

Trajectories of Curriculum Change in Initial Primary Teacher Education in Zambia

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Abstract. This chapter reviews trends in primary teacher education for the last five decades in Zambia. Since independence, Zambia has undertaken the following curriculum reforms in primary teacher education; the Zambia Primary Course(ZPC), The Zambia Basic Education Course(ZBEC), The Field Based Teacher Training Approach(FIBATTA) which was discontinued hardly three months of trial, The Zambia Teacher Education Reform Programme(ZATERP) piloted in three colleges of education, The Zambia Teacher Education Course(ZATEC-one year college based and one year school-based);the Zambia Teacher Education Course(ZATEC-two year residential course) and the current three year Diploma Primary Teacher Education Programme. The Ministry of Education upgraded all primary colleges of education to Diploma status and affiliated them to the University of Zambia. For a couple of years, the Ministry of Education back peddled and attached all Colleges of Education to the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ), a decision that was roundly condemned as a departure from the SADC protocol on education. Meanwhile, Colleges of Education which were under ECZ have now reverted to the University of Zambia with respect to quality assurance and programme supervision.

Key Words: Primary Teacher Education, Colleges of Education, Curriculum innovation, Zambia

I. INTRODUCTION

During the past five decades, there have been several attempts by the Ministry of Education in Zambia to reform the initial primary teacher education curriculum so that it is relevant and of good quality. In spite of all the efforts made so far, the problem of primary teacher education curriculum seems to persist as some of the changes have been on experimental basis. In addition, some of the curriculum changes or innovations that have been undertaken in Zambia seem to have been initiated by international capital in the name of technical assistance. Ostensibly, the nature of technical assistance that has been given in the past is sometimes based on foreign experience without sufficient local participation. It has been observed that some of the sporadic shifts in the primary teacher education curriculum have been drawn and implemented in a haste without a solid philosophical foundation anchored in research.

Trends in pre-service teacher education in Zambia

Commonwealth of Learning (2005) observed that piecemeal reforms in pre-service primary teacher education in Zambia have not served the desired purposes as some of changes look almost the same. In trying to establish a coherent primary teacher education curriculum, Zambia has been involved in

major efforts to reform its entire basic education system. These efforts have been occasioned by a growing dissatisfaction in the way primary school teachers have been trained and the quality of learning in schools. Efforts by the Ministry of Education through its Directorate of Teacher Education and Specialised Services (TESS) to reform primary teacher training have become popular because primary teacher training programmes are generally held in low esteem. Students preparing for primary teaching in Zambia are generally perceived as weak academically (Musonda, 2005). Issues surrounding these reforms are mainly two fold. One school of thought advocates for *increasing the time for content or subject matter background during teacher training*. The other school of thought lays emphasis on *increasing the length of time for practical student teaching and field experiences*. Therefore, the raging debate in primary teacher education has generally been between putting emphasis either on *subject matter* or *pedagogy*.

The attainment of independence in Zambia was followed by demands for changes in different institutions including education. Therefore, curriculum change was inevitable due to social, cultural, economic and political reasons. The first pre-service teacher education course for primary school teachers was the Zambia Primary Course (ZPC) introduced in 1967. The ZPC was an experimental curriculum based on the New Peak Course, an English Medium Programme in use that time in Kenya (Chishimba, 1979). The New Peak Course, sometimes referred to as the New Primary Approach, embodied primary teaching methods such as learning through doing and group work, while using English as the medium of instruction.

The Zambia Primary Course (ZPC) was designed to offer a six-term course (two years). ZPC was aimed at preparing student teachers to teach all the primary school grades (Grade 1-7). Previously, primary school teachers were trained as either lower primary teachers or upper primary school teachers. This type of training posed a lot of problems in the deployment of teachers as teachers could not teach all the grades in the primary school. The second curriculum review which affected primary teacher education was from 1975 to 1977. This was part of a more comprehensive educational reform exercise aimed at improving the content and methodologies of the curriculum in order to reflect the needs of the changing society. The education reforms of 1977 regarded teacher education as one of the vehicles for social and economic transformation of the newly independent

Zambian society. The policy declared that the teacher was the key person in the entire educational system of a country. It was felt that the success of the educational reforms in Zambia depended on the commitment, competence and resourcefulness of teachers in the system (GRZ / MoE, 1977). A careful reading of the Educational Reform: Proposals and Recommendations of 1977, makes it quite clear that the Reforms focused essentially on two issues: (a) the quantitative development of the formal education system and (b) the qualitative development of the education system, particularly in reference to teacher education and supply, evaluation and examinations, technical education and vocational training, continuing education, pre-school education, and the organization and management of the education system.

The Educational Reforms of 1977 acknowledged that teachers could not play their roles successfully from a position of mediocrity. It was argued that good teaching demands that the teacher should not only possess a correct attitude and adequate knowledge of the subjects taught but also keep abreast of developments in those subjects and in the objectives and methods of teaching. A teacher was also expected to have a deep understanding of the society in order to serve the communities effectively. In order to perform this role, teachers were required to develop themselves politically, academically and professionally. Thus, the second curriculum review resulted in the Zambia Basic Education Course (ZBEC), this curriculum review placed emphasis on Science, Mathematics, Technology, Political Education and Production Units in schools and colleges. Under ZBEC, English was still the medium of instruction from Grade I, although one of the seven official Zambian languages understood by the majority of the pupils in the class was used in special circumstances.

