, suggesting that NQTs often had problems themselves adjusting to the role that they had acquired – assuming that this was one where primary school teachers should integrate at some level into the communities they serve.

Fourth, accommodation, food, transport and salary payments all figured highly as sources of problems. Though predictable, this draws attention to the continuing need to attempt to ease these problems, since they clearly will detract from the effectiveness of any NQT whatever the quality of their training.

Fifth, it appears that only the most basic learning materials are available to most NQTs in their schools and even these are not in adequate quantities. Any more generous provision seems a rarity. The college curriculum needs to recognise this reality of the professional environment of NQTs (and trainees).

Sixth, NQTs appeared to believe that they were utilising new methods and following the MIITEP approaches to learning that departed from the traditional, such as question and answer, group work, demonstrations etc. However, this self-reported data does not seem to match with other classroom observation data, or with the dominant patterns of learning and teaching in primary schools, many of which now have large proportions of MIITEP trainees and NQTs.

Finally, induction and support during the first few years of teaching remain problematic. The MIITEP NQTs mostly return to the schools they have been working in and are therefore presumably less in need of induction than those going to new schools and

---

## **9 The Newly Qualified Teacher**

communities. Nevertheless, induction is not yet universal, and ways of smoothing the transition from student teacher to qualified teacher should be further developed. At the very least print material extending the Handbooks into the first year of teaching might be helpful, especially if direct entry into MIITEP is contemplated as an option for the future. This could easily be integrated with the support the MSSSP or its successors provide for school development.

Critical to future policy and practice for teacher education are issues of supply and demand. We now turn to an analysis of these.



## Chapter Ten

## 10 Analysis of Teacher Supply and Demand

The central question that this chapter explores is what is the likely demand for primary teachers in the short and medium term? The answer to this question is important because it will determine what alternative methods of training are financially and logistically viable as the first phase of MIITEP reaches its conclusion. Decisions will have to be made within the next two years about the future modes of provision. In particular, if the numbers needed on a recurrent basis are within the capacity of the present College system, conventional full-time pre-career PRESET may be an option. If they are not, then either a system with a similar capacity to MIITEP to qualify large numbers of trainees is needed, or substantial expansion of College enrolments has to be contemplated.

## 10.1 Teacher supply

On the supply side, a simple analysis can show some of the characteristics of those likely to be trained as new teachers. In 1997 the total number of pupils graduating from the secondary school system with passes in MSCE was about 8000. The numbers with credits in English and in mathematics were about half of this. This represents the annual pool of students with this level of qualification. The MSCE pass rate appears to have been dropping which will reduce the numbers becoming available. Most of those who succeed are in government schools. The number passing JCE was about 61,000 with the great majority of successful candidates originating in the MCDE schools. Table 10.1 shows this.

Table 10.1: Pass Rates for Different Types of Schools 1997

	Number Sitting MSCE	Pass Rate (%)	Number Passing
Govt	8692	58	5033
Private	4011	43	1713
MCDE	11503	11	1288
Total			8034
	Number Sitting JCE		
Govt	11507	93	10666
Private	4218	87	3657
MCDE	55868	83	46573
Total			60896

MSCE graduates are qualified for University and College entry. There appear to be about 1500 places available each year. Secondary teacher training has been absorbing small numbers of MSCE graduates. This is planned to grow but it is unclear how many additional teachers will be required since the rate of expansion has not been determined (Ministry of Education 1996). If the Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) is implemented then several thousand new secondary teachers will be needed and these will be drawn from the ranks of MSCE graduates. A proportion of those graduating will not enter the labour market for domestic reasons e.g. marriage. A larger number will seek other forms of employment

## 10 Analysis of Teacher Supply and Demand

---

outside the education system. If 25% of MSCE graduates applied to teacher training about 2000 would be available each year. Of these perhaps half or more would opt for secondary training if it is expanded, leaving no more than about 1000 to enter primary teacher training.

If primary teacher training is to continue on a substantial scale it is clear that in the short to medium term most applicants will continue to be JCE holders<sup>10</sup>. This was the case with the MIITEP recruitment and remains the case among those teachers who are untrained and not in MIITEP. Whatever training arrangements are devised need to recognise this probable constraint.

### 10.2 The demand for new teachers

Analysing demand is more complex. In 1997 the eight year primary school system in Malawi enrolled 2.82 million pupils in over 3,700 schools. In 1997 43,400 teachers were listed as employed, about half of whom were classified as unqualified (Basic Education Statistics 1997). The PIF for Malawi targets a pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) of 60:1 for primary schools which generates a total demand for teachers of about 48,500 without adjustment for the fact not all teachers teach all the time or that some schools are over-staffed. The currently approved teacher establishment is about 52,000. If the cadre were complete with teachers in post the PTR in 1997 would have been 54:1. This figure might be sufficient to include an adjustment for maldistribution of teachers and for small schools, which recognises that achieving 60:1 in most schools involves providing a larger number of teachers than 60:1 suggests.

However, 2500 primary teachers are in MCDE/CDSSs rather than primary schools. This means that only 40,900 are teaching in primary schools. With a total enrolment of 2.82 million pupils the actual average PTRs were about 69:1 during this period<sup>11</sup>.

To put it another way, if 52,000 teachers are needed to reach a PTR of 54:1 (equivalent to 60:1 in most schools), then the shortfall of teachers is currently 11,100. A further 24,000 are untrained (including those who have not yet qualified through MIITEP) and these teachers will need upgrading to trained status.

Several refinements are needed to this simple analysis to establish the answer to the key question posed.

---

<sup>10</sup> The pass rate at MSCE further deteriorated in 1999 to average about 11%, thus worsening the supply side problem.

<sup>11</sup> The MIITEP 1998 database yields a school by school average ptr of about 74:1. The difference is largely explained by the different ways of calculating the average (i.e. total enrolment/total teachers or school by school).



## 10 Analysis of Teacher Supply and Demand

First, a substantial proportion of the teachers who were untrained in 1997 have been enrolled in MIITEP and are in the process of qualifying. This is shown in Table 10.2. 16,200 were enrolled in the six TTCs. The first cohort graduated in the first quarter of 1999.

Table 10.2: Enrolments by Cohort for Different Colleges

Cohort	College						Total
	Karonga	Kasungu	Lilongwe	Blantyre	St Montfort	St Joseph's	
1	267	581	519	513	439	310	2629
2	314	547	532	532	562	288	2775
3	288	546	496	513	494	204	2541
4	350	529	528	525	520	350	2802
5	305	544	470	432	434	297	2482
6	346	529	577	545	580	370	2947
							16176

Assuming 15% of MIITEP students fail to qualify, or leave the programme, total output between January 1999 and January 2001 will be about 13,750, or 6,874 per year<sup>12</sup>. If 25% of those who start fail to finish successfully output will fall to 12,100, or 6,050 per year.

MIITEP data indicates that there are about 7,500 untrained teachers currently teaching who are not enrolled in MIITEP. The actual number may be marginally larger than this due to some non-returns to their survey. An estimate of 8,000 needing training is therefore reasonable and consistent with the other figures above. Most of these untrained teachers who are not in MIITEP have a JCE qualification level. A recent survey indicates only about 800 have achieved MSCE passes. This means it is not feasible to require MSCE as a minimum entry requirement in the short term without excluding most untrained teachers.

Second, achieving a pupil-teacher ratio of 60:1 in most schools will require an average PTR of somewhat greater size. This is because PTRs are very unevenly distributed between schools and it is unrealistic to assume that even in a 10 year period such differences will disappear. Small under-enrolled schools and well-resourced urban schools popular with teachers may retain ratios well under 60:1; rural schools unpopular with teachers may continue to have PTRs over 100.

The most recent Ministry request to DEOs to identify surpluses and shortages of teachers in schools was based on a PTR of 60:1. Adjustments are included to take into account the need for schools to have a minimum of five teachers (one for each grade even if enrolments fall below 300 in five-grade schools). This generates a demand for about 7,500 teachers. It is unclear how surpluses and shortages have been combined in this Ministry study. If the two

<sup>12</sup> It appears that 468 returned to Blantyre College for the examination period from Cohort 1. This compares with 513 initially enrolled. This is 11% attrition before the examination results are known.

## 10 Analysis of Teacher Supply and Demand

---

have simply been added the result is an under-estimate since it will not be the case that all teachers in schools with a surplus (PTR less than 60:1) can be re-deployed to those where there is a deficit. Actual demand may therefore be more than 7,500, and possibly as much as 10,000 depending on the viability of relocation. The PIF commits the Ministry of Education to build classrooms with a capacity for 60 pupils. This is inconsistent with a PTR of 60:1 since this does not include a margin to account for non-teaching heads and deputies. To achieve class sizes of 60 a PTR of closer to 50:1 is probably needed which would increase teacher demand by up to 20% above the figures projected.

Third, some primary teachers have migrated to the Malawi Distance Education College system. Between 1996 and 1997 the number of MCDE teachers increased by about 500. These teachers are mostly trained primary school teachers who continue to be paid from the primary school budget. If the community schools which are replacing MCDE schools continue to grow at this rate they will create an additional recurrent demand for trained primary teachers to replace those who leave primary teaching<sup>13</sup>.

If secondary school enrolments are allowed to grow as planned to reach a 30% transition rate into Form 1 by 2005 the total number of pupils in the new public secondary system would need to grow. The PIF identifies a need for about 120,000 additional places implying that the number of secondary teachers would have to increase by about 15,000<sup>14</sup> if all were qualified and on the public payroll. What proportion of these new teachers would be upgraded primary teachers is unknown. It is plausible that a significant number of primary school teachers (especially those in MCDE) schools will upgrade their qualifications.

