

**Credit Accumulation and Modular Scheme in Higher  
Education in Rwanda: a case study of lecturers'  
perceptions of implications for lecturers' work**

Jean Claude NDAGIJIMANA

Supervisor: Ms Lynne Slonimsky

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Master of Education**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Jean Claude NDAGIJIMANA, Master of Education student at the University of the Witwatersrand hereby declare that this research report is my own original unaided work. It has never been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university. I am submitting it in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Education Degree.

Signed .....

Date: .....

Jean Claude NDAGIJIMANA

## **DEDICATION**

To Françoise MUKARUKUNDO, my beloved wife;

To Ineza Ndagije Clenia , my daughter.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First and foremost I am thankful to the Government of Rwanda for the funding of my studies through the Students'Financing Agency for Rwanda (SFAR). The present work is the fruit of the combined efforts of many people to whom I am sincerely grateful. More particularly I am indebted to Ms Lynne Slonimsky who, despite many other commitments, eagerly accepted to supervise this work. Her encouragement and advice during the course of this work are worth acknowledging. May she find here my heartfelt gratitude. I am also grateful to all lecturers at the School of Education of the University of the Witwatersrand whose courses provided valuable ingredients into this product. I particularly acknowledge the contribution of Professor Karin Brody, Doctor Devika Naidoo and Ms Lynne Slonimsky, Professor Michael Cross and Ms Yvonne Reed.

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Last, but not least, my thanks go to my family in general, and to my beloved wife Françoise MUKARUKUNDO in particular, for enduring my absence from home during the course of my studies at Wits and more particularly when she endured hard times she went through when our beloved daughter Ineza Ndagije Clenia was born. I thank the Almighty God, for all the blessings He bestowed upon them and me, particularly during the course of my Masters studies at the University of the Witwatersrand especially when I got sick amidst my research project work. I am grateful to all friends that I made during my Masters studies at Wits. God bless all those who, in one way or another, have contributed to the completion of this work.

## **ABSTRACT**

International literature suggests that curriculum changes that have occurred in higher education globally over the last two decades, more specifically the shift from subject-based curriculum to integrated curriculum have been perceived by many academics as having affected their work with regard to course designing, teaching and assessment. Studies of academics' response to such changes have argued that the way academics perceived these changes and the meanings they made of them influenced the implementation of these curriculum changes.

This case study investigates lecturers' perceptions of how one curriculum reform, the introduction of the Credit Accumulation and Modular Scheme (CAMS) in higher education in Rwanda, has affected lecturers' work. One of the aims of the study was to analyse how lecturers understand CAMS and the changes it has introduced in their work. A second aim was to analyse how these perceptions and changes are negotiated in their teaching practices. Sixteen lecturers from Kigali Institute of Education were interviewed.

Analyses of lecturers' accounts of their teaching experiences revealed that lecturers espoused the intended changes that CAMS introduced in their work. However, although they claimed that the changes have affected their teaching and teaching arrangements- course designing, teaching and assessment- in actual practices many of them have not always managed to shift their thinking. CAMS requires lecturers to function in teams. However, although they have been trying to do so many of them have not managed to work out how to make more substantive changes to the way they think about the knowledge to be taught, their actual teaching and assessment practices. They have tried to keep boundaries of their disciplines while CAMS requires them to integrate their teaching.

*Key words:* curriculum reform; higher education; integrated curriculum; outcomes-based curriculum, modular based; team teaching.

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

CAMS : Credit Accumulation and Modular Scheme

GAR: General Academic Regulations

HEC : Higher Education Council

KIE : Kigali Institute of Education

KIEQFR: Kigali Institute of Education Qualifications Framework

NLTAP: National Learning Teaching and Assessment Policy

MINEDUC: Ministry of Education

RNQFR : Rwanda National Qualifications Framework

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# **CHAPTER 1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1. Background information**

This research investigates lecturers' perceptions of how the new curriculum policy of Credit Accumulation and Modular Scheme (CAMS) in Rwanda has affected lecturers' work mainly teaching. The research was conducted at Kigali Institute of Education (KIE), a Higher Institution of Learning in the Republic of Rwanda. KIE is an institution whose main mission is to train secondary school teachers.

In 2007 KIE introduced a curriculum reform called the Credit Accumulation and Modular Scheme. This new curriculum policy was not introduced in vacuum. It is commonly argued that any curriculum is produced in a particular time or period; and each time, period has its historical, social, cultural, philosophical and economic prevailing ideologies, concerns, phenomena, and trends (Lovat and Smith, 1995; Brazee and Capelluti, 1995; Cornbleth, 1990; Kelly, 1989). CAMS is a national curriculum policy for all higher education institutions in Rwanda as stated in Rwandan National Qualifications Framework (RNQFR) [Higher Education Council (HEC), p.4]. It is a curriculum that has been introduced in the context of changes that occurred in higher education in Rwanda which place an emphasis on outcomes-based curriculum. The focus on outcomes-based curriculum is informed by national and international contexts of higher education. The new role of higher education as viewed globally is to offer programmes that are responsive to society's needs; to produce graduates who have required knowledge and skills to apply in real life. In this perspective higher education is viewed as a means and not as an end in itself (Light and Cox, 2001; Delanty, 2001). This shift in the role of higher education globally has arisen from two main determinants – globalisation and expansion of access to higher education- that emphasize a knowledge-based economy or knowledge society (Naidoo, 2003; Currie, 2003; D'Andrea, 2005).

The mission of higher education in Rwanda, as stated in the national policy on higher education (Ministry of Education [MINEDUC], 2008, p. 17), is:

*to provide quality higher education programmes that match the labour market and development needs of Rwanda for graduates who are capable of contributing to national economic and social needs, and who can compete on the international labour market, and that supports the development of the national culture, promotes lifelong learning, research, innovation and knowledge transfer.*

This redefinition of the role of higher education in Rwanda to an outcomes-based curriculum has had implications for different aspects of curriculum. First there has been a shift in academic programmes from content knowledge specification to an emphasis on learning outcomes. In RNQFR two measures are used to locate qualifications within the Qualifications framework: the level of learning outcomes to be achieved, and the volume of programmes in terms of student credit. These outcomes and credits are specified at each level of study. The rationale behind this system is to facilitate flexibility for students' learning. According to the new system students enter higher education and may exit at any point and be awarded an academic paper after he/she has completed a given number of credits as specified in RNQFR. The framework has established levels for progression of students and the number of credits to be completed for the award of a corresponding qualification.

This shift to outcomes-based curriculum, as responsive to the country's needs, has also introduced the development of generic competences into the higher education curriculum. Higher education is required to develop and provide students with "generic competences such as problem solving, learning to learn and communication skills" (MINEDUC, p.9). This is a shift from traditional content knowledge to competences (Barnett, 2000).

The emphasis on outcomes introduced changes in course structures with a shift from subject-based courses to integrated courses.

The shift in curriculum perspectives has had implications for teaching and learning. The new perspective of higher education calls for changes in teaching and learning styles: a shift from subject-centred or teacher-centred to student-centred pedagogy. This is premised on the fact that in the past teaching and learning was teacher/subject centred, “mainly didactic and relied on outdated material” (MINEDUC, 2008, p.15). This appears to be in line with changes that have occurred in teaching and learning approaches internationally as discussed by many scholars (for example Barnett, 2000; Bridges, 2000). There have been shifts from subject- based teaching to student-centred learning. This has been done under a variety of approaches according to different contexts and rationales: field-based learning; learner centred, problem-based learning (as a variety of field-based learning). These shifts have been accompanied by the use of new teaching and learning technologies including web-based curriculum, email tutorials, use of internet to search materials (Bridges, 2000).

In the context of this study the new teaching environment requires methods that encourage development of independent learners equipped with the necessary knowledge and transferable skills while the lecturer is viewed as a guide or facilitator of student’s learning.

CAMS has also brought about accountability and quality assurance procedures in higher education. The emphasis on student learning outcomes requires that the outcomes are identifiable, explicit and are communicated to different stakeholders including lecturers, students, and employers. It is within this context that accountability and quality assurance procedures have been put in place to ensure quality of curriculum development, teaching, learning and assessment. These changes have also occurred elsewhere in the world as shown in the literature about changes that have occurred in higher education (for example Newton, 2002; Martin, 1999; Vidovich and Slee, 2001). Programmes are developed but must be validated through established validation processes to make sure they meet the established requirements before they are taught. It is within this framework that the Higher Education Council of was put in place in Rwanda to make sure all the programmes that are taught in higher education in

Rwanda meet the country's socio-economic needs and equip graduates with required skills to be able to compete on the global market.