The teacher education curriculum under ZBEC and organization of training still remained traditional and stereotype. Each subject was developed discrete without any element of integration. During the 1990's, it was observed that the quality of education in the country had deteriorated. It was alleged that the curriculum was out-dated and was producing people who were unable to perform according to expectations. This was enunciated in the second education reform policy called *Focus on Learning*, which was launched in 1992. The policy was founded on the premise that completed primary education should help alleviate poverty, ignorance and advances economic and social development. In this policy, the purpose of primary teacher education was to transform Grade 12 school leavers into professionals who would be masters of the subject knowledge appropriate at primary level, competent in teaching skills and imbued with a sense of professional commitment to educating beginners and the young (GRZ/MoE, 1992). Teacher training colleges were expected to focus their training on transforming students into competent and committed teachers. In order to accomplish this task, teacher training institutions were required to have sufficient expertise and autonomy to direct their efforts in the production of high quality teachers. *Focus on Learning* adopted a rationalist approach to teacher education, it reduced

or narrowed teaching to technical competencies which students would be able to promote at appropriate levels in schools. It also called for adequate resources and autonomy for teacher training institutions. This policy position can be appreciated against the background that at this period in the Zambian history, there was too much political control and centralization of the education system and the college infrastructure were run down and under resourced. The policy highlighted the role of adequate resources in ensuring quality teacher education.

When Zambia changed its political system and ideology, it embraced liberal democracy. Consequently, a new educational policy, *Educating Our Future* (1996) was formulated, built on the values of liberal democracy. The aim of education was expected to be guided by the principles of liberalization, decentralization, equality, equity, partnership and accountability. Just like the Educational Reforms of 1977, this policy adopted a reconstructionist approach to education. However, more emphasis was placed on skills and competencies that were regarded as crucial in contemporary education.

On teacher education, *Educating Our Future* is concerned with the essential competencies required in every teacher such as the mastery of material to be taught and skill in communicating material to the pupils (GRZ/ MoE, 1996). In order to prepare and train teachers, the curriculum in pre-service primary colleges of education was not confined to what was taught in the lower and middle basic classrooms, the training made provision for the personal education and growth of the students (GRZ/MoE, 1996).

Educating Our Future established a radical departure in the way the curriculum was arranged at the lower and middle basic. The curriculum was not fragmented into rigid subject defined compartments because the child at this stage did not require the analytic capability of separating the world of experience.

Educating Our Future lays emphasis on the skills and knowledge that are central to the productivity of the economy and that help in the establishment of a liberal economy, in which internal and external competition are central values. Following the 1996 National Educational Policy (*Educating Our Future*), the Ministry of Education took steps in reviewing and restructuring the teacher training curriculum. In 1997, the Teacher Training Inspectorate Unit of the Ministry of Education designed a programme called Field Based Teacher Training Approach (FIBATTA). This programme was intended to address the problem of shortage of qualified teachers in order to stop the use of untrained teachers in primary schools. FIBATTA was premised on the competence-based curriculum aimed at developing, broadening and deepening the pedagogical and professional competencies of the trainees through active methods of study. FIBATTA was short lived and was discontinued hardly three months of trial in all teacher training colleges. However, this strategy developed into the Zambia Teacher Education

Reform Programme (ZATERP), funded by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). ZATERP was originally to be seated in the Teacher Training Inspectorate (TTI) but for unexplained reasons, a parallel structure was created in the Ministry of Education, an ad-hoc committee known as *Teacher Education Steering Committee* which was the forerunner of Teacher Education and Specialised Services (TESS). This management arrangement caused tension between the TTI and TESC. The Steering Committee was serviced by a Coordinator (an inspector) who became a key liaison officer between TTI and DANIDA the implementers of the programme. ZATERP was designed to implement a new basic teacher education curriculum that would reflect accurately the current needs of Zambia. The programme ran successfully for three years. Based on the experiences from the pilot, the programme was taken to scale at all the ten teacher training colleges from January 2000 and the programme changed its name to Zambia Teacher Education Course (ZATEC). ZATEC was delivered through a two year course; the year based in the colleges was referred to as the college-based year. In the second year students were attached to schools for teaching practice. This was referred to as the school based year. During the school based year students continued their studies alongside their teaching practice and were assisted by a Mentor (experienced teacher) appointed in all practicing ZATEC schools. Mentors were responsible for the professional training of student teachers in schools and reported to the college on the performance of students under their tutelage. This was an apprenticeship type of model (Sitting by Nellie) type of instruction based on the understanding that teachers are made in the actual classroom practice and not in a lecture theatre. In due course mentors started asking for an allowance for supervising college students which could not be met by colleges or the Ministry of Education. The morale for mentors declined in some practicing schools as their demands could not be met.

ZATEC was based on learner-centred education. It focused on the need for change in the form and nature of teacher education for basic schools. It recognized the three stages. i.e. lower, middle and upper within the basic education phase. The focus of ZATEC was on the lower and middle stages. However, the flexibility in the structure of the course made it possible to extend it to cover the entire basic education phase. It was based on the principle of integration of the traditional subjects rather than their differentiation. Unlike ZPC and ZBEC, ZATEC adopted a concept of study areas in which the subjects were grouped according to clearly definable relationships among them.