In any event it needs to be noted that all current MCDE teachers (2,470) are primary teachers paid from the primary budget but not teaching in primary schools<sup>15</sup>. Thus, as noted above, the number of primary teachers currently teaching in primary schools is not 43,400 but 40,930. This creates an additional demand to replace these teachers if the 60:1 PTR is to be realised. The future of MCDE teachers is uncertain but it seems that many may be offered the opportunity to upgrade to secondary status.

Fourth, attrition within the existing cadre of primary teachers will be a substantial source of recurrent demand for new teachers. There appear to have been 49,140 teachers in post in 1996 (Basic Education Statistics 1997) and 43,400 in 1997, in both cases including MIITEP trainees. If it is the case that during this period new teachers were not appointed then 5,500 teachers left the service, equivalent to an attrition rate of 11% per annum. If annual attrition were only 7% then about 3000 teachers a year would need replacing.

---

<sup>13</sup> As of 2000 the numbers of MCDE/CDSS teachers have been capped. In principle this should stem the flow out of primary teaching into these schools. It remains to be seen if the policy will be effective.

<sup>14</sup> These estimates are approximations. A more detailed study is underway to offer a more refined analysis.

<sup>15</sup> This historic practice should change in 2000 so that all are paid from the secondary budget.

## 10 Analysis of Teacher Supply and Demand

Fifth, none of the calculations on demand vary assumptions about the current rates of repetition and drop out. Currently enrolments in grade 8 (147,000) are 18% of those in grade 1 (817,500), primarily as a result of drop out. If repetition were reduced enrolments would fall as pupils moved more rapidly through the system. If drop out falls enrolments will increase. The effects of such changes can be projected. Their magnitude depends on the rate at which repetition and drop out fall in each grade.

The most likely short term effect of successful reductions in repetition and drop out is a net increase in enrolments. This is because drop out appears highest in the lowest grades, whereas repetition rates are more evenly distributed and are highest in grade 8 which has the least enrolments (Table 10.3). Reducing the claimed 28% drop out between grades 1 and 2 to 14% would increase enrolments in grade 2 by over 110,000, requiring more teachers in the short term to maintain the PTR. Simulations can estimate the effects of drop out and repetition reduction (see Section 10.3 below). If drop out was reduced to an average of 5% and repetition to 7% over 10 years an additional 2000-4000 teachers a year would be needed to maintain PTRs for the first five years, after which demand would begin to fall slowly.

Table 10.3: Repetition and Drop Out Rates by Grade 1997 (%)

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
Repetition	18	17	17	14	13	12	12	21	16
Drop out between grades	28	16	18	13	14	12	9		16

Sixth, underlying all projections of teacher demand is the growth in the size of the school age cohort. If this is 2% per annum, it generates a demand of an additional 1,000 teachers per year, assuming full enrolment. If the cohort is not growing, which is unlikely, no additional teachers would be needed for this reason.

Table 10.4 collates the estimates of demand. The conclusion from the analysis is that annual training demand is between 9,000 and 14,000 if all government objectives were to be met and the assumptions above held true. It may be that some of the assumptions are unduly pessimistic and that in any case progress towards targets will be slower than anticipated. This would lower demand. Nevertheless an output of teachers similar to that planned for MIITEP is likely to be needed for a sustained period. The annual capacity of primary TTCs is about 8,100 under the MIITEP system. Under a conventional full-time PRESET system annual capacity would be 2,700.

## 10 Analysis of Teacher Supply and Demand

Table 10.4: Teacher Demand

<b>Teacher Demand for 1999</b>		
Current Establishment	52000	As gazetted
Teacher in Post 1997/8	43400	1998 MoEST statistics
Number of primary teachers not teaching in primary schools but in MCDE/CDSSs	2500	
MIITEP replacements whilst on course	3000	
Shortfall in 1999	11100	If these were in post PTR would be 54:1
<b>Training Needs – Backlog</b>		
1. Untrained Teachers in system	24000	Within the total of 43400 employed
2. Enrolled in MIITEP	16000	
3. Unqualified teachers needing training not in MIITEP	8000	MIITEP data base 1998 survey
4. Additional teachers needed to reach establishment of 52,000	11100	
5. Training Demand – Backlog in 1999 (3+4)	19100	Number needing training if all 52000 teachers are trained
<b>Annual Recurrent Demand</b>		<b>Per Year</b>
6. New migration to MCDE/CDSS	500 – 1000	1996-1997 = 500. Could be higher per year if CSS are developed into schools with much lower PTRs than in MCDE/CDSSs
7. Attrition of primary teacher cadre through retirement and death (attrition 7% or 11%)	3000-5500	1996/1997 attrition rate = 11% = 5,500 loss of teachers
8. Reduction in drop out and repetition	1500-3000	FPE invites reduction in drop out to increase completion rates. Demand depends on rate of reduction and on changes in repetition (see simulation).
9. Cohort growth	500-1000	1-2%
10. Total Annual demand (6+7+8+9)	5500-10500	
11. Backlog of untrained teaches in the system (8000) + teachers needed to reach establishment numbers (14100) = 19100 to be trained over 5 years = per year	3820	Assuming all untrained teachers currently in schools will be trained over 5 years, that MCDE/CDSS teachers will be replaced in primary schools, that MIITEP continues, and that the establishment is filled with new recruits.
12. Training Demand per Annum	9320-13820	
<b>Output of Training System 1999</b>		
13. MIITEP annual net output 1999	6050-6870	15%-25% attrition in MIITEP.

## 10 Analysis of Teacher Supply and Demand

---

### 10.3 A simulation

Teacher requirements for primary can be modelled to update the projections made in the PIF and examine the effects of different changes on demand. This has been done using an enrolment-driven model with the data initially obtained from the 1997/8 school census statistical report and using the methods used in the PIF. For simplicity the consequences of changed enrolment and expenditure at secondary level have been omitted from this model. Depending on how rapidly secondary school enrolments grow, and what effect they have on the staffing of primary schools, secondary expansion may create additional demands for primary teachers as some upgrade to secondary status.

Simulation 1 allows drop out and repetition rates to fall from current values to 5% over the next 10 years, with the exception of grade 8 where repetition remains at 20% to account for examination retaking. The entry rate into grade 1 falls from its current value of about 190% to 130% as overage enrolment diminishes and there is less repetition in grade 1. Teacher attrition in the simulation is 7% p.a. The 1997 PIF assumes a rise in attrition rates to 7-8% by year 2000; recent estimates suggest attrition may be higher. The growth rate of the school age cohort is estimated at 2%. As predicted, enrolments and consequently teacher demand first rise as a result of the dominant effect of drop out reduction. In the longer term demand falls as the effects of lower repetition and a fall in the entry rate into grade 1 are felt. Annual demand peaks at about 7,500 in 2001. This does not account for the training needed to upgrade those untrained in the system, to replace those working in MCDE/CDSS schools, or to reach the establishment level of employment.

If the growth rate in the primary school age cohort falls from 2% to 1.5% the number of teachers needed will diminish. However, if attrition rates amongst teachers are not the 7% assumed in Simulation 1 but 11%, (the apparent attrition in 1996-1997), then the numbers needed will increase. The result of these adjustments is shown in Simulation 2. In Simulation 2 demand peaks at nearly 10,000 teachers a year in 2002 as a result of reductions in drop-out, decreased repetition, cohort growth and attrition. Like Simulation 1 this does not include any reduction in the backlog of untrained teachers over and above those already enrolled in MIITEP, any replacement of MCDE/CDSS teachers not teaching at primary level, or any recruitment to establishment levels.

The Simulations confirm that primary teacher demand is very substantial and growing. It is of a size that implies that higher output is required from the teacher education system. In the absence of this pupil-teacher ratios will increase and class sizes grow.

## 10 Analysis of Teacher Supply and Demand

Figure 5: Simulation

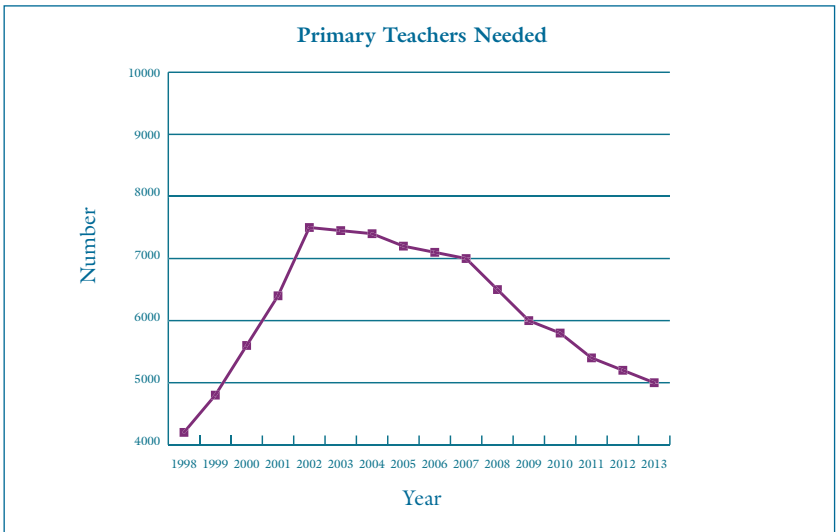
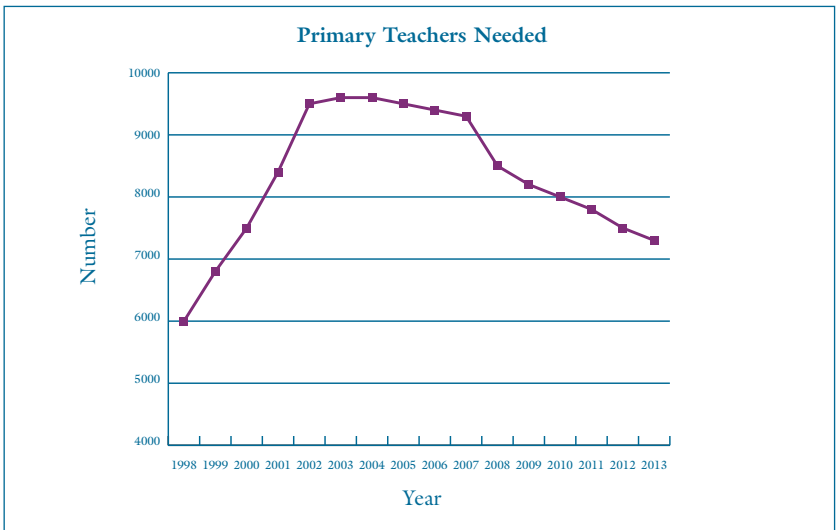


Figure 6: Simulation 2



## 10 Analysis of Teacher Supply and Demand

---

### 10.4 Some observations

First, primary teacher demand in Malawi has remained high since FPE was introduced. The supply has always been problematic since, even before FPE, not enough teachers were being trained to reduce pupil-teacher ratios and increase enrolment rates. The requirements of PIF, teacher migration to the increased number of public and private secondary schools, attrition due to HIV/AIDS, reduced drop out, and expansion in the size of the school age cohort have all contributed to increased demand.