Different policy documents were developed and distributed to higher education institutions for implementation. They included the Rwandan National Qualifications Framework for higher education, National Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy (NLTAP), General Academic Regulations (GAR), Procedures for the Validation of Programmes and Modules, Student Support and Guidance Policy, programme specification form and module description form and many other working documents. All these policy documents have been designed to serve as guidance in the implementation of the new curriculum policy of CAMS.

## **1. 2. CAMS at Kigali Institute of Education**

It is in response to the national policy of CAMS that KIE started its implementation in 2007. CAMS brought about changes in academic structures, course structures and in teaching arrangements. Faculties and departments were restructured to meet the requirements of KIE Qualifications Framework (KIEQFR)/KIE credit accumulation and modular scheme which is informed by RNQFR. It was anticipated that this restructuring of the already existing academic programme structures would integrate subjects or programmes that have affinities and this would enable students to accumulate knowledge and transferable skills required. New academic structures- subjects and modules- were introduced. In most cases subjects correspond to what used to be called departments in the previous system structures. For example in the Faculty of Arts and Languages there are subjects like English, French, Swahili and Kinyarwanda. In the previous system these were independent departments. Within these subjects there are different knowledge clusters- modules. With regard to degree structures there was a shift from 4 year-full programmes to levels of study (1-5).

Contrary to the former system in which teaching and learning was done in individual courses, in CAMS teaching and learning is done within modules. The teaching learning process is organized on a module system where a module comprises units with a given number of credits. Modules mainly consist of a combination of former courses and this is done according to the required learning outcomes. According to GAR “a module is a coherent and identifiable unit of learning and teaching with defined learning outcomes” (p.5). A module is designed, taught and assessed by a team of lecturers whose qualifications and specializations match the content areas to be taught. This approach is different from the previous system in which courses were designed, taught and assessed by individual lecturers.

For module designing, module team members fill in a module description form that has been designed by HEC and adapted to KIE’s academic structures. This module description form comprises different aspects pertaining to teaching and learning including notional hours and credits, the distribution of teacher led and learner centred time, module learning outcomes, indicative content, learning and teaching strategies, assessment strategy and resources.

When the module has been designed and the module form completed it goes through institutional validation mechanisms to make sure the proposed programme and the teaching and learning approaches meet the established programmes. As has been mentioned for each academic level there are programmes and specific learning outcomes. These are broad statements which define what a student is expected to achieve for him or her to have knowledge and skills required. Modules must be externally referenced. They must be in accordance with KIEQFR, RNQFR, GAR and other official policies.

After the module has been validated it is up to the module team to deliver the programme to the registered students. A module is taught for a period of at least three months. When the teaching is completed the module is assessed by the same group of lecturers who taught it as required by the policy. The assessment of the module must cover its learning outcomes. As stated in the NLTA “all

modules have learning outcomes which are what the assessment is to test. These learning outcomes cover knowledge/understanding, cognitive skills, practical skills and personal transferable skills”(National Learning Teaching and Assessment Policy, HEC, P. 5). These are descriptors stated in RNQFR.

When modules have been taught they can be evaluated by students using questionnaires that were designed by KIE. For student evaluation of module teaching, the purpose is threefold: to provide useful opinion feedback to relevant staff such as module team and the actual lecturer who taught a particular module, to provide explore the difficulties encountered by students in module(s) taught, and to improve teaching- learning effectiveness and curriculum development. From questionnaires the institute gathers both quantitative and qualitative feedback on eight core areas: module content and organisation, student's contribution, learning environment and teaching strategies, learning resources, quality delivery, assessment and feedback, overall evaluation and overall experience. Besides validation of programmes and student evaluation of module teaching there are other accountability and quality assurance procedures that are used with regard to teaching and learning: external examiners, revision of programmes.

### **1.3. Problem statement**

The implementation of CAMS at KIE has been marked by debates, tensions and sometimes conflicts especially with regard to lecturers' designing modules, teaching modules and assessing them. Some lecturers have been accused by academic managers of resisting the new policy and the former have defended themselves by arguing that the module structures that had been established were incompatible with their respective disciplines. In other cases persistent remarks have been made by academic managers and some lecturers that the modules that lecturers have been designing and teaching lack coherence; and that instead of having a module as a whole unit with identifiable learning outcomes there have been many courses in one course. Lecturers have also been

complaining that some of their colleagues have been less collaborative in the new curriculum when it requires much collaboration, while others have been complaining that their colleagues simply taught as they taught before. Students have also formulated the same complaints with regard to lecturers' teaching. In some instances there have been open conflicts between lecturers for instance over marking whereby some lecturers delayed marking and their colleagues were angry that this affected their work. All these and many other related issues have been recurrent themes in academic meetings, in lecturers' conversations and anecdotes as well as in students' informal accounts of their learning experiences.

Working in the context of CAMS- at KIE's Centre for Academic Practice and Development- I witnessed these debates and tensions. I started getting interested in looking into these issues. I initially attributed these practical issues to the common argument that people always resist change. However, as a member of KIE on study leave I engaged with the literature on changes in higher education with regard to higher education curriculum, curriculum designing and delivery, teaching and learning. And I started realizing that there could be more to these debates, tensions and conflicts than resistance to change. Themes and issues discussed in the context of my Master's courses including Issues in Curriculum also engaged my interest to look into these debates, tensions and conflicts.

The literature about curriculum changes in higher education has revealed debates, tensions and conflicts especially with regard to curriculum design and delivery. In many cases, as announced earlier, the emphasis on outcomes, student-centred curriculum, transferable skills and competences has generated shifts from subject or discipline-based teaching and learning to cross-disciplinary, interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary teaching and learning (or broadly speaking a shift from discipline-based curriculum to integrated curriculum) (Barnett, 2000; Bridges, 2000). It should be noted that there have been variations with regard to this shift according to contexts including credit and modularization frameworks (e.g. Trowler, 1998; Bridges, 2000). This shift

has brought about changes in lecturers' work at the level of curriculum designing, teaching and assessment. Research has shown that many academics had difficulties adapting to the changes in their work. Many academics perceived these changes as having undermined the status, power and integrity of their disciplines and subsequently their subject identities. Especially under the pressures of accountability and quality assurance lecturers have believed they lost control and autonomy on what to teach and how to teach it. While these academics seem to suggest that the integrated curriculum and pressures of accountability and quality assurance have affected their curriculum designing, teaching and assessment, research has shown that in practice many of them tried to do things as they did before or tried to use coping strategies. For example in some cases it was found that at superficial level courses appeared to be integrated and boundaries between disciplines weakened. However, in actual practices lecturers were more oriented to their disciplines by trying to defend their identities. Thus one of the main themes that have emerged in the literature has been that academics have shown more allegiances to their disciplines than to the integrated curriculum.

Although research findings have shown how lecturers' perceptions and meanings have influenced their responses to curriculum change, most of this research has focused on individual lecturers. Little has been done to investigate how academics negotiated their understandings and meanings of the changes in their module teams. The literature on integrated curriculum and more specifically on interdisciplinary team teaching provides insights into what integrated teaching and team teaching could mean or look like in practice (see for example Forcey and Rainforth, 1998; Martin, 1999; Schlesinger, 1996; Young and Kram, 1996; Benjamin, 2000; Murata, 2002; Perry and Stewart, 2005; Shibley 2006). Research findings and academics' accounts of their experiences in integrated teaching or team teaching have revealed different processes and dynamics in this regard. It has emerged in the literature that not all team members have necessarily the same understandings and beliefs about the curriculum framework in which they were working. Subsequently disagreements, tensions and conflicts have been reported between team



members over different aspects of their work. However, different models of negotiation of these issues have emerged. One may summarise them into two broad categories: lecturers who managed to negotiate their understandings, differences and conflicts and integrated their courses effectively and others who failed to go beyond their differences, concerns and conflicts and thus failed to integrate their courses effectively.

