Teaching and learning of teacher education students in South African universities within a context of quality

by

Judith Mutemeri

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**Faculty of Education and Social Sciences
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Supervisor: Prof R Chetty

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DECLARATION

I, Judith Mutemeri, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the dissertation has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those for the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

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Signed   Date

ABSTRACT

The study focused on teacher education in South African universities. The major purpose was to examine how teacher educators in South African universities prepared teacher education students for teaching and learning within a context of quality. It is important to start with quality teachers before being able to speak about quality education because "you cannot give what you do not have" (Parliamentary Monitoring Group of South Africa, 2009:3).

Consistent with the postmodern qualitative paradigm I used phenomenology as the strategy of research. The main epistemological assumption was that the way of knowing reality was through exploring the experiences of others regarding a specific phenomenon, in this case teaching and learning of teacher education students. To this end the stories, experiences and voices of the respondents were the medium through which I explored and understood reality embedded in the teaching and learning of teacher education students.

The research sites included four Faculties of Education nationally. Purposive sampling was conducted to adequately capture the heterogeneity of institutions especially of those faculties that offer Initial Professional Education for Teachers (IPET) programmes.

Purposive sampling was also used to select both students and lecturers because respondents were selected on the basis of some defining characteristic that made them holders of the data needed for the study. The main criterion for inclusion was the level of study at which the students were. The sample comprised BEd Level IV pre-service students and BEd Level IV lecturers. The major reason was that BEd Level IV teacher education students had gone through four years of the process of teacher training and as a result it was assumed that they were in a better position to give informed comments on how they were taught and learnt. The interview was the main instrument for data collection. Interviews provided rich data that gave solid material for building a significant analysis as participants' views, feelings, intentions, actions as well as the context were revealed (Charmaz, 2006:65). Twenty six (26) lecturers, nine (9) HoDs and nine (9) focus groups with a total of sixty one (61) final year undergraduate students participated in the study.

Data revealed that there were some areas in teacher education that were producing quality teaching and learning of students. There were however, other areas from which improvement could be expected. Using Levine's (2005:21) nine point template for judging quality in teacher education programmes, data suggested that teacher educators were beset with some hurdles to cross in the aspects/areas of curricular coherence, curricular balance, faculty composition, research, admissions and assessment. In light of the foregoing areas that called for improvements, it was evident that quality in teacher education remained elusive. The need for updating knowledge through research, linking teacher education with local schools, and a proliferation of teaching methodology were some areas among others that were recommended for consideration by teacher educators.

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DEDICATION

To my husband Paul Misai Ndaba Mutemeri without whose support I would not have come this far. To my children, Sukoluhle, Linda and Farai who soldiered on through thick and thin in their mother's absence; thank God for rallying behind me.

LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

AFT	American Federation of Teachers
APQC	American Productivity and Quality Committee
BEd	Bachelor in Education
CHE	Council of Higher Education
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DAS	Developmental Appraisal System
DoE	Department of Education
ELRC	Education Labour and Relations Council
FET	Further Education and Training
FP	Foundation Phase
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HoD	Head of Department
IPET	Initial Professional Education for Teachers
ISP	Intermediate and Senior Phase
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NMMU	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
NOCHE	Northern Ohio Council for Higher Education
NRF	National Research Fund
NSE	Norms and Standards for Educators
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PACT	Perspectives on the Performance Assessment for California Teachers
PMG	Parliamentary Monitoring Group
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statements
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SoTL	Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
TEIs	Teacher Education Institutions
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
WCED	Western Cape Education Department
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand
WSE	Whole School Evaluation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter 1
Statement of the Problem

1.1   Introduction

The teaching and learning of teacher education students is a dynamic process. Like an amoeba that changes its shape, size and texture dependent on its surrounding; so likewise should be the process of educating teacher candidates. This is because society is dynamic; hence teacher education should meet current changes in knowledge and skills. McLeod and Reynolds (2007:1) contend that "we are teaching and learning in times of overwhelming change – changes in the way we know, changes in the way we teach and changes in what is expected of us as teachers and learners." As we enter the twenty first century a variety of forces call for higher academic achievement for all school learners, especially in light of new research findings' revealing that teacher quality is the single most important school variable affecting student achievement (American Federation for Teachers, 2000). In its minutes of the meeting held on February 17, 2009 the Parliamentary Monitoring Group of South Africa discussed that it is important to start with quality teachers before being able to speak about quality education because "you cannot give what you do not have." In this light, most nations, including South Africa, have focussed public attention on teachers and the quality of instruction.

Mattson (2005) is of the view that in this twenty first century, employers need individuals who can retool quickly. Moore, Fowler and Watson, (2007:43) contend that workers in an increasingly global economy need "a very different kind of mind, one that combines critical analysis with the type of big-picture thinking that was previously associated with creators, pattern recognizers and meaning makers." It would appear therefore, that a nation's workforce with appropriate and relevant skills is dependent on quality and rigorous teacher education. The foregoing sentiment has serious implications for teacher education as teachers are the core in the process of human capital formation. The chapter begins by providing background to the study in an effort

to clarify both the context and antecedent factors. In developing the chapter the following themes provide the parameters of the discussion;

- ❖ Background
- ❖ Research question
- ❖ Rationale
- ❖ Contributions to research knowledge
- ❖ Methodology
- ❖ Definition of key terms
- ❖ Outline of study and
- ❖ Summary

1.2   Background

The major focus of my research was rigour and quality in teaching and learning of teacher education students in South African universities. The general belief across nations in transformation is that the realization of national goals is mostly dependent on the education system. According to Bergh (1991), societies in transformation see education as a route to all things. He further mentions that education is regarded not only as a route to creating a unified nation state, instilling loyalty and patriotism, creating a skilled and professional workforce, stimulating national economic growth, redistributing wealth and alleviating poverty but very often people expect education to be one of the vehicles for major change. The foregoing correlates with the idea put forward by the national Department of Education (DoE) (2005:18), that in South Africa "educators are to a large degree the midwives in the nation building process." McMahon (1993) argues that teachers are one of the major inputs in the process of education and that their qualifications give rise to better instruction and student achievement. Leu (2006) contends that in a search for the factors that promote quality, the programmes in countries as well as the literature increasingly emphasize teachers as the engines of quality, with teacher quality identified as primary focus. I appreciate Leu's use of the term engine because it really puts teachers as the driving force, the central power to quality in the education sector. In addition, studies such as those conducted by Sanders and Rivers (1994) in Tennessee, have demonstrated

statistically and conclusively that quality teaching and student achievement are closely linked; implying that the impact of teacher education graduates is realized through learner outcomes/results. Levine (2006:34) reiterates that it is important for teacher educators to focus on student achievement as the primary measure of their success.

It is the poor output of schools in South Africa, as announced by Pandor (2007) that becomes a challenge to teacher education. Grant (2010) also alluded to the fact that there was a further decline in the matriculation results pass rate from 78.6 percent in 2008 to 75.7 percent in 2009. He went on to express the sentiment that another disappointment is the number of learners who qualified for bachelors' degrees, diploma or certificate studies. For example he revealed that 31.9 percent of the learners qualified for access to studies for bachelors' degrees in 2009 compared to 33 percent who qualified in 2008. (DoE) (2006:13) indicated that teacher performance in South African schools remains low and contributes significantly to the learners' poor results. The foregoing has a negative impact on HEIs in the sense that low quality student input presents a challenge to teacher educators as "poor preparation provided by the general education system impacts on the students' ability to persist in South African higher education" (Letseka & Breier, 2008:14).

While there could be other factors that have led to poor output in schools, it is believed that teacher education should meet the needs of today's standards-driven, accountability-driven classrooms, where student achievement is honoured as the highest measure of instructional success. According to Walsh (2001) the use of student outcomes, particularly achievement, as a measure of teacher quality enjoys strong support from both education professionals and the policy community. De Clercq (2008) concurs that teacher quality is the most important factor in student achievement. According to Zientek (2007) teacher quality is the responsibility of teacher education. Therefore the teaching and learning of teacher education students is critical in building teacher candidates' capacity to improve learners' output/results.

For schools and learners to be successful, universities should also succeed in their efforts to recruit, prepare and support strong new teachers (Goodlad, 1999). However pertaining to recruitment, Morrow (2007:16) believes that in South Africa most students "are from a background of schooling that has not prepared them well for

university study, to learn the kinds of things universities teach." The foregoing sentiment correlates with Hadland's (2009:29) argument that universities in South Africa "draw on a school system that is simply not preparing young people to succeed at the tertiary level." HEIs in South Africa, unfortunately, do not seem to take into consideration students' prior learning experiences as the study carried out by Letseka (2009) reveals that universities make certain assumptions regarding their first-year students. They assume that all first-year students completed a good general education at school and that they are therefore ready for specialized study. As a result, students are thrown in the deep end where they can either swim or sink. Letseka's (2009) study also reveals that a fair number of students failed some or all their subjects; they battled with concepts and terminology and eventually lost interest and about one-third dropped out. In the light of the foregoing argument the question stated below guided the discussion.

1.3 Question guiding the research

1.3.1. How are teacher educators in South African universities preparing teacher education students for teaching and learning within a context of quality?

1.4 Rationale

The research has strategic importance since teachers constitute the most important component of the education enterprise and play a critical role in the social, political and economic development and transformation of society. The Commission of the European Communities (2007) indicates that teachers play a vital role in helping people develop their talents and fulfil their potential for personal growth and well-being, and in helping them acquire the complex range of knowledge and skills that they need as citizens and as workers. It is school teachers who mediate between a rapidly evolving world and the learners who are about to enter it. In South Africa teachers are considered as key agents for achieving the post-apartheid transformation and development agenda.

However, the challenge that faces South Africa is a general "low teacher productivity that has been cited as the main reason for relatively poor performance" (Christie, et al, 2007:10). The constraint is the fact that most educators received most of their training under apartheid. The GM South Africa Foundation (2006: n.p) reiterates that being products of the disadvantaged schooling and training they have received; a majority of teachers have limited understanding of subject content they teach. This impedes the effectiveness of teaching and the quality of outcomes achieved. The provision of quality instruction and the inculcation of a sound culture of learning can hardly be expected from teachers who do not themselves possess quality knowledge of the field they are expected to teach (GM South African Foundation, 2006). Poor personal understanding of subject content undermines a teacher's professional self concept, confidence, and commitment and limits the teacher's capacity to respond constructively to reform initiatives, e.g. Curriculum 2005 and the New National Curriculum (The GM South Africa Foundation, 2006: n.p).

Over the past few decades societies and nations worldwide, South Africa included, have been confronted with substantial social, cultural, economic and technological changes and challenges and there seems to be widespread agreement that education and training has to play a key role in order to meet these changes adequately and the challenges pro-actively (Buchberger, Campos, Kallos & Stephenson, 2000:23). As agents of socialization, teachers are expected to play a key role in the development of a new South African identity that values inclusivity and social justice in a diverse and ever-changing world (Albee & Piveral, 2003). The issue of quality in teaching at teacher education level should be addressed in order for students to exit the teacher education programme with not only adequate but appropriate skills to enable them to be confident and effective teachers. Educators impart complex knowledge that is concerned with the development of the student and the future of the society. Given the acute skills shortage being experienced in the country, educators are expected to help expedite the process of human capital formation.

Buchberger et al (2000) argue that by focusing on human capital theories which stress the relevance of both comprehensive and coherent human resource

development for the economic and social prosperity of post-industrial information societies, education has increasingly become an integral part of economic and social policy. McLeod and Reynolds (2007:15) reiterate that investment in education should be seen as in the national interest and should be central to the knowledge economy. They go on to mention that due to the many new and rapidly changing tasks and roles teachers are expected to fulfill, substantial improvements and reforms in teacher education are seen as imperative in order to enhance teacher education students' competence to meet new tasks, challenges and expectations proactively.

According to Rose (2002) the need to investigate the efficacy of teaching and the process of learning in teacher education is greater than at anytime in the past. The foregoing sentiment correlates with Levine's (2006:53) argument that the focus of much teacher education research remains on teachers and teaching; it is yet to fully embrace the teaching and learning of teacher candidates. Wickham's (2008:10) report in South Africa reveals that there was unanimous consensus that teacher education needs to be investigated "from top to bottom." In addition, the DoE (2008) reveals that in a launch for the Quality Learning and Training campaign individuals and organizations were called to assume responsibility for improving quality in education. The DoE (2003:11) alludes to the fact that "the task of skilling educators to provide quality schooling is a mammoth task which depends not only on government but also initiatives from different stakeholders including Higher Education (HE).

1.5   Contributions to research knowledge

The study aligns itself with the current debate in higher education which prioritises the learning experience of students as well as giving increased attention to the professionalisation of university teaching and staff development and support. Improvements in teaching and learning are essential in order to give effect to the transformation objectives in the restructuring of institutions of higher learning, especially in relation to redress and equity and to the responsiveness of universities to national goals and challenges (HEQC, 2004a). While the research is not covering the whole countenance of teacher education, it is believed that the major variables explored, namely teaching and learning, are quite significant in the process of teacher

education. Hence research findings will contribute towards the debate currently under discussion.

The maintenance and implementation of quality teaching and learning of teacher education students is dependent in part on reflective practitioners having sufficient understanding of teaching and learning of teacher education candidates. The study contributes to this knowledge by developing an empirical and theoretical base to inform the educators on current issues in teacher education, particularly in South African universities. For instance data suggests the importance of balancing theoretical and practical courses, close partnership with the schools where students go for their practice teaching and linking research with teaching. According to Blanton, Sindelar and Correa (2006) strong research programmes are necessary both to guide teacher education programme design and to inform policy. Buchberger et al (2000) emphasize the need to base research and practice on what is currently known about teacher education, in order to implement an agenda for consistent, continued development of the field. In times of rapidly changing contexts in education even preserving existing quality calls for continuous improvement and reform. If it is an aim to enhance the existing quality of education and training, then a programme of perpetual improvement and substantial reform becomes imperative (Buchberger et al, 2000). In this light I believe that the research findings will add to the foundation on which teacher educators could base their reflections about their own practice.

1.6   Methodology

Consistent with the postmodern qualitative paradigm I used phenomenology as the strategy of research. This is because phenomenology focuses "on the ways that the life world, the world every individual takes for granted – is experienced by its members" (Holliday, 2007:16). Phenomenology offered a descriptive, reflective, interpretive and engaging mode of inquiry from which the fundamental nature of teaching and learning of teacher education students could be elicited. The major aim was to describe and understand the teaching and learning of teacher education students within their naturally occurring context with the intention of developing an understanding of the meanings imparted by the respondents; i.e. a "seeing through

the eyes of the respondents" (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:51) so that the process of teaching and learning could be described in terms of the meanings that they have for the respondents. The main epistemological assumption was that the way of knowing reality was through exploring the experiences of others regarding a specific phenomenon, in this case teaching and learning of teacher education students. To this end the stories, experiences and voices of the respondents were the medium through which I explored and understood reality embedded in the teaching and learning of teacher education students. Four Faculties of Education nationally were purposively sampled to conduct the research project.

Sampling was carried out to adequately capture the heterogeneity of institutions especially of those faculties that offered BEd programmes**.** Data were collected from BEd Level IV teacher education students, and lecturers. Both students and lecturers were purposively sampled. The main criterion for inclusion was the level of study at which the students were. The major reason was that BEd Level IV teacher education students had gone through the process of teacher training and as a result I assumed that they were in a better position to give informed comments on how they had been taught and to what extent they had acquired requisite skills to be teachers. On the other hand lecturers provided views about their individual experiences in the teaching and learning of their students. Data were also collected from Heads of Department as it was important to learn how the teaching and learning of teacher education students was administered.

The major means of data collection was the interview. Interviews were preferred as a tool for data collection because they allowed the researcher to tap into the experiences of teacher educators and teacher education students. Interviews provided rich data that gave solid material for building a significant analysis as participants' views, feelings, intentions, actions as well as the context were revealed (Charmaz, 2006). As I proceeded with data analysis I relied heavily on Holliday's (2007) thematic analysis as a means of organizing data. Holliday (2007:93) argues that "taking a purely thematic approach, in which data is taken holistically and rearranged under themes which emerge as running through its totality, is the classic way to maintain the principle of emergence."

1.7 Definition of key concepts

1.7.1 Teaching and learning: According to the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) (2002:14) framework for improving teaching and learning in South Africa, the concepts teaching and learning should not be separated; they are two sides of the same coin, that is, an interactive process that requires the active cooperation of both learner and teacher. The manual further explains that teaching might be the inspiration and facilitation of learning; whilst learning is explained as the conceptual and cognitive change as a result of direct or indirect interaction with a more knowledgeable and experienced other. For the purpose of the study teaching and learning are defined broadly to include not only the actual teaching and learning within lecture rooms but also procedures and activities that educators undertake to provide for student teachers the conditions necessary for learning to take place, that is, in terms of knowledge and skills development. Race (1994) argues that educators need to be concentrating on the learning side of the teaching-learning equation rather than only on the quality of their performance as teachers. Willis (2006) argues that an individual is said to have learnt when she/he has increased his/her options for applying learnt knowledge to a specific set of circumstances.

1.7.2 Quality: Robertson (2007) mentions that quality, as a measure of excellence, means different things to different people and as such is totally subjective. In the light of this observation, I conceptualize quality as productive quality, because quality is constructed within interactive processes of particular contexts. Quality in this case becomes a function of continuous development and improvement. In this process the two are never accomplished. Within the relativist framework quality teaching and learning is conceived within a process-product-impact dimension. Within this dimension, quality in teacher education is embedded in the process of teaching and learning with the major focus being on student learning (product) whose impact is realized through learner outputs/results (impact).

1.7.3   Good practice strategies: Good practice strategies are those that facilitate deep approaches to learning and enable students to participate in actively building and transforming their cognitive and knowledge structures. According to Buchberger et al (2000) good practice strategies should be based on what they term 'state of the art-knowledge' which they have defined as the knowledge gathered from the huge amount of research and scientifically validated practices for improving teaching and learning and teacher education submitted both by research on teaching and research on teacher education in recent years. Good practice strategies ensure that exiting students have the requisite skills and experience to teach all learners successfully.

1.7.4   Transformative learning: According to Mezirow (1991) transformative learning is a process through which learners change their meaning schemes, namely, specific beliefs, attitudes and emotional reactions as they engage in critical reflection on their experiences. This in turn leads to perspective transformation (change in evaluation) which is a process of becoming critically aware of how and why the learners' assumptions have come to constrain the way they perceive, understand and feel about the world. Changing these structures of habitual expectations makes possible a more inclusive, discriminating and integrating perspective which finally leads to making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings. As described by Mezirow (1997) transformative learning occurs when individuals change their frames of reference by critically reflecting on their assumptions and beliefs and consciously making and implementing plans that bring about new ways of defining the world. Transformative learning is based on constructivist notions of cognitive development. The emphasis is on the student actively constructing knowledge through learning activities or performances of understanding and through social interaction or mediation by the lecturer (HEQC, 2002).

1.7.5   Teacher education student: The phrase refers to preservice undergraduates on the IPET programme. The phrase teacher education student is used interchangeably with education student/student/teacher candidate.

1.8. Outline of the study

The study consists of seven chapters Chapter 2 forms the first part of the literature review and the chapter clarifies the conceptual framework. The study is framed within the postmodern qualitative paradigm. Constructivism and phenomenology form part of the theories used because the major focus among these theories is on how individuals construct meanings. Arguments around issues of plurality, multiplicity, contextualization, diversity, pursuit of differences are valid for all of the chosen theories (Niewenhuis, 2007:59). It was the meanings that individuals shared about their experiences that the study focused on. This is followed by Chapter 3, which gives part two of the literature review.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed theoretical search about what pertains in the field of teaching and learning of teacher education students. The literature review builds on Korthagen's (2001) realistic teacher education pedagogy that emphasizes pronesis instead of episteme. A benchmarking approach is adopted in discussing good practice strategies in teacher education. Educator characteristics that impact positively on teaching and learning are also considered. In the final analysis linking theory and practice is discussed.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology and research approach. It gives the grounds and justification for the design and the methods used. Chapter 4 as Holliday (2007:90) alludes to, was a link from data to writing. Phenomenological approach is justified as a research strategy. Issues of validity and generalizability are considered and their strengths and weaknesses exposed. Thematic approach to data analysis is also examined.

Chapter 5 presents data as experienced by the respondents. In presenting data about teaching and learning of teacher education students themes used in data collection were used, namely, lecture delivery, teaching skill development, staff development, product and achievement of quality. The presentation structure allowed for a full description of the process of teaching and learning.

Chapter 6 discusses the data presented in Chapter 5. The discussion is conceptualized according to themes that emerged from chapter 5. The identified themes framed the researcher's understanding of what the data portrayed. The themes include, interactivity in lecture halls, lecturers' espoused theory versus theory in use, market blind approach, gap between theory and practice, the taken for granted school roles in teacher education, staff development issues, and achievement of quality.

The last chapter, Chapter 7, gives a summary of the whole study, conclusions and recommendations. A special attention is given to the manner in which data answered the major question guiding the study. To this end the question is answered in categories following the structure of the interview schedule.

1.9. Summary

Chapter 1 provided an advance organizer to the discussion and research about teaching and learning in teacher education. Some of the antecedents that prevail in teacher education are briefly discussed in the background section. A rationale for the current study is also provided as well as the illumination of ways in which the current study contributes to research knowledge. Further reference has been made to methodological highlights. In addition key concepts have been clarified as well. The chapter ends by giving an overview of the outline of the thesis.

Chapter 2
Conceptual Framework

2.1 Introduction

The major purpose of this research project was to examine teaching and learning of teacher education students in South African universities within a context of quality. The aim was to understand how teacher educators are preparing teacher education students to acquire requisite skills for teaching and learning. The organization of the conceptual framework was guided by the contributions of Maxwell (2005) who advises that the conceptual framework should focus on:

 a) What is going on as far as teaching and learning of student teachers is   concerned in light of;

❖ The issues under discussion;

❖ Improvements under way; and

❖ Individuals that are being studied. (i.e. teacher educators and students)

b). highlights of theories, beliefs and prior research findings that inform the study; and

c). preliminary studies that inform the understanding for this thesis.

While the point of departure makes reference to higher education in general, specific reference was made to teaching and learning of teacher education students in particular. The discussion takes off by clarifying and providing justification of the chosen paradigm in which the study is situated, namely, postmodern qualitative paradigm. Within the justification the interconnectedness of postmodernism with sub theories such as constructivism and phenomenology, that the study capitalizes on thereafter, is made. Quality in teacher education, transformative teaching and learning are selected among other current issues under discussion in teacher education. The conceptual framework finally summarizes prior studies that inform the current study.

Before embarking on the development of Maxwell's (2005) themes it is important to first clarify the framework within which the study was conceptualized.

2.2 Paradigmatic perspective

The study is conceptualized within the postmodern qualitative paradigm. Postmodernism is a system of thought that became well established in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Postmodernism presupposes modernism. As it is not within my scope to dwell on the concept modernism, the following table will be used to clarify the relationship between the two concepts.

Table 2. 1. A comparison of modernity and postmodernity's epistemological presuppositions

Modernity	Postmodernity
Consensus	Dissensus
Homogeneity	Heterogeneity
Conformity	Plurality
Universality	Multiplicity
Generalizability	Localization/Contextualization
Commensurability	Incommensurability
Hierarchy/Subordination	Non-hierarchical
Hegemonic	Anti-hegemonic
Metaprescriptions	Case by case
Foundational	De-foundational
Totalizing	Diversity
Section of boundaries	Collapse of boundaries
Subject/Object dialectics	Subject/Object dissolution
Normalizing	Temporizing
Stability	Impermanence
Suppression of difference	Pursuit of differences
Ignore silences	Identify silences
A priori essences	Rejects such essences
Macro politics	Micro politics
Centering	Marginality
Continuities	Discontinuities
Patterns	Ruptures
Order	Displacement
Definitional	Anti-definitional
Mystifying	De-mystifying
Legitimizing	De-legitimizing

Adapted from English (1998:433)

According to Addis and Podesta (2006:386) postmodernism denies rationality and any kind of rationalization, calling for fragmentation and multiplicity. Addis and

Podesta further explain that postmodernism can be defined as a loss of faith in metanarratives; by metanarratives they refer to any transcendental theory or a reference frame, which is used to evaluate and judge any other theory or reference frame. Postmodernism alludes to the fact that true knowledge is the simultaneous existence of a multiplicity of interpretations, each of which is the result of a particular perspective that is essential and should therefore be valued; this manifold knowledge leads the individual to appreciate difference (Addis and Podesta, 2006:395).

The postmodern qualitative paradigm is preferred because researchers "portray people as constructing the social world" and researchers as "themselves constructing the social world through their interpretations of it" (Holliday, 2007:19). To the postmodern qualitative researcher there is no reality outside 'there' until it has been constructed (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997:38). In this light "every act of seeing or saying is unavoidably conditioned by cultural, institutional and interactional contingencies" (1997: IV). Postmodernist epistemology within teacher education is the 'wave of the future' (Jacobs and Kristonis, 2006:1). This particular type of thinking alludes to reforming the current educational system. It emphasizes the ideology of creating reality with each moment especially as nations are experiencing rapid changes in knowledge and skills. It brings to the forefront the idea that no one method of teaching style appeals to all students or staff. The postmodern qualitative paradigm encapsulates critical theory and constructivist perspectives among others; theories that inform part of theoretical research as well as phenomenology that informs the empirical study. At this point it is important to show the relationship or interconnectedness of the chosen theories.

Arguments that focus on the individual as the meaning maker, issues of plurality and multiplicity, localization/contextualization, diversity and pursuit of differences are valid for all the above chosen theories. Niewenhuis (2007:57) alludes to the fact that "one possible way of illustrating this convolution and the overlapping nature of approaches is to look at Paulston and Liebman's (1996:13-14) notion of postmodern mapping...that clearly illustrates the interrelatedness of the various strands of qualitative research approaches." He further argues that the conceptual map sheds light "to the many spaces and possibilities and opens up the infinite

number of relations that are assumed within the spatiality of the map" (2007:57). Figure 2.1 illustrates the postmodern mapping.
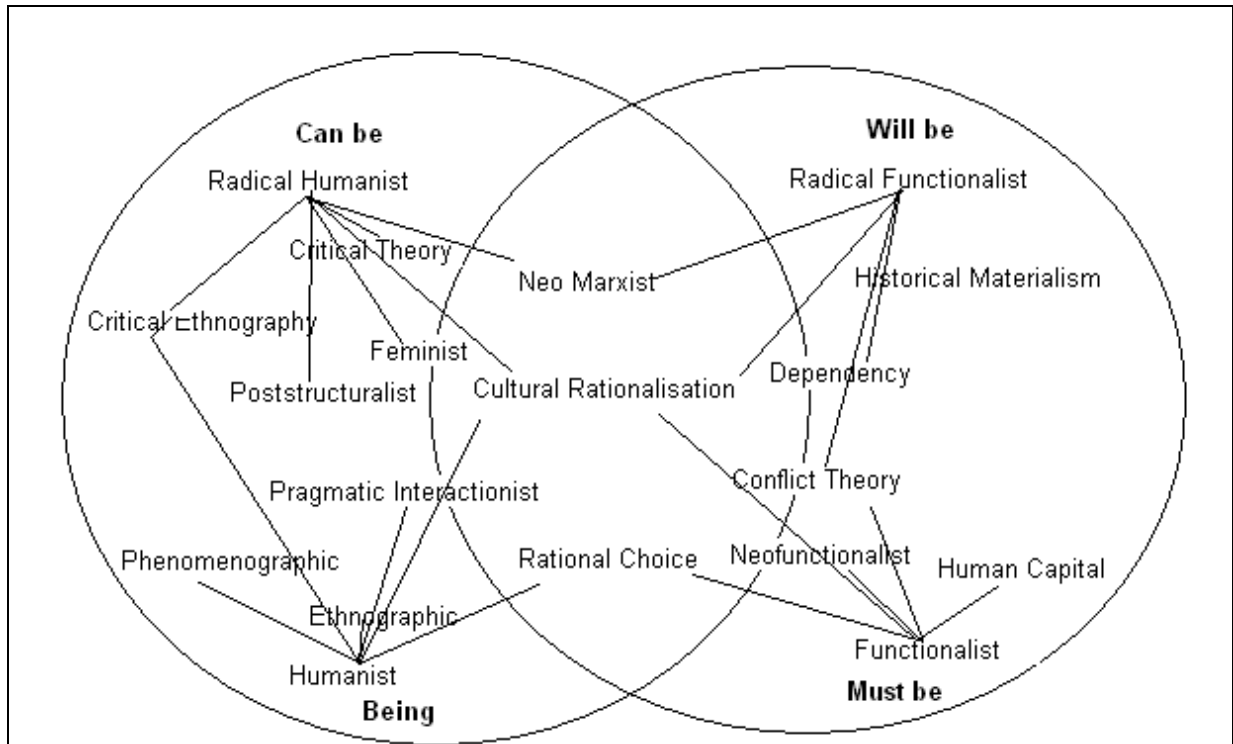
Figure 2.1 Postmodern mapping
Adapted from Niewenhuis (2007:57)

Consistent with the postmodern qualitative paradigm, phenomenology was used as a strategy of enquiry. Phenomenology according to Richards and Morse (2007:159) refers to both a philosophy and a research approach. Edmund Husserl, Heidegger, quoted in the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (2007:21) says that phenomenology is the name for a method of doing philosophy. He asserts that the method includes three steps, namely, reduction, construction and destruction. He posits that the three are mutually pertinent to one another. Construction necessarily involves destruction, and he identifies destruction with deconstruction. In the same light, for example, deconstructing the apartheid education system means constructing a new system that caters for individual groups.

As a philosophy the "discipline of phenomenology may be defined initially as the study of structures of experience, or consciousness" (Smith, 2008). Literally,

phenomenology is the study of 'phenomena': appearances of things, or things as they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience. Smith (2008) further clarifies that phenomenology studies conscious experience as experienced from the subjective or first person point of view. Conscious experiences have a unique feature: we *experience* them; we live through them or perform them. This experiential or first-person feature — that of being experienced — is an essential part of the nature or structure of conscious experience: this forms the essence of phenomenology. The following are its ontological and epistemological analyses.

Ontology is a philosophical study of the nature of being, existence and of reality, i.e. "what there is, what exists, what the phenomenon in reality is made of" (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 2007:24). In ontological terms what exists is that which can be represented and the representation is in a declarative form. Arguing along the same lines, Richards and Morse (2007) are of the view that to a phenomenologist reality is dependent on human beings. In other words there is no reality out there. Hence the study capitalizes on the meanings/reality as experienced by respondents. On the other hand epistemology questions what constitutes knowledge, how knowledge is acquired and what its sources are. In phenomenological terms knowledge is socially constructed within the socio-cultural and historical context. The individuals are the sources of knowledge, knowledge that they have built, that is, through lived experiences. Language is the medium of the lived experiences. The following discussion focuses on some of the current issues under discussion in teacher education. Of special interest is the issue of quality in teacher education. However, initially it is important to unpack the concept 'quality.'

2.3 The concept 'quality'

2.3.1 Historical background

The history of the concept quality can trace its roots back to medieval Europe, where craftsmen began organizing into unions called guilds in the late 13th century. These unions or associations of merchants or crafts persons formed to give help and advice to its members and to make regulations and set standards for a particular trade

(Encyclopedia Britannica, online 10th May 2010). The birth of total quality in the United States came as a direct response to the quality revolution in Japan following World War II. This has resulted in the continued practice of Total Quality Management by many business leaders during the last decade of the 20th century. According to Buchberger, et al (2000:14) the concepts quality, quality assurance or total quality management developed within the industrial sector, where quality is indicated by a product. Since the turn of this century, the quality movement seems to have matured and evolved from its foundations and has moved beyond manufacturing to service many sectors including education (Harvey and Green, 1993:27). Quality as a metaphor in education brings with it several challenges in terms of its conceptualization, as it originates from a system that is mechanistic and predictable as compared to the education system that is more subjective and less predictable. The following discussion suggests the implication of quality in teacher education.

2.3.2 Meaning

Conceptions of quality vary widely. UNESCO (2004:37) emphasizes that different notions of quality are associated with different educational traditions and approaches; for instance:

❖ The humanist approach, which focuses on students constructing their own meanings and integrating theory and practice forms a basis for social action. Quality within this tradition is interpreted as the extent to which students translate learning into social action;

❖ The behaviourist approach assumes that students must be led and their behaviour controlled to specific ends, with quality measured in precise, incremental learning terms;

❖ Critical approaches on the other hand, focus on inequality in access to and outcomes of education and on education's role in legitimizing and reproducing existing social structures. Quality education within this tradition is seen as prompting social change, encouraging critical analysis of social power relations and ensuring that students participate actively in the design of their learning experiences.; and

❖ Indigenous approaches to quality reject mainstream education imported from the centers of power, assure relevance to local content and include the knowledge of the whole community.

One could argue that where the major focus is on quality as transformative learning the underlying approaches should be the humanist and the critical approaches. This is because of their emphasis on constructivist nature of knowledge, i.e. knowledge is deconstructed and constructed taking into account the subjective socio-historical context of individuals. Harvey (1995:47) provides a useful framework for thinking about quality by outlining five goals for education that define the vision of quality within individual systems. Education systems vary in emphasizing a single vision or a mixture of the five goals:

❖ Quality as exceptionality: excellence is the vision that drives education and quality education is education that is exemplary wherein schools maximize the pursuit of the highest potential in individual students;

❖ Quality as consistency: equality is the vision that drives education. Quality requires equitable experiences, schools and classrooms should provide students with consistent experiences across the system;

❖ Quality as fitness-for-purpose: refinement and perfection in specific subject areas is the vision that shapes the system. Quality is seen as preparing students for specific roles and as a result instructional specialization is emphasized;

❖ Quality as value for money: education reflects reasonable correspondence to individual and societal investment. Quality is interpreted as the extent to which the system delivers value for money; and

❖ Quality as transformative potential: social or personal change is the vision that drives education. Quality education is a catalyst for positive changes in individual and society.

Writing along the same lines about quality as consistency, Leu (2006) reiterates that much of the literature includes equity as an essential factor for quality, taking the

stance that no system of education can claim to be of good quality if it serves different groups in a society in significantly different ways (UNESCO, 2004). The foregoing sentiment seems to have a bearing on the local scenario because of the fact that "schooling for black people in South Africa and especially for Africans, is a site of struggle, a political cauldron in a chronic state of crisis; it is chancy and sporadic, subject to frequent disruptions and other kinds of breakdown, and usually in radical disarray" (Morrow, 2007:140). This is because "the post-apartheid government inherited a largely dysfunctional education system that reflected and perpetuated the vast inequalities that characterized whole sectors of South African society" (Todd and Mason, 2006:223). Wickham (2008) contends "that there is no longer any doubt that there is serious crisis in education, if not at all levels then certainly for black working class learners who are not receiving the quality of education they ought to expect in a democratic society; the reason being that South Africa does not have a plan for the children of the poor." In light of the foregoing arguments it could be concluded that quality within the education system in South Africa remains elusive.

Emphasizing the fluid nature of the concept of quality in education, Adams (1993:12) identifies multiple co-existing definitions of quality as concepts-in-use with some of the following characteristics:

- ❖ Quality has multiple meanings;
- ❖ Quality may reflect individual values and interpretations;
- ❖ Quality is multidimensional, it may subsume equity and efficiency concerns;
- ❖ Quality is dynamic; it changes over time and by context;
- ❖ Quality may be assessed by either quantitative or qualitative measures; and
- ❖ Quality is grounded in values, cultures, and traditions: it may be specific to a given nation, province, community, school, parent or individual students.

In light of the above, quality in higher education is considered to be a multidimensional, multilevel and dynamic concept that relates to the contextual settings of an education model, to institutional missions and objectives as well as to specific standards within a given system, institution, programme or discipline (Castle and Kelly, 2004). McMahon (1993:33) mentions that quality teacher education programmes should be economically efficient, that is both efficient as between inputs,

processes and outputs; as well as externally efficient, that is, whether the outputs meet the larger society's needs. Internal efficiency also referred to as production efficiency refers to the efficiency with which learning and other educational outcomes are produced within teacher education.

According to McMahon (1993), ultimate outcomes such as outputs, processes and inputs should have a quality dimension. The quality of each of these ultimate outcomes is important and needs to be monitored by indicators (see Table 3.1 below).

Table 2.2 Ultimate outcome and their indicators

	Input	**Process**	**Outcome**	**Measures**
Quality indicator	-Teacher quality -Text and reading materials -Library and IT activity	-Course duration -Drop out rates -Teacher absenteeism	-Achievement effect -Attitudinal effects -Equity effects	-Number of teachers -Teacher experience -Teacher qualification and specialization -Number of students per class.

Source*: McMahon, (1993:23).*

On the other hand, exchange efficiency refers to the extent to which teacher education practices are producing those outcomes or outputs that are desired by society. McMahon's (1993) analysis of quality falls within the positivist, behaviourist and objective paradigm, characteristic of a systems approach where the unit of analysis is the macro structure or settings that any education system finds itself in, for instance, the socio-political context. This kind of analysis tends to gloss over the importance of the individual as a major contributor within the settings. It is therefore important that the individual should be the basic unit of analysis in order to understand the macro settings, namely the institutions, communities and societies. Leu (2006) mentions that it is only recently that policy makers and programme implementers have started seriously to look beyond input and output models of what constitutes quality, now focusing more seriously on process at the local level and daily school experience as the engine of quality.

Quality education programmes are characterized with relevance, that is, relevant to the individual as well as to the community at large. Conceptualizing relevance within this relativist, interpretive stance makes the concept of quality in education quite complex indeed, as it is not a given but relative to individuals in both time and space. Robertson (2007:545) mentions that quality, as a measure of excellence, means different things to different people and as such is totally subjective. The foregoing observation resonates with McLeod and Reynolds' (2007:44) sentiment that "quality teaching is different for different learners in different contexts with diverse values." McLeod and Reynolds add that the most influential factor in quality learning is not the institution students attend, nor students' socio-economic status, but the quality of teaching that students receive. I, however, find the foregoing assumption problematic in the sense that teaching does not occur in a vacuum, but rather that it is embedded in socio-historical and socio-cultural contexts and as such external influences abound. For instance commenting about high school results for the year 2008 in South Africa, the DoE (2009:10) reports that "the national achievement rate per quintile showed that the less resourced a school was the poorer they performed. Quintile 1 schools which were the poorest schools only achieved an average pass rate of 50% while quintile 5 schools received an average pass rate of 84%."

In the final analysis I conceptualize quality as productive and dynamic, because quality is constructed within interactive processes of particular contexts. Quality in this case becomes a function of continuous development and improvement. The implication of the foregoing is that a teacher education curriculum should meet the dynamic needs of society

Within the relativist framework I conceived quality teaching and learning within a process-product-impact dimension. The understanding is that quality in teacher education is embedded in the process of teaching and learning with the major focus being on student learning. The quality of exiting students (product) is judged by their impact on learners in the schools. The use of student outcomes, particularly achievement as a measure of teacher quality enjoys strong support from both education professionals and the policy community (Walsh, 2001). According to Robinson and Reback (2008) there is a need to understand that quality in teaching

and learning is a journey, not a destination. It consists of steps that form a process that is continuous. In the final analysis it could be argued that quality teacher education practices are a result of good practice strategies, an issue that is discussed in Chapter 3. At this juncture it is important to foreground the context for teacher education in South Africa that serves as a reference point as the rest of the study unfolds.

2.4 Context for teacher education in South Africa

The above discussion has highlighted some important definitions of quality. The following section provides an analysis of what pertains within the education context in South Africa and the meaning the context has for the attainment of quality education A brief historical beacon is made in the following paragraphs to mark how far South Africa has progressed in terms of transforming the context for education from the previous apartheid policies.

What makes South Africa's apartheid era different to segregation and racial hatred that have occurred in other countries is the systematic way in which the National Party, which came into power in 1948, formalised it through the law (Evans, 2010). As doctrine of white supremacy, apartheid policies promoted separate development. To this end several laws were enacted. The following laws are pertinent to the study. First was the Bantu Education Act, Act No 47 of 1953. The act established a Black Education Department in the Department of Native Affairs which would compile a curriculum that suited the "nature and requirements of the black people". The author of the legislation, Dr Hendrik Verwoerd (then Minister of Native Affairs, later Prime Minister), stated that its aim was to prevent Africans receiving an education that would lead them to aspire to positions they wouldn't be allowed to hold in society. Instead, Africans were to receive an education designed to provide them with skills to serve their own people in the homelands or to work in labouring jobs under white supervision (Evans, 2010). Second was the Extension of University Education Act, Act 45 of 1959. The Act put an end to black students attending white universities (mainly the Universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand). Instead, it created separate tertiary institutions for whites, coloureds, blacks, and Asians. Finally

there was the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, Act No 49 of 1953. The act forced segregation in all public amenities, public buildings, and public transport with the aim of eliminating contact between whites and other races. "Europeans Only" and "Non-Europeans Only" signs were put up. The act stated that facilities provided for different races need not be equal. The foregoing was enforced by The Group Areas Act of 1950 that established residential and business sections in urban areas for each race, and members of other races were barred from living, operating businesses, or owning land in them (Encyclopedia Britannica, online 10 May 2010). From the foregoing descriptions it is apparent that consideration of quality outside the white borders was not an issue. However, with the installation of democratic government in 1994, South Africa has effected vast changes in the various sectors including education, all aimed at improving the quality of life for all.

2.5 Transformation as quality in teacher education

In South Africa the teaching and learning of teacher education students falls within the area prioritized by the Council of Higher Education (CHE) in its improvement of teaching and learning in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). In keeping with the conceptualization of transformation as an indicator of quality in teacher education, one of the central concerns of HEIs in South Africa is the enhancement of transformative learning (HEQC, 2002:13). The Report of the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (2005) indicates that over the past decade South Africa has developed a comprehensive set of policies in the field of education with a view to transform education in such a way that the ideal of quality education for all could become a reality. But, the report goes on to express a concern that some of the principal intentions of those policies are not being achieved as revealed by large scale systemic evaluations which have taken place (Report on the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education, 2005:14). The implication of transformation in South Africa, as in other previously colonized societies, is moving from highly segregated population groups to a democratic and just society. At this point it is important to foreground briefly the nature of higher education restructuring in South Africa.

The period of "great transformation in South African higher education brought about a reconfiguration of the landscape of public institutions by means of mergers and incorporations as key strategies" (Hall et al, 2004:V). Mergers and incorporations have been prescribed by the state as part of an explicit agenda of transformation, redress and equity in the sector, (Hall et al, 2004:11). Restructuring has, as its goal, the dismantling of the apartheid landscape of higher education and the configuration of a new landscape which would allow higher education to achieve the set goals for it in national policy. The report goes on to explain that a merger was taken to imply a combination of two or more separate institutions into a single entity with a single governing body and chief executive body. Incorporation referred to the process whereby a subdivision of one institution was incorporated into another institution, without affecting the latter's legal status. Mergers were variously classified in terms of their organisational outcome, in terms of the type of academic focus and activities that merging institutions brought together, (Hall et al, 2004:29). According to Chisholm (2004:7) "the incorporation of teacher education colleges into universities has significant implications for improving the quality of teacher education in South Africa."

The implementation of improvement plans by teacher educators depended in part on reflective practitioners having sufficient understanding of learning: in other words, that staff members should be involved in developing an empirical and theoretical base to inform their improvement of teaching and learning (Blanton, Sindelar and Correa, 2006:45). They go on to argue that strong research programmes are necessary both to guide teacher education programme design and to inform policy. To this end the HEQC (2002) articulated what they considered good practice in teaching and learning (an issue that I take up in the literature review, Chapter 3, by exploring good practice strategies). Basing my argument on postmodern rationalisation, I take note that good practice is contingent, context-dependent and defies generic description.

2.6 The transformative nature of teaching and learning

In keeping with conceptualization of quality as transformation, one of the central concerns of HEIs in South Africa is the enhancement of transformative learning

(HEQC, 2002:13). In South Africa the need for transformation, as in other previously colonized societies can not be overemphasised. Hence the post apartheid government is putting every measure in place to redress the situation. In education the foregoing could be realised through among other practices transformative learning.

According to Taylor (2006:19) transformative learning is first and foremost about educating from a particular worldview, a particular educational philosophy. Mezirow (1997) asserts that transformative learning occurs when individuals change their frames of reference by critically reflecting on their assumptions and beliefs and consciously making and implementing plans that bring about new ways of defining their worlds. Cranton (1994) is of the view that the theory of transformative learning developed by Mezirow (1978) has evolved into a comprehensive and complex description of how students construe, validate, and reformulate the meaning of their experiences. Recognizing levels of reflection using categories developed by Mezirow (1978) namely, content, process, premise, Kreber (2004:34) concluded that when learning, in this case about teaching, education students may need at times to begin with premise reflection—that is, being more concerned with why they teach than with how or what they teach. Premise reflection involves critically "questioning our presuppositions underlying our knowledge" (Kreber (2004:31)). In addition, critical reflection seems to be a developmental process, rooted in experience. It begins to give credence to Merriam's position (2004:65) that "mature cognitive development is foundational to engaging in critical reflection and rational discourse necessary for transformative learning."

Harris, Lowery-Moore & Farrow (2008:319) are of the opinion that for educators, these findings suggest the importance of engaging students in classroom practices that assist in the development of critical reflection through use of reflective journaling, classroom dialogue, and critical questioning. Furthermore, it also means recognizing that becoming more reflective is a developmental process requiring time and continuous practice. The foregoing correlates with Brown's (2003) contribution in the area of strategies for transformative learning. Brown (2003) echoes the sentiment that teachers must be active facilitators in the learning process and assume responsibility for student growth through questioning the student's expectations and

beliefs. In other words teacher educators and their students must be actively engaged in assignments that require them to explore and examine their own assumptions, values, beliefs, experiences, and worldviews.

Perspective transformation is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why individual assumptions have come to constrain the way individuals perceive, understand, and feel about their world; changing these structures of habitual expectations to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating and integrating perspective; and finally making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings (Mezirow, 1991). Perspective transformation explains how the meaning structures that adults have acquired over a lifetime become transformed. These meaning structures are frames of reference that are based on the totality of individuals' cultural and contextual experiences and that influence how they behave and interpret events (Taylor, 1998). The meaning schemes that make up meaning structures may change as an individual adds to or integrates ideas within an existing scheme and, in fact, this transformation of meaning schemes occurs routinely through learning. In this light, the transformative characteristic of educator roles is that frames of reference change with each entering class and its differing circumstances.

The role of the teacher educator in establishing an environment that builds trust and care and facilitates the development of sensitive relationships among teacher education students is a fundamental principle of fostering transformative learning (Taylor, 1998). Loughlin (1993) believes that the responsibility of the teacher educator is to create a community of knowers, that is, individuals who are united in a shared experience of trying to make meaning of their life experience. As a member of that community, the teacher also sets the stage for transformative learning by serving as a role model and demonstrating a willingness to learn and change by expanding and deepening understanding of and perspectives about both the subject matter and teaching (Cranton, 1994). As part of the community of knowers, learners share the responsibility for constructing and creating the conditions under which transformative learning can occur. Transformation is not just a question of methods and techniques, but rather a different relationship to knowledge and society (Shor and Freire, 1987:29).

The following section attempts to unpack the application of transformative teaching and learning.

2.6.1 Implication of transformative teaching and learning in teacher education

Education as transformation places the teacher education student at the centre of his/her own learning. In light of the foregoing the discussion within this section takes constructivism to be the context through which transformation could be realised as the focus is on individuals and the role they assume in building their own meanings. In this light the discussion goes on to define the concept 'learning' within constructivism. In the final analysis the discussion goes on to include active learning as it is argued to be a feature of constructivism (Scheyvens et al, 2008).

2.6.2 Constructivism in teacher education

Abdal-Haqq, (1998) postulates that constructivism is an epistemology, a learning or meaning-making theory, which offers an explanation of the nature of knowledge and how human beings learn. It maintains that individuals create or construct their own new understandings or knowledge through the interaction of what they already know and believe and the ideas, events, and activities with which they come in contact (Cannella & Reiff, 1994; Richardson, 1997). Scheyvens, et al (2008) further explain that proponents of constructivism believe that knowledge does not exist independently of the knower. In other words, if a student is to learn something there must be an interaction between the student's internal knowledge structures and the outside world. "This interaction can be supported by requiring the student to both participate in an activity and then reflect on his/her experience with the activity" (Scheyvens, et al., 2008:53). This process of engagement with learning enables students to internalize key concepts and make linkages between theory and practice.

According to the series *Concept to Classroom* (2004) the concept of constructivism has roots in classical antiquity, going back to Socrates' dialogue with his followers, in which he asked directed questions that led his students to realize for themselves the weaknesses in their thinking. The Socratic dialogue is still an important tool in the way constructivist educators assess their students' learning and

plan new learning experiences. Constructivism is basically a theory based on observation and scientific study about how people learn. It maintains that individuals construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences (*Concept to Classroom* series, 2004). The publication goes on to state that constructivist teacher educators pose questions and techniques in the teaching process. For example, they may:

❖ Prompt students to formulate their own questions (inquiry);

❖ Allow multiple interpretations and expressions of learning (multiple intelligences); and

❖ Encourage group work and the use of peers as resources (collaborative learning).

As a result of the above, in a constructivist classroom learning is constructed, active, reflective, collaborative and evolving. The foregoing statement contrasts with traditional classrooms as illustrated below.

Table 2.3 Traditional classrooms vs. constructivist classrooms

Traditional Classrooms	Constructivist Classrooms
Curriculum begins with the parts of the whole. Emphasizes basic skills.	Curriculum emphasizes big concepts, beginning with the whole and expanding to include the parts.
	Pursuit of student questions and interests is valued
Strict adherence to fixed curriculum is highly valued.	Materials include primary sources of material and manipulative material
Materials are primarily textbooks and workbooks.	
	Learning is interactive, building on what the student knows.
Learning is based on repetition.	
	Teachers have a dialogue with students, helping students construct their own knowledge.
Teachers disseminate information to students; students are recipients of knowledge.	Teacher's role is interactive, rooted in negotiation
	Assessment includes student works, observation, and points of view, as well as tests. Process is as important as product.
Teacher's role is directive, rooted in authority.	
	Knowledge is seen as dynamic, ever changing with experience.
Assessment is through testing, correct answers.	Students work primarily in groups.
Knowledge is seen as inert.	
Students work primarily alone.	

Source: *Concept to Classroom (2004:23)*

Constructivist teacher education is working with teachers in a constructivist way, helping them to re-examine and reflect about the tacit ideas they bring to their education. The importance of basing teaching and learning on constructivist notions is that the constructivist paradigm emphasizes the dynamism of the learning process where the educator's role is not to dispense knowledge (Richardson, 1997). Constructivism in teacher education encourages constructivist teaching practice by modelling the practices in the teaching and learning of student teachers. The foregoing sentiment correlates with the statement put forward by UNESCO (2004:161) that teacher educators should not only advocate, but also use and model constructivist methods. Constructivism, according to Richardson (1997) can be discussed as a lens through which the process of learning to teach can be understood.

Arguing for constructivist pedagogy for teacher educators and teacher education students, Vadeboncoeur (1997:21) posits that teacher education programmes should take seriously the task of preparing teacher education students for diverse classrooms. He goes on to express the sentiment that the need for constructivism in teacher education is urgent in order to teach every student successfully and effectively. He suggests that the groundwork of a constructivist teacher education programme begins with content that:

❖ foregrounds cognitive development as socio-historically situated and attends to the merging of everyday and academic concepts;
❖ defines knowledge as partial and positional rather than foundationalist; and
❖ provides for the awareness and examination of discourses of power and privilege (Vadeboncoeur 1997:32).

Consistent with constructivist principles, Myers (1996) contends that to accomplish the goals of social transformation and reconstruction, the context of education must be deconstructed and the cultural assumptions, power relationships, and historical influences that under gird it must be exposed, critiqued, and, when necessary, altered (Myers, 1996). It is through this process that teacher education students could deconstruct their own prior knowledge and attitudes, comprehend how

these understandings evolve; explore the effects they have on actions and behaviour, and consider alternate conceptions and premises that may be more serviceable in teaching (Richardson, 1997:12).

Discourses of power and privilege should not be ignored by constructivists in order for teacher educators to understand how all students develop and learn. The discourse postulated by Freire (1972) provides a sound foundation for discussing social inequality issues. However writers like Freedman (2007) argue that the Freirean discourse takes an extreme position. Bartolome (2004:100) argues that lack of political and ideological clarity often translates into teachers uncritically accepting the status quo. According to Bartolome (2004:101) the lack of ideological and political clarity also leads educators down an assimilationist path to teaching and learning, rather than a culturally responsive, integrative and transformative one. Teacher candidates should realize that schools are the sociocultural settings where teaching and learning take place and where cultural tools such as reading, writing, mathematics and certain modes of discourse are utilized (Richardson, 1997:12). The foregoing assumes that theory and practice do not develop in a vacuum; they are shaped by dominant cultural 1assumptions (Martin, 1994; O'Loughlin, 1995).

Teacher education students need opportunities for testing, discussing and comparing various perspectives and approaches to teaching (Bartolome, 2004:99). They should develop a composite view of practice achieved by viewing events from a variety of vantage points. By striving for such a composite view teachers become more responsible for their pedagogical choices. MacKinnon and Scarff-Seater (1997) are of the opinion that there should be a way of slowing down the pace of teacher education to allow teacher educators and students to work closely together in practice, and so together observe and try to untangle the many mysteries of learning or failure to learn.

Understanding the role of the teacher in constructivist teaching and learning provides a useful vantage point from which to grasp how theory impacts on practice (Levine, 2006:34). Within constructivist teaching and learning the teacher educator has two important roles (Richardson, 1997). The first is to introduce new ideas or cultural tools where necessary and to provide the support and guidance for students to

make sense of these for themselves. The other is to listen and diagnose the ways in which the instructional activities are being interpreted to inform further action. Teaching from this perspective is also a learning process for the educator (Fosnot, 1996). Ernest (1996) identifies the following constructivist underpinnings:

❖ the focus of concern is not just the learner's cognition, but the learner's beliefs and conceptual knowledge;

❖ the focus of concern with the teacher and in teacher education is not just with the teacher's knowledge of subject matter and diagnostic skills, but with teacher's beliefs, conceptions, and personal theories about subject matter, teaching and learning; and

❖ an awareness of the social construction of knowledge suggests a pedagogical emphasis on discussion, collaboration, negotiation, and shared meanings. The awareness implies the educators' ability to deconstruct curriculum discourse in order to understand who is spearheading and managing the curriculum process and how; what philosophical and pedagogical truths are being established in the curriculum making process; what identity-producing mechanisms are at work and what particular notions of identity are being shaped in the process (Soudien & Baxen, 1997:n.p).

Constructivism like any other theory has its own critical perspectives. It has been considered as elitist by critics who argue that constructivism and other progressive educational theories have been more successful with groups of students from privileged backgrounds. Fataar (2007) contends that moving from traditional methodology to a learner-centred and constructivist teacher education is challenging and not easy to replicate in rural and township schools. However, contrary to Fataar's assertion, Chisholm's (2004:5) study revealed that despite the fact that quality differences continue to reflect historical legacies and differences, many poor schools are performing better than better-resourced schools.

Critics further argue that constructivism leads to 'group think' as the collaborative aspects of constructivism tend to produce a tyranny of the majority in

which a few students are forced to conform to the emerging consensus (*Concept to Classroom*, 2004). Constructivists however counter that. This is revealed by the outcome of an American study referred to as Project Follow Through – the largest and most expensive federally funded experiment in education ever conducted during 1967-1995. Its major aim was to break the cycle of poverty through better education. Productive and constructivist approaches were emphasized throughout the experimenting schools, to strengthen learners as individuals. In the final analysis students were compared on higher order thinking skills, constructivist students seemed to out- perform their peers (*Concept to Classroom*, 2004). This is because constructivism concentrates on learning how to think and understand which results in transfer of knowledge as students create organizing principles that they take with them to other learning settings (Concept to Classroom, 2004). A brief consideration of the definitions of learning within constructivism is made within the following paragraphs.

2.6.3 Constructivist notions of the concept 'learning'

Within the framework of constructivism theorists have advanced varied definitions of learning. Willis (2006) is of the opinion that an individual is said to have learnt when he/she has increased his/her options for applying to a specific set of circumstances, new or different behaviour which the individual believes will be to his/her benefit. He further argues that learning is not always immediately followed by an observable behaviour because learning is often stored for future use. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) posit that learning is the internalization and transformation of social tools of thought which are communicated to the learner through social interaction and instructional conversation. In addition, Northege (1994) defines learning as the reconstruction of elements of one's meaning production systems which are collective, socially and culturally constructed.

Von Glasersfeld (1995) argues that from a constructivist perspective, learning is not a stimulus-response phenomenon; it requires self-regulation and the building of conceptual structures through reflection and abstraction. Writing along the same lines Kruger, Smit and du Pre le Roux (1996) contend that learning is how well a student must understand what he or she must learn and the level of consciousness at which

learning takes place. Fosnot (1996) adds that rather than behaviours or skills as the goal of instruction, concept development and deep understanding are the foci. According to von Glasersfeld (1996) in the constructivist paradigm, learning emphasizes the process and not the product. How one arrives at a particular answer, and not the retrieval of an 'objective true solution', is what is important. Learning is a process of constructing meaningful representations, of making sense of one's experiential world. In this process, students' errors are seen in a positive light and as a means of gaining insight into how they are organizing their experiential world. The notion of doing something 'right' or 'correctly' is to do something that fits with an order one has established oneself (von Glasersfeld, 1987). This perspective is consistent with the constructivist tendency to privilege multiple truths, representations, perspectives and realities. The concept of multiplicity has important implications for teaching and learning, especially in multicultural settings. It defines, not only the epistemological and theoretical perspective but, as well, the many ways in which the theory itself can be articulated (Richards and Morse, 2007:87). Nonetheless, there are many common themes in the literature on constructivism which permit the derivation of principles, instructional models and general characteristics (Fosnot, 1996).