Second, up to 10,000 teachers a year are needed to meet demand if PIF targets are to be met. The number might be slightly less depending on the assumptions made about the future pattern of the factors mentioned in the first point above. However, the numbers are clearly well in excess of the current levels of output. The 10,000 projected annual demand was based on the assumption that MIITEP continued to function with successive cohorts. MIITEP enrolment was suspended after cohort 6. It is only now (July 2001) that cohort 7 has been enrolled, thus creating a backlog of demand which has accumulated since cohort 6 was enrolled at the end of 1998. In the short term this suggests that demand probably exceeds 10,000 a year if pupil-teacher ratios are not to rise further, or enrolment rates to drop.

Third, demand at this level can only be met by maintaining recruitment of JCE holders. However desirable MSCE qualification might be it is unlikely that enough holders will be willing and able to train as primary teachers. This is even more true now than in the past as a result of the rapid increase in enrolments in public and private secondary schools which will attract MSCE holders interested in teaching. This has implications for teacher education curricula that could or should be differentiated for JCE and MSCE holders. In addition, raising entry qualifications for teacher training to MSCE would discriminate against women, given the historic and current gender inequity in the Malawian education system (see Croft, 2000).

Fourth, the implications are clear. PIF and international development targets, to which the Government of Malawi is committed, require high volume training methods for primary school teachers. Extended periods of full-time pre-career training cannot provide these volumes without tripling (for a one-year course) or multiplying by six (for a two-year course) the number of places in colleges.





## Chapter Eleven

## 11 Financing Teacher Education

## 11.1 The Cost of MIITEP

The costing of MIITEP is complex. In the original plan the Government of Malawi provides six professionals associated with the Teacher Development Unit and a range of short term local experts from the Malawi Institute of Education, the University, the Colleges of Education, the University and the Ministry of Education. The 315 Primary Education Advisors and senior school staff are supposed to support trainees through various field activities.

Support for training activities which surround MIITEP – e.g. training of trainers, PEAs, and head teachers - is supported by the MoEST from a World Bank loan. So also are the curriculum review activities, and the production of five MIITEP Student Teacher Handbooks plus other guidance and learning materials. GTZ provides three long-term experts for training and materials development, logistics and monitoring and evaluation. It also provides funds for short term international consultancy, study tours, and project management along with office support costs including vehicles and computing equipment.

The original agreements provide for a MK74 million loan assistance drawn from the International Development Association (IDA) support for the Primary Education Project as a whole (World Bank 1995). This amounted to about US\$5 million. GTZ agreed to contribute DM 4.5 million as grant aid (Table 11.1).

Table 11.1: MIITEP Planned Costs – World Bank Supported Elements<sup>16</sup>

Activity	Cost		
	MK Million	MK/trainee	US\$/trainee
<b>Investment Costs</b>			
Sub Zonal seminars	5.6	311	21
Printing of training manuals	17.98	999	67
Projects, assignments, examinations	3.0	167	11
Mid Term Evaluation	1.0	56	4.0
Staff development	1.6	89	6.0
<b>Pedagogic Support for Teachers</b>			
School-based In service	4.7	261	17
Materials for in service	4.7	261	17
Sub Zonal in service training	16.9	939	63
Teaching and learning packages	7.0	389	26
Motorcycles	9.1	506	34
<b>Running Costs</b>			
Teacher Development Unit operating costs	0.15	8.0	1.0
Motorcycle operating costs	2.59	144	10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>74.32</b>	<b>4129</b>	<b>275</b>

<sup>16</sup> Conversion at 1US\$ = MKS15 in 1995. In 1998 1US\$= MK42. Unit costs based on 18000 trainees. MIITEP enrolment in 6 cohorts is 16200. This table does not include GTZ supported elements or account for overlaps with other projects.

## 11 Financing Teacher Education

---

MIITEP benefits from support provided by other projects. Thus, for example, the Malawi School Support System Programme (MSSSP) trains PEAs and heads and deputy head teachers, is establishing the TDCs, and supports in-service programmes, all of which overlap with MIITEP activities. It also contributes to the costs of transport for PEAs visiting schools. DFID has provided £8.8 million of grant aid for MSSSP over 5 years for its whole range of activities.

There are several factors which create difficulties in establishing the true costs of MIITEP<sup>17</sup>. The first arises from lack of clarity in what is and is not a MIITEP activity and which receives complementary or over-lapping funding from other sources. These issues cannot be resolved in the accounts available for this analysis. This is not least because of the aggregation of Teacher Development Programme activities into the single line item for Internal Training in the EDMU which makes it impossible to unpack separate activities funded from different sources easily. It is also the case that some MIITEP activities appear to extend to wide constituencies, which might be thought to cover needs over and above those directly related to the training of MIITEP trainees. Similarly, other projects target similar groups of stakeholders in MIITEP with training and orientation activities which complement MIITEP support but are funded from other sources.

Second, devaluation and inflation have had an unknown but substantial impact on project finances. Current exchange rates of 1US\$= MK42 mean that the Kwacha value of the loans and grants will have increased nearly three-fold. Detailed knowledge of disbursement patterns and inflation in prices, salaries, and allowances would be needed to determine the impact of this on the value of the support agreed.

Third, some scheduled activities for MIITEP have not taken place as originally planned. Thus it seems probable that many of the 12 sub-zonal workshops have not occurred and that presumably disbursement for these has not taken place.

### 11.2 Costs per trainee

This chapter is concerned with the costs of MIITEP-style programmes and focuses on a forward view of their financial implications and sustainability. It is therefore important to arrive at estimates of the recurrent cost per trained teacher of maintaining such a system so that comparisons can be made with alternatives. In so far as the actual costs of the existing programme can be established, they provide a guide to reasonable assumptions for a recurrent system. A large element of these costs are related to the development work necessary to establish the programme and to the associated international inputs. Though some proportion of these costs would continue if the system of training is continued, these on-going development costs would relate to after-care and periodic revision of training materials. As a first proxy we have tried to cost elements of the training programme at

---

<sup>17</sup> We are very grateful to Tim Cammack for assistance in interpreting budgetary issues.

## 11 Financing Teacher Education

current rates (January 1999) to establish some guidance as to the cost per trainee that would allow continuation of existing arrangements. The results are shown below (Table 11.2).

Table 11.2: Projected Cost of Training – Cost per Trainee

	Cost/ Activity	Number	Cost/ trainee		cost/ 2500		cost/ 15000	
	MK		MK	US\$	MK '000	US\$ '000	MK '000	US\$ '000
Field Support Costs								
Zonal Meetings - Trainees	150	12	1800	43	4500	107	27000	643
Zonal Meetings - PEAs	200	12	160	4	400	10	2400	57
PEA School Visits	300	10	3000	71	7500	179	45000	1071
TTC supervisor visits	1000	5	5000	119	12500	298	75000	1786
Full-time Training Costs								
TTC Teaching Salaries			1000	24	2500	60	15000	357
Trainees Salary 3mth			4500	107	11250	268	67500	1607
Trainees Salary 1mth			1500	36	3750	89	22500	536
TTC boarding 3mth			2100	50	5250	125	31500	750
TTC boarding 1mth			700	17	1750	42	10500	250
Orientation - non salary			1000	24	2500	60	15000	357
Orientation salary costs			500	12	1250	30	7500	179
Materials and Assessment								
External Exam costs	475	1	475	11	1188	28	7125	170
Internal Assessment costs	720	1	720	17	1800		10800	
Materials	1050	1	1050	25	2625	63	15750	375
Central Costs								
Administration			200	5	500	12	3000	71
Transport etc			200	5	500	12	3000	71
DEO Overhead								
(10% field costs)			496	12	1240	30	7440	177
TTC overhead (50% salaries)			500	12	1250	30	7500	179
Total			24901	593	62253	1439	373515	8636

Key assumptions made in this analysis include:

- 12 zonal meetings occur and PEAs make 2 visits a term for 5 terms to trainees.
- College lecturers visit trainees in school once each term.
- About 20 weeks of lecturers' time is devoted to each cohort over two years (11 week block + 4 week block + visits) and salary is apportioned accordingly.
- Trainees receive MK1500/month during training.
- The costs of an initial orientation period are included.
- Materials costs per student are US\$25 for all guides etc.
- Central costs and overheads are distributed as shown.

## 11 Financing Teacher Education

---

Various modifications could be made to this model. In particular if zonal meetings and PEA visiting were reduced in frequency (as has been the case in practice) this would have a significant downward effect on costs. On the other hand, these aspects of the programme were evaluated as being very important. It is possible that such meetings and visits could be shared with other INSET support (notably the MSSSP) with an apportionment of costs. This is especially true for PEA visits, which probably should not be solely focused on MIITEP support, given the costs and difficulty of transport.