Although research findings cannot always be generalized, the research findings from other countries can offer a theoretical and empirical field within which to investigate how CAMS has affected lecturers' work. At KIE lecturers are required to design modules, teach them and assess them in module teams. It should however be noted that they used to work in a teaching learning environment that was different from that of CAMS. From the perspective of curriculum designing and delivery CAMS marks a shift from subject-based curriculum to outcomes-based curriculum, with subsequent shift in teaching- from didactic modes of teaching to student-centred approaches to teaching and learning, and from individual courses to modules, from individual lecturers to team teaching. This shift cannot be said to be cut and dried or mechanical. All these shifts require new ways of doing things

The debates, tensions and conflicts announced above could be located in the framework of curriculum implementation. While on the one hand there is a policy on the other hand that policy will be implemented or translated at the micro-level- lecturers' local practices. The investigation of the processes of implementation is likely to provide insights into dynamics and processes that underpin these debates and tensions.

#### **1.4. Aims and objectives of the study**

The broad aim of the research was to investigate lecturers' perceptions of how the new policy of CAMS has affected lecturers' work. As Trowler (1998, p. 103) argues "to fully understand processes of change in any social context we need an

understanding of the nature of the ground-level interpretations of, and responses to, policy.” This stresses the importance of the meaning of educational change held by those on the ground (Trowler, 1998, p. 107). Thus one of the objectives was to analyse how lecturers understand the CAMS policy and the changes which it has introduced into their work. It was assumed that these understandings and meanings would constitute a background against which to analyse how they have responded to the policy, and how it has affected their academic work. These responses are individual but also collective in that lecturers work in teams for different module processes: designing/developing, teaching and assessment. The analysis of these responses could help understand how they negotiated the changes in their work.

## **1.5. Research Questions**

Since the *raison d’être* of any research is to find answers to questions, this study aimed to answer the following questions.

1. How has Credit Accumulation and Modular Scheme affected lecturers’ academic work (mainly teaching)?
  - a) How do lecturers understand CAMS and the changes it has introduced into their work?
  - b) How do they share and negotiate academic practices within that new curriculum?

## **1.6. Rationale**

Much research has been carried out on academics’ responses to curriculum changes and innovations in higher education over the last two decades including credit framework (Trowler, 1998). The research findings have uncovered important issues that help in exploring curriculum as a contextualised process of negotiation of meanings. Issues of identity of academics and of their disciplines, negotiation of meanings in practice, different models of team teaching, conflicts

and tensions and many other aspects pertaining to curriculum implementation have emerged.

This research has been done in contexts outside Rwanda. Moreover, most research has been done on individual academics and little has been done on how individual understanding, conceptions and meanings come into play in academics' module team teaching as far as I have been able to ascertain.

To carry out this research it was expected that it would contribute to an understanding of the critical issues of curriculum implementation in the context of CAMS in Rwanda and add to the existing body of knowledge about curriculum reform in higher education internationally. The expectation is that the findings of this research could offer lecturers, academic managers and curriculum policy makers an empirical framework within which to discuss and make sense of CAMS.

## **CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Much has been written about changes that have occurred in higher education globally over the last two decades. Some scholars have addressed these changes at the macro-level (for example Currie, 2003; Altbach, 2004; Barnett, 2001; Bridges, 2000, Moore and Young, 2001; Delanty, 2001; Love, 2008) while others have investigated how academics have responded to curriculum policy changes at the micro-level (including Martin, 1999, Trowler, 1998; Moore, 2003; Perry and Stewart, 2005; Lea and Callaghan, 2008). It is argued that changes that have occurred in higher education following two main determinants-globalisation and expansion of access to higher education- have brought about changes in curriculum designing, delivery, teaching and learning in higher education. One of the major changes is the shift from subject-based curriculum to integrated curriculum with a student- centred focus, a focus on learning outcomes rather than on subject content. This shift has required lecturers to work in teams in designing programmes and in teaching.

Literature including research findings has revealed some practical issues, debates, tensions in the implementation of curriculum policy changes in higher education. While much of the literature focuses on how individual academics responded to curriculum changes, little has been done to investigate how lecturers' meanings and responses were negotiated in their teams.

In the following review of literature I will discuss some of the themes and key issues that are relevant to the context of the present study. I will also draw on some literature on primary and secondary education to inform my discussion of the context of higher education. Although primary, secondary and tertiary are different domains in terms of teaching and learning, some research evidence has shown that the three domains may inform each other. In their review of the literature on the teaching and beliefs of university academics, Kane, Sandretto and Heath (2002) argue that literature and research findings on primary and secondary education teaching can be of valuable reference in this regard. Entwistle and Walker (2000, p. 343) argued that " while teaching in higher

education is bound to have distinctive characteristics, it also has elements in common with more general ways of describing teaching. Consequently we can draw on research on schooling teaching” (Entwistle and Walker, as cited in Kane, Sandretto and Heath, 2002, p. 180).

## **2.1. Curriculum: General considerations**

To better understand the theoretical and empirical field within which the present research is located it is noteworthy to discuss some general considerations with regard to the concept of curriculum. These key characteristics will help in the discussion and understanding of some debates and research studies that inform the present study.

The concept ‘curriculum’ is so complex that it is not easy to define or delineate. It has been defined and addressed in different ways by different scholars, researchers and writers. Different approaches and perspectives have been used including pedagogical, epistemological, socio-economic, and historical to cite some. It has also yielded different perceptions, interpretations and uses. One might say that curriculum means different things to different people. It follows that for any curriculum there are specific concerns, phenomena and trends. These can be social, cultural, philosophical and economic (Lovat and Smith, 1995; Brazee and Capelluti, 1995; Cornbleth, 1990; Kelly, 1989). These factors may be local, national, regional or international.

The key question however is what curriculum is. Different definitions and understandings have been given and each has its underlying conceptions and values. Curriculum has been viewed as a product (for example policy documents, syllabus or course of study); as what actually happens in classroom; or as a process from policy decision-making to its implementation in classroom. All these diverging views have generated some debate, but the common argument is that curriculum should be considered as a social process and it is

contextualised as a number of scholars have argued (for example Lovat and Smith, 1995; Cornbleth, 1990).

Taking issue with what she terms technocratic view of curriculum - as a document or content or a tangible product- Cornbleth (1990, p.13) argues that technocratic approaches decontextualise curriculum both conceptually and operationally. By conceptual decontextualisation she means "separating curriculum as a product from curriculum policy making, design and practice". By operational decontextualisation she means "treating curriculum, however defined, apart from its structural and sociocultural contexts as if it were independent of its location in an education system, society and history." Drawing on this argument and as argued elsewhere (for example Lovat and Smith, 1995) one may suggest that curriculum involves different agents and is experienced within multiple, interacting contexts. Curriculum should be looked at a process and product. If curriculum understanding is restricted to the product we lose sight of some processes and dynamics that shape the curriculum.

This idea leads us to considering another important aspect of curriculum. If curriculum is both a process and product, one may think of how and where the curriculum is developed and produced. Curriculum can be developed at what may be called the macro level (including state or national level, district level) and the micro-level (for example at school, faculty, department, subject levels, at the individual teacher level and at the classroom level). For whichever level curriculum will be located in interrelated contexts. For example if a team of lecturers develop a curriculum to be taught in their subjects, they may be guided by some curriculum guidelines developed at the faculty level. The curriculum guidelines at the faculty may be in relation to the curriculum at the school level, which in turn is informed by the curriculum guidelines at the national level. When the lecturers finish developing the curriculum at the subject level it goes down to its implementation by the individual lecturer or the team in actual teaching and learning process. This example indicates that no curriculum should be viewed as in isolation. The main issue would be how it is implemented for example from one level to another. An answer to this question may be found in

the common argument that curriculum should be viewed as both intention and reality (see for example Lovat and Smith, 1995; Brazee and Capelluti, 1995; Kelly, 1995). This is the point I now want to turn to.

## **2. 2. Curriculum: the intended and the enacted**

It is generally argued that there is a gap between the intended curriculum and the enacted curriculum. As Stenhouse argues “it is the gap between the ideal and the actual, between the intention and the operationalizing of the intention that should be the most important focus for curriculum study and research.” (Stenhouse, 1975 cited in Lovat and Smith, 1995, p. 14). Most of the time curriculum intentions are encoded in policy documents and it is generally argued that people value and interpret texts differently. Moreover there are other factors that come into play and they both influence curriculum as both a process and product. These factors may be of many kinds including human, social, epistemological, physical, and organisational. They may be explicit or implicit.