Entwistle (1988:54) has contributed an additional perspective on learning in HE namely, that how students perceive particular learning task demands largely determines whether their approach to learning will be 'deep', 'strategic' or 'surface.' It is only the deep approach to learning that results in transformative learning, for it is characterized by a focus on underlying meaning, the use of a well-structured knowledge base, relating new knowledge to old knowledge, and working conceptually and relationally. Theories of learning such as constructivism suggest that 'good teaching practice' can facilitate 'deep' approaches to learning and enable students to participate in actively building and transforming their cognitive and knowledge structures (Entwistle, 1988).

Transformative learning per se suggests the importance of emphasizing principles of critical pedagogy in teacher education to enhance the process of transformative learning. According to Bartolome (2004) critical pedagogy is primarily concerned with the kinds of educational theories and practices that encourage both

teacher education students and teacher educators to develop an understanding of the interconnecting relationship between ideology, power and culture. In order for teacher education students to better understand the three-way relation, two important critical pedagogical principles need to inform the curriculum: a critical understanding of dominant ideologies, and exposure to hegemonic discourses to resist and transform such oppressive practices (Darder, Torres and Baltodano, 2002:15).

The above argument correlates with the Report on the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (2005:14) that comments that the Initial Professional Education of Teachers curriculum needs to include public knowledge, that is, what teachers need to know and to be able to do to become teachers in contemporary institutions. The Report further observes that the IPET curriculum however, usually fails to take account of embedded and unarticulated assumptions about teaching and learning that the teacher education students bring from their own twelve years of experience as learners at school. According to the Report on the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (2005:14) the teacher education curriculum needs to disrupt these embedded assumptions of what it means to teach and to be a teacher.

The suggestion is that a teacher education curriculum (coursework and practicum experiences) be deliberately designed and implemented to expose prospective teachers to a variety of ideological postures so that they can begin to perceive their own ideologies in relation to others' and critically examine the damaging biases they may personally hold, and the inequalities and injustices present in schools and in the society as a whole (Bartolome, 2004). The idea is simply to open up students to a wide range of experiences so that they can expand, hold up to a critical light and adjust their own ideological lens in ways that make the classroom more inclusive, exploratory and transformative. But according to Gonsalves (1996), sometimes prospective and experienced teacher educators alike often resent having to take courses that challenge some of the dominant ideologies they unconsciously hold. Transformational change however, "can take place if educators challenge the practices that have served to re-produce inequitable relations" (Carr, 2008:95). Engaging students in the construction of their knowledge presupposes provision of active learning by teacher educators. Active learning is taken to be the main feature of

constructivism. Marlowe and Page (2005) contend that the strategy of active learning is grounded in constructivism. Writing along the same lines, Scheyvens, et al (2008) posit that active learning is situated within the constructivist approach to student learning. The following section is a brief discussion of the implication of active learning.

2.6.4 Active learning in teacher education

According to Smart and Csapo (2007:454) "with a shift of focus from teaching to learning in higher education, educators often look for strategies to involve students actively in the learning process, especially since numerous studies have demonstrated that a student's active involvement in the learning process enhances learning." Watkins (2005) contends that active learning sometimes referred to as interactive instruction, experiential learning or learning by doing, results in positive learning outcomes. Active learning is rooted in Dewey's philosophy of pragmatism that thought and action, ideas and the use of ideas can never be separated (Mattson, 2005:24).

According to Scheyvens, Griffin, Jocoy, Liu and Bradford (2008:51) "the term active learning covers a wide variety of learning strategies aimed at encouraging active student participation in learning (learning-by-doing)." Healey and Jenkins (2000) explain how using a range of different teaching methods, as is common when promoting active learning, is appropriate in terms of responding to students different learning styles. Active learning according to Scheyvens, et al (2008:54) requires more than simply activity; it should also encourage thinking and reflection on learning activities. Hanson and Moser (2003:18) reiterate that by utilizing learning strategies that include small group work, role play and simulations, data collection and analysis, active learning is purported to "increase student interest and motivation and to build students' critical thinking, problem solving and social skills."

Smart and Csapo (2007:452) suggest some general characteristics of active learning:

❖ Students are involved more than listening;

❖ Instruction emphasizes the development of students' skills more than just transmitting information;

❖ Students develop higher order thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation);

❖ Students are engaged in activities (e.g. reading, discussing, writing); and

❖ Students explore their own attitudes and values.

Huang (2006:32) provides three questions that frame the instructional foundation of active learning. These questions seem to provide a foundation for reflecting and elaborating on the above items. The questions are:

How can the educator facilitate students' learning in such a way that he/she provides opportunities for them to discover, apply and analyze knowledge for themselves?

a) How can the educator get students to push themselves beyond the comprehension level to higher levels of thinking?

b) How can the educator facilitate a learning process that motivates students to understand the knowledge in a meaningful and creative way?

The above questions act as a guide in choosing approaches to active learning. Scheyvens, et al (2008) suggest some approaches to active learning, e.g. case studies of practice, reading journals, and use of portfolios.

Smart and Csapo (2005) argue that active learning activities should be focused around clear objectives. They suggest a four-step learning cycle as a useful framework in implementing meaningful activities. The first cycle is experiencing where students interact with others, building on individual strengths, and provides a shared experience upon which reflection and class discussion can build. The second cycle is reflecting. During this cycle students reflect and work at formulating meaning from the activities. The third cycle is generalizing, where students extend meaning from an activity by making connections to and finding patterns in their own lives. The fourth cycle is applying. During this cycle students are encouraged to apply what they experience in class, working to make meaning applicable.

2.7 Beliefs about teaching and learning of student teachers

According to Calderhead and Shorrock (1997:25) how teacher educators conceptualize the work of teachers inevitably influences how they think about teacher education student teaching and learning, and ultimately shapes suggestions for the further improvement of teacher education. Calderhead and Shorrock (1997:27) provide classifications of beliefs/ ideologies or conceptual orientations in teacher education. These are:

2.7.1 The academic orientation

The academic orientation emphasizes teacher subject expertise and sees the quality of the teacher's own education as the basic professional strength (Calderhead and Shorrock, 1997:27). Within this belief a sound liberal arts education is seen as the crucial ingredient of teacher preparation. According to Buchberger et al (2000:15) the academic orientation of teacher education may be defined as celebrating the academic discipline. The academic knowledge is reminiscent of Korthagen's (2001:23) type of knowledge that he refers to as 'episteme.' It is propositional in nature, that is, it consists of assertions that can be explained and investigated. Consequently they are formulated in abstract terms. The resultant major challenge is a gap between theory and practice that hampers both the teacher educator and the teacher candidate (Korthagen, 2001:24). The academic orientation characterizes secondary school teacher education.

2.7.2 The practical orientation

Calderhead and Shorrock (1997:28) assert that the belief in practical orientation emphasizes the artistry and classroom technique of the teacher, viewing the teacher as a craftsperson. The major argument within the practical orientation is that what is needed is not scientific knowledge (episteme), but practical wisdom (phronesis) (Korthagen, 2001:24). All practical knowledge is context-related, allowing the contingent features of the case at hand to be, ultimately, authoritative over principle (Nussbaum, 1996:300). The belief attaches importance to classroom experience and apprenticeship models of learning to teach. The practical orientation characterizes

primary school teacher education and is described by Buchberger et al (2000) as a normal school tradition. According to Buchberger et al (2000:14) to a large extent the normal school tradition builds upon untested craft knowledge developed by practitioners and could be defined as a celebration of experience. To some extent the tendency to neglect educational research can be seen as a legacy of this tradition (2000:15).

2.7.3 The technical orientation

This ideology derives from a behaviourist model of teaching and learning Calderhead and Shorrock (1997:28). Explaining further they assert that the orientation emphasizes the knowledge and behavioural skills that teachers require and has been associated with micro teaching and competency based approaches to teacher education.

2.7.4 The personal orientation

The orientation emphasizes the importance of interpersonal relationships in the classroom, often derives support from humanistic psychology, and views learning to teach as a process of becoming or personal development (Calderhead and Shorrock, 1997:29). In this view teacher education takes the form of offering a safe environment which encourages experimentation and discovery of personal strengths.

2.7.5 The critical inquiry orientation

The critical orientation belief views schooling as a process of social reform and emphasizes the role of schools in promoting democratic values and reducing social inequalities (Calderhead and Shorrock, 1997:27). Within this ideology an important aspect of teacher education is therefore seen as enabling teacher education students to become aware of the social context of schools and of the social consequences of their own actions as teachers (Bartolome, 2004). The orientation holds that teacher education functions to help teachers become critical, reflective change agents.

While arguably all of the above orientations offer a perspective on teaching and learning of teacher education students and all simultaneously have implications for the design of teacher education courses, Calderhead and Shorrock (1997:30) argues that they appear to vie with each other for precedence in the prevailing language with which teacher education is publicly discussed, rather than being thought of as complementary or mutually relevant and informative. With reference to my study however, good practice strategies embrace the above orientations in the sense that they cover knowledge of the subject matter and knowledge of teaching. While this is the case, the critical orientation, embedded in the postmodern paradigm, takes precedence in the analyses of issues under discussion with other orientations subsumed.

2.8 Prior research informing the study

There are several different studies that have been conducted on different aspects of teaching and learning of student teachers. The four studies summarised in Table 2.4 are some of the examples of research that shed light on the current study.

Table 2. 4 Examples of prior research informing the study

Researcher(s)	Area of Research	Aim of Study	Research Method	Findings
Chetty and Lubben (2009)	Research in teacher education in a higher education institution in transition	To examine perceptions of professional and organizational identity of teacher educators in a 'new' University of Technology	Semi-structured interviews	-Most staff consider teaching and research as dichotomous. -Research activities are seen to satisfy the institutional requirement for securing research funding and producing publication.
Deacon, et al (2009)	An analysis of education research in Higher Education in South Africa from 1995-2006	To determine the gaps, strengths and general research trends over that twelve-year period.	Document analysis	-There is a vibrant community of scholars engaging in a variety of research -There is a dearth of large scale research projects that would consolidate knowledge about issues of national and global importance.
Okhremtchouk et al, (2009)	Preservice teacher education (California education schools implementing PACT)	To understand how the PACT preparation process affects teacher candidates and how it also informs teacher education programmes within the state.	Open ended unstructured survey.	-PACT was helpful in student teaching practice. -PACT was not helpful on university coursework. -PACT affected student's personal time and life in a significantly negative way.
Levine (2006)	Preservice teacher education (America's education schools).	How well university based teacher education programmes prepared students to meet the needs of today's dynamic classrooms.	Survey	-Low admission standards -Little connection between theory and practice -Dearth of research in teacher education -Teacher education curriculums are often dated.

The above studies provided a base for reflection in the areas of, linking research with teaching; staff development issues; assessment practices as well as teacher education programme as a whole. Of particular interest was Levine's (2006:20) nine point scale for judging quality in teacher education programmes. The template provided me with a tool for making informed decisions pertaining to judgment of quality in teacher education in South African universities. Table 2.4 provides details for the nine point scale.

Table 2. 5 Nine point template for judging quality

Standard	Description
1. Purpose	The program's purpose is explicit, focusing on the education of teachers; the goals reflect the needs of today's teachers, schools, and children; and the definition of success is tied to student learning in the graduates' classrooms.
2. Curricular Coherence	The curriculum mirrors program purposes and goals. It is rigorous, coherent, and organized to teach the skills and knowledge needed by teachers at specific types of schools and at the various stages of their careers.
3. Curricular Balance	The curriculum integrates the theory and practice of teaching, balancing study in university classrooms and work in schools with successful practitioners.
4. Faculty Composition	The faculty includes academics and practitioners, who are experts in teaching, up to date in their field, intellectually productive, and have their feet planted in both teacher education and the schools they serve.
5. Admission	Admissions criteria are designed to recruit students with the capacity and motivation to become successful teachers.
6. Degrees	Graduation standards are high, students are adequately prepared for the classroom, and the degrees awarded are appropriate to the profession.
7. Research	Research carried out in the program is of high quality, driven by practice, and useful to practitioners and/or policy makers.
8. Finances	Resources are adequate to support the program.
9. Assessment	The program engages in continuing self-assessment and improvement of its performance.

Source*: Levine (2006:20)*

2.9 Summary

The conceptual framework has clarified the postmodern qualitative parameters that guided the study. The interconnectedness of postmodernism with constructivism and phenomenology is made. The concept 'quality' as an issue in higher education is discussed. In keeping with the qualitative and relative characteristics of postmodernism, discussions about improvement within HEIs point to the importance of enhancement of transformative learning in teacher education in order to meet the dynamic needs of society. In the light of the foregoing sentiment, the nature of teaching and learning of teacher education students is discussed. Constructivism is put forward as a theory that should be the foundation of learning for teacher education students. Discussion about some of the philosophical beliefs about teaching and

learning of teacher education students has been highlighted. These beliefs include the academic, practical, personal and critical inquiry orientations. Prior studies that inform the current study are summarized. Levine's (2006) nine point template is used for judging quality in teacher education in South African universities. Phenomenology is used as a research approach.

Within the field of teacher education there is substantial literature of theory and research that warrants a special focus. This literature review is presented in the next chapter, Chapter 3.

Chapter 3
Literature review

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter provides a framework within which the study is conceptualized. Chapter 3 focuses on the review of related literature in order to clarify and gain a deeper understanding of the research topic.

Pedagogy of teacher education is discussed first as it forms the foundation of the study i.e. the work of teacher educators. The issue of professionalism is reviewed as it determines the implementation of teacher education pedagogy. The professional characteristics of a teacher educator are also discussed. A benchmarking strategy is adopted in discussing good practice strategies in teacher education. Focusing on different learning styles is discussed as it encourages educators to consider learning needs for individual students. In the final analysis the contentious issues in teacher education, namely, linking theory with practice as well as linking research with teaching are discussed.

3.2 Pedagogy of teacher education

This section on teacher pedagogy focuses on what should constitute teacher pedagogy, its structure as well as guiding principles and in doing so the section leans on the contributions of Korthagen (2001). The work of teacher educators is what Korthagen (2001) refers to as pedagogy of teacher education. Korthagen (2001:69) argues that teacher educators often use practical examples of the theories presented, give assignments aimed at translating certain theoretical principles into practice, make use of feedback procedures, "but the effects of such an approach on teaching behaviour in the classroom have proved to be small."

The dominant model for teacher education programmes in many countries is the technical-rationality model based on the notion that "professional activity consists in instrumental problem solving made rigorous by the application of scientific theory

and technique" (Korthagen, 2001:3). Hoyle (1990:34) argues that implicit in the foregoing are three basic assumptions:

- ❖ that theories help teachers to perform better in their profession;
- ❖ that theories must be based on scientific research; and
- ❖ those teacher educators should make a choice concerning the theories to be included in teacher education programmes.

Reminiscent of Calderhead and Shorrock's (1997) argument at 2.7, Korthagen (2001:25) is of the belief that the operationalisation of any pedagogy of teacher education is dependent on the conceptions of knowledge. On the one extreme are those who believe that theoretical scientific understanding – episteme – should be the foundation of pedagogy in teacher education; and on the other extreme are those who believe that practical wisdom – phronesis – is what is needed. Within the confines of phronesis the appeal is not to principles, rules or theories but to perception. For, to be able to choose a form of behaviour appropriate for a situation one must be able to discriminate the relevant details. These can not be transmitted in general abstract form but must be seized in a confrontation with the situation itself. Korthagen (2001:29) argues that episteme, with its universal principles; lacks not only concreteness but also flexibility, subtlety, and congruence to the situation at hand.

The important consequences of the turn to phronesis are to be able to develop the wider perception-based type of knowledge in teacher education programmes. Grossman (2008:94) asserts that what is needed is not so much of theories, articles, books, but first, concrete situations to be perceived, experiences to be had, persons to be met, plans to be exerted and their consequences to be reflected upon. "Without such perceptions, no knowledge is formed at all" (Korthagen, 2001:29). Korthagen argues that theories do not disappear, but that the educator has an important role to introduce theories in the process of student learning. In other words theories emerge in practical contexts. The kind of support that the educator offers should be adjusted to the specific problems the teacher candidates have, which requires specific professional knowledge and skills (Donaldson & Marnik, 1995). The task of the

teacher educator is to help students explore and refine their experiences. This calls for a well-arranged arrangement in which teacher candidates get opportunities to reflect systematically on the details of their practical experiences (Grossman, 2008). The following paragraphs develop what should constitute pedagogy for teacher education.

3.2.1 The essence of pedagogy of teacher education.

Korthagen (2001) emphasizes that for successful professional development among teacher candidates, educators should start by trying to understand the way students view teaching and learning and how they have come to construct these views. This would enable the educators to create new experiences during teacher education, which would lead education students to question their preconceptions. According to Donaldson and Marnik (1995:63) three principles could be drawn from the foregoing idea – that a teacher candidate's professional learning is more effective when,

a) directed by an internal need in the student;

b) rooted in his/her own experiences; and

c) the student reflects in detail on his/her experiences.

Focusing on the third principle first, the argument is that education students' preconceptions about teaching are implicit and that they take the form of gestalts, that is, holistic constructions of reality based on experiences (Korthagen, 2001:71). These include feelings, values, and behavioural tendencies. By analyzing their implicit preconceptions, teacher candidates thus make the implicit explicit. The foregoing process enables education students to discuss weaknesses in their preconceptions. This in turn, creates in them the need for further learning which according to principle 1 above, is a basic factor for promoting learning. The assumption underlying principle 2 above as Korthagen (2001) argues, is that education students' professional development is not so much grounded in knowing more, but in perceiving more in the practical context in which one has to teach. Reflection is a basic tool in developing more awareness about practical situations and finally while being involved in those situations.

The implications of the above principles for the work of the teacher educator, that is, pedagogy of teacher education are:

❖ the teacher educator should help teacher candidates to become aware of their learning needs;
❖ the teacher educator should help education students in finding useful experiences; and
❖ the teacher educator should assist education students to reflect on those experiences in detail.

It is important to note that the above principles can be applied in any order. Korthagen (2001) emphasises that a realistic approach to teacher education is based on the aforementioned principles. Korthagen (2001) argues that a realistic pedagogy of teacher education capitalizes on and bases its programmes on how education students learn. Following a theoretical reflection on the view of learning about teaching, the implications for teacher education are also discussed in the next paragraphs.

3.2.2 The process of teacher candidates' professional learning.

Korthagen (2010:99) analyses the friction between teacher behaviour in practice and the wish to ground teacher's practices in theory. To this end Korthagen focuses on how teacher educators' and researchers' understanding of teacher behaviour, teacher learning and pedagogy could be used in teacher education. Korthagen (2010:101) argues that "learning as it normally occurs, is a function of the activity, context and culture in which it occurs, i.e. it is situated." Hence, he develops the situated learning theory. The situated learning theory contrasts with most classroom learning activities which involve knowledge which is abstract and out of context. According to Korthagen (2010) social interaction is a critical component of situated learning – students become involved in a community of practice which embodies certain beliefs and behaviours to be acquired.

In clarifying his theory Korthagen (2010:100) develops a three-level model which contributes not only to the clarification of the process of education students' professional learning but to a better understanding of the relationship of theory to practice. The diagram below provides details of its components.
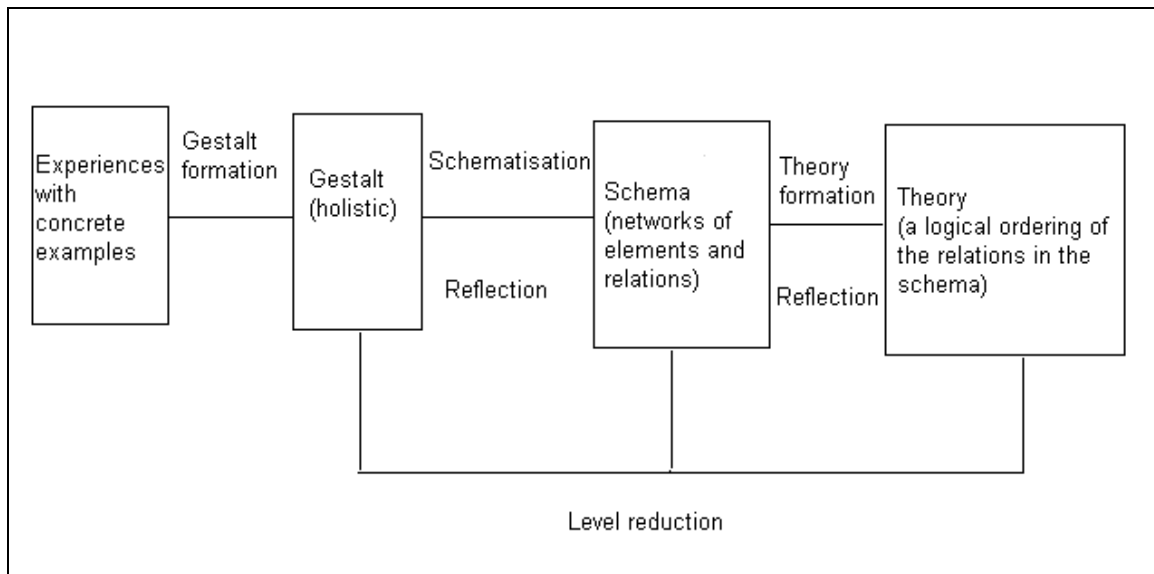
Figure 3.1 The three-level model and the accompanying learning processes.
Source: Korthagen, (2010:100)

In his three-level model based on a study about teacher behaviour, Korthagen, (2010:100) combines situated learning and cognitive theory – theories which earlier on were considered as incompatible by writers such as Cobb and Bowers (1999). The three-level model contributes to a better understanding of the relationship between theory and practice. By integrating the two theories Korthagen tries to offer an integrating image by taking into account the shift in the purpose of knowledge, which can take place during a teacher's development. The first rectangle represents the relationship between experiences and internal processes in a teacher. The notion of a gestalt in the second rectangle represents the view that human behaviour is mediated by experiential body-mind system, processing information in a rapid manner (Korthagen, 2010:101). This system, Epstein (1990) argues, involves cognitive, emotional, motivational, and behavioural factors. For example, if a teacher reacts without much reflection, his/her reaction is based on unconsciously and momentarily

triggered images, feelings, notions, values or behavioural inclinations. These factors remain unconscious and thus form a whole that Korthagen and Lagerwerf (2001) call a gestalt. This broader conceptualisation of a gestalt, considered as a dynamic and constantly changing entity, encompasses the whole of a teacher's perception of the here-and-now situation, that is, both his or her sensory perceptions of the environment as well as the images, thoughts, feelings, needs, values, and behavioural tendencies elicited by the situation.

The implicit learning taking place during the process of gestalt formation is not so much characterised by conceptual development but rather by what Marton and Booth (1997) call the development of awareness. Through the changed awareness of the phenomenon, the relationship between the person and the phenomenon is changed. Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that the gestalt formation process is the result of a multitude of encounters with similar situations in everyday work. At the schema level the teacher becomes consciously aware of the underlying sources of his/her behaviour. During reflection a teacher's previously unconscious gestalt develops into such a conscious cognitive schema. When a teacher aims at developing a more theoretical understanding it leads the teacher into the last level, the theory level. This is the level at which a logical ordering is constructed in the knowledge formed before, that is, the relationships within one's schema are studied or several schema are connected onto one coherent theory. However, studies carried out by Hoekstra et al (2007) reveal that no examples of teachers were found in which teachers demonstrated this level. The foregoing findings correlate with Korthagen's (2001) findings that teachers do not use much theory in their work. At level reduction, schematized or even theoretical knowledge can become self-evident, and the schema or theory can then be used in a less conscious way. In other words the schema is reduced into one gestalt. For example during teacher education a student may go through a process of change by experiencing in a variety of situations that knowledge transmission is actually not very effective.

A basic principle underlying the three-level model is that all knowledge is originally grounded in personal encounters with concrete situations and influenced by social values, the behaviour of others, implicit perspectives and generative metaphors

(Korthagen, 2010:103). The emphasis is on the belief that all knowledge has its roots in practical situations and is socially constructed. The model also builds onto both an individual and a social perspective. The argument being that gestalts cannot be considered in isolation from the social context in which they are evoked. Learning is embedded in the relationships between people.

Korthagen (2010:103) argues that his model has strong implications for teacher education because it points towards the need to take immediate teacher behaviour more seriously and to emphasise the development of adequate gestalts. The explanation is that teaching is to a large degree a gestalt driven activity and that presentation of theory is not sufficient in trying to influence the more perception-driven gestalts. Hence Korthagen (2010) suggests that what is needed is a teacher pedagogy that combines fruitful practical experiences – experiences that help form the type of gestalts the teacher educator wishes to develop – that is, a realistic teacher pedagogy (Korthagen, 2001:82). The major consideration is the kind of experiences that can be organised that would both effectively shape student teachers' gestalts, and elicit concerns in them that can serve as a good launch pad for joint reflection within a professional community, leading to the development of adequate schemata (2010:104). Having considered such important theoretical insights about teacher education, it is important at this juncture to consider the context for educator professionalism in South Africa. Practising teacher professionalism is also included as it is important that educators and their students are aware of the situation out there – a situation that should not be divorced from teacher education programmes.

3.3 Professionalism

According to SACE (2005:7) policy, professionalism refers to how society views teaching as a profession and professionalisation refers to the issue of teachers as reflective practitioners. Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) distinguish between teacher professionalism and teacher professionalisation. They argue that teacher professionalisation is a sociological project that focuses on the authority and status of teaching as a profession. On the other hand they are of the view that professionalism is a pedagogical project that focuses on what Englund (1996:75) refers to as "internal

quality of teaching as a profession." According to Vallicella (2009:n.p) teacher professionalism can be defined as the ability to reach students in a meaningful way, developing innovative approaches to mandated content while motivating, engaging, and inspiring young adult minds to prepare for ever-advancing technology.

Teacher professionalism in South Africa traces its roots in the apartheid era during which teacher autonomy, which is a central tenet of professionalism, was severely undermined. According to Taylor and Vinjevold (1999) teacher education was underpinned by fundamental pedagogy which instilled passiveness and obedience to authority. As a result it contributed to producing teachers who did not "consciously exercise their professional autonomy (Baxen and Soudien, 1998:131). The current debates on teacher professionalism revolve on professionalism as an instrument to empower teachers or as an instrument to control teachers' work. Sachs (2001) suggests two discourses of teacher professionalism – one is what she calls democratic professionalism and the other one she calls managerial professionalism. Managerial professionalism emanates from outside the teaching profession and it is often imposed by employers to control teachers' work. This form of professionalism often sees teachers as service providers or merely state employees rather than professionals with autonomy to determine the nature of their work. Democratic professionalism on the other hand emanates from within the teaching profession and its logic is to improve the nature of teachers' work and to entrench teacher autonomy. It also works with a conception of teachers that assumes that teachers are highly skilled and knowledgeable and therefore they are able to exercise professional judgment. According to Vallicella (2009:n.p) teacher professionalism contains three essential characteristics, competence, performance, and conduct, which reflect the educator's goals, abilities, and standards, and directly impact the effectiveness of teaching through the development of these qualities.

The characteristic of competence is fundamental in an educator's pursuit of excellence. A discussion on competence focuses on three important ideas: preparation, knowledge of subject area, and defined pedagogy (Vallicella (2009). The first, preparation, prepares the professional for the adversity of the classroom. From language and cultural barriers to socio-economic differences; all educators face

deterrents in the classroom that must be broken down by individualized techniques. The second, knowledge of subject area builds confidence and enables the educator to focus on how to relate subject matter to the students and their cultures within classrooms.

The final portion of competence is discovering and assuming a defined pedagogy. A professional teacher who has a defined pedagogy has already journeyed through several trials to discover which pedagogical techniques are most effective (Evans, 2010). Although competence is essential to teacher professionalism, it is only useful if the educator is able to perform. Performance is Vallicella's (2009) second characteristic. A professional teacher educates so that students learn concepts and apply them to their lives. This type of educator becomes an active teacher rather than a passive teacher, showing the students a genuine interest in their progress as students. The final characteristic of teacher professionalism, conduct, is equally as significant as the first two. The manner in which an educator carries himself or herself is a reflection of one's classroom, school, community, and educational system. Conduct is a representation of how well one takes care of himself or herself, from aesthetics to language and behavior. A professional teacher desires to locate effective communicative skills to achieve preferred educational goals.

In addition to the foregoing characteristics Phelps (2006) proffers three 'R's of professionalism, namely responsibility, respect and risk taking. Phelps (2003:10) emphasizes the fact that professionalism means that educators fully accept the challenges of teaching. Teachers who assume responsibility for student learning have a sense of efficacy, a critical component of professionalism (Coberly and Cosgrove, 2002:75). Teachers who are committed use respect as a touchstone for their actions. They model integrity, or wholeness (Palmer, 1998), and present an authentic self to students while they acknowledge that vulnerability is a part of teaching. Phelps (2006) argues that if "the essence of teaching is taking chances" as Smith (1990:216) indicates, then risk taking is an important indicator of professionalism. Teachers, who are not afraid to pose difficult questions, engage in critical pedagogy or take unpopular stands.

Within the post apartheid South African education system the policy framework created space for teacher professionalism than under apartheid. There was room for teachers to participate in policy making. The post-apartheid state has also come up with a number of policies that have an impact on the nature of teachers' work. The Norms and Standards for Educators were gazetted as a policy in February 2000 (DoE, 2000). The Norms and Standards for Educators envisage teachers who are not only competent and qualified, but they also envisage teachers who are curriculum developers. In addition, the policy conceptualizes teachers as researchers and knowledge creators. These have implications for teacher autonomy, which is central to teacher professionalism. Whether the programmes of teacher development support teachers sufficiently to be able to fulfill these expectations is another matter.

Commenting on the policy framework, Robinson (2003) points out that the expectations from teachers are too high; they are not matched by any form of action to make the expectations realizable. The policy also ignores the reality of lack of support or inadequate support from the state to make sure that the ideals are realized in practice. The policy is much suited to contexts with independent and highly professionalized teachers. The Norms and Standards for Educators reflect contradictions between policy intentions and implementation (Jansen, 2004). In theory, the policy attempts to reprofessionalise the teacher, but in practice it could result in more deprofessionalisation (SACE, 2005:21) as skill expectation is beyond what teachers possess. Another policy that has a bearing on teacher professionalism is the Integrated Quality Management System.

The Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) was agreed upon in the Education Labour Relations Council in 2003 (Resolution 8 of 2003). The government sees this policy as a shift from the system of inspection to a system of self-evaluation and external evaluation. According to SACE (2007) the policy attempts to locate teachers in their working environment rather than judging their performance in isolation to their working environment. The IQMS was an attempt to integrate the Whole School Evaluation (WSE), Performance Measurement System (Resolution 1 of 2003) and Developmental Appraisal System (DAS) (ELRC, 2003). The practicality of this has been questioned. Gardner (2003) argues that practically it seems rather

problematic to identify needs, provide support, rate performance and evaluate the entire school using the same instrument. Further, Gardner (2003) is of the view that IQMS was designed by the bureaucrats to simplify their job – it was conceived more for convenience rather than to support teachers and to recognize their ability to make professional judgments. So, the administration of the IQMS results in intensification of teachers' work. The other important policy that impacts on teacher professionalism is the Revised National Curriculum Statement that was developed basing on Curriculum 2005.

In 1997 the democratic government introduced Curriculum 2005 which was based on the philosophy of outcomes-based education. The Revised National Curriculum Statement (2002) is very clear on its expectation of teachers to be able to develop materials and make professional decisions regarding the presentation of the curriculum. Here there is an attempt not to separate the conception of teachers' work from its execution – the separation has been noted to deprofessionalise teachers because it treats teachers as mere implementers of ideas decided by the bureaucracy (Carrim, 2003). Notably, the conception of teachers' work in the RNCS (2002) is guided by the nationally specified outcomes. Critics like Baxen and Soudien (1998), and Morrow (2001) have questioned the idea that OBE gives teachers space to use their professional judgment. They argue that judgment is confined by the pre-determined outcomes. Curriculum 2005 also forced teachers to be in a discourse that they were not familiar with (Harley and Parker, 1998). For instance, teachers were forced into diversification of expertise (Stoffels, 2005), where they were expected to integrate subjects (some of which they did not have expertise in).

SACE (2005) policy reveals that the post- apartheid policies have contradictory effects on the nature of teachers work. One argument advanced is that the policy framework seems to encourage teacher professionalism on paper, but its implementation tends to contradict professionalism. Secondly, the policy overload and the intensification of teachers' work have contributed to the loss of space for teachers to develop themselves. This has a negative impact on teacher professionalism because one of the central tenets of professionalism is knowledge and creativity. The policy framework has also tended to homogenize teacher identities (Carrim, 2003) and

portrayed teachers in images that they do not identify with. The foregoing sentiment correlates with the idea put forward by SACE (2005) that overall the policies are in tension with the reality on the ground where teachers are inadequately prepared and they do not conceptualise themselves in sophisticated terms that are reflected in the policies.   Portraying teachers in new images will not necessarily change the learning and teaching or their practices.

Another argument is that the proliferation of policies in the post-apartheid era has not only resulted in confusion among teachers, but it has resulted in policy overload. The implication of this is not only loss of confidence among teachers, but also a feeling of being overworked (SACE, 2005:26). There is no doubt what loss of confidence and feeling of being overworked can do to both teacher autonomy and teacher productivity. In a study on educator morale in South Africa conducted by Hayward (2002), it was found that one of the sources of demoralization amongst teachers was overload of paperwork and administrative tasks. In light of the arguments advanced above there is a general agreement that where professionalism is concerned, autonomy, accountability, knowledge and ethical conduct are important in teachers' work. However the increased bureaucratic accountability in South Africa has undermined teachers' skills as focus is more on learners passing tests. In the final analysis the importance of teacher development cannot be overstated given the reality that most of the teachers were trained under the apartheid system which did not encourage professional autonomy and the involvement of teachers in policy matters (SACE, 2005). Research by Krishnaveni and Anitha (2007) has revealed particular professional characteristics of educators attributed to impact positively on teaching and learning. These are discussed below.

3.3.1 Professional characteristics of a teacher educator

Krishnaveni and Anitha (2007) have developed a comprehensive model of professional characteristics of an educator that would help prepare educators for quality teaching. They argue that educators should develop as life long learners, reflective thinkers and ethical leaders exemplifying the ideals of literacy and scholarship. Krishnaveni and Anitha (2007) have grouped the characteristics under

three categories, namely, skill, concern for others and concern for self, as illustrated in Figure 3.2 As shown in Figure 3.2 the various facets of a teacher educator are encompassed under three schemas that focus on the educator's practice. The three are skill; concern for others and concern for self.

3.3.1.1 Skill

Subject knowledge, teaching prowess and updating knowledge are classified as skill because these characteristics contribute to enhancing one's professional competence, which is mainly teaching. The educator's subject matter knowledge influences the way in which the educator teaches and the educator who knows more about a subject is more interesting and adventurous and more effective in the way he/she teaches (Molander, 1992:72). Teaching prowess or the ability to teach includes pedagogy, communication skills and expertise. It augments the transferring of knowledge to the students, which is the prime responsibility of the educator. According to Snell and Swanson (2000:122) expert teachers seek out on-going opportunities to enhance and refine their craft. Quality teaching ranges from the actions of the educator, to the knowledge an educator possesses, to the creativity of the educator, (Berliner, 2005).

Carr (2008:148) argues that educators have to be open to new ways of thinking about old issues because they should be wary of believing that they have all the knowledge and importantly experience they require to understand how teacher education students experience their educational journey. In light of the foregoing, educators need to challenge themselves always to learn more, to become engaged, to comprehend the interplay between theory and practice (praxis), and to accept that individuals experience phenomena differently.

Researchers (Berliner 2005; Fenstermacher and Richardson 2005) have focussed on the multidimensional nature of the concept and have defined educator quality as encompassing two parts:

a) good teaching, meaning that the educator meets the expectations for the role (for example, upholding the standards of a field of study and other attributes and practices); and

b). effective or successful teaching, meaning the results of the educators' actions on
    student learning and achievement.

In other words, one dimension in the absence of the other falls short of fully defining teacher quality. The aptitude and the dexterity of the educator are positive and rich when the knowledge is updated. Buchberger, et al, (2000) argue that as in all other professions a close relationship between educational research and development and the teaching profession seems to be indispensable. McLeod and Reynolds (2007:162) propose that educators should be at the forefront of educational research. They describe classrooms as providing the ideal environment in which to test educational theory. In short the sphere of skill relates to the content knowledge that the educator possesses, his/her ability to transfer this knowledge to the students through his/her expertise, the pedagogy he/she uses and the communication skills that he/she possesses and the need for life long learning for an educator which encompasses

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                    ┌──────────────────────────────────────┐              │
│                    │ Professional characteristics of an   │              │
│                    │ educator                             │              │
│                    └──────────────────────────────────────┘              │
│                                                                          │
│   ┌──────────────┐       ┌──────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐   │
│   │ Skill        │       │ Concern for      │      │ Concern for self│   │
│   │              │       │ others           │      │                 │   │
│   └──────────────┘       └──────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘   │
│                                                                          │
│   ┌──────────────┐       ┌──────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐   │
│   │ Subject      │       │ Collegiality     │      │ Empowerment     │   │
│   │ knowledge    │       │                  │      │                 │   │
│   │              │       │ Commitment       │      │ Self-development│   │
│   │ Teaching     │       │                  │      │                 │   │
│   │ prowess      │       │ Teacher-student  │      │ Remuneration    │   │
│   │              │       │ relationship     │      │                 │   │
│   │ Updating     │       │                  │      │                 │   │
│   │ knowledge    │       │                  │      │                 │   │
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│                    │ (to instil in) Ethical code of   │                  │
│                    │ conduct                          │                  │
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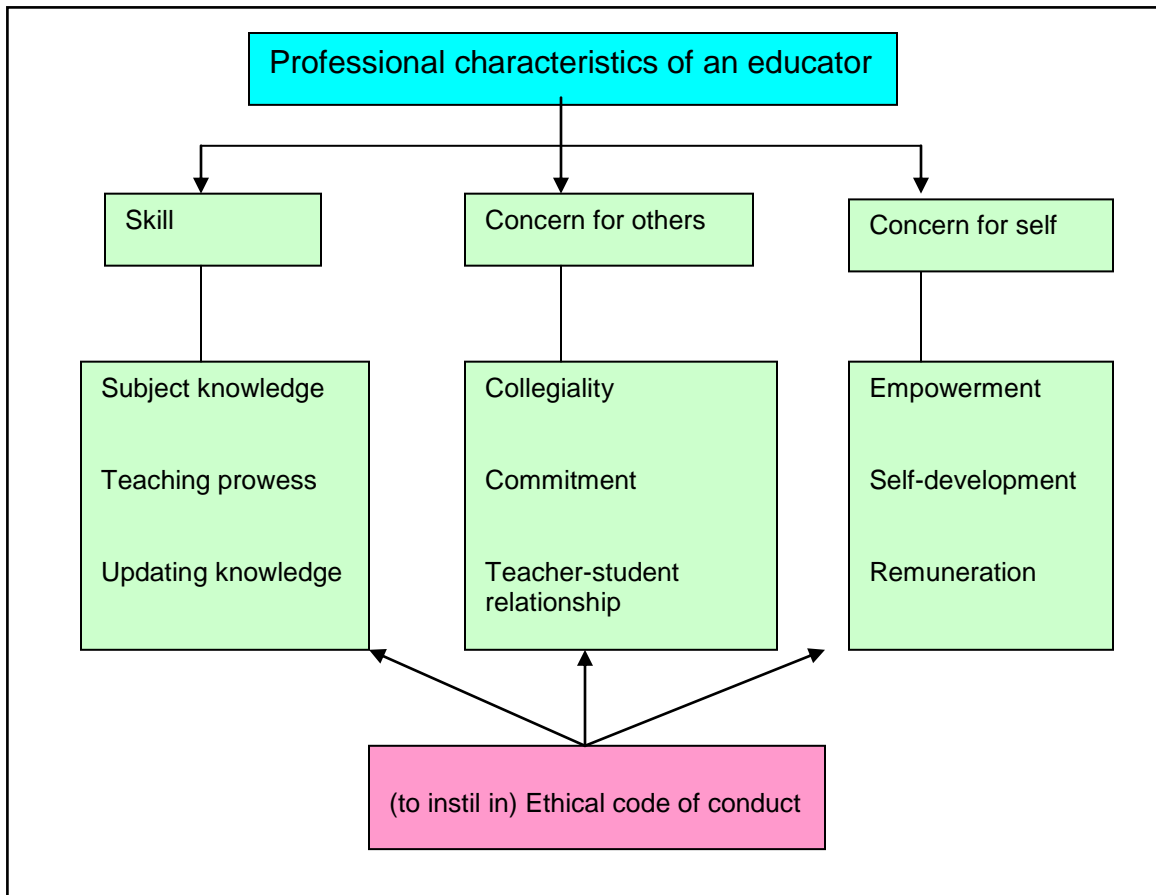
Figure 3.2 Theoretical model of quality characteristics of an educator
Source: *Krishnaveni and Anitha (2007:151)*

updating of content knowledge, and action research which updates him/her with the student feedback (Krishnaveni and Anitha, 2007).

With reference to the skills characteristics, Pace (2004) mentions that a consensus has formed within growing circles in academia that there is scholarly research to be done on teaching and learning, that the systematic creation of rigorous knowledge about teaching and learning is a crucial prerequisite to responding to major challenges facing academia. Elton (2001:47) indicates that there are reasons for valuing an approach to teaching commonly called the scholarship of teaching because it involves:

❖ asking questions about student learning and the teaching activities designed to promote student learning in an effort to improve one's own teaching practice;

❖ answering those questions by systematically analyzing evidence of student learning; and

❖ sharing the results of that analysis publicly in order to invite review and to contribute to the body of knowledge on student learning in a variety of contexts.

However, Carr (2008) contends that by critically examining their own educational experiences educators can become more attuned to how teacher education students might be experiencing teaching and learning.

The conceptualization of the scholarship of teaching embodies Boyer's (1990:42) four separate yet overlapping functions of an educator. These are the scholarship of discovery; the scholarship of application; the scholarship of integration and the scholarship of teaching. The first element of Boyer's (1990) model, discovery, is the one most closely aligned with traditional research. Discovery contributes not only to the stock of human knowledge but also to the intellectual climate of a college or university (Borra, 2001:7). The second element, integration, focuses on making connections across disciplines. One interprets one's own research so that it is useful beyond one's own disciplinary boundaries and can be integrated into a larger body of knowledge. Boyer (1990) alludes to the fact that the rapid pace of societal change within a global economy has elevated the importance of this form of scholarship. The third element, application, focuses on using research findings and innovations to remedy societal problems. Included in this category are service activities that are specifically tied to one's field of knowledge and professional activities. Finally, Boyer, (1990) considers teaching as a central element of scholarship. Many educators state that they are primarily interested in teaching, but they feel that their institutions do not value or reward excellence in teaching (Borra, 2001:17). Boyer's (1990) conceptualization of scholarship elevates the traditional role of teaching from being teacher centred to student centred. From the foregoing discussion four elements of quality teaching can be deduced, namely; teaching as a form of scholarship, teaching as community property, teaching as a focus on student learning and finally teaching as focus on evidence of students' knowledge (Bass, 2005).

Other writers like Richlin (2001) have added to Boyer's model the aspect of learning and have come up with the model of the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). Though there are connections among them, it is important to distinguish good teaching from scholarly teaching, and from the scholarship of teaching and learning (Richlin, 2001). Though good teaching has been defined and operationalised in many ways (e.g., student satisfaction ratings, peer observation judgments, self reflective portfolios), good teaching is that which promotes student learning and other desired student outcomes (McKinney, 2004:14).

Scholarly teaching involves taking a scholarly approach to teaching just as we would take a scholarly approach to other areas of knowledge and practice. Scholarly teachers view teaching as a profession and the knowledge base on teaching and learning as a second discipline in which to develop expertise (McKinney, 2004:16). Thus, scholarly teachers do things such as reflect on their teaching, use classroom assessment techniques, discuss teaching issues with colleagues, try new things, and read and apply the literature on teaching and learning in their discipline and, perhaps, more generally. Scholarly teaching is closely linked to reflective practice (e.g., Brookfield, 1995; Schon, 1987). This conception of scholarly teaching is related to what Boyer (1990) labeled the scholarship of teaching.

The scholarship of teaching and learning involves systematic study of teaching and learning process and the public sharing and review of such work through presentations or publications (McKinney, 2004:18). Presentations and publications may be local, regional, national or international. SoTL, then, shares established criteria of scholarship in general, such as that it is made public, can be reviewed critically by members of the appropriate community, and can be built upon by others to advance the field (Shulman, 2001). SoTL focuses on teaching and learning at tertiary level, and is primarily classroom and disciplinary based. Ideally, SoTL also involves application and use (McKinney, 2004:19). The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning has provided the example summarized in Table 3.1 to help distinguish what SoTL is all about.

Table 3.1 What qualifies as SoTL

No, this would not qualify as SoTL	Yes, this would qualify as SoTL
I am using group projects that last all semester.	I am using semester-long group projects in a class that never had this methodology before, and I have got assessment in place to measure how the curricular change is impacting learning compared to other groups who are not using the method.
I am asking students to do oral presentations on topics of interest to them, and it has made them really engaged in the learning.	Students are doing oral presentations in one section of the class, but not doing it in the other section. We are comparing their learning, as measured via the test at the end to see which method of teaching them was more effective.
I publish extensively in journals on how I teach my classes, giving examples of my best practice.	I make changes in my method of teaching every semester, and track how much of a difference these changes make on students performance. I publish those results in journals.
I started teaching philosophy in my class in a brand new way that I have not done in prior semesters. The students really seem to be learning it better.	I started teaching philosophy in a brand new way that I have not done in prior semesters. I am tracking their improved learning by comparing test results from last semester to this semester.
I instituted a new style of testing that my students really understand my sociology lectures. My measurement clearly demonstrates they are learning the material.	I instituted a new style of testing that my students really understand my sociology lectures. My measurement clearly demonstrates they are learning the material, and I am tracking the learning when compared to my other class which didn't receive this new testing.

Adapted from the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (2007:3), Clark Atlanta University

Thus, in this sense quality teaching and learning is not only done to invite a critical review and exchange of ideas but also with an emphasis on inquiry into student learning. While some educators argue that all faculty should be SoTL researchers because ethical educators are always collecting data to inform their practice and that these data should be shared; others argue, on the other hand, that the demands of time and expertise are too great to expect all teaching faculty to augment or change their research activities to include SoTL (Poole, 2010:2). Consideration of the latter argument is rather problematic in South Africa because the Norms and Standards for Educators, "which is the key document that South African teacher educators use to benchmark their academic activities…identifies 'scholar, researcher and lifelong learner' as one of the seven roles appropriate for an initial teaching qualification" (Chetty & Lubben, 2009:2).

3.3.1.2 Concern for others

The second sphere, concern for others, consists of the factors: collegiality, commitment and educator-student relationship. Krishnaveni and Anitha (2007) argue that collegial relationships enhance critical thought about teaching; encourage the sharing of ideas and reflection. Commitment consists of personal and professional investment in a specific workplace and its goals, as indicated by specific behaviours that indicate extra effort as well as attitude. According to Ashburn (1989) commitment is measured through acceptance, loyalty, sense of pride and ownership within the department and educator engagement or persistence on the job. Louis (1998:35) advances four types of commitment as, academic goals of the department, the student and to the body of knowledge to carry out effective teaching.

As far as educator-student relationship is concerned the educator is a powerful source of either satisfaction or frustration in students. The educator's enthusiasm, competence and interpersonal and communication skills should be a role model that both cognitive and affective motives can co-habit side by side. The educator ought to afford time and space by being available for students. Koutsoulis (2003:57) mentions that students demand a humanistic approach, effective communication skills of the educator and understanding. The educator should also be a trusted adviser or mentor to the students. Educator attitude may enhance or adversely affect students' achievement and behaviour. Educator - student relationship develops a sense of responsibility and self discipline.

3.3.1.3 Concern for self

The third sphere, concern for self, consists of empowerment, self-development and remuneration. Empowerment can be thought of as a process whereby educators develop their competence to take charge of their own work and resolve their own problems. Empowerment is enhanced by educators working in teams (Dondero, 1997), feeling a sense of ownership and hence greater job autonomy (Honold, 1997), enjoying discretion, autonomy, power and control (Lashley, 1999:12) and information sharing. However Giroux (1992:27) argues that the proletarianization of the teaching profession has made educators too dependent and powerless. A self developed

educator will be able to enhance his/her career by assuming leadership skills that enrich his/her mindset.

As far as remuneration is concerned, the assumption is that given the complexity of the knowledge and skills required, relatively high levels of compensation are necessary to recruit and retain capable and motivated individuals (Hodson and Sullivan, 1995). Buchberger, et al (2000:62) observes that large differences exist in regard to the status of teacher educators. They argue that if income is used as an indicator, teacher educators rank lowest among the academic professions. According to Ingersoll (1997) it is important to provide opportunity for promotion, to foster ongoing motivation and commitment, and, hence, to retain capable individuals. That is why, as far as teacher educators are concerned, Boyer (1990:22) argues that there is need to reward the scholarship of teaching just as well as the scholarship of research is rewarded. Boyer charges that universities need to recognize that the role of teacher educators has changed over time, and that forcing educators to conform to a model in which only the scholarship of research is rewarded is not serving academics well, particularly with regard to undergraduate education. Rivkin, Hanushek and John (1999:47) allude to the fact that educators are the most important determinants of educational output. Buchberger, et al (2000:36) reiterate that "the status of teachers affects the developments towards professionalisation of the teacher force." Raising educators' salaries raises teacher quality, reduces dropout rates, improves quality of education (Loeb and Page, 2000) and improves student outcomes (Lavy, 2002:45). A professional work life not encroached on by disturbances, demands a suitable and appropriate pay which is an extrinsic motivating factor that contributes to the retention of more academically talented educators.

3.3.1.4 Ethical code of conduct

Finally as indicated in Figure 3.2 Krishnaveni and Anitha (2007:156) argue that ethical conduct is both the most fundamental tenet of professionalism and the most challenging and should be the foundation for the three broad areas they have termed skill, concern for others and concern for self. Ethical standards should be treated as welcome moral principles guiding a vibrant profession. Teaching should be dedicated

to student learning and upholding high standards for professional performance. This requires the educator to possess the above professional characteristics. These characteristics have powerful impact on the students and in the work life of the educator in establishing standard performance.

The above characteristics correlate with those given by Mowrer-Reynolds (2008:218) who also indicates that research on quality teaching has typically addressed two categories of qualities of good educators as reflected in Figure 3.3 below,

Qualities of good educators

Professional skills	Personal educator characteristics
Pedagogy, subject matter knowledge, Policy, cultural knowledge, multiple approaches and teaching style	caring, enthusiasm, fun, humorous, friendly, supportive respectful
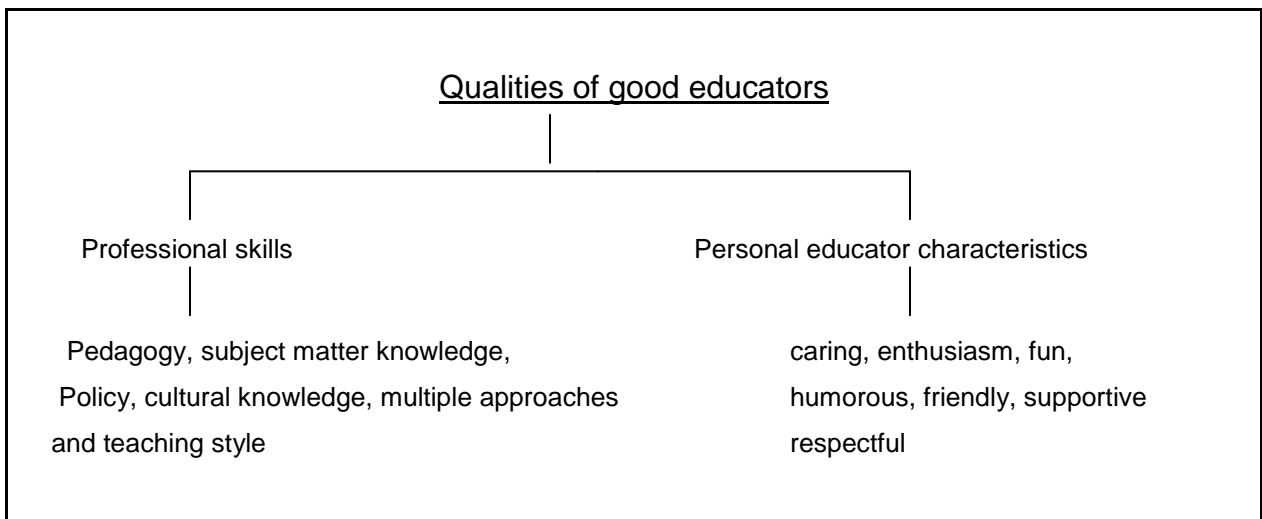
Figure 3.3 Qualities of good educators
Source: Mowrer-Reynolds (2008:220)

Writing along the same lines as Freire (1998:52), Banner and Cannon (1997:37) suggest that we may know our subjects and perfect our techniques for teaching them, without recognizing that, for our mastery to make a difference to our students, we must also summon from within, certain qualities of personality that have little to do with subject matter or theories of instruction. They mention that these qualities are not learnt but that teacher educators should call them forth – and by understanding them, teacher educators should use them for the benefit of teacher education students. These are the teacher educators' personal characteristics that include fun, humour, respect and caring. Mowrer-Reynolds (2008:223) point out that there dwells a large body of literature that suggests that while subject matter

knowledge is important, educators' characteristics matter more when students' achievement is at stake.

At this point it is useful to learn from other educators, especially those that have been identified as successful in implementing pedagogy of teacher education.

3.4 Good practices in teacher education

This section on good practice strategies adopts a benchmarking strategy, that is learning from others that have made outstanding progress in implementing pedagogy of teacher education. To this end three sources have been used.

According to a study conducted in America by the Northeast Ohio Council on Higher Education (NOCHE) and the American Productivity and Quality Centre (APQC) in 2003, policies and practices in teacher preparation should be built on core elements of quality teaching and the preparation of quality teachers. The focus should be that teachers completing these programmes have the requisite knowledge, skills and experiences to teach all students successfully. In collecting information about good practice strategies in teacher education internationally, three sources have been used and the recommendations summarized in Table 3.2 below. The sources are NOCHE & APQC (2003), Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005) and Levine (2006).

Table 3.2 Good practice strategies recommendations

Recommendations for;	NOCHE & APQC (2003)	Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005)	Levine (2006)
Knowledge expectation	-Student teachers develop a strong foundation of knowledge in the subjects they are preparing to teach. -Master the science of child development and how children learn.	-A common core curriculum grounded in knowledge of development, learning, subject matter, pedagogy and assessment taught in the context of practice.	-Master skills and knowledge that promote classroom learning.
Skills:			
Teaching	-Teacher candidates learn how to teach their subjects;		-Transform teacher education practices from ivory towers into professional schools focussed on classroom practice.
Assessment	-Teacher candidates understand and know how to use student's assessment data to gauge a student progress in the classroom. -Teachers must be able to integrate this information with their content knowledge and teaching skills to develop strategies that respond to individual needs.	-Well defined standards of practice and performance used to guide the design and assessment of coursework and clinical work.	
Practice teaching experiences	-Successful teaching practice develops over time. New graduates need extensive mentoring and support for the first few years of their careers.	-Extended clinical experience (at least 30 weeks) that are interwoven with coursework and are carefully mentored.	-Practice teaching experiences to be closely related to theory. -Extend practice teaching experience and provide close guidance.
IT in education	-The effective integration of technology into curriculum and instructional practices in the classroom is essential for teachers in their teaching and assessment practices		
Programme in general		-Strong relationship between teacher education and schools	-Transform teacher education practices into professional schools focussed on classroom practice. -Make five-year teacher education the norm. -Establish effective mechanisms for teacher education quality control.

From the three sources summarized in Table 3.2 the following conclusions could be made. Good practice strategies emphasize the development in student teachers of a sound knowledge base in theory, pedagogy and assessment focussed on classroom practice. Buchberger, et al (2000) stress that good practices should be

founded on the 'state of the art-knowledge' which they have defined as the knowledge gathered from the huge amount of research and the scientifically validated practices for improving teaching and learning. It is apparent that good practices in teacher education address the key problem of learning to teach by helping student teachers enact theory into practice and helping student teachers deal with the complexities of teaching by learning to analyze teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden, 2005). While the knowledge of IT cannot be overemphasized in this new millennium, it was rather an omission that the three sources in the table did not emphasize that.