Theoretical Perspectives on Primary Teacher Education in Zambia

In view of policies that have influenced the theory and practice of primary teacher education, there are two major competing perspectives of teacher education that seem to have influenced planners of primary teacher education programmes in Zambia. These are the *social market perspective* and the

platonian or rationalist perspective. The theoretical understanding of some of the principles underpinning teacher education systems are based on the assumption that the epistemological relationship between educational theory and professional knowledge are central in shaping teacher education paradigms.

The *social market perspective* is based on economic principles. Education is seen as a process which must supply consumers (learners) with educational commodities, i.e., (competencies / skills) which may change in accordance with the educational needs of society. This, therefore, requires a teacher who keeps on learning in order to cope with such changes. This model sees the teacher as a facilitator and not an expert in full control. A teacher education programme modeled on this perspective puts emphasis on the following: Practice at the expense of theoretical foundation of learning and teaching; teacher as facilitator, guide, adviser rather than expert, learner-centred approach to teaching, school-based training at the expense of college-based training, teacher as a life long learner and formative assessment rather than summative assessment.

The Field Based Teacher Training Approach (FIBATTA) and the initial Zambia Teacher Education Course (ZATEC) appear to have been modeled on this perspective of teacher education.

On the other hand, the *platonian or rationalist perspective* considers a teacher as a rational individual who is in full control of his profession because he or she understands well the theoretical foundations of the profession as well as the subject knowledge. To have such a teacher, the college-based training is most crucial during which the individual is subjected to theories and principles of learning and their subject knowledge is enriched. But before graduation, the prospective teacher must be given chance to do school teaching practice to put the theories and teaching techniques learnt into practice. An individual who goes through this process is seen as an expert who do not only understand how to teach but also what to teach. A teacher education course modeled on this perspective puts emphasis on the following: theory at the expense of practice; teacher as an expert-teacher should be knowledgeable in the theories of teaching as well as subject content; College-based training at the expense of school-based training and summative assessment at the expense of formative assessment. The Zambia Primary Course (ZPC), the Zambia Basic Education Course (ZBEC) were premised on this model. The current transformed ZATEC (2008) two year residential course is also premised on this model. Similarly, the current three year Primary Teachers Diploma Programme appears to be anchored in the rationalist perspective. The Ministry of Education introduced a new curriculum at school level which shows a shift from positivist to constructivist view of teaching. This change necessitated the need to review the teacher education curriculum. The revised curriculum for Primary Teachers Diploma provides trainee teachers with an

opportunity to acquire the necessary key competencies, skills, values and positive attitudes that are useful in facilitating the learning of the young learners. The Primary Teachers Diploma is designed in such a way that its content and pedagogy is in harmony with the school curriculum at primary school level. This approach exposes trainee teachers to the school content and to the delivery of the material. In order to implement the Primary Teachers Diploma (PTD) course effectively, lecturers in Colleges of Education are expected to be familiar with the new primary school curriculum so that they are able to facilitate the transfer of necessary pedagogical knowledge and skills required for its effective implementation. For the PTD curriculum to be implemented effectively, it is used side by side with the Grades 1-7 curriculum. Colleges of Education should ensure that every student has a copy of the primary school curriculum throughout their training period. It is envisaged that the PTD curriculum would enable Colleges of Education to train teachers that are relevant to the teaching and learning process in schools. In this curriculum, deliberate effort has been made to give prominence to content and pedagogy. This is meant to bridge the gap between the college curriculum and the school curriculum.

Similar to these two major philosophies or perspectives of teacher education are the three ideal types of teacher education paradigms presented by Stuart (1999) which she calls *Sitting by Nellie*; *Ivory Towers* and the *reflective Practitioner*. These nick names seem to be embedded in the actual theory-practice relationship these paradigms imply. For instance, *Sitting by Nellie* carries the criticism levelled at placing more emphasis on practice than theory. The opposite is true of the *Ivory Tower* paradigm which is criticized for imparting theories that have little relevance to practice. The *reflective practitioner* sounds like an ideal paradigm, balancing up theory with practice and producing teachers as independent thinkers.

The theoretical understanding of some of the principles that undergirds teacher education systems are based on the assumption that the epistemological relationship between theory and practice are central in shaping teacher education paradigms.

In the case of Zambia, there are two major competing philosophies or perspectives of teacher education that seem to have influenced the planning of teacher education programmes. These are the *platonian or rationalist* perspective and the *social market perspective*. The rationalist perspective considers a teacher as a rational individual who is in full control of his profession because he or she understands well theoretical foundations of the profession as well as the subject knowledge. To have such a teacher, college-based training is most crucial during which the prospective teacher is subjected to theories and principles of teaching. In addition, the subject knowledge of the prospective teacher is also enriched. Before graduation, the prospective teacher must be given chance to do school teaching practice in order to put theories and

teaching techniques learnt into practice. An individual who goes through this process is seen as an expert who does not only understand how to teach but also what to teach. A teacher education course modeled on this perspective puts emphasis on the following:

- Theory at the expense of practice - an expert teacher should be knowledgeable in the theories of teaching as well as subject content.
- College based training is emphasised at the expense of school-based training.
- Summative assessment is emphasised at the expense of formative assessment.