It was previously noted that curriculum should be viewed as a contextualised social process (Cornbleth, 1995). It is argued that curriculum is a social and cultural artifact. Viewed as a cultural artifact, it means that it has symbolic meanings, is shaped and shapes people’s consciousness and identity. As Thompson (1990, p. 146) argues these meanings can be explicit, visible, accessible or implicit. Curriculum as a symbolic form is an artifact of participation. Thus, it is received and interpreted by individuals who are also situated within specific social-historical contexts and interpretation of meanings depends on various kinds of resources, interests, values and beliefs. Moreover, as Cornbleth (1995, p.12) argues “our curriculum conceptions, ways of reasoning and practice cannot be value free or neutral. They necessarily reflect our assumptions about the world, even if those assumptions remain implicit and unexamined.” Trowler (1998, p.109) commenting on the idea of viewing policy as a text argued that actors on the grassroots level “interpret it in relation to their own cultural, ideological, historical and resource context.”

In the light of these arguments one might suggest that curriculum implementation should be viewed as a process of negotiation rather than viewing it as one of mechanical implementation. In this regard curriculum should not be considered as cut and dried. It is a process of negotiation because, in agreement with Trowler's (1998) argument, agents involved in curriculum are not passive recipients of policies or mandates. This view indicates that the enacted curriculum is the result of negotiation of meanings and conceptions that "emerge from and enter in practice" (Cornbleth, 1990; p.12). The negotiation involves human relations, relations with the material environment and the meanings we attach to them. This concurs with the following comments made by James A. Beane who provides us with ingredients into the negotiation of curriculum as a social process. In his foreword to Brazee and Capelluti's (1995) *Dissolving boundaries: Toward an integrative Curriculum*, Beane argues that there is no set curriculum, no recipe, no cookbook, no standardisation, no alignment". He views curriculum as "a set of guiding principles to give us direction and our own imaginations to create ways of bringing those principles to life". The implication is that "thinking about curriculum design and change in this way makes room for people to create their own local arrangements while sharing with others a commitment to common purposes" (Brazee and Capelluti, 1995, p. ix).

Drawing on Ball (1994) and Bernstein (2004), Chisholm and Leyendecker (2008, p.196) argue that "policy and curriculum implementation does not follow the predictable path of formulation-adoption-implementation-reformulation, but is recontextualised through multiple process." Drawing on McLaughlin (1991, 1998) they suggest that "local, and especially teachers' values, practices and beliefs shape the outcomes of implementation... and that the way to understand implementation is to start with an examination of practice." Wenger's (1998) discussion of the concept practice is instructive here. According to him practice is not predetermined, nor is it mandated; it is emergent.

Research has shown that academics respond to policy in different ways and this tends to be influenced by different factors. Different models of curricular



responses have been proposed and discussed in this regard. For example Trowler (1998) -in his study to investigate how academics responded to the new curriculum of credit framework at one university in the UK – discusses four categories of response: sinking, swimming, using coping strategies and policy reconstruction; Newton (20002), in his investigation of how academics coped with quality procedures in their teaching practices, proposes almost the same categories with further elaboration (for example by viewing some academics as intransigent, colonised, convert, rational adaptor, the pragmatic sceptic and the sceptic); and Lea and Callaghan (2008, in their study to explore lecturers' perceptions and experiences of teaching in a specific modules, suggest three main levels of lecturers' responses: awareness, response and reflection. Although these authors used different terminologies and their research contexts differ, the common argument is that some academics implement the curriculum policy as it is stated; others find it as compromising their established beliefs about teaching and therefore in practice use some strategies to turn it around; while others may resist it either explicitly or implicitly.

Moore (2003) - in his case study aimed at examining how the science faculties of 2 universities in South Africa had implemented a policy that anticipated that disciplines would be weakened and academics would work in teams across subject boundaries- found that academics at one university defended their boundaries within their disciplines while others managed to respond to the curriculum change positively by forming solidarities across boundaries of their disciplines. One might wonder why these academics responded to the same curriculum differently and yet the two universities had traditions of discipline-based departments. The answer may be found in the comments made above that for each curriculum implementation there are influences that come into play. In this case there were issues of power, authority and identity that came to surface in the negotiation of meanings of what the curriculum meant for the agents involved. Moreover, it can also be interpreted as having to do with the academics' levels of participation in the new curriculum. In one case academics were given opportunities to discuss the changes and tried to internalise them while in the other case some academics felt they were not part of the changes

because they felt it was imposed on them. This tends to accord with Bernstein's (1975) suggestion that for the integration to be effective all those involved should reach consensus on the idea of the integration and understand why subjects have been put together, for them to develop "a sense of joint ownership" (Moore, 2003). However, as Moore (2003) argued, this sense of joint ownership didn't mean that negotiations were always smooth. Some disagreements, misunderstandings arose but the academics managed to negotiate them.

Moore suggests that, and other scholars have also reasoned in this framework as shown earlier, for an effective curriculum implementation there must be an open negotiation of meanings of the curriculum policy.

Although the example above concerns academics' responses at institutional level, it provides some insights into what might happen at the very ground level of teaching and learning especially in the context of curriculum integration whereby lecturers are asked to work in teams with regard to curriculum designing, teaching and assessment.

### **2.3. Integrated curriculum**

An orientation towards the introduction of integrated curricula has gained much focus in the recent years especially for tertiary education. As a result of major changes that have occurred in higher education over the last two decades, there has been a shift from subject-based curriculum to interdisciplinary, cross-disciplinary, trans-disciplinary curriculum (Barnett, 2000; Bridges, 2000; Moore, 2003). This shift has had implications for curriculum designing and delivery as well as teaching and learning in higher education (Trowler, 1998; Martin, 1999; Perry and Stewart, 2005). Various themes have emerged in the literature about integrated curriculum: debates around the shift from subject-based curriculum to integrated curriculum, implementation of integrated curriculum at

institutional level, implications of curriculum integration for curriculum designing and delivery and implications for team teaching.

Before discussing some of these themes it is instructive to present the main characteristics of curriculum integration. Like curriculum the concept of integrated curriculum or curriculum integration has been defined differently and means different things to different people. Integrated curriculum has been described as interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary and many other forms. Although these interpretations may differ given the perspectives that underpin them, there are some common points that cut across different perspectives with regard to teaching and learning. At a more general level curriculum integration can be described as an approach to teaching and learning that brings more than one subject together to form a single unit of knowledge to be taught. In this perspective it is generally argued that the focus is to break down barriers between subjects, to move away from subject-based curriculum which is viewed as organising and delivering learning and teaching in isolated and independent subjects or disciplines. The rationale is to draw together knowledge, skills, attitudes and values from within or across subject areas to allow students to have a holistic view of learning, to build connections across disciplines, to integrate knowledge and modes of thinking, use some concepts from one discipline to understand another in a coherent way and to apply concepts and skills to the real world (see Brazee and Capelluti, 1995; Harden, 2000; Mansilla, Miller and Gardner, 2000). It lays emphasis on ways of knowing rather than states of knowledge as it is in the subject-based curriculum (Bernstein, 1975; p. 83). This emphasis on ways of knowing implies a shift in the underlying pedagogic theory from 'didactic' to 'self-regulatory' (Bernstein, 1975; p. 83). According to Bernstein this shift will give a student new rights and status or role. This shift explains the focus on student-centred approach to teaching and learning in higher education where the learner is no longer viewed as a passive receiver of established knowledge but as independent, autonomous and active in their learning. Integration not only brings about changes in knowledge organisation and transmission but also in teachers or lecturers' relationships. Bernstein elaborates on this change by suggesting that curriculum integration

“will require teachers of different subjects to enter into social relationships with each other which will arise not simply out of non-task areas, but out of a shared, co-operative educational task.” (p. 103-104).

#### **2.4. Integrated curriculum: implications for curriculum designing and delivery**

Curriculum integration brings a number of subjects together and attempts to break boundaries between subjects or disciplines. In this regard it redefines relationships between courses and relationships between teachers or lecturers. All these changes are likely to have implications for curriculum designing, teaching and assessment as will be discussed in the following section.