Because teachers must learn about practice in practice, it is important to ensure well supervised practice teaching opportunities, closely connected to course work where student teachers learn from experts who can model and coach effective teaching. Bennett (2007) argues that those teacher educators should meet the request for more experience-based preparation of teachers. Research has revealed that most students indicate that what they learn in course work is not visible in their field experience (Bennett, Katz and Beneke, 2006). Educators should ensure that their own teaching of student teachers is congruent with the way they want them to teach. In order to prepare teachers to work within changing circumstances student teachers should possess a framework for understanding teaching and learning. From the above three sources the framework is made up of theoretical knowledge base, knowledge of subject matter and knowledge of teaching as illustrated below.
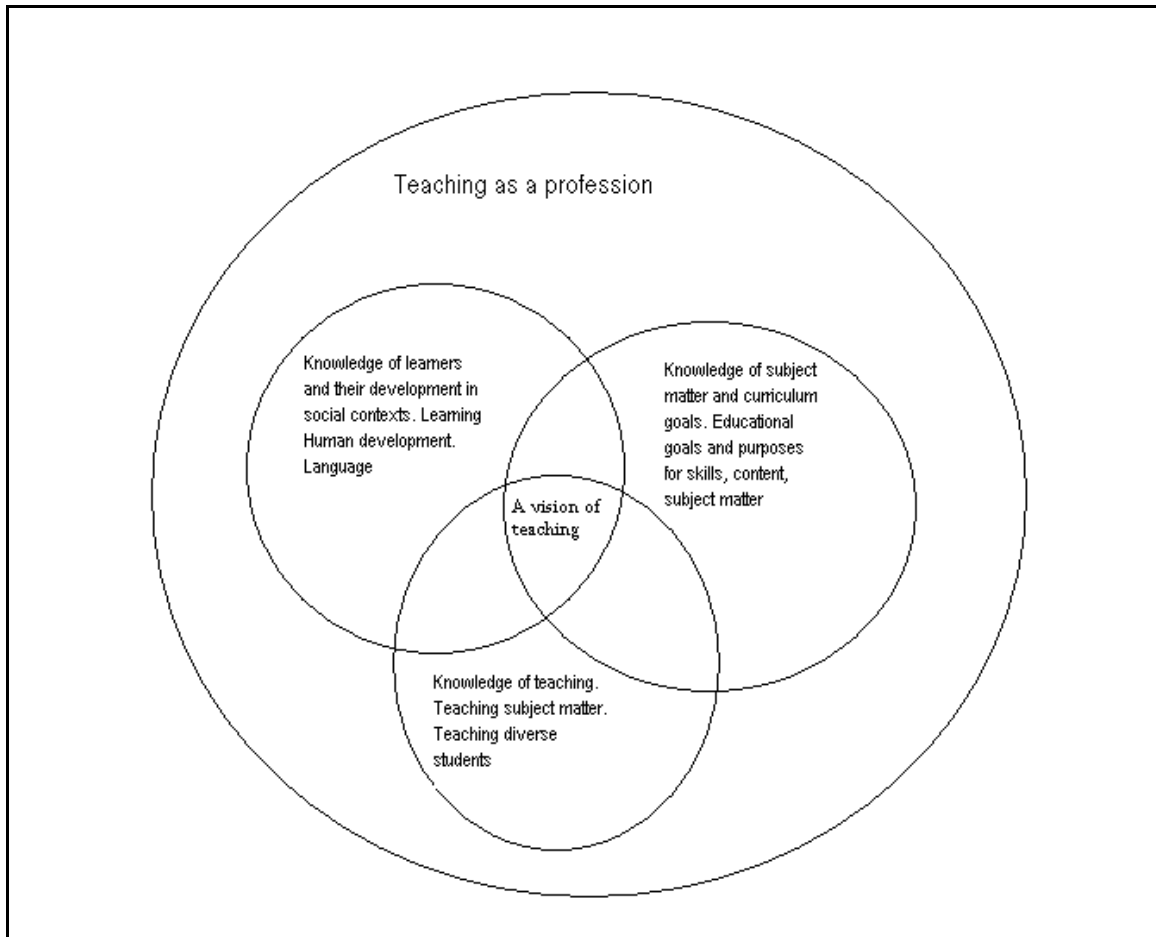
Figure 3.4 A framework for understanding teaching and learning
Source*: Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005:6).*

Figure 3.4 reflects that teachers should have a good mastery of the knowledge and skills about learners and their learning, development and language acquisition. In addition to understanding learners, teachers must know the subject matter they teach. However the issue of the knowledge of subject matter is rather problematic in South Africa as noted by Morrow (2007) that schools especially for the blacks do not adequately prepare learners for university study. It is important to draw the reader's attention to the fact that there are no schools in the post apartheid South Africa specifically for blacks; the schools Morrow is referring to tend to be former Department of Education and Training (DET) schools during apartheid. Sadly they are still almost exclusively attended by black African children. The foregoing correlates with Jansen's

(2004:42) observation that "research shows that most teachers (especially in high schools) are under-prepared to teach the subject matter accurately." According to Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005:14) a "curricular vision – one that also takes into account the social purposes of education in a democracy – is necessary to guide decisions about what to teach and why." The foregoing argument resonates with Apple's (2003:5) debate in critical pedagogy that teacher education content is never devoid of context. Hence there is need to interrogate the ideological and epistemological contestations of school knowledge. Student teachers should have a good mastery of the development of pedagogical content knowledge specific to the subject area, knowledge of how to teach diverse learners and knowledge of assessment. As the mastery of the foregoing skills is consolidated during practice teaching, it is therefore important that the exercise is meaningful and effective. It should be extended to enable students to build a framework for learning to teach as illustrated in Figure 3.5 below.
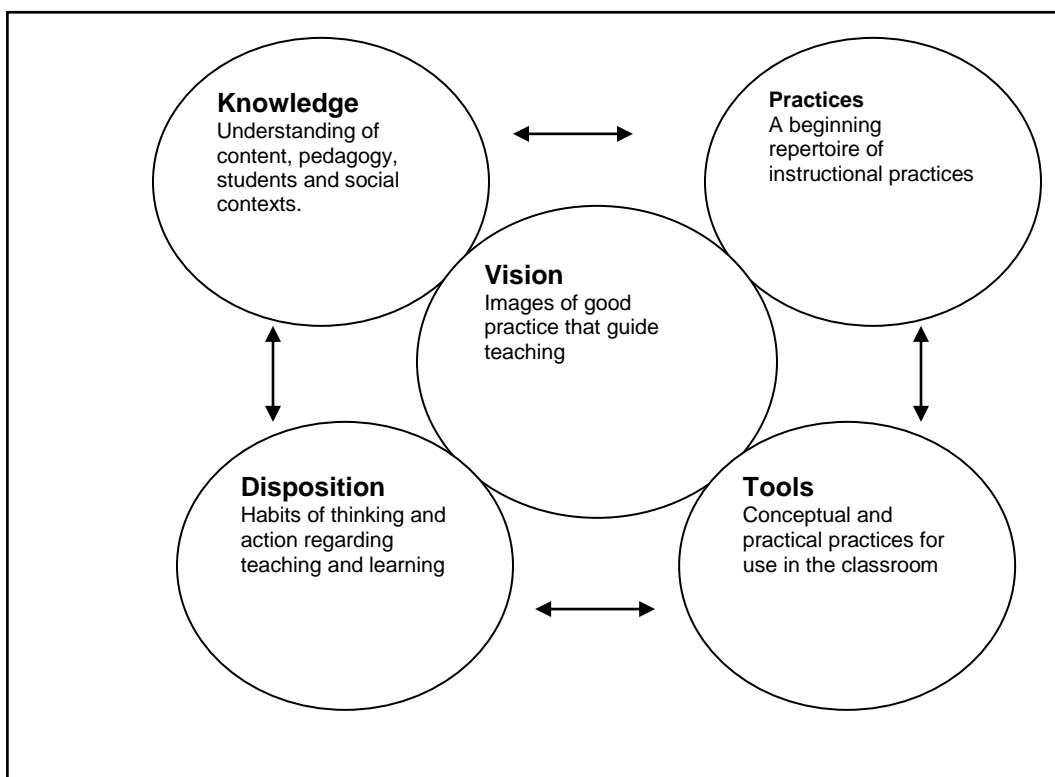
Figure 3.5 A framework of learning to teach
Source*: Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005:40)*

Student teachers learn best in a community that enables them to develop a vision for their practice; knowledge about teaching, learning and learners; dispositions about how to use this knowledge; practices that allow them to act on their intentions and beliefs and tools that support their effort. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) (2000) puts forward the argument that the reality, however, is that most student teaching experiences fall far short of what is needed. The report goes on to highlight that it is not surprising to learn that:

- ❖ the student teaching experience is too short to adequately prepare teacher candidates to assume full responsibility for a classroom;
- ❖ schools where student teachers are placed are often selected because of their proximity to the campus or to students' homes or their willingness to participate, not on their academic reputations;
- ❖ the cooperating teachers who are responsible for mentoring the student teachers placed in their classrooms are frequently selected haphazardly by principals with little input from the university or the teachers in the schools regarding criteria;
- ❖ cooperating teachers receive few or no incentives for working with student teachers, and they are not trained adequately, nor supported, by the school or university;
- ❖ cooperating teachers' evaluations regarding the teacher candidate are often ignored or not requested; and
- ❖ frequently, there is far too little coordination among university faculty, clinical supervisors and cooperating teachers concerning standards of good teaching and the requirements of a rigorous clinical experience.

Extending on good practice strategies, it is important to reflect on the contributions of a study conducted by NOCHE & APQC (2003). The study provides details of six institutions of higher learning that met the criteria of good practice. For the rest of the section I refer to these as good practice institutions. The following is a brief discussion of their good practice strategies.

3.4.1 Examples of good practice strategies in teacher education

The NOCHE and APQC (2003) in America embarked on a study to identify and examine innovations, good practices, and key trends in the area of teacher education and preparation with the goal of enhancing teacher education and preparation programmes. Of the twenty one institutions that participated six, namely, University of

Wisconsin-Milwaukee, University of Virginia, East Carolina University, Miami-Dade and Alverno Colleges were found to be characterized with good practices in all the areas of foci which included teacher education programme strategy, instructional functions for teacher education, student support functions and programme evaluation. Within these broad areas the following discussion makes analyses of selected good practices pertinent to the study.

3.4.1.1 Organizational context and strategy

According to the NOCHE and APQC (2003) study good practice institutions create a culture of evidence and require that decisions be made collaboratively among all members engaged in preparing teachers. Leaders of these successful institutions create structures that yield strong relationships between teacher preparation programmes and schools where students are assessed. However, Levine (2006) observes that it is rather problematic that in general teacher education programmes do not work in collaboration with the schools. Goodlad (1991:10) alludes to the fact that "any teacher education programme created or conducted without the collaboration of surrounding schools is defective." The European Commission (EC) (2007: n.p.) also reveals that within its Member States "the relationship between TEIs and schools has often been one-sided, in which the school is the passive recipient of trainee teachers and in which most power lies with the TEI." Zeichner (2010:89) argues for hybridity and creation of third spaces in teacher education. His work in creating third spaces in teacher education where academic and practitioner knowledge and knowledge that exists in communities come together in new less hierarchical ways in the service of teaching and learning represents a paradigm shift in the epistemology of teacher education programmes. Taking school needs into account significantly contribute to high quality teacher preparation. Good practice strategies incorporate the voice of the stakeholder in planning for teacher preparation; not only do they consider customer data but also create clear roles and responsibilities for stakeholders which indicates a wide coalition of support for implementation of teacher education activities, e.g. Alverno College has incorporated administrators and teachers from area school

districts to serve on various curriculum design teams to provide input regarding the needs of the schools and the district.

3.4.1.2 Curriculum development

The NOCHE and APQC (2003) study came up with four key findings related to curriculum development that deal with the full range of standards, content issues, clinical practice activities, and new teacher support that characterize high quality teacher preparation. Because context matters so much in the preparation of teachers, good practice institutions focus on the teaching and learning needs of students in the schools they serve. To this end communication between the TEIs and schools should be strengthened (EC, 2007). Teacher education students develop a strong foundation of knowledge in the subjects they are preparing to teach. Good practice institutions use teacher education students' assessment data and they integrate this information with their content knowledge and teaching skills to develop strategies that respond to individual teacher education student's needs. Teacher education students are provided with well designed clinical experiences that enable them to meet the issues and challenges of effective teaching, particularly their acquisition of classroom management skills. Teitel (2003:43) argues that the separation of coursework and practice creates problems in transfer and in implementation within schools. The EC (2007) suggests that "in the growing complexity of society and the demands on the educational system,…schools should play an active and central role in developing teaching methods, improving the quality of teaching, and extending knowledge about teaching and learning."

Good practice institutions refine their teacher education curriculum through a continuous alignment process with:
   a) state and national content and pedagogy standards;
   b) content areas across the institution;
   c) practice teaching standards and outcomes; and
   d) the needs of schools.
A critical aspect for building an effective teacher education programme is to keep in touch with the needs of the customer. Good practice institutions build and maintain

mutually beneficial relationships with the schools and learn the current needs in the education marketplace and adjust the curriculum and training accordingly. In this light, the EC (2007) maintains that it is imperative to develop knowledge about teaching and learning through research.

The successful institutions monitor success through reflection, because ongoing assessment is critical for high quality teacher education students' development. They monitor teacher education skill development through portfolios, regular opportunities for dialogues and structured feedback sessions and carefully planned practice teaching experiences. Good practice institutions attach importance to teacher education student assessment data as they use these continually for evaluation of their own teacher education programmes and also share this information with the schools where students are assessed e.g. at the Kansas State University each student creates a developmental portfolio that captures performance across all programmes. This enables educators to identify evidence (artefacts) that should come from a student as he/she develops. The portfolio is based on Danielson's (2007) framework for teaching. The framework consists of four domains as illustrated below.

Table 3. 3 Framework for teaching

Domain 1: Planning and preparation	**Domain 2: The classroom environment**
❖ Demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy	❖ Creating an environment of respect and rapport
❖ Demonstrating knowledge of students	❖ Establishing a culture of learning
❖ Selecting instructional goals	❖ Managing classroom procedure
❖ Demonstrating knowledge of resources	❖ Managing student behaviour
❖ Designing coherent instruction	❖ Organizing physical space
❖ Assessing student learning	
Domain 3: Instruction	**Domain 4: Professional responsibility**
❖ Communication clearly and accurately	❖ Reflecting on teaching
❖ Using questioning and discussion techniques	❖ Maintaining accurate records
❖ Engaging students in learning	❖ Communicating with families
❖ Providing feedback to students	❖ Contributing to the school and district
❖ Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness	❖ Growing and developing professionally
	❖ Showing professionalism

Source*: Danielson (2007:7).*

Danielson's framework guides students to focus on the knowledge of content, pedagogical and administrative aspects. Such elaborate skills development observably would require longer duration of practice teaching. Arguably the framework leads to intensification of teacher education students' work. According to SACE (2005:26) "intensification of teachers' work has contributed to the loss of space for teachers to develop themselves." The report further notes that intensification has negative impact on teacher professionalism because one of the central tenets of professionalism is knowledge and creativity. Where there is intensive work creativity is thwarted.

The successful institutions design and implement curricula that provide extensive and structured clinical experiences for all teacher education students. Their philosophy is early exposure and careful mentoring of teacher education students.

3.4.1.3 Transition from education student to practitioner

Good practice institutions accept responsibility for the early career development of their graduates and design programmes to help them to become successful teachers. They have the necessary desire and funding to accept this responsibility and follow through. This support is needed for the first year in the career of a new teacher and requires close collaboration between the institution and the local schools where new candidates would be placed. NOCHE & APQC (2003) suggest that new graduates need extensive mentoring and support for the first few years of their careers.

It is evident from the good practice institutions that their success is dependent on their teacher education programmes that have a coherent approach to rigorous knowledge and skill development that includes extensive practice for candidates and new teachers.

3.4.1.4 Human resources

Boyer's (1990) powerful concept that higher education should develop and support a broader, rich notion of what constitutes scholarship is very much in evidence within the good practice institutions. Chetty and Lubben (2009:1) contend that "an

appropriate balance between different types of scholarships is vital for any viable tertiary institution." Leaders of these successful institutions understand how to create and sustain the right incentives for their campus members. Staff members of these institutions indicated that they are recognized, rewarded and respected for their work in the teaching and learning of teacher education students. The NOCHE and APQC (2003) study also reveals that while the staff in the good practice institutions are hard working, committed and have knowledge, skills and abilities to prepare new teachers, there is also continual upgrading as the content in their field changes as new technologies become available and as new students enter their classrooms.

3.4.1.5 Evaluation

Good practice institutions use multiple kinds of assessment data at different points. They use the evidence to assess the programme, the faculty and teacher education students. In other words they have a well defined institutionalized process for using the results of assessment for continuous improvement. Good practice institutions are also willing to completely change their traditional offerings based on the needs of their community and teacher education students. For instance, Levine's (2006) findings reveal that there is need for extended teacher education programmes to at least a minimum duration of five years.

While the above good practice institutions have taken significant and creative steps towards good practice strategies the AFT (2000: n.p) observe that most institutions are beset by problems such as;

- ❖ difficulty in recruiting the ablest students prompted in large part by low pay, poor working conditions, and lack of respect for the profession, as well as the low esteem in which teacher education courses are held at many universities;
- ❖ inadequate standards for entering and exiting teacher education programs;
- ❖ under-investment by the university in teacher education;
- ❖ difficulty, within a four-year program, in finding enough time and the proper balance of coursework in liberal arts, pedagogy and a major in an academic discipline;
- ❖ practical experiences that often are too brief and do not require students to take sufficient responsibility for instruction.

The above good practices such as those implemented by identified successful institutions may be sound as foundation but not rigorous enough for nations in transformation, South Africa included, whose major focus in on transformative education. Rigour according to Shor and Freire (1987:47) is a desire to know; a search for an answer; it is also communication which challenges others to take part or includes others in active search. The foregoing sentiments are encapsulated within the theory of critical pedagogy.

3.4.2 Critical pedagogy: implication for teacher education.

According to Graziano (2008:154) the concept of embedding critical pedagogy in teacher education programs is not novel. McLaren (1998:68) defines critical pedagogy as "a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship between classroom teaching, the production of knowledge and creation of processes whereby students take ownership between classroom teaching, the institutional structures of the institution, and the social and material relationships of the wider community, society, and nation state." McFarland (1999) argues that within this pedagogical model, educators shift from control of knowledge to creation of processes whereby students take ownership of their learning and take risks to understand and apply their knowledge. Graziano (2008:154) postulates that critical pedagogy questions not only knowledge but also the method of delivery and asks: Whose standard? Whose culture? Whose history? Whose language? Whose perspectives? (Wink, 2005). Such questions have the potential to encourage the educator to interrogate the assumptions embedded within the inherited education system and to determine the extent to which the curriculum has shifted its emphasis, for example, from the apartheid education system to the post-apartheid transformative system of education.

The field of critical pedagogy has emerged largely because of the notion that concern alone will not break down systemic barriers (McLaren, 2007:62), but that it also necessitates the political imperative of not giving up on those who are marginalized. According to Carr (2008:92) "having hope can also mean understanding what society looks like for different individuals and groups, who are silenced and who

have voice, how power works to advantage some and not others, and why some appear to be more comfortably positioned to demonstrate the virtues of a democratic society whereas others are locked into permanent struggle." Carr argues further that without hope for all students, education will become nothing more than a holding cell in which large numbers of students will not be able to realize their potential.

In light of the above discussion teacher education programmes need to assist teacher education students in developing critical language to explain the world around and within them, that is, the whys and how of what is happening in society. Leistyna, Lavandez and Nelson (2004:8) present some of the important questions that teacher education students should address, e.g.:

❖ What are the ideological lenses that individuals use to read social reality?

❖ How can individuals better make sense of the social, political, economic and institutional factors that shape their lives?

❖ How can individuals come to recognize and address the relationship and abuses of power that are so significant in schools and the larger society?

It is imperative that teacher educators should offer activities that help teacher education students make sense of, name and critique oppressive acts, conceptualize alternatives and work to realize them.

Essential to any critical pedagogy is the exploration of the inextricable relationship between knowledge, ideology and power. Relations of power need to be explored in terms of how knowledge is produced, circulated, legitimated, consumed and then reproduced or resisted. According to Leistyna and Woodrum (1996:4) the questions posed by critical pedagogues in an attempt to explore the relationship between knowledge, ideology and power are:

❖ Whose values, interpretations and goals constitute the foundation of public education, namely, the official core curriculum?

❖ How is this body of knowledge, which is often falsely presented as being objective and universal, imposed on the greater society?

❖ Whose stories are told and whose are not?

❖ Who produces and chooses textbooks?

❖ Who selects classroom content and whose interests are advanced with the promotion of this body of knowledge?

The above questions resonate with McLaren's (2008:62) argument that educational institutions should not be considered simply as an arena of indoctrination or socialization or a site of instruction, but also as a cultural terrain that promotes student empowerment and self transformation. Writing along the same lines Apple (2003:5) focuses on similar considerations, but organized within given philosophical perspectives.

❖ **Epistemological**. What should count as knowledge? As knowing? Should we take a behavioural position and one that divides knowledge and knowing into cognitive, affective, and psycho-motor areas, or do we need a less reductive and more integrated picture of knowledge and the mind, one that stresses knowledge as process?

❖ **Political**. Who shall control the selection and distribution of knowledge? Through what institutions?

❖ **Economic**. How is the control of knowledge linked to the existing and unequal distribution of power, goods, and services in society?

❖ **Ideological**. What knowledge is of most worth? Whose knowledge is it?

❖ **Technical**. How shall curricular knowledge be made accessible to students?

❖ **Aesthetics**. How do we link the curriculum knowledge to the biography and person meanings of the student? How do we act "artfully" as curriculum designers and teachers in doing this?

❖ **Ethical**. How shall we treat others responsibly and justly in education? What ideas of moral conduct and community serve as the underpinnings of the ways students and teachers are treated?

❖ **Historical**. What traditions in the field already exist to help us answer these questions? What other resources do we need to go further?

Apple's (2003) contribution points to the fact that teacher education content is never devoid of context. Carr (2008:83) argues that "the current educational context (how, what and why we learn? Who decides? How is the human condition factored into the equation? What are the implications?) is submerged in a deluge of content (expectations, standards, objectives, lesson plans, prescriptive curriculum documents, etc.)." Carr is of the view that while teacher education students need to learn some

common and specialized curricular content they also need to learn how to learn, how to be, how to think, how to relate, how to critically examine, and how to understand and be part of society. The foregoing questions according to Carr (2008:84) would provide the focus for discussing, for example,

❖ Can content be taught without an appreciation of the context?

❖ How do educators understand the vast educational attainment gaps between groups without examining the context?

❖ If educators focus on the content how do they explain the rejection of the curriculum and schooling process by large numbers of school learners?

In other words, the major focus of Carr's (2008) argument is that content is always more appropriate, relevant and engaging when it is contextualized and when it takes into consideration the needs and realities of teacher education students. McLeod and Reynolds (2007:17) argue that a valuable structure for considering the impact of context on teaching is to position the learner as the focus for the teacher's reflection. Figure 3.6 illustrates contexts of teaching.
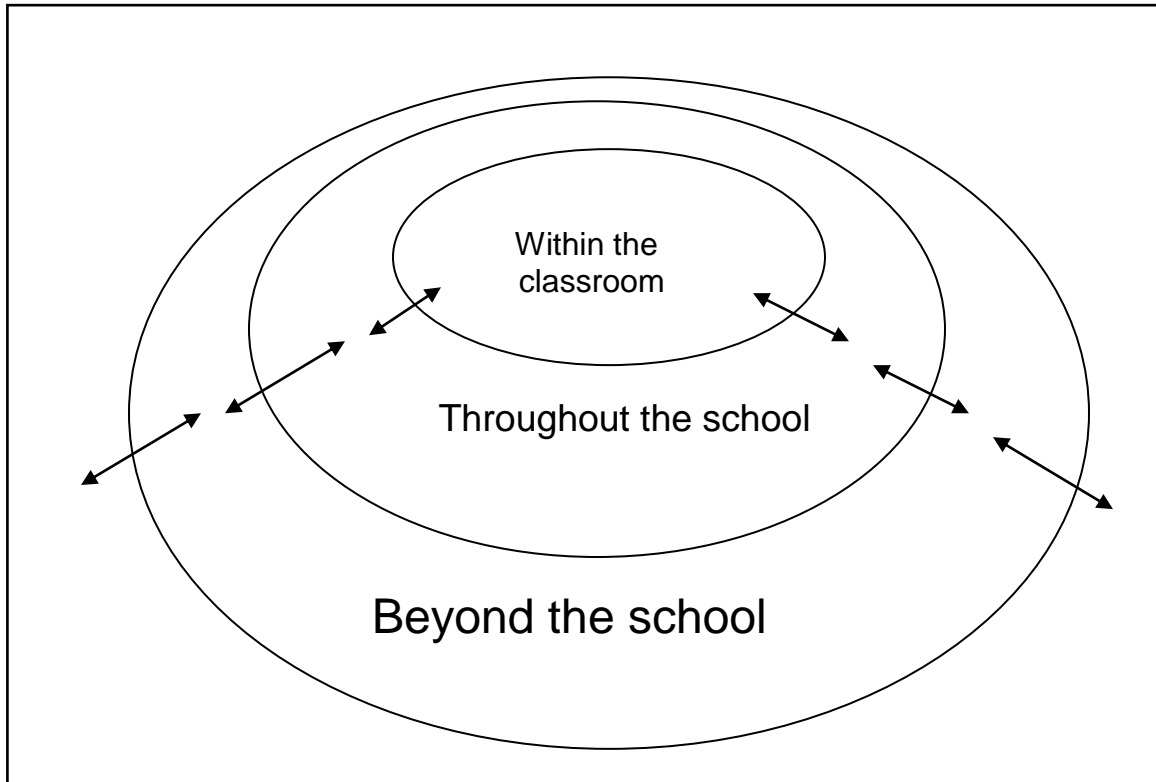
Figure 3.6 Context of teaching
Source*: McLeod and Reynolds (2007:17).*

The contexts illustrated in Figure 3.4 above do not exist or operate in isolation. They are interdependent. Developments emanating from one context impact on other contexts and ultimately shape teaching and learning. For instance in South Africa the sample policies summarized below form part of the context for, as well as impact on teaching and learning (See 3.3 - context for teacher education in South Africa).

Policy	Focus	Aim
NCS	Outcomes-based education	-That teachers should be able to develop materials and make professional decisions regarding the presentation of the curriculum. -To equalise black and white teachers and to reprofessionalise teaching.
NSE	Teacher performance	-To guide teacher performance and productivity through specific standards -To give teachers more space to exercise their professional judgment.
IQMS	Evaluation – self evaluation and external evaluation	-To link performance with development and remuneration of teachers -To integrate the Whole School Evaluation, Performance Measurement System and Development Appraisal System.

Arguably issues of critical pedagogy in teacher education are of particular importance in the enhancement and expediting of transformation. Kincheloe (2000) contends that teacher educators need to address the kinds of knowledge that teacher education students should be exposed to in order to be prepared for the challenges of the classroom. He offers an outline of the types of knowledge that should be explored in every teacher education programme. These include empirical, experiential, normative, critical, ontological and reflective domains. The typology constitutes what Kincheloe (2000) refers to as a meta-epistemological package, which he argues helps teacher educators approach the contested concept of a knowledge base for education. According to Kincheloe (2000) teacher education is first and foremost epistemologically based and as such, the goal of critical teacher education programmes should be to have teacher education students understand how these different types of knowledge are produced, and subsequently examine the diverse ways they are taught and learnt. In this way educators are better able to analyze the epistemological assumptions that are embedded in current classroom practices.

Milner (2003) asserts that the efficiency of critical pedagogy has been criticized and questioned throughout the years. He argues, for instance that there is good talk about closing the gap between races but walking the talk remains elusive. Wink (2005) argues that critical pedagogy has been criticized as being more of a theory of pedagogy rather than a practical specification that informs educators about the principles that govern their work; neither saying how they might actually do it nor providing models toward which teacher educators should aspire. Ellsworth (1992) contends that theory and research on critical pedagogy provide repressive, abstract, and utopian ideologies, which are difficult to transfer into the classrooms, and argues that critical theorists have failed to launch any meaningful analysis of or programme for reformulating the institutionalized power imbalances between themselves and their students.

Carr (2008:85) also argues that there are stumbling blocks for critical engagement by teacher education students. Firstly, Carr is of the view that most teacher education students often feel that their contribution to the education world cannot make a difference. When this attitude is multiplied across-the-board, the

overall effect is enormous. Secondly, according to Carr (2008) some teacher education students do not wish to be political, yet the sociological literature on education clearly indicates that teaching is a political process (McLaren, 2007:64). Thirdly, Carr (2008) argues that teacher education students' interest to move forward is often challenged and derailed by what they perceive as an inhospitable social environment, one that does not encourage critical debate on fundamental issues. Fourthly Carr's (2008) sentiment correlates with Levine's (2006:32) that teacher education students "have the rather unfortunate conception that their courses are less central, less relevant, less substantive and without reserve, less related to the science of teaching and pedagogy."

In light of the identified challenges it is important for teacher educators to provide teacher education students with strategies, concepts, and consideration for becoming engaged, and, significantly for taking action aimed at social transformation. Education students should learn to examine their curriculum, their texts, their materials, and their verbal and non verbal transactions in the classroom to see how they may be perpetuating inequalities (Bartolome, 2004:101). The above recommendations and exemplary experiences for good practice in teacher education provide pillars for quality teaching and learning of teacher education students.

3.5 From an instruction paradigm to a learning paradigm

According to Barr and Tagg (1995:13) the American teacher education landscape has seen an onset of a paradigm shift in the conceptualisation as well as operationalisation of teacher education programmes. This is a shift from what they call an instruction paradigm to a learning paradigm. The foregoing correlates with the argument put forward by Heystek and Lethoko (2001:223) that one of the main goals in education today in South Africa (SA) is to restore the culture of learning and teaching (COLT) in schools with the net result of improving schools' output.

The instruction paradigm, according to Barr and Tagg (1995:15) mistakes a means for an end. It takes the means or method - called instruction or teaching – and makes it the teacher educators' end or purpose. The foregoing makes the instruction paradigm rest on conceptions of teaching that are increasingly recognized as

ineffective. Guskin, (1995) points out that the primary learning environment for undergraduate students, the fairly passive lecture-discussion format where teacher educators talk and most teacher education students listen, is contrary to almost every principle of optimal settings for students' learning. In developing the discussion the focus and emphasis is on the learning paradigm. Within the learning paradigm the following discussion unpacks the conceptualization of quality teaching and quality learning.

3.5.1 Quality teaching

McLeod and Reynolds (2007) present the New South Wales model of quality teaching. The quality teaching model is based on research showing that of all the things that educators control, it is the quality of the pedagogy that most directly and most powerfully affects the quality of learning outcomes that students demonstrate. According to McLeod and Reynolds (2007:46) the quality teaching model is designed to,

a) promote high levels of intellectual quality to produce deep understanding of important, substantive concepts, skills, and ideas. Such pedagogy treats knowledge as something that requires active construction and requires students to engage in higher order thinking and to communicate substantively about what they are learning;

b) establish a high quality learning environment to create classrooms where students and teachers work productively in an environment clearly focused on learning. Such pedagogy sets high explicit expectations and develops positive relationships between teachers and students and among students; and

c) generate significance by connecting students with the intellectual demands of their work to help make learning meaningful and important to them. Such pedagogy draws clear connections with students' prior knowledge and identities, with contexts outside of the classroom, and with multiple ways of knowing or cultural perspectives.

Each of the above three dimensions in the quality teaching model is defined by six elements as illustrated below.

Intellectual quality	Quality learning environments	Significance
. Deep knowledge	. Explicit quality criteria	. Background knowledge
. Deep understanding	. Engagement	. Cultural knowledge
. Problematic knowledge	. High expectation	. Knowledge integration
. Higher order thinking	. Social support	. Inclusivity
. Metalanguage	. Students self regulation	. Connectedness
. Substantive communication	. Student direction	. Narrative

According to McLeod and Reynolds (2007:48), the intellectual quality dimension in the model builds from a recognition that high quality student outcomes result if learning is focused on intellectual work that is challenging, centered on significant concepts and ideas, and requires substantial cognitive and academic engagement with deep knowledge. Such deep knowledge as noted by Carr (2008:82) facilitates students to retool quickly within the ever changing and dynamic environments. In other words students learn how to learn. The second dimension of quality learning environments focuses on the fact that learning is improved when the classroom or other learning environments provide high levels of support for learning. This dimension of pedagogy draws attention to the specific need to support learning, as well as the need to support students in classrooms. The third dimension of significance clarifies the fact that to achieve high quality learning outcomes for each student, students need to see why, and to understand that their learning matters. "The significance of students' learning lies in the connections between and among the student as an individual and social being, the nature of the work at hand, and the contexts in which such work matters" (McLeod and Reynolds, 2007:62).

3.5.2 Quality learning

According to the Australian Council of Deans of Education (2004:2) quality learning in the twenty-first century will be "about creating a kind of person with kinds of dispositions and orientations to the world, rather than simply commanding a body of

knowledge. These persons will be able to navigate change and diversity, learn-as-they-go, solve problems, collaborate, and be flexible." Quality learning is active, purposeful and productive, supporting teacher education students who are flexible, creative and collaborative. According to McLeod and Reynolds, (2007:67) quality learning is managed around four frameworks, that is:

❖ supporting teacher education students in developing control over their own learning through management of learning;
❖ planning structures or situations where teacher education students apply theory to practice thereby using learnt knowledge;
❖ creating opportunities for teacher education students to learn from and with others through sharing learning experiences; and
❖ preparing teacher education students for diverse abilities, intelligences, styles and perspectives through learning in different ways.

The above four frameworks are supported by constructivist practitioners (Marlowe & Page, 2005:32). They posit that learning is about a) understanding and applying, not recalling; b) thinking and analyzing, not accumulating and memorizing; and c) being active, not passive. Planning for quality learning is focussed on developing in teacher education students, knowledge, skills, understandings and values they need to operate in the world of teaching.

According to Barr and Tagg (1995:25) quality learning is framed holistically, recognizing that the chief agent in the process is the learner. Thus, teacher education students must be active discoverers and constructors of their own knowledge. Consideration of quality learning encourages teacher educators to ask some of the following questions:

❖ What knowledge, talents and skills do teacher trainees need in order to live and work fully?
❖ What must they do to master such knowledge, talents and skills?

❖ Has the experience of the faculty made students flexible and adaptable learners, able to thrive in a knowledge society?

However, the critical observation in the foregoing discussion is that Barr and Tagg (1995) are advocating for educational change which is rather a problematic issue. Korthagen (2001:57) is of the view that its not that educators do not know their limitations to influence teacher behaviour – but that change in practice is usually very difficult. For instance Barr and Tagg (1995:20) indicate that among educators the difference between espoused theory, that is, the set of principles people offer to explain their behaviour, and theory-in-use, that is, the principles that can be inferred from how people actually behave, is becoming distressingly noticeable. They point out that the instruction paradigm is the theory-in-use for most educators, yet the espoused theory for most of them resembles components of the learning paradigm. Thus so many of the educators feel increasingly constrained by a system increasingly at variance with what they believe. "To build teacher education practices needed for the 21st century – to put educators minds where their hearts are, and rejoin the acts with beliefs – educators should consciously critique the instruction paradigm and restructure what they do on the basis of the learning paradigm" (Barr and Tagg, 1995:23). In the learning paradigm, student learning and success set the boundary of learning. The criteria for success under the instructional paradigm are defined in terms of inputs and process measures, for instance factors such as selectivity in student admissions, research output and pass rates are used to rate the quality of teacher education. Guskin (1995) laments that educators are so wedded to a definition of quality based on resources that they find it extremely difficult to deal with the results of their work, namely student learning. The power of an environment or approach should be judged in terms of its impact on learning.

Because quality learning is dependent on assessment procedures, Barr and Tagg (1995:21) argue that there should be a shift into the new forms of assessment that focus on establishing what the student teachers have learnt – the knowledge and skill levels they have achieved and their potential for further independent learning. Writing along the same lines Laurillard (1993:42) is of the view that the major influence

on the students' approach to learning is the assessment method. Ramsden (1992:82) mentions that educators need to think carefully about the assessment and assessment processes, as it is this part of the curriculum that affects the students' approaches to learning most. He adds that there is a need to construct assessment that gives students the opportunity to receive feedback, but also must make the assessment relevant to the real world of teaching. However Miller (2008:168) argues that assessment is not easy and that most educators feel the struggle over best practices of assessment. The major question that Miller (2008) suggests in considering assessment procedure is: how do educators instil in teacher education students the ability to be effective judges over their own learning? Part of the process means supporting a shift in students' thinking about conventional, traditional ways of grading to the concept of liberatory assessment where teacher education students develop assessment practices along with educators. During the process teacher education students are led into "critical conversations about state standards, school standards, and how these align with what teacher education students themselves hope to gain from the learning process (Miller, 2008:169). Miller (2008) gives recommendations that can foster liberatory assessment. The following are examples he has provided:

❖ periodically invite students to write progress reports on what and how they are growing in their learning and ask them what and how they want to continue in order to become more adept;
❖ accentuate curriculum with multiple opportunities for self reflection; and
❖ provide assignment choices that promote self-direction, foster inner motivation, and invite teacher education students to develop the assessment along with the educator (2008:170).

The debate ensues when the focus is on student evaluation of teaching. Rowley (2002:143) asserts that "there is a considerable level of disagreement as to the value of student evaluation of teaching." Rowley (2003:144)) argues that opposition to student feedback draws on two types of arguments; those associated

with the legal and educational policy arguments and those associated with the validity of the methodologies adopted. According to Coles (2002) the first category of arguments expresses fundamental doubts about whether students have the capacity to evaluate teaching. The foregoing resonates with what is termed Meno's paradox in philosophy. The paradox proffered by Meno (Socrates' student) was: "How will you inquire into a thing when you are wholly ignorant of what it is? Even if you happen to bump right into it, how will you know it is the thing you didn't know?" (Vallicella, 2009 n.p). In other words how could students know anything about X if they do not know what X is? In this light how could students assess whether a lecturer's teaching is good or bad if they don't know the content? If the paradox is taken seriously, it raises huge problems because it makes it impossible to come to know about anything. Further, the paradox assigns a 'jug-mug' relationship between the lecturer and the students, where the lecturer pours knowledge into the empty heads of students (Freire, 1998:66). Contrary to the foregoing assumption, in Platonic terms it could be argued that one is able to learn, not from experience, but from one's own mental resources. Hence one can search for something as long as one has some specification of it.

Advancing a different argument, Rowley (2003:142) indicates that lecturer resentment of students' evaluation of teaching stems from the realization that "there are a number of independent variables that influence students' evaluation, for example, attitude or expressions of satisfaction." Rowley (2003) further emphasizes that it is important to take a pragmatic position and find some way of listening to students and that whatever their limitations (that is, surveys and questionnaires), these approaches are better than nothing. Miller (1988:60) argues that university and college students are professional "teacher watchers" and, if asked questions to which they can respond, are capable of making fair and sound judgements about teaching.

3.6 Implication of a paradigm shift

To effect successful change there is need to change the structures – that is, those features of teacher education that are stable over time and that form the framework within which activities and processes occur and through which the

purposes in this instance, of teacher education, are achieved. According to Barr and Tagg (1995:22) structures include, the organization chart, role and reward systems, technologies and methods, facilities and equipment, decision-making customs, communication channels, feedback loops, financial arrangements and funding streams. Arguing along the same lines Mattson (2005:23) is of the view that the major question to be asked is, "What can be done to ensure that working conditions of teacher educators make it possible for them to do their job?" Mattson (2005:15) criticizes literature that portrays "the teacher educator as a rusty wheel ignoring the paradigm shift." He maintains that the success of teacher educators in focussing on student learning is dependent on smaller class sizes, funding and recrafting of institutions to reflect participation and activity goals. However, I do not seem to agree with Mattson on the idea of having smaller classes because as most developing nations are moving towards democratization of education the issue of big classes has receded into the background as consideration is on how knowledge could be accessed not only by most students but also how knowledge could be made meaningful to individual students within large classes. Within the large classes the issue of assessment remains a challenge to be overcome by educators.

Within the foregoing circumstances the issue of increasing funding for teacher education institutions in order to enrol more staff, among many other restructuring activities, becomes imperative. Within the South African higher education system, planning, funding and quality assurance are three mechanisms used to steer the education system towards the goals set out in the 1997 White Paper on higher education transformation (Ministry of Higher Education and Training, 2009:2). The White Paper states that the funding framework should act as a mechanism which would help steer the higher education system towards the achievement of the goals of transformation. In its new funding framework, the Ministry of Higher Education and Training (2009) brought to bear the following block grants. First, is the teaching input grant which is calculated based on student enrolment. Second is the output grant which is dependent on both the actual total enrolment and the total normative enrolment which the institution should have produced in terms of national benchmarks. Third, is the research output grant which is dependent on both the actual

totals of research graduates and research publication units for the year, and the normative total which the institution should have produced in terms of national benchmarks (2009:6-12).

According to Reid (1995) the advantages of restructuring are that restructuring offers the greatest hope for increasing organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Structure is leverage. If you change the structure in which people work, you increase or decrease the leverage applied to their efforts. A change in structure can either increase productivity or change the nature of educational outcomes. Structure is the concrete manifestation of the abstract principles of the organization's governing paradigm. Barr and Tagg (1995:21) argue that structures reflecting an old paradigm can frustrate the best ideas and innovations of new paradigm thinkers. As the governing paradigms change, so likewise must the organization's structures. The teaching and learning structures of the instruction paradigm are different from those of the learning paradigm. As opposed to the instruction paradigm that is positivist in nature, the learning paradigm puts the learner in the "driver's seat" and the learner becomes the producer of knowledge (Arends 1997:63). In this scenario learning is subjective and personal. As a result the students' prior knowledge forms the foundation of learning.

However, other theorists like Zeichner (2010) have argued that the discussion should be about the proliferation of teaching methods instead. The focus is on how, whatever approaches are used, they serve best to prompt learning of particular knowledge by particular students. By the same token, not all elements of the learning paradigm are contrary to corresponding elements of the instruction paradigm; the learning paradigm includes many elements of the old within its larger domain of possibilities (Zeichner, 2010:94). The learning paradigm does not prohibit lecturing, for example; lecturing becomes one of many possible methods, all evaluated on the basis of their ability to promote appropriate learning. However, whatever method is used, the educator should be cognizant of the fact that the student is the chief agent in the process of learning. Thus, students must be active discoverers and constructors of their own knowledge. McLeod and Reynolds (2007) postulate that in the learning

paradigm knowledge is not seen as cumulative and linear like a wall of bricks, but as a nesting and interacting of frameworks; what Gardner (2003:28) calls,

> education for understanding…a sufficient grasp of concepts, principles, or skills so that one can bring them to bear on new problems and situations, deciding in which ways one's present competencies can suffice and in which ways one may require new skills or knowledge.

To this end, learning environments should be challenging, cooperative, collaborative and supportive.

Changing paradigms is difficult because it means doing everything differently. Barr and Tagg (1995:24) suggest small changes that they feel could provide leverage for larger changes for the future. They suggest that the first thing is to begin by speaking, that is, speaking within the framework of the new paradigm. Start talking about what it takes to produce quality teaching and quality learning. Refer to learning programmes and speak more of learning outcomes instead of instructional delivery. Only as educators begin to experiment with the new language will they begin to think and act out of the new paradigm. The simple question to be asked is how educators would do things differently if they put learning first. There is a need for a paradigm shift; otherwise as Einstein (1949:19) argues, we cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them.

A paradigm shift is even more challenging to a South African educator in the sense that most currently serving teachers received their professional education and entered teaching when education was an integral part of the apartheid project and organized in racially and ethnically divided sub-systems (Department of Education (2007:4). In addition Morrow (2007:142) argues that aspects of the blueprint, crucial to maintaining the relations of domination are still in place. Presenting a paradigm shift in this context tends to be problematic in the sense that since 1994 educators have had to cope with rationalization of the teaching community into a single national system, the introduction of new curricula which emphasize greater professional autonomy and require teachers to have new knowledge and applied competences, including the use of new technologies and radical change in the demographic, cultural and linguistic composition of students.

What is needed is a realistic approach to change that draws attention toward the process of professional development and change itself. To enhance implementation of quality teaching and learning teacher educators should be empowered to face change and challenge proactively. Fullan (1993:45) suggests four capacities that could enable the change agents to cope:

❖ *Personal vision building.* Fullan (1993:45) mentions that there is need for a shared vision. The starting point is to ask oneself, 'What difference am I trying to make personally?' The question pushes individuals to articulate what is important to them as educators. Creating vision forces individuals to take a stand for a preferred future. Notably, personal purpose and vision should be the starting point. Personal purpose is usually not private. Good ideas converge under conditions of communication and collaboration. Personal purpose should be pushed until it makes a connection to social betterment in society. Hence it should be realized that personal purpose in education is a change theme. Personal purpose is the route to organizational change. When personal purpose is diminished what emerges is the uncritical acceptance of the status quo. That is why reflection is important because it affects professional growth and brings individuals to greater self-actualisation (Pedro, 2006:17) through collaboration with others to apply knowledge and experiences in practice (Schon, 1987:27). Experience is important to developing thinking (Dewey, 1916:14).

❖ *Inquiry.* According to Fullan (1993:46) inquiry is necessary at the outset for forming personal purpose. While personal purpose comes from within, it must be fuelled by information, ideas, dilemmas and other contentions in the environment. Habits of questioning, experimentation and variety are essential. Inquiry means internalising norms, habits and techniques for continuous learning. Thus, educators need mechanisms to question and update their mental maps on a continuous basis.

❖ *Mastery.* The capacity of mastery is another crucial ingredient. Fullan (1993:15) asserts, "People must behave their way into new ideas and skills, not just think their way into them." Mastery leads to the achievement of deeper understanding.

New mindsets arise from new mastery. When personal mastery becomes a discipline, an activity, individuals integrate into their lives it enables individuals to clarify what is important to them as well as continually learning how to see current reality more clearly. The skill is central to successful change. Individuals have to know where new ideas fit, and also how to become skilled in them.

❖ *Collaboration.* Collaboration is essential for personal learning. There is a ceiling effect to how much an individual can learn if he/she keeps to himself/herself. The ability to collaborate is becoming one of the core requisites of post-modern educational practice. Collaborative skills and relationships lead to sharing and clarification of ideas that empower individuals to implement change (Krishnaveni & Anitha, 2007:154).

❖ Hickman and Silva (1984:84) present another important dimension, that of versatility. They argue that versatility prepares individuals for the ever changing world otherwise individuals become set in their ways and isolated in their own world. Versatility according to Hickman and Silva (1984:84) ingrains adaptability without which responses to change are too slow or too late.

While the above argument focuses on the need to shift from instruction to learning, it is also equally important to note that not all students learn in the same way. Hence, within the learning paradigm it is important to cater for the individual student's learning needs.

3.7 Catering for different learning styles

Following the argument put forward by Korthagen (2010) at 3.2 above, through schematisation, education students develop learning styles, that is, a preferred way of structuring their learning experiences. According to Robotham (1999) in considering learning and how to improve teacher education students' learning, one needs to understand the way(s) in which an individual learns. Robotham further explains that it is widely accepted that while it is possible to identify common constituent elements, the learning process varies at an individual level. Teacher education students develop a way or style of learning and refine that style in response to three groups of factors: unconscious personal interventions by the individual, conscious interventions by the

learner, and interventions by some other external agent. One of the reasons put forward for the emergence of the term 'learning style' is that it has a practical application particularly in education and training (Keefe and Ferrell, 1990). The term 'learning style' indicates an interest in the totality of the processes undertaken during learning. A recurring feature of the research into learning styles is the frequency with which different styles are presented as being diametrically opposed. Learning styles have been presented by researchers as a bipolar construction as shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3. 4 Dichotomies in learning style

Sensory ←————————————→ Intuitive	
Sensory learners prefer concrete, practical, and procedural information. They look for the facts.	Intuitive learners prefer conceptual, innovative, and theoretical information. They look for the meaning.
Visual ←————————————→ **Verbal**	
Visual learners prefer graphs, pictures, and diagrams. They look for visual representations of information.	Verbal learners prefer to hear or read information. They look for explanations with words.
Active ←————————————→ **Reflective**	
Active learners prefer to manipulate objects, do physical experiments, and learn by trying. They enjoy working in groups to figure out problems.	Reflective learners prefer to think things through, to evaluate options, and learn by analysis. They enjoy figuring out a problem on their own.
Sequential ←————————————→ **Global**	
Sequential learners prefer to have information presented linearly and in an orderly manner. They put together the details in order to understand the big picture emerges.	Global learners prefer a holistic and systematic approach. They see the big picture first and then fill in the details.

Source: Felder and Silverman (2002:4)

Felder and Silverman (2002) developed Kolb's (1984) model of learning styles, namely, concrete experience – abstract conceptualization, and reflective observation – active experimentation styles, into what they termed a learning style index which comprises four dimensions of learning styles, namely, sensory – intuitive; visual –

verbal; active - reflective and sequential – global. They assert that by engaging students in most of these styles the educator not only improves learning effectiveness but also opens up students to many different ways of perceiving the world.

According to Robotham (1999) a key feature of the learning styles falling under 'high quality learning style' is that the learner approaches learning from a contextual perspective, where a problem is addressed at two levels. At a micro level the problem or task requirements are addressed and completed, while at a macro level, the problem or task is perceived in the context of, for example, the course or subject area of which it is a part. Rather than adopting a narrow focus and concentrating on only solving a particular problem (low quality learning), the learner attempts to identify links and similarities with other problems and other areas. The interest of the individual is not confined to an instrumental approach to learning where task completion is the only aim; there is also an interest in the learning process (high quality learning) (Bradbury, 1997).

One of the major applications of knowledge concerning learning style in education is whether to match or mismatch learning style and instructional style. Research is emerging (Hayes and Allinson, 1996) with a bipolar response, one group advancing that learning is more effective where there is a match and the other group advancing that learning is more effective where there is a mismatch. However, what is important is to promote an educational environment developed for flexibility at the individual student level. What is required is a stimulus-stimulus approach (Taylor and Burgess, 1995), where the student and the lecturer are actively involved in both learning and the mechanics of the learning process, the aim being to facilitate student empowerment by developing in students a critical awareness of material studied and the delivery and structure of the material. Students can then tailor flexible education strategies to their requirements to optimize the quality of the learning experience. This objective will be more achievable where the student is able to self-direct his/her own learning.

In theory, where there is lack of congruency between the preferred learning style(s) of individuals and the approach adopted by the educator, the student may mentally opt-out of the programme, although still physically attending (Robotham,

1999). This possibility must be countered with the recognition that to continually direct learning activities to a single learning style may promote the adoption of a narrow learning focus within a particular individual. According to Curry (1990:22), in the initial stages of a learning programme, matching instructional formats to students' learning styles would be appropriate, while individuals seek to overcome initial unfamiliarity with the new material being presented. As an individual's proficiency increases, the use of systematic mismatches between instructional approach and learning style may encourage the development of a wider learning style repertoire (Kolb, 1984). It is theoretically possible that individuals can develop their learning capability to the point where they may consciously choose a learning style they find harder to learn through, as it is the most appropriate learning style, given the nature of a particular learning task. A proficient student is not someone who demonstrates capability within a narrow band of activities, as defined by a particular learning style, but rather someone who demonstrates the ability to select an appropriate learning style from a range, according to the demands of the situation and their own learning capability (Dunn, Dunn and Price, 1985).

This ability of an individual to actively select from a personal style or skills portfolio is part of what can be termed self-directed learning. In an educational setting, a self-directed student no longer operates as a passive receiver of information, but takes responsibility for the achievement, and ultimately setting, of learning outcomes (Hammond and Collins, 1995). In essence, the traditional lecturer-student divide becomes increasingly blurred, as the student begins to pro-actively structure the programme to match their own learning attributes. According to Brookfield (1995) the lecturer's role therefore shifts from being one of an instructor, to that of a facilitator, and finally to that of a resource to be tapped, as required by the student. Ultimately it is feasible that during the course of a programme, the lecturer will become increasingly redundant, as the student becomes capable of not only identifying what resources and skills are needed to achieve objectives, but also how to acquire those resources and skills.

Within the above approach, higher education ceases to be simply something that is done to people, and becomes a platform from which individuals can go on to, in

effect, educate themselves (Cornett, 1983). Higher education should be concerned with not only enhancing learning in a specific situation, but should also constitute a catalyst for further self-initiated development of the individual, above and beyond the contents and aims of a particular course. This can be achieved by considering the development of not only specific skills applicable to defined situations, but also more fundamental skills such as how individuals learn, how to improve that process, and how to achieve self-directed students (Brookfield, 1995).

In close connection with the concept of preferences for different individual styles the associated concept of approaches to learning has been developed (Ramsden, 1992:87). These are deep and surface approaches to learning. In fact the idea that students can and do take a deep or surface approach to their learning is probably one of the most used bits of educational research in higher education. It is a very powerful and useful principle that we should apply most of the time to the way we teach. According to Biggs (1999:54) failure to apply it and apply it properly explains how a lot goes wrong with learning processes. Simply stated, deep learning involves the critical analysis of new ideas, linking them to already known concepts and principles, and leads to understanding and long-term retention of concepts so that they can be used for problem solving in unfamiliar contexts. Marton and Booth (1997:61) argue that deep learning promotes understanding and application for life and in contrast, surface learning is the tacit acceptance of information and memorization as isolated and unlinked facts. It leads to superficial retention of material for examinations and does not promote understanding or long-term retention of knowledge and information.

Critical to our understanding of this principle is that we should not identify the student with a fixed approach to learning, but it is the design of learning opportunity that encourages students to adopt a particular approach. Perhaps the major influence on the students' approach to learning is assessment methods (Laurillard, 1993). According to Thomas and Bain (1984) it is often argued that the explicit setting of straightforward assessments involving short questions testing separate ideas will encourage surface learning (although this may not necessarily be the case).

Table 3.5 provides some very valuable characteristics of the approaches and illustrates the importance of how curriculum management impacts on the teaching - learning process.

Table 3. 5 Comparison of the characteristics and factors that encourage deep and surface approaches to learning.

	Deep Learning	Surface Learning
Definition:	Examining new facts and ideas critically, and tying them into existing cognitive structures and making numerous links between ideas.	Accepting new facts and ideas uncritically and attempting to store them as isolated, unconnected, items.
Characteristics	Looking for meaning. Focusing on the central argument or **concepts** needed to solve a problem. Interacting actively. Distinguishing between argument and evidence. Making connections between different modules. Relating new and previous knowledge. Linking course content to real life.	Relying on rote learning. Focusing on outwards signs and the **formulae** needed to solve a problem. Receiving information passively. Failing to distinguish principles from examples. Treating parts of modules and programmes as separate. Not recognizing new material as building on previous work. Seeing course content simply as material to be learnt for the exam.
Encouraged by Students'	Having an intrinsic curiosity in the subject. Being determined to do well and mentally engaging when doing academic work. Having the appropriate background knowledge for a sound foundation. Having time to pursue interests, through good time management. Positive experience of education leading to confidence in ability to understand and succeed.	Studying a degree for the qualification and not being interested in the subject. Not focusing on academic areas, but emphasizing others (e.g. social, sport). Lacking background knowledge and understanding necessary to understand material. Not enough time / too high a workload. Cynical view of education, believing that factual recall is what is required. High anxiety.
Encouraged by Teachers'	Showing personal interest in the subject. Bringing out the structure of the subject. Concentrating on and ensuring plenty of time for key concepts. Confronting students' misconceptions. Engaging students in active learning. Using assessments that require thought, and	Conveying disinterest or even a negative attitude to the material. Presenting material so that it can be perceived as a series of unrelated facts and ideas. Allowing students to be passive. Assessing for independent facts (short answer questions).

	requires ideas to be used together.	Rushing to cover too much material.
	Relating new material to what students already know and understand.	Emphasizing coverage at the expense of depth.
	Allowing students to make mistakes without penalty and rewarding effort.	Creating undue anxiety or low expectations of success by discouraging statements or excessive workload.
	Being consistent and fair in assessing declared intended learning outcomes, and hence establishing trust.	Having a short assessment cycle.

Source*: Houghton, (2004:9)*

The characteristics and factors that encourage deep learning as reflected in Table 3.5 are underpinned by active learning. According to Mattson (2005) active learning is framed by the belief that thought and action, ideas and the use of ideas, can never be separated. To guide students into deep learning, Huang (2006:32) suggests three major questions to be considered. These are:

❖ How can the instructor facilitate students' learning in such a way that she/he provides opportunities for them to discover, apply, and analyze knowledge for themselves?

❖ How can the instructor get students to push themselves beyond the comprehension to higher levels of thinking?

❖ How can the instructor facilitate a learning process which will motivate students to understand the knowledge in a meaningful and creative way?

Houghton (2004) argues that clearly stated academic aims, opportunities to exercise some choice and well aligned assessment strategies that help students to build confidence can be found among the factors identified as encouraging a deep approach. Whilst the learning theories provide educators with tools for analyzing teaching and learning, it is important to consider how a link between theory and practice could be forged in order to facilitate student learning.

3.8 Linking theory with practice in teacher education

Zeichner (2010:89) asserts that the "central problem that has plagued university preservice teacher education for many years is the disconnect between the campus and school based preservice components of the programme." According to Merrill (2002), learning is promoted when knowledge is applied and integrated in the real world. Most instructional design theories advocate application of knowledge and skill as a necessary condition for effective learning (Merril, 2002:6). Learning is enhanced when teacher candidates are provided with multiple opportunities to apply what they have leaned in meaningful contexts (Perkins & Unger, 1999).