School visits by College lectures have not taken place at the frequency suggested in MIITEP documentation. Indeed they could not. By the time MIITEP had enrolled six cohorts, five cohorts totalling about 12,500 trainees were in schools. If 125 College lecturers were available for school visits this would imply 100 visits per term per lecturer, at the same time as a cohort was being taught in the Colleges. With no more than about 60 working days in a term this is unlikely. A lower frequency of visits would reduce the costs.

The commitment of lecturers' time to school visits amounts to about 20 weeks over a two year period per cohort. Lecturers' total workload will depend on the number of cohorts enrolled simultaneously. With only three cohorts enrolled, as is currently the case, about 30 weeks per year are generated. If staff are not involved in any other activities then the full annual costs of their time should be charged to MIITEP. This would substantially increase costs.

Materials costs exclude development costs and might therefore be thought an underestimate, especially if materials are to be revised and improved. Examination costs are substantial. Estimates suggest that Malawi National Examinations Board related costs are about MK475 (= US\$10.5) per candidate for the final examination alone. Other assessment-related costs internal to MIITEP (internal examination, projects, assignments) appear to be around MK720 (= US\$16). Depending on how projects, assignments and final examinations are organised and marked, a cheaper arrangement might be feasible. Overhead costs are estimated. They may be higher depending on how they are apportioned and shared.

It has been suggested that payment is to be made for school-based supervision to heads and deputies. This would considerably increase the costs. At MK50/month for heads and deputy heads this would add MK2400 (US\$57) per student). This would create a precedent that would seem undesirable.

This analysis indicates that a programme with the activities identified appears to cost about MK24,900 per student or US\$590 at prevailing exchange rates. These costs are for two years of training. The cost per cohort of 2500 is MK 62.3 million (US\$ 1.35 million) and for 15,000 trainees MK 374 million (US\$8.1 million). This excludes development costs,

## 11 Financing Teacher Education

training of trainers, and international consultant support, all of which have been substantial. The distribution of costs is as shown below.

Table 11.3: Distribution of Costs per Student over Two Years

	MK	US\$	Percent
<b>Field Support Costs</b>	<b>9960</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>40.0</b>
Zonal Meetings	1960	47	7.9
PEA Visits	3000	71	12.0
TTC Visits	5000	119	20.1
<b>Full-time Training Costs</b>	<b>11300</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>45.4</b>
TTC Salaries	1000	24	4.0
Trainees Salaries	6500	155	26.1
Boarding etc	3800	90	15.3
<b>Materials and Assessment</b>	<b>2245</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>9.0</b>
Materials	1050	25	4.2
Assessment	1195	28	4.8
<b>Central Costs</b>	<b>1396</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>5.6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>24901</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 11.3 gives some indication of the scope for cost reductions. If the basic model of a three-month initial block and a month-long final block separated by school-based practice is retained, then cost reductions will have to be found from within the major categories identified. Field support costs could be reduced by sharing costs for zonal meetings and PEA visits. It might be possible to reduce these by as much as 75%. As noted above school visiting by College lectures cannot take place at the frequency planned if all cohorts are enrolled simultaneously. There is evidence that less than one visit per student has actually been achieved, and that such school visits have not been regarded by observers as contributing much to the training process, although students thought they were very valuable (Kunje and Chiremba 2000). If this visiting was eliminated in favour of school - and PEA - based assessment covered under other budgets these costs would disappear. Changing the length of the school-based period would not have an effect on costs independent of the number of activities planned. It is more difficult to see how the full-time training costs could be reduced without reducing the time in College. Cost recovery has been suggested related to boarding costs. If this were set at about MK5 per day it would reduce the boarding costs by about MK600. Materials costs are fairly fixed and could not be seriously reduced without degrading the resources available to students. The costs of assessment could be reduced but this would not have much effect on the overall budget. It is probably preferable to re-profile expenditure on assessment to produce more valid instruments of higher quality (Croft, Kunje and Stuart 2000). If these modifications were made the cost per MIITEP trainee over two years would fall from MK24,900 (US\$593) to about MK 15,540 (US\$370).

## 11 Financing Teacher Education

---

These figures can be compared with the most recent unit costs for teacher training institutions as a whole (including secondary) based on MoEST budget estimates. These are MK5,200 (1996/7 MoEST statistics published in 1998), or about MK6,900 (US\$163) (budget estimate 98/99). Recurrent unit costs of MIITEP training therefore appear to be about three times the current government unit cost of the teacher training institutions alone. By way of further comparison project estimates for full-time residential training secondary teachers at Domasi and Chancellor College are currently placed in the range of MK45,000 per year (US\$ 1100) (Secondary Education MOEST, 1996:63).

In summary, what can be said about costs is that MIITEP-style training would cost around MK62.3 million for a cohort of 2,500 over two years if it continued to be implemented as originally intended without further development costs. This figure could be reduced to around MK38.5 million if the fieldwork costs were reduced and a boarding fee introduced. With six cohorts enrolled simultaneously (15,000 trainees) the total cost of training would be between MK374 million and MK231 million (including salary costs borne by the Ministry). The current annual allocation to teacher education for all the training colleges, including secondary, is about MK40 million. To maintain MIITEP therefore requires substantial external assistance. We note that currently infrastructure and staffing is not sufficient to maintain six cohorts simultaneously. If this were envisaged there are additional investment costs over and above those needed to support the recurrent budget.

It is important to remember that the existing method of training teachers incorporates five terms paid work as an untrained teacher during the training period. Conventional full-time residential PRESET does not have this complementary benefit. The opportunity cost of this system is therefore much lower than that of conventional full-time training. If MIITEP were not in existence and was replaced by full-time training, additional untrained teachers would have to be employed and paid to maintain the same levels of the pupil-teacher ratio. Simply speaking, the opportunity cost of a two-year full-time programme is that of the gross salary of a primary teacher for two years – say MK 50,000. MIITEP's opportunity cost is only 4 months salary – about MK8,000. This represents a substantial saving for the education budget as a whole of about MK630 million (US\$15 million) over the four years covered by 6 cohorts of MIITEP (or MK158 million per year).

### 11.3 Comparisons with alternatives

Alternative patterns of organisation for teacher education are being considered as a result of dissatisfaction with some aspects of MIITEP training. An illustration of the most commonly discussed alternatives is informative. The training model could return to a pattern of one year full-time and one year school-based, or two years full-time with teaching practice integrated into the programmes. The full-time cost per trainee in TTC can be estimated at about MK 25,200, based on existing cost structures. Table 11.4 estimates costs for a

## 11 Financing Teacher Education

conventional 2-year full-time programme with 16 weeks of College-supervised teaching practice, and for a one year full-time course followed by one year of supported school-based teaching practice.

Table 11.4: Comparison between Different Modes of Training

Mode	College cost	Field cost	Teacher Replacement	Full unit cost	Annual Output	Total for 7500
	MK	MK	MK	MK		MK '000
MIITEP without cost reduction	14700	10080	8400	33180	7500	248.9
MIITEP with cost reduction	14280	1260	8400	23940	7500	179.6
Two years full-time - 16 weeks teaching practice	50400	8400	50400	109200	2500	819.0
1 yr FT + 1 yr in school - without cost reduction	25200	4200	25200	54600	2500	409.5
1 yr FT + 1 yr in school - with cost reduction	23940	504	25200	49644	2500	372.3

Table 11.4 shows that two years full-time training is between three and four and a half times as expensive as MIITEP per student. One year full-time followed by school-based training is between two and three times as expensive. The estimates include the cost of teacher replacement. In addition MIITEP is capable of producing three times the output of either of the other options in the same time period without the need for additional facilities. In order to increase output from 2,500 to 7,500 an additional 5,000 places would have to be created in the College system through building new TTCs, or through utilising space in other educational institutions. The alternative modes are therefore substantially more expensive and would probably require significant capital investment. They would also require the appointment of a considerable number of new College lecturers.

### 11.4 Some conclusions

First, funding of MIITEP is complex and its analysis is made even more complex by the lack of clarity as to what activities certain funds are meant to cover. Government funds, donor funding and loans have been used to support MIITEP directly and indirectly.

Second, the best estimates available from this analysis suggest that recurrent costs of MIITEP as currently configured are about MK25,000 (US\$590 at 1999 prices) per two-year trained teacher. This writes off the costs of development, training of trainers, induction of heads and PEAs, and technical cooperation assistance, all of which have been substantial. To sustain this system with no further development would create a recurrent cost burden many times larger than the current allocation for teacher education and an unsustainably large proportion of the education budget.

## 11 Financing Teacher Education

---

Third, if various cost savings were introduced whilst maintaining the basic form of MIITEP, costs could be reduced. If school-based supervision was mainly undertaken by PEAs and school staff (recognising that college staff cannot make all the scheduled visits anyway), and a contribution to boarding costs were introduced of MK5 per day, costs would fall to about MK15,500 (US\$370 at 1999 prices). Further cost reductions would require more fundamental changes to MIITEP's structure, and the additional costs of transition.

Fourth, two alternative patterns of training have been considered. These are one year full-time residential + one year school-based, and two years full-time residential with 16 weeks supported teaching practice. These would cost a minimum of twice as much as MIITEP and a maximum of four and a half times, excluding the costs of transition and development which would be very substantial.

Fifth, whatever MIITEP's problems in practice, the cost analysis indicates that awkward choices may have to be made. MIITEP, or structurally similar programmes, are the only way of affording to meet demand. Other alternatives appear to require unsupportable levels of new investment and recurrent costs, or the abandonment of key PIF targets.