The topic of the integrated curriculum has generated much debate as discussed by many scholars (for example Mansilla et al. 2000; Harden, 2000; Nixon, Marks, Rowland & Walker, 2001; Young, 1998; Beane, 1995). For these debates one might identify two extreme positions: those who are for and those who are against. Educators who are for integrated curriculum hold the common view that when disciplines or subjects are integrated together in one curriculum unit they enrich each other and allow a fruitful exchange of concepts and modes of thinking; it allows students to make connections between ideas and theories of different disciplines and apply them to real life as has just been mentioned. For these educators sources of curriculum should be themes, issues, problems that relate to real life. These educators take issue with separate-subject curriculum which they accuse of viewing education as an end in itself, as providing learners with facts, principles and skills that have been established or selected, and thus fails to equip them with knowledge and skills required in real life. Those who advocate subject-based curriculum argue that curriculum integration deprives subjects and disciplines of their epistemological and social bases, disturbs the coherence and discreteness of bodies of knowledge, and therefore does not allow students to get deep immersion in the subject matter; and this tends to have effect on their identity. With regard to teaching those who support integrated curriculum argue that it allows teachers to work in teams and these close

working relations provide them with opportunity to learn about other disciplines. For those who are against it is argued that curriculum integration makes their teaching difficult because there is a lack of developmental sequencing.

While at a more general level it appears that teachers or lecturers who take issue with integrated curriculum are concerned about the developmental sequencing of knowledge some evidence has shown that teachers and lecturers are more concerned about the integrity of their disciplines and seem to be worried that once their disciplines combine with others their power and authority will be reduced and thus their identities will be threatened (Beane, 1995; Schlesinger, 1996; Trowler, 1998). As Beane (1995, p. 620) argues “critics of curriculum integration love to convey their deep concern that it will destroy the integrity of the disciplines of knowledge.” Bernstein (1975, p. 83) elaborates on this tension between the two types of curriculum by suggesting that it should not be seen as “simply a question of what to be taught but a tension arising out of quite different patterns of authority, quite different concepts of order and of control”.

In his study to investigate how academics responded to the new curriculum framework of credit accumulation and modular programmes at one university in the UK, Trowler (1998) found that some academics were worried about the fact that the move away from a disciplinary base to module-based courses undermined the disciplinary knowledge and was a threat to the status of academics as experts in their disciplines. Some academics bemoaned the loss of autonomy and control on what to teach and how to teach it. These concerns were also confirmed elsewhere. Giving accounts of his experiences in an integrated course where lecturers with different knowledge backgrounds were engaged in designing and teaching interdisciplinary business courses Schlesinger (1996, p.483) suggested that although some faculty members were for the idea of curriculum integration and professed some commitment to it, in their discussion and negotiation of curriculum contents and other related educational activities it was found that they “believed that integration was inappropriate because they feared dilution of their disciplines and subject matter.” This was detected in their

difficulty considering new ways in which to deliver their material. These academics “tended to keep their courses intact but did refer to other course material.” Commenting on implications of curriculum change for teachers’ work Brazee and Capelluti (1995, p.133) argued that “curriculum change is difficult as teachers often equate their identity with what they teach. When subject lines become fuzzy, individual’s status within the school or team can be challenged”.

One might wonder why teachers or academics seem to resist curriculum integration even when they agree with the idea in principle. The answer to this question can be found in issues related to epistemological and social nature of disciplines.

It is generally argued that subjects or disciplines that are integrated do not exist in vacuum, and that educators who teach them have their histories, experiences and beliefs that are rooted in their disciplines. Mansilla et al. (2000, p. 31) suggest that “disciplines are both epistemological and social entities.” The authors provide some key characteristics in both cases. Disciplines as epistemological entities “involve bodies of knowledge, methods of inquiry, purposes, and forms of representation that are shaped by the types of problems that they explore.” With regard to social considerations of disciplines “they involve departmental arrangements, organizational channels of communication, power relationships, and patterns of socialisation, values, and heroes”.

Bernstein’s (1975) focus on the distinction between collection type and integrated type can shed light on the epistemological and social implications of disciplines. The collection type is subject or discipline-based curriculum while the integrated type, as the name indicates is a connective model by which subjects are integrated. In the discipline-based or collection type, the boundaries between subjects or disciplines are very strong; in Bernstein’s words the classification is strong. By classification, he means relationships between subjects or disciplines. Each subject or discipline has its power on its own and gives academics within it a certain identity, authority and voice. By contrast, in integrated type boundaries are weakened or blurred; thus classification becomes

weak. Subsequently curriculum integration brings about disturbances in the existing knowledge structures, in established identities, in authority, power and control over knowledge. Thus the reconceptualisation of disciplinary knowledge may be seen by discipline specialists as a threat to their identity, power and to the integrity of their disciplines. Put in another way, when lecturers feel they are being moved away from their disciplinary boundaries or “territories” (Becher, 1989), they may feel insecure and worry about the integrity of their disciplines in terms of what counts as knowledge, what counts as pedagogy and what counts as assessment. As Bernstein suggests the move from collection type to integrated type will require a move towards a common pedagogy, a common examination and a common practice of teaching when in the collection type they were in the hands of teachers. As Price (2005, p. 218) argues “control of teaching, the syllabus and assessment were seen as the remit of the individual academic with no obligation to account for, or even discuss, these with others.” But in the new integrated curriculum whereby disciplines are no longer in a closed relation but in an open relation, the remit is no longer in the hands of individual academics; it is shared with others.

As revealed by the discussion above academics who bemoaned the loss of control over what to teach and how to teach it might be worried that the integrity of their disciplines was threatened for they had entered a new order that demanded their disciplines’ discourses, methodologies, traditions of teaching and learning, beliefs, values, modes of thinking be subordinated to the requirements of the integrated curriculum. They seemed to believe that the integrated curriculum in their teaching and learning framework forced them to operate within the established framework irrespective of the epistemological considerations of their respective disciplines. The use of metaphors such as ‘a Procrustean bed into which a discipline is expected to fit’ or ‘to force a square peg into a round hole’ by academics in Trowler’s study (Trowler, 1998, p. 90-91) is instructive here. These metaphors mean that the academics who held this view believed their disciplines lost some epistemological aspects to compromise. Some lecturers complained that their disciplines have been diluted by the introduction of generic skills and communication skills, others worried that they

could not teach the required material in their disciplines because of the unequal distribution of time between disciplines within module structures, while others reported they were forced to use common teaching and assessment practices when they knew it was not appropriate for their disciplines (Trowler, 1998).

Academics perceived these changes in their courses to have affected their teaching. However, one can explore how they responded to them in their practices. It has been noted that the way academics understand curriculum framework within which they operate influences the way they respond to it. It was also argued that academics are not passive receivers of policies. Some research findings have shown that in their teaching some lecturers adopted some strategies informed by the meanings they attached to their disciplines and subject matter. For example in teaching it was found that lecturers tended to work within their disciplines when on the official syllabus (where learning outcomes of modules were made explicit) lecturers had indicated use of common pedagogy for the whole module (Trowler, 1998; Perry and Stewart, 2005; Young and Kram, 1996). Perry and Stewart (2005), in their study to investigate team teaching in an interdisciplinary curriculum at one university in Japan found that some lecturers were concerned about the 'territoriality' of their content areas within the integrated curriculum. They believed that in their teaching they were master of their content areas and no one could cross the boundaries of their content areas and yet at the designing level they had agreed to be open to each other. Trowler (1998, p. 128) found that lecturers used the traditional freedom they had before to control their teaching inside lecture and seminar rooms; others attempted to change assessment strategies they had agreed upon while designing modules. They did this regardless of the outcomes stated. In a study of the perceptions of three lecturers in a teaching team, Young and Kram (1996, p.504) observed that although three lecturers shared a module, planned it together and agreed to teach it as a whole, they continued to perceive themselves as teaching in their own disciplines.

The research discussed above suggests that at the level of the initial planning-curriculum designing- boundaries between disciplines are weakened; lecturers



discuss course content, learning outcomes, teaching and learning strategies. However, when it comes to actual teaching lecturers tend to keep boundaries strong to control knowledge transmission to try to retain their power and regain the epistemological integrity of their disciplines. This tendency appears to accord with Bernstein's (1975, p. 107) argument that "integrated codes at the surface level create weak or blurred boundaries, but at bottom they may rest upon closed explicit ideologies", in line with the argument that teachers' assumptions about teaching and learning often operate underneath the surface. One might suggest that it is these ideologies that come to surface in teaching practices. It could be that at the level of course designing boundaries appear to weaken and lecturers seem to be open to one another and do things explicitly because of the demands of official quality assurance as indicated by some empirical evidence (Trowler, 1998; Newton, 2002; Lea and Callaghan, 2008).