However Allsop et al (2006) assert that while there is an attempt to connect students' practice teaching experiences through course content, teacher educators encounter difficulties for instance, a) often there is no match between the practices applied in the classroom setting and the practice emphasized in university classes, b) teacher educators have difficulty facilitating connections because they do not have first-hand exposure to their students' practice teaching sites, and c) these factors often lead to a disconnect or gap between what students see and what they learn in their courses. Levine (2006:31) voices the sentiment that "one of the unfortunate consequences of teacher education's retreat from practice and practitioners is that graduates are not being adequately prepared for the classroom." Within the dominant "application of theory" model of preservice teacher education, prospective teachers are supposed to learn theories at the university and then go to schools to practice or apply what they learned on campus (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999). Hence the disconnect between what students are taught in campus courses and their opportunities for learning to enact these practices in school placements is often very great (Bullough et al., 1997). Angelo (1999) refers to this kind of a scenario as a vaccination model of teaching, where a dose of theory is given at the university with the expectation that it will cure all practice teaching ills, but unfortunately this has not worked for students.

Zeichner (2010:89) argues for the concept of hybridity and third space that offers much promise in deepening the quality of teacher learning in university programmes and the ability of teacher education graduates to enact desired teaching

practices in complex school settings. This work in creating hybrid spaces in teacher education where academic and practitioner knowledge and knowledge that exists in communities come together in new, less hierarchical ways in the service of teaching and learning represents a paradigm shift in the epistemology of teacher education programmes. Zeichner argues that the shift toward more democratic and inclusive ways of working with schools and communities is necessary for universities to fulfill their mission in the education of teachers.

The teacher education-school partnerships are premised upon Goodlad's (1991:10) conclusion that "any teacher education programme created or conducted without the collaboration of surrounding schools is defective." Teitel (2003:45) argues that the separation of coursework and practice creates problems in transfer and in implementation within schools. The European Commission (EC) (2007:n.p) suggests that "in the growing complexity of society and the demands on the educational system,…schools should play an active and central role in developing teaching methods, improving the quality of teaching, and extending knowledge about teaching and learning" in teacher education. The EC argues that the relationship between teacher education institutions (TEIs) and schools has often been one-sided, in which the school is the passive recipient of trainee teachers and in which most power lies with the TEIs. The foregoing correlates with Zeichner's (2010:90) argument that under the traditional view of practice teaching, schools are expected mainly to provide a place for education students to practise teaching and they are usually not provided with the kind of preparation and support they would need to implement a more active and educative conception of mentoring. Coble and Williams (1998) are of the opinion that teacher education-school partnerships should be guided by five guiding principles. They are:

❖ increased time for pre-service teachers to experience earlier, longer, and more intensive field-based placements in the schools, connected to method classes and mentors at the school sites;

❖ jointly crafted professional development programmes for teacher education students;

❖ increased communication between public schools and higher education for the purpose of sharing and disseminating best practices;

❖ generation and application of research and new knowledge about teaching and learning;

❖ joint involvement of university and school personnel in curriculum planning and programme development.

According to Coble and Williams (1998:2) there is a wide range of existing relationships between universities and schools, from simple episodic transactions to complex on-going partnerships. Cortada (1995:3) argues that what distinguishes between these polarities is the value-added to university-school relationship as they grow from transactions to partnerships. Henderson (1990:4) provides a conceptual framework for understanding the structure of what is meant by the term 'partnership', what characterizes successful partnerships, and some of the general benefits derived from developing strategic partnerships. There are two dimensions of partnership style relationships described by Henderson (1990); they are partnership in context and partnership in action.

Partnership in context is the degree to which the university and schools believe that the partnership will be sustained over time. The key indicators are longevity, stability, and interdependence between the partners. There are three domains that help define the context of a successful strategic partnership, namely, a) mutual benefits; if a partnership succeeds, it will be because both parties have something to gain, b) commitment; partnerships require a long range view as well as a willingness, over time, to relinquish some organizational controls in favour of operationalized shared governance, and c) predisposition; developing strategic partnerships as a means to achieve improvement in teacher preparation and development is a significant departure from past practice (Henderson, 1990).

Partnership in action is the ability of the partners to influence policies, processes, and programmes that affect the operational performance of the partnership. The key indicator is the ability to affect the day-to-day working relationships of the partners. Henderson (1990) asserts that there are three major

principles that help define successful partnerships. The first principle is shared knowledge. Partnerships ultimately survive on a deep foundation of shared knowledge between partner organizations. University-school partners must understand the environment and culture that affect how the other works if they are to support and influence each other in critical areas. The second principle is dependency. In every partnership there are distinctive competencies and resources, so that if the partnership fails, each member of the partnership loses. Successful university-school partnerships learn how to manage an environment where each holds critical cards tied to the other's success. The third principle is an organizational linkage. Successful partnerships are characterized by formal and informal linkages at all levels in the organization.

The EC (2007) has suggested aims of partnerships between teacher and schools. While the aims and efforts of partnerships could vary depending on circumstances and context of institutions, the EC has projected three elements that are crucial, namely, a) improving methods for teaching and learning; b) raising the quality of teachers and c) developing knowledge about teaching and learning through research. For sustained relationships both parties should benefit from the outcomes of partnerships. The EC (2007:5) has postulated benefits for the school, teacher education and for the students. The benefits for the school are:

- ❖ involvement in the initial education of new teachers;
- ❖ in-service development of staff within the school;
- ❖ increased capacity for innovation and knowledge development through support from teacher educators and through student-teachers' development and research activities; and
- ❖ the feedback of the outcomes of educational research into the reality of the schools.

The benefits for teacher education include the following:

- ❖ opportunities to relate the curriculum of teacher education more closely to the complex reality within the school;

❖ to provide student teachers with a realistic learning environment; and

❖ to get realistic and relevant research questions and assignments for education students.

The benefits for students are:

❖ involvement in the reality of the schools helps to reduce the practice shock sometimes experienced by students when they go out for practice teaching;

❖ students will get a more realistic view of the profession and the demands that it places on teachers; and

❖ students will be involved in a wider variety of activities, better reflecting the breadth of the profession.

Coble and Williams (1998) are of the view that although partnerships between schools and teacher education need to be addressed at policy level, partnerships are not an aim in themselves; they are a means to improve the quality of teacher education and to support innovation within schools and school development.

Teitel (2003:3) suggests the concept of professional development schools (PDS) as a special case of teacher education-school collaboration in which the experience in partnership formation provides rich backgrounds for the efforts to 'grow' PDSs. PDSs can be seen as places in which to resolve the tension between schools and universities. They are creative ways to bridge the gap and avoid the theory-practice dichotomy (Stoddard, 1993:43). For teacher education, PDSs provide an opportunity to create a venue for literal praxis, the development of teaching skill and practice in context. PDSs provide an opportunity to bridge the gap between the abstract and the authentic in the preparation and development of education students (Teitel, 2003).

Zeichner (2010) argues for the rejection of binaries such as practitioner and academic knowledge; and theory and practice, arguing instead for the creation of new hybrid spaces for integrating what are seen as competing discourses, in new ways where an either/or perspective is transformed into both/also point of view. In other

words, third space is concerned with the creation of hybrid spaces in teacher education programmes that bring together school mentors, teacher educators and academic knowledge in new ways to enhance student learning. Contrary to the traditional disconnection between teacher education and schools and to the valorisation of academic knowledge as the authoritative source of knowledge for learning about teaching in traditional university models of teacher education, third spaces bring mentors and academic knowledge in less hierarchical ways to create new learning opportunities for teacher candidates. Creating third spaces in teacher education involves an equal and more dialectical relationship between academic and practitioner knowledge in support of student learning. Gorodetsky and Barak (2008) are of the view that third space in school-university partnership in teacher education encourages a more egalitarian status for participants than conventional school-university partnerships. Examples of hybrid spaces that could be created in teacher education include, a) bringing mentors and their knowledge into campus courses and field experiences; b) incorporating representations of teachers' practices in campus courses; and c) mediated instruction and field experiences where method courses could be school based.

3.9 Linking research with teaching in teacher education

Prosser et al (2004) are of the opinion that the way academics conceive the link between research and teaching affects the way they would teach. The research carried out by Prosser et al (2004) in the UK, reveals that educators who see their research as tentative and as part of a wider debate in the discipline, and see their teaching as supporting student conceptual change, are more likely to bring their teaching and research together. By contrast educators who see their research as atomistic investigations and their teaching as concentrated on teacher-focused transmission of information are less likely to experience strong connections between teaching and research (Jenkins et al, 2007:18). In his study of experienced academics in Australia, Rowland (1996:15) made a distinction between a view of knowledge as absolute, specialized and unrelated to wider perspectives or experiences of life, where teaching was unlikely to have effects on research, and a view of knowledge as

tentative, open to reinterpretation or containing insights which can be applied more widely, which is likely to stimulate the lecturer's research. Simons and Elen (2007:28) attributes the differing debates on the relationship between research and teaching to two approaches: on the one hand, a functionalist approach that regards research as a tool in the learning environment, and on the other hand an idealist approach that regards research as a process of edification.

The foregoing argument correlates with the idea put forward by Brew (1999:291) that "the way in which knowledge is conceived is central to the kind of teaching that is done and to what educators understand research to be. It therefore crucially affects the relationship between them." Prosser et al conclude: "All this suggests that it is not the quantity of research that is associated with quality of teaching, but how scholarship in the discipline or profession is maintained and developed that is important" (2004:6). Prosser et al (2004) also draw the conclusion that enhancing the link helps educators to have more sophisticated or wider conceptions of knowledge in their discipline.

Jenkins et al's (2007:23) study in the UK "found little evidence to suggest that synergies between teaching and research were managed or promoted at departmental or institutional level…There were some attempts to manage teaching and research workloads in departments, partly to allow more time for research. Some strategies may be having the unintended consequence of driving research and teaching apart for some staff." The foregoing resonates with the idea put across by Chetty and Lubben (2009:1) that South African tertiary institutions have been classified as either teaching-oriented or research-oriented institutions. The classification tends to galvanize the separation of research from teaching. In a Canadian study, Poole (2010:2) reveals that some educators argued that all faculty members should be SoTL researchers because ethical educators are always collecting data to inform their practice, and these data should be shared. Others argued, on the other hand, that the demands of time and expertise are too great to expect all teaching to augment or change their research activities to include SoTL.

The conceptual challenge, as Boyer (1990) powerfully argued, lies not in focusing on the differences between teaching and research, with the polarity that this

implies, but in seeking the potential synergies between these two academic activities. Boyer (1990) proffers a currently respected typology of scholarship, which for him is a preferred term to the binary classification of teaching and research. He identifies the scholarship of

- Discovery (advancing knowledge)
- Integration (synthesizing knowledge)
- Service or engagement (advancing and applying knowledge)
- Teaching (advancing and applying knowledge about how to teach and promote learning. (Jenkins et al, 2007:28).

In light of Boyer's (1990) argument research is not carried for its own sake but for the main purpose of enhancing student learning.

3.10 Summary

This review of related literature focuses on the discussions about teacher education. Pertinent issues, namely, pedagogy for teacher education, issues of professionalism in South Africa as well as professional characteristics of an educator are discussed. The need to focus on student learning is emphasised. To this end literature suggests that teacher educators should shift from an instruction paradigm to a learning paradigm. Good practice strategies are analyzed in order to learn how outstanding programmes have implemented pedagogy for teacher education. In the final analysis the discussion embraces the issues of linking theory with practice as well as linking research with teaching.

Korthagen (2001) suggests realistic pedagogy for teacher education - a pedagogy that emphasizes phronesis instead of episteme. This could be achieved by engaging teacher candidates in a three level step in their professional learning, namely, gestalt formation, schematization and theory learning. The three level-step model is important as it not only helps explain the gap between theory and practice but provides suggestions on how the gap could be closed. Issues of professionalism are discussed with a special reference to the South African context. The literature also reveals that there are particular professional educator characteristics that impact positively on teaching and learning. Krishnaveni and Anitha (2007:151) identify these

as, a) skill which embraces subject knowledge, teaching prowess and updating knowledge; b) concern for others which includes collegiality, commitment and teacher-student relationship and c) concern for self which encompasses empowerment, self-development and remuneration. The discussion develops by including good practice strategies in order to learn from the experience of others.

Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005), Levine (2006) as well as the NOCHE & APQC (2003) report, echo similar recommendations for good practice strategies. The underlying belief is that teacher education students should develop a sound knowledge of both the content and pedagogic skills. Practice teaching or learning experiences should be extended to allow students to enact theory into practice as well as deal with the complexities of teaching by learning to analyze teaching and learning, (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005:65). The need to embed teacher education within critical pedagogy in order to facilitate transformation is emphasized. According to McLaren (2008:62) critical pedagogy enables educators to consider education "not simply as an arena of indoctrination or socialization or site of instruction, but also as a cultural terrain that promotes student empowerment and self-transformation."

The literature review also discusses the need for catering for varied learning styles among students, mindful of the fact that some learning styles maximize surface approaches to learning compared to others that facilitate a deep approach to learning that lead to meaningful learning. Kolb (1984), Felder and Silverman (2002) have postulated dimensions of learning styles. The argument is that an ideal learning process should engage most of the modes of learning in response to situational demands. In the final analysis linking theory with practice as well as linking research and teaching are two pertinent issues discussed that lead to enhancement of student learning. In discussing linking theory with practice Zeichner (2010) argues for the creation of third spaces in teacher education that would facilitate close cooperation between teacher education programmes and schools. While the literature review has shed light on teaching and learning of teacher education students, the next chapter, Chapter 4, discusses research methodology.

Chapter 4
Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The main purpose of the study was to examine teaching and learning of teacher education students in South African universities. The major question that guided the study was "how do teacher educators in South African universities prepare teacher education students for teaching and learning within a context of quality?" In clarifying methodology initially the research design is discussed. In line with the chosen design the research instrument is elaborated on including how issues of validity and generalization were achieved. Consideration of ethics is also spelt out. Finally procedures of data collection are discussed. In the process a description of data as well as how data were analysed is made.

4.2 Research Design

The research design was the blue print or plan that guided the research process in an effort to answer the research question. Consistent with the postmodern qualitative paradigm I used phenomenology as the strategy of research. This is because phenomenology focuses "on the ways that the life world; the world every individual takes for granted – is experienced by its members" (Holliday, 2007:16). The following discussion focuses on phenomenology as a methodological underpinning of the study.

Phenomenology as a research approach enables the researcher to understand the meaning of phenomena. It also enables the researcher to transform the lived experience into a textual expression of its essence through reading, writing and rewriting. Phenomenology attempts to gain insightful descriptions of the way individuals experience the world. According to Richards and Morse (2007:49) there are two major assumptions that underlie phenomenology.

The first assumption according to Richards and Morse is that "perceptions present us with evidence of the lived world – not as it is thought to be but as it is lived" (2007:49). To phenomenology lived experience is crucial. The deduction from the foregoing is that human life can only be understood from within the context. To this end the focus is on people's subjective experiences, on how people interpret and interact within their social environment. The second assumption is that human existence "as being in the world is a phenomenological phrase that acknowledges that people are in their worlds and are understandable only in their contexts" (Richards and Morse, 2007:50). This is because social life is a distinctively human product. As a result, by studying individuals' experiences the researcher has a greater opportunity to understand the perceptions they have of their own activities. The foregoing discussion presupposes that there is no single grand theory that can explain the world, but that instead situations must be studied and understood at local level with particular attention to diversity and to those voices at the periphery.

As a result of the relative and dynamic circumstances of human beings, phenomenological reflection takes place within the four existentials; temporality (lived time), spatiality (lived space), corporeality (lived body) and relationality or communality (lived human relations) (Richards and Morse, 2007:49). In other words, human behaviour occurs in the context of relationships to things, people, events and situations. The foregoing reflections lead to plausible insights that bring individual researchers in more direct contact with the lived world. The issue of reflection means that the human mind is the purposive source or origin of meaning and that individuals arrive at these meanings through abstraction. The following are the kinds of abstraction that phenomenology offers.

Table 4.1 Doing abstraction

Method	When does abstraction occur?	Where does abstraction come from?	How is it done?	What is the goal of abstraction?
Phenomenology	Not until one has the data; previous knowledge and ideas are bracketed.	Themes and meanings in accounts and texts.	Deep immersion and focus through reading.	To describe the essence of a phenomena.

Adapted from Richards and Morse (2007:159).

The process of abstraction leads to exploring the richness, depth and complexity of a phenomenon; i.e. through uncovering how meanings are constructed, researchers can gain insights into the meanings imparted and thereby improve comprehension of the whole.

The greatest strength of phenomenology is the richness and depth of exploration and descriptions it yields. Myers (2002:n.p) contends that a major strength of a phenomenological approach "is the depth to which explorations are conducted and descriptions are written, usually resulting in sufficient details for the reader to grasp the idiosyncrasies of the situation." The major disadvantage is its subjectivity and failure of the approach to generalize its findings beyond the situation studied. Since we maintain our humanity throughout the research process, Myers (2002) argues that "it is largely impossible to escape the subjective experience, even for the most seasoned of researchers" because as individuals proceed through the research process their humaneness informs them and often directs them through such subtleties as intuition or 'aha' moments.

Bernstein (1974) criticizes the overriding concern of phenomenology with the meanings of situations and the ways in which these meanings are interpreted by actors involved. Bernstein's criticism leans on the argument that the way in which situations are interpreted and defined is itself a product of the circumstances in which one is placed (1974:41). One important factor in such circumstances that must be considered is the power of others to impose their own definitions of situations upon respondents. For example, in the interview situation there could be inequalities in power imposed upon unequal respondents. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2008:38) are of the opinion that there is the danger of a phenomenologist neglecting the power of the external, structural forces that shape behaviour and events. In other words, the expression of respondents is influenced by the context they find themselves in. Cohen et al (2008:39) argue further that phenomenological approaches tend to be sealed from the world outside the respondents' theatre of activity, in that they put artificial boundaries around respondents' behaviour. To this extent, these approaches could be criticized for their narrowly micro-sociological perspective.

However, of late other authorities like Zientek (2008) refute the foregoing claim, arguing that emergent theories and themes could be generalized to other settings provided they share the same demographic characteristics, for instance in teacher education, the students and curriculum characteristics are nearly the same in the sense that students would have completed their matriculation and the school curriculum that they would be prepared for is the same RNCS. Cohen et al (2008:168) contend that generalizability in this context is interpreted as generalizability to identifiable, specific settings and subjects rather than universally. In other words generalizability could be among faculties that offer similar programmes.

Through this strategy "attention to this life world was to first bracket it "(Holstein and Gubrium, 2005:485). In other words the implication of bracketing was, to see the fundamental nature of teaching and learning of teacher education students as perceived by both teacher educators and teacher education students. Phenomenology offered a descriptive, reflective, interpretive and engaging mode of inquiry from which the fundamental nature of teaching and learning of respondents could be elicited. The major aim was to describe and understand the teaching and learning of teacher education students within their naturally occurring context. That is, a "seeing through the eyes of the respondents" (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:51) so that the process of teaching and learning could be described in terms of the meanings that they have for the respondents. Phenomenology enabled the researcher to transform the lived experience into a textual expression of its essence through reading, writing and rewriting (Richards and Morse, 2007:159). The main epistemological assumption was that the way of knowing reality was through exploring the experiences of others regarding a specific phenomenon, in this case teaching and learning of teacher education students. To this end the stories, experiences and voices of the respondents were the medium through which I explored and understood reality embedded in the teaching and learning of teacher candidates.

The qualitative research design followed a reflexive process that operated through every stage of the research. The qualitative design allowed the researcher to attend to individual participants, namely, teacher educators and teacher education students. The following model for qualitative research design was used.
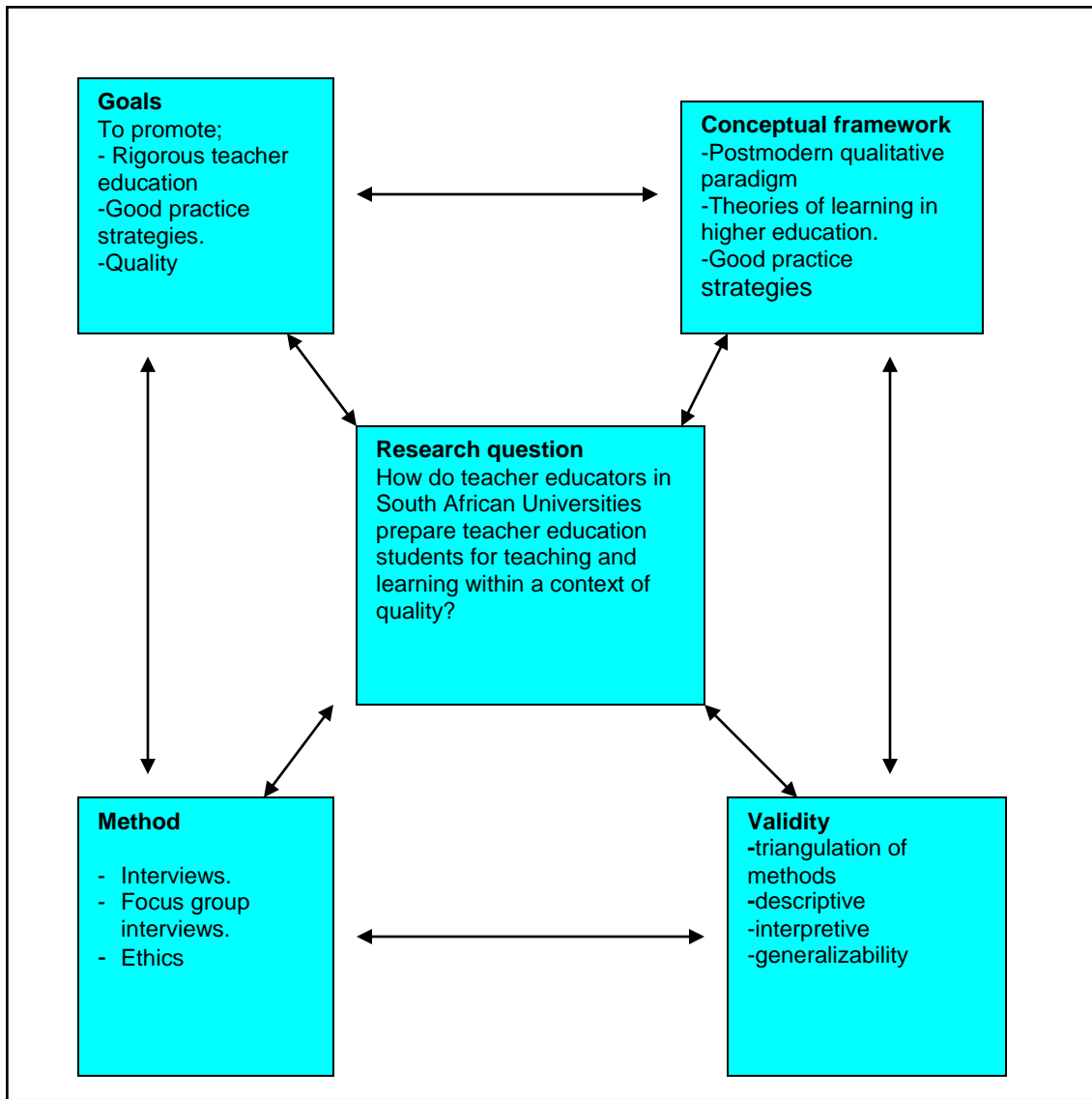
Figure 4.1 Interactive model of research design
Source: *Maxwell (2005:9).*

The above design was preferred because of its interactivity. Each of the components had implication for the other components and the interactivity allowed for a holistic overview of the research process. For instance data analysis started from the onset as I collected the first few interviews. The procedure allowed not only for a holistic reflection on the study, but also guided literature search.

4.3 Research sites

The research sites included four Faculties of Education nationally. These Faculties of Education offer programmes as indicated on Table 4.2. Purposive sampling was conducted to adequately capture the heterogeneity of institutions especially of those faculties that offer Initial Professional Education for Teachers (IPET) programmes. The purpose was to ensure that the conclusions adequately represented the range of variation. It is important to foreground briefly the specific nature of higher education restructuring in South Africa.

According to Hall, Symes and Leucher (2004:11) the restructuring exercise was politically driven. Mergers and incorporations were prescribed by the state as part of an explicit agenda of transformation, redress and equity in the sector. Restructuring had as its goal the dismantling of the apartheid landscape of higher education (characterized by fragmentation, inequalities and inefficiencies) and the configuration of a new landscape which allowed higher education to achieve the goals set for it. Mergers were "variously classified in terms of their organizational outcome, in terms of the type of academic focus and activities that merging institutions brought together" (Hall et al, 2004:29). As a result the major variable of size and different configurations in the higher education scenario post–1994 was taken into account as explained below.

a) The University of the Witwatersrand is a previously white liberal university that merged with the Johannesburg College of Education, previously white.

b) The University of KwaZulu Natal is the result of the merger of the University of Natal, previously white and the University of Durban-Westville, previously Indian.

c) The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University is the result of the merger of a previously white Afrikaner university, University of Port Elizabeth and a previously white Technikon, Port Elizabeth Technikon.

d) The Cape Peninsula University of Technology is the result of the merger of two technikons, Cape Technikon, previously white, and Peninsula Technikon previously coloured.

Of the sampled faculties two of them are among the largest providers in terms of enrolments in the IPET BEd degree programme as reflected in Table 4.2 below. The sample included the University of Kwazulu-Natal, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, University of the Witwatersrand and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

Table 4.2 Higher Education Institutions ranked by total expected Initial Professional Teacher Education (IPET) completions in April 2007

	HEI	Expected IPET Completions			
		Dip	Deg	PGCE	Total
1	University of South Africa		763	770	1533
2	University of Kwazulu- Natal		500	144	644
3	Cape Peninsula University of Technology	30	503	46	579
4	North West University		333	102	435
5	University of Pretoria		284	59	343
6	University of the Free State		243	70	313
7	University of Zululand		250	56	306
8	University of Stellenbosch		145	86	231
9	University of the Witwatersrand	35	150	40	225
10	University of Johannesburg		100	120	220
11	Tshwane University of Technology	10	69	80	159
12	University of Limpopo		110	44	154
13	University of Fort Hare		35	101	136
14	NIHE- Northern Cape		120		120
15	Central University of Technology (Free State)	65		50	115
16	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University		62	34	96
17	University of the Western Cape		9	67	76
18	University of Cape Town			72	72
19	Rhodes University			53	53
20	Walter Sisulu University		49	2	51
21	NIHE – Mpumalanga	27	17		44
22	Durban Institute of Technology		40		40
23	University of Venda		4	34	38
24	Central University of Technology (Welkom)			23	23
25	Vaal University of Technology			23	23
	TOTALS	**167**	**3786**	**2076**	**6029**

4.4 Sampling technique

Purposive sampling was used to select both students and lecturers because respondents were selected on the basis of some defining characteristic that made them holders of the data needed for the study. The main criterion for inclusion was the level of study at which the students were. The sample comprised BEd Level IV preservice students and BEd Level IV lecturers. The major reason for the preferred sample was that BEd Level IV teacher education students had gone through the process of teacher training and as a result it was assumed that they were in a better position to give informed comments on how they had been taught and to what extent they had acquired requisite skills to be teachers. On the other hand lecturers of BEd Level IV teacher education students provided views about their individual experiences of how they conducted their lectures and also how students learnt. Sampling decisions were therefore made for the explicit purpose of obtaining the richest possible source of information to cover the research question. Twenty six (26) lecturers and nine (9) focus groups with a total of sixty one (61) final year undergraduate students participated in the study. For a detailed overview of interviews see Appendix 6.

Data were also collected from Heads of Departments purposively sampled as well, as it was important to understand how the teaching and learning of teacher education students was administered. Nine (9) HoDs participated in the study. In support of purposive sampling Richards and Morse (2007:195) are of the opinion that "rather than employing random sampling, qualitative researchers seek valid representation with sampling techniques such as purposive sampling, in which the researcher selects participants because of their characteristics." Good informants are those who know the information required, are willing to reflect on the phenomenon of interest, have the time, and are willing to participate (Henning, 2004). Both lecturers for BEd Level IV and BEd Level IV teacher candidates were "information-rich informants" as far as answering the research question was concerned (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:433).

4.5 Research instrument

4.5.1 The interview.

The principal means of data collection was the interview. An interview is generally defined as a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the respondents questions to collect data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the respondents (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:87). Interviews were preferred as a tool for data collection because they allowed the researcher to tap into the experiences of teacher educators and teacher education students. Interviews provided rich data that gave solid material for building a significant analysis as participants' views, feelings, intentions, actions as well as the context were revealed (Charmaz, 2006). Obtaining rich data meant seeking thick descriptions through compilation of detailed narratives from transcribed interviews.

The interview was ideal as Guba and Lincoln (1981) advise, especially where the researcher was dealing with subjects who had special status and knowledge, that is, teacher educators. Questions were tailored to fit the respondents' knowledge, degree of involvement and status. For instance face-to-face interviews were found to be more appropriate with the lecturers and HoDs as I felt that these respondents preferred to voice their opinions individually. On the other hand focus group interviews were conducted with BEd Level IV teacher education students. The focus group interview was based on the assumption that group interaction would be productive in widening and diversifying the range of responses, activating forgotten details of experience and releasing inhibitions that could otherwise discourage respondents from disclosing information (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:90). In focus group interviews students were able to build on each other's ideas and comments to provide an in-depth view of data.

The interview allowed the researcher to uncover the teacher educators' motivation, intent and their explanations about their experiences in teaching and learning of teacher education students. The interviews also enabled the researcher to probe for clarification on a given response as well as amplification where I felt I needed information on different aspects or dimensions of a question. I used Nieuwenhuis' (2007:89) three probing strategies in order to obtain the maximum

amount of data and to verify that what I had heard was actually what the respondent meant. First, the detail oriented probes were used to ensure that I understood the 'who', 'where', and 'what' of the opinion expressed by the respondent. Second, the elaboration probes were used to get the full picture by asking the respondent to tell me more about a given answer; for example:

Interviewee	We find our students coming in have gaps within their school mathematical content knowledge. So it's always catching up, catching up.
Researcher	What do you do now to try and address - particularly the issue of knowledge gaps?
Interviewee	They identify topics; though I do have a course outline they still have the freedom to identify certain topics they think they have gaps in terms of their understanding.

Thirdly, the clarification probes were used in order to verify if my understanding of what had been said was accurate; for example:

Interviewee	I basically did science with BSc students which I don't need at all. It doesn't prepare me for the school curriculum at all. My thing is that we need so many credits and we are going to get so many credits there.
Researcher	My understanding of what you are telling me is that the way you are studying now is - you take some education subjects with the education faculty and your specialization with the other faculty and you are not too happy about that. It's more abstract, and you would want subjects that apply in the classroom.
Interviewee	Exactly… I have more knowledge about math now but they should have taught us math that they do in school. Because when I am teaching in the school now there are some things that I have not dealt with.

The interview was more flexible and provided wide latitude within which the respondents' responses were explored and fruitful leads exploited (Guba and Lincoln, 1981:187).

As I conducted the interviews, not only did I get explanations about issues raised, I also read feelings and emotions expressed during the process. I also redirected the discussions to ensure that my research question was being addressed.

Face-to-face encounters also allowed for maximum rapport to be built between the respondent and me. As a result, I believe that I received more accurate responses on sensitive issues especially from students about their lecturers. To this end the interview provided a more complete and in-depth picture. Furthermore, there was less chance of misunderstanding between the respondents and myself.

4.5.1.1   Interview design

The design of the interview was influenced by Miles and Huberman's (1984) conception of qualitative research as an interactive and iterative process in which data were collected in response to some initial questions; the data were then reduced and interpreted, and further more specific questions concerning verification were generated which in turn guided subsequent data collection and analysis.

The themes for interviews that I started off with were lecture delivery and teaching skills. I later added on literature review generated themes, namely, quality, staff development and product. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:474) refer to these (themes) as etic categories defined as representing what the phenomenon meant to me, based on my experience as well as those that I borrowed from the literature. Within these themes questions were devised that invited detailed discussion of issues. I was mindful not to force interview data into preconceived categories (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). While the interview schedule covered the mentioned five themes, respondents guided the agenda by the extent of their enthusiasm for the topics (Holliday, 2007:51). As a result I adopted a constructivist approach that encouraged me to elicit the respondents' definitions of terms, situations and events and also tapped into the respondents' assumptions as well as implicit meanings (Charmaz, 2006:33). In this light the initial questions encouraged unanticipated statements and stories to emerge. However a balance was maintained, that is, in exploring the research topic and fitting in the respondents' experiences.

In designing the interview I followed Charmaz's (2006) four principles which I took as four levels. However over and above what Charmaz recommends, I included a preliminary step I termed 'house keeping'. At this level the issue of anonymity was emphasized and respondents' privacy and confidentiality were assured. It is during

this level also that the need for recording the conversation was explained after which the interview and recording consent forms were handed to the respondents to sign. During this activity the atmosphere was kept light and jovial and in one or two instances through passing jokes. For example I told one of the students' focus groups a joke about a researcher who, after the respondents had signed the consent forms, collected them and walked away; to the amazement of the respondents he never came back. The benefit of this strategy was creation of a relaxed atmosphere in which respondents expressed themselves freely.

1. At level 1 the initial questions were at the participant's comfort level. The content of the discussion was mainly talking about self and this led to a settled atmosphere. For example, 'How long have you been in the service? How does your teacher training experience compare with the current practice?'

2. At the second level I paid close attention to when to probe. For example from 1 above: 'From what you have said, how would you define quality teacher education?'

3. At the third level the questions sought to understand the experiences from the participants' view and to validate their significance to the participant. For example 'How do you explain the influence of previous teacher education experiences to your present status as teacher educator?'

4. The final level solicited positive responses to bring the interview to closure at a positive level. For example, 'Is there anything that you feel our discussion did not cover that you want to draw my attention to? In summary, which points would you like to emphasize?'

I however, went beyond Charmaz's level four by engaging in parting comments where I indicated that the conversation was but a beginning of more discussion. I indicated that I would engage with them if there was need for follow up in terms of clarification as well as getting more information from them. It was encouraging to realize how much benefit this strategy brought about; for instance, useful and

interesting comments emerged to the extent that on three occasions I had to extend the recordings.

For the samples of interview guides see Appendices 1-3

Within each category questions were tailored to fit the interviewees' knowledge, degree of involvement and status. For an illustration see the interview matrices below.

Table 4.3 Interview matrices

Focus	Lecturer	Student	Head of Department
Lecture delivery a)methodology b)assessment	-What mode of lecture delivery do you use mostly? - How do you think your lecturing mode serves both your purposes and students' purposes?	-What mode of lecture delivery do lecturers use mostly? - How does the mode of lecturing meet your needs as student teachers? -How would you like your lecturers to deliver lessons?	-Basically how are lectures conducted within the department? - How do you think that the mode of lecture delivery is serving the department's purposes? -How does the department ensure that learning is taking place and how is the information used?
Teaching skills	-What provisions do you have on the programme for student teachers to practice teaching skills? -What is the duration of practice teaching? -Do you think it is adequately serving the purpose?	-What arrangements are in place to facilitate teaching skills development during the course? -Are these arrangements meeting your needs as student teachers -How do you think your teaching skills development could best be met?	-Does the department have a formal structure through which lecturers' link content areas, pedagogy and the development of teaching skills? -How does the department ascertain that student teachers are equipped with skills to be effective teachers?
Staff development	-What in your opinion are the qualities of a good lecturer of student teachers? -How do you think you measure up to those qualities? -How do you feel about lecturer support within the department?	-How do you feel about the quality of lectures that you receive? -What is your expectation from lecturers as far as lecturing is concerned? -Which do you consider to be the qualities of a good lecturer	-How does the department meet the development needs of the staff? -How does the department recognize lecturers' professional growth? -What staff development programme does the department have for lecturers
Product	-What are the knowledge expectations for exiting student teachers and how do they usually fare?	-Which knowledge areas are you expected to exhibit by the end of the course? -To what extent do you think the knowledge gained enhances classroom practice? -How do you feel about your overall preparedness to go and teach	-Which knowledge areas does the department expect the exiting student to be competent in? -How does the department measure the success of its student teacher training programme?

The design illustrated in Table 4.3 facilitated comparative analysis of responses which facilitated data interpretation through cross referencing. The notion of comparative analysis was facilitated by the fact that the three segments of data, i.e. from lecturers, HoDs and students were presented under similar headings, making it easy for the researcher to compare different views about the same issue.

4.5.1.2   Pilot testing the interview

For the purposes of pilot testing the interview, a group of respondents who were part of the intended test population but who were not part of the sample were used (Tuckman, 1984). The exercise was important as it provided feedback on whether the interview questions "sounded right" and also if they were understandable (Brace, 2004:164). The feedback helped me identify some of the loaded or double-barrelled questions. An example of a loaded question that I identified is: 'What mode of lecture delivery do you use mostly and how do you think it is serving both your purposes and students' purposes?' Corrections made ensured collection of accurate and good quality data. Pilot testing also helped me in determining the duration of the interview which was about 45 minutes to 1 hour.

4.5.1.3   Validity and Generalizability

i.   Validity

Consistent with the qualitative research, issues of credibility and dependability were considered essential criteria in the attainment of trustworthiness, that is, the extent to which the conclusions were trustworthy and could be depended upon. Because of the need to monitor that the research was not fraught with errors, the issue of validity became inescapable. As a qualitative researcher, the major question that I asked pertaining to the issue of validity was whether by the use of the interview I investigated what I set out to investigate (Henning, 2004:147). Validity was taken to be a relative term that referred to credibility of explanation, interpretation and conclusions made (Maxwell, 2005). Maxwell's (2002) realist approach to validity was used as a guide in monitoring issues of validity. Maxwell's types of validity are derived from the kinds of understanding gained. As a result his typology of validity categories is also a

typology of the kinds of understanding at which qualitative research aims. I used the first two of Maxwell's typology of validity categories as discussed below.

a). Descriptive validity was achieved through the use of a digital recorder. In addition to providing an accurate record of what interviewees expressed, the digital recordings were a proof that determined if the interviewees had made particular statements during the interview. To overcome descriptive validity threats like omission, I used observer comments to note non-verbal cues and as a result captured the whole meaning of interview information;

b). Interpretive validity was gained through seeking to understand information from the interviewees' perspective in their contexts. An effort was made to maintain the interpretations "experience-near" (Maxwell, 2002), that is, based on the immediate concepts employed by interviewees through employing two verification techniques. Through respondent validation, that is, member checks, I solicited feedback about collected data in order to verify the accuracy of interpretations and conclusions from participants. Dialoguing the knowledge is what Henning (2004:149) calls communication as validity, that is, checking whether respondents agreed with the researcher data. I also sounded my understanding of transcribed interviews with respondents to verify whether my interpretation of what they had shared with me was correct. Further I achieved communication validity through getting my ideas discussed in seminars where I opened them to possible falsification. For even broader communication I sent part of my work for publication.

Henning (2004:147) further identifies taking action as validity that is, interpreting pragmatic consequences of knowledge claims as validity. The argument put forward is that to pragmatists, truth is whatever assists individuals to take action that produce desired results. I am also hopeful that the findings of the study would add to the current debates in teacher education and that participants would reflect on their practices as a result. It is in this way that catalytic validity would be achieved, because catalytic validity points to the degree to which research moves those it studies to understand the world and the way it is shaped in order to transform it" (Lather,

1991:67). Catalytic validity not only displays the reality-altering impact of the inquiry process but it also directs this impact so that those under study gain self-understanding and self direction (Lather, 1993:675).

I was also mindful of validity threats especially bias and reactivity and sought strategies to rule out these threats. Henning (2004:148) terms this process validity as competence and craftsmanship. In this light to validate was to check for bias, for neglect as well as lack of precision. It was also to question all procedures and decisions critically and to theorize, that is, by looking for and addressing theoretical questions that arose throughout the research process. To deal with bias I avoided forcing respondents' views into my own preconceived themes i.e. etic categories about teaching and learning of teacher education students. For instance I guarded against selecting data that fitted my preconceptions as well as the selection of data that 'stood out' (Miles and Huberman, 1994). To deal with reactivity, that is, the influence of the researcher on the individuals studied, I avoided over emphasis of some questions during the interview. I was also mindful of unnecessarily repeating a question in a manner that could have implied that the correct answer had not been given.

To enhance credibility of findings I collected information from a diverse range of individuals (Maxwell, 2005). This improved on the dependability and trustworthiness of findings, by using interviews with lecturers, head of departments, and teacher education students. In addition, a comprehensive literature search fulfilled the intended purpose of data collection.

ii.   Generalizability

The purpose of using triangulation "is usually the generalization of results" (Flick, 2007:118). Generalization addresses the question, to which other contexts could the developed arguments be transferred? Or, for which other contexts, beyond the one it was discovered, could the developed argument be valid? While I acknowledged the fact that generalization is more complicated for qualitative research, I however worked within parameters that facilitated the possibility of generalization; that is, in the steps that I took to extend the area of validity of empirical results by

using, in addition, Henning's (2004:156) "cutting-edge ideas on validity." Furthermore in the light of Zientek's (2007:962) argument some insight could be yielded when sample characteristics reasonably well matched those of a targeted population. Writing along the same lines Richards and Morse (2007:194) are of the opinion that while generalizability is problematic in qualitative research, "however, readers will be able to extract from a well-written report those elements of the findings that they find to be transferable and that may be extended to other settings." In this light I argued that findings could be transferable to other contexts providing IPET BEd programmes as this was the common underlying characteristic. In any case BEd teacher education programmes prepare teacher education students for the same national curriculum, the RNCS.

4.6 Ethics

According to Flick (2007:122) "ethics are becoming increasingly relevant in the context of research. Most research has to be approved by institutional review boards. As qualitative research is almost always research with human beings in one way or the other, it has to be subjected to examination by institutional Ethics Committees quite regularly." Likewise the first major ethical consideration was approval for the research by the CPUT Ethics Committee (Appendix 7: the ethics clearance letter). A point to note is that for my clearance I was covered by the approval granted to the Quality in Teacher Education project; an NRF funded project which was headed by CPUT, Faculty of Education, Research Department, in collaboration with the Faculties of Education at Wits, UKZN and NMMU. As I participated as a research assistant within the national project during data collection from May to August 2009, I was granted permission by the project leadership to infuse my interview items within the project's interview schedule. Observably one of the institutions in which research was to be conducted, that is, outside CPUT, had its own rules regarding access. For instance at University Q approval had to go through their ethics committee as well; as Richards and Morse (2007:237) intimate that sometimes ethical clearance means a second ethics review. The final level of approval was obtained at individual level, namely from the lecturers in their offices and teacher education students in their

lecture halls. I was however mindful that permission for institutional access did not mean that staff and students would automatically support my research. Once in the setting there was a need to obtain individual consents and permissions. It was also important that I fitted "in and won support of both staff and students" (Richards and Morse, 2007:237). This encouraged the respondents to discuss research questions without reservations.

I also considered principles of research ethics. I respected the interests of respondents by assuring them of anonymity and confidentiality. Initially the purpose of the research was explained to the respondents. This was an important step as respondents were to be fully informed about the research in which the interview data was going to be used (Henning, 2004:72). The information provided the respondents with a basis for giving informed consent. To this end an information sheet was also handed to respondents to read, in addition to verbal briefing as a way of facilitating their decision whether to participate or not. In the next step respondents were further briefed on the necessity of using a digital recorder during the interview. A promise was made that their identities were going to be protected. After the explanation I requested the respondents formally to sign a consent form. For the consent to use the audio recorder (Appendix 4: titled 'Interview consent and recording consent form') I also assured the respondents that their recorded information was not going to be used beyond the purposes of the project.

4.7 Data collection

While arrangements for collecting data from students and staff had been made on campus at University N and also prior to arrival at other institutions, operational reality on the ground presented its own challenges. For instance students in the first two sampled institutions had just arrived from practice teaching and apparently they had several assignments due in addition to preparing for an examination which was to be written in a week's time. On the other hand, lecturers were compiling marks. As a result both students and lecturers were rather restless and not manageable in as far as having a tight operational schedule for collecting data was concerned. Noticeable also was the fact that the time table was rather fluid to allow for students to settle

down after practice teaching. Thankfully the HoD in the first institution moved with me from door to door introducing me to both the staff and groups of students. This welcoming support was instrumental in gaining the respect and cooperation that I received for the rest of the time I was on that campus.

From henceforth the process of collecting data depended on meticulous time keeping and constant planning and replanning, always looking ahead in order to be ready for diversion. It was my experience that diversions do emerge and no matter how well prepared; events do not necessarily develop according to plan (Henning, 2004:53). Because of the fluidity of the time table it was important first to run around and make appointments for interviews with both students and staff before they left their venues and offices. This called for a great deal of moving up and down the corridors. Through this plan I managed to come up with a time table of interview appointments with both staff and students.

During the interviews a digital recorder was used. Using a digital recorder enabled the researcher to give full attention to the interviewees with steady eye contact and they were encouraged to give detailed data. During the process I cautiously took notes, being mindful not to distort the interview. The notes were useful as they served as a reminder to return to earlier points where more clarification was sought. Notes also helped in suggesting how to frame subsequent questions and probes. As I engaged in data collection as well as data analysis I was able to explore nuances of meaning and process (Charmaz, 2006:35).

With the generation and accumulation of information, there was a need for data management. I dated the transcriptions using a computer word processor and saved them in computer files for ease of retrieval. As a form of back-up I printed hard copies for easier reading and opened file folders for their storage. Transcripts and notes were clearly indexed in the files for easy access. Interviews were conducted over a period of six months, from May to October, 2009.

As in any other process, data collection had its own challenges. Some lecturers did not turn up for their interview appointments. Apparently both lecturers and students showed signs of pressure of work despite their willingness to participate. I had an instance where I missed a group of students in an institution because the

lecturer completed the lesson earlier than expected. As I anticipated diversions I had to have alternative solutions. When I realized that I had missed an appointment with a lecturer, I quickly looked for the next available lecturer and negotiated for some interview time. To make sure that I didn't miss students' groups, I had to go and wait outside the lecture hall to catch up with whatever time the lecturer would end the class. As a way of motivating both students and lecturers to participate I introduced some refreshments; snacks and soft drinks during or after interviews. It was amazing how much more relaxed and informative the interviews turned out to be. Frazer and Lawley (2000:74) argue that "consequently, the researcher needs to do all that is possible to encourage a better response." Frazer and Lawley provide the following techniques for stimulating response rates, which I also found to be very useful, especially the information in shaded boxes:
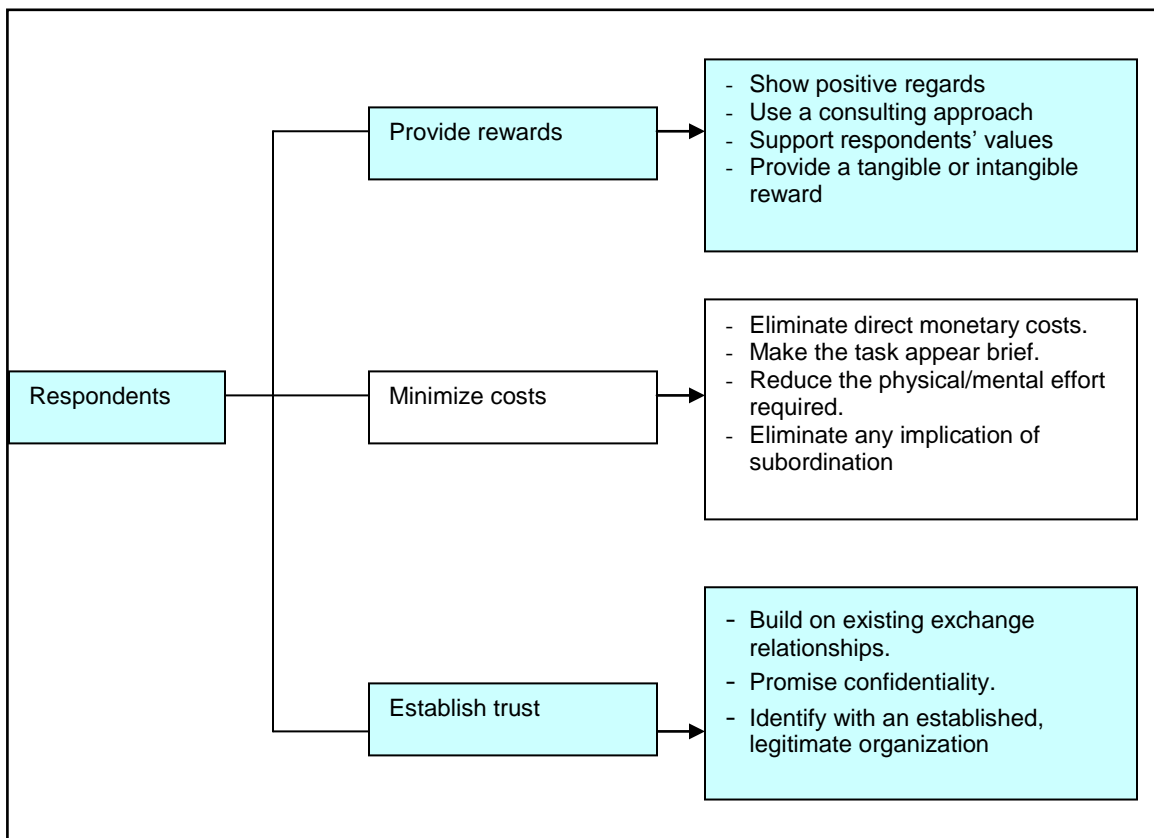
Figure 4.2 Techniques used to stimulate survey response rates
Adapted from Frazer and Lawley (2000:75)

In addition to the tangible rewards, I used a courteous tone when I greeted and introduced myself to the respondents and further acknowledged the fact that I had found them under pressure of work; then I went on to thank them for their cooperation. On the whole I adopted strategies that enabled me to use my time in the best possible way; arriving early and leaving at the end of the day helped me gain status as a colleague. I was also mindful of the sensitive business of developing and maintaining appropriate relations (Henning, 2004:53) with both students and staff in the best possible way that I could. At the first institution I maximized work coverage on the first day with the realization that the Heads of Department were going away for a seminar the following day. I had to be alert and followed target groups closely in an effort to interact with them whenever they were free. The cooperation from both students and staff was very good generally.

4.7.1 Data

It can be argued that the data collected were appropriate for the purpose of this research especially if one takes into account the fact that there was sound collaboration between the participants and the researcher. Moreover some respondents enthusiastically welcomed the research as a long awaited avenue to express their views and be heard. For example the following comment was made by Jenny, a 24 year old intermediate student from one university,

> *Sometimes we don't know who to tell our feelings and observations; we are happy that you have given us the opportunity to express our feelings…*

I could tell from the comment that whatever else the group discussed was genuine. Secondly, in light of the foregoing I was happy with the group's focus that was directed at my research question. Thirdly, data collected had density. Richards and Morse (2007:110) define density as when "one interview at least in part confirms or builds on other interviews. The following serve as examples; where two different respondents from two different institutions expressed the following sentiments about lecturer support.

Researcher	What internal mechanisms are in place to support teaching and learning?
Respondent A.	We all basically have to live up to our own devices at the end of the day.
Respondent B	I think if I say nothing it may be shocking but I really mean nothing is really in place here to support you.

Fourthly, I gave careful recognition to participants' perspectives. I ensured that participants had enough space to present their own perspectives and also had their say through guiding and not leading them.

Above all, considerations of validity issues ensured that the process of data creation and interpretation recorded the phenomenon of interest (teaching and learning teacher education students) as closely as possible (Richards and Morse, 2007:120).

4.8 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of making sense of the data and discovering what it had to say about teaching and learning of teacher education students. Consistent with the phenomenological approach, qualitative data analysis was based on the interpretive philosophy that was aimed at examining meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data. In analyzing data an effort was made to establish how respondents made meaning of the teaching and learning of teacher education students by analyzing their perceptions, attitudes, understanding, knowledge, values, feelings and experiences in an attempt to approximate their reality. This was best achieved through inductive analysis of qualitative data where the main purpose was to allow the frequent, dominant or significant themes that were inherent in the raw data emerge. To this end I acknowledged the fact that as the arch designer of data collection, I also submitted myself to emerging patterns of data and I was free to engage strategically with realities that went beyond my initial themes (Holliday, 2007:92), namely, lecture delivery, quality, staff development and product. These few a-priori themes distilled from literature were not meant to restrict, as Nieuwenhuis (2007:99) argues, but rather

were meant to provide parameters that ensured that the question that guided research was comprehensively explored.

As I proceeded with data analysis I relied heavily on Holliday's (2007) thematic analysis as a means of organizing data. Holliday (2007:93) argues that "taking a purely thematic approach, in which data is taken holistically and rearranged under themes which emerge as running through its totality, is the classic way to maintain the principle of emergence." Figure 4.3 represents the process I followed in analyzing data.

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4. Text of data discussion
4.1 Themes as headings
4.2 Argument gradually unfolding
4.3 Extracts from data presented as evidence
4.4 Discursive commentary telling the reader which
    bits of the data are significant.

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3. Creation of themes
3.1 Finding headings that suit these divisions
3.2 Seeing how far the headings help make further
    sense of the data.

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2. Data analysis
2.1 Looking at overall character of data
2.2 Searching for natural divisions
2.3 Determining the character of each division

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1. Corpus of raw data

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Figure 4.3 Data analysis leading to writing
Adapted from Holliday (2007:90).

In step 1, the corpus of raw data that I started off with was interview transcripts. In step 2, I read through the transcripts as a way of getting an overall picture across all transcripts. I re-read the transcripts once more in order to get closer to the data (Richards and Morse, 2007:135). The greatest advantage I had was that I compiled the transcripts, a process that facilitated my abstractions. I found "getting inside the data much easier" (Richards and Morse, 2007:136). As I read through portions of transcripts I began to realize section/divisions. I reviewed transcripts, seeking recurring themes and critical responses (Powell et al, 2003). Responses were considered critical in their relationship to the research question in so far as they were shedding either positive or contrary views. At this point I began to colour code segments of data and also started to reflect on the meanings and implications of the text divisions. By colour coding it was possible to determine data sets that supported or contradicted each other in terms of the themes that emerged (Hramiak, 2005:88). This ushered in step 3 where I began to find headings that suited these divisions. These headings were themes that I attached to these divisions.

As alluded to earlier on, themes generated from the theoretical research – which correspond with the headings of the divisions of the interview schedule, were used in presenting data in. The final step 4 was in a way an advance organizer for Chapter 5 as the identified themes provided structure for data presentation. Step 4 as Holliday (2007:90) mentions was a link from data to writing.