Finally MIITEP, or its successor, needs to improve its quality and the effectiveness of its delivery. This is likely to be most effective if it is cast within a medium term development strategy for teacher education (including secondary since the two inevitably interact). This desirably should include consideration of career progression for primary teachers beyond the MIITEP qualification. It is conceivable that MIITEP initial qualification, followed several years later by intensive professional development programmes for selected primary teachers might be both the most affordable and the most realistic strategy to improve the effectiveness of primary schools and enhance the professional leadership of primary teachers.



## Chapter Twelve

## 12 Concluding Remarks

### 12.1 Introduction

MIITEP is a huge programme. It was conceived to address a crisis of teacher supply in the primary school system when the Free Primary Education policy created unprecedented demand and children enrolled en masse. It quickly became clear that there were not enough teachers, children needed classrooms and books, and school managers needed to be equipped with new skills. The Government of Malawi secured external assistance to reshape teacher education to meet the needs, and MIITEP was born.

There were many constraints which need recognising before passing judgement on MIITEP's strengths and weaknesses and making suggestions for the future. First, MIITEP was designed to include large elements of school-based training. Many Malawian primary schools have insufficient desks and chairs, lack classrooms, and possess few learning materials. Many also have half or more of their staff untrained. FPE initially meant that class sizes often exceeded 200 in lower grades, especially when they are combined for lack of space or lack of teachers. The blackboard is the main teaching aid, though enterprising teachers collect bottle tops, stones, etc. for counting. Textbooks, if available, usually have to be shared between several children; some teachers do not have teachers' guides, and there are virtually no other published resources. In the lower grades, many pupils do not have pencils or exercise books; infant grades sometimes practising writing in the sand. The diversity within one class is enormous, not only children with different abilities and aptitudes, but also of different ages: the range in grade 1 is often from 4 -12 years old or more. Pupil absenteeism is high, and many are ill-nourished (Croft, forthcoming). Neither the college classes nor the Handbooks developed for MIITEP could easily focus on helping students deal with these kinds of conditions, especially since tutors have had little direct experience themselves of teaching in such impoverished learning environments.

Second, heads were expected to co-ordinate the school-based training after being given just a short introduction to MIITEP. Their tasks included, for example, pairing the trainees with more experienced teachers, (though in over half Malawi primary schools less than 50% of the staff are qualified), organising training sessions, supervising trainees regularly, and sending in reports. Most heads were unprepared for the role and many thought they should be paid extra. In practice, they checked the trainees' lesson plans daily, but delegated or ignored much of the rest. Pairing seemed ad hoc, and often more directed to reducing teaching loads than to professional development. The trainees did not, on the whole, feel the school had given them much support, and perhaps many schools could not do so, given the large numbers of trainees<sup>18</sup>.

Third, the PEAs were supposed to supervise and report on the trainees regularly, and to run 12 zonal workshops for each cohort, on the top of their other inservice responsibilities. At

<sup>18</sup> Training for head teachers has since been introduced through MSSSP

## 12 Concluding Remarks

---

the time of the study the PEAs were newly appointed, had received little training, the Teachers Development Centres (TDCs) were not built, and transport to schools was difficult. Many zonal seminars did not take place because of lack of available funds. Those that did, were rated by both trainees and observers as useful, practical, and participatory. Not only did trainees get information and skills that could be immediately applied in their classrooms, but they could share ideas and experiences with each other. It seems most students had only one or two visits from PEAs. However, one team of PEAs we researched had managed to visit some students several times, giving effective formative feedback before allocating a final grade, showing what was possible. Since then, all PEAs have been issued with motorbikes, building of TDCs and housing for PEAs is underway, and they have received training through the MSSSP. The situation may therefore be improving.

Fourth, college tutors were supposed to visit trainees five times during the 20 months in school. The regime devised was impossible to execute. The first cohorts followed each other directly into college, no funds were available for travel or subsistence, and tutors were not released from teaching until the first cohorts had been many months in schools. A period of four weeks was available with a limited number of vehicles for transport. Tutors could only spend a brief time in each school, perhaps seeing only part of a lesson, and having little opportunity to give feedback. Yet a grade had to be given. Tutors were not always able to see their own students, and many were not visited. Under this system, assessment could hardly be more than a ritual. If no mark could be reported from the field, the mark given for the one lesson taught by each trainee in the demonstration school during the college period was used. Almost all trainees passed teaching practice with good grades. It is unlikely this reflected a considered judgement of teaching competencies.

Fifth, MIITEP was a huge, elaborate scheme devised to meet a crisis, without sufficient time to put into place the necessary administrative infrastructures. Capacity was stretched to the point where many trainees' records were incomplete and it was not known where they were; colleges kept no continuous records of student performance, zonal activities were constantly rescheduled at short notice or cancelled, and learning materials were late in production and delivery. There clearly were considerable problems with the disbursement of funds arising both from the timescale and accountability attached to external funding, and from the complex and inefficient internal allocation procedures. A key complementary training element - the Malawi Schools Support System Programme (MSSSP) – which was to train head teachers, other senior school staff, and PEAs in management and supervision, began some time after MIITEP itself.

The MUSTER Discussion Papers detail many other constraints which affected MIITEP. In the round, it was not surprising that plans were often not realised and that for much of the time MIITEP existed within a culture of crisis management, rather than systematic and evolutionary programme development and consolidation. Though it is easy to agree that

---

## 12 Concluding Remarks

both new structures for teacher education were needed to meet unprecedented demand, and new content and methods were essential to train more effective teachers, attempting system-wide innovation of both at the same time was more than ambitious.

The findings of MUSTER in relation to the major research arenas – characteristics of trainees, the curriculum as intended and in action, the qualities of colleges and trainers, insights into the effects of training and the experience of newly qualified teachers, and issues of supply and demand and costs, are summarised at the end of each of the preceding chapters. They are therefore only briefly elaborated here.

### 12.2 Entrants

The analysis of the characteristics of MIITEP trainees highlights the need to take these into account in designing the teacher education curriculum. Trainees have high average ages for initial training, come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds often with limited experience of the modern sector, have low levels of educational achievement, and are not conspicuously proficient in the medium of instruction. Trainees' memories of primary schooling and their perspectives on effective teachers and the teaching profession suggest fairly restricted images of pedagogy and limited engagement with new ways of conceptualising teaching and learning in the primary school. Almost all had substantial experience as untrained teachers, but this was often under-valued, both by their tutors and by the trainees themselves, as though their practical knowledge was subordinate, if not irrelevant, to the task of acquiring formal status as a trained teacher.

As noted in Chapter 3 all these characteristics carry messages for the curriculum and its realisation. MIITEP students are adult learners with weak study and language skills. They are diverse, and would benefit from a recognition of their different strengths and weaknesses. They bring with them to MIITEP insights into teaching and learning which may not be theorised but are nevertheless grounded in classroom experience. However it seems that this is rarely recognised explicitly either in curriculum materials or in college practice.

### 12.3 Curriculum and delivery

The MIITEP curriculum is a combination of subject content knowledge and pedagogic content knowledge. The curriculum clearly has its antecedents in previous teacher education programmes in Malawi and much of its content and organisation is recognisably similar. However, it is taught in considerably less time than the programmes which preceded it. Overall impressions lead to the conclusions that though MIITEP espouses student-centred and participatory pedagogy, the Handbooks project much more closed and didactic approaches to learning within specific units. The balance between subject content and

## 12 Concluding Remarks

---

pedagogic content is inconsistent. Much of the material in the Handbooks can be approached as facts to be learned and the assessment regime reinforces this recall-based orientation of the curriculum in practice. School-based practice, and the experiential base of trainees, is peripheral rather than central to the curriculum. There is no differentiation to reflect the different needs of JCE and MSCE holders. Important omissions include the development of study and communication skills, language up-grading and code-switching, understanding gender issues, and classroom pedagogy for multi-grade classes with poor resources.

The curriculum in action in the colleges appears to be inefficiently delivered. Observational studies indicate that teaching time is often shortened by poor time keeping. Class sizes can be unnecessarily large and exceed 80 students as a result of doubling up groups, despite relatively low student staff ratios. Teaching loads of lecturers appear to be between 8 and 12 periods a week. Much lecturing is undertaken in a transmission style where information is projected with few opportunities for students to engage in debate and reflection. Questions were often informational and recall-based, and much of the teaching appeared examination-driven, rarely departing from material likely to be found in assessment tasks. Few attempts seem to be made capitalise on trainees' insights into learning and teaching based on their experience in schools. Professional development issues were invariably approached in a compartmentalised way, as were other areas of the curriculum. Where the MIITEP materials attempted to promote in-depth discussion, this was sometimes misinterpreted as another opportunity for students to 'learn the right answer'. There were few occasions where trainees seemed to be treated as future colleagues, rather than subordinate learners in a similar position to secondary school students. These are all indications of a view of academic educational knowledge as absolute, fixed and non-negotiable. With such beliefs, it is unsurprising that exhortations to staff and students to 'discuss' were unsuccessful.

School-based activities were compromised by the levels of support actually provided by schools. With some exceptions these were often minimal, perhaps predictably given the numbers of untrained teachers in schools and the general scarcity of resources. It was the exceptional head who systematically provided support, and most heads felt inadequately prepared for their roles. Though MIITEP trainees are expected to develop professionally during school-based work, and many appear to, there was evidence that they needed more support than most received. Few resources were available apart from the Handbooks. The assessment regime of assignments and projects was largely unsupported in practice, and students generally received no feedback on what they produced. Women with family responsibilities may have been especially disadvantaged by the workload generated by combination of work and study. The proposed schedule of visits from college tutors did not and could not happen. At best students tended to be visited once and assessed for teaching practice. The school-based element of the curriculum was severely handicapped by irregular and inadequate flows of resources for zonal workshops, travel etc and delays in the

---

## 12 Concluding Remarks

development of complementary inputs from MSSSP and elsewhere. Despite all this MIITEP trainees did value the inputs and support they received. Evidence from the later stages of fieldwork, when MSSSP was being implemented, offers hope that it is feasible to provide more support to future cohorts.