An emphasis on outcomes in an integrated approach has introduced the use of official accountability and quality assurance procedures as announced in the general introduction. Contexts and types of these procedures differ but there is a common finding that academics have complained that these procedures put excessive control and restrictions on their teaching. In their responses to this perceived increased in external control over curriculum some lecturers confessed that on module descriptors they could specify what was required with regard to course content, teaching and learning strategies and assessment strategies, but they just did it because they had to do it (Trowler, 1998; Newton, 2002; Lea and Callaghan, 2008). The result was that in some cases lecturers acknowledged having taught what was different from the syllabus. They confessed that they specified learning outcomes just for the sake of paper work as required by quality assurance procedures. While research findings cannot always be generalised this may partly explain some tensions that sometimes arise between academic managers and teaching staff as regards curriculum policy implementation. While for example some research studies revealed that academic managers seemed to believe that lecturers were turning around accountability and quality assurance in their teaching because they did not understand the new curriculum in which they were working (for example

Martin, 1999), the empirical evidence above appears to suggest that lecturers are more concerned about issues related to power, authority and identity of their disciplines.

While the research discussed in the context of this study appears to suggest that many lecturers tended to work within the boundaries of their disciplines in their responses to a shift from subject-based curriculum to integrated curriculum, this behavioural response cannot be generalized. Some research established that while some lecturers tended to defend their discipline identities their colleagues were open to the integrated curriculum (for example Trowler, 1998; Moore, 2003; Schlesinger, 1996). Thus one may argue that not all lecturers had the same views and attached the same meanings with regard to integrated curriculum. For example while some lecturers were concerned that their disciplines have been diluted to fit in the established course structures; others even in the same subjects felt comfortable with the integrated courses or module-based courses (for example Trowler, 1998). Some empirical evidence also disclosed that although lecturers expressed many concerns about their disciplines they were not against the idea of integration in principle (Trowler, 1998; Schlesinger, 1996; Murata, 2002).

Curriculum implementation is a negotiation of meanings. One might predict some practical challenges in cases whereby two or more lecturers are involved in designing, teaching and assessing an integrated course. If for instance they have different understandings and meanings of the curriculum framework they are working in, they have concerns above the role and status of their disciplines within their integrated course, it is likely that all this will come into play in their sharing teaching practices and will influence the outcome.

Literature on team teaching in an integrated curriculum has revealed cases of disagreement, differences, conflicts and tensions between teachers or lecturers delivering joint integrated courses (Shibley, 2006; Murata, 2002; Schlesinger, 1996; Forcey and Rainforth, 1998). These issues were reported about different aspects of teachers or lecturers' teaching work: selection of content to be taught,

decision on teaching and learning strategies, assessment strategies and tasks and many other educational activities. Although these issues appear to have been reported in all teams there are differences in how they were handled and how they affected lecturers' work. In some cases lecturers confessed to having failed to integrate their courses effectively (Shibley, 2006; Forcey and Rainforth, 1998) while in others there is evidence that they managed to handle their differences and integrated their courses to some extent (Murata, 2002; Schlesinger, 1996; Martin, 1999). For those who failed different reasons were given including poor planning, poor content integration and poor communication essentially due to the fact that some lecturers wanted to keep their courses closed when they were supposed to be open to others.

For those who managed to integrate their courses, there is empirical evidence that curriculum integration can be effective despite epistemological and social differences between disciplines and between lecturers (Murata, 2002; Schlesinger, 1996, Shibley, 2006). This can be achieved, as indicated by the evidence, through open negotiation of meanings between lecturers involved.

Murata (2002), in a research study conducted on four interdisciplinary teams at a high school level, provided some insights into the negotiation of some issues highlighted above. The researcher found that in effective teaching teams teachers went beyond their individual concerns and were open to each other with regard to the idea of reconceptualising curriculum. In their discussions they managed to move away from viewing their courses as individual and independent but from a holistic point of view. They met formally and informally to discuss content, teaching and assessment strategies, their roles and the roles of knowledge. As Murata suggested "the teams saw themselves not as sacrificing their individual content areas, even when they did omit some subject matter formerly taught, but as enhancing learning through multiple perspectives" (Murata, 2000, p.74). However, this does not mean that all teachers necessarily had the same understandings and attached the same meanings to what they were doing together. Indeed, the author reported instances of differences. But through negotiation, discussion teachers understood that their common or joint enterprise was to contribute to students' learning. Schlesinger's (1996) accounts

of experiences in team teaching in higher education appear to agree with Murata's findings. In his context some lecturers believed that the integration of their courses diluted them and were concerned about their contents and the ways to deliver their courses. However, as Schlesinger reported, "during the design process each faculty member had to be willing to give up some control over the content and delivery of individual material." This was facilitated through frequent meetings where lecturers tried to understand the idea of integration, how to integrate their courses. This appears to be related to Bernstein's (1975) suggestion of the linkage between the organising or relational idea and what is to be integrated to be well spelled out. This interaction allowed teachers to internalise the integration process and finally managed to develop effective integrated courses.

This empirical evidence appears to agree with some suggestions made by some scholars that integrated curriculum should not be viewed as a loss of subject knowledge (For example Young, 1998; Nixon et al. 2001). According to these scholars curriculum integration should rather be viewed as a redefinition of the role of the lecturer and the role of subjects. Lecturers should understand how their subjects are in relational power with other subjects within the broader curriculum. Nixon et al (2001, p.240) argue that "interdisciplinary practice depends upon recognition of, and respect for, the cultural, epistemological and methodological differences between disciplinary or subject areas" (2001, p.240).

The discussion above seems to be in line with some argument that there may be different levels of curriculum integration and that this depends on how academics negotiate their practices and attach meanings to what they are doing. (Harden, 2000; Brazee and Capelluti, 1995).

## **2.5. Team teaching**

It has been argued that integrated curriculum brings two or more disciplines together and teachers or lecturers may work in teams while designing, teaching and assessing integrated courses. In the discussion above there are some indications of what teams may look like in their integration processes of their courses. There are insights into the ways in which team members managed to integrate their courses through the negotiation of their perceptions of the curriculum framework in which they were working. There is also evidence on how lecturers taught as if they were teaching within their disciplines even though at the initial course planning they had agreed to integrate their teaching. For each case there were underlying factors.

The insights above lead us to consider further dynamics and processes that may be involved in team teaching. The literature on team teaching can shed light on some issues that are relevant to the context of this study. Team teaching has different forms and is the result of different motivations; some result from educators' initiatives to form learning communities in order to improve their teaching and contribute to students' learning while others arise from the existing academic course structures. However, a close analysis of processes and dynamics within these teams reveals some common characteristics and models especially about all the teaching process. Most of the evidence discussed above was about the planning level.

Each team has its own processes and all these depend on different factors as mentioned above. Benjamin (2000), in a study of five groups of university teachers (teaching-teams from different subjects: Medicine, Law, Economics, psychology and Biology) in the perspective of scholarship of teaching, found three main models: teaching teams that are involved in no teamwork at all; those engaged in predominantly cooperative teamwork and those engaged in truly collaborative teamwork. By examining how different team members designed, taught and assessed courses Benjamin found teams whose members met to plan their joint course and this planning was mainly about organisational sharing of

workload (allocation of teaching workload, content to be taught). In this model there was little reflection and communication during the actual teaching. As the evidence showed, teaching was taken for granted. Lecturers considered each other as expert in the subject and they trusted each other thus saw no need to consult each other during the teaching period. In the second model, lecturers also met to plan their joint courses but also met informally to reflect on their teaching. However, as Benjamin noted, their discussion was more on content and organisational issues; they did not discuss deep teaching issues. Unlike these two models, in the third model lecturers planned their course together and would meet formally and informally to discuss teaching issues, students' progress, sharing experiences and other related issues. In this model team members considered student progress and course progress as crucial. It would seem that they considered their practice as emergent, thus the need to meet to discuss what really happened in practice. Although they met in the initial phase to plan the course it seems they were aware that what they agreed upon would be recontextualised, hence the need to negotiate the meanings of what they were doing as the course progressed. Wenger (1998, p. 68) argues, and this has been argued elsewhere, "participating in an activity that has been described is not just translating the description into embodied experience, but renegotiating its meaning in a new context."