In presenting data, thick descriptions were achieved through articulation of interconnections of different data extracts from the three sources, namely students, lecturers and heads of departments as well as from the literature review, showing how these contributed to the argument. The following Figure 4.4 illustrates how thick descriptions were arrived at.

```
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  Thick description  │
                    └─────────────────────┘
              ┌───────────────┴───────────────┐
    ┌──────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────┐
    │ Network of       │          │ Argument and     │
    │ interconnected   │          │ discussion       │
    │ data             │          │                  │
    └──────────────────┘          └──────────────────┘
                                          │
                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │ a)  Which data?                                 │
                    │  -   The following comments by….                │
                    │  -   The following note…                        │
                    │ b)  From which sources?                         │
                    │ c)  How does it interconnect?                   │
                    │  -   Within the coherence of the argument        │
                    │      structured by themes.                      │
                    │  -   As the following indicates…                │
                    │  -   As described in the following…             │
                    │ d)  What does the data mean?                    │
                    │  -   Any competent…..would recognize what was   │
                    │      needed to be done and do it                │
                    │ e)  How each extract means what it means?       │
                    │  -   I interpreted these comments to mean….     │
                    │ f)  Relationship with theory                    │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 4.4 Generating thick descriptions
Adapted from Holliday (2007:103)

Holliday's practical illustration of achieving thick description guided data analysis and enhanced its depth and density. Figure 4.4 shows how data were broken up to be used as evidence in different parts of the data analysis. For example in discussing a theme the consideration would be; Which data? From which sources? What does data mean and how is it related to theory? It is through following these guidelines in developing the discussion that thick descriptions were arrived at.

4.9 Limitation

Hofstee (2006:112) argues that all methods have limitations. Like any other qualitative inquiry, the issues of bias and generalizability quickly come to the fore. Regarding the issue of bias, the argument is that personal experiences, beliefs and value laden narratives are biased and subjective. However within the postmodern

qualitative research framework subjectivity is strength because truth is relative. To that extent "no story can have more credibility than any other; all stories are equally valid, being so validated by community that lives by them" (All about Philosophy Series, 2009). Nieuwenhuis (2007:52) contends that "qualitative researchers accept value laden narratives as true for those who have lived through the experiences." Focus was on the depth and quality of information provided by respondents pertaining to teaching and learning of teacher education students, with major emphasis being on the uniqueness of each particular contribution. In the light of the foregoing clarification I can argue that findings were worthwhile. As far as generalizability is concerned the major observation was that I restricted participation to BEd Level IV teacher education students and their lecturers in the four HEIs. However, Zientek (2007:962) echoes the sentiment that "of course such samples are not without limitation but can yield some insights when sample characteristics reasonably well match those of a targeted population."

4.10   Summary

Within the postmodern qualitative paradigm the methodology section was designed following Maxwell's (2005) reflexive process that operated through every stage of the research. The discussion showed how the data were collected using a phenomenological approach in order to answer the question that guided the study, that is, how do teacher educators in South African universities prepare student teachers for teaching and learning in the context of quality? An interactive and iterative design that was used allowed for the simultaneous collection and analysis of data. Sampling procedure is clarified as well as the justification for the chosen sampling strategy. A detail of how I proceeded to gain access and collected data was given. To this end a catalogue of research activities and a description of the collected data were made. The methodology section also clarified how the issue of validity and generalizability were dealt with. In proceeding with data analysis I used Holliday's (2007) thematic approach that allowed themes inherent in the data to emerge. A clarification of how thick descriptions in the following chapter were arrived at is also

made. The next chapter, Chapter 5, data presentation and description, was structured around the themes that I used as headings in the interview schedules.

Chapter 5
Data Presentation and Description

5.1. Introduction

The data presented in this chapter focuses on how lecturers prepare teacher education students to acquire requisite skills for teaching and learning. The etic themes were brought forward to structure the presentation of data, namely, a) lecture delivery; b) teaching skills; c) staff development c) product and d) achievement of quality. Three segments of data are presented as per respondents, that is, the lecturers, the HoDs and the education students respectively.

In data presentation and description I took note of Lester's (1999:3) caution to "be faithful to the participants and be aware (insofar as is possible) of biases being brought to the inevitable editing which was needed." In this light I was mindful however of an ethical issue about guarding against misrepresenting, distorting or deleting findings which have been provided in good faith by respondents. Arguing along the same lines, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2008:462) are of the opinion that some "researchers feel that it is important to keep the flavour of the original data, so they report direct phrases and sentences, not only because they are often more illuminative and direct than the researcher's own words, but also because they feel that it is important to be faithful to the exact words used." This is further coupled with the fact that the post-modern qualitative paradigm celebrates multiple interpretations. As a result by reporting the respondents' narrations verbatim, the reader is given an opportunity to bring to the text own interpretations and to evaluate the plausibility of explanations and descriptions made by the author.

However some of the interview transcripts used may have grammar errors, hesitation features and some disconnections within sentences associated with spoken language. I did not correct those errors or change those features. As a result the major aim of data presentation was to describe how respondents answered the guiding question, that is, how do teacher educators in South African universities prepare

teacher education students for teaching and learning within a context of quality? At this point it is important to point out that the terms lecturers and respondents are used interchangeably. Basically letters of the alphabet are used as referents, for example, Lecturer A, Lecturer C…These are used interchangeably with 'one' or 'some.' On the other hand HoDs are referred to using figures e.g. HoD 1,2… and in the case of students descriptors such as many, a few or percentages are used as a large number of students were interacted with.

Three segments of data are presented under similar headings as indicated in the interview matrices in Table 4.3. The foregoing made the data to stand out clearly and the process also facilitated ease of cross referencing in the discussion section.

5.2. Interview data from lecturers.

5.2.1 Lecture delivery

5.2.1.1 Method

   i.   Lecture vis-à-vis interactive learning

The main issues with regard to lecture delivery that were raised concern the lecturing style, material used and the impact of lecturer actions on students. Asked about what mode of lecture delivery they used mostly, the majority of respondents indicated the following:

❖ Small discussion and focus groups
❖ Work in seminar and workshop mode of delivery
❖ Lecture method.

Lecturer G indicated that he could not attach a name to his lecturing style but could however explain what occurs within his class. He stated:

> What happens in my class, the students have a voice; very important. If they don't speak to me everything stops and then I try to set a scenario for them to get into it, to get them talking. It's a conversation. It's not teaching. I don't lecture. In all I say we want to make sense of this topic. What is your understanding of this topic? This is the starting point. I sort of model what should happen in the classroom.

Because "there is [sic] a lot of voices in the class" Lecturer G was of the opinion that because of those voices he was able to start a lecture from where his learners were. It is in this manner that he felt that he was able to guide his students "to make conceptual links." Like Lecturer G, Lecturer H believed that "education is a conversation, it's a learning conversation." Hence he held the opinion that he "can't make sense of, and negotiate meanings on behalf of my students. They have to engage with and make meaning" for themselves. In light of the foregoing he argued that his preferred "way of teaching is to go the Socratic method, to engage the learners, to talk with the learners, to challenge what they say, to get to develop their own thinking and understanding. This is my preferred approach." The advantage of approaching lectures in that way, according to him, was that you "hear their voice, listen to their voice then you can hear whether there are gaps in their understanding, whether they make illogical jumps…whether they bring their own understanding that you can engage from." The implication of starting from the students' level of understanding is that you ensure mastery of concepts and it is in this manner according to Lecturer H, that you "give students dignity and understanding of self worth that will catapult them into a learning mode and a growing mode."

However, to most respondents the lecture method remains the basic and main vehicle for lecture delivery. Asked what mode of lecture delivery he used mostly Lecturer Y asserted,

> "I suppose it's the traditional teaching method, what some people would consider to be chalk and talk. Yah, that would be the primary means; in other words…while I use traditional aids, my primary means of delivery is via me communicating my thoughts, my ideas, my understanding on a body of subject matter to the students and the subject matter is always dictated by a very comprehensive course outline."

To enhance lecture delivery, most respondents commented that they infused diverse techniques, for example, transparencies, over head projectors, videos, power point and board work. For instance, Lecturer A pointed out that while she found it necessary to use the lecture method, she still tried "to make it as interactive as possible, to break it up with activities. Even in a big lecture room I find it possible to stop and ask students to work with each other on something." Like Lecturer A,

Lecturer B indicated that, "I use a mixture of lecturing and classroom active engagement. I don't only lecture; I give a lot of opportunities for students to work either individually or in groups." Explaining further he expressed the sentiment that because of his lecturing style he had to change the classroom set up. He clarified, "So if you look at my classroom arrangement as well, all the tables are clustered in it into groups." Lecturer C also expressed similar sentiment to the foregoing lecturers. He acknowledged that, "I do use the lecture mode a lot…but I ensure that my lectures are always staged, scaffolded and very structured."

Discussing the lecture method, Lecturer A expressed a reservation that, "well what worries me about lecturing is that it is a bit of one way traffic." She was of the opinion that "if it was really well done and really interesting" one could hold students' interest for quite a lengthy period of time but she went on to say, "I think it's hard for students to sit in the lecture theatre hour after hour and be expected to absorb." Despite her observation she went on to support the use of lectures. She believed that "it works better if the lecture is interactive." In any case according to her, "sometimes it is important for students to get some theory or some research findings; as a result one needs to deliver in a sort of lecturing mode." She felt that under those circumstances "it is important to have some visuals for students to both see as well as listen." Giving another justification for the lecture method, Lecturer C was of the opinion that it was rather ironic that most students called for more interaction during lectures but when he posed a question and tried to engage them in the discussion, most of them did not interact. He argued;

> …they want it [the lecture] to be interactive but they often do not read the text so you cannot have a communication with people who are not on the same page as you are. Sometimes you find in a lecture room of over 150 students probably one person has read the text and can engage with you, so that is why I say that I mainly use the lecture mode. I just use transparencies to guide me with the key points of the discussion.

It would appear that under those circumstances Lecturer C had no option except to proceed with lecturing. Like lecturer C, Lecturer D put across the sentiment that "basically the mode of learning is lecture method where we meet students and deliver

the lectures." He found it quite helpful "because we interact with the students and we give them space to put across their opinions." The advantage of active learning according to Lecturer F was, "I believe that you learn by doing" and students' engagement in learning "develops some independence" in them.

Several respondents indicated that the adopted lecture method was dependent on the type of course. In her response Lecturer J was of the opinion that "It depends a lot on the type of course. All courses which are methodological like curriculum studies and learning areas, it's mainly hands-on so the students do things themselves as they conduct investigations or structure work sheets or they do unit plans or lesson plans." Lecturer I contended, "That depends on the content that I am teaching. For the module on the teacher and the law…it's mostly discussions because we are discussing matters about the rights of learners."

ii.   Constraints within lecture halls

However in general there was a constraint that most lecturers expressed; that is, the growing numbers of students within lecture halls. One lecturer argued, "because of the high number of students, for example we had 402 students in the third year and 330 in the fourth year; that does not give you much leeway in terms of the methods you can use in class." Although the groups are split he indicated that the numbers remain large, "so mostly it is talk and chalk." Discussing along the same lines one respondent reiterated that it was difficult to incorporate "any deliberate attempt to make the lecture varied because of large number of students – it doesn't allow for it. So therefore, you find that…the lecturer is doing all the talking." Lecturer C also argued that because of large numbers,

> Students obviously are not enjoying it very much…one thing is that you are teaching them something that is abstract. I am not quite sure whether they are really benefiting very much because from the evaluation quite often students ask what the relevance of what they are doing is. Now, I know what the relevance of the module is but that relevance is not always transferred to them because it's mostly me doing the talking.

iii.   Modeling

A few respondents expressed that they fused modeling during lectures. For instance Lecturer E commented, "What I do is that I am always very mindful of the fact that we are developing teacher candidates for the world of work. So I am always an example of what a good teacher is. So my teaching, my lecturing is to show the students certain keys or examples of what I would expect of them when they go into the classroom." Lecturer F had a similar view. She believed that "we should teach by example and I have no right to go to the students and say you have to teach with hands-on activities and don't talk for 25minutes, if I do it." She however acknowledged that lecturing through "hands-on activities take more time than just delivering information."

iv.   Assessment

a. Performance evaluation

Asked how they assessed students' learning, most respondents indicated the following:

❖ listening to what students have to say about their particular programme;
❖ focus group discussion;
❖ questionnaire and interview;
❖ students' reflection in the form of a diaries or journals;
❖ peer evaluation;
❖ continuous assessment;
❖ developmental portfolio;
❖ tests and assignments (individual or group assignments) and
❖ examinations.

In addition to the above assessment procedures Lecturer O remarked that the impact of lecturing is assessed on student's performance during practice teaching. She clarified, "When our students go out into teaching practice that is where we find out whether what we taught makes a difference; because what the students are

learning is what the students are imparting and what the students are imparting is what they have learnt from us." Commenting on the use of group discussion as an assessment tool one respondent remarked that "the danger of doing it [assessment] in a discussion form with the lecturers is the power dimension and it is difficult to know whether students are really saying what they have to say." Explaining further the respondent indicated that in light of the foregoing it was important to make students "write it down and present it anonymously and that is usually more honest and more informative." Yet another respondent remarked that he believed in formative and summative assessments. He commented that, "the formative assessment is based on the exercises and activities that I give them on a daily basis and the feedback that they give me…As far as summative assessment is concerned, well, they have got bigger assignments to do and they have got tests that they do."

Responding to how the assessment information was used, Lecturer Z had started a novel way of using assessment information. He explained that he was using outstanding students' journals to develop them into research articles. He said;

> What I do is I use…one girl in the senior phase did a wonderful job. What I do is, I will use her work and translate it into a research article. So teachers will actually read that. So I will do that as the base for a research article to bring it to the public domain for teachers to read. So I inform practice by doing that. So this is the angle that I am trying to do. I don't know if it is working I will try and see.

On the other hand Lecturer P uses assessment information to mount intervention exercises for her students. Responding to a similar question on how he ensured that students were learning, Lecturer Q argued, "I can tell you nobody can ever guarantee that learning is taking place. Full stop…because learning is ultimately an individual process; and I can not make you learn. I can provide you with the means to learn but whether you learn is dependent on you, not me." Arguing further he expressed the view that "when you are dealing with 800 students, how do you do continuous assessment every week? Who's going to mark it? Right, how do you know whether what you've said is understood by everyone? You can't."

b. Students' evaluation of teaching

Discussing students' evaluation of teaching, Lecturer P argued that he was absolutely clear about one thing that "students don't know how to assess. Because they don't know what it is that you are teaching so how can they say whether you are doing a good job or a bad job"? Explaining further he indicated that he found students' assessment quite questionable because when a lecturer "is not nice to them you get horrible assessment. If you are absolutely adamant about certain things you get horrible assessment." According to Lecturer P the foregoing observation was an indication of the students' inability to assess what is going on "because they are caught up in what in philosophy is called Meno's paradox. You cannot know virtue if you have never encountered it…Now it's the same here." On the contrary, one lecturer argued that,

> The notion of the lecturer, or the concept lecturer, is very misleading, for it means that I as the lecturer am the expert and you the student are the novice, and to me is not entirely true, because my students are also experts in certain aspects, [e.g. in personal experience they are experts on it] – so to say I'm the lecturer and you are the student creates all sorts of divide [sic] and what not. I think it's not a good thing to approach it like that.

In other words, from the above argument one can not assign total lack of knowledge on the part of the students because they bring with them a wealth of experience and knowledge.

In response to how the information from students' evaluation of teaching was used, Lecturer O indicated that the feedback was used for subsequent courses or programme improvement. She commented that;

> We try to use it for developing course outlines for the following year. So if there was clearly a problem expressed by a group of students this year you try to look at it and try to adapt the course outline for the following year. If a particular component needs more attention you try to structure it in such a way that it is given more attention. If it is a teaching strategy or a teaching methodology that is not understood, then you try and weave that into your teaching and make it more explicit in your teaching.

5.2.2 Mechanisms and resources

Asked if there were any mechanisms and resources in place to support both lecturers and students, responses from most lecturers were categorized as illustrated below;

Table 5. 1 Mechanisms and resources

For lecturers	For students
• Provision of coordinators • Center for learning and teaching development • Reprographic machinery • Interactive white board • Overhead projectors • Power point • Library	• Tutorial system • Writing center • Counseling center • Library • Computer labs with internet • Individual consultations

5.2.2.1 Resources

While the above were categorized as mechanisms and resources in place, however, in some instances respondents indicated that the technological gadgets were not adequate. For instance Lecturer K expressed, "Well the university will always provide resources although sometimes you feel that it is not enough…If these equipments were sufficient we could do better." One respondent reiterated, "The library is there, which provides me with some resources, but otherwise there aren't too many resources." Lecturer L indicated that "the computer lab is wonderful, but there are just too many more students than computers." Pertaining to the tutorial system one respondent revealed that the system was not working due to an overloaded time table. He asserted, "The first year programme is so full that they tend not to show up for the tutorial period and gradually tutors say it's not worth our while hanging around." As a result, students missed out on what should have been their supportive programmes.

5.2.2.2 Support for teaching and learning

Several respondents argued that they were not getting any form of support from their departments. For instance Lecturer G lamented that, "I think if I say nothing it

may be shocking but I really mean nothing is really in place here to support you." He went on to explain "that in terms of teaching and learning some colleagues are supportive if we have problems." Lecturer M held a similar view about lecturer support; she emphasized, "We all basically have to live up to our own devices at the end of the day." What counts according to her is "how you feel about the profession in terms of…are you going to give it your all or are you going to do the bare minimum?" According to Lecturer M it then depended on how committed a member of staff was; whether one was prepared to give the best without support. One respondent however was of the view that, "if you have taught for as long as I have, you know, you can do things by yourself; by and large. You don't have to rely on admin staff, you know, or library staff because you have been doing it often enough so you know what resources are available."

5.2.3 Teaching skill

The responses on teaching skill focused on the provisions that lecturers had within the modules that they taught, for students to practise teaching skills as well as evaluation of the adequacy of those provisions.

5.2.3.1 Linking theory with practice

Asked what provisions they had on module teaching for students to practice teaching skills Lecturer R commented,

> I think it's also one of the areas that are [sic] lacking; to make it more relevant to the classroom. But that's something that we are still working on. We haven't really got it to where we want it to be in terms of how students can apply what they are learning in the classroom…as I say we touch on it in class but it's not done to the satisfaction of the students and myself.

One lecturer concurred, "Not much is available via the module teaching, but certainly our teaching practice programme allows for students to go out to the schools and in a sense practise what we taught them in all of the modules." So what it means is that the lectures were basically theoretical and not related to practice. Lecturer T expressed a similar sentiment, "We have workshops and seminar kind of based

lectures…and we have teaching practice where they actually go out to teach." One respondent also indicated that "sometimes they have to do presentations; I know a lot of lecturers do this, they do presentations, that is, in all courses…Sometimes they have to make posters." Lecturer S was of the opinion that students benefited "more through verbal communication with their colleagues in small groups." One respondent clarified that, "the mini micro-module in the first year acts as a dry run for students to practice and develop teaching skills." Apparently the 'mini micro module' was university based and what they use mostly is peer teaching. The respondent felt that it "is a good grounding for beginning teachers to get over their fears of how they are going to face the classroom, how to structure lessons; getting constructive criticism and how to prepare resources." While Lecturer O agreed about the importance of the mini micro programme, he was of the opinion that as it was done during the first year only, it was not adequate to prepare students for what lay ahead of them.

Responding to the same question Lecturer G indicated that they also focused on theoretical descriptions of practice. For instance he gave an example of focusing on lesson introductions with a first year group at the beginning of the year, when he indicated that "we talk about what we want to hear and see in the introduction in a math lesson." The whole exercise was followed by observation of a lesson introduction in a school setting in July/August. He said, "So they only go now July, August. So they will only observe for me, introductions of teachers." But he was rather worried about the gap between theory and practice. He explained that, "to me the gap in terms of theory and practice – it's quite a long gap. What I would like to see is the presentation of the introductions within the school session."

Most respondents clarified that enhancing the teaching skill in teacher candidates was the responsibility of didactics/professional studies. Lecturer T explained that within the main subject, for example, mathematics, they had what is called subject didactics where they discussed the whole issue of teaching mathematics. He explained, "At this point I don't have any provision on the programme for them to physically teach a lesson as part of my programme. What I do in the subject didactics is to look at the theoretical background regarding teaching and learning of mathematics, looking at what the curriculum requires." Explaining further,

Lecturer T expressed that what he did during didactics was to let students design lessons and let them do assessment in mathematics but, "they don't really get practical opportunity to teach as such. That I leave for professional studies…And of course there is a question of teaching practice and of course there they really get the opportunity to practice the teaching of mathematics." Commenting about professional studies one lecturer expressed concern that what happened in professional studies was not very explicit. She went on to explain that, "It is happening but I don't think its happening in the organization in such a way that we all know that this is what is happening there, that is how skills are being developed for teaching. I think as a division we don't know what is happening to the division that is supposed to be teaching skills." Arguing along the same lines Lecturer N acknowledged that teaching skills development is taken care of in professional studies. But what had worried him was the realization that he had,

> …noticed a kind of weakness in the Language students I find that they are not very familiar with the curriculum statements, the assessment standards the type of texts they are supposed to be teaching and sometimes the third year students tell me that they have not seen a curriculum statement. I'm quite shocked at that. I think that more of that must be included in our teaching or somewhere else more deliberately for the students,[it would] be a good thing for often they are asked to devise lesson plans and outcomes and they don't know what it's all about.

Respondents queried the efficiency of the departments that were charged with teaching skills development

At one of the universities they had removed the micro teaching component. Lecturer X explained, "We have taken out micro teaching because we had micro teaching as a stand alone module where we taught questioning skills, what media to use and all those things that go with teaching." In the new revised curriculum micro teaching was moved to be part of individual subjects. Lecturer X was however worried about the issue of monitoring to ensure that the aspects of micro teaching that were stand alone were incorporated in different subject areas. She suggested that, "As method lecturers we need to come together and share how we put our methods

course together to ensure that all aspects that were stand alone are really incorporated in different subjects. The monitoring part of it is very lacking…"

5.2.3.2 Practice teaching/teaching experience

Responding to the question about the duration of practice teaching (termed teaching experience in other institutions); it appeared that the general practice across universities was about six weeks in a year and twenty four weeks of practice teaching over four years. Asked whether practice teaching was adequately serving its purpose Lecturer D answered "to an extent yes. I feel the first year teaching practice is not the time for students to do teaching practice because they are not ready." The reason she gave was that first year was rather too early to implement methodology but by the second year they would be a "bit confident to cover at least two sets of methodology covered in the foundation phase", as she explained. Lecturer E responded to the same question, "I don't know if it meets the needs because a little lesson that I see doesn't tell me much about a student's ability." So to have a clearer picture about a student's performance meant stepping up the supervision visits to each student and Lecturer E felt that would be "harder for the students; for them to be required to do a lot more teaching and for lecturers to be allowed to pop in not by appointment." One respondent argued that "the short period in which they actually go out is totally inadequate so therefore, I am not very convinced that my going out and supervising them in the way I do is sufficiently good enough. I don't think we are doing students any good – students should be spending a semester or a full year." Lecturer J was of the opinion that the time was sufficient for the lecturers but went on to say "I am not sure if this is sufficient for the fourth years; sometimes they are just getting into the schools and [adapting to] the timeframes and the periods; and they have got to come back. So maybe a longer stretch like an apprenticeship…I think maybe six months will be a nice idea." He went on to suggest that for students to be fully rounded, "at least a semester will enable them to participate in the life of a school." The general sentiment among several lecturers was that teacher candidates needed to go out for much longer periods once, rather than smaller periods over a few years.

Expressing a similar sentiment about practice teaching Lecturer M asserted, "We feel that it is not adequate." At one of the universities they were in the third year of implementing a revised curriculum and the provision in the new programme was that for "the whole of fourth year they [students] go out for teaching practice, because we felt that the block was not enough; but its something that we are trying out now." She also mentioned that during the fourth year lecturers would concentrate on research and teaching practice. On the contrary, some lecturers felt that the practice teaching blocks provided on the programme were sufficient but, however, queried the guidance, supervision and mentoring students got from the schools in terms of sufficiency and appropriateness. According to one lecturer the "reason is that still most of our teachers are in the old teaching and learning paradigm as far as mathematics is concerned…So in most of those schools the emphasis is on rote learning rather than learning and understanding." His major concern was that students were prepared to teach in ways that promoted understanding and when they went out into the schools "teachers tell them no, no, there is no time for all that nice staff. Teach them what you have to teach them, teach them what they have to know and get on with the job." Because of this tension students were always complaining that they had no opportunity to practise what they learnt. Commenting along the same lines another lecturer reiterated;

> It's very frustrating because the majority of students do take what we tell them seriously. They try to put into practice and they come to a school where teacher says you have to do this, this and that. It just turns out to be something that one reads from a book. It must be dreadful for the students. I am sorry for them.

Lecturer N contended with the foregoing that;

> There is a sense that some of the schools are so dysfunctional that there is hardly any supervision if you just leave them in the school and expect the school members of staff to do it. Their standards are very different to yours; even if you have workshops it's still very different and so I believe there is some consistency of assessment if you see all your students. So I personally believe that you see all your students. I wouldn't like anybody to see my students.

She believed that at least when she saw all her students there would be some reliability and validity in her assessment.

5.2.3.3 Practice teaching supervision

Asked to comment about practice teaching supervision, a few lecturers clarified that they had a set of lecturers who concentrated on teaching methodology but however "when they go out it's a different set of lecturers who are going out to supervise them, you [the subject specialist] included but you can not be able to see all of them." It appeared that because of numbers there was no way the subject specialist could supervise all students in specific subjects. Lecturer M expressed concern that "some of them [lecturers] have not even taught them methodology and what we have been doing in the classroom." She mentioned that the advantage of seeing one's group of students during practice teaching was that a lecturer was able to see where he/she needed to put more emphasis when the students returned from practice teaching. Talking along the same lines one lecturer emphasized that "you find someone who is not a specialist in the subject going to give your students advice and then you think out, now, how can you give advice if you are not a specialist?" The result of such organization is that "I say to them one thing in class and someone, not the expert comes in tells them another thing and that frustrates them." Lecturer K also revealed that she had received several students' complaints that "tutors don't stay long, they don't even speak to the teachers you know, sometimes they want to stay for 10-15minutes out of the evaluation and they still give not nice marks."

5.2.3.4 Organization of practice teaching

Commenting about the organization of practice teaching a handful of lecturers asserted that they had a very good history of college experience that they had inherited. But however they were concerned about students' placement. The sentiment they expressed was that,

> Students' arriving at the school someone is just appointed to good mentors.
> At some schools they have willing mentors. At other schools they have

appointed mentors; this is at gun point because the principal says you have to have a mentor. And that is something that we need to explore.

The important thing according to Lecturer B was to "explore what we need the mentors to do…what it means to mentor the young students who come into schools administratively and professionally." He argued that it was not about incentives, but that the most important thing was to create links between university and schools. He said, "There should be this reciprocal relationship where both parties benefit. You need to develop an understanding that the school is but an extension of the university; to have better understanding of the dialectical relationship between theory and practice." Lecturer R expressed that he enjoyed practice teaching supervision as it "translates the theory into practical experience. It helps me to reflect on my own teaching and gives me a holistic picture of students as teachers in a class – not in lecture." Lecturer L was also happy about supervision. She said, "I like to supervise students because there we can tutor them and we can see where students are going wrong and we can give them guidance, we can give support and advice and in a three week period you can see the student developing from the first week to the third week and notice the difference." Lecturer J argued that the three weeks period was adequate on the condition that students "have sufficient time to teach and to develop teaching skills. If the teaching practice is only to develop teaching then it's not enough." He felt that during practice teaching, time should be set aside when lecturers should teach them how to teach and then give them time to implement it. The concern according to one lecturer was that "I see students who have no clue about how to teach. I think for me that puts me under lots of anxiety and stress for them, for myself, for the school and for the learners that are there." His biggest anxiety according to him was that "we project the university very badly when we have students like that."

The arrangement to critique each student twice was rather problematic to lecturer A, because "once the two times are over we don't go back. So I don't think we are really serious about it. Maybe we need to rethink about how student teaching practice can be done." Another problematic area was the students' choice of practice teaching schools. There was a tendency for students to practice in the same schools throughout their course. One lecturer explained that there were students "who

complete an entire degree and have gone to a school that is generally well equipped with all the resources – so are we preparing them to teach in South Africa or a typical South African school?" He explained further that "there are other students who go mostly to schools that are under resourced – they never understand what it is to teach in schools that have resources." Discussing along the same lines Lecturer Z concurred that students who go to one type of school never get to understand what the South African schools are like. He also brought up the fact that when the issue of choice of schools was discussed "they will start talking about individual rights. So we have to maintain a balance."

5.2.4 Staff development

Asked about what in their opinion were the qualities of a good lecturer most respondents gave the following in order of their frequency, beginning with the highest.

- ❖ Knowledge of subject matter;
- ❖ being an example of what good teaching is;
- ❖ using a variety of teaching strategies yourself;
- ❖ ability to put subject matter across;
- ❖ being passionate about teaching and teacher qualifications;
- ❖ being open and approachable;
- ❖ being patient;
- ❖ being able to go an extra mile for your students;
- ❖ understanding the students exceptionally well;
- ❖ having positive expectations about students;
- ❖ being able to instill in students open mindedness and a constant search for new ideas and new methodologies;
- ❖ being able to familiarize students with the reality in schools; and
- ❖ being supportive of their students.
- ❖ Teaching and research

Elaborating on some of the qualities identified above Lecturer J emphasized that "you can't have a wishy-washy content because it doesn't instill confidence in those around you." He further argued that he didn't "go so much for putting it [subject content] across; I go more for the ability to help students assimilate and construct that knowledge. Not me telling you something and you become brilliant because of it. It doesn't work like that." One lecturer contended, "Content knowledge is very important because learners can see through you if you don't know what you are talking about. So you need to keep abreast with [sic] the knowledge in your subject and because we

are at a university your qualifications too talk a lot to students." Arguing along the same lines another lecturer reiterated that qualities of a good lecturer were explained in terms of what went on in the lecture hall; what the nature of engagement was.

Explaining about the need to be passionate about both subject and students Lecturer K maintained that, "the two go hand in hand. I don't think you can put one before the other. Both must be integrated because some people are passionate about their subject but they don't care about the students but just getting the job done." Lecturer R was of the opinion that one should be approachable "because in any human servicing profession you need to be approachable, you need to communicate your views without being defensive or demeaning to the other person." One lecturer emphasized the need to be patient because students came from varied socio-economic and cultural backgrounds; she asserted, "There is a vast difference among students. Some students are financially better than others…you have got to understand that some people are battling financially all the time. And you can't just overlook and say that is not my business; it is."

Lecturer Y explained that "unless we have positive expectation we will not be able to influence students. They should be able to know that they will be able to perform after interacting with you." One lecturer expressed that it was important "to familiarize your students with the realities in schools because;

> [the] University environment certainly does not replicate what happens in a school – it's an ideal environment. It's mainly theoretical; it's book learned knowledge information- it really does have nothing to do with what happens in a school. And often you meet students who have graduated when you ask them how it is, how are things- they tell you, that it's nothing like what we learn at university.

A supportive lecturer was one whom "students are confident enough to discuss those issues that are affecting their learning in the university and be able to come to a ground where they could start to work in an environment that is conducive for learning." Elaborating on the quality identified as teaching and research, Lecturer G explained that his "notion is that when I stand in front of my class I should have a grasp of what I am trying to do and also I should be at the cutting edge of what is the

current research in my topic so as to inform my teaching." He went on to say that there should be a relationship between research and teaching. On the contrary one lecturer did not see the relationship between teaching and research. The argument advanced was that lecturers should concentrate on teaching.

Asked how lecturers measured up to the identified qualities, namely,

❖ Knowledge of subject matter;
❖ Use of a variety of teaching strategies;
❖ Passion about teaching and teacher qualifications and
❖ Understanding the students exceptionally well;

Lecturer X argued,

> I don't think that all staff measure up to that. I don't think so. I think you have staff members that have never taught in schools so how can they measure up to that? I think we have staff that has no idea what learners are like. They haven't been in classrooms lately. So I think it's very difficult. Unless in fact you really know what is going on in schools and what is going on in classrooms I think it's very difficult to prepare teachers adequately.

The foregoing argument was indicative of the fact that lecturers should go out into the schools and update their knowledge on current practice. With reference to two identified qualities, that is, knowledge of subject matter and ability to put it across, one respondent was of the opinion that there were some lecturers who measured up to the identified qualities and some who did not. He explained, "I know that they are many people who don't care and yet I am flabbergasted how so many of my colleagues are so wonderful with the students…I believe that if you can't kick out lecturers, something must be done for people who don't care about their students, who willy-nilly cancel their lectures, who don't give their best, who don't try to do their best all the time." On the other hand Lecturer C made the observation that some lecturers were very supportive of their students and others "think they know everything and in that case students are left to feel like they are inferior."

Commenting about how lecturers fared in the area of updating knowledge and research, Lecturer M maintained that, "Among the staff I think we are not there. All of us are not there…yes we are not quite there." Lecturer G also emphasized, "Not in

that one…so I think this is the one that [one area in which] we are lacking. We have a notion on this campus that research is not important. It's all about teaching that we need to do; we don't keep abreast of what is the current situation for example." Commenting along the same lines that lecturers did not update their teaching through research one respondent intimated, "They [lecturers] do the same thing over and over and you think; now, we need to get that right." On the contrary, one lecturer queried the importance of research. He was of the opinion that universities had shifted their emphasis "from teaching and preparing teachers to do research." He argued that the shift had diverted the focus of lecturers from adequately preparing teachers to teach." He emphasized that he did not necessarily believe that research was going to make him a better lecturer, or make him "to adequately teach teachers to become teachers."

5.2.4.1 Support in staff development

After discussing operational expectations and how lecturers measured up to those, it was necessary to find out the nature and amount of support lecturers were provided with. Responding to the question about how lecturers felt about support they were given, the following aspects emerged in general.

- ❖ Inadequate support from the university;
- ❖ inadequate administrative support;
- ❖ lecturers not treated as academics;
- ❖ lecturers not given space to develop academically;
- ❖ collegial support within departments; and
- ❖ very strong support in the foundation phase.

Discussing university support, Lecturer T was of the opinion on one hand that while the university was not adequately supporting them, on the other hand she also expressed the sentiment that, "I don't believe that university should be supporting us." Explaining her contradictory premise she clarified that the onus was on the individual and not on the university. She argued, "I believe you have got to look for support and create support and the university can't supply that but can support in terms of making it possible for you to do what ever." One lecturer was of the opinion that her lack of support was a result of the fact that she had been in the system for a long time "and I

give an impression that I don't want any support and I am fine; which is true, most of the time I am fine." On the other hand Lecturer R remarked that, "I have to rely a lot on myself. I do get help from certain persons sometimes regarding resources but not all the time – I have to learn to help myself most of the time." According to him the situation within the department was compounded by the fact that departmental head turnover for the previous years had been too high and "therefore there isn't much lecturer support in this department because the person that you report to as line of management is changing all the time." He expressed the sentiment that the departmental head turnover had impacted negatively on members. "At the department we find that we are depending on one another [rather] than the persona on the top," he said. One respondent was of the opinion that there was a need "to have capacity on each campus; if I don't know how to handle the situation going from teaching to research, is there someone on campus that I can actually speak to? Support on campus not to wait for somebody else to come from elsewhere."

Several respondents complained that they were not treated as academics. Lecturer X lamented that; "For starters I think universities in general [ours] specifically should treat lecturers as academics, to understand that they [lecturers] can manage themselves, they can think for themselves; to respect the integrity of lecturers as academics. If they can't do that they should not have appointed them." Explaining further he indicated that university should;

> Understand that to be an academic, to add value to an institution, [the university needs] to create space for people to do research, to create space for people to do writing, to create space for lecturers to engage with other colleagues nationally and internationally; because there is a lot of good talk about it but we don't walk that talk. If we can't do those basic things as a university, we can never become a university.

To Lecturer X the university was begrudging that opportunity because of lack of trust. Responding along the same lines one respondent intimated that, "If you want to take leave people want to know why. You feel you want to take a research day but there is no trust…its worse if management does not trust you." She further explained that the main problem that she had was that the "faculty is not giving people space to develop

academically and in terms of research and not trusting people that if they say they are going for conferences, they are going for conferences." The other dimension that she added was that "there is no support in terms of staff development because there is a suspicion that you are going to develop and I as a person on top of you I feel threatened. You know there is that petty politics of childishness."

5.2.5 Product

At the end of the day when education students came to the finishing line it was important to know what expectations lecturers had from their product in terms of skill development, knowledge and values and how they felt their students measured up to their expectations in order to determine how successful their efforts had been in preparing students for teaching.

5.2.5.1 Lecturer expectation

Asked to comment about their expectation of exiting education students the following aspects in percentage frequency responses were put forward as illustrated in the chart drawn below.
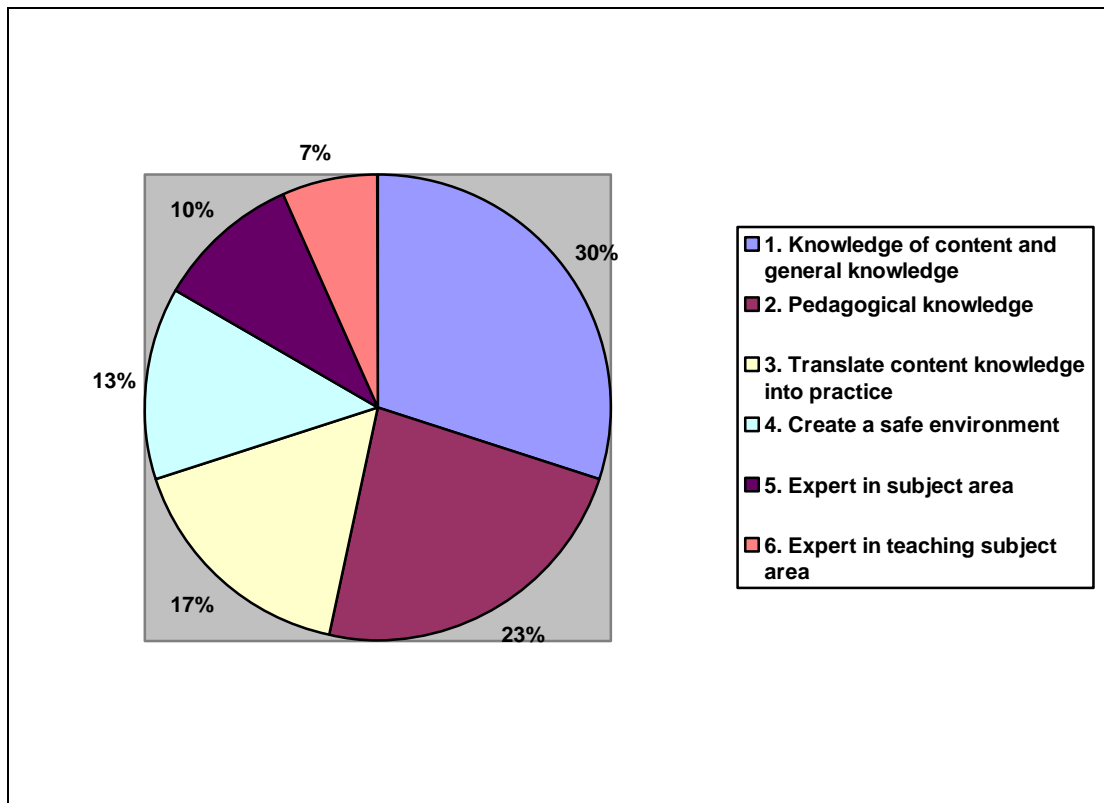
Figure 5.1 Lecturer expectation

Discussing the expectations summarized in Figure 5.1, one respondent emphasized that there is no substitute for strong content knowledge and general knowledge. She remarked,

> Yes you need pedagogical knowledge. You need to know how to translate content knowledge into learning opportunities for kids in the schools but if you don't have the solid content base you haven't got much to work with and if you haven't got a good knowledge of the world in various ways you haven't got much to use to interest learners with, to respond to learners' queries…One of the things that concern me is that on the BEd programme, the students sometimes don't have the knowledge base from which to work in terms of them developing teaching.

Arguing along the same lines a few lecturers expressed the sentiment that they had a general constraint towards realization of their expectations among teacher candidates. Another respondent reiterated that education departments were "getting the type of students that are generally not the cream of the crop. We generally get the students that are not accepted in other faculties. They end up here with us with the

minimum requirements in terms of pass rate." He further conveyed the concern that there were "some of our final year students…who do not even know school mathematics let alone university levels of math." Lecturer T however, asserted that as this was a BEd degree the academic depth was not the same as people who did BA or BSc. The implication was that BEd teacher candidates did not require comparable academic depth. One respondent also underscored the importance of knowing how to interpret an act within an education setting like the school in addition to the knowledge of content of subject matter and methodology.

Asked to comment about how the students were measuring up to their expectations some respondents commented positively and others commented negatively. For instance Lecturer Z queried, "I don't know for whatever reason they don't fare very well at schools initially –probably they are very young and they go from here with rose tinted spectacles and expect a lot of ideal views of what a school should be and initially they do struggle." In support of the foregoing sentiment lecturer A remarked that, "when they go out into the school they are prepared to take up the classroom and be able to teach but they are not the best of teachers." Lecturer Y reported that "principals at schools are complaining quite vociferously that our students are not what they ought to be; and I support that I don't believe our students are at the level that we should be preparing them." However, Lecturer Z further explained that they must be looked at as an initial teaching degree and that they had a lot more to learn: "those things you can learn when you are put into a practical situation", she said. Commenting along the same lines one lecturer argued that, "Look, like any first and second year teacher they battle; they say they are drowning. First year is battle; it's a whole different environment."

Lecturer J believed that, "you know our students are disadvantaged in teaching practice because they go out in their third year…its not their fault, it's the structure of the degree and I am not saying the degree is wrong but they don't know enough." On the contrary, Lecturer G asserted that they were inflated by the performance of their students. He maintained that, "Our students are doing very, very well in schools in general. I think in terms of meeting those expectations as an institution we are doing very well." Lecturer Y also was happy with their product. She indicated that their

students were very much sought after. She expressed, "I get calls from principals of schools saying I need so many students or can you refer me to students and we give their contact numbers to the principals." On the other hand, Lecturer B believed that they were producing 70-80% of "the type of students who will go out and deliver but the other 20-30% we will need to sort them out."

5.2.6 Achievement of quality

Some lecturers believed that they had a general constraint towards realization of their expectations among teacher candidates because departments were enrolling the type of students that were generally not the cream of the crop. The argument was that education departments enrolled students that were not accepted in other faculties and usually these students possessed minimum requirements in terms of pass rate. For instance one of the lecturers expressed concern that some of his final year students were not conversant with school mathematics, let alone university mathematics. Lecturer F reiterated "what you are able to achieve is also dependent on the student that you get...you have students who have incredible difficulty reading, students who believe that they are to be told everything, who take absolutely no initiative." However attracting quality students remained a challenge; some lecturers believed that salary structures needed to be changed in order to attract quality candidates. There was a general consensus that there was room for improvement towards attainment of quality in teacher education and that the improvement should start with the lecturers in terms of updating knowledge and linking theory with practice because lecturers could not give what they did not have. Lecturer K believed that "to achieve quality it's obviously going to start with the lecturer first. It's no use having a beautiful institution with all these facilities but you still carry on with what you were doing since 1960 or 70 or 80, but it must start with us being proud of what we deliver and how we deliver it; making sure that it's on par with what is out there and not what we think is necessary, but because of what through research we have found that this is what is necessary and the kind of thing that could happen if you don't do x, y and z." One lecturer expressed a concern that there had been a fundamental conflict within HEIs since the mergers. The reason he gave was, "I perceive a tension between what

the university demands and what a college demands and unfortunately, sometimes the nature of the demands that are made by people who are historically part of the college are completely incommensurate with the demands that we make at the university." Lecturer F believed that "levels of knowledge... I have often found significantly different. I have found individuals with such limited knowledge of a domain, yet who are teaching within it."

5.3 Interview data from HoDs

The focus of the interview information from the HoDs was segmented into four parts. In the first part the focus was to learn how lectures were conducted within the department and how the department ensured that learning was taking place as well as the internal systems and practices that have been developed to effect and sustain quality teaching and learning of students. The purpose of the second part of the interview was to elicit information pertaining to what structures were in place to enable teacher educators to link content areas, pedagogy and the development of teaching skills, as well as how the department ascertained that education students were equipped with skills to be effective teachers. The third segment focused on staff development issues, that is, how the departments met the developmental needs of individual lecturers and also what staff development programmes were in place to support teacher educators. The final segment checked on the departments' knowledge and skill expectation from exiting fourth year students and how success in meeting expectation was measured.

5.3.1 Mode of lecture delivery

Asked how lectures were conducted within the department the general responses brought forth included;

- ❖ Lecture method;
- ❖ Tutorials;
- ❖ Group discussions and
- ❖ Individual and group assignments.

Elaborating on the given modes of lecturing HoD 3 clarified that the department valued flexibility. To this end he stated, "We don't try to impose any particular mode…its up to them to organize themselves in a way that best suits their academic subject and the delivery of the content." Another respondent reiterated that the mode of delivery depended "on what programme they are teaching, but in the Bachelor of Education they conduct lectures orally…sometimes supported by power point and overhead projector slides." HoD 1 also indicated that "teaching takes place basically by means of the lecture method. The majority of lecturers still use that method and they supplement it with audio visual materials like the transparencies using the overhead projector." The overall observation among the respondents was that in most instances lectures were followed up by tutorials.

There was also a general feeling among the respondents that lecturers were operating under serious limitations. HoD 2 intimated that "there are real difficulties which really have to do with the lecturing venues and the number of students in them rather than the abilities of the lecturers." He gave an example of a female lecturer who, on a particular day, was teaching in an examination hall; "it's a flat surface room, there is no gradation…she was stuck with a microphone – one of these microphones with a cable so she could not move around to see the students who were at the end of the hall." Commenting along the same lines one respondent emphasized that, "with our bigger classes that we have now it's more difficult to arrange for interactive learning." The implication of the foregoing observations was that quality lecture delivery was compromised. However, despite the gloomy picture that HoD 2 had portrayed, he concluded by saying that, "So I think the modes that we have got are pretty good, they are pretty solid and reliable but they are complicated by certain circumstances like we have mentioned now." He further indicated that the mode of lecture delivery used "had evolved over time into what is best for the students as well."

Asked how the department ensured that learning was taking place, the following were the common responses:

❖ end of year student evaluation;

- ❖ tests;
- ❖ formative assessment;
- ❖ subject coordination and
- ❖ school experience/practice teaching.

From the responses, it appeared that it was a common practice among institutions to implement students' evaluation. "So we have the evaluation yearly of the subject and the lecturer" one respondent commented. To ensure free responses students participated anonymously. A few HoDs described similar organizational structure within the departments that monitored and ensured quality learning. Their descriptions could be illustrated by the diagram below.

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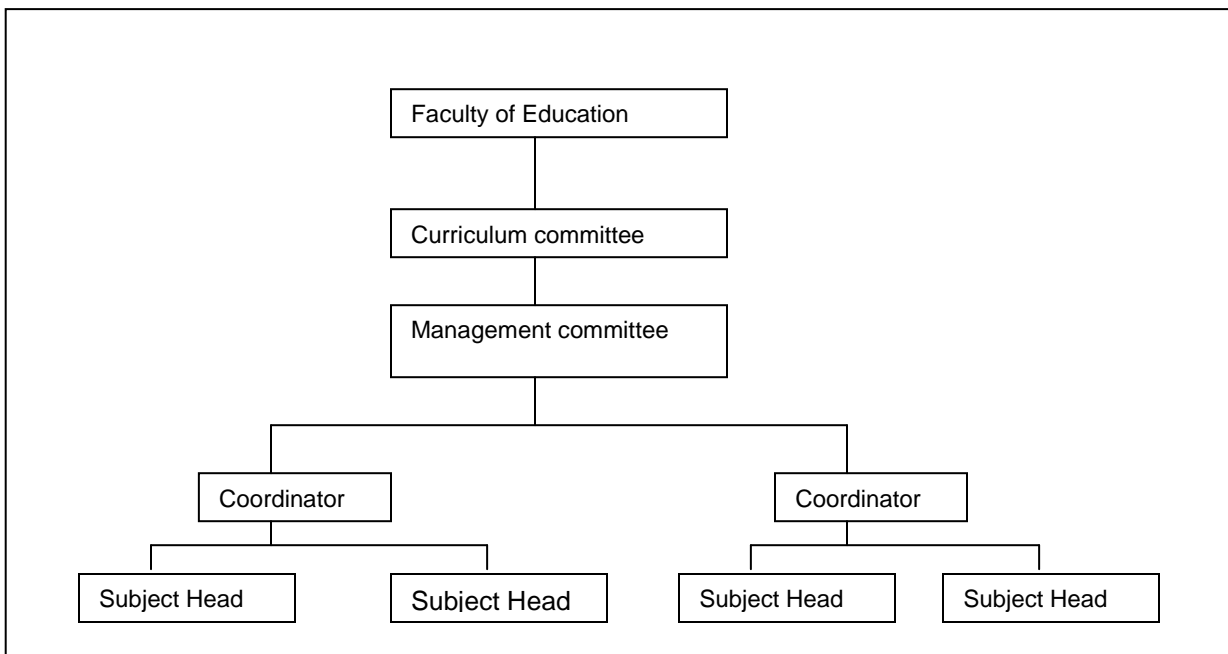
Figure 5.2 Organizational structures to ensure quality learning

The subject heads and the coordinators including the HoD met at the management committee where the Dean could also attend. Within the faculty there was the curriculum committee where everything pertaining to student learning was discussed. According to one HoD, "So there is quite a lot of bodies and systems in place" to ensure that learning is taking place. HoD 3 added that they also "rely on the professional commitment that the staff had got to delivering programmes." He further

suggested that "they [lecturers] must arrange that the study guides or learner guides of the students come to me…and also gave instruction that all assessment must be handled by subject heads and course coordinators" for the purposes of checking for quality in assignments.

Responding to the question on the forms of internal mechanisms or practices that have been developed to effect and sustain quality education within the department HoD 4 explained that they had an internal moderator where they ensured that every final subject was moderated. He also stated that they had "the so called programme review mechanism where the result of the previous examinations will be analyzed." The analysis would then reveal adverse subjects "where we will ask the lecturer responsible for the adverse subject to come up with intervention programme." One HoD argued that quality for him was not only the output, "but we need to concentrate on quality input. What are the types of students we allow to enter into teacher education courses?" His argument was that students "must comply with the requirement to study towards the degree, then you will have better quality students." The implication was that it is important to look at what is happening from the moment the student applies until his graduation "and the whole process of moderation that needs to be quality assured."

5.3.2 Development of teaching skill

Responding to the question whether the department had a formal structure through which lecturers were encouraged to link on the one hand content, the methodology or pedagogy and on the other hand development of teaching skills in students, HoD 5 stated "we have a subject called professional study which is about teaching strategies, teaching methods in general…it's combined with teaching practice." Commenting further he emphasized that all the subjects had didactics "and there is a lot of time going into that." In contention HoD 4 asserted that "linking the content with pedagogy is done through what we call curriculum studies courses and learning area courses where the students learn how to teach the content they have learnt." He further explained that it is in these courses that students receive specialized tuition on how to teach the content at the level of the learners." HoD 6

commented that in addition they had a learning and teaching advisor of the faculty "who conducts courses…which help tutors to tutor effectively…she also helps individual lecturers to sort of integrate their content knowledge and their pedagogy and their assessment."   However with the acknowledgement that theory influenced practice and that practice influenced theory, one HoD shared that in their institution they "were moving into a conception of a professional model of teacher development and this model will require the student to spend an entire year in the school." According to him it would be some kind of 'master apprentice model' where a student would learn from direct observation and imitation. He went on to explain that "the programme is designed to be skills based…so emphasis is on learning from your master."

In response to the question of how the department ensured that students were equipped with the relevant skills to be effective teachers, there were common statements made among the HoDs, for instance:

❖ assignments and tests;
❖ practice teaching/learning experience assessment; and
❖ teacher tutor mentoring.

Commenting about practice teaching, a few HoDs expressed that the biggest challenge that they had was to get good mentors for students during their fourth year. One HoD further asserted that they had tried several ideas to overcome the challenge, for example, equipping mentors in the schools and even giving them incentives, but maybe "we need to go out to cluster schools…to try and explain to the teachers in the cluster what we are aiming at with our teaching practice programme." Another HoD suggested that "if we [HoDs] can just call them [lecturers] and say reflect a little bit, educators of teachers, you need to set an example. I think the strongest way we can prepare them, it's by lecturers' own examples."

5.3.3 Staff development

In response to how departments identified and met lecturer developmental needs HoD 6 explained that in their phase meetings they encouraged lecturers to identify what they considered to be their specific needs and then appropriate personnel were sourced for staff development programmed based on identified needs. Expressing a similar sentiment one HoD mentioned that they "meet twice a year to talk about issues which are commonly found to be difficult and how we could overcome those."

HoD 6 on the other hand argued that "probably the department doesn't have a great deal of influence there except in so far as staff will come to me with an interest area and say how can I do this?" It was only then that the department could come in and help. Commenting further, he expressed the sentiment that there were "lots of programmes to help staff…complete further degrees, publish research and improve their teaching…" HoD 2 reiterated that "it's about saying to them here are the opportunities, but who actually comes? Opportunities are not taken." HoD 8 was of the opinion that "if you are not involved in the programmes of development and you just stick to what you do and that's it, and you want to keep to yourself then you will have problems" One HoD added that "the need is to come together as staff and talk about the new curriculum in the school; what does the Department say? And to share ideas."

Asked about the quality of knowledge staff were imparting to teacher candidates, one HoD asserted,

> Outdated; completely outdated. We see it all the time. As we see in the research proposal modules, in the way they interact with students, the way they write, are completely outdated. We tell them that students should quote from the last five years but we still get students quoting the last fifteen years of the literature because students are exposed to that."

5.3.3.1 Recognition of professional growth

Asked how the department recognized professional growth among lecturers and what rewards were in place if any, HoD 4 commented, "You see there is the so called teacher of the year award and therefore a particular lecturer needs to build up a portfolio." It appeared this portfolio was evidence of the good work. One HoD asserted

that when good practice was identified within the faculty the dean shared that within meetings and when need be the identified good practice was incorporated into departmental practice. Another HoD mentioned that lecturer growth was rewarded by "allowing them time to do their own research or easing the path to promotion or early confirmation and that sort of a thing." Responding to the argument put forward that excellent work should be rewarded by promotion; HoD 7 regretted that it was difficult to get the balance right in terms of promotions within the department because "you will have to wait for somebody to retire to get the post."

5.3.4 Product

Asked which knowledge areas the department expected exiting students to be competent in, HoDs' responses converged on the items stated below:

❖ the theoretical content;
❖ knowledge about their subject or phase specialization; and
❖ pedagogical skills.

Elaborating on how they measured programme success HoD 7 reiterated, "And the way we assess, that is, in their fourth year, they do continuous teaching practice and that's when we want to see that they are ready to teach completely independent [sic] as a first year teacher will be expected to teach." HoD 5 explained that at the end of school experience they completed an assessment form and they met with teachers who had also tutored the students as a way of sharing comments and allocating marks. One HoD however acknowledged that they still were short of a very good instrument with which to measure programme success. He suggested that "there needs to be regular feedback from the alumni." He went on to emphasize, "The need to move into more of a kind of structured survey method to gain the right kind of a response."

5.3.5 Achievement of quality

Commenting on the quality of education offered within departments there was a general sentiment passed by most HoDs that while the quality was good there were still areas that needed improvement. For instance one HoD was of the opinion that "There are pockets of very good education and there are also pockets of education where it is very poor and these could be attributed to a range of things, staff capacity, staff interest…" HoD 2 believed that their standard was above average but went on to say, "remember we still need to adapt our courses to the quality of students that we do have. We need to develop them." Another HoD suggested that what was needed were "smaller groups which means really employing more staff. HoD 1 asserted that they were relatively happy with the quality of education that was offered but went on to say, "There are a lot of challenges. We are losing students because we don't get contact with everyone like we used to do in the past in small classes. We think we are losing a bit of control because of bigger classes which I suppose is part of every university." However, on the whole the HoDs' observation was that in general they were producing quality teachers as evidenced by school demand for university teacher graduates.

5.4 Interview data from students

5.4.1 Lecture delivery

5.4.1.1 Method

Asked what mode of lecture delivery lecturers used mostly; there were two common responses, namely:

❖ lectures accompanied by transparencies and data projectors; and

❖ lectures accompanied by hands-on-participation.

Most respondents were of the opinion that lecturers relied mostly on chalk and talk in their classes. A sizeable proportion asserted that "our lecturers, it's them standing and lecturing to us. Some of them use lap tops and projector presentations and slide shows that usually link up with our study guides where they read through these with us." A few respondents indicated that it varied per lecturer; for example, "Some of the lecturers like dictating…there were other lecturers who occasionally gave us practical

work and allowed us to be in groups and then we present but I would say the majority was dictatorship." However the general sentiment was that "it's mostly chalk and talk. Typically standing in front of the classroom with a book, reading and showing some transparencies with slides and that will be the end of the lecture." A few students believed that "in essence it depended on the lecturer and the subject because like the science subjects, those are more hands-on and you actually have to do practical activities."

Asked how methods used met their needs as student teachers, the majority of respondents were of the opinion that most lecture deliveries were problematic. It was believed that, "It feels like lecturers mostly open up notes from where you left last time and it doesn't feel like lecturers have prepared something new." Some respondents intimated that, "At times it can be boring. It can be monotonous. They give you notes exactly as they are and you sit there for 45 minutes to 1½ hours when you could just sit at home and read or something." Commenting along the same lines some students complained that, "And also they project the data from the computer on the white screen. It's not summarized; it's exactly taken from the text book and presented as it is." About three quarters of the respondents lamented that, "a lot of stuff seems completely irrelevant to what we do and how we are going to be using it…the rest, it's like lecture notes; its information and not application."

There was a general feeling among respondents that lectures were irrelevant to them as they were not related to teaching. For example there was an indication that lectures were "quite opposite of what we do in class. They teach us not teach like…chalk and talk but they give us examples how not to do it." Arguing along the same lines a few respondents expressed the view that, "They tell us to use different strategies in class but they don't implement it themselves. It's very difficult to see how it is properly done to be able to implement it yourself. We don't get examples of how we can do it." On the other hand "there are some lecturers who…although its like reading notes…there is a lot of interaction and a lot of discussion and there are a few lecturers who are like that'.

5.4.1.2 Students' preferred mode of lecture delivery

In response to how they wanted lectures to be delivered several respondents suggested that "with lots of interaction between the lecturer and students." A few students emphasized "lessons for us that are interactive with the actual learning making a difference…we are part of the learning experience; they give us something to think about and feedback." The general belief among respondents was that because theirs was an education degree they were of the opinion that lectures should have a component of application; because according to them lecturers tended to "concentrate a lot on content and forgot that they were delivering content to education students. It's what you do with the content that makes a difference." Some respondents also held the view that lectures should be accommodative in terms of different races, gender and different learning styles. A few respondents remarked, "It's not only that we are of old age. Not everyone can learn the same way, not everybody can understand by chalk and talk so you should try and implement a learning strategy that works for everybody, not just one particular group."

5.4.1.3 Quality of lectures

Asked to describe the quality of lectures that they had received several respondents expressed that "we have got phenomenal lecturers who really know their subject; who obviously have been in the classroom and they know what they are talking about and are passionate about their subject." On the other hand "we have lecturers that have no interest, who do not know what they are talking about. Who have not been in the classroom. Who give notes all the time". Arguing along the same lines a few students indicated that, "It feels like the lecturers mostly open up notes from where you left last time and it does not feel like lecturers have prepared something new…they read some of the notes from last year." One respondent emphasized that "some lecturers know a lot about their subject but they have no idea how to communicate it to an audience. They would rather be academics and researchers because they are terrible to listen to."

5.4.1.4 Students' expectations

Responding to the question about what their expectations from lecturers were, as far as lecturing was concerned, the general sentiment was;

> They should actually spend more time in schools to be able to see what goes on in there so that they have a realistic feel of what goes on in the classroom nowadays and afterwards they can come to us and say this is what the theory says but this is how it is implemented in classrooms.

For several, "lecturers must make an effort to keep up with what is going on in the current education system. The lecturer should look up and see what the current goings on are in his subject area." In general, respondents suggested that lectures should improve their academic knowledge and at the same time fulfill their need for application in the schools and yet, "Its more theory. It's not really relevant to how you are going to get into the class one day and teach."

5.4.1.5 Qualities of exemplary lecturers

Pertaining to what they considered to be the qualities or personal characteristics of an exemplary lecturer, the common responses in order of their popularity were as stated below:

❖ knowledgeable in their area of study;
❖ someone who balances theory and practice;
❖ well read and knowing what is going on in society;
❖ have teaching experience behind them;
❖ someone who is consistent;
❖ always prepared;
❖ organized;
❖ charismatic;
❖ dedicated;
❖ willing learner;
❖ approachable;
❖ someone that will go an extra mile; and
❖ humane.

The majority of respondents were of the view that lecturers should be knowledgeable and be resource persons for them. Expanding on the importance of lecturers to be

knowledgeable, some students stated that "because you always find that if you are with the lecturer and you ask him questions – yes we understand that a lecturer can not answer all your questions but if you feel that a lecturer can not answer any of your questions - you feel like, what are they doing here?" Expanding on the same point some suggested that "we also think that they need to be well read and know exactly what is going on in society." Most of the respondents emphasized that lecturers should be approachable. One respondent argued that "this is a huge thing because at the university you find that lecturers lecture and leave and you feel stuck with this work that you did not understand and you don't know what to do." Voicing a similar sentiment some respondents indicated that a good lecturer was one that they (as students) were able to speak to one-to-one about issues and things that could be going on outside the lecture room; "a lecturer that is available, not awful, cold or whatever but who is able to understand where you are coming from." A few students intimated that "it's just much easier to learn from a lecturer who is passionate about his subject."