The *Zambia Primary Course (ZPC)* and the *Zambia Basic Education Course (ZBEC)* seem to have been premised on this model.

On the other hand, the *social market perspective* is based on economic principles. Education is seen as a process which must supply learners with competencies and skills which may change in accordance with the needs of society. This, therefore, requires a teacher who keeps on learning in order to cope with such changes. This model sees the teacher as a facilitator and not an expert in full control. A teacher education programme modeled on this perspective of teacher education puts emphasis on the following:

- Practice at the expense of theoretical foundation of learning and teaching.
- Teacher as facilitator, guide, adviser rather than expert.
- Learner-centred approach to teaching.
- School-based training at the expense of college-based training.
- Teacher as a life long learner.
- Formative assessment rather than summative assignment.

The *Field Based Teacher Training Approach (FIBATTA)* and the *Zambia Teacher Education Course (ZATEC)* appear to have been modelled on this perspective of teacher education. It is for this reason that the ZATEC methodology emphasizes learner-centred approaches which encourage teaching techniques that are practically oriented, participative and that require inquiry and reflection. The different subjects taught in lower and middle stages of basic education were collapsed into six study areas, the course adopted team teaching and an integrated approach. Similar to these two major philosophies or perspectives of teacher education are the three *ideal types* of teacher education paradigms presented by Stuart (1999) which she calls apprenticeship, academic and professional, nicknaming them *Sitting by Nellie*; *Ivory Towers*; and the *Reflective Practitioner*. These nicknames seem to be embedded in the actual theory-practice relationship these paradigms imply. For instance, *Sitting by Nellie* carries the criticism leveled at placing more emphasis on practice than theory. The opposite is true of the *Ivory Tower* paradigm

which is criticized for imparting theories that have little relevance to practice. The *reflective practitioner* sounds like an ideal paradigm, balancing up theory with practice and producing teachers as independent thinkers.

The Ministry of Education through its Directorate of Teacher Education and Specialised Services (TESS) upgraded the two year certificate programme in the Colleges of Education to a three-year Diploma Programme and affiliated all colleges of education to the University of Zambia. The implications of this decision were that quality control and programme supervision in affiliate colleges of education was the responsibility of the University of Zambia. The Ministry of Education has now rescinded its decision, colleges of education will now be supervised by the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) as was the case in the past. This change has been received with mixed feelings with respect to determining standards of knowledge and skills to be attained by persons seeking to become registered as teachers and regulating or controlling the teaching profession in all its aspects and ramifications. The Teaching Council of Zambia which has the legal mandate in the supervision of teacher education should take an interest in this matter. To register individuals as professional teachers on a mere presentation of certificate without scrutinizing the preparatory aspects of the profession would amount to nothing in an attempt to professionalize teaching in Zambia.

Dynamics of Curriculum Change

Curriculum change invariably reflects change in the society at large and education in general. Hence most of what is dealt with in curriculum change with colleges of education addresses ways of implementing change effectively. A specific curriculum innovation may lead society in changing in a particular direction, but usually curriculum change reflects societal change. Consequently, when we consider curriculum change we need to include both the content of that change as well as the process by which that change comes about. By content, we mean the knowledge, skills, concepts, understandings, values and so forth associated with the material concerned, such as a new History Syllabus or a Primary Mathematics Syllabus. The change process refers to means by which teachers will be introduced to that content and how they will be convinced to adopt and implement it. This requires the use of appropriate change strategies to convince teachers of the need for the change, the value in participating in the change and importance of developing appropriate perceptions, beliefs and actions that accord with that change. An important beginning is for curriculum developers and all participants in the educational process, to be aware of the generic forces of curriculum change if they are to survive effectively.

As the fast pace of curriculum change continues unabated, driven by the increased politicization of curriculum, so those involved in developing and implementing curricula will need to know more about the nature of change and how to deal with it purposefully.

Curriculum, being the essential heart of schooling, has experienced enormous swings with the pendulum of change. As curriculum is concerned with the *what, how, when* and *so what* question in teaching, it also has the scope for multidimensional change. However, before examining the nature of that change, it is useful to distinguish the significant terms employed in the literature.

Change as we have noted is a generic term used in education to incorporate a number of associated concepts (innovation, adoption) in order to analyze and explain curricula phenomena. Change is, in effect, the process of transformation of phenomena in analyzing that transformation it is useful to consider the dimensions of rate (speed), scale (size), degree (thoroughness), significance (profoundness) and direction (orientation). It usually refers to a general concept which describes what has happened, particularly as the result of the dissemination of an innovation. Much of curriculum is concerned with planned change, which may be defined as a deliberate and collaborative process involving a change agent and a client system which are brought together to solve a problem or, more generally, to plan and attain an improved state of functioning and applying valid knowledge (Bennis in Print 1993). Most of what is addressed in curriculum change is some form of planned change.

At any one time the curriculum of a school or college is subjected to considerable pressures to change from its current situation. But the question is where do these pressures come from and what do they mean for the teachers or college lecturers? Pressures emerge from what Skilbeck (1984) considers to be four principal sources.

Skilbeck (1984) suggests that changes to the school or college curriculum reflect four major inputs: changes in society (indirect and direct) and changes in education (indirect and direct).