It is within this framework of understanding that many scholars have suggested the need for team members to adopt a collaborative critical reflection of what they are doing (Knights et al, 2007; Perry and Stewart, 2005; Forcey and Rainforth, 1998). The main focus seems to be about actual teaching. One may argue that the suggestion for collaborative critical reflection or communication is made to counter a "tacit assumption that one's beliefs about the teaching and learning process are shared with others working in the same educational environment"(Perry and Stewart, p. 570); or in line with Young and Kram's (1996, p.510) argument that lecturers in a team teaching should not operate as if everyone shares the same role expectations and that their mutual trust and respect as seasoned teachers should not be considered as a guarantee for effective team teaching. This argument appears to question for instance the

strategy adopted by the first model in Benjamin's (2000) case as discussed above. In their study to investigate how colleagues from different disciplines (at one university in Japan) can achieve an effective partnership in team teaching Perry and Stewart (2005) found that lecturers in some teaching teams had different assumptions about teaching and learning process even though it was assumed that they had a common view and understanding. The authors concluded by suggesting a meaningful dialogue in which these assumptions and understandings should be addressed openly and explicitly for effective interdisciplinary teaching. According to them "the core area that must be explored and openly discussed in partnership [team teaching] is that related to underlying beliefs and assumptions about the classroom learning process" (Perry and Stewart, 2005, p.571).

There is also evidence of some lecturers teaching in interdisciplinary team teaching who had conflicts which remained underneath their teaching practices and affected their teaching and students' learning experiences (for example Forcey and Rainforth, 1998). Drawing on experiences in their team teaching in an interdisciplinary course at one university Forcey and Rainforth also suggested a collaborative reflective approach. Reflecting on their own teaching experiences, the two authors reported that they encountered extensive conflicts in their teaching styles. It was only after reflection that they realised that their problems emanated from inadequate planning: "Although we met weekly, we didn't plan far enough in advance and some important decisions were neglected or were made independently after the planning meeting"(p. 378). They confessed to having failed to communicate openly. This acknowledgement has been echoed elsewhere. Knights et al. (2007), drawing on their team teaching experiences, suggested that lecturers may meet regularly, exchange experiences and discuss their beliefs, values and approaches to teaching but still fail to discuss deep issues that would provide opportunities for collaborative critical reflection. This implies that in lecturers' meetings or discussions not all things are explicitly made public and there might be underlying reasons including epistemological issues. For example, as shown by evidence discussed earlier, in some cases lecturers tended to keep their teaching invisible to their colleagues with whom

they shared courses in a bid to regain control and authority over their disciplines when at the planning level they had agreed to consult each other. Young and Kram (1996, p. 507) argued that “most academics have been socialised to regard their classroom as a sovereign territory over which they rule”. Thus interdependency or making their teaching open to others learning ‘strikes at the very heart’ of their perceived role as expert in their field and master of the knowledge they are transmitting. This seems to corroborate the comment made earlier that teachers’ assumptions about teaching often operate underneath their teaching practices.

We have seen that in some interdisciplinary courses lecturers tended to teach individually and to show more allegiance to their disciplines. However this cannot be generalised to all teams teaching integrated courses. There is evidence of cases whereby team members negotiated their teaching by discussing openly their teaching practices despite epistemological differences and concerns (Schlesinger, 1996; Murata, 2000). Negotiations included collaborating, discussing, meeting regularly to communicate classroom activities and keep in touch with common material and topic. For instance Schlesinger (1996, p. 486) suggested that in their teaching teams they “had to be aware of what [their] colleagues covered in their individual sessions and emphasize the integrated nature of those concepts during [their] class time.” They also used their discussion time to monitor classroom process, student morale and programme climate. This indicates that these lecturers were aware that this strategy of regular communication and openness would help them in achieving their joint enterprise by sharing a common pedagogical philosophy and an understanding of roles and expectations.

It is within the framework of these concerns that different educators and authors have recommended a team working environment related to Wenger’s communities of practice (Knights et al., 2007; Price, 2005; Head, 2003). Knights et al. (2007, p. 243) suggest that “reflective team teaching may also be seen as a framework which encourages the development of a small scale ‘community of practice’ between the members of the teaching team”. Other educators have



developed communities of practice around teaching (Laksov, Mann and Dahlgren, 2008; Coburn and Stein, 2004).

The discussion above implies that one should not take the process of collaboration, cooperation or consultation for granted. It must be negotiated. Head's (2003) exploration of the concept collaboration is instructive here. Head distinguishes two main types of collaboration: effective collaboration and functional, bounded, procedural collaboration. Head argues that effective collaboration goes beyond prescriptions, procedures, simple share of tasks and ideas that are characteristic of bounded collaboration. One may apply bounded collaboration to team models in which team teaching was restricted to setting procedures, teaching strategies and sharing of tasks.

Effective collaboration, as Head construes it, involves people who come to a task with different backgrounds, experiences and knowledge. In their practices, they negotiate meanings of what they are doing. It is within this understanding that he equates effective collaboration viewed in this perspective with communities of practice (Head 2003, p.57). To better understand the suggestion of Wenger's communities of practice approach to team teaching it is instructive to provide key characteristics. By communities of practice Wenger means a group of people who make meanings of what they are doing through negotiation. Wenger highlights three main dimensions of a community to be called a community of practice: mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire. By mutual engagement, he means how the members do things together and respond to each other's actions and establish relationships accordingly. With regard to joint enterprise, it is how participants in the community interpret, contribute to and take responsibility for the development of the community. This refers to mutual accountability. As for shared repertoire, it includes styles, discourses, actions, tools and so on.

The key argument about communities of practice is the negotiation of meanings. In the current context it implies negotiation of meanings around teaching and learning. It should however be noted that communities of practice are not

synonymous with harmony or consensus. There might be disagreements, challenges, tensions and conflicts. However what binds the members together is that they will negotiate these for the development of their joint enterprise. One may imagine a scenario by which for example a team of lecturers is teaching an integrated course as some examples discussed earlier suggest. Lecturers may have different backgrounds and different understandings of the curriculum context in which they are working; may have concern over the status and representation of their disciplines within the integrated course as has been mentioned; may have disagreements about teaching and learning approaches; there might be conflicts between team teaching members, power differences among disciplines, knowledge based power differences and differences in personal style. In the context of communities of practice this should not be seen as a challenge in itself but rather an opportunity to see how to negotiate them for the achievement of educational goals. This requires willingness and commitment to work through differences (Shibley, 2006; Murata, 2002). In a study of interdisciplinary team teaching, Murata (2002, p.74) found that “the teachers did not always use a common teaching style, nor did they think it was necessary to do so. Yet they were equally willing to alter their own style to accommodate the new content that was created in their partnership”.

In light of the discussion above one may infer that for an effective integration of courses teams should be willing to openly explore all the issues pertaining to teaching and learning and to try work through differences rather than using discipline differences as something to separate them.

The themes and issues that have emerged in the literature discussed above may constitute a basis on which to analyse lecturers' perceptions of how CAMS has affected lecturers' teaching. Curriculum implementation is a process of negotiation of meanings and the way lecturers interpret curriculum changes influences the way they implement it. Integrated curriculum has been perceived by many lecturers as disturbing their existing knowledge structures, their established identities within disciplines and thus as making them feel a loss of authority, power and control over what counts as knowledge, knowledge

transmission and assessment. These interpretations came into play in the implementation of the curriculum either explicitly or implicitly. Although many academics agreed with the idea of integration the research showed that they tended to defend their subject identities while in theory boundaries between disciplines were blurred. As it is argued one may espouse changes but in practice they may do differently because of their underlying ideologies.

## **CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY**

In this section I will discuss the methodological approach I followed while conducting the present research. Firstly, I will discuss the type of the research and justifications that underpin it. Secondly, the discussion will be turned to the research population to explain the criteria I used to select the research participants. Thirdly, I will discuss procedures for data collection and then will follow data analysis. Lastly, I will briefly talk about ethical issues.