A few respondents suggested that "it is also important that they engage with their students and put it at an appropriate level for us. Nothing too difficult that it goes over our heads but also nothing too easy because we also need to be challenged." Commenting about the importance of school teaching experience some respondents asserted that, "What is also important, they [lecturers] need to have teaching experience behind them and be able to teach us properly on what is going on in the schools and more or less recent teaching experience because some of them have been teaching like 23 years ago and don't have that recent exposure of what is happening in schools." According to a handful of students good lecturers try to "interact the academic and the practical side so that we are able to apply what they are teaching us into the classroom environment so that there is that connection; sometimes what they are teaching us is a bit dislocated and distant from the classroom practice and has not much relevance for us."

About half of the respondents stated that "good lecturers should always be prepared and should have personality…to bring a point across like, in a charismatic kind of way so that people can actually listen to you. There are a lot of lecturers who

know a lot about their subject but have no idea how to bring it across to an audience." To some respondents a good lecturer "is someone that will go an extra mile for you whether that is coming on days that he is not supposed to stay later than he is supposed to be; he will make sure that you get the best out of what he can offer." A few students also asserted, "We want the lecturer not to think too highly of himself; like we are in the same boat, like we are all learning, we all want to be teachers and we are in the business of education trying to lead people in the betterment of their future, that kind of a thing."

5.4.2 Teaching skill

This section on teaching skill focuses on the opportunities that there are for education students to practice teaching skills and the students' assessment of their adequacy.

5.4.2.1 Linking theory with practice

Most students were of the opinion that there was a weak link between theory and practice and to them this was rather problematic. Asked what component of the programme focused on the development of teaching skills a few students intimated that,

> "Well we think in the year or the people that we came with, we didn't get much of classes where they gave us the skills that we need for teaching. But in curriculum studies they have tried there and there to touch those bits and pieces; then we realize now we still need more training than the four years that we have spent here."

Some students argued that if lecturers "do methodology, it is in a very rushed and presumptuous way. They assume that we know…I promise you I still can't assess learners on multilevel…you are thrown into the deep end." A few respondents remarked, "We don't feel like we have been taught how to teach." The general sentiment was, "The rest we learn from practice, that is, from the practical that we do. That's the biggest place where we learn. You can't really teach teaching skills and test out teaching skills until you are really in the classroom." Commenting along the same lines a few students also emphasized the sentiment that while in all of their modules

they touched on the development of teaching skills they went on to say, "but one part on our programme where we learn teaching skills is teaching practice." Some students indicated that the component of didactics (which other respondents referred to as pedu, that is, pedagogical education) also focused on the development of teaching skills although the general sentiment was that a lot needed to be done to make the area more effective.

Asked whether the component set aside for skills development during module teaching fulfilled its function, most responses were negative. The general argument was, "No; they are more theoretical than practical in a lot of senses…Otherwise it's just an array of literature reviews, of how to teach it on paper and really not get to do it in the classroom." Arguing along the same lines a few respondents were of the opinion that a lot of didactics exercises had to do with writing essays instead "of how you apply what you really learn…its just essay, research and essay." The query was how these essays would help in class during practice teaching. The concern expressed by several students was that, "we get taught different types of teaching skills but we don't get taught how to implement them; you know how to put them into practice." On the other hand there were a few students who expressed the idea that they were happy about the development of teaching skills but suggested that maybe more could be done in the area of "assessment or maybe report writing or comment writing. We feel there we could have maybe done a lot more on that." Some respondents were of the opinion that FP students were "a lot more equipped to be in the classroom compared to other students." The observation made was that the "FET and the ISP students are not given those opportunities [to practice]; so FP students are really lucky in that way, but it should be across the board". The reason given was that "in the FP there are lecturers that have had teaching experience so they can come with all their ideas that they implemented in the classroom and they can show us examples and strategies."

Responding to the question whether lecturers found time to demonstrate appropriate skill to them, most respondents expressed the view that, that was common in the FP. A few respondents expressed the sentiment that, "I think there is also a problem in the sense that teaching is more practical than theory but in this campus under BEd we have…10 courses, 9 of them are theory and you only have one

practical which is curriculum and in that one you are supposed to cover all aspects of teaching…They need to divide that; maybe 5 of them be theory and 5 be practical." Some students commented that "it's not as many as we would like." Responding along the same lines several students emphasized, "It's not as often as we would have liked."

Asked to suggest ways in which their teaching skills development needs could be best met the general suggestion was that "the lecturers demonstrate more classroom scenarios and they pretend they are the teacher and we are the students. Like real live situations." Answering the same question some respondents added that "you need to see a classroom situation. It's all very well dealing with us and using us as the learners but we don't respond like the children do. If the lecturers are actually dealing with the class with learners and we are watching that, we can see how the lecturer interacts and deals with those kinds of situations." A few students clarified further and emphasized that, "So basically we need opportunities where the skills that we are supposed to have are put into practice." According to several respondents it's not about teaching skills in general but they were of the opinion that "what is lacking is with regards to assessment and work schedules and putting things together." The explanation given was that they were "fine with teaching but when it comes to planning and putting everything into a year plan and work schedules for a term and how we should assess we are not quite sure how we should do that." Some students concurred that "there is so much emphasis put on teaching and we are so much equipped to be teachers but the administration side of it is a little bit lost on us."

5.4.2.2 Organization of teaching experiences

As far as organization of teaching experience was concerned a sizeable proportion expressed the view that universities should take note of the schools' examination time tables because during these periods they did not teach as much as they were expected to. Several respondents argued that organization of teaching experience left a lot to be desired because "you are just being dropped in a school whether the teacher that you working with is helpful or not, it's just a different thing." Expressing concern, a few students argued, "actually we are not happy about the

word 'organize' because there was a time they got us a tutor three times; the same person. We didn't like that because sometimes you must get a different tutor." On another note a few respondents lamented "please don't allocate us lecturers who don't have any knowledge about the learning area…How are they going to judge whether what we are doing is right or wrong?" Some respondents also suggested that, "they need to consider the time frame, when to do it. You can't go for teaching experience and immediately when you get back it's examination time. You need to have time to breathe. You have 24 assignments to work on as well. One wonders whether they consider our needs as students." Other respondents felt it was unfair to be allocated to a school, not of their own choice. The reason given was that students did not like a situation, "where you will go and you are kind of forced to go to that school with a lot of children." The general sentiment was that "a lot of students are not happy with that way because now it's an inconvenience for transporting; it's an inconvenience for them because they are forced into a situation where they might not cope."

Despite the voiced concerns, on the whole most respondents were unanimous that teaching experience was the place where they experimented with what they learnt in class and got to figure out new things that they wanted to know concerning their teaching and teaching strategies. They felt that without practical experience it would have been problematic to go into the classroom for the first time. Teaching experience to most respondents was seen as an opportunity for discovering all they needed to learn or where learning took place.

5.4.3 Product

The major focus of this section was to elicit from respondents those learning areas they considered to be competent in and those learning areas they believed contributed more to their teaching skills. Respondents' suggestions for improvement as well as any other contribution to the discussion were also called for.

5.4.3.1 Areas of competence

Several respondents felt that they were competent "in the majors that we have chosen and curriculum studies that we have received from those learning areas."

Other respondents indicated that they were more competent in those areas where "lecturers had a lot of practical input and those subjects that we taught practically we will be more prepared than in others." A few respondents on the other hand "had problems as ISP student teachers." They explained that "what they have been learning here was more like tertiary staff. We haven't learnt things for our kids next year. We only did those things in curriculum studies for six months…maybe if we break it down it can be a month; and that is not enough." Other respondents indicated that while they could be competent in their majors the "problem is…it becomes a battle when you get out there…they don't only want you to become competent in two things. They have other things as well that they are looking for." For several the concern was that "our skills in different learning areas are still lacking."

Asked which area they considered less important in the development of teaching skills, a few students made an observation that "even in schools the learning areas are given different times; that stresses the importance of which one is more important and which one is less important." A few respondents found it rather problematic especially when one specialized in a subject that was accorded less time at school, for instance life and culture or life orientation. The explanation given was that, "if those are your majors and when you got to school…in schools they are less important; so I think that is quite a contradiction."

Some students considered it a waste of time to go over the content area that they considered to have sound background in. For instance they stated that if you come to the university to major in mathematics, you already have a background; as a result emphasis should be on methodology. The emphasis was that, "so to give math the same time as methodology that for us does not make sense because the methodology is the one they should be focusing on."

Asked for additional information they thought needed more emphasis or was not covered during the discussion, respondents were unanimous that "they are not training us to go to the classroom and be able to deliver to a group of 41 students." Most respondents also indicated that they needed to know more in the area of assessment and related administrative duties. Respondents felt that lecturers were missing the point, "our degree is an education degree; we are trained to go and teach

and that is where we are lacking." The general sentiment was that "a lot more practice in the classroom is needed. We don't think you can become an amazing teacher sitting behind in a lecture hall. We think the more you are in a classroom the better equipped you are to face those problems." A few respondents expressed the view that, "we are not going to school only for learning areas and teaching kids social sciences and all that. They are not even giving us opportunity to do extra murals here…there is a big lack there and when you get to school, like the interviews…they will ask you; are you competent in any sport"? On the whole respondents felt that the quality of teacher education they received was "pretty good. There are a few that let the team down and those few make a huge difference. But the majority of our lecturers I think live up to our expectations."

5.4.4 Achievement of quality

Responding to the issues of achievement of quality in lectures, some students believed that lecturing varied to a great extent. The argument advanced was that there were some quality lectures; lecturers who "know their stories and we get some who don't even know anything or repeat something we have done intensively," one student asserted. Some lecturers were described by some students as phenomenal, who knew their content and were passionate about their subject, but others were described as having no interest and who "did not know what they were talking about." The latter were described as boring and some students indicated that they "could not help but sleep during that time." It is these "few that let the team down and those few make a huge difference," a few students argued. Hence the overall quality and image of particular faculties got tarnished by a few under performing lecturers.

Some students also indicated that over the years they have had lecturers "who simply don't turn up" without giving prior notice or communicating with students. The reaction from some students was "why should I turn up for my lectures if lecturers don't even show up." Several respondents believed that the level of professionalism at their institution was quite low compared to other colleges or universities elsewhere. As exiting students, on the one hand some of them indicated that they were not courageous to go out into the field as they believed that they had poor mastery of

teaching skill; on the other hand others believed that they had benefited a lot and were ready to go and teach.

5.5 Summary

The above three segments of data present the respondents' views and beliefs about teaching and learning of education students as portrayed by lecturers, HoDs and students respectively. The major foci of data in the three segments were lecture delivery, teaching skill, staff development and product. The following are brief summaries of main ideas within each segment.

5.5.1 Data from lecturers

To most lecturers, the lecture method remains the major vehicle for lecture delivery. There was an indication that variations in the form of active student participation and use of data projectors were used during lectures. Several lecturers revealed that they infused modeling during lectures so that students would have something to emulate when they went out for teaching practice. Large numbers and student quality were singled out as some of the major aspects that eroded realization of quality lectures. Most lecturers revealed that during module teaching there was no provision for the development of teaching skills. They indicated that they had theoretical description of skills and peer teaching instead, as some of the forms of practical activities that they engaged students in. Several lecturers were not happy about practice teaching organization as they were of the opinion that those who lectured in methodology courses should be the ones to supervise students. Some of them also queried the mentoring that teacher candidates received from school teachers. Most lecturers voiced concern pertaining to staff development issues as they believed that administrative procedures were fraught with prejudices and biases. Some lecturers were concerned that they were lacking in the area of research. The general expectations by most lecturers from exiting students were knowledge of subject matter, teaching content, and pedagogic skills. There was a general consensus that there was room for improvement towards attainment of quality in teacher education.

5.5.2 Data from HoDs

There was a general observation by HoDs that lecturing remained the main method for lecture delivery. Data projectors and interactive white boards were itemized as some of the resources which were there to facilitate lecturing. Departments ensured that learning was taking place through analysis of students' assessment information as well as having structures in place for monitoring progress and quality control, for example, subject head, coordinators as well as HoDs. While there were opportunities for staff development in departments, a few HoDs were worried that these were not being taken up by lecturers. Because of lack of research there was a concern that some lecturers "are 'yellow page teachers' who teach the same thing for say twenty years", one HoD intimated. Commenting about quality within departments, most HoDs acknowledged the fact that while there were subject areas that were producing high quality work, there were also other subject areas where quality was very poor. In order to get feedback pertaining to achievement of quality within departments, several HoDs indicated that they were in the process of compiling a good instrument for collecting data both from teachers where students do their practice teaching as well as from the alumni. But despite the drawbacks identified, HoDs expressed that in general, they were happy about the product.

5.5.3 Data from students

Most students expressed disenchantment about the lecture method as lecturers tended to use it mostly at the expense of focusing on the development of teaching skills. They explained that they expected lecturers to infuse active learning, modeling appropriate teaching skills and even demonstrating to them how to impart specific skills to learners. Students also acknowledged the fact that while there were very good lecturers, there were still some from whom improvement was expected. As exiting students, on the one hand some of them indicated that they were not courageous to go out into the field as they believed that they had poor mastery of teaching skill; on the other hand others felt they had benefited a lot and were ready to go and teach.

The following, Chapter 6, focuses on data discussion.

Chapter 6
Discussion of Findings

6.1. Introduction

The process of data presentation in the preceding chapter culminated in the following emergent themes: these are the themes that framed my understanding of what the data portrayed:

❖ interactivity in lecture halls;

❖ lecturers' espoused theory versus theory in use;

❖ market blind approach;

❖ gap between theory and practice;

❖ the taken for granted assumptions about the role of schools in teacher education; and

❖ staff development issues.

It is these themes that structure the rest of the discussion. It is important to point out that the above themes are not isolated, but rather interconnected and interwoven as discussion in one theme has implication for other themes.

6.2. Interactivity in lecture halls

6.2.1 Active learning

Several lecturers revealed that they infused active learning into their lectures. The practice is in line with the HEQC's (2002:13) call for interactive learning in HEIs. The call for interactive learning correlates with the sentiment put across by Barr and Tagg (1995:27) that HEIs should shift from the instruction paradigm to the learning paradigm. The socio-psychological assumption embedded in the learning paradigm is that an individual is an architect of his/her knowledge through social interaction.

Several interviews seemed to support the fact that there were some teacher educators who were busy with the implementation of active learning or participatory learning. According to Smart and Csapo (2007:454) "with a shift of focus from teaching to learning in higher education, educators often look for strategies to involve students actively in the learning process, especially since numerous studies have demonstrated that a student's active involvement in the learning process enhances learning." Scheyvens, et al (2008:51) contend that "the term active learning covers a wide variety of learning strategies aimed at encouraging active student participation in learning (learning-by-doing)."

Reading through the data it was evident that some lecturer's mode of lecture delivery was guided by constructivist notions, whose proponents believe that knowledge does not exist independent of the knower. Phrases such as, "I try to make it as interactive as possible," "learning is a conversation," "I believe in students' active engagement", serve as evidence of the foregoing statement. In other words one of the constructivist tenets is that learning is a result of an interaction between the student's internal knowledge structures and the outside world. According to Scheyvens, et al (2008:53) "this interaction can be supported by requiring the student to both participate in an activity and then reflect on his/her experience with the activity." This process of engagement with learning enables students to internalize key concepts and make linkages between theory and practice. Apparently a sizeable proportion of students also favoured interactive learning. For instance some students expressed that they liked lectures "with lots of interaction between the lecturers and students." The general belief was that the more questions they asked the better they understood content.

The foregoing students' sentiments are supported by constructivist principles that suggest that good teaching practice can facilitate deep approaches to learning and enable students to participate in actively building and transforming their cognitive and knowledge structures (McLeod and Reynolds, 2007). Active learning in this sense is the internalization and transformation of social tools of thought which are communicated to teacher education students through social interaction and instructional conversation. There was supporting evidence that active participation in

learning enabled students to build and transform their knowledge structures; for example data suggests that it is the quality of the interaction that leads to the quality of learning experience where lecturer-student and student-student relationships are fundamental. According to Hill, Lomas and MacGregor (2003:17) the quality of the interaction may be difficult to quantify but it is immediately recognized by students who experience it. Smart and Csapo (2007:452) also argue that constructivist lecturers involve students more than listening; they emphasize the development of students' skills more than just transmitting information; students develop higher order thinking skills and above all they are able to explore their own attitudes and values. Hanson and Moser (2003:18) reiterate that active learning builds students' critical thinking, problem solving and social skills.

However within active student engagement it is important to make provision for varied learning styles. This is because a proficient student is not someone who demonstrates capability within a narrow band of activities, as defined by a particular learning style, but rather, someone who demonstrates the ability to select an appropriate learning style from a range according to the demands of the situation and their own learning capability, (Dunn, Dunn and Price, 1985). In any case, a few students acknowledged that "not all of us learn through chalk and talk." Robotham (1999) argues that where there is lack of congruence between the preferred learning style(s) of individuals and the approach adopted by the educator, the student may mentally opt out of the programme although physically attending. Kolb (1984) postulates four learning styles occurring in a continuum; namely, the concrete learner on the one end of the continuum with the abstract learner on the other end; the reflective learner on the one end of the continuum with the active experimentation learner on the other end. He argues that the ideal learning process engages all four of these modes in response to situational demands. As individuals attempt to use all four approaches they tend to develop strength in one. Felder and Silverman (2002) have also developed an index of learning styles ranging from sensory-intuitive, visual-verbal, active-reflective to sequential-global as referred to earlier on in the literature review. By trying to embrace most learning styles, not only will the educator improve his/her teaching effectiveness but will also open avenues for students to perceive the

world in many different ways. Students' ability to take in new information and make sense of it quickly, accurately, and effectively is improved (Felder and Silverman, 2002:676).

According to the series Concept to Classroom (2004) constructivist teacher educators pose questions and model techniques in the teaching process. For example, they may; prompt students to formulate their own questions (inquiry); allow multiple interpretations and expressions of learning (multiple intelligences) and encourage group work and the use of peers as resources (collaborative learning). The foregoing idea is consistent with phenomenological assumptions that maintain that meaning is not something psychological in an individual but something developed socially across a community (Richards and Morse, 2007). Hence learning is a process of meaning making not of knowledge reception. Smith (2008) argues that meaning making resolves the dissonance between what we know and what we perceive. Explaining further he clarifies that this dissonance ensures some ownership of the knowledge by students because it is their discrepancy that they try to resolve. In the final analysis knowledge that is personally constructed or socially constructed is necessarily owned by and attributed to the meaning makers, whether they are acting individually or collaboratively (Smith, 2008).

However constructivism has been considered as elitist by critics who argue that constructivism and other progressive educational theories have been more successful with groups of students from privileged backgrounds. Further more; constructivist practices within HEIs are challenged by increasing enrolment numbers. For instance some lecturers wondered how they were supposed to implement continuous assessment with a group of 800 students. In support a few HoDs acknowledged that "there are real difficulties which really have to do with the lecturing venues and the number of students in them, rather than the abilities of the lecturers." There was consensus among HoDs that education departments lost several students because they could no longer afford the personal attention they used to offer; as a result students felt neglected.

6.2.2 Lecturer collaboration

Some aspects of lecturer data reflected expressions of similar beliefs and values about lecturing as well as student learning. The reason, as noted in my field notes, was that they had close working relationships. Working in teams impacts positively on teacher educators' work as Krishnaveni and Anitha (2007) argue that collegial relationships enhance critical thought about teaching; encourage the sharing of ideas and reflection. In addition empowerment is enhanced by educators working in teams (Dondero, 1997), feeling a sense of ownership and hence greater job autonomy (Honold, 1997), enjoying discretion, autonomy, power and control (Lashley, 1999) and information sharing.

6.2.3 Implication of active learning for teacher educators

6.2.3.1 Sound knowledge base

Data reveals that a few lecturers believed that implementation of active learning implied internal coherence, integration, knowledge, maturity and confidence on the part of the lecturer and "not to be threatened by different voices." From the foregoing beliefs I deduced that active or participatory student engagement during lectures places certain specific demands on the lecturer. Initially a lecturer should have a sound knowledge base. Molander (1992) believes that the educator's subject matter knowledge influences the way in which the educator teaches; the educator who knows more about a subject is more interesting and adventurous and more effective in the way he/she teaches. But however, attaining the foregoing among some members of staff is problematic as data suggests that there are some lecturers with "limited knowledge of a domain, yet who are teaching within it." Data also revealed that most teacher education students also expected to interact with knowledgeable lecturers who were prepared to debate and discuss with them.

The underlying assumption to most of the students' expectations was reminiscent of Freire's (1998) dialogue approach. Freire (1998:65) argues that "only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be not true education." By communication is meant the whole environment of effective

teaching as well as simply verbal speaking and listening (Child, 1997). It is in this dialogue that teaching and learning of education students is able to resolve the queries between lecturers and students. Hence according to Freire preoccupation with the content of dialogue is really preoccupation with the content of teacher education. Buchberger (2000:50) also is of the opinion that teacher education programmes and curricula should be oriented more on the,

❖ process;

❖ problem;

❖ project; and

❖ research oriented learning environments;

 and that

❖ inquiry-oriented cultures have to replace the rather rigid and reactive cultures of teaching, studying and learning in order to meet the challenges of a dynamic society.

Having sound knowledge means extensive research on the part of the lecturers. However, data suggests that some lecturers' research efforts were not adequately supported. Contrary to the sentiment expressed by several lecturers, some HoDs argued that there were a lot of opportunities at the lecturers' disposal but not many of the lecturers were taking up these opportunities. According to Snell and Swanson (2000), educators should seek out on-going opportunities to enhance and refine their art. Carr (2008) reiterates that educators have to be open to new ways of thinking about old issues because they should be wary of believing that they have all the knowledge and importantly, experience they require to understand how teacher education students experience their educational journey.

However, the issue of updating knowledge was critiqued by a few lecturers. For instance they queried the importance of research; the argument was that research does not necessarily make one a better teacher. The foregoing belief is underlined by the way in which knowledge is conceived, which in turn influences the way teaching is carried out and what individuals understand research to be (Brew, 1999:291). For example, Rowland (1996:15), in his study with experienced academics, reveals a distinction that they made between a view of knowledge as 'absolute, specialized and

unrelated to wider perspectives or experience of life,' where teaching was unlikely to have effects on research; and a view of knowledge as 'tentative, open to reinterpretation or containing insights which can be applied more widely', which was likely to stimulate the lecturer's research. In addition the study carried out by Chetty and Lubben (2009:6), in a 'new' University of Technology in South Africa, reveals that a sizeable proportion of lecturers considered teaching and research as dichotomous. Coles (2002) argues that the most significant theoretical influence on teaching in higher education has been a move from a realist to an interpretative view of the nature of knowledge. McLeod and Reynolds (2007:1) posit that "we are teaching and learning in times of overwhelming change – changes in the way we know, changes in the way we teach and changes in what is expected of us as teachers and learners." Hence the need for updating knowledge through research cannot be overemphasized. The Department for Education and Skills (2003) in the United Kingdom accepts that not all lecturers need to be involved in research 'as a narrowly defined activity,' but suggests that lecturers might be expected to engage in scholarship to inform their work as teachers. However, while some lecturers acknowledged the need for research they expressed the sentiment that, "there is one thing that wears down the research component, that is, the amount of teaching that you do." The issue of teaching load is compounded by the large student numbers in some classes.

6.2.3.2 Assessment

Assessment helps lecturers to focus on student learning rather than on their own teaching. Research has indicated that assessment promotes greater student involvement in learning and helps lecturers to feel more confident that they are meeting students' learning needs (Rowley, 2003).

i.   Performance assessment

Data revealed that while the majority of lecturers had some assessment techniques that they were using, there were a few lecturers who believed that determining the extent to which students had learned was not feasible. For instance responding to the question of how they ensured that students were learning, a few

lecturers argued that, "nobody can ever guarantee that learning is taking place, full stop." The major reason given was that learning was an individual and an internal process. It is however important that within active, interactive and participatory learning environments, the rate and amount of student learning is assessed. According to Kelly (2003:4), "In an era with increasing student diversity, it is important for those who teach in higher education to develop ways to find out what students are learning." She further argues that by finding out what students have learned and what is still unclear to them, lecturers may focus class sessions more effectively to meet the learning needs of their students.

Data revealed that lecturers had a variety of ways for assessing students' performance, for example, tests, assignments, group and individual assignments, as well as students' presentations. While these could form part of the assessment, according to Fadel, Honey and Pasnik (n.d), "traditional assessment practices, however, focus in large part on the individual and fail to account for knowledge-building and learning context." It has been widely noted that with the emergence of technologies and new mindsets, learning is increasingly collaborative and knowledge increasingly distributed across many members of a learning community (Kelly, 2003).

Because quality learning is dependent on assessment procedures, Barr and Tagg (1995) argue that there should be a shift into the new forms of assessment that focus on establishing what the student teachers have learnt – the knowledge and skill levels they have achieved and their potential for further independent learning. Writing along the same lines Laurillard (1993) believes that the major influence on the students' approach to learning is the assessment method. Ramsden (1992) posits that educators need to think carefully about the assessment and assessment processes, as it is this part of the curriculum that affects the students' approaches to learning most. As researchers in the field of assessment consider the cultural shifts that arise from the emergence of a more participatory culture they will need to find new methods of applying assessments to learners (Fadel, et al, n.d.).

ii.   Students' evaluation of teaching

Data revealed that a few lecturers resented students' evaluation of teaching. The argument presented was that students did not know how to assess, basically because they were ignorant about content. The students' inability to assess was characterized by what in philosophy is termed Meno's paradox, that is, how can students know X if they do not know what X is (Vallicella, 2009)? The implication of the argument was that students knew nothing about lecture content, so how could they assess whether lecturing was good or bad? In other words a few lecturers assigned themselves the position of knower or reservoirs of knowledge and the students were taken as empty vessels that were waiting to be filled in with knowledge by the lecturers (Freire, 1998). Writing along the same lines Brew (1999:294) reiterates that, "a basic assumption of a lecture-based approach is that the one who knows hands over knowledge to those who do not know." Unfortunately, such an assumption tends to erode the effectiveness of the teaching encounter as students' needs are not taken into account. However, with the observation that lecturers indicated that they provided study guides or course readings in advance "that set the tone of the particular things that you are going to do" (as expressed by some lecturers), it was rather questionable to conclude that course content was beyond students' reach as it could have been possible that some students could have read in advance of lectures. Contrary to Meno's paradox, in Platonic terms it could be argued that one is able to learn, not from experience but from ones' mental resources. Hence, arguably, if students are led by an inquiry with specific guiding questions they could know or discover what X is, instead of the argument that X is unknowable. Miller (1988:60) argues that university and college students are professional "teacher watchers" and, if asked questions to which they can respond, are capable of making fair and sound judgments about teaching.

According to Rowley (2003:142) "student evaluation of teaching is an important component of quality management systems in higher education, and may also contribute to student reflection upon their learning." Contrary to the foregoing assertion, Coles (2002) expresses concerns and contentions pertaining to student evaluation of teaching. Westerman et al (2002) postulate that opposition to student

evaluation of teaching "draws on two types of arguments; those associated with legal and educational policy arguments, and those associated with the validity of the methodologies adopted." Expanding on the former argument they assert that some educators express doubts about whether students have the capacity to evaluate class teaching. Pertaining to the latter argument, according to Coles (2002) research suggests that course, lecturer and student characteristics may affect evaluation outcomes; for instance Cole reveals that students' satisfaction is decreased when class sizes are larger.

6.3 Lecturers' espoused theory versus theory in use

The theme of lecturers' espoused theory versus theory in use emerged as a result of the observation that there was a generally sharp contrast between what teacher educators presented as their modus operandi and what teacher education students expressed as the ways they were taught and learnt. Discussing along the same lines Barr and Tagg (1995:14) indicate that among educators the difference between espoused theory, that is, the set of principles people offer to explain their behaviour and the theory-in-use, that is, the principles that can be inferred from how people actually behave, is becoming distressingly noticeable. While some lecturers expressed their classes as interactive it was evident reading through the data that most students held a contrary view. Data revealed that according to most students, chalk and talk is what generally characterized their lectures. A sizeable proportion of students expressed concern that lecturers did not give them room for discussion. In other words lecturers did most of the talking. Data from HoDs confirmed the students' concerns that teaching took place basically by means of lecture method.

With the evidence before me I was convinced that teacher education students' voices represented the teacher educators' theory in use while the teacher educators' voices represented their espoused theory. While most lecturers' espoused theory was underlined by interactivity, the theory in use, that is, what was happening within the lecture halls for most lectures was still founded on the traditional, positivist trends where the lecturer is the knower and the students are the semi literate subjects (Freire, 1998). Barr and Tagg (1995:18) argue that the instruction paradigm is the

theory-in-use for most educators, yet the espoused theory for most of them resembles components of the learning paradigm. Levine (2006:61) contends that while the rhetoric of teaching and learning is rooted in the information age, its practice is firmly grounded in the traditional era; where educators overshadow students and teaching eclipses learning.

Barr and Tagg (1995:18) give a justification for the lecturers' tendency to use the lecture method. They are of the opinion that lecturers are frustrated by existing structures that thwart their effort and creativity in teaching. According to Barr and Tagg (1995:18) structures include the organization chart, role and reward systems, technologies and methods, facilities and equipment, decision-making customs, communication channels, feedback loops, financial arrangements and funding streams. Mattson (2005:23) argues that instead of pointing fingers at lecturers the major question to be asked is, "What can be done to ensure that working conditions of teacher educators make it possible for them to do their job?" Mattson (2005) criticizes literature that portrays "the teacher educator as a rusty wheel ignoring the paradigm shift." However, considering the challenge of large numbers within lecture halls, there is no leeway for lecturers to use varied approaches, hence the notion of teacher educators being referred to as "rusty wheel ignoring the paradigm shift" is perpetuated.

It is important that teacher educators go an extra mile, not only for their students' sake, but for the purposes of meeting skills development in a dynamic and changing society. Buchberger et al (2000) argue that the changes and challenges in teacher education and in teaching call for a redefinition of the professional task and roles of teacher educators and teacher education students. They go further to argue that traditional role conceptions such as teaching as knowledge transmission or teaching as a craft have become obsolete. A consequence of lectures based on traditional ideas of knowledge is, arguably, the persistent tension between learning for understanding, that is, a deep approach, and learning for reproduction, a surface approach (Marton et al, 1997). Elton (1998) argues that there has to be change in attitudes amongst certain academics who believe that their main task is to profess their discipline. Discussing further, he maintains that such academics consider that

they are professors or lecturers rather than teacher educators or facilitators of learning. The foregoing argument resonates with sentiment expressed by a few lecturers that "the notion of lecturer or the concept lecturer is very misleading, for it means that I as the lecturer am the expert and you the student are the novice, and it's not entirely true." In any case a handful of students were of the opinion that they expected to be taught by lecturers who did not think highly of themselves but lecturers who took them as colleagues in the same business of teaching.

The issue of chalk and talk was compounded by what some students perceived as poor communication from some of the lecturers. The ability to teach or teaching prowess according to Krishnaveni and Anitha (2007) includes communication skills. Papa (n.d.) is of the opinion that if an educator has considerable amounts of knowledge on the subject he/she is teaching but can not effectively communicate it to his/her students, he may not be a productive educator. Education rests on the ability to communicate in such a way that every student has a clear and comprehensive grasp of information. Notable at this point is Child's (1997) sentiment referred to earlier on, that by communication is meant the whole environment for effective teaching and learning. From the students' argument I deduced that the educators' communication framework was mechanistic, that is, a transaction of a message from the sender to the receiver. As a result a sizeable proportion of education students did not understand because the whole notion of mediation, as advocated by Williams and Burden (1997), was overlooked. Mediation within lecture halls should be taken as communication between two different orders of discourse; on one hand, the current levels of students' knowledge and on the other the broader knowledge into which they are being apprenticed and the appropriate language by which it is expressed (Williams and Burden, 1997:67). Communication augments the transferring of knowledge to the students which is the prime responsibility of the educator. Communication as a process is the navigation and assigning of meaning to phenomena. Hence, it becomes important for teacher educators to use the social constructionist framework which considers communication to be the product of the interactants sharing and creating meaning. The foregoing is consistent with phenomenological underpinnings that emphasize dialogue. It is through dialogue that critical, problem solving skills are

sharpened. I find Freire's (1998) observation referred to earlier on quite befitting; that without dialogue there is no communication and without communication there can be no true education.

It was interesting to note that there were a few students who empathized with their lecturers; who acknowledged that lecturers worked against their beliefs and that in the process they also got bored. In other words the implication was that lecturers were aware that their performance was not the best and that this also bored them; as if to say they had no way out of the situation they found themselves in. The general belief was that there were brilliant lecturers who knew what they were talking about but were not performing at their best because of circumstances beyond their control. The issue of teaching in order to cover the syllabus and get marks for examinations was cited as one major cause of inflexible use of the lecture method.

The line of argument that underlines the students' sentiment expressed above is reminiscent of Barr and Tagg's (1995) view that many of the teacher educators feel increasingly constrained by a system increasingly at variance with what they believe. Reading through the student data, I deduced that according to some students lecturer frustration also stemmed from the fact that course content was a given, hence dynamism in lecture delivery was thwarted as lecturers focused on content coverage and examination marks. On further examination of some students' sentiment, some lecturer rigidity in lecture delivery and lack of adaptability and flexibility was really a cause for concern. Data revealed that there were some lecturers "with such limited knowledge of a domain, yet who are teaching within it"; hence, the 'robotic teaching,' (to use some of the lecturers' words).

However, data revealed, there was a small percentage of lecturers who had embarked on the implementation of active learning and they really appeared motivated in the teaching and learning of teacher education students. For example a few lecturers argued that they had to fight and break the traditional system of teaching that pertained in institutions of higher learning. It was quite encouraging to have lecturers who were working towards reconceptualisation of their practice. Buchberger et al (2000:43) contend that "making teacher education as an open and dynamic system a reality, has a host of implications which will sometimes involve the breaking

down of old concepts of teacher education and the teaching profession." They also explain that there are many cogent arguments that these conceptions will have to be replaced by more dynamic conceptions oriented toward a new professionalism in general and pedagogical professionalism in particular. According to Berliner, (2005); Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005) the foregoing exemplifies good teaching, meaning that the educator meets the expectation for the role (for example, upholding the standards of a field of study and other attributes and practices) and effective or successful teaching, meaning the results of the educators' actions on student learning and achievement that is defined as educator quality. Buchberger et al, (2000:53) argue that professionalized models of teacher education aim at the development of a broad repertoire of professional actions which education students may use in a justified and flexible way adapted to individual learners, goals, tasks, contents and situations. The foregoing is possible when the aptitude and the dexterity of teacher educators are positive and rich as a result of updated knowledge.

6.4 Market blind approach

The theme focuses on the contextual aspects of lecture delivery. The theme 'market blind approach', as a metaphor in education, can be exemplified by a manufacturer who embarks on production without a market needs analysis. There was evidence that most teacher educators were preparing teacher education students for teaching and learning in a world that most of them were not familiar with. This sentiment was expressed strongly (as my field notes reflect) by some teacher educators and most teacher education students. Data revealed that there were several lecturers who were last in the schools twenty or thirty years ago and had lost touch with classroom realities, and others had had no school experience at all. Reading through data I concluded that a proportion of lecturers were not in the habit of going and visiting schools in an effort to update themselves with what was happening there. Apparently the reason they gave, which was implied in data, was that they were both experienced and qualified. However, Levine (2006) is of the opinion that it is important to transform education departments from ivory towers into professional schools focused on classroom practice. He further argues that one of the unfortunate

consequences of teacher education's retreat from practice and practitioners is that graduates are not being adequately prepared for the classroom (p, 26).

Because some lecturers were not in touch with what happened in the schools there was a tendency to lean on the traditional "application of theory" model of preservice teacher education where teacher education students were supposed to learn theories at the university and then go to schools to practice or apply what they had learnt on campus. The "central problem that has plagued university preservice teacher education for many years is the disconnect between university teaching and practice teaching in schools" (Zeichner, 2010:89). The foregoing correlates with Feiman-Nemser's (2001:17) findings that students' "experiences are often limited, disconnected from university coursework and inconsistent."

In support of the above ideas data suggested that a sizeable proportion of students were of the opinion that at university content that appeared good was covered but unfortunately it was not related to what was implemented in the schools. Lambert and Ball (1999) suggest that this divide between theory and practice has left a critical gap unattended. For instance teacher candidates could be taught about constructivist theories of learning but constructivist methodology is not modeled by the instructor. This "leaves the students unclear of what these ideas mean, what it might mean to draw on them in practice, and the complications they raise for teaching and learning" (Lambert & Ball, 1999:39).

Data suggested that several lecturers were out of touch with the current goings-on in the schools and that some lecturers shared dated knowledge. Buchberger et al (2000:23) concurs that "curricula of initial teacher education do not always reflect changed and changing roles of teachers and new tasks that the teaching profession is expected to fulfill." Carr (2008) is of the opinion that educators have to be open to new ways of thinking about old issues because they should be wary of believing that they have all the knowledge and importantly experience they require to understand how teacher education students experience their educational journey. In light of the fore mentioned educators' lack of current experience of conditions in schools, they need to challenge themselves to always learn more, to become engaged, to comprehend the

interplay between theory and practice (praxis), and to accept that individuals experience a phenomenon differently.

Data revealed that the majority of the lecturers who had no school experience were those who had joined the university straight from HEIs after completing their Honours or Masters degrees. The argument was that lecturers who come straight from universities after completion of post graduate degrees would have had no time in the schools and as a result they needed to be connected with the schools in order to get a picture of how the school curriculum was structured. The overall deduction was that lecturer knowledge about what went on in the school was limited as a result. Data suggested that there were instances where lecturers confirmed that their approach was "not quite the kind of approach that they use at school level." This line of thought further emphasized the weakness of the application of theory model of teacher education. Data also suggested that a few HoDs echoed similar sentiments that most of the lecturers who taught business subjects, for example, had no prior experiences themselves. They were actually preparing students for the world of work that they had no experience in. It is argued that, that could become problematic when the lecturer had to provide illustrations and model appropriate behaviour.

Arguing about lack of knowledge about what went on in the schools; a few lecturers acknowledged that they did not understand the NCS and the general belief was that that impacted on the way they taught because they did not understand the framework within which they were teaching. Knowing the underlying principles of the NCS implies ideological clarity. It was rather problematic for a teacher educator not to be clear about the ideological foundations of the curriculum because the extent to which educators can understand educational theories, policy developments, and instructional practices corresponds to the ways in which they are able to identify and critically interrogate these underlying basic assumptions (Apple, 2003). As noted by Bartolome (2004:100), lack of political and ideological clarity often translates into teacher educators uncritically accepting the status quo and usually leads the educators down an assimilationist path to teaching rather than a culturally responsive, integrative and transformative pedagogy. Under such circumstances teacher education students are deprived of the opportunity for discussing various perspectives

and approaches to teaching that could lead to development of a composite view of teaching. DoE (2006:14) posits that,

> The IPET curriculum needs to include 'public knowledge' – what teachers need to know and to able to do to become teachers in contemporary institutions – but it usually fails to take account of embedded and unarticulated assumptions about teaching and learning that students bring from their own twelve years of experience as learners in the schools.

The teacher education curriculum should lead the students to interrogate the embedded assumptions. Data revealed that a sizeable number of students were deeply concerned that they had inadequate knowledge about learning areas and assessment standards for specific phases. The respondents found it really frustrating that as teacher education students they had inadequate knowledge about important aspects of their work. The general concern was how they would cope with classroom realities. According to a few students the foregoing sentiment was compounded by the fact that it appeared problematic for lecturers to keep up with the current changes in education. The foregoing correlates with Zeichner's (2010:90) argument that it is very common that "the people teaching the campus courses often know very little about the specific practices used in the classrooms where their students are placed."

Data revealed that a sizeable proportion of lecturers acknowledged that there should be a deliberate focus on the issues that teacher education students were going to meet in the world of work; for example, curriculum statements, assessment standards and the type of texts they were supposed to go and teach. The above response resonates with Levine's (2006:99) findings of a respondent from a college in Southern Carolina who reported that "[an] elementary reading course did not match the state standard or curriculum that was taught in the local schools; the course was described as 'awful' and the approach to literacy was characterized as 'extinct like the dinosaur." Apparently the market blind approach impacted negatively on teacher education students as they got confused when they got to school settings especially during their practice teaching. According to NOCHE & APQC (2003:24) good practice teacher education programmes are aligned to state and national content and pedagogy standards, practice teaching standards and outcomes and the needs of

school customers. It becomes important that teacher education programmes to a greater extent should operate in light of what goes on in the schools.

6.5 Gap between theory and practice

The theme of the gap between theory and practice encapsulates the responses about lecture delivery that focused on theory and practice; that is, how lecture content was applied to classroom practice. Buchberger et al (2000:46) argue that "teacher educators should transform academic knowledge into teaching and learning situations." Willis (2006) believes that it is only when a student can apply theory into practice that one could confirm that learning has taken place. It appeared that most teacher educators' mode of lecture delivery was characterized by a gap between theory and practice. Levine (2006:34) contends that most teacher educators tend to emphasize theory over practice. The foregoing correlates with Bennett et al (2006) who point out that research has revealed that most students indicate that what they learn in course work is not visible in their field experience.

Data revealed that the majority of students were concerned that they were well equipped with theoretical knowledge but usually got confused on its application in the classroom. The foregoing sentiment correlates with one of the respondent's argument in Levine's (2006:39) study who intimated that at the end of the course he "could talk about Carl Jung, scaffolding, cooperative learning groups, the advantages of constructivism, but had no idea what to do when Johnny goes nuts in the back of the class, or when Sue hasn't eaten in three days." Levine goes on to mention that what the respondent described is a symptom of a serious underlying problem described by one education alumnus in his study as "an abyss" between theory and practice. It was evident that some lecturers also acknowledged that university teaching is "basically theoretical and that it has nothing to do with what happens in the schools." Buchberger et al (2000:53) are of the opinion that "it seems to be necessary to integrate practice coherently into all subjects of teacher education." The department of Professional Studies in most institutions seemed to be responsible for giving students grounding in linking theory and practice. However most students and some lecturers had problems with the effectiveness of the knowledge application students received. It appeared that

the problem lay in the fact that the educators who handled theory courses were not necessarily the ones who took the methodology modules. Arguably it is important that both the content and the didactics be handled by the same lecturers as was the case in main studies at most universities. Commenting on the same issue a few HoDs indicated that all main subjects had didactics to which a lot of time was allocated.. While a lot of time was spent on didactics for each subject, most students were of the opinion that the didactic component was not fulfilling its function as it was mainly content followed by writing of essays and research without classroom application.

Talking about gaps between theory and practice a few lecturers indicated that one other cause of the gap between theory and practice was brought about because of the gap there was between the time a skill is taught and the actual time students are expected to go out for practice teaching. The implication of the foregoing sentiment was that there were no structures within some faculties where lecturers guided education students to link theory with practice except when they went for practice. A good example is where a skill was taught to a group of students during first year and the application was implemented in the second year during practice teaching. This is quite a huge gap for students to remember the 'what' and 'how' of the learnt skill. Allsopp's (2006) findings reveal that the close proximity of the university courses to real classrooms allowed teacher candidates to move from theory to practice in real time rather than abstractly, as is usually the case with traditional programmes. Data suggested that the majority of students yearned for opportunities where learnt skills could be put into practice with the lecturers offering guidance and demonstration.

The above pointed to the issue of programme organization; that within the programme there should be adequate time allocated for application of theory. Merrill (2002:48) argues that learning is promoted when knowledge is applied and integrated into the real world. He further explains that most instructional design theories advocate application of knowledge and skill as a necessary condition for effective learning. In other words learning is enhanced when teacher candidates are provided with multiple opportunities to apply what they have learnt in meaningful contexts (Perkins and Unger, 1999:97). Korthagen (2010:103) contends that the situated learning

perspective combined with the perspective of traditional cognitive theory represent two complementary ingredients of an integrated view of learning to teach. This is because learning has it roots in practical situations and is socially constructed. It was evident that most students were of the opinion that their teacher education studies were basically theory and this did not help them much when they went for practice teaching. There was a general consensus among education students that as their degree was in education they should be able at the end of the day to teach children but unfortunately because their lectures were theory based they realized by the end of the fourth year that still they had some gaps in knowledge. According to Allsopp (2006) teacher educators have a difficulty facilitating connections between theory and practice because they do not have first hand exposure to their students' practice teaching sites. The foregoing results in the gap between what students see when they are in the classroom and what they learn in their courses.

With the evidence that supported the fact that there was a gap between teaching and practice I was of the opinion that some of the teacher education programmes were characterized by what I termed design dissonance; a design that is characterized by what Angelo (1999:114) coins as a vaccination model of learning that assumes that a dose of methodology course cures teaching ills for the rest of the practice teaching programme. This is supported by a sentiment that was advanced by a few students who indicated that out of ten modules only one was set aside for skills development. Hence, the advanced argument is that, if the focus is on teacher training, then there is need for a system that is basically practical; we cannot educate teachers through a system that is informational because teaching is practical. Shanker (1996:221) admonishes teacher education for "presenting knowledge in a piecemeal and disconnected manner. Theory is unrelated to practice; content knowledge is disconnected from teaching methods; instructional practices are unrelated to learning and development." This opinion is also echoed by the National Commission for Excellence in Teacher Education (cited in Burnstein, Kretschmer, Smith, & Gudoski, 1999:109): "Teacher preparation programs often fail to link theory with practice, leave content area knowledge disconnected from methods, and do a poor job of relating instructional practices to learning and development."

Darling-Hammond (2006:309) argues that the general weakness of traditional program models is that they are largely collections of unrelated courses and this notion tends to reinforce the low regard that individuals have about teacher education. Within the dominant "application of theory" model of preservice teacher education, prospective teachers are supposed to learn theories at the university and then go to schools to practise or apply what they learned on campus (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999). Hence the disconnect between what students are taught in campus courses and their opportunities for learning to enact these practices in school placements is often very great (Bullough et al., 1997). Therefore, it becomes imperative that as teacher education programmes are planned, focus should be on the product, namely, teacher candidates. Teacher education programmes should be characterized by particular design fundamentals; for instance, a) efficiency; programmes should produce a teacher who is functionally sound and skilful in dealing with learners, b) adaptability; programmes should produce a teacher who can retool quickly in light of the dynamic societal circumstances, and c) flexibility; programmes should produce a teacher who can deal with learners from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds.

Buchberger et al (2000:45) are of the opinion that teacher education has to support teacher education students so that they can develop those abilities and attitudes that seem to be necessary to meet the professional task of the teaching profession competently and reflectively. It is important therefore to structure initial courses and practice teaching experiences in ways that create a greater nexus between them in order to provide students with a context for beginning the foregoing transformation. Allsopp's (2006) findings support the view that instead of having education students spend their initial year on observing school teachers implementing instructional behavioural practices they are learning about in their courses, it was evident that education candidates benefited more from courses that emphasized structured experiences where they were able to apply course content. In other words students should be immersed into practice from the onset. The implication is that education students need opportunities to apply theory into practice from their first year; contrary to the notion expressed by some lecturers that first year education students are not yet ready for application. It was rather encouraging to note that some

educators were really challenged by the gap that was there between theory and practice. About 20% of the lecturers indicated that the greatest challenge that they had as teacher educators was to develop a conceptual link between content and practice because the argument they held was that unless the link was forged then all effort was wasted. As a result "the focus should be on the studying and learning processes of education students and on the design of learning situations in which education students can find ample opportunity to develop structures of meaning, knowledge and action" (Buchberger et al, 2000:46).

Data suggested that a majority of education students echoed a similar version of the following concern; "How do we apply the theories we are learning to the problems we confront in our classes?" It was evident that the majority of students looked forward to being told the 'how' of each and every theory learnt. Embedded in the question stated above was a genuine concern about the relevance of theory to practice, but also a serious misconception about what it means to apply theory to a practical situation. Teacher candidates were legitimately concerned that the theories they learnt had little, if anything, to do with the problems they encountered in the complex and messy world of the classroom. The concern was that there was a mismatch or even worse, an unbridgeable gap between educational theory and the practice of teaching.

Aside from this genuine concern, there was also a misconception shared by many education students that educational theories are established facts or undisputable truths that had direct application to the classroom. In this view, good theories should be directly applicable to real life and could be plugged into actual situations and yield direct results. The problem was with the false assumption that there was a direct or causal connection between educational theory and the practice of teaching, "as though one could apply a given theory to a classroom situation like one applies a proven remedy to a disease" (Gordon 2007: vii). Data suggested that it was believed that theories could be taken in their entirety without any modification or adjustment and put into practice in a particular classroom. In short, most teacher education students falsely assumed that there was a one-to-one relationship between theory and practice.

Therefore the purpose of bridging theory and practice in teacher education is to address both the concerns of teacher candidates and their misconceptions about the relation of theory and practice in education. Smith (2007:38) postulates that "a given practice may reflect several different theories about how people learn; at the same time, belief in a particular theory might give way to numerous ways of approaching instruction." Basmadjian (2007:102) argues that the goal in bridging the gap between theory and practice should be to empower teacher candidates "to work in the space between theory and practice, where they must continuously negotiate issues of control and freedom, chaos and uncertainty." According to Gordon (2007: xii) teacher educators should help teacher candidates understand the link between educational theory and the practice of teaching as something that is complex and ambiguous rather than clear and distinct. Teacher education students should appreciate that theories provide them with a frame of reference and a language with which to name and critically analyze many of the problems they would face as teachers. They should understand that the significance of theory is in its ability to define the problems that they face, clarify their confusions, and suggest possible solutions to these problems. Once theories are viewed as guides to thought and instruments of interpretation rather than as established facts, it becomes clear that theories can not simply be plugged into a particular classroom. Instead, a theory must be applied in more nuanced and contextual ways, taking into account the social-historical context in which it was created as well as various particulars of each classroom situation.

The above experiences would enhance flexibility, adaptability and versatility that would lead teacher education students to be autonomous in making choices within classrooms (Hickman and Silva, 1984:47). Teacher candidates should, as a result, develop skills to challenge what ever is presented: reflect upon issues within the context in which we find ourselves in South Africa; and look inwardly to encompass their own beliefs, actions and ideas so that they might in the end come to know themselves a little better – both as teachers and as individuals. The foregoing skill is important as South African classrooms are characterized by diversity; to this extent there is no given way of teaching. By giving students steps and teaching outcomes a few lecturers argued that they were developing what they referred to as

"robot teach" where students' thinking was not called for. Teacher education students should cope within a dynamic environment. Teacher educators should use Kimbell and Stables' (2007) capability approach in order for education students to have confidence, competence and motivation to choose and to be. In other words, importance should be attached to sharpening students' capabilities in order to enable them adapt to a variety of situations.

Above all teacher education students should be made aware and appreciate that "the most successful teachers are those who undergo specialized training from the moment they graduate and continue to engage in periodic substantive professional development through the course of their careers" (Patterson & Manning, 2008:251). The foregoing argument is endorsed by one of the seven Norms and Standards for Educators that stipulates that educators should be scholars, researchers and life long learners. So in this regard education students should be encouraged to appreciate the idea of going to learn and enhance particular skills during practice teaching as this is but the first step in their career development.

6.6 The taken for granted school roles in teacher education

The theme 'taken for granted assumptions about the role of schools in teacher education' focuses on the observation that teacher educators take for granted the role of the school in teacher education without making deliberate and clearly spelt out links with the schools where teacher education students go for their practice teaching. According to Ross, Brownell, and Sindelar (1999) schools and universities must critically examine the core assumptions that guide how they do their work. Both schools and universities must be open to new ideas regarding their goals and operating structures, and they must be open to the possibility of redefining existing roles. Apparently there was a general belief among some teacher educators that there were certain components of teacher education that they believed were supposed to be imparted by schools where students do their practice teaching. A few lecturers were of the opinion that aspects such as record keeping, planning and other administrative skills could be dealt with at school level. The justification given was that learning to teach is career long, that is, as long as one is a teacher one keeps on learning.

However the foregoing was one of the issues that teacher education students reacted to with strong emotions. They felt that it is these aspects that they are left to go and learn at school that make them very uncomfortable as they tend to lose confidence when they get to schools.

In one memorable interaction a few students argued that if all teaching skills they needed were learnt at school, then why should they waste huge sums of money for courses that would not benefit them? They would rather go straight into the schools and learn from there. Levine (2006:31) contends that "one of the unfortunate consequences of teacher education's retreat from practice and practitioners is that graduates are not being adequately prepared for the classroom." Although there is a growing consensus that much of what students need to learn must be learnt in and from practice rather than in preparing for practice (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005), there is much disagreement about the conditions for teacher learning that must exist for this learning in and from practice to be educative and enduring (Zeichner, 2010:91).

It was evident that there was a clash of expectations between some teacher educators and some schools as far as the level of skill development in teacher education students was concerned. For instance some schools expected to receive knowledgeable and skilled students while some lecturers expected students to go and acquire certain knowledge and skills from the schools. This was confirmed by a few lecturers who were of the opinion that most school teachers were not comfortable having second year student teachers teach in their classes. It was evident that with the clash of expectations the teacher education student was caught up in the middle and hence was a victim of circumstances beyond his/her control. It light of the fore mentioned it was concluded that the teacher educators have taken the school role in the teaching and learning of education students for granted without making a deliberate link and clarifying the role of the schools in the process.

On the other hand there were departments that held seminars and workshops with the schools that hosted students but data revealed that a lot still needed to be done in this regard in order to get the support that lecturers expected. The foregoing sentiment resonates with the European Commission's (2007:1) report that indicated

that in many Member States of the European Union, relationships between teacher education institutions (TEIs) and schools have often encountered difficulties:

- ❖ it has often been a one-sided relationship, in which the school is the passive recipient of education students and in which most power lies with the HEI;
- ❖ communication between the two parties has not always been optimal; and
- ❖ schools may have negative perceptions of TEIs and vice versa.

The fact that some schools react negatively could be an indication that those schools do not consider themselves as part of the teacher education process and they also expect education students to join them with a certain level of competence contrary to expecting them to help teacher education students to master teaching skills as expected by some teacher educators. Data suggested that the relationship that pertained between some TEIs and schools was one sided, in which the school was the passive recipient of trainee teachers and in which most power lay with the TEI. Gorodetsky, Barak and Hadari (2007:27) reiterate that even in the current wave of school-university partnerships in teacher education, universities continue to maintain hegemony over the construction and dissemination of knowledge and schools remain in the position of practice fields where students are to try out the practices provided by the university. Such an arrangement is however, fraught with weaknesses, as Zeichner (2010:90) argues that it is very common for mentor teachers to know very little about the specifics of the methods and foundation courses that their student teachers have completed on campus, and teacher educators often know very little about the specific practices used in the classroom where their students are placed.

Data suggested that communication between some TEIs and schools were not always optimal. Lecturer expectations and the role of the school during practice teaching were not clearly communicated to mentors. As a result more often than not schools had negative perceptions of TEIs and vice versa. The European Commission (2007:1) policy stresses that the contribution that a TEI can make to a school's programme of continuous professional development for its staff, the contribution that

student teachers can make to school development, or the contributions that school staff can make to teacher education have not always been recognized, leading to wasted opportunities. However despite these facts, there were some teacher educators who held a different view; who were of the opinion that it was their duty to ensure that teacher education students mastered adequate teaching skills.

It was evident that during practice teaching teacher educators leave the whole exercise of choosing mentors for education students to the schools but this was rather problematic as some of the mentors were not willing. Levine (2006:40) argues that "too many schools of education pay inadequate attention to where they place students and fail both to supervise them carefully and to provide them with meaningful feedback." The foregoing resonates with Darling-Hammond's (2005) sentiment that too often students are left to work out the daily business of student teaching by themselves with little guidance and connection to campus courses and it is often assumed that good teaching practices are caught rather than taught. If a teacher is not willing to mentor a student then relationships become strained between the two of them. This has a negative impact on the education student as far as skills development is concerned.

From the response it is evident that the tension between mentor and the education student creates discomfort in students. Most of the respondents believed that it was fair if schools totally declined accepting them. The respondents felt that it was important for lecturers to evaluate the schools and mentors that they would be attached to. Teacher education students expected to be attached to willing mentors who would guide them to develop into the kinds of graduate teachers that they should be; the kinds of quality teachers HEIs were aiming at. What this means is that teacher educators should have a specific criteria for selecting mentors for education students. AFT (2000:16) argues that schools where education students are placed are often selected because of their proximity to the campus or to students' homes or their willingness to participate and not on their academic reputation. So to this end it is important that strong links are built between teacher education programmes and schools.