### 12.4 Assessment strategy and achievement

The assessment regime of MIITEP is extensive and demanding and has many elements. In summary, the written examinations do cover material from the MIITEP Handbooks but rarely stretch beyond this. Their coverage of subject specific content knowledge and pedagogic content knowledge is problematic and variable. Nowhere are students asked to integrate their knowledge and understanding, not even between Foundations Studies and the curriculum subjects. The exams vary in their degree of content validity and poor test items pointed to the need for improvement in test construction. Most examination items require only low level cognitive performance based on recalling material directly from the Handbooks. The occasional question on gender is the only example of integrating these broader objectives into the subject-based assessment. The assessment of assignments and projects appears to miss opportunities to assess how students are actually applying knowledge and understanding to their own classroom situations. The assessment of teaching practice in schools adds little variance to overall score, is unreliable, and is generally not credited with much validity.

Data on performance is disappointing. What indications there are suggest that even after training mathematics and English competence remains low. Though most students obtain pass grades in the final examinations, the real level of achievement that this represents must be a cause for concern. So also must be the fact that teaching practice grades are consistently high, though judgemental data from our research suggests that many new teachers have not mastered a full range of classroom competencies.

### 12.5 Colleges and staff

The college system has been deteriorating, with staff working under poor conditions. Though some colleges have good buildings, other infrastructure and resourcing vary from barely adequate to totally unsatisfactory. A combination of policy neglect, lack of maintenance, erratic and minimal funding, unstable staffing, and indifferent leadership appear to have resulted in impoverished institutions with low morale and poor quality learning environments. If MIITEP or its successors are to use the colleges as an institutional base, whatever the quality of their planning and curriculum materials, effectiveness will be compromised by very poor quality learning environments.

## 12 Concluding Remarks

---

The general budgetary system for the colleges simply does not work and makes any kind of regular functioning difficult if not impossible. Partly as a result of the irregular patterns of finance, and MIITEP scheduling and changes in policy, patterns of utilisation of staff are not very efficient and college capacity is under-utilised. The main constraint on increased enrolment lies in boarding facilities. Current arrangements also tend to exclude those with child care responsibilities from residential status with consequences for recruiting more women into teaching.

College lecturers as a group are under-qualified, relatively old and many will soon be seeking retirement. Their numbers have been dwindling. This creates an opportunity to renew the cadre within a medium term plan for the development of teacher education. There is currently no coherent staff development programme. The perceptions lecturers have of good teachers, their view of the curriculum, trainees and the nature of the training task rests uneasily with much of the rhetoric of MIITEP. Clearly they have yet to be largely converted to ideas of student-centred learning (their practice displays only glimpses of what it might be), and they transmit messages through their practice of a more traditional teaching approach. Yet the colleges continue to function and staff do communicate some of their skill and enthusiasm to trainees, many of whom seem to value their college experience. This is a tribute to those who remain motivated to make something out of very adverse conditions.

### 12.6 Newly Qualified Teachers

Most NQTs return to the schools where they trained and are quickly integrated into schools as normal teachers. Some receive rapid promotion or are sent to new secondary schools. Most seem to get some induction at zonal level, though reportedly the arrangements made at school level for support vary from very helpful to non-existent. There were signs of a distance between the school and community in many of the responses of NQTs. Accommodation, food, transport and salary payments all figured highly as sources of problems. Though basic learning materials are available to most NQTs in their schools, other resources are scarce, and the Handbooks become a valued tool. The college curriculum needs to recognise this reality of the professional environment of NQTs.

However, links which might smooth the transition from student teacher to qualified teacher still seem tenuous. Notably, the induction topics that NQTs apparently find most useful are things that they should have already been taught, such as lesson planning, recording, and assessment. This suggests the need for more practical on-going support during the first years of teaching, perhaps supported by more print materials. This could be integrated with the support the MSSSP or its successors provide for school development.

---

## 12 Concluding Remarks

### 12.7 Supply and demand

The requirements of PIF, teacher migration to the increased number of public and private secondary schools, attrition due to HIV/AIDS, reduced drop out, and expansion in the size of the school age cohort have all contributed to increased demand. Up to 10,000 teachers a year are needed to meet demand if PIF targets are to be met. This projection of annual demand was based on the assumption that MIITEP continued to function with successive cohorts. MIITEP enrolment was suspended after cohort 6, thus creating a backlog of demand. This suggests that demand probably now exceeds 10,000 a year if pupil-teacher ratios are not to rise further, or enrolment rates to drop. These levels of demand at this level can only be met by maintaining recruitment of JC holders. This is even more true now than in the past as a result of the rapid increase in enrolments in public and private secondary schools which will attract MSCE holders interested in teaching. If PIF and international development targets to which the Government of Malawi is committed are to be met, this requires high volume training for primary school teachers.

### 12.8 Financing teacher education

The best estimates available from this analysis suggest that recurrent costs of MIITEP as currently configured are about MK25,000 (US\$590 at 1999 prices) per two-year trained teacher. This writes off the costs of development, training of trainers, induction of heads and PEAs, and technical cooperation assistance, all of which have been substantial. If various cost savings were introduced while maintaining the basic form of MIITEP, costs could be reduced to more sustainable levels. If school-based supervision was mainly undertaken by PEAs and school staff (recognising that college staff cannot make all the scheduled visits anyway), and a contribution to boarding expenses were made, costs could fall to about MK15,500 (US\$370 at 1999 prices). Two alternative patterns of training have been considered. These are one year full-time residential + one year school-based, and two years full-time residential with 16 weeks supported teaching practice. These would cost a minimum of twice as much as MIITEP and a maximum of four and a half times, excluding the costs of transition and development which would be very substantial.

MIITEP, or structurally similar programmes, are the only way of affording to meet demand. Other alternatives appear to require unsupportable levels of new investment and recurrent costs, or the abandonment of key PIF targets. MIITEP, or its successor, needs to improve its quality and the effectiveness of its delivery. This is likely to be most effective if it is cast within a medium term development strategy for teacher education (including secondary since the two inevitably interact). This should include consideration of career progression for primary teachers beyond the MIITEP qualification. It is conceivable that a MIITEP initial qualification followed several years later by intensive professional development programmes for selected primary teachers might be both affordable, and the most realistic strategy to

## 12 Concluding Remarks

---

improve the effectiveness of primary schools and enhance the professional leadership of primary teachers.

### 12.9 Postscript (2002)

The bulk of the data for this research was collected and analysed during 1998 and 1999. Since then a number of developments have taken place which warrant comment.

First, the projections of teacher training demand remain valid. No subsequent enrolment or teacher employment statistics are available that change the conclusions reached, except in the direction of increased demand. The annual output capacity of MIITEP (7,500) is on the lower margin of what would be needed to meet PIF targets. No new MIITEP trainees have been enrolled for over two years, as a result of the external support being exhausted prematurely. There will be no new output of trained teachers until cohort 7 completes in mid 2003. The backlog of untrained teachers has remained as it was when the estimates were made and to this has to be added those needed as a result of attrition over the last two years, which is substantial. It is planned to recruit up to 10,000 additional untrained teachers to meet these new needs. It is not clear how these will be trained.

Second the majority of those in cohorts 7, 8 and 9 are likely to be JCE holders. In the light of evidence from previous cohorts it is being suggested that JCE holders are placed on a modified programme which recognises their weak academic background. MSCE holders are likely to be concentrated in one of the six colleges.

Third, college staff have been under-occupied since cohort 6 completed and will remain so until several cohorts are enrolled sequentially. An opportunity has been missed to use this gap in the flow of MIITEP students to upgrade college lecturers' knowledge and skills, to review the college curriculum and to revise the Handbooks.

Fourth, the original regime for supervising students by college tutors was unrealistic. If it is to be replaced by much greater dependence on zonal and school-based support by PEAs and senior staff this has to be adequately financed and systematically arranged. Previous arrangements did not succeed in supporting these activities consistently.

Fifth, a revised PIF has been produced (PIF 2000) This includes new sections which relate to teacher education and indicate policy shifts of relevance to this study. The most important of these include:

- Teacher Education and Development will be regarded as a priority area and funding will be increased from 3% to 4% of the recurrent education budget.



## 12 Concluding Remarks

---

- The percentage of unqualified primary teachers will be reduced from 50% in 1997 to 30% in 2002 and 10% by 2012
- A Teacher Education Directorate will be introduced in the Ministry to be headed by a Director level appointment
- A national strategic plan for teacher development will be produced in 2000.
- National standards will be developed for all training institutions
- MIITEP style of teacher education will continue as long as the need is justified
- Cost-sharing measures will be considered for teacher education
- The government will promote the participation of the private sector in teacher education.
- TTCs will be rehabilitated and maintained and staff development programmes introduced to upgrade competencies
- The establishment of more TTCs will be considered, especially in those divisions currently without a TTC.
- The mode of teaching practice will be revised to increase its effectiveness
- Measures will be taken to promote gender balance in teacher training and appointment
- Training will be provided for teachers working with pupils with learning difficulties and other special needs.

The Task Force on primary teacher education has now met and produced some preliminary recommendations. In mid 2001 these advocated:

- Recruitment of MSCE holders and those likely to upgrade to MSCE level. MSCE holders may become eligible for direct entry from school without a prior period of untrained teaching
- Separate college-based training of MSCE and JCE holders. JCE holders would have two 16 week blocks in college, compared with one 16 week and one 8 week block for MSCE holders.
- Supervision of all school-based training by PEAs rather than college tutors, with assistance from senior school staff. Local placement of trainees during college-based teaching practice.
- Focus of the second block in college on work in Handbooks 4 and 5 not covered in zonal seminars.
- A revised assessment regime under which colleges are solely responsible for college-based assessment and MANEB for the final examination. In addition the many school-based assignments and projects will be replaced by one reflective research project.