Curriculum change in schools reflects changes in society at large. Such changes are invariably indirect in nature and the association or linkage between societal and curriculum change is rarely a perfect match. Nevertheless, many societal changes may have significant impact upon the school curriculum. Skilbeck suggests that the school curriculum responds to changes in society which explicitly and deliberately enlist curriculum policy and practice as a means of achieving stated goals and ends. These include for example, attempts to encourage schools to show greater awareness of developmental issues, or problems of poor governance. In recent years the school curriculum in Australian schools has changed to accommodate such direct pressures as new standards of literacy, enhanced numeracy skills, environmental studies and peace studies. These examples demonstrate how deliberate changes have occurred in schools as a response to societal change. In the immediate future we shall witness substantial change to the post-compulsory curriculum in our schools and colleges as the curriculum and schools react to numerous societal changes. Finn (1991) and Mayer (1992).

Within education itself, changes occur which impinge or implicitly challenge existing curriculum practices and policies. While Skilbeck states that these are internally based, they obviously reflect aspects of the outside society.

Nevertheless, internally instigated changes (those emanating from within education systems) can have a profound effect upon school or college curricula. Skilbeck suggests that changes may be made or sought in curriculum policy and practice to promote certain ends or achieve particular goals in the education system.

Six Dilemmas in Teacher Education

The major issues of concern to those who have a stake in the preparation of teachers are discussed in terms of a set of six dilemmas: coverage versus mastery; evaluative versus affective emphases; emphasis on current versus future needs of candidates; thematic versus elective approaches; emphasis on current practice versus innovative practice; and specific versus global assessment criteria. These dilemmas are endemic to teacher education and may account for both the dissatisfaction with teacher education and the low level of impact attributed to it.

Each group with a stake in the preparation of teachers such as governments, local educational authorities, teachers, parents, teacher educators and the candidates themselves have complained that teacher education has little impact on the candidates. Graduates in teacher education have characterized their experience as less than satisfying and of doubtful practical value (Harris and Associates, 1990). Each group has expectations of what teacher education should accomplish and its own favourite explanations for why it falls short much of the time. Katz and Rath (1992) have identified some of the major issues of concern to those who have a stake in the preparation of teachers are discussed in terms of a set of six dilemmas that are endemic to teacher education. Of the six dilemmas, the first three are generic to all education; the remaining three are more specific to teacher education. These six dilemmas do not exhaust all dilemmas teacher educators face. Rather, they are enduring and especially nettlesome in this discussion of six dilemmas. A dilemma is described as a predicament that has two main features, it involves a situation that offers a choice between at least two courses of action, each of which is problematic and it concerns a predicament in which the choice of one of the courses of action sacrifices the advantages that might accrue if the alternative were chosen. In sum, a dilemma is a situation in which a perfect solution is not available. Each of the available choices in such predicaments involves a choice of negative factors as well as positive ones.

The first dilemma is *coverage versus mastery emphases*, all teachers face conflicting pressures to emphasize either coverage or mastery of the content and skills to be taught. The more content and skills pupils cover, the less they can master, and vice versa. Teachers cannot do justice to coverage and mastery at the same time. Teacher educators are under constant pressure to expand the curriculum to cover more

content and skills. Rarely are proposals put forward to eliminate a programme component. As schools take on more and more responsibility to address the ills of society such as substance abuse, crime, violence, teenage pregnancies, suicide and other vices, corresponding pressure grows to add topics to the already crowded teacher education curriculum. Another responsibility facing teacher educators is that of preparing teacher candidates for examinations leading to licensure. Addressing this responsibility as a principal focus requires a mastery emphasis. Part of the pressure to maintain or expand coverage of the content and skills in teacher education stems from the expansion of knowledge and information in the disciplines related to teaching. Expansion of knowledge applies not only to subjects taught in schools but also to such disciplines as child development, psychology of learning, sociology of learning, methods of teaching and aspects of special education. Teacher educators may believe that it is more important to introduce these topics to their candidates, even if only superficially, than to graduate prospective teachers who have never heard of them. Most teacher educators are convinced that teacher preparation is only a beginning and that teacher development is an ongoing, career-long process, they may elect to help candidates anticipate what they need to learn by covering many topics superficially rather than to teach fewer topics at the mastery level.

A coverage emphasis might be seen as most appropriate for programmes in elementary and early childhood education, where candidates are required to become generalists.

Emphasis on mastery has important implications for teacher education curriculum. Instead of being exposed to a smattering of topics, candidates would master a carefully selected and limited number of topics well enough to retrieve and apply them in real teaching situations. A mastery emphasis would give candidates greater feelings of competence and confidence in the knowledge and skills they have learned. Courses would probably have a longer lasting impact on graduates. In contrast, when programmes require coverage of a wide range of topics, candidates are more likely to feel pressured to cram course content to cope with assignments and examinations. Approached in this manner, the content covered is likely to be perceived by candidates as inert rather than anchored in experience and accessible to them in their teaching.

In some respects, the mastery/coverage dilemma can be analysed as a problem of perception. Any attempt to tip toward mastery is somewhat compromised by our awareness that the knowledge explosion, often cited to justify coverage emphases, is likely to continue. The specifics of what is being taught in teacher education today are likely to be replaced tomorrow, suggesting that the greatest contribution teacher education programmes can make is to strengthen appropriate dispositions (e.g. being accepting, patient, thoughtful, resourceful, experimental, cooperative and open minded) can be addressed as the most important aspects of the programme. A teacher education programme can give a mastery focus to

the dispositions they are seeking to strengthen and at the same time a coverage focus to a wide variety of important topics.