The concept of making a link between teacher education institutions and schools could be informed by Teitel's (2003) concept of Professional Development Schools (PDS). Teitel explains how schools could be made extensions of universities. As hybrid institutions formed by university and school partners they can, a) bridge the gap between the two sectors; b) bridge the gap between theory and practice; c) facilitate renewal in both school and university as a result of shared knowledge and d) enhance both teacher educator and student learning. Only when close links have been created between HEIs and schools, could those schools take pride in receiving and being tutor teachers for teacher education students. According to the report of the European Commission (2007:6) teachers in the schools would begin to build a perception of mutual interdependence that "we are in this together." The report goes on to explain that the link between teacher education and schools facilitates education as transformation as teacher educators would be in touch with current demands from the community.

Zeichner (2010) proposes the creation of third spaces in teacher education. Third-space is concerned with the creation of hybrid spaces in teacher education programmes that bring together school mentors, teacher educators and academic knowledge in new ways to enhance student learning. Contrary to the traditional disconnection between teacher education and schools and to the valorisation of academic knowledge as the authoritative source of knowledge for learning about teaching in traditional university models of teacher education, third spaces bring mentors and academic knowledge in less hierarchical ways to create new learning opportunities for teacher candidates. Creating third spaces in teacher education involves an equal and more dialectical relationship between academic and practitioner knowledge in support of student learning. Gorodetsky and Barak (2008) are of the view that third space in school-university partnership in teacher education encourages a more egalitarian status for participants than conventional school-university partnerships. Examples of hybrid spaces that could be created in teacher education include, a) bringing mentors and their knowledge into campus courses and field experiences; b) incorporating representations of teachers' practices in campus

courses; and c) mediated instruction and field experiences where method courses could be school based.

6.7 Staff development issues

The theme focuses on the academic and professional growth of teacher education lecturers and how they measure up to expectations of quality teaching. According to Buchberger et al (2000:65) high quality teacher education depends on high quality teacher educators. As alluded to earlier, Krishnaveni and Anitha (2007) argue that the aptitude and dexterity of the teacher educator are positive and rich when the knowledge is updated. Commenting along the same lines one lecturer was of the opinion that, "Unless you change and grow with that world then you are not going to make it." The implication of the sentiment is that lecturers should keep abreast of knowledge; to be on the cutting edge. Otherwise, they would not be successful in their endeavours. This means that teacher educators should engage in research as part of their work. According to Hill et al (2003:17) the nexus between teaching and research is highly influential. Research provides an added dimension to teaching and allows the development of a collaborative relationship between lecturer and students within a learning community. However, contrary to the above conceptualization Rowland et al (1998) reject the notion of an automatic synergistic relationship between teaching and research, arguing that they do not necessarily complement each other. They identify a reconceptualisation of the role of teacher educators within an increasing separation of research and teaching.

Data suggested that there were several constraints that respondents identified pertaining to teaching and research. It was evident that some lecturers were not accorded the space for research. Most of the respondents believed that there was lack of trust between the administration and the teaching staff. A few lecturers believed that if they were to succeed then opportunities to do research were indispensable. The argument was that the success of lecturers was dependent on research. But however, data revealed that the issue of research remained a challenge to most lecturers. Support from administrative staff in some universities was inadequate. Data revealed that in some instances there was lack of trust between staff and administration as far

as granting of leave to do research was concerned. As a result certain members of staff were of the opinion that their integrity was being eroded. The general sentiment expressed was that lecturers needed academic freedom, the freedom to think and to become through creation of space for staff to do research. The lack of trust by administration however impacts negatively on lecturer morale. The flexibility and the teaching prowess in lecturers (Krishnaveni and Anitha 2007,) were compromised. With the foregoing lecturer sentiments I began to understand why some students expressed disenchantment about the quality of lecturers. It was evident that the need for research in teacher education can never be overemphasized. Research would enable lecturers to bring into a subject new and exciting body of knowledge that would challenge the students. It is also important, especially in the South African context where the focus is on quality as transformative learning, to base teaching on research so as to align content with current societal needs. According to Hill et al (2003) knowledge creation is one of the basic concepts used to describe an organization's ability to cope with change. A lecturer who knows more in his subject is not challenged by students' questions.

However, data revealed that there was quite a sizeable number of lecturers who were still lacking in the area of research. It was evident that most universities still had a lot to do among the members of staff as far as research was concerned. It appeared that holding research in low esteem was common among some members of staff in some universities. Lecturers should act as spearheads in education development. Data suggested that in some institutions new members of staff were not inducted into programmes. The general sentiment was that new members of staff were thrown into the deep end to find their own way out. The foregoing correlates with the sentiment expressed by Buchberger et al (2000:65) that coherent initial education for teacher educators or measures for an induction into the profession cultures of teacher education do not generally exist. The situation is exacerbated by the observation that "most teacher educators such as professors and lecturers in the field of education have never received education and training in methodologies of teaching, cooperation and learning appropriate for adult learners" (Buchberger et al 2000:58).

They further argue that coherent staff development programmes for teacher educators should be introduced.

Teacher educators also indicated that their research efforts were constrained by lecturer overload. The congested time tables left some teacher educators with no time for research. The foregoing correlates with the Brew's (1999:291) idea that "key features of the changes in higher education which have a bearing on, and are contributing to, changes in the relationship between teaching and research include the move to a mass higher education system and the amount of time available both for teaching and for research." This is a serious limitation because as alluded to earlier on, knowledge creation is one of the basic concepts used to describe an organization's ability to cope with change.

6.8 Achievement of quality

In order to make an informed discussion pertaining to the achievement of quality in teaching and learning of teacher education students, Levine's (2006:21) nine point template was used as criteria to arrive at conclusions.

Table 6.1 Nine point template for judging quality

Standard	Description
1. Purpose	The program's purpose is explicit, focusing on the education of teachers; the goals reflect the needs of today's teachers, schools, and children; and the definition of success is tied to student learning in the graduates' classrooms.
2. Curricular Coherence	The curriculum mirrors program purposes and goals. It is rigorous, coherent, and organized to teach the skills and knowledge needed by teachers at specific types of schools and at the various stages of their careers.
3. Curricular Balance	The curriculum integrates the theory and practice of teaching, balancing study in university classrooms and work in schools with successful practitioners.
4. Faculty composition	The faculty includes academics and practitioners, who are experts in teaching, up to date in their field, intellectually productive, and have their feet planted in both teacher education and the schools they serve.
5. Admission	Admissions criteria are designed to recruit students with the capacity and motivation to become successful teachers.
6. Degrees	Graduation standards are high, students are adequately prepared for the classroom, and the degrees awarded are appropriate to the profession.
7. Research	Research carried out in the program is of high quality, driven by practice, and useful to practitioners and/or policy makers.
8. Finances	Resources are adequate to support the program.
9. Assessment	The program engages in continuing self-assessment and improvement of its performance.

Adapted from Levine (2006:20)

From the nine point scale, a six point scale in line with the research was derived, and applied using the data. Table 6.2 summarizes the extent to which quality was achieved in teacher education.

Table 6.2 Achievement of quality in teacher education

Criterion	Generally meets criterion	Explanation
Curricular Coherence • Curriculum is rigorous, coherent, and organized to teach the skills and knowledge needed by teachers at specific types of schools and at the various stages of their careers.	To a less extent	Data suggested that in some instances the organization of skills development was characterized by design dissonance in the sense that theory courses were not immediately translated into practice. Skills development was not catered for during module teaching. The idea of having courses such as curriculum studies/professional studies/pedagogics focusing on skills development was not meeting the needs of most students as some students reflected inadequacies when they got to schools for practice teaching.
Curricular balance • Curriculum integrates the theory and practice of teaching.	No	There was a general gap between theory and practice in teacher education. There was little connection between what education students learned in university classes and with students' practice teaching experiences. Some teacher educators had no knowledge of what is going on in the schools. Involvement of teacher educators during practice teaching was insufficient. Hence performance of some students was insufficiently monitored.
Faculty composition • Faculty composed of scholars and practitioners, up to date in their fields, intellectually productive, and having their feet planted simultaneously in the department and the schools. • Total faculty numbers and fields of expertise aligned with curriculum and student enrollment.	To a less extent	Data revealed that more common are teacher educators without recent experience in schools. Their concentration was more on lecturing than updating their knowledge as far as classroom practice was concerned. Some educators believed that research was not significant in their teaching. Large enrollments have led to depletion in lecturer student ratio. This resulted in non subject specialists' practice teaching critiquing; which was rather a disadvantage to the students. This was compounded by the fact that (as data reveals) some lecturers had limited knowledge of subject areas they taught.
Research • Research high quality, driven by practice, and useful to practitioners and/ or policy makers.	No	Data suggested that some teacher educators believed that research was not important. They expressed concern that faculties were emphasizing research and publication at the expense of quality teaching. Other lecturers asserted that staff development efforts were suppressed by administration for various reasons. Work load was also singled out as one factor that hindered research. Hence there was a dearth of research on the ground especially in the field of teacher education.
Admissions • Admissions criteria designed to recruit students with the capacity and motivation to become successful school teachers.	No	Data revealed that both lecturers and HoDs were concerned about the quality of input i.e. that students enrolled in teacher education programmes were not the cream of the crop. The argument was that students must comply with the requirements to study towards the degree – then you could have a better quality student. Hadland (2009:29) concurs that universities "draw on a school system that was simply not preparing young people to succeed at tertiary level."

Assessment • Continuing self assessment and performance improvement	To a less extent	Some HoDs believed that some teacher educators implemented continuous self assessment but however, that they still needed to reflect more on those in order to improve their performances.

From Table 6.2 it is evident that teacher educators have improvements to implement in order to realize quality in teaching and learning of education students. The greatest improvement lecturers should make is to start by reflecting on their own practices and to question their long held assumptions about teacher education in order to improve their own practice. In other words quality teacher education should start with lecturer improvement because lecturers can not give what they do not have. The findings resonate with Metcalfe's (2008) debate that "the hard reality is that we are not making the progress we need in the two most critical dimensions of education: quality and equity."

6.9 Summary

The discussion of findings was categorized according to the themes that emerged; namely, interactivity in lecture halls; lecturers' espoused theory versus theory in use; market blind approach; gap between theory and practice; the taken for granted assumptions about the role of schools in teacher education and staff development issues. The following are main threads drawn from the discussion of each theme.

6.9.1 Interactivity in lecture halls

Data revealed that there were a few lecturers who were implementing active/interactive/participatory learning within their classes, practices that were reminiscent of constructivist principles. However, within the active learning environments, it is argued, there should be infusion of varied learning styles so as to maximize student learning. Apparently active learning imposes particular demands on the lecturer, for instance, a lecturer should have a sound knowledge base. While linking research with teaching was queried by some lecturers, current research reveals that the need for research cannot be overemphasized as educators are

teaching in times of overwhelming socio-economic changes. Discussion about lecturing cannot be complete without incorporating issues of assessment, because research has revealed that assessment promotes greater student involvement in learning. Data revealed that lecturers had varied procedures for assessment although a few lecturers queried the feasibility of their implementation considering the large student numbers. As far as student evaluation of teaching is concerned, there were also a few dissenting voices. Some lecturers questioned the capacity of students to evaluate teaching, and correlated their argument with Meno's paradox.

6.9.2 Lecturers' espoused theory versus theory in use

Reading through data there was evidence of a generally sharp contrast between what teacher educators presented as their modus operandi and how teacher education students expressed the ways they were taught and learnt. While lecturers discussed active learning, learning as a conversation, as well as making lectures as interactive as possible; students were of the opinion that lectures were basically talk and chalk, one way communication, and with lecturers projecting data on overhead transparencies just as if it were from text books. With the evidence before me I concluded that the students' voices represented the lecturers' theory in use, while the lecturers' voices represented their espoused theory. Writers like Barr and Tagg, (1995), and Levine (2006) contend that while the rhetoric of teaching and learning is rooted in the information age, its practice is firmly grounded in the traditional era. The foregoing was compounded by the fact that several students were of the opinion that some lecturers' communication skills were poor.

Lecturers' tendency to use the lecture method has, however, been justified on the grounds that lecturers are frustrated by existing structures that thwart their efforts in both their academic and professional development. However, Elton (1998) argues that there has to be a change in attitude amongst certain academics who believe that their main task is to profess their discipline.

6.9.3 Market blind approach

It was evident reading through the data that some lecturers were preparing education students for a world that they were not familiar with. Some lecturers had been in higher education for 20-30 years and had really lost touch with what was happening in the schools. Hence the content of some lectures, as some of the students indicated, was not related to practice. The lack of knowledge of what was going on in the schools was compounded by the fact that some lecturers had been recruited straight from their post graduate studies without school experience at all. One lecturer also queried how it was possible for individuals without teaching experience to be allowed to "churn out teachers when they had no experience themselves." Having no knowledge of what pertains in schools had some serious implications for teacher education. For instance, one lecturer revealed that he had no knowledge of the NCS and where they came from. However, it is important for educators to appreciate what it means to be educated, for what purpose, for what kind of society, and towards what future (Apple, 2003). These views, in part, determine the nature of the actions educators take in the realm of education and instruction. The extent to which educators could understand educational theories, policy developments, and instructional practices corresponds to the ways in which they are able to identify and critically interrogate these underlying basic assumptions.

6.9.4 Gap between theory and practice

There was a general belief among most students and some lecturers that lecture delivery within some education departments was characterized by a gap between theory and practice. Hence most students found this to be problematic as they were lacking in application skills. While it was general practice in most departments to have a subject like professional studies/curriculum studies, some lecturers and some students questioned the effectiveness of content covered within these subjects. Some respondents were of the belief that the impact of professional studies on skills development was insignificant. Several students were also concerned that the main subject didactic component was mainly theory instead of practice. Apparently the other cause of the gap between theory and practice emanated from the

structure of the modules. Data revealed that there was no provision during module teaching to link theory and practice except when students went out for practice teaching; which was a huge gap between theory and practice. From the foregoing it was argued that programmes were characterized by design dissonance. There is need to develop teaching skills in students from their first year so as to ensure adequate mastery. In addition the need to inculcate in students flexibility and adaptability cannot be overemphasized to enable students to cope in multicultural and dynamic teaching situations.

6.9.5 The taken for granted school roles in teacher education

It was evident that some lecturers omitted components of student content, for example, lesson planning and assessment, in the belief that these would be learnt at schools during practice teaching. In other words, some lecturers assumed too much as far as the role of the school in teacher education is concerned. Hence, generally there were inadequate arrangements or programmes put in place to link schools and teacher education. Literature reveals that because of this one sided relationship, in which the school is a passive recipient of students, communication between the two parties has not always been optimal.

Students expressed concern that when they got to schools, teachers often had high expectations from them as far as teaching was concerned; they were frustrated when they could not live up to expectations. Therefore it is important that education programmes should have strong links with the schools. Such decisions could be informed, for example, by Teitel's (2003) concept of professional development schools (PDS). It is through such links that schools could identify themselves with teacher education programmes. Literature reveals that the link improves student learning.

6.9.6 Staff development issues

It was apparent reading through data that academic and professional growth of teacher educators hinges on updating knowledge; because as one lecturer intimated, "unless you change and grow with that world you are not going to make it." However, both literature and some lecturers rejected the notion of an automatic synergistic

relationship between teaching and research, arguing that these were two independent fields. But, nonetheless, on the whole there was a general consensus among academics that in these changing times, the need for research can not be overemphasized.

Large classes and heavy work loads, as well as inadequate support from some departments were isolated as some of the factors that held back individual staff development efforts. The foregoing has serious implications for teacher education as knowledge creation is a cornerstone of quality teaching and learning.

6.9.7 Achievement of quality

The evidence, portrayed in the data, of quality deficits in teaching and learning of teacher education students is clear. Using six out of Levine's (2006:21) nine point template for judging quality in teacher education programmes, data suggested that teacher educators were beset with some hurdles to cross towards realization of quality teacher education in the following aspects; curricular coherence, curricular balance, faculty composition, research, admissions and assessment. For instance in the aspects of

a) curricular coherence: data revealed that some students believed that in some instances what they were taught was rather dislocated and distant from classroom practice. In other words, in most cases there was no link between university teaching and classroom practice;

b) curricular balance: evidence portrayed by data was that more time was spent on theoretical courses compared to practice, for example, some students indicated that of the ten modules that they were studying, one focused on practice and ten of them focused on theory. The imbalance had serious implications for skills development. Teacher educators can not succeed in training effective and efficient teachers through a system that is basically informational;

c) Faculty composition: data revealed that teacher educators without recent experience in schools were more common than those with recent or current experience. Some teacher educators concentrated more on lecturing than on updating

their knowledge as far as classroom teaching was concerned. Large enrollment was singled out as one of the impediments towards realization of quality;

d) Research: data revealed that some lecturers were concerned that faculties were emphasizing research and publication at the expense of teaching. Their concern was proof that these lecturers did not see the importance of research in their teaching. Other lecturers expressed the sentiment that their research efforts were repressed by administration for various reasons;

e) Admission: data suggested that both lecturers and HoDs were concerned about the quality of input, that is, of students enrolled in the teacher education programmes, that often they were students who could not be enrolled by other departments because of their low matriculation pass rates. One lecturer expressed the sentiment that these students were "nice to work with but their intellectual capacities are not always excellent,"

f) Assessment: some HoDs believed that some teacher educators implemented continuous self assessment but however that they still needed to reflect more on those self assessments in order to improve their performances.

The following Chapter 7 is the final chapter of the study. It summarizes, concludes and gives recommendations based on the findings.

Chapter 7
Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1. Introduction

The major purpose of the study was to understand how teacher educators in South African universities prepare education students for teaching and learning within a context of quality. It is hoped that the study would benefit, first, the educators that participated in the study and secondly other institutions that offer similar teacher education programmes. It is believed that through this study teacher educators would not only review their practices, but would also question their long held assumptions about their role in teacher education. It is in this way that quality learning could be enhanced as teacher educators shift their foci from lecturing to student learning. Research has revealed that achievement of quality teacher education within HEIs has a positive impact on learners in the schools.   The summary of findings is organized around how the research question, ('how do teacher educators in South African universities prepare teacher education students for teaching and learning within a context of quality') was answered, that is, in light of the research findings is made. The section culminates in a theory that suggests how teacher educators are teaching and preparing teacher candidates for teaching and learning. Before the recommendations are made a brief conclusion of the study is made followed by a revisit to some of the limitations of the study.

7.2 Answering the research question

The focus of the study was on teaching and learning of teacher education students in South African universities within a context of quality. The major question that guided the study was how do teacher educators in South African universities prepare teacher education students for teaching and learning within a context of

quality? The findings suggest the following answers to given subsections of the question.

7.2.1 Lecture delivery

In discussing about how lectures were delivered, data reveals that there was rather a sharp contrast between students' and lecturers' responses. Lecturers coined their lecture delivery as characterized with interactivity, multi-voices, dialogue and active learning while on the other hand students complained about the chalk and talk and one way nature of lecture delivery which was described by some students as boring. With the foregoing realization, as argued in the discussion chapter, I concluded that the lecturers' responses reflected their espoused theory and the students' responses reflected the lecturers' theory in use. While lecturers' espoused theory was rooted in the learning paradigm; their theory in use was rooted in the traditional era. Barr and Tagg (1995) contend that the instruction paradigm is the theory-in-use for most lecturers, yet the espoused theory for most of them resembles components of the learning paradigm. Levine (2006:61) echoes the same sentiment that while the rhetoric of teaching and learning is rooted in the information age, its practice is firmly grounded in the traditional era; where "educators overshadow students and teaching eclipses learning."

Hence, to most lecturers, despite the periodic modernization of the curriculum, little has changed in the basic assumptions as to how teacher education programmes are implemented. The lecturing method in some teacher education programmes remain the constant of university teaching. As a result, most students were disenchanted with lectures as they believed that some of them were basically talk and chalk characterized by one way communication. Data reveals that some HoDs echoed the same sentiment that lecturing remains the basic method for most lecturers. Data suggests that most lecturers emphasized the lecture method at the expense of practice; an aspect that most students found to be problematic as they believed that their teaching skills development was not being addressed. Based on the findings, the technical-rationality model, Figure 7.1 represents my understanding of how teacher

educators prepared student teachers for teaching and learning and because there was less focus on student learning, the issue of quality remained elusive.

Educational knowledge   Teacher educator notes   Teacher educator lecturing   Education student teaching
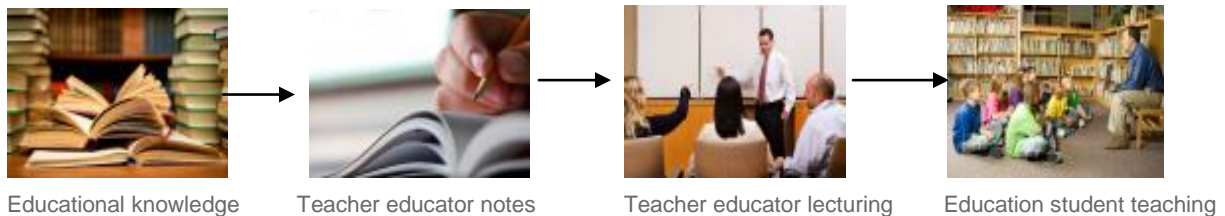
Figure 7.1 Technical-rationality model of teacher education

The first assumption behind the model is that, the lecturer who has the knowledge gives education students doses of theory with the hope that these would help students perform during teaching practice. The second assumption is that the theory selected by teacher educators and transmitted to students within the lecture halls would meet the professional needs of all students during teaching practice. In the final analysis, the one way process of teacher preparation does not give room for students to reflect on their field experiences.

Basing teaching and learning solely on the lecture method is contrary to some research findings that emphasize the need to cater for students' varied learning styles. This is because a proficient student is not someone who demonstrates capability within a narrow band of activities, as defined by a particular learning style, but rather, someone who demonstrates the ability to select an appropriate learning style from a range according to the demands of the situation and their own learning capability, (Dunn, Dunn and Price, 1985). In any case, as one student indicated, "not all of us learn through chalk and talk." Robotham (1999) argues that where there is lack of congruence between the preferred learning style(s) of individuals and the approach adopted by the educator, the student may mentally opt out of the programme although physically attending. The quality of lectures was further compromised by the fact that some students were of the opinion that some lecturers had poor communication skills coupled by the fact that some lectures were simply chunks from text books, read as they were. As a result some students indicated that they were not motivated to attend some lectures.

Nonetheless, findings also reveal that there were a few lecturers who were implementing active/ participatory learning within lectures; lecturers who attached importance to students' active engagement during classes. The dialogue approach was justified on the premise that it enhanced meaning making and the development of critical thinking among students. Apparently most students believed that these lecturers engaged them in the learning process that they will remember those years after leaving teacher education.

7.2.2 Assessment

Data reveals that a sizeable number of lecturers had several procedures for assessing students' performance ranging from individual and group assignments, tests, essays and students presentation. What several students found to be problematic was that performance assessment tended to be mono focal in the sense that even in the area of professional studies which was supposed to be practical some students had to submit essays and assignments. In this way the whole process of teacher education was rendered to be basically informational instead of being practical. Data also suggests that when it came to practice teaching supervision lecturers were allocated students at random despite their areas of subject specialization. A good proportion of students did not find non subject specialist critic worthwhile. Hence some of these activities were rendered fruitless.

Data reveals that some lecturers found student evaluation of teaching a valuable exercise as it afforded them feedback about the effectiveness of their instruction. However, the majority of lecturers did not believe that students had the capacity to evaluate their teaching. They believed that their argument resonated with Meno's paradox, that is, how can students know the lecture content when they had not yet come across it? The implication of the foregoing debate was that the lecturer assigned himself the position of the knower and the students were taken as empty vessels waiting to be filled in with knowledge; an approach fraught with inadequacies as far as student meaningful learning is concerned.

7.2.3 Teaching skills development

Data suggests that to most students and even to some lecturers the area of teaching skills development was seriously lacking. This is because during module teaching there was no provision for the development of teaching skills in students. Some lecturers resorted to theoretical description of skills which students found to be in effective. In actual fact what this meant was that there was a gap between theory and practice. Practice teaching was singled out as the period during which students go to apply what they learn during lectures to the classroom. This was a huge gap between theory and classroom application. Skills development was characterized by an injection model approach, where it is argued that some lecturers believed that the doses of theory during lectures would cure all ills pertaining to teaching skills. This form of design dissonance that characterized some programmes has serious implications for student learning because a student is considered to have learnt when he/she has increased his/her options for applying learnt knowledge to specific set of circumstances, (Willis, 2006).

7.2.4 Practice teaching/teaching experience

Data reveals that practice teaching duration of six weeks in a year and twenty four weeks over four years was common practice within teacher education departments. Some lecturers and students believed that time allocation was adequate while others argued that it was not. The new arrangement of allocating practice teaching to the fourth year within some departments was not taken positively by some students. The general belief was that by the fourth year when they went out for practice teaching they would be as inadequate as the first year students. The fact that some students were not happy with their new curriculum was proof that the changes made did not take into account students' needs. In other words the new curriculum was founded on inadequate consultations.

Pertaining to the organization of practice teaching there was a general belief that those who lecture in methodology should be responsible for practice teaching supervision. While this could have been a noble idea, however, large student numbers, in some instances, were prohibitive. There was also an observation by some

lecturers that some students were allocated to unwilling mentors when they got into schools for practice teaching; an aspect that could impact negatively on a student's learning experiences as cooperation from teacher tutors could be minimal. Data reveals that some lecturers were of the opinion that mentoring in most cases did not match universities' expectations. The foregoing observation was a result of the fact that there was a weak link between teacher education and some schools. There was evidence that some departments had programmes in place to improve on the link between teacher education and schools, for example, seminars and incentives for hosting teachers; but despite the fact, meaningful links were not yet established. Data reveals that some students were of the opinion that practice teaching experience was not meaningfully followed up during lectures – arguably, as a result of not having provision for skills development during module teaching. The foregoing further amplified the gap between theory and practice.

7.2.5 Staff development

Data suggest that there are phenomenal lecturers in teacher education and also that there are other lecturers from whom improvement is expected. There are some lecturers whom students believed manifested knowledge gaps during lectures as evidenced by the amount of repetitive lecturing they engaged in. On the other hand there were some lecturers whom students believed were characterized by rigid frames of knowledge as evidenced by their over reliance on text book information, not flexible when teaching, and poor communication skills. Some lecturers were described by some HoDs a "teaching from the yellow pages," i.e. teaching from dated lecture notes. The level of professionalism in one faculty was described by students as being low. One reason for the identified concerns could be that data suggests that there were some lecturers who had limited knowledge in the subject areas they were teaching.

Pertaining to the area of research, some lecturers acknowledged the fact that this was one of the important areas in which they were lacking. They however, argued that they had some constraints as far as research is concerned; for instance support from administration was not forthcoming in some instances. Teaching load was also cited as weighing down research efforts. However, there were some lecturers who

argued that research was not going to make them better teachers. They found it problematic that some departments were emphasizing research and publication at the expense of good teaching. To these lecturers there was no synergistic relationship between teaching and research. In other words the two were taken to be independent areas.

7.2.6 Achievement of quality

The findings resonate with Metcalfe's (2008:9) argument that "the hard reality is that we are not making the progress we need in the two most critical dimensions of education performance: quality and equity." In order to make informed judgment about quality in teacher education, Levine's (2006:20) nine point template was used, as referred to earlier on in the discussion chapter. The evidence of quality deficit is clear, i.e. in the areas of curricular coherence, curricular balance, faculty composition, research, admission and self-assessment. For a fuller synopsis of the foregoing refer to highlights on achievement of quality, Table 6.2.

7.3 Conclusion

Using phenomenology as a research approach, the study aimed at finding how teacher educators in South African universities prepare education students for teaching and learning. The focus was on the process of teaching, that is, lecture delivery methods, assessment procedures, provisions teacher educators had for development of teaching skills during module teaching, organization of teaching practice, and in the final analysis, achievement of quality within teacher education. The interview was the major tool for data collection; the main focus was to get the first hand experiences of the respondents, namely, lecturers, students and HoDs.

Data reveals that the lecture method remains the major method for lecture delivery. Although it has a space in the lecture halls; the overuse had a negative impact on student learning as skills development was overlooked. There were some lecturers described by students as 'phenomenal' and there were others from whom improvement was expected. The observation made by students was that it is these few who actually tarnish the image of the faculty. Apparently there was a weak link

between the schools and teacher education which had a negative impact on student learning.

The area of research and teaching was still lagging behind. Some lecturers acknowledged that this is an area in which they were lacking. This weak link impacted negatively on lecturing as most students indicated. Achievement of quality has room for improvement in the areas of quality of student enrolment, quality and amount of research into own practice, and links with and involvement in schools as a way of updating knowledge. It is towards some of these concerns that the recommendations under 7.6 are made. While the shortcomings of a qualitative inquiry are acknowledged it is hoped that readers will find something to transfer to individual practice.

7.4 Limitations revisited

Hofstee (2006:112) argues that all methods have limitations. Hamel (1995) underlines that a qualitative study has been strongly faulted for 1) its lack of representivity as a point of observation for a social phenomenon and 2) its lack of rigor in the collection, construction, and analysis of the empirical materials that give rise to the study. The first criticism concerns the view that generalizations cannot be made on the basis of sample size while the lack of rigor criticism is linked to the problem of bias, which is introduced by the subjectivity of the researcher and that of the respondents on whom the researcher relies to get an understanding of phenomenon. The argument is that personal experiences, beliefs and value laden narratives are biased and subjective. However, within the post-modern qualitative research framework, subjectivity is strength because truth is relative. To that extent "no story can have more credibility than any other; all stories are equally valid, being so validated by community that lives by them" (All about Philosophy Series, 2009). Nieuwenhuis (2007:52) contends that "qualitative researchers accept value laden narratives as true for those who have lived through the experiences." Focus was on the depth and quality of information provided by respondents pertaining to teaching and learning of teacher education students, with the major emphasis being on the uniqueness of each particular contribution.

Yin (1984) also argues that within qualitative research an investigator's goal is to expand and generalize theories (analytic generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization). Patton and Appelbaum (2003:64) posit that if you have a good descriptive or analytic language by means of which you can truly grasp the interaction between various parts of a system and the important parts of a system, the possibilities to generalize from very small samples, or even one single case, may be reasonably good. Zientek (2007:962) echoes the sentiment that "of course such samples are not without limitation but can yield some insights when sample characteristics reasonably well match those of a targeted population." Hence for qualitative studies generalizability is determined by the strength of the description. Such descriptions are one of the cornerstones of qualitative research that allow the reader to determine the level of correspondence of a particular case to other similar situations. In the light of the foregoing discussion, I can argue that my findings are worthwhile as I took my time to meticulously describe the life world of respondents in the study. "With such detailed description, the researcher enables readers to transfer information to other settings and to determine whether the findings can be transferred 'because of shared characteristics'" (Creswell, 1998:203).

7.5 Recommendations

It is hoped that this research will provide readers with insight for developing their own improvement practices or for creating model teacher preparation programs within departments. However, as with any qualitative study, it is up to readers to determine if or how the following recommendations apply or transfer to their own contexts. The recommendations that follow are not intended to act as an all-encompassing list of "to-do's" for teacher education departments, staff, and administrators in the higher education institutions. Rather, these recommendations may serve as a starting point for further research or action in any or all of the following areas: improved lecture delivery and assessment practices; teaching skills development; organization of teaching practice and staff development issues, as a way of the enhancement of quality achievement in teacher education. The recommendations are grouped into three categories, namely recommendations for, a)

teaching and learning; b) programme and curricula development and c) future research.

7.5.1 Teaching and learning

Arguably, from the research findings it is imperative to improve both instructional productivity and learning quality in teacher education. Realizing this vision therefore, requires several fundamental shifts in educators' standard operating procedures. Angelo (1999:116) is of the opinion that many promising shifts are already under way within many education departments and that powerful 'levers' are available to hasten the transformation.

7.5.1.1 Shift from a culture of largely unexamined assumptions to a culture of inquiry and evidence

Teacher educators' practice often depends on implicit and often highly questionable assumptions. For example module teaching assumes that all students learn all subjects at the same rate. In addition Angelo (1999:114) argues that lectures assume a vaccination model of learning, that a dose of theories would cure all ills of practice teaching. Assessment should, however, prod educators to examine their assumptions by turning them into empirical assessable questions. For instance, do students learn at the same rate? Do students who succeed in theoretical courses do well in their practice teaching? Such questions would lead into individual educators' inquiry into own teaching; leading into an accumulation of information that would inform teaching and learning.

7.5.1.2 Shift from a teaching culture that ignores what is known about human learning to one that applies relevant knowledge to improve practice

Angelo (1999) argues that for far too long, most educators are uninformed about applicable research on learning and teaching, and far too many are dismissive of its potential value. Imagine if other applied professions, such as medicine, took the same dim view of research (Angelo, 1999:116). In the same vein, educators should be

interested in understanding and applying the research base in order to enhance quality teaching and learning.

7.5.1.3 Shifting from scholarly teaching to scholarship of teaching and learning

Scholarly teaching and learning is what every educator should be engaged in every day that he/she is in a classroom, in his/her office with students, tutoring, lecturing, conducting discussions, all the roles he/she plays pedagogically, and many others. But it is only when educators step back and reflect systematically on the teaching they have done, in a form that can be publicly reviewed and built upon by their peers that they have moved from scholarly teaching to the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). The focus of scholarship of teaching and learning should always be on improving student learning. Engaging in SoTL requires dedicated lecturers who are prepared to go an extra mile for their students.

7.5.1.4 Shift of emphasis in the faculty's evaluation system

It is important to revisit departments' evaluation systems in order to refocus lecturers' attention and enhance teaching and learning. Angelo (1999:116) posits that "like every one else, lecturers tend to do what they are evaluated on and rewarded for. Therefore, the department evaluation system used for retention, tenure, and promotion and merit decisions is a powerful lever for redirecting lecturer time and effort".

7.5.1.5 Shift of emphasis from teaching to learning

There is a need to shift emphasis from teaching to learning; what Barr and Tagg (1995:14) refer to as a shift from an instruction paradigm to a learning paradigm. However, other theorists have argued that the discussion should be about the proliferation of teaching methods instead (Zeichner, 2010:93). The focus is on whatever approaches used serve best to prompt learning of particular knowledge by particular students. Thus, students must be active discoverers and constructors of their own knowledge. McLeod and Reynolds (2007) postulate that in the learning paradigm knowledge is not seen as cumulative and linear like a wall of bricks, but as a

nesting and interacting of frameworks. To this end, learning environments should be challenging, cooperative, collaborative and supportive.

7.5.1.6 Attitude change

Implementing the above shifts means attitude change among educators, that is, being open minded and appreciating the need for change. Hickman and Silva (1984) argue that versatility prepares individuals for the ever changing world; otherwise individuals become set in their ways and isolated in their own world.

7.5.2 Programme and curricula development

7.5.2.1 Research

i.   Buchberger, et al (2000:36) argue that good practice strategies should be founded on the 'state of the art-knowledge,' They further assert that programmes and curricula of teacher education should be oriented more on, a) Process; b) Problem; c) Project and d) Research oriented learning environments and that e) Inquiry-oriented cultures have to replace rather rigid and re-active cultures of teaching, studying and learning if the desired transformation is to be accomplished (Buchberger et al 2000:50).

ii.   The relationship between teacher education, the teaching profession and educational research and development needs to be redefined. As in all other professions a close relationship between, a) (educational) research and development, and b) the (teaching) profession seems to be indispensable. To this end there should be coherent and targeted research and development for the improvement of all forms of teacher education. Hence there should be a clear profile in regard to research and development and an active involvement of educators in it. A development in this direction implies that all institutions and/or departments involved in teacher education programmes must themselves be actively involved in research and in doctoral programmes specifically related to teacher education, teaching and teacher work.

iii.   Teacher education should provide coherent practice teaching/teaching experience component. The professionalised models of teacher education should aim at - the development of a broad repertoire of professional actions, which education students may use in a justified and flexible way adapted to individual learners, goals, tasks, content and situations. The emphasis as Korthagen (2010:106) argues is the development of adequate gestalts in each student. The development of a broad repertoire of professional actions/action structures seems to call for a broad knowledge base as well as for coordinated and coherent practice in which education students may find learning situations appropriate to promote the development of competent, reflective and theory-based action.

iv.   It is important to integrate practice coherently into teacher education. The NOCHE & APQC (2003:43) study in America also revealed that "when teacher preparation programmes have a coherent approach to rigorous knowledge and skill development and when they include extensive practice teaching for candidates…education programmes realize solid track records of success." The foregoing correlates with findings from studies such as those carried out by Ishler et al., 1996; McIntyre & Byrd, 2000; Farkas et al., 2000; Shen, 2002; Bristor et al., 2002) who reiterate that combining field experiences with curriculum or "connecting theory to practice" is one of the best ways to effectively prepare future teachers and improve teacher quality. Darling-Hammond (2006:311) reiterates that there are three critical components of good teacher education programmes and these include "tight coherence and integration among courses and between course work and practice teaching work in schools, extensive and intensely supervised practice teaching work integrated with course work using pedagogies that link theory and practice, and closer, proactive relationships with schools." By incorporating early field experiences into all of the education courses, education students can be more prepared for what lies ahead in classroom teaching.

v.   Close cooperation between the teaching profession, schools and teacher education is a necessary condition for high quality education and training. To this end

faculties of education should ensure high quality teachers, especially staff developed to fulfill the demanding tasks of co-operating supervisors and mentors. The development of a strong, mutually beneficial partnership with the schools could be informed by Teitel's (2003) concept of professional development schools (PDS). Darling-Hammond (1996) concurs that teacher education curriculum should be a fluid continuum of professional development through collaboration by public school and university professionals. Goodlad (1999) also advocates the need for higher education involvement in schools and considered serious faculty engagement as the first step.

vi.   It is proposed that the professional qualification of teacher educators should be reviewed and raised and that coherent staff development programmes for teacher educators should be enhanced.

vii.   Teacher education programmes should continuously be aligned with state and national content and pedagogy standards as well as the needs of the schools where students are placed for their practice teaching.

7.6. Future research

7.6.1 As quality learning for education students is dependent on the close links between schools and education departments there is need to research and document how this link could be effectively forged. It is important that schools feel part of the teacher education process.

7.6.2 The research and teaching nexus continues to be a bone of contention. It is imperative that research focus on this area with a view of not only making educators appreciate the link between teaching and research but also to demonstrate how they can improve their practice through researching own teaching.

8. Summary

Chapter 7 provides a summary of the findings by focusing on how the research question was answered. Data suggested that teacher educator style was

characterized by a technical-rationality model. A brief conclusion of the whole study is also made. A brief revisit to some of the major constraints was highlighted. In light of the findings, recommendations were made in the areas of teaching and learning, programme and curricula development, as well as in the possible areas for research for the future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Lecturer interview schedule

Quality in Teacher Education
Project
2009

LECTURERS' INTERVIEW
SCHEDULE

The *Quality in Teacher Education* (QTE) Project is an NFR funded initiative which aims at determining the conditions for quality learning, teaching and research in teacher-training institutions. This interview will allow lecturers to provide their perceptions on the quality of education provided by their institution during the 4 years of initial teacher training. The discussion will not serve for any personal evaluation. **All responses are anonymous and they will be treated confidentially.** Thank you for your co-operation in participating to this interview.

Areas	Questions
Lecture delivery a)methodology b)assessment	-What mode of lecture delivery do you use mostly and how do you think it is serving both your purposes and students' purposes? -What internal mechanisms are in place to support your teaching and learning by students? -How do you assess teaching and learning of student teachers and how do you use the information?
Teaching skills	-What provisions do you have on the programme for student teachers to practice teaching skills? -What is the duration of practice teaching and do you think it is adequately serving the purpose? -How do feel about student supervision?
Staff development	-What in your opinion are the qualities of a good lecturer in a teacher education programme? -How do you think you measure up to those qualities? -How do you feel about lecturer support within the department?
Product	-What are the knowledge expectations for exiting student teachers and how do they usually fare?

Thank you

Appendix 2: HoD interview schedule

Quality in Teacher Education
Project
2009

HOD'S INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The *Quality in Teacher Education* (QTE) Project is an NFR funded initiative which aims at determining the conditions for quality learning, teaching and research in teacher-training institutions. This interview will allow principals to provide their perceptions on the quality of education provided by teacher training institutions during the 4 years of initial training. The discussion will not serve for any personal evaluation. **All responses are anonymous and they will be treated confidentially.** Thank you for your co-operation in participating to this interview.

Areas	Questions
Lecture delivery a)methodology b)assessment	-Basically how are lectures conducted within the department and how do you think that is serving the department's purposes? -How does the department ensure that learning is going on and how is the information used? -What internal systems and practices have been developed to effect and sustain quality teaching and learning of student teachers?
Teaching skills	-Does the department have a formal structure through which lecturers link content areas, pedagogy and the development of teaching skills? -How does the department ascertain that student teachers are equipped with skills to be effective teachers?
Staff development	-How does the department meet the developmental needs of the staff? -How does the department recognize lecturers' professional growth? -What staff development programme does the department have for lecturers? And especially in which areas?
Product	-Which knowledge areas does the department expect the exiting students to be competent in? -How does the department measure the success of its student teacher training programme?

Thank you very much for your time and co-operation

Appendix 3: Student interview schedule

Quality in Teacher Education Project 2009

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STUDENTS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

</div>

The *Quality in Teacher Education* (QTE) Project is an NFR funded initiative which aims at determining the conditions for quality learning, teaching and research in teacher-training institutions. This interview will allow **students** to provide their perceptions on the quality of education received during the 4 years of initial training as teachers. **This is not an exam. All responses are anonymous and they will be treated confidentially.** Thank you for your co-operation in participating to this interview.

Lecture delivery and assessment

- What mode of lecture delivery do lecturers use mostly?

- How do the methods used in lecture delivery meet your needs as teacher education students?

- How best do you think lectures should be delivered?

- Which do you consider to be the best learning opportunities that lecturers have provided for you?

- How would you describe the quality of lectures that you receive?

- What is your expectation from lecturers as far as lecturing is concerned?

- What do you consider to be the qualities or personal characteristics of an exemplary/outstanding lecturer?

Teaching skills

- What components of your programme focus on the development of teaching skills?

- Are these components of the programme meeting your needs in as far as the development of teaching skills are concerned?

- Do lecturers find time to demonstrate appropriate teaching skills for you?

- How do you think your needs in teaching skills development could best be met?

- Are you happy about the organization of practice teaching?

- What is your evaluation of practice teaching supervision?

- How in your opinion could practice teaching be made more effective in the development of teaching skills?

Product

- In which of the knowledge areas do you consider to be competent?

- Which of the knowledge areas contribute more to classroom practice?

- Do you have some knowledge area you consider as less important in the development of teaching skills?

- Which knowledge areas need improvement?

- Is there anything else you think I should know in order to understand how teacher education students are taught?

Thank you very much for your time and co-operation. Enkosi! Siyabonga! Dankie!

Appendix 4: Interview consent and recording consent form

Quality in Teacher Education Project

Interview consent and recording consent form

1. I agree to be interviewed for the purpose of the Quality in Teacher Education Project.
2. The purpose and the nature of the interview have been explained to me.
3. a) I agree that the interview may be recorded (tick)
   b) The interview must not be recorded (tick)

4. Any question I asked about the purpose and the nature of the interview have been answered to my satisfaction
5. I do not wish my name to be used or cited or otherwise disclosed

   Name of the interviewee: _____
   Signature: _____
   Date: _____

   ----

6. I have explained the project and the implications of being interviewed to the interviewee and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understand the implication of participation

   Name of the interviewer: _____
   Signature: _____
   Date: _____

Quality in Teacher Education Project
Department of Research
Faculty of Education
Mowbray Campus

Cape Peninsula University of Technology
P.O. Box: 652
Cape Town, 8000
Phone: 021 680 3932
Cell: 083 7172 415
Email: mwepud@cput.ac.za

Appendix 5: Subject information sheet

Quality in Teacher Education Project

Subject Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand the aim of the research and why it is being done. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to be interviewed or respond to a questionnaire.

The *Quality in Teacher Education* (QTE) Project is an NFR funded collaborative initiative which involves Faculties of Education at CPUT, Wits, UKZN and NMMU. This project aims at determining the conditions for quality learning, teaching and research in teacher-training institutions. We are particularly interested in stakeholders' perceptions of quality education and how it can be achieved. You have been approached because of your position which leads us to believe that you can provide valuable insight on this topic. There are no foreseeable dangers or risks in taking part in this research project.

However, it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. Refusal to take part will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and you will also be asked to sign a consent form. Even when you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time, without penalty or loss and without giving a reason.

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will provide insight in ways of improving quality in teacher education and the quality of education in general. All information which is collected from you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential.

If you have decided to participate please sign the attached consent form.

Thank you for taking part in this research project.

Dr. Dominique Mwepu
Quality in Teacher Education Project
Department of Research
Faculty of Education
Mowbray Campus

Cape Peninsula University of Technology
P.O. Box: 652
Cape Town, 8000
Phone: 021 680 3932
Cell: 083 7172 415
Email: mwepud@cput.ac.za

Appendix 6: Overview of Interviews

Schedule of Interviews

May – June & September- October 2009

1. Lecturer Schedule of Interviews: Number = 26

Date	Respondent	Venue	Duration
May 18	Lecturer A	Office	45minutes
May 19	Lecturer B	Office	35minutes
May 19	Lecturer C	Office	50minutes
June 2	Lecturer D	Office	48minutes
June 2	Lecturer E	Office	47minutes
June 5	Lecturer F	Office	46:21minutes
June 18	Lecturer G	Office	1hr 5minutes
June 18	Lecturer H	Office	1hr 4minutes
June 19	Lecturer I	Office	43:39minutes
June 19	Lecturer J	Board Room	31:27minutes
June 24	Lecturer K	Office	51:14minutes
October 12	Lecturer L	Office	50minutes
October 13	Lecturer M	Office	40minutes
October 13	Lecturer N	Office	55minutes
October 13	Lecturer O	Office	53minutes
October 13	Lecturer P	Office	30minutes
October 13	Lecturer Q	Staff Room	40minutes
October 13	Lecturer R	Office	35minutes
October 13	Lecturer S	Office	42minutes
October 14	Lecturer T	Office	23:30minutes
October 14	Lecturer U	Office	29:08minutes
October 14	Lecturer V	Office	25:48minutes
October 14	Lecturer W	Office	30:45minutes
October 14	Lecturer X	Office	39:10minutes
October 14	Lecturer Y	Office	45minutes
October 14	Lecturer Z	Office	32minutes

2. HoD Schedule of Interviews: Number = 9

Date	Respondent	Venue	Duration
May 18	HoD 1	Office	35minutes
May 19	HoD 2	Office	32minutes
June 3	HoD 3	Office	47minutes
June 18	HoD 4	Office	50minutes
June 22	HoD 5	Office	1hr 10minutes
October 12	HoD 6	Office	48minutes
October 12	HoD 7	Office	58minutes
October 13	HoD 8	Office	45minutes
October 13	HoD 9	Office	38minutes

3. Students' Schedule of Interviews: Number of focus groups = 9

Date	Respondents per gr.	Venue	Duration
May 19	2 students	Lecture hall	40:37minutes
May 19	4 students	Classroom	48:42minutes
May 19	7 students	Lecture hall	42:27minutes
September 2	10 students	Classroom	1hr 7minutes
September 3	9 students	Classroom	1hr 4minutes
September 13	7 students	Science laboratory	37:46minutes
October 14	10 students	Lecture hall	1hr 13minutes
October 14	7 students	Classroom	44:54minutes
November 23	5 students	Classroom	1hr 10minutes

Appendix 7: Ethics Clearance

**Cape Peninsula
University of Technology**

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

| Office of the Chairperson
Research Ethics Committee	Dr Cina Mosito

In June 2007 a Focus Area Grant application was submitted to the National Research Foundation by a team of researchers in the Faculty of Education in collaboration with researchers at WITS University and the University of Kwazulu Natal. The application was successful and funding was received in November 2007.
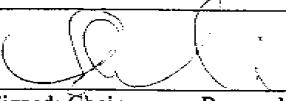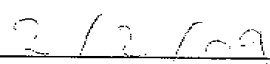
Before submission to the NRF, the application was approved by the Faculty Research Committee (includes Ethics Review Committee). Ethics approval was granted to the research team to collect data for the Quality in Teacher Education project.
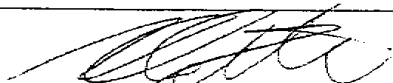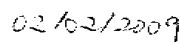
Title of Project:	Quality in Teacher Education Project
Funder	National Research Foundation
Project leader	Prof R Chetty

Conditions:
1. Permission for data collection from the various sites (Wits University, University of KwaZulu Natal and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University) must be obtained from the institutional research offices of the universities. Evidence of consent must be provided.
2. Confidentiality
3. Anonymity

Research activities are restricted to those detailed in the research proposal.

Signed: Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee	Date:

Signed: Chairperson: Faculty Research Committee	Date: 02/02/2009

Appendix 8: Sample transcript from one of the lecturers

2009 /06/02

1. <u>Lecture delivery</u>
<u>a)methodology</u>
<u>b)assessment</u>

What mode of lecture delivery do you use mostly and how do you think it is serving both your purposes and students' purposes?

Ok I think a few weeks ago when I started my first lecture students complained about my method of lecture as they wanted it to be more interactive and I was peeved that they did not approach me and I addressed the issue and reminded them that a lecture by definition is a one-way process. It is really a one way communication between a lecturer who lectures and the assumption being that you know a little bit more in the subject area than your students. I do use the lecture mode a lot; I use transparencies, but I ensure that my lectures are always staged, scaffolded and very structured because I like structure in my lectures. I take my students from the unknown to the known. Because I am a language lecturer I try to use a lot of theoretical perspectives wherever they are required and I try to make it both text and context based depending on the demands of the particular text that I'm lecturing on. I try to be interactive but the irony is that students ask for interaction but they do not interact like I do pose questions and try to engage them into discussion but I think probably one of the reasons is and that's where the irony lies that they want it to be interactive but they often do not read the text so you cannot have a communication with people who are not on the same page as you are. Sometimes you find in a lecture room of over 150 students probably one person has read the text and can engage with you so that is why I say that I mainly use the lecture mode I just use transparencies to guide me with the key points of the discussion. Sometimes when you get interesting input but more than often students are silent and trying to take down notes and trying to understand the text. The other thing is also we are very limited we only have three lectures per text so you have to pack a lot or unpack a lot I would say in three lectures for one text I find that it is not sufficient. On that point I would like to also add that I know that it may sound old fashioned to use transparencies I'm not really skilled I would like to do power point presentations for me its quite tedious to type them out and run them out and do the transparencies it's quite a long haul so ideally I would like to be skilled in power point presentation and I haven't had that opportunity offered here at the university so I still resort to the old fashioned method of transparencies.

-*What internal mechanisms are in place to support your teaching and learning by students*?

I think if I say nothing it may be shocking but I really mean nothing is really in place here to support you and there may be various reasons for that but more than often I find that in terms of the teaching and learning some colleagues are supportive if we have problems but we have had change in management for the past 2½ years so we haven't built up a core of fixed people that you can turn to if you have problems with the result that you have to rely on yourself and I think in that I'm fortunate because I'm mature and I have a lot of experience at school levels and I think because of my maturity I am able to stand by myself and rely on myself when it comes to the teaching and the learning of the students. And often I go by my own instinct and own knowledge and own wisdom but if I am really struggling I will go to one of my colleagues and sound things out but more than structure is in place now. I do my own research; compile additional notes to supplement often I try to rely on myself and there's very little mentoring again I say as there hasn't been a coherent or a constant core group of people here for the past 2½ years. When I started of in about I think 2005 we had Jack Kearney who was the HOD and after him we had Jabulani who stayed for a short while and after that we now have Emmanuel who is in an acting capacity I think that the only time we had a certain degree of support was when Jack was here and at that time I was a tutor I wasn't really a lecturer but he was very supportive whenever I had a question I was not sure I went to him he was always willing to and was able to help but in so far as support regarding my teaching and my learning generally there isn't much I pretty well do what I see or think is fit and I do my own research compile my own notes no body checks on me there's no validation, there is a lot of freedom but I hold all that very dear I think I am very cautious because of that because my Students' are my only barometer there's nobody else who can tell me are you doing okay or not you are on the right track or not are you a good lecturer or not to date there is nobody within the department who can tell me that . I think we all need that so that we can become better people and more effective in the classroom situation.

So would you say that you would like a mechanism of this sort to be put in place?

Yes I think it's nice to have mentors who can sound against whom you can sound out your professionalism and measure it against theirs I came from a teaching background and I used to admire my good teachers and I used to say that one day I would like to be like them the other day a student came into my office and said I'd like to be a teacher like you and that's quite a compliment because we all want role models we want to be good teachers we are in the business of teaching teachers and we don't want to be poor examples for them to go out there. I think yes as good examples to be there to help and support I think that is absolutely necessary because we sometimes we employ young people who may be good academically but who may not have the experience at grass roots level and they really need to be mentored and supported.

They gonna fall and make mistakes but they need somebody there to tell them that you gonna be okay. I think its crucial

-*How do you assess teaching and learning of student teachers and how do you use the information*?

I think within the languages department we have a do have a set of criteria whereby we do assess most of the work is written in form of assignment 80- 90 % exam based. Most of the time what we mark are essays and this is how we are assessing them I don't know whether it's the perfect way to do so but I think also being in languages we also look at skills regarding language and fortunately as I say we have criteria we meet as a team we moderate, we agree to disagree we have a good working relationship with colleagues where there's a nice congenial atmosphere where we look at all these skills and we can arrive at some form of assessments and I think that is the provision we have to assess the students. For them I think it is important we give them feedback as to how they are doing regarding their performance. I think that's also important because when they go back to schools when they become teacher they will know you cannot evaluate people and be critical of what they're doing without giving feedback otherwise they will not develop. So we do have certain requirements where we look at content skills in listening and writing.

Beside the assignment do you have tests and projects?

Not projects as such- not even an oral if I could think. Mostly writing based. I think we need to probably incorporate different forms of assessment, which are more realistic reflections of what they will do in their classroom. We do expose them to media text such as Shakespeare but the approach is not quite the kind of approach that they use at school level in terms of analysis and evaluation.

So do you use this information on continuous basis to evaluate their progress?

Yes I think to me its very narrow we only looking at their progress in terms of the assignment whether they passed or failed, how they used the language, how they analysed the question and that is the reflection of their performance but again I think being a major in the subject it also is important that they learn the skills they going to teach because the shocking thing is that many of our major students are very weak, they cannot use the language properly, they cannot string a simple sentence properly, they do not know how to construct paragraphs, they don't know how to structure an essay and I think those things are important and hopefully by the fourth year they learn some of these skills

2. Teaching skills

What provisions do you have on the programme for student teachers to practice teaching skills?

From what I know about this institution we have the TP 120 for the first years. Mini micro module in the first year acts as a dry run for students to practice and develop teaching skills.

I was part of that programme for two years and I think it is a good grounding for beginning teachers to get over their fears of how they gonna face the classroom how to structure lessons it's a good way for them to get over those initial things that they experience in the classroom especially mainly fears, facing people, criticism, getting constructive criticism, how to prepare resources, how to structure a lesson. Also I know in the second year the university evaluate students on a school-based level then we have the third and fourth year school based evaluation. In the language department specially we have our subject specialisation where what we have taught them about the teaching of literature we want to see that play out in the classroom especially literature can be boring and our approach is to try and make it fun and interactive in the classroom so the various methodologies and strategies that they have learnt we want to see those skills implemented in the classroom especially when we are evaluating specialist students those who are specialising in English. We also have the PGCE students and we look for the same kind of approach in the classroom to see how they going to teach what we have imparted to them as ideas in the approach to teaching of these skills.

Are they prepared with a lesson plan prior to them going to the schools?

Lesson plans are taken care of in the Professional studies. Well I have noticed a kind of weakness in the Language students I find that they are not very familiar with the curriculum statements, the assessment standards the type of texts they supposed to be teaching and sometimes the third year students tell me that they have not seen a curriculum statement. I'm quite shocked at that. I think that more of that must be included in our teaching or somewhere else more deliberately for the students will be a good thing for often they are asked to devise lesson plans and outcomes and they don't know what it's all about. Although we try to give them some skills in terms of methodology, I do think they need more on the curriculum and the assessment standards and the criteria. They need to be honed in. as I say I do know they are being done in the methods but they need to link that with the subject as well. That link is not there in the majors probably because some other module is taking care of it. It may be done in the professional studies but the students can't transfer that knowledge across so often they are at a loss and we have to explain to them that this is the assessment standard and this is the criteria and these are the text you are looking at and these are the outcomes we want. So they don't seem to be very clear on that.

-*What is the duration of practice teaching and do you think it is adequately serving the purpose*?*

Yes it does serve the purpose. I think it gives the students to be in a real situation and se how theory translates into practicality and putting them in the real environment and where they will have to teach and that is what this university is for. The duration of four (4) weeks I think for our purpose as tutors it is adequate. The students do get into the school and most of them try to fall in line into the working of the school because it is paradigm shift for from the university and a very structured environment in a school Lecturers do get to see students at least three (3) times during this time. The time is sufficient for us but I'm not sure if this is sufficient for the fourth years sometimes they are just getting into the school and the timeframes and the periods and they got to come back so maybe a longer stretch like an apprenticeship I think maybe six months will be a nice idea. Sometimes in four weeks they don't get to experience everything. They so focussed on delivering lessons and pleasing their lecturer that everything that is co or extra curricular is often neglected because of that. I do think that to be truly rounded at least a semester will enable them to participate in the life of a school.

PGCE students have an extended period due to their nature and design of their final qualification – short period of study in education field. Personally I think it is good

-*How do feel about student supervision?*

I enjoy it. It is relevant as it translates the theory into practical experience. I do not enjoy visits to townships, as I have been bothered on the roads by taxis and buses as I was pushed off the roads and as a new person in the area and not being familiar with the surroundings we tend to travel slowly and this annoys the other drivers.
It helps me to reflect on my own teaching and gives me a holistic picture of students as teachers in a class – not in lecture

3. Staff development

What in your opinion are the qualities of a good lecturer in a teacher education programme?*

Must be a role model, added to that I think you have to familiarise your students with the reality in schools. University environment certainly does not replicate what happens in a school – it's an ideal environment. It's mainly theoretical; its book learned knowledge information- it really does has nothing to do with what happens in a school. And often you meet students who have graduated when you ask them how is it, how are things- they tell you that it's nothing like what we learn at university. I think that you need to familiarise them with the reality in reality that it's not an ideal