## 12 Concluding Remarks

---

- Funding direct from the treasury in a regular and timely way; cost sharing for transport, boarding costs, and examination fees.

The commitments in the PIF are an indication of the importance that is now attached to teacher education. They are generally consistent with the analysis in this report and its conclusions. So also are the preliminary recommendations of the Task Force. However, many of the items in the PIF have yet to have the mechanisms for implementation adequately detailed and the Task Force recommendations need to be converted into reality. This is the immediate challenge.

### 12.10 General recommendations

Our analysis identifies several critical areas where new policy related to primary teacher education is needed. To be meaningful, decisions on policy cannot be separated from programmed activities and their associated resource requirements. Firm medium term decisions are needed on the future of teacher education. Without these there will be cumulative damage to the quality of primary schooling and deterioration in performance against most if not all the relevant PIF indicators.

Despite the evidence of under-performance and many problems in implementation, the research indicates that MIITEP could be reinvigorated and modified in ways which could reduce costs, maintain output, and encourage focus on achievable goals that would improve quality. A strategy to achieve this would address the following issues systematically as an integrated set of concerns in several arenas.

#### 12.10.1 Policy issues

A consistent medium term plan for teacher education does not exist. Clear commitments are needed which allow enrolment planning, accumulation of expertise, the development of efficient and effective institutional infrastructure, and systematic quality improvement.

A consensus is needed on the level of demand for primary teacher training. This invites a choice between methods that can produce trained teachers in sufficient quantity to meet demand, and those which might improve quality but will dramatically reduce the number of pupils with access to teachers with any training at all.

The arrangements for the co-financing of primary teacher education between the MoEST and its partners need agreement. Predictable flows of external assistance are needed over an appropriate period. Without these it is unlikely that PIF targets are feasible.

---

## 12 Concluding Remarks

Current practice in funding the operational expenditure of the TTCs creates bottlenecks in the flow of funds and unrealistic allocations for learning and teaching infrastructure. It absorbs wholly disproportionate amounts of senior management time. It is unclear why more simplified and predictable arrangements cannot be put in place for the small number of TTCs.

### 12.10.2 College issues

A window of opportunity exists to renew the cadre of teacher educators, rehabilitate buildings and infrastructure, and generate developmental TTCs that could have a real impact on the quality of learning and teaching. Without a substantial programme to identify, train and appoint a new generation of College lecturers the primary TTCs capacity will degrade rapidly as a result of attrition among existing faculty. It should be accompanied by targeted staff development for existing faculty far enough from retirement for investment in new skills to be worthwhile.

Current salary levels do not seem sufficient to attract and retain high quality staff to TTCs for this purpose. If it is intended to up-grade the education level of lecturers and re-profile lecturers' jobs towards a more demanding set of professional responsibilities, then greater incentives and rewards will have to be considered, including a professional career structure and mechanisms to recruit experienced primary teachers..

The learning environment in the TTCs is generally inadequate to support quality teacher education. It also demoralises staff and trainees. Needs differ, but with relatively modest amounts of investment in rehabilitation, extension of facilities, and appropriate re-equipment, a transformation is possible.

Further, the TTCs could be staffed and resourced to be regionally located centres for professional development as well as initial training. They could complement TDCs and other facilities in a way that is not currently possible. They could take on developmental responsibilities with others (e.g.PEAs) to improve access, retention and quality in clusters of schools associated with the TTCs. This could generate new synergies and closer links between TTC staff and the contemporary realities of the schools for which they are preparing trainees.

Strategic support to revitalise College management and re-orientate it towards effective learning and teaching is critical. Without stable and purposeful leadership directed towards clear goals, institutional development will be unpredictable and sporadic. Turnover of College principals is high, new appointments have no initial or subsequent management training, and external sources of advice and support are unclear. No TTC appears to have a strategic plan which would create direction and focus energy towards agreed goals. TTCs

## 12 Concluding Remarks

---

will only establish themselves as centres of excellence if senior management teams have the skills and commitment to make this a reality.

### 12.10.3 Curriculum and assessment issues

College curricula are established and materials have been developed. In the short term there would seem no realistic alternative but to continue using the MIITEP Handbooks which are the main resource. If there is some assurance of their use beyond cohort 7 it becomes attractive to address areas of weakness or omission in the curriculum such as language and study skills, and the mathematics course (see Stuart and Kunje 2000). The Handbooks could be revised to ensure a more consistent approach.

Decisions need to be made about the level of subject knowledge it is possible and desirable to achieve during an initial training course of this length. Is it possible, for example, to train all students to be competent to teach all subjects over eight standards? Perhaps students should specialise in a group of subjects, or in a phase of schooling (junior v. senior). This would have some impact on the flexibility of teacher deployment, of course.

The current system of field support is over-ambitious and demonstrably ineffective. In particular college visiting of trainees in school often does not occur and when it does can be fragmented, short and focused solely on assessment. The logistics preclude frequent visiting with a developmental purpose. These realities lead to the suggestion that these field support activities are reconsidered and integrated into the normal work of PEAs. This can and should be complemented by support from head teachers who have a responsibility for managing, developing, and appraising all their staff. Modifying the arrangements as suggested would release TTC staff to concentrate on college-based quality improvement and development activity focused on the area local to the TTC. This would increase efficiency and reduce costs by eliminating duplication. TTC staff might also play a role in training and professional support for PEAs.

The load created by the assessment strategy adopted is substantial. It is not clearly justified by the contribution it makes to effective professional development, or the selection of those unsuited to teaching. Final examinations are expensive. It is important that they are reliable and valid indicators of learning. Modest investments in quality improvement in this area should pay dividends. The inclusion of action research assignments would link in well with the training that PEAs and head teachers experienced in MSSSP.

The analysis reported in this paper does identify exciting possibilities for ways forward that would transform what is a deteriorating situation in primary teacher education. The MUSTER studies indicate both the strengths and weaknesses of the current system. What has been achieved should not be undervalued, nor should the difficulty of the task ahead be

---

## 12 Concluding Remarks

under-estimated. The TTC system is small; it can be transformed with vision and insight. This is critical to the main aims of MoEST policy on primary education development.

Below we collect together a set of specific recommendations arising from the MUSTER studies

### 12.11 Some specific recommendations

1. If demand for new teachers is to be met JCE holders will have to be recruited alongside MSCE holders. The MoEST should recruit failed MSCE candidates as untrained teachers with a view to allowing them to upgrade as they wait to be enrolled in teacher training programmes. If and when the supply of MSCE students is adequate then the requirement for JCE could be phased out, bearing in mind the need to increase gender equity in the education system.
2. The curriculum for JCE holders should be differentiated from that for MSCE holders to recognise their weaker academic backgrounds, poorer study and communication skills, and language competence.
3. Some consideration should be given to reducing the length of pre-training experience as untrained teachers. This may or may not be applied differently to JCE and MSCE holders.
4. Previous experience and practical knowledge should be recognised more explicitly in the curriculum and in its implementation. So also should the fact that trainees are adult learners.
5. Colleges need extensive refurbishing in appropriate ways. Laboratories, libraries, classrooms and hostels all need some repairs and new equipment that reflect the needs of the training curriculum.
6. Training activities for school-based work need to be revised to reflect realistic levels of activity and resources. This implies simplification, a reduction in the total work load, adaptation to the capacities of supporting staff, and adequate learning material support. The Handbooks have proved very useful. It may be that additional print material to support school-based work (and NQTs) can be justified.
7. School-based assignments and projects should be reconceived to take advantages of linking theory and practice, and focused on core learning outcomes for school-based work. This suggests simplification and reduction in the number of tasks.

## 12 Concluding Remarks

---

8. The length of school-based training may be longer than is necessary for initial qualification given what can realistically be achieved. The balance between school-based work and college-based work may need reconsideration.
9. School-based resources are scarce. School development programmes should consider how these might be enhanced to improve learning and to support trainees on school-based work.
10. Zonal seminars should be continued and supported through print material and training of trainers. Their costs must be kept within sustainable limits.
11. It has proved impossible to maintain the distance mode of learning in MIITEP in an interactive way. This should be reconceived using more local support mechanisms.
12. The teacher education curriculum needs revision to reflect the actual characteristics of trainees and their needs. It is over-loaded, inconsistent in emphasis between subject and pedagogic skills, and its assessment needs refining
13. The cadre of college tutors needs renewing within the context of a medium term plan. Existing tutors' effectiveness could be enhanced by a systematic staff development programme designed to upgrade qualifications, competence and professional engagement.
14. A medium term plan is needed for both primary and secondary teacher education so that resources can be identified, the institutional bases developed, personnel prepared and recruited, and systems established in a timely and well conceived manner.
15. Co-ordination with sources of external support for teacher education is essential. The dialogue between the MoEST and development agencies on support for teacher education should be focused and specific. Medium term commitments of resources are needed to underpin development and delivery. The MoEST needs to learn from its experience of MIITEP disbursement problems and devise structures that will deliver financial and other resources as and when needed.