Although this approach includes both coverage and mastery values, we must recognize that the dilemma has not vanished. Teacher education faculty will be able to strengthen only a small number of dispositions in their candidates. Choices still must be made.

The second dilemma is *evaluative versus affective emphases*. Part of the teacher educator's role is to evaluate the progress of candidates in the programme. Evaluation in teacher education is undertaken principally to exclude weak or inept recruits from entering the profession. It also gives direction to candidates to improve their performances as prospective teachers. Another part of the role, creating a dilemma for teacher educators, is the obligation to address learners' needs for support and encouragement. Conducting realistic evaluations of candidates requires a certain distance between faculty and candidates and creates some wariness between them. When a faculty chooses to emphasize support and encouragement and to create feelings of closeness, they are likely to withhold negative feedback. Some teacher education programmes are dedicated to providing candidates experiences from which they get feelings of success. This approach emphasizes warm encouragement and positive feedback as a basis for stimulating the candidate's growth in self confidence. This strategy is most often evident in student teaching placements. Advantages of an affective emphasis in teacher education are that most candidates need some emotional support and encouragement to help them through rough spots. Recent interest in the potential value of providing new teachers with mentors is based on the assumption that experienced colleagues can provide needed emotional support in addition to professional know-how (Austin, 1990).

Teacher educators, especially in their roles as supervisors of field experiences, learn to expect strong pressure from candidates for support and encouragement. Many student teachers need positive feedback that tells them to "keep going" and "try again" in the face of fumbling first efforts. The major advantage of emphasizing the helping and nurturing aspect of the roles of teacher educators is that with support many candidates will improve their competence and persevere.

On the other hand, candidates in programmes characterized by an evaluative emphasis may feel more confident in their readiness to function as professionals for they know that they have survived a stringent evaluation process while weaker candidates have not. Little concern for evaluation may signal that almost anything goes and deprive candidates of a positive identification with the profession to which they aspire. Some believe that teacher education programmes suffer from the perception and reputation, deserved or not, that almost everyone who starts a teacher education programme succeeds in finishing it. By emphasizing evaluation, and by making evaluations rigorous and exacting, teacher education programmes might begin to shake the

reputation that they lack intellectual rigour. As programmes emphasize the helping and nurturing aspects of the teacher educator's role, candidates are likely to be more satisfied with their educational experiences. On the other hand, evaluation procedures that are highly formalized and rigorously applied are likely to undercut this warm and caring ambience. One approach that can preserve the nurturance in the programme is to separate the formative and summative evaluation roles. Coaching roles could be assigned to some faculty, and summative evaluation roles could be assigned to others.

The former could be charged with providing support to candidates, giving them the strength to keep trying under the watchful and caring eyes of the university supervisors.

The third dilemma is *emphasis on current versus future needs of candidates*. During their pre-service preparation, candidates are typically at a stage in their development characterized by high dependence on their lecturers for direction, prescription and evaluation. Fuller (1969) described teachers in this stage of their professional development as having "self concerns." Teacher educators may be disposed to do something for their candidates that will satisfy them at this time without considering what is best for their students in the long term. For example, teacher educators can indulge and gratify their candidates' concerns by providing what they claim to need in the way of specific guidelines and tips for teaching. On the other hand, teacher educators can resist candidates' dependency needs and encourage them to begin to take responsibility for their own learning and professional development by withholding specific detailed academic requirements, directions and prescriptions.

Some of the advantages in addressing current needs are that teacher educators demonstrate and present methods of instructions in the form of recipes, gimmicks and quick fixes that are easily digested and understood, candidates are likely to feel confident that they are preparing for the teaching role. The concerns of undergraduates will be especially well met if the approach taken in the programme avoids theory and a discussion of the complexity of teaching. Further, as the requirements of the teacher education programme place candidates early and often in schools with children, they will feel as though they are in the right place for learning how to teach. A focus on current needs avoids a pitfall associated with all professional preparation programmes: namely, providing candidates with answers to questions they have not yet asked and preparing them for eventualities rather than actualities. By concentrating on the current concerns of candidates, faculty can keep their courses from becoming, in the eyes of the candidates, remote and inert.

Some perceived advantages in addressing future needs of candidates are that in some respects what are seen to be future needs of candidates accommodates the needs of teacher educators more than those of candidates. As experts in teaching and teacher education, they feel confident in their own knowledge of what is important for teachers to know and learn. By acting on their beliefs and values in this situation,

teacher educators may feel more useful and true to their calling. An analysis of follow-up studies demonstrated that the judgments of teachers about experiences in their pre-service programmes change over time (Katz, Rath, Kurachi and Irving, 1981).

One of the critical questions asked about laying emphasis on current versus future needs of candidates is: Should a programme in teacher education concentrate on offering a curriculum that caters for the current needs and concerns of candidates, or should it make an effort to answer questions that the candidates are not yet ready to ask but that are seen by teacher educators to be of critical significance for the future? Addressing this dilemma can be difficult. The current interest of candidates is at least in part concerned with “making it through college,” “getting good grades,” and “completing the assignments” (Goodlad, 1990).