situation, there are a host of challenges at schools not only are you going to be teaching and that's not what is only expected of you the schools have huge problems – there are social problems; economic problems; there's HIV Aids so as a teacher the most important thing – I have a passion for what I do – I think that's very important quality. You must be able to meet with challenges at your school and I would like believe that a quality of a good lecturer to meet with challenges and face obstacles and not to become a part of the problem but to become the part of the solution what ever the ethos of the school and to create realistic expectations for our students as well – I tend to worry sometimes when I'm teaching them and they me that I'm ECD, Foundation Phase specialist and what has that got to do with me and I tell them that when they go to schools there are no guarantee that you will be placed in the position for which you have qualified you may be an ECD graduate but they may haul you into an FET phase where they need a teacher and that's a challenge that you may have to face- you cannot tell the principal I can't do this because that's a reflection on your training at the University- in other words have you been prepared adequately to meet with the real expectations when you go – those are important qualities. Not to create any false impressions or give them any grandiose ideas about how you just going to fit into the schools and things are going to be fine this definitely is not so especially in our schools. We have a host of problems, host of challenges and if they are not tough enough many of them will not survive

-*How do you think you measure up to those qualities?*

Personally I'm quite tough as I have told you I have a no nonsense approach because as at schools we have a no nonsense approach you cannot come into a lecture room at quarter past -15 minutes late and expect me to ignore that I do not ignore that. If you are tardy with handing in your assignments I make sure that you know that. If you haven't handed in your assignment I will give you a naught if you don't come and discuss your problem with me. You have to learn that there are rules. You have to be guided by those rules and you have to follow those rules because you in turn are going to impose those rules on students in your school environment and if they gonna buck the system like you what are you going to do? So you have to have limitations, you have to have lines that cannot cross which makes your lives easier cause at the end of the day we all need those boundaries most definitely we need those boundaries. So I do think that I do measure up in that hopefully I project the kind of image where I do appear serious and tough to many students that is the type of person that I am that is important - don't change who you are but make sure your delivery at every level is excellent –not satisfactory but excellent – strive for the best.

-*How do you feel about lecturer support within the department?*

As I said previously there isn't much. I have to rely a lot on myself; I do get help from certain persons sometimes regarding resources but not all the time – I have to learn to help myself most of the time. I don't want to sound as if I'm repeating myself but I think if there are incentives to allow people to remain in key positions as a consistent

person for maybe two or three years it will be good thing because we are very much in a state of flux for the past 2 – 3 years and I think therefore there isn't much lecturer support in this department because the person that you report as line of management is changing all the time. Recently or in three years we had three different head of changes we had a head of school change. I think it will be foolish for us to say that it doesn't impact on us lower down now what is happening now is what happened in schools in the early years when transformation was taking place teachers had to rely on themselves. They had to be resilient. And that's what we are doing mow. At the department we find that we are depending on one another than the person on the top. The person on the top really doesn't really matter any more. We do what we have to do regardless. That's what's happening. We are working very much independently without a head and without much guidance and I hope we not doing a bad job. Sometimes it's a good thing but at the same time we do need some one at the top-some manager to mentor us and help us - who hopefully knows much more than we do

Can you suggest anything to change the situation?

Well as I said probably appoint people who have a term of contract that is fixed-not a short term so not only can they contribute to the school as a whole but also on the university as a whole and impact on the   those people they are managing. I'm not saying we are dependant on those managers but I think in any organisation, we need that kind of structure-where we are not liaising and interacting with people who are on the same level as you - sometimes all of us need somebody higher to resolve issues. But all be it I don't think we are doing so badly because it forces us now- see the point I'm making that our students should see that we are working without a head of school-sometimes the head of discipline is torn between his duties and we work very much on our own- relying on ourselves making decisions based on our own instinct and our own past experiences – so I think that I am very grateful for my experiences at school level cause I had to co-ordinate a module of 150. I had assistance from one full time staff for which I am very grateful but most of the time when it comes to students' problems I don't think I would have handled it had I had lesser experience and it was very stressful as well but I think I coped quite well. So if there was a person up there at the front it would have made a difference at the moment it's just one person trying to hold two positions and its unfair to impose on one person all the time –should appoint people for longer terms and part of their responsibility should be mentoring at lower levels – that would help I think - give the school some directions.

So definitely a person should be appointed as head of discipline

Yes! Yes! Heads should be appointed to focus mainly on the head of discipline role because at the moment the head of discipline is doing various things- he's trying to co-ordinate and dealing with appointing suitably qualified tutor and that filters down to us as well as co-ordinator and we don't want to run to him for every problem again its not fair. So we try to resolve that in the best way we possibly can and often it does come back to us and it really should have been the head of discipline's role. I would like to

acknowledge that we are doing more because people up there aren't there

4. Product

What are the knowledge expectations for exiting student teachers *and how do they usually fare?*

The second part of the question I do think I don't know for whatever reason they don't fare very well at schools initially –probably they are very young and they go from here with rose tinted spectacles and expect a lot of ideal views of what a school should be and initially they do struggle. And also what happens at school level teachers are so caught up with what's expected of them that when a new recruit comes they haven't got time to mentor them- they nice to them when they go for practice teaching but once they appointed as teachers somehow that niceness for most long term teachers just falls away and they expect these brand new graduates to survive on their own which is a good thing too as they got to now work out strategies which is what I like to prepare them for. So yes I think the main thing in the knowledge in their specialisation subjects or in their phases, how well skilled are they, what have they taken from their various phases. I think they must not believe that they are specialists and that where they will get into trouble.
 I also found that during teaching practice students teach within a certain knowledge area but there knowledge is very limited – sometimes-incorrect information is imparted. A lesson on preposition was being taught and the teacher herself didn't know what the preposition was. Yes. the expectation that when they get to the school level they will consolidate that knowledge at which ever area they are teaching and become a better teacher

Do you think that lecturers at this institution of this kind need to be an experienced teachers prior to them becoming lecturers?

Yes. I would think so although people may disagree

End of Interview

Appendix 9: Sample transcript from one of the HoDs

Interview transcription – HOD
18 June 2009: HoD Office

First of all I want to thank you for your time to talk with me under time constraint you are working under with your responsibilities and accepting to speak to me.. How long have you been working in this capacity as an HOD?

You see I have been in the colleges since 1982, so that's what, a long time. I was HOD in the previous colleges since 1985 and when we changed to the Cape Technickon they also appointed me as HOD that was in 2000, 2001 and from Technicon to the university that is since 2005. So I have been an HOD since 1985.

Its been along time.

But there is a slight difference been an HOD in the colleges and in the universities, its more or less the same. HOD… there was more of a department like in my subject Afrikaans. HOD in the Technicon was more of a subject or course. IP, SP, that sort of a thing. And then I have been assistant dean since 2003- actually combining both.

That's very interesting then we will tap on the wealth of experience and perspectives here. In your faculty how are lectures generally conducted and how do you think that serves to benefit both lecturers and students?

Are you talking about the methods?

I am talking about what happens in the lecture hall the moment a lecturer steps in.

There are a variety of things that go on. You got a traditional lecture but that's a small percentage of what is going on. Lot of lecturers use class discussion. We have lots of group discussions also with new lecture halls, and then we with new technology a lot of power point presentations and white board presentations and we have a lot of practicals where we have school children in class and students going to schools. If I talk of the GET course they go out weekly to schools in the foundation phase and we have long practical sessions seven weeks each year for all the students. This if from practicals to formal lectures this also happens. We have also class notes and assignments and tests and so forth. Lot of the people are using group sessions, small group discussions, and class discussions. With our bigger classes that we have now it's more difficult to arrange that. But I think variety is on, we really use a lot of methods and every year we give attendance to new methods with the new curriculum. So we really focus on methodology. We have a short introduction of a talk about the

subject then ask the class, ok if we talk about mathematics how do we handle this in a classroom of grade fives or nines. So we using to shift from theory to practical situation because all the lecturers here come out of school and we know that students are going back into the school. So I think its relative practical examples with theory. It's never, never only theory. I suppose one could say that sometimes there is more theory. But the product that is going out in schools knows what is going on in the schools and what to do in school.

Here you are telling me that there is a combination of a variety of methods.What stands out is not the traditional talk and chalk or ingestion type of discussion with students which also combines some practicality that is triggered by the theoretical input by the lecturer and in terms of media you have power point that is being used, white chalk board and a variety of new media being used.

Oh last year we had a lot of variety of media being used, last 4, 5 years.

When you say new technology you include?

Smart board and data projectors. So for the last 3, 4 years we had money to expend on that.

How do you think this served the interest of the students?

Well I think they take note of the method used in technology and they use it in school also. So it's also a practical way of showing them how to do it in class. It's not only giving them instruction but showing them how to do it in the classroom.

So it's the modeling part of it.

It's the modeling part of it. How you behave in class and how you do it.

How do you think that serves the interest of your lecturers?

Well I think that is what we are interested in, in the first place. We also are adapting to new circumstances, new technology and inquisitive about what is going on in school and when we go out on practice teaching, even here we go out on practice teaching ourselves, look at their new technology that we don't have here. It's a two way experience I think and then they can do class research about use of these technologies and keep interested in their work. Otherwise it's adapting from year to year.

My other question is, are staff members embracing new technology? Is there any resistance among staff or some form of enthusiasm?

No there is no resistance. Some will take longer than others. That I think is the case. So we can say it's a process and we have training cessions for them each term within

the new technologies. We have two persons on campus the one is media coordinator and we also have an IT coordinator. So we are being trained in new technology, new programmes and computers during the year in any case and we can ask from the university also to do the training here on campus. We have all the possibilities if you are uncertain about using it. Some people are always there to help. I don't see any resistance, some people will go on with their traditional way than others and take longer than others. But I suppose that's human, because its security for them.

There is this kind of uneasiness. You must go from the known to the unknown.

It's always there. The only thing they ask of us is I tell them that you must use the white board and also the computers are there but they tell me the system is not working. So it must work because we don't want any problem with IT. They don't want to spend their time with things that don't work because with contact time we have lessened it quite a lot since we came here. I think the contact time students have per subject it's about 40% of what they had before in the old colleges. Like in Afrikaans we had 8 periods per week per subject now we have 4. Its 50% of the time we spend. So you have less time you don't want to take it to the system and trying the system and getting everything and the system is down. That is frustrating at the moment. The ICT system at the moment is not very conducive to…like the blackboard system it's not conducive to the expanding…they see the value of it but it must work immediately because time is so precious. So support systems must be there otherwise they will tell you I'll go back to my old ways because I don't want to waste time. But I suppose that is the balance that you must have in any institution.

How does the department ensure that learning is being carried out properly?

So you want to know the systems in place to ensure quality?

To ensure that learning takes place the way it should.

We have students' evaluations every year, as I said there are anonymous, per subject and per lecturer. So we have the evaluation yearly of the subject and the lecturer. This year we divided into three because we don't want students to be busy with that. So half of the permanent staff in June and the other half will be in September and the part time people we ask it to be done in August. So we divide it in second term so that students don't need to do it in one week in every class. Then we have subject heads, for every subject head we have a coordinator, like in mathematics we have a subject head, human sciences we have a subject head and the languages there is a subject head that must control what is going on within this small group of subject lecturers. Then we have the management committee where all the subject heads and the course coordinators and the HOD are present. That is a management committee where the dean is also present. Then within the faculty we have a curriculum committee where all these things are discussed. This committee consists all the course coordinators in the different courses in the faculty. And all these minutes go into the faculty board once a semester even the minutes of the learning committee goes to the university's

teaching and learning committee. So if you look at it from top to bottom or bottom up you have quite a system in place. Then you have also class representatives from students under the auspices of the SRC they meet once a term and in that meeting and they also have a representative on the SRC for academic issues or what ever. My office is open to him so that they can come to me directly if there is any problem. What we have is a code where you go to the lecturer first then coordinator, because we have a course coordinator for the FP and the course coordinator for the IP and SP. They are senior lecturers and I meet them regularly at least once a week. The students have a choice to go to the lecturer, the course coordinator or the HOD in that order if there is a problem or they can go to the SRC. That route if there is any complaint I tell them it should be in writing. I tell them write this complaint to the lecturer and tell him to explain to me what is going on. Then I get both sides of the story and then I can follow up. Although the course coordinators will come to me and say this is the problem, we discuss it and effect performance management system where we interview the staff twice a year and we can talk about problems and evaluations. So there is quite a lot of bodies and systems in place then you have discussions twice a year about the marks of the students and we have difficult subjects identified within the faculty then you must fill in forms to say what you are doing about the subject and if you have aggregate pass rate of 60%. If you have an aggregate pass rate of less than 60% you must report what you are doing in your subject to better the pass rate.

My other question then is, do you think that there is a way that the system could be tightened up so that you are 99% sure that quality teaching and quality learning will take place within the parameters of the checks and balances that are in place.

Firstly on records for past 6-20 years obviously I think the system is working. It won't be 100% working it can always be user system so to say because we are not going into the classes for that sort of control. They don't like it and we don't like it but we maintain different ways of getting information. I think we have open communication with the staff. We are lucky in the sense that the staff coming here has been coming here for a number of years and we know each other quite well. That makes the communication easy. So I think we are quite a happy family as far as that is concerned. It's a big institution and of course there are some people that you have to tighten up I think. What I have arranged this year is that they must arrange that the study guides or leaner guides of the students come to me and I like to look at that and we also gave instruction that all assessments must be handed in to the subject heads and course coordinators so that they can go through all of them to look for quality in assignments and tasks and all that kind of a thing. Its big work but we are starting that this year. We also have this ICTQ review a few years ago in 2006 which was I think very good experience and exercise to get everything together. A lot of meetings with the staff, a lot of documentation was produced by the staff. Very positive experience to see the staff working together producing all these evidence and documents. It helped to tighten up quality control. We had a report and we did a lot of work after that report with the curriculum that I think was really very positive. If you look at the product, if you

look at the pass rate in courses and subjects it working quite well. I have answered your question about lecturing it is going quite well. The challenge is that every lecturer has his own subject. I don't think of a subject where there is more than two people, of course we have a lot of subjects, all the subjects in the school curriculum, and you would not get more than one person teaching biology and one person teaching natural science and two persons in Afrikaans and two in English, one in drama and one in music so in a certain sense everyone is a specialist in his field and you don't want to inquire too much about another man's speciality. That's academic freedom that you must have. I think its academic freedom that you decide what is in your curriculum and what you are going to teach. Then we have this arrangement that we must work together. So we have that sort of control also that on both campuses we have the same syllabus more or less the same content.

Does the department have a formal structure through which lecturers are encouraged to link on the one hand content, the methodology or pedagogy and the development of teaching skills in the students. Where you have the content and the development of teaching skills.

We do it in two ways, we have a subject called professional study which is about teaching strategies, teaching methods in general. For four years they take that subject. For the four years of their degree and that is about teaching practice it's combined with teaching practice. So they get theory about teaching and practical skills about teaching in the schools. Also in every main subject of the course is subject didactics which is focused on teaching strategies and teaching methods for each of the subject. So in the foundation you will have a subject like teaching studies which is about methods of teaching the language of mathematics and every other subject like we have in the IP and SP, like my subject is Afrikaans I also teach the method of Afrikaans, in different subjects it taken as a different subject though we have a combination and then in professional studies it's a general course about general didactics, general methods, learning styles and that sort of thing. All the subjects have didactics and they is a lot of time going into that.

Do you feel that this provision allows the students to be well equipped with skills to be effective teachers or do you think there is need for it to be improved?

I don't think at the moment we can have more time given to it. Already there is a lot of time going into didactics and professional studies. A lot of colleges go that way and we have to go for practice teaching to apply that knowledge. We have lesson forms and even teachers in the schools are helping us with the evaluation. I think at the present moment there is already a lot of time going into that part of their training. I don't think in the curriculum there is more space for expansion on that side. That would make it difficult to go through the theory and content that you must do also. But the focus of the colleges of which we were part was on the practical side so I don't think we err on that side.

How does the department meet the development needs of lecturers, first of all how do you identify the development needs of lecturers and how do you go about meeting those needs?

We have the performance management system especially for staff to identify their needs. It is part of that system which is twice a year and we send in all identified needs to the central university which plans training for next year. So we make a list of the needs and we send it to the director who plans training for next year for the university. But in the faculty itself we have one session each week for an hours time identified for that purpose. We have speakers and then we have mini lessons and information that the staff needs like assessment or like teaching methods or like issue of assessment. So we have a programme that we follow every Tuesday morning. That time is open to all the staff. That is an hour every morning.

From what time to what time?

It's a quarter to ten to a quarter to eleven.

Once you have identified these needs how do you meet them?

There are other sessions planned by the university which includes like IT training which includes like management training or what ever. So the university is offering a lot of training sessions throughout the year, for HOD that will be management training that you can go to. But this is voluntary but we go for it once or twice a year in any case.

These are generally like one day work shops.

One day workshops or weekend workshops, yes. And we organize it on campus for the staff if it is possible because its so far away from Bellville and Cape Town. If there are enough people we organize it here.

How do you identify growth professional growth among staff members?

I think there is more than one way and the one is discussion with performance management twice a year and talk and plan about next year. The other is going to conferences and publication. And then I think we have these discussions in management and subject committees which are quite informative about the way things are going. We try and give opportunities to grow. Lot of them are subject heads even though they are senior lecturers. Maybe because quite a lot of staff are developed and they have been here for quite a long time I sometimes feel that it's possible that we don't give enough attention to that to be honest about it.

What do you mean? Elaborate a little bit on that.

Not really but I get a feeling that sometimes we can do a little bit more. It was part of the HDC report also. On the other side if you have people with 20 years of teaching experience or more you get some resistance about development and you must understand also what are you trying to do now? You are trying to teach me how to do it when I have been in the field for the past ten years don't do it now. Sometimes we must differentiate between the groups and you have a very big group here with 20, 30 years of experience. So there are two little young people at the moment we know that and its difficult to get the balance alright because we don't get new posts. You will have to wait for somebody to retire to get the post. There is a need for more professional development for some of then yes but if you ask them to come for the very full time table it's difficult to get time to do that. So I suppose it keeping a balance but I agree we can do more on that side.

In which areas is there need for more professional training?

You see that is the problem because we do a lot of IT training development. Every year there is a lot of development in the market, new teaching technology and there is a lot of attention to that. I think there is more to discuss about the philosophical, the philosophical idea, I get the idea that the need is mostly there. The need is to come together as staff and talk about the new curriculum in the school. What does the department in education say, to share ideas? We have once a day to come together for about twenty minutes in this staff room during tea time and share jokes and relax which is quite good because we come together everyday as a staff. This is a positive thing because we see each other once a day as a staff and talk these other personal and interesting issues. On the academic it's to drink coffee and discuss one or two issues if it's worthwhile. But I know most of the universities do not have that but because students are in classroom from half past seven to one o'clock we thought that a break was important to them and for ourselves too.

Which knowledge areas does the department expect the graduating students to be competent in?

The first one we have three courses… which is FET which is training students for the secondary school and the FET course is about economics, mathematics, mathematical literacy and accounting. So they will have two main subjects and the department has these two main subjects for the knowledge base especially for the secondary school so that they can teach up to grade 12. In the FP, that is the other side of the coin you have a programme for foundation phase because you will take up grade 1, grade 2, grade 3 as a class and you will be expected to teach everything, mathematics, life orientation and all those. I think there are five learning areas in the foundation phase; and in the IP and the SP this is a combined course. It's quite difficult because you have to train a student to become a class teacher for grade 4 and 5 especially to most of them. Then you have to train them to have main subjects' specialists as from grades 7, 8, 9. So what we do is we have a sort of general training

for the first two years and make them knowledgeable to have general knowledge in all areas. Then we have specialist training in the 3rd and 4th year where they have two main subjects that they specialize in. So we try to do it both ways so we train a generalist and a specialist because there are different needs in schools. We have a class teacher maybe even to grade 6 and you have to be a specialist in teaching mathematics, Afrikaans or English from grade 4-7 if different schools. That is quite complicated. The schools are really satisfied with our products. Feedback from HEQC showed that schools were very, very satisfied. There is always something you must pay attention to we try to adapt and change as we go along.

My other question was going to be how does this department measure the success of its training programme and I hear you already mentioning HEQC report.

Because there were panels from different schools and also panels from alumni that are still teaching. That was two panels that talked to the HEQC. We did some of these tests. We sent a questionnaire to alumni and to schools, not every year but every five years. We sent two questionnaires to school two years ago. We also do course evaluation before the 4th years leave every year and we must look at what these say.

What do you say about the course evaluation. You ask them to….

There is an evaluation form for the foundation phase when they leave. We ask them to evaluate every aspect of their programme when they are in the 4th year. We do that every year but now they haven't been in schools yet. As from this year we will have an advisory committee from the schools to talk to us about the products. We are really getting this as stipulated by the university.

What do you generally feel about the quality of teacher education provided by this institution?

I think we have a good record and I think we feel relatively satisfied. We will know when we reach the final stages of the competition. As a staff we think we are doing quite well. There are a lot of challenges. The classes are getting bigger and bigger. We are losing students because we don't get contact with everyone like we used do in the past to small classes which is an ideal but the economics wont support that. We think we are losing a bit of control because of bigger classes which I suppose is part of every university. But on the other hand we have a lot of applications every year. This year we have already more application than we have place for and it will double by end of August. I suppose we are the Afrikaans medium speaking campus and there is a lot of applications because there are not many places where they can go and train in Afrikaans. So language problem play a part. We started this year with a new curriculum, changed the curriculum to have more depth, more reflective practice that was part of the HEQC's recommendation. So we started this year with a new curriculum less contact time, more time for self study and the idea is to have more academic depth in the course. And we are already preparing a questionnaire to the

students and the staff. It will take four years to go through the curriculum and say here we are. So we are not all that satisfied.

Talking about large numbers do you feel maybe because of your position as the main or only Afrikaans medium teacher education institution you have to accept as many as possible or do you think that there should be a filtering mechanism?

No we doing some selection this year because we cant take everybody. We don't have the capacity to take more than 120 in the course because the class size and because of the time table sessions. So we will have to select the best. So this year we will have a selection test but we must take students from all different groups in the Western Cape and it will only be on merit or metric exemption what ever but we will have to take the best because if you look at the Fundza Lushaka bursary its to get the best people into education. If you talk about quality you must talk about best student also otherwise you cannot talk about quality. I know it's a difficult balance to strike but we will try the best to do that. We have already started the selection process for next year.

How does it work, what does it involve?

What we do at the moment is that we took the first 300 applications and we only have places for about 120 or about 300 students for the three courses and we already have about 300 applications so we took the first, we had the selection of the to top 40% that we will take in so we selected 40 out of 120 already; the best applications, make certain that they will come here. For the first time we selected about 75% from the metric which is quite high. We thought we did about 60 and if we had done 60 we were already full. Those are about 70% with the deans permission, this is a pilot study within the faculty to see how the thing works for this year and by the end of August applications close and we look at all applications again that we received from March and look up what we can come up with. We also send out letters to the principals to have an indication of how this will candidate will fit into education. How good is the communication, so we try to have a selection that will make us get the best candidate? It's always subjective but its not only one person working with it we have the three course coordinators doing the selection. For the administrative we do it ourselves because with each application we have to see what is going on. Then we will have interviews if there is any element of doubt in our students. We can't interview all of the students that will be a massive organization. I suppose that will enhance the quality also because you are not allowing students with minimum requirements. That cannot have an open admission because we do not have facilities to do that.

Talking about facilities I happen to have gone round this campus but do you have a demo room or rooms?

Yes we have demonstration rooms.

The other thing I wanted to know is you have been based on this campus for a long time working here since this was a college, went through all the transformation phases till now that its part of the university my question to you is how different do you think this institution is or campus is from other campuses?

It's difficult because this is padlocked, its countryside and we are in a peaceful little town and other campuses are in the big city. That is the big difference about, I think it's peaceful. It looks peaceful, it has beautiful surroundings. We have lot of interest in our residences. We have five residences. We lead full residences lives which is good for competition, cultural diversity also because I compete with each other in dramas and choirs, athletics and in sport. Its already useful surrounding to grow up. We have lot of possibility for development for students as persons in house committees, leadership in residences. It's a small campus about 500 students. The capacity is more or less 1500. The language will bring other cultures I think because we will have more coloured people here because they are Afrikaans speaking in the Western Cape. There is a lot of integration on campus because we have other races as well because we have this faculty on campus, the agricultural science. So it's more of an atmosphere and culture and tradition of course. We still have lot of the tradition from the previous college like residences was part of the old college, that tradition is going forward. But there is a lot of transformation and change if you look at the demographic of the campus, if you look at the different cultures now combined; it's a totally different campus than 15 years ago. But that's been the process. It's been slow, only growing and developing which was a good thing. So I think we are quite a housely atmosphere and I think most of the people know each other and you are part of a big family. Now we have a lot of students traveling in and out from the surrounding towns because 50% are in residency and the rest are traveling from town. Which is also a change? In the past all the students were resident. It was part of the education policy.

How does that help or hinder quality? I mean this positioning of the institution.

I don't think it hinders quality. It's better for quality. Most of the students are on campus and they are on education. I think it helps quality because they are also checking on each other and learning from each other and there is more contact I think between students and staff. Because we are a small campus, you know most of the students by the end of the four years. By the way they come to my office as if I was one of the teachers in the school. You don't have that idea of a distance everybody is a madam or sir. Sometimes they call me uncle. Can be quite amusing sometimes.

I think that the residency arrangement also provides a fertile environment where students can help each other after working hours.

I always tell them that put them in the residency at least for their first year. You have the same students in the same class and you can get a lot of information in class whether the lecturer is coming or sick you know what is going on and you have lot of information around you and all the students can tell you this is important and this is not

important. It's not always the right message but…you get the idea. It's difficult I think in coming out of school to be on your own in a house or in a flat or what ever. The contact is essential. We also have a residence combination for the students living in town with a house name and they also compete with others.

I don't know whether I had the right impression, walking to this part of the building I went past a number of notice boards where students marks were displayed. Quite impressive.

What we do is give them the marks and they must sign on that the notice board is going on and they have a few days to act and come back to us. If I put on my marks yesterday they have 5 days to go to come to me and say no say I think I did this assignment and you told me its 50% my mark was 60% now it's 65% what's going on? They must then sign for their marks. If they sign and they didn't look at it they can't complain because they can not complain about something they have signed for.

The impression that I have is that there is a very high pass rate.

There is a very high pass rate yes.

And there is also a high percentage of distinctions of first class pass.

It depends on the subject. Some subjects more some subjects less. It depends on the subject. It also depends on the level of the subject. The pass rate is very high you are quite right.

How is performance like at other campuses?

I think it's more or less the same. There is not much big difference. I don't think so. They struggle with some subjects like mathematics, like languages. But in the education you have this normal distribution of marks. But some people say the pass rate is too high. It's possible in a tertiary education. That's one of the debates you must take up, why is this so?

How about in other campuses, in general, in South Africa?

Now if you look at universities they will tell you that the fall out rate is 50% in some universities and we have a fall out rate here of about 15% if you look at the first years, less than 15% which is amazing. Then you have a certain person coming in to education not a normal aggregate student. If they come to education, most of them want to come to education because it's an occupation specific degree.

What kind of complaints do…

They talk about assessment. Students complain about assessment. They talk about too many assessments in a week. They talk about the way they are handled by some

lecturers; they talk about the way assignments were handled. Then I have to follow up. Most of the complaints from the SRC would be about assessments and about time table for assessments and requests about the exam time table and sort of thing, which is quite normal. This time of year they come to me and say now everybody wants to have marks, everybody wants to have assignments. It isn't true because lot of assignments given in March must be finished by now. I look at lot of students for psychological reasons. I will have a lot of contact with psychologist on campus. Some of them come to me direct and you must look at things like depression. It's like a little Mrs. its quite common these days. And then you have to arrange something for them because medication, it takes a while to get accustomed to the medication and some of the lecturers tell them to come to me and look at the work try and find means to do it later and what ever. That's some of the problems you must handle.

Are there examples of good practice initiatives, good practice situations in this campus? In other words is there a system of identifying best lecturers and how do you reward them?

Do you talk about students or lecturers?

I am talking about lecturers.

We look at performance management system. We look at that specifically and we also do is to give them time out in the professional development system to talk about what they are doing and also in the faculty board the dean will talk about these activities and what they are doing and also in the deans report she will mention things like that. The other way to do it is to make it part of the system. So if you see that something is working well within a certain subject we try and make it part of the system for everybody if it is working quite well. It's an indirect way of complementing somebody. On the other hand I think we can do more about it. We are accepting that people are doing good work because we are used to that. People in education are really going to complement colleagues. That's part of education I don't know about other faculties. You don't hear people in education and in schools complementing colleagues. I think it's a fault. Its not part of the system.

Any award system for the best performing lecturer?

Yes there is the award system in the university, 2 or 3 lecturers of our lecturers have already won that award as best lecturers in the university from the faculty. That was quite good. Not in the faculty at the moment. The dean is looking at the ceremony at the end of the year to have some awards within the faculty which I think is a good initiative.

Any other comments you want to make about where you see our faculty move in terms of improving quality teacher education.

Yes I think the election of the students for different courses is one of the most important things we must do in the future. We have recorders of really open admission policy. But we really have to go with the facilities expanding. This election of teacher students will enhance quality. I think we have to look carefully at the students especially the Xhosa speaking students because I think there is a great need for Xhosa speaking students in the country. We have a situation where the national education department tells us that number of teachers in the foundation phase is Zulu and Xhosa are very scarce. I think that is the place we will have to expand. We had an open day with the Xhosa students from the other side of town two weeks ago and they were quite enthusiastic about education which was quite a good experience to have with them and another open day at another campus also. That is one of the problems with our faculty there is not enough Xhosa speaking students. I don't know where Xhosa students are going to be trained as teachers. Because we need them. We must make plans to expand if we really want to make a difference.

Thank you for your time once again and to say that I really appreciated.

I will be interested to see what comes out of the research. There is such a variety in South Africa. For different systems and different courses. I have been to different universities on HEQC assessments. It's interesting how people diversify on different things.

END OF INTERVIEW

Appendix 10: Sample transcript from one of the students' focus groups

Focus group (9)
Foundation Phase
3 September 2009
Venue: Classroom

Thank you very much and welcome to this focus group interview. I am very grateful that some of you were willing to stay whilst you had a choice to leave. It's a strong message to me to say you are really interested in issues of quality in teacher education and you are really willing to contribute to the improvement of the experience that you went through so that people who come after you will probably have a much more better and a much more enjoyable experience than you. Number one I want to know from you, what is the mode of lecture delivery lecturers mostly used during your stay here?

You mean the mode like language?

How were lectures conducted?

Speaking and sometimes there is the overhead projector.

How do you feel about that mode of lecture delivery?

Boring. At times it can be boring. It can be monotonous. They give you notes exactly and you sit there for 45 or one and a half hours when you could just sit at home and read or something. Sometimes I get to feel frustrated but other times they do give you more input that is not in your notes and you need to be there. It depends with the lecturer.

There are some lecturers who… although if you look at education although its notes and then like reading of the notes which you are talking about there is a lot of interaction and a lot of discussion and they are a couple of lecturers, a few lecturers who are like that.

There is a lot of interaction during some of the didactics lectures. Like for example numeracy we do a lot of what children are going to be doing. So we are taking part in some of the lectures.

My next question is how best then do you think lectures should be delivered?

With lots of interaction between the lecturers and students. I feel that like in numeracy there is a lot of interaction between us and our lecturer and I find that the knowledge that we gain from those lecturers sticks. I understand it a lot better because I ask a lot

of questions. The more questions I ask the better I understand. I feel more interaction between students and lecturers is much better than just reading off the notes like some lecturers do.

I think we need to be more… I think a lot of like buffet. I think a lot of staff seems completely irrelevant to what we are doing in the classroom. Like we don't get concrete examples that we do like in music of what and how we are going to be using it. It's ok to tell me that this is this and by the time I get home I forget. In music, we sit there and we actually have to make things and how to use it in the classroom. The rest its like lecture notes; its information and not application.

It's like working with materials and things. Our lecturer acts like a teacher some of the time and she asks the questions that she would in a classroom and I found that a lot helpful. Not just doing to us as a teacher but she is actually modeling to us how we should be in the classroom. This is very good. Same with human movement. She almost treats us like children in the classroom and therefore she is modeling how we should be in the classroom.

Another good example of what happened recently is special education; throughout the year we did not know what is going on and once a week we go to school and we are learning to support practically three children and we were quite lost until the lecturer gave us an example of what she actually wanted. She showed us exactly the steps and it's only now that we understand what she actually wanted. She actually modeled how we are to do it. She was telling us now she showed us. Now we know what to do.

Its 8 months too late. Poor two or three children. I don't think they learnt anything.

I must say at the beginning of the year she did tell us although she did not demonstrate but she told us. She definitely told us if you had only listened to her as you took down your notes you should have a had a rough idea of what to do because she gave us steps of what to do, what ever we wanted to do. A step further to understand what we should do I think modeling is really important.

Ok which do you think are the best opportunities for learning that lecturers provided you with?

The practical, like after the first year after four months we went into teaching. We learnt so much. We went in knowing nothing and when we came out it was like wow! We had so much practical.

We got to see… we learnt the theory in class and straight away got to use the theory in the classroom and experienced how they come together.

We do reflection afterwards which is also great.

I also found that when I see other students from other universities at my school I can see that we know a lot more than them. We know what kind of lessons to give and the levels and things we should expect from the learners. It's much better than the students from the other universities. They will ask us for advice because they do not know what they are doing. So because we have so much practical by the time we are in the fourth year in our last teaching practice we basically could be teachers, I think, with the things we prepare for the learners and the way we think as teachers; the practical has a huge element in a teacher training.

In my fourth year experience the teachers don't hesitate to leave me alone. Take over this, take over that. They treat me as if I am a member of staff and they were really disappointed to see me go but I do believe that the practical and everything helps you to build up and you can feel that you can go into a class and just teach, not afraid or anything like that.

You were discussing about the best learning opportunities that you people have had over the past four years. You talked about practice teaching from year one which should have prepared you not only to deliver well at your place of placement but you feel that you have been prepared well than other students from other universities who might not have had the same experiences as you have had. Any more learning opportunities that you have been provided during lecture time that you can share with us?

I think the practical opportunities that we were provided when we were still in class, e.g. in numeracy we made a lot of material during class with the lecturer and she showed us exactly how to do it and how to present it to a class. That helped a lot.

How would you describe the quality of lectures that you received?

I think we got some phenomenal lecturers who really know their subject who obviously have been who actually have been in the field like we have in the classroom who know what they are really talking about and are passionate about their subject. And we have lecturers that have no interest, who do not know what they are talking about. Who have not been in the classroom? Who give notes all the time? To think about special education in the first and second year; it was a waste of time.

Some lecturers know a lot about their subject but they have no idea how to communicate it to an audience. They would rather be academics and researchers because they are terrible to listen to. We also had a lot of problems over the years where lecturers simply don't turn up. We are not told in advance. It's highly unprofessional and frustrating as a student because you travel. You travel far and the lecturer doesn't turn up and you think why should I turn up for my lectures if lecturers don't even show up.

And also the lecturer should have experience in the phase that they lecture in. like in this subject the lecturer had no experience in the foundation phase yet she was lecturing to us. Like application to foundation phase she couldn't really tell us.

Activities that she gave us were foundation phase but there they were not related to what we were doing. For example we played random games after doing wants and needs and I said to myself what has this got to do with wants and needs. I think she was just doing it to make the atmosphere pleasant but for me it was like cant I leave now.

Any more comments about the quality of lectures?

Some of the lecturers like someone said earlier on they would practically read the notes or something. I could not help but sleep during that time. And many of my hours of my life in first and second years were wasted years. Yet from half past eight in the morning to five o'clock in the afternoon; either you are sitting doing nothing waiting for a lecturer or some of them were cancelled or you sitting in a useless lecture you wish it were cancelled and you go and sleep somewhere else.

Especially first year; if I look at my time table from first year and the subjects that we did…its like we had 22 subjects that we did - something stupid.

Now it looks like the time table has been changed. Subjects like human movement and art have been spread out.

What are your expectations as far as lecturing is concerned? When you go to a lecture what are your expectations?

That they pitch up.

I have learnt not to expect much because half of the time they are not giving us enough there and we don't learn much.

We don't learn anything. We sit there and reflect what were we learning and you say nothing. There is nothing to expect or make us better teachers.

We have dropped our expectation of the lecturers.

Its true and that is actually sad from first year I was expecting to come to the university and study but now I would never… I don't consider this university because the level of academics that I have learnt is definitely not up to university standards. I could have studied… I think I did more academic work at high school than at college.

Especially the level of professionalism at this institution is quite low compared to other college or university anywhere else.

Any specific thing that you think of when you talk about the level of professionalism?

Anything from admin to delivering of lectures.

From the time we receive our results our results they are not even right. If you print out marks they are not right.

A case in point is that it took me two years to change my name. I registered and had a spelling error; it took three years to change my name.

So it's anything from admin, to dealing with offices, to dealing with lecturers. Anything it's not up to university level.

Like we have an admin building here. They are supposed to give us a report. But we have got to go to the main campus to get it. Then what is the purpose of it being here. Really you can't ask they say make a photocopy. Then why are you here. You are an admin and you are supposed to give us the staff. Why send us away. Why don't you close up the place and go home.

I get that window slammed in my face. It's like they will ignore you.

You see them playing games and they say we are busy now.

You see them playing solitaire on the computer and you say hello and they just carry on. Can I come in and print my student's report and they just look at you and give you this attitude. I think excuse me if you did your job correct I shouldn't be here asking. They give you this attitude and getting paid how much money and part of the money it's the fees that we pay. They just sit there and do nothing about it. I am just fed up about it and I can't just wait to leave this university.

Its not just said admin for nothing. Our campus relies on the main campus for a lot of things. Whenever there is an inquiry they don't have the brain capacity you have to go to the main campus to sort it out. Everything its like go to main campus, go to main campus. It's more expensive for us because you need to travel there. You find that it's a waste of time and money cant they just have their own educated people on this campus?

I once wanted a form and she said over there and I said where and she said on the left hand side and I went to the wrong side and she came to me because I got confused which is the left hand side and she insulted me and said are you stupid? And I had all this attitude about me I was so hurt and I right turned and I didn't get it.

I also feel that they are systems in place that do it. I know that if you have got a serious issue you can go to Nicky. I think it's the inconsistencies that really drive you insane. We do have lecturers who do give you marks on time who do give you

feedback and so you think this is what it should be like but when you go to the other lecturer it's completely devastates any expectation you had of this entire institution. I think there is a lot of work that needs to be done.

The negative is more than the positive.

It feels very negative. The whole place for me feels very negative. I don't want to be here anymore.

I was also speaking earlier on; first year and second year the library themselves were very, very bad in terms of… you would return a book, give them a book and they say ok thank you but they don't put the book through the system. So next time when you come you have about R100 and something rand fine. You ask them and they tell you the book was not returned. You take them to the shelves and show them there is the book. And also there are stories of them pocketing money and all those horrible things but since last year they have been changing staff there and organizing systems. I must say the library staff there is getting better.

There is one positive especially in the library, there is one thing there have bought a big flat screen in the library to show people who owe books. That money should have been used for something better for computer labs we have few printers and no colour printer. And the printer there is not always working; there is always some paper jam. You supposed to hand in an assignment and we have only two printers for the whole campus. That never work and there are not enough computers.

There are not enough computers for all the students here. You go into a computer lab and you find students sitting on face book or playing games. They are actually three printers and the lady in this computer room is really nasty. She locks the room and you can't print.

She does her lectures in that computer lab. Why doesn't she allow us to use some of the computers? There are about twenty computers going to waste.

I want to focus on one of the comments you made about the quality of lecturers and lecturing or lectures which do not match what one could expect from a university. Does anyone want to make a comment on that?

It doesn't feel like lecturers have prepared something new. So most of the time its like lecturers are reading some of the notes from last year but they haven't looked back and reflected on what worked and what did not work last year which could have been improved. A lot of the time it just feels like they are coming and carrying on from where they left. Which we could have done, one of us could have stood in the front and read all the notes.

And I also… just to back up the reading of the notes. A lecturer comes in and just says I am waiting for the printing guy to print my notes. Obviously they are not preparing

ahead because notes should have been copied and finished before hand. So we get into the class and wait for the notes or we wait for the notes to get them a week later because she had no time to print them.

And yet on that when we are in lectures they are always telling us that when we are teachers and we are in the classroom we need to be fully prepared we shouldn't be printing notes or work sheets on the day. We should have them prepared in advance in case something happens to the printer. So they are telling us one thing and completely doing the opposite.

I feel like I am in a school. They take register. I feel like I am in a school. The whole way feels like a school. I finished school 8 years ago and I feel like I am back.

They look for you when you not in class. They literary look for you and shout for you in the corridor, why are you not in the lecture? But in the booklet it says it's your responsibility to be in class. Why do you come and look for me if it is my responsibility? Because it's not high school.

It's fine if you have to be at the lectures if the attendance is part of it but they do role call but it's still the students' responsibility. They don't ask questions where you are. It's your responsibility. We are in a university and we know we must be there and if we have chosen not to be there it's our fault. If we miss out on notes it's our fault. You don't have to provide more notes. It's our fault. But let us take the responsibility.

Obviously everyone has their own personal issues and they are different reasons why we don't attend lectures. We don't want to share that with our lecturers. It's our personal choice not to come or come.

And also when she takes register the lecturer spends 14 or 15m asking where everyone is. We are at the high school wasting time asking where everyone is. Obviously people will not be there because there are not there for a reason. But they will take time out of our lectures to follow up on that.

They take their time to mourn at us and then they say I am sorry to preach to the converted but blab, blab and blab wasting more time.

What do you consider to be the qualities or personal characteristics of an exemplary or outstanding lecturer?

Someone who is consistent, they don't change their attitude or what they say. They follow through what they say.

They don't give you marks according to whether they don't like you or not. They do it just if they were just marking on you they know you actually do bad work and happen to come along the way you good; project they will mark you down because they do not

know whether you are doing it on your own or they are in a bad mood today so they are not going to give you good marks.

I think a good lecturer should always be prepared. Should have some personality because to be a lecturer it doesn't mean you are a clever person. You need to bring a point across like in a charismatic kind of way so that people can actually listen to you. There are a lot of lecturers who know a lot about their subject but have no idea how to bring it across to an audience as I have said earlier. But I think it's very important for a lecturer to be able to speak to people.

Also the lecturer must actually have the practical experience. Being teachers themselves they know what is going on. We have some lecturers who were last in the schools many, many, many years ago and now they come and still think the classroom situation is still like that when they were there and they try to put that on us but meanwhile it changes all the time and they don't have that kind of experience. We think that they are out of touch with reality. They say one thing but it happens differently in class. They don't have that experience. They don't know how to bring that experience to us. Sometimes when they say staff we just wonder now do they know what they are talking about?

Any good lecturer that struck you with their high quality of professionalism?

One lady lecturer - she is consistent, she is well prepared and she is always there on time. She gets our attention and she interacts with us all the time. She feeds back on our assignments.

She is very professional. She doesn't pretend she is your friend. She keeps the line where it's meant to be and she is fair. If you do your work she will be fine with you.

Now we are going to talk about teaching skills. What component of your programme focuses on the development of your teaching skills?

I think the numeracy and literacy are meant to be didactic courses. Personally I don't feel like I have been taught how to teach literacy very well. I think in certain lectures we are given a bit of didactics especially in special needs we were given a bit of didactics but some of our subjects aren't really meant to give us teaching skills for example our math's lectures were not meant for us to be teaching children which is purely for us like English major its not how we are going to be teaching children its for our own enrichment. About half the subjects are about how to teach in the class.

The rest we learn from practice, i.e. from the practical that we do. That's the biggest place where we learn. You can't really teach teaching skills and test out teaching skills until you are really in the classroom. One thing that this university does is to provide the immense amount of teaching practice experience. It's the only place where you can really learn how to teach.

We get given ideas of what to do in the classroom and the reality is that those ideas don't work in every situation. It might work in my classroom because of the personalities that I have or the number of children that I have in my class but its not going to work for everybody else. The only way we are learning teaching skills is by doing it in the classroom.

Do you think that this component is really meeting your needs as far as the development of teaching skills is concerned?

The practice teaching I think is really meeting our needs. We have done a lot of experience and we have leant to adapt our skills in different classrooms because we have been to so many different classrooms. So from that we have leant to adapt what we have leant in the classroom we learn to adapt it to the other classroom and make it work there. So I think the practice teaching for me has met my needs for teaching skills.

In terms of lectures meeting our teaching skills; I don't think that a lecture will be able to meet all the needs of every single student teacher but we definitely get ideas that we are given. If you are able to change them a bit to suit your class and we do talk about how to change activities in certain situations because it is obvious that in South Africa there are very vast differences in the classrooms. So I don't think the lecturers could give us exactly what to do in the classroom.

Do lecturers find time to demonstrate appropriate teaching skills to you? Do they find time to model and demonstrate?

Human movement was very, very well.

So to most of the lecturers there is modeling.

Definitely they have time to do that but whether they do or not that is a different story.

That is what I want to know. Do they do it or not?

It's not as many as we would have liked.

It's not as often as we would have liked.

We have never seen how to teach a L2 lesson. We have been given theory of how to teach it and why we teach it. This is how to teach it and you do it this way and we have never actually seen it happen. She has never modeled that to us. Which for me… it's a big thing because I have to teach Afrikaans as a second language. First of all I am not strong in the Afrikaans language. I have got an idea of how to teach it to children. I have taught it in the classroom and I have no idea whether I am in the right track because I have never seen it being taught. I have taught it according to my notes and how I think it should be taught but I have no idea whether I am in the right track.

For L2 we did a cycle of lessons all grades and she marked it and staff but it's if you did badly in it you don't know where to improve and how to improve. You don't know like what, how, where and why?

The problem is we all interpret our notes differently to what our lecturer thinks and what we should be doing. So I read it like its x, y and z but I think its something else because it has been learnt by different brains and how we interpret it and where we come from… also determines how we are going to do it. All those factors, but it might be wrong the way I interpret it. It's like when you are at the school and the lecturer comes to critic you and then you get to see how they mark your interpretation of how you want to teach it.

How do you think your needs in teaching skills development could better be met?

The lecturers demonstrate more classroom scenarios and they pretend they are the teacher and we are the students. Like real live situations.

Some universities or something I have heard where the lecturer has a class on stage and teaches them like the class and students are sitting watching so they got learners and they are teaching them relevant staff that we should be teaching to children and we watch them.

We should be teaching children and get to watch them. I have heard that has been done in other universities and I think that would be something that would help us a lot in our teaching.

You need to see a classroom situation. It's all very well dealing with us and using us as the learners but we don't respond like the children do. We responding to what the lecturer want us to respond and what we should be responding but children come up with their own answers and they have got completely different ideas. We also don't know how to deal with that because sometimes they go completely off the topic and we don't know how to bring them back or ask questions to make them further understand. If the lecturers are actually dealing with the class with learners and we watching that we can see how the lecturer interacts and deals with those kinds of situations.

But it's not all universities that do that. It's not a lot of them They did it here and they stopped.

In human movement Molly used to bring children from the schools and we could teach them how to swim.

How happy are you about the organization of teaching practice?

Some aspects are fine. There are instances that it seems much unorganized.

I found practice teaching fine. I have never had problems with the lecturers saying they are coming when they are not. I have heard issues that… except for the teaching manual that sometimes is not available by the time we go for practice teaching. But I think that is a little bit minor especially when you get to 3rd and 4th year because you pretty much know what you should be teaching. But I think it is being organized well.

I do think that the university does not cater for the students. There are, not many, students who are doing two majors and they don't care to put them to do practice for both majors. It's like a last minute, day before, what is happening? Ask this lecturer, ask that lecturer; it was really much disorganized. And I don't think they had put any thought into that. And there are students that do majors and they must cater for them.

I am one of the students I do two majors and I was told on Thursday of the last week that I had to stay on an extra week. Its not that I mind staying for an extra week but I would like to know from the beginning that I am staying for an extra week so that I kind of prepare my lessons for the week that is coming up.

Because if you have like tickets booked in staff you want to know in advance your flight tickets.

What is your evaluation of teaching practice supervision?

I think lecturers should come and see us but I don't think we should get marks. I think they should come and see what we are doing, watch a lesson and talk to us afterwards. But because it's a subjective thing I don't think we should be marked for it because all the different lecturers mark differently; it's a completely subjective process. Personally I could get a distinction for one lesson and for a similar lesson maybe I would just pass just because I have got a different lecturer. Either they must have the same lecturer coming to every one so the marking is consistent. I know that is an impossible scenario or they must come, watch us and give us feedback and not give us marks.

Who should mark you then?

We shouldn't get a mark for the teaching practice because it's unreasonable or there should be like a very clear guide line of how you are going to be marked. There should be a rubric rather than a…I have never ever had a lecturer mark using a rubric, never.

I have only had two lecturers ever that have used a rubric and those were the two that sat down with me after my lesson and actually gave me feedback. We went through the rubric and they told me why they ticked this box instead of that. The other lecturers all my years of experience have always arrived late. So the children were upset because they are waiting and waiting. Then they just write down, scribble the mark and give me pages, here there and there. If you want questions phone me. Which they probably not available for and they just run off jump into the car and they go. That is how all my experience has been.

I have had the complete opposite of experience of that. That shows you that it is very inconsistent. My experience is that my lecturers have always come on time except for once where she had a problem, car broke down or something. She still managed to get there. I always get feedback and its always very constructive feedback. They say you did this wrong you could have done this. They give me a solution to what I have done wrong and how I could change. So my experience of evaluation has worked for me and it has helped quite a lot. Because I have got a lot of lessons I can see where I have gone wrong and where I can improve on them. Why I shouldn't have done this and I have always got the feedback, the feedback is very, very important.

Like Amy says it's so subjective. I know lecturers who will give me distinctions and which won't. Like I know before I go in who likes me and who I get along with and also you know how to please them. Also the lessons that you give for your critic are not practical. Those are the lessons that you are not going to be doing. You are not teaching 6 or 7 of those lessons every single day. It's like showing the best of everything and I don't think that's not everything. You have got to be able to look at how you take the test, how you do hand writing. You like showing them the very best of the very best. I don't think it's relevant. It's unfortunate the tutor teachers are the ones who should be marking you but unfortunately we are put into classrooms where either the tutor teacher does not like you or does not personally get along with you. So it's like its hugely problematic the whole teaching practice and getting a mark. I don't even take my teaching practice mark as relevant to anything. I really don't. Its just depends on who comes to see you. If they like you yes you have a distinction and if they don't…too subjective.

Its not a very constructive exercise either because what they should be doing is coming into a class and seeing where your weak points are and sitting with you and say this is what you must work on. Do something that you are not very sure on. I did sit with Joy. I wasn't sure how to teach a literacy lesson and she actually came and showed me how to teach it. She gave me quite a good mark for it even though she like stepped in. but I know so much because she demonstrated it for me.

I think it's very good for lecturers to come and help you on something you are struggling with but personally I would like to do something on weekends because I want to get the best mark and even if it wasn't for marks, I would even do something that I am scared to teach. But I must comment that most of the lecturers who have come to see me have been fantastic and have constructive criticism and they really have given positive ways to improve my lessons and how I handle the children. I have gained a lot from the lecturers coming to see me.

You are really speaking into the next item - how do you think practice teaching could be improved or be made more effective in developing your teaching skills?

I think first of all they need to evaluate the teachers that they are sending us to because some of the teachers that we get sent to are horrible. Teachers like… we don't learn anything from them. So I think they need to evaluate the teachers that we get sent to so that we get to tutor teachers that are what we should be, what we are aiming to be.

I don't know. I am just being lucky. I have had tutor teachers the right way through out fortunately because I have had a lot of students who had problems with their tutor teachers. Its hard to find places in the schools and it's a whole lot of logistics and not everyone will be able to get along with their tutor teacher; its personality as well and the fact that they let us get into the classrooms is like wow, but treating them badly… I don't know. If you don't get along with your tutor teacher, you may be teaching well but she could mark you down because you are not getting well together. She could also give you a ridiculous mark like 89%...is everything going well, maybe not. Its unrealistic, it should be like a situation where the lecturer comes in and sits the whole day where she sees even the change over of the lessons. Something I struggle with to go from one lesson to the next. Something like that we don't look at here. We have never been taught anything like that. We have a lecturer and he comes and says this is how you should teach; I will basically help you out, see what you are doing, see where you are going wrong and sit for the entire day. For me if a lecturer can sit and go, ok this is what I think of your teaching. This is a realistic view of teaching not saying this is a fabulous lesson and beautiful resources, it should be an entire day. Basically it's really impractical but I think that should be the way.

Can we start wrapping up now, how ready do you feel you are to go and join the teaching field?

A lot of the time the lecturers have told us that we must feel ready to learn because next year we are going to learn so much more.

The first year of teaching you learn the most and you have got to apply everything that you have learnt. I think in certain areas you could feel more ready than in others. I think those lecturers that had a lot of practical input and those subjects that we taught practical we will be more prepared than in others.

In certain areas I feel prepared and in others I don't feel prepared as I should be. I am excited to go into the schools, I am really excited and at the same time I am very nervous because I don't know how the first day goes in my first classroom. I don't know what I should do in the classroom. Do I sort it out or somebody else sorts it out for me. There are certain areas that I am not sure of. In some subjects like numeracy, I feel very prepared to teach and in some area of literacy and human movement, I feel

very prepared to teach. But other area I may not teach them because I don't feel prepared.

I feel I want to go. I want to start teaching now. Like in some areas you really feel confident you want to teach now you don't have to think of what am I going to teach.

Which are those area?

Numeracy and L2. I feel confident in L2 and human movement. There are some things that I don't really feel confident in.

Like in history you don't know what to teach. We did history in first year and there was no didactics how we go about teaching it. It was abstract what we learnt.

I am actually afraid to go because the staff that they teach at school is not what they teach us here. I am worried about four years of input and coming into class it was for nothing. You come there and they teach you things that we don't do here; that we are not supposed to do. I am afraid of that. That shift…I am used to four years of this is how you should do it, this is how you set your lesson. This is how you start the lesson and it's completely different. You don't even use the staff that you learnt here. It's like you supposed to go over the university all over again. I am afraid of that. I am actually looking forward to it but I will take it as it comes.

I feel prepared with the actual teaching but I am very nervous about the whole school day set up how to go from one lesson to the other. Doing register in the morning and how to go through the whole motions of the full term and year.

I feel confident about the actual teaching of the subjects. It's just the semantics and how the school works. Some schools only want to teach in a certain way, if you are like me, I want to do things my way. The kind of thing that makes me nervous.

I am nervous but excited next year I am going out there even if they taught me at this campus what is different from over there. I don't want to go out in the school with big things. I want to tell myself that I know nothing. Because all the real teachers know more than myself even if I am going there with a Bed… I am scared. I am very scared.

Next year I am actually not going to be teaching I will be furthering my study through and Honors full time but not at this place. I will be going to Stellenbosch where I will really experience real student life but if I think of it I do feel confident about the teaching part being in class teaching children. But the part that real worries me is the admin thing. This after hour thing, I mean reports…how do I know that I am doing the right thing. It's not like the lecturer is going to teach us that because each school is different. Even if you have a system in your mind how you want to evaluate but the school comes in they do everything differently. You think how do you teach them because it's just overwhelming.

I am also nervous about going to the school and I think over the four years we have gone to different schools and we have been taught to adapt to which ever situation you get put into. Anywhere I am very nervous about identifying children with learning problems because I simply have not had enough experience about that.

Parents freak me out the idea of that you will be responsible for twenty to fifty children depending at which school you will be at… children you are responsible for getting them into the next grade. You are responsible for identifying why they are not going through. Having the back up to support that and it boils down to admin and class management and the parents. The fact that you have got to do this admin that completely freaks me out.

Thank you very much for your input I think we are done for today.

END OF INTERVIEW