## References

- Bude U, Coombe C, Muwowo B, Nashire N, (1995) *Teacher Development for Free Primary Education in Malawi*. Report to MoEST published by DSE Bonn
- Croft, A. (2000) *Gender Gaps in Schools and Colleges: Can Teacher Education Policy Improve Gender Equity?* MUSTER Discussion Paper 14. CIE: University of Sussex.
- Croft A (2002) *Teachers, student teachers and pupils; a study of teaching and learning in lower primary classes in Southern Malawi?*, Unpublished D.Phil.Thesis. University of Sussex.
- Croft, A. Kunje, D. and Stuart, J.S. (2000) *An Analysis of MIITEP Assessment in Malawi?*. MUSTER unpublished working Paper. CIE: University of Sussex.
- DSE (1998) *The Project Progress Review, Malawi Integrated Inservice Teacher Education Programme (MIITEP)*. DSE, Bonn.
- GTZ (1995) *Malawi German Basic Education Project – The Malawi Integrated Teacher Education Programme, Appraisal Report* June 1995. GTZ, Bonn.
- Hauya, R.J.R. (1997) *The Question of Curriculum*, Blantyre: Dzuka Education Foundations.
- Kunje, D. and Chiremba S. (2000) *School-based Training Under MIITEP*. MUSTER Discussion Paper No 12. CIE: University of Sussex.
- Kunje, D. and Chimombo, J. (1999). *Malawi: A base line Study of the Teacher Education system*. MUSTER Discussion Paper No 5. CIE: University of Sussex.
- Kunje.D and Lewin K (2000) *The costs and Financing of Teacher Education in Malawi*. MUSTER Discussion Paper 2. CIE: University of Sussex
- MIITEP (1997a) *Malawi Integrated Inservice Teacher Education Programme (MIITEP) Project Planning Matrix and Plan of Operation*, Occasional Paper No 1, Lilongwe
- MIITEP (1997b) *Malawi Integrated Inservice Teacher Education Programme (MIITEP) Project Description* Occasional Paper No 2, Lilongwe
- MIITEP (1997c) *Malawi Integrated Inservice Teacher Education Programme (MIITEP) Project Description* Occasional Paper No 3, Lilongwe
- MIITEP (1998) *Malawi Integrated Inservice Teacher Education Programme (MIITEP) Workshop for TTC Professional Staff*, Lilongwe
- MoEST (1996) *Secondary Development Plan*. MoEST Lilongwe.
- MoEST (2000) *A Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) for Education in Malawi*. Government Printer, Lilongwe.
- Shulman, L.S. (1987) *Knowledge and Teaching: Foundations of the New Reform?*, In Harvard Educational Review, 57 (1).
- Stuart, J.S. and Kunje, D. (2000) *MIITEP: An Analysis of the Curriculum and its Delivery in Colleges*. MUSTER Discussion Paper 11. CIE: University of Sussex.
- TDU (1996) *A Handbook for MIITEP*. Teacher Development Unit. MoEST Lilongwe
- UNDP, (1995) *Human Development Report*, OUP, New York.
- UNESCO (1998) *Malawi Experience in Free Primary Education; Policy Analysis Study*. Ministry of Education, Lilongwe.

## The MUSTER Discussion Paper Series

---

- No 1** *Counting the Cost of Teacher Education: Cost and Quality Issues*  
(January 1999) Keith M Lewin
- No 2** *The Costs and Financing of Teacher Education Malawi*  
(March 2000) Demis Kunje & Keith M Lewin
- No 3** *Primary Teacher Education Curricula as Documented: A Comparative Analysis*  
(July 1999) Janet S Stuart
- No 4** *“On the Threshold”: The Identity of Student Teachers in Ghana*  
(April 2000) Kwame Akyeampong & David Stephens
- No 5** *Malawi: A Baseline Study of the Teacher Education System*  
(December 1999) Demis Kunje & Joseph Chimombo
- No 6** *Trinidad & Tobago: A Baseline Study of the Teacher Education System*  
(July 1999) Lynda Quamina-Aiyejina, Jeniffer Mohammed, Balchan Rampaul, June George, Michael Kallon, Carol Keller & Samuel Lochan.
- No 7** *Ghana: A Baseline Study of the Teacher Education System*  
(September 2000) Kwame Akyeampong & Dominic Furlong
- No 8** *Lesotho: A Baseline Study of the Teacher Education System*  
(September 2000) J Pulane Lefoka et al
- No 9** *Teacher Education in Trinidad & Tobago: Costs, Financing and Future Policy*  
(August 2000) Keith M Lewin, Carol Keller & Ewart Taylor
- No 10** *Costs and Financing of Teacher Education in Lesotho*  
(June 2000) Keith M Lewin, Vuyelwa Ntoi, H J Nenty & Puleng Mapuru
- No 11** *The Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Project: an analysis of the curriculum and its delivery in the colleges*  
(February 2000) Janet S Stuart & Demis Kunje
- No 12** *The Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Programme and its School based Components*  
(June 2000) Demis Kunje & Shadreck Chirembo
- No 13** *The Importance of Posting in Becoming a Teacher in Ghana*  
(June 2000) John P Hedges
- No 14** *Gender Gaps in Schools and Colleges: Can Teacher Education Policy Improve Gender Equity in Malawi?*  
(August 2000) Alison Croft
- No 15** *Newly Qualified Teachers: Impact On/Interaction with the System (Trinidad & Tobago)*  
(March 2000) Jeanette Morris & Arthur Joseph
- No 16** *Careers and Perspectives of Tutors in Teacher Training Colleges: Case Studies of Lesotho and Malawi*  
(November 2000) Janet Stuart with Demis Kunje & Pulane Lefoka
- No 17** *Learning To Teach In Ghana: An Evaluation Of Curriculum Delivery*  
(August 2000) Kwame Akyeampong, J. Ampiah, J Fletcher, N. Kutor & B. Sokpe
- No 18** *The Costs and Financing of Teacher Education in Ghana*  
(December 2000) Kwame Akyeampong, Dominic Furlong & Keith Lewin
- No 19** *On-the-Job Training: Pre-service Teacher Training in Trinidad & Tobago*  
(August 2000) June George, Janice Fournillier & Marie-Louise Brown
- No 20** *Becoming a Primary School Teacher in Trinidad & Tobago, Part 1 The Curriculum in the Teachers' Colleges*  
(October 2000) June George, Patricia Worrell, Joycelyn Rampersad, Balchan Rampaul & Jeniffer Mohammed



## The MUSTER Discussion Paper Series

---

- No 21** *Becoming a Primary School Teacher in Trinidad & Tobago, Part 2: Teaching Practice Experience of Trainees*  
(October 2000) June George, Patricia Worrell, Joycelyn Rampersad & Balchan Rampaul
- No 22** *Primary Teacher Trainees in Trinidad & Tobago: Characteristics, Images, Experiences and Expectations*  
(January 2001) June George, Jeniffer Mohammed, Lynda Quamina-Aiyejina, Janice Fournillier & Susan Otway-Charles.
- No 23** *Analysis of the Curriculum as Documented at the National Teacher Training College in Lesotho*  
(May 2001) J. Pulane Lefoka & Janet S. Stuart
- No 24** *The Experience of Training: a Study of Students at The National Teacher Training College in Lesotho*  
(August 2000) J. Pulane Lefoka with Mantoetse Jobo, Baatswana Moeti & Janet S. Stuart
- No 25** *Teaching Practice at the National Teacher Training College in Lesotho*  
(May 2001) J. Pulane Lefoka with Mantoetse Jobo & Baatswana Moeti
- No 26** *Turbulence or Orderly Change? Teacher Supply and Demand in South Africa – Current Status, Future Needs and the Impact of HIV/Aids*  
(June 2000) Luis Crouch Edited and Abridged by Keith M. Lewin
- No 27** *New Teachers on the Job: The Impact of Teacher Education in Lesotho*  
(September 2001) Edith M Sebatane and J Pulane Lefoka
- No 28** *Who Becomes a Primary School Teacher in Lesotho: Characteristics and Experiences of the DEP Student Teachers upon Entry into NTTC*  
(January 2002) J. Pulane Lefoka with M.K. Molise, J.M. Moorosi-Molapo, Edith Sebatane
- No 29** *Primary Teacher Education in Action: a peep into the TTC classrooms at the National Teacher Training College, Lesotho*  
(June 2002) J.Pulane Lefoka and Vuyelwa.M. Ntoi
- No 30** *Roles and Responsibilities, Institutional Landscapes and Curriculum Mindscapes: a partial view of teacher education policy in South Africa, 1990-2000*  
(March 2002) Ben Parker
- No 31** *Face-to-face Initial Teacher Education Degree Programme at University of Durban Westville, South Africa*  
(May 2002) Michael Samuel and Daisy Pillay
- No 32** *Teacher Education for Transformation: the case of the University of the Western Cape, South Africa*  
(May 2002) Maureen Robinson, Tania Vergnani and Yusuf Sayed
- No 33** *Further Diploma in Education (Educational Management) by Distance Education at the University of Pretoria, South Africa*  
(June 2002) Yusuf Sayed, Jan Heystek and Brigitte Smit
- No 34** *Face-to-Face Training in a Conventional Preservice Programme: a case study at Edgewood College of Education in South Africa*  
(August 2002) Vijay Reddy
- No 35** *South African College for Open Learning: a model of an Inservice Distance Education Programme for Initial Teacher Education*  
(August 2002) Vijay Reddy

## **The MUSTER Research Reports**

---

- No 1** *Teacher Training in Ghana – Does it Count?*  
(December 2001) Kwame Akyeampong
- No 2** *Initial Primary Teacher Education in Lesotho*  
(January 2002) J.Pulane Lefoka with E.Molapi Sebatane
- No 3** *Primary Teacher Education in Malawi: Insights into Practice and Policy*  
(March 2002) Demis Kunje with Keith Lewin and Janet Stuart
- No 4** *An Analysis of Primary Teacher Education in Trinidad and Tobago: The MUSTER Report* (May 2002) June George and Lynda Quamina-Aiyejina
- No 5** *Researching Teacher Education: New Perspectives on Practice, Performance and Policy. Report on the MUSTER Project*  
(June 2002) Keith M.Lewin and Janet S.Stuart

The discussion papers are downloadable from the following web address:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/usie/muster/list.html>