The fourth dilemma is *thematic versus eclectic approaches*, some teacher education programmes are designed around a coherent theme that includes a particular philosophy, curriculum or pedagogical model. Every course in the programme advances the common theme by using it as a basis for selecting readings, giving feedback, and evaluating the progress of candidates. On the other hand, programmes without themes encourage faculty to “do their own thing.” Under this eclectic approach, faculty members order their own texts, prepare their own assignments, and evaluate candidates using their own frameworks without any systematic consultation with colleagues or with programme policies. Candidates in such programmes are encouraged to choose the courses they want to take from the instructors they prefer. Very little philosophical coherence exists across courses, except by sheer accident or circumstance. The horns of this dilemma are whether to organize teacher education programmes around a theme, philosophy or model or to give faculty license to take an eclectic approach in which each faculty member advocates a preferred philosophy or pedagogical model.

Some of the advantages of a thematic approach are that a programme organized around a single coherent theme and a unified approach to teaching may have stronger impacts on candidates’ practice of teaching than one that is unfocused (Barnes, 1987). As candidates in teacher education are likely to be at a stage of development in which clear and unambiguous guidelines or rules for handling routine tasks of teaching are sought,

a single approach without competing alternatives can be a source of clarity and may build candidates’ confidence and be more satisfying to them. Some candidates may perceive an eclectic approach as the faculty’s abdication of its own professional judgment. In such cases, they may simply dismiss the faculty as a group of competing ideologies unworthy of respect. Candidates expressing such views may find cooperating teachers of similar views, and the two groups may well develop a united front against the faculty, further diminishing the programmes’ impact.

Without denying the impact likely from their thematic programmes, there are difficulties with this approach. The first is that a programme organized around a coherent theme may well become shrill and cloying, indoctrinating candidates into particular views about teaching and learning. As Buchmann and Floden (1990:8) put, “A programme that is too coherent fits students with blinders, deceives them, and encourages complacency. In teaching, the comforts of settled opinion are neither realistic nor functional. A doctrinaire approach is antithetical to the ethos of a university that prizes openness to alternative points of view. One of the original arguments for locating teacher education in a university instead of in a single –purpose teacher training institution such as a normal school was that exposure to a wide range of ideas and intellectual endeavours would be a valuable part of the socialization of prospective teachers.

If a faculty adopts a theme, the certitude with which it is advanced can lead to the indoctrination of candidates. If there is no theme, candidates are free to elect courses and faculty on their own personal bases, and faculty are given the option of teaching whatever they want. In the latter case, the chances are great that candidates will be dissatisfied with the programme and that the impact of the programme on candidates will be weak. Their dissatisfaction will arise from hearing contradictory views from their instructors about what constitutes good teaching. Students are likely to perceive the dissonant ideals and goals of the faculty as confusing. As a result, all the ideas may be rejected, and the sources of the dissonance – the faculty members – be discredited. Faculty may elect at least two ways to address this dilemma. The first is to select a theme for their program that is sufficiently narrow to discipline the approaches faculty use to plan programmes, conduct evaluations, and focus the attention of candidates to a well-defined knowledge base. Examples of such themes might include “teaching for diversity”-emphasizing individualizing instruction in a classroom – or “teaching for understanding” – stressing the teachers’ need to apply their skills to lead pupils to more sophisticated understandings about what is being in class. Both of these themes high light what is taught in courses within a programme, but not in ways that are unduly restrictive. A second approach is to permit faculty to offer competing programmes simultaneously. Under this approach, candidates have the opportunity to choose the themes of their programmes, and faculty are encouraged to collaborate with several others to develop thematic approaches.

The fifth dilemma is emphasis on current practice versus innovative practice. The thrust of some teacher education programmes is to prepare candidates to perform successfully in today’s schools. In fact, the emphasis of late on mandated early field experiences and extended periods of student teaching is motivated in part by the goal of acclimating candidates to the current school scene. On the other hand, some programmes are committed to preparing candidates for schools that would represent improvements over today’s schools. Thus, a teacher education programme faculty can

choose to focus on helping candidates acquire competence in the current standard practices of the schools available to them or programme faculty may give priority to helping candidates learn the most recently developed innovative practices – ones that are rarely seen in today’s schools. Due to the finite amount of time available to teacher education faculty, not all possible pedagogical methods can be covered and taught.

Some of the advantages of emphasizing current practices are that a good grounding in current teaching practices prepares graduates to take up their positions with a minimum of adjustment problems. New teachers can seek suggestions and advice from experienced colleagues and can recognize that they are in the early stages of learning the teaching methods others in the school have long used. Having been trained in current standard practices, new teachers are likely to experience a sense of continuity between their student teaching experience and their first teaching assignment. An emphasis on current practice is also likely to minimize conflicts between teacher education faculty and cooperating teachers. Advantages of emphasizing innovative practices in teacher education are that colleges of education should be seen to develop new knowledge and innovative practices by which the profession’s standard and contributions to the general welfare are improved. Professional colleges of education carry out this function most effectively when faculty members work to introduce innovative practices into the teacher education programmes. It is assumed that when recruits are equipped with new knowledge and improved techniques, they will contribute over time to the upgrading of professional practice. Of course, new teachers can become discouraged when they enter the current school scene to find the innovative practices they have learned are either rarely invoked or actually discouraged by local school norms.

Without emphasizing innovative practice, the research and development mission of the university would be difficult to justify. A brief internship or a training programme characteristic of the apprenticeship found in the normal schools of former times would suffice to prepare teachers for current schools. Teacher educators should pride themselves in helping new teachers develop innovative practices.

The sixth dilemma is *specific versus global assessment criteria*. A teacher education programme faculty might define its objectives in crisp, concrete and specific ways, making clear to all of its candidates precisely what is expected of them. This approach was prevalent during the competency-based teacher education / performance – based teacher education of the mid-1970’s (Howey and Zimpher, 1989). High specificity in the criteria for assessing the progress of candidates has several advantages. First, the more specific the criteria are, the more easily they can be shared with candidates in unambiguous ways. Thus candidates easily come to know what is required of them. Secondly, the more assiduously candidates work at attaining success on them (Natriello and Dornbusch, 1984). Thirdly, most teacher education candidates are admitted into higher education because of successful

socialization into the disposition to work for good grades and to pass examinations. They are therefore likely to feel comfortable and satisfied with the programme when the grading criteria are clear. Specificity and explicitness concerning how candidates’ progress and performance are to be judged are consistent with a sense of fairness.

The advantage of a global approach to assessment of candidates’ progress is that it takes into account the complex nature of teaching. The more explicit and specific methods of assessment are likely to lead to trivial notions of teaching. Holistic criteria might, for example, include professional dispositions that are difficult to specify in detail and depend upon observations of candidates over time (Katz and Raths, 1985). Holistic judgements also enable teacher educators to put candidates’ behaviors into a context of multiple occasions and situations in which they have been observed, and a sense of how they might function in the complex professional environment of a school can be incorporated into the evaluation procedures. Without a broad conceptualization guiding both instruction and evaluation, the ethos created by an emphasis on specific criteria is apt to be more technical than intellectual and is therefore unlikely to cultivate such intellectual disposition as reflectivity and openness to new ideas and to alternative interpretations of teaching predicaments. This is not to gainsay the advantages of specificity. Under a global approach, candidates are likely to be dissatisfied in that they may feel the assessments are arbitrary and unfair or so unclear that it is difficult to know how to improve. Candidates are apt to become resentful when faculty members appear unable to answer questions such as “What precisely is it that you want me to do?”

Assessment of candidates’ progress is one of the most stubborn predicaments facing teacher educators. In fact, this issue is reflected in two of the six dilemmas we have presented. One aspect of any evaluation system that bears on the way it is perceived is its fairness. The extent to which an evaluation emphasis in teacher education leads to candidate dissatisfaction may be related to the fairness with which it is implemented. There are at least two ways in which evaluation procedures are likely to be deemed fair, represented by each horn of this dilemma. The first is to make the process as objective as possible – using test scores, objective observations, and behavioural objectives as the bases for the evaluations. For such a system to be deemed fair, there would be need to frequent feedback to the candidates throughout the period of preparation accompanied by lengthy conferences in which formative judgments are explained and translated into plans for improving performance. Another approach for accommodating the conflicting pressures involved in this dilemma might be to use both specific and holistic evaluations as a form of triangulation. Specific assessment criteria can be applied to the instructional context of formal profession studies, while holistic criteria are used in the informal context of a teacher educator’s evaluation of individual candidates. When the specific criteria of grades and scores differ from the holistic judgments of programme faculty, special reviews can

be conducted of the cases that reflect a disparity to attempt to understand more clearly the sources of dissonance and to improve the faculty's understanding of its application of the assessment process. In sum, these six dilemmas related to teacher education may not be mastered, solved or overcome easily. They are enduring and intractable. Our analysis suggests at least three things. Firstly, our frustration with efforts to reform teacher education are likely rooted in these dilemmas. Secondly, our realization that we are facing unsolvable, enduring dilemmas should not be used as an excuse for inaction in teacher education.

II. CONCLUSION

The study established that curriculum innovations in pre-service primary teacher education in Zambia were too rapid. Most of the respondents interviewed 124 (89%) observed that curriculum innovations in pre-service primary teacher education in Zambia were too rapid. In addition, the respondents strongly felt that the curriculum should be allowed to run a considerable period of time before it was phased out. It was also noted that the curriculum change in pre-service primary teacher education appeared haphazard as there were too many programmes introduced within a short period. Some college lecturers and eminent retired educationists interviewed noted that the Ministry of Education had tried six curriculum innovations since independence most of which were on experimental basis. Some respondents complained that the curriculum change were not linked to the school curriculum.

Some respondents interviewed observed that curriculum innovations in pre-service primary teacher education had compromised the quality of graduates in primary colleges of education. It was observed that teachers were generally half baked due to insufficient training. It was argued that some young teachers could not demonstrate the required skills and competencies as compared with teachers trained under different programmes. It was reported that there were some misunderstandings in schools among teachers due to different orientations in teacher education. Some respondents felt that generations of teachers churned out of colleges under different orientations in teacher education produced conflicting ideas in schools. It was noted that the dissonance between the school curriculum and teacher education curriculum resulted into problems among teachers. Some college lecturers interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with the frequent changes in pre-service primary teacher education curriculum. Some college lecturers complained that they did not have enough time to familiarize themselves with the ever changing curriculum in teacher education. It was noted that most of the teacher education programmes were on experimental basis and were never evaluated after donor pull-out.

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