### **3.1. Introduction**

The nature of the research problem determines the kind of research to do. The present research is a qualitative research. Different scholars have defined and delineated the concept qualitative research. For example Schumacher and McMillan (2006, p.315) comment on qualitative research assumptions. According to them, “qualitative research is based on a constructivist philosophy that assumes that reality is a multilayered, interactive, shared social experience that is interpreted by individuals”. From this position, reality is social. Bryman (1988) cited by Ritchie and Lewis (2003, p.3) notes: “[T]he way in which people being studied understand and interpret their social reality is one of the central motifs of qualitative research.” As has just been noted, there are different definitions given to the term qualitative research. The following emerge as common points. Qualitative research is understood as a naturalistic, interpretative approach concerned with understanding social phenomena from participants’ perspectives. These phenomena include human actions, decisions, values, beliefs, viewpoints, perceptions. Put in another way qualitative research is concerned with understanding the meanings which people attach to the above phenomena. In the light of these characteristics, the present research which aimed at examining how the new curriculum of CAMS has affected lecturer’s work at Kigali Institute of Education is qualitative. The effect of CAMS on lecturers’ work can thus be reflected through lecturers’ perceptions,

understandings and meanings they attach to the new curriculum, and subsequently through their responses to it in practice.

The present research is also a case study of lecturers' perceptions of the implications of CAMS for lecturers' work. Like qualitative research, the concept of case study has had different definitions (Gillham, 2000; Hancock and Algozzine, 2006). According to Yin, quoted by Hancock and Algozzine (2006, p.15), case study research "means conducting empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its natural context using multiple sources of evidence." This implies that a case study is appropriate for studying a human phenomenon in the real world as it happens. The main purpose of case study is to better understand a phenomenon in a real context. The present research is a case study of lecturers at one of the higher institutions of learning in Rwanda-Kigali Institute of Education (KIE) with the objective of analyzing and investigating their perceptions of how they have responded to the new policy of CAMS and how it has affected them. There is a justification for the selection of the case. KIE was the first institution of higher education to translate into practice the credit accumulation and modular scheme in Rwanda. Thus, having gone into water first it is a well established site for an in-depth examination of the implementation of the new policy. It was believed that lecturers at KIE could reflect on their teaching practices and their accounts of teaching experiences could provide empirical insights about how the new curriculum has affected their work.

### **3.2. Research subjects**

The research population are academics in Kigali Institute of Education. Given the nature of the study and the theoretical framework which informs it, the population comprises lecturers as primary population. As the population is too big to be studied as a whole, I chose a purposive sample. The number of purposive sampling is often small. Citing Patton (1990) Bailey (2007, p. 64) justifies the rationale for a purposive or purposeful sampling by suggesting that

“the key to purposeful sampling is to select cases for systematic study that are information rich”. For the purpose of the research and guided by the research questions and the theoretical framework, I selected a sample of sixteen lecturers. The selection of the interviewees was guided by the following considerations. I chose module teams from different subjects on the assumption that subjects or disciplines have their own characteristics that may influence lecturers in their perceptions and meanings and therefore influencing their practices. I chose lecturers who worked on the same module and the module selected were recently developed, taught and assessed. The total number of modules is 6: 2 from Arts and Languages, 2 from Social sciences, 1 from Social Sciences and 1 from Education. The number of lecturers per module varies between 2 and 4. Two lecturers taught in two different modules. The selected lecturers have different qualifications (PhDs, Masters) and their teaching experiences vary from five to thirty years. The majority of participants taught at KIE when CAMS policy was introduced while the other lecturers joined KIE in the course of the policy implementation. Two participants lectured but also held academic leadership positions (subject leader, HoD).

I also selected some line managers not as primary population but as secondary population. This selection was made on the assumption that they could provide some additional information that would help in accessing some information I could not get through lecturers’ responses when it was needed especially with regard to the policy of CAMS. With this sample I conducted what Gillham (2000) terms ‘elite’ interviews. This is a sort of unstructured interview that is done with someone or a group of people in position of authority in an organisation. As Gillham puts it, “although they may be remote from some aspects of what you’re researching, they are likely to have a particularly comprehensive grasp of the wider context and to be privy to information that is withheld from others” (2000, p.81). They may provide breadth and depth of information especially about the background context of what my research subjects experience and where and what kind of documents to be used and the permission to gain access to them.

I had intended to interview the vice-rector academic, the director of academic quality, and other line managers. I couldn’t interview the Vice-rector Academic

and the Director of Academic Quality as they were busy and I couldn't access them. However I managed to interview the Academic Development Officer, one Head of Department, one programme leader, and two subject leaders. The interviews lasted between fifteen and twenty minutes and they were conducted in their offices. The information gathered during these interviews was mainly concerns the implementation procedures and challenges in the implementation of CAMS at a general level.

### **3.3. Data collection**

Data was collected using two main methods: interviews and document analysis. With regard to interviews, I used open-ended semi-structured interviews. Different scholars have defined advantages of open-ended interviews. Citing Byrne (2004) Silverman (2006, p.114) suggests that "[q]ualitative interviewing is particularly useful as a research method for accessing individuals' attitudes and values-things that can not be necessarily be observed or accommodated in a formal questionnaire". In this regard, as he further suggests "open-ended and flexible questions are likely to get a more considered response than closed questions and therefore provide better access to interviewees' views, interpretation of events, understandings, experiences and opinions..." Such information cannot be obtained using questionnaires. Questionnaires have some weaknesses. These are caused by a number of factors including the fact that other people can answer for the targeted respondents, respondents might misunderstand questions or can deliberately give false information since there is nobody to challenge them about it. Even when respondents can be trusted to be sincere, it is not easy to know what lies behind their responses. Another important element is that people do not have time to respond to questionnaires.

As the paradigm of the research was mainly interpretative, and given that I was interested in how CAMS has affected participants' work by analysing how they understand the new policy and how they responded to it in their daily practices, semi-structured interviews were worth using. Semi-structured interviews have advantages over other types of interviews namely structured interviews

particularly with regard to my research. Bailey (2007) argues that that semi-structured interviews have added advantages for, as she puts it, during them, the interviewer might engage in dialogue with the interviewee, rather than simply ask questions. Bailey concurs with Hancock and Algozzine (2006, p.40), who takes this point further by asserting that “semi-structured interviews are particularly well suited for case study research. In addition to posing predetermined questions, researchers using semi-structured interviews can ask follow-up questions designed to probe more deeply issues of interest to interviewees.” It should however be noted that the rationale behind this approach was not to force interviewees to provide answers they did not want to.

The semi-structured interviews with lecturers covered a range of issues. The questions asked were informed by some themes that have emerged in the literature and were relevant to the context of the present study. As the main aim of the study was to investigate lecturers’ perceptions of how CAMS has affected lecturers’ work one of the key questions was about lecturers’ understanding of CAMS. The logic of this question was to gather lecturers’ perceptions and interpretations of the new policy. As an elaboration of this question I asked other questions about changes that CAMS introduced in lecturers’ teaching arrangements and teaching and how it has affected their work. These questions were informed by some debates and tensions that emerge in literature about higher education curriculum including changes in course designing, teaching and assessment. It is also within the same framework that questions were asked about how lecturers designed, taught and assessed module courses as well as the main experiences they have had in their teaching practices within modules. These questions were premised on the assumption that the way lecturers perceive the curriculum framework in which they are working influences the way they implement it.

All interviews were conducted in participants’ offices. The interviews were done one-on-one (the interviewer and the interviewee) in a conversation- like environment whereby both the interviewer and the interviewee could feel comfortable. The interviews lasted between twenty minutes and forty five



minutes. I had intended to conduct 45- minute interview for each participant but some lecturers couldn't afford that time because they were busy working on other academic activities. Thus some interviews lasted shorter than expected or intended. This was the case for two participants in Sciences. In my interviews I was guided by the interview guide I had elaborated and I also posed probe questions to get more information on issues of interests with regard to research questions and the objectives of the research. The probe questions were particularly asked to get deeper information essentially on what really happened within module teams and how lecturers negotiated the meanings of what they did. However, even when I probed some comments interviewees did not always provide additional information.

Interviews were conducted in English for all participants except two lecturers who responded in French. Before interviews I had conversations with participants who had agreed to participate in the research and told them that they were free to answer in any language they feel comfortable in. All interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed verbatim. The two interviews that were conducted in French were translated into English.

Hancock and Algozzine (2006, p.56) point out, "unlike some forms of research in which data are examined only at the end of information collection period, case study research involves ongoing examination and interpretation of data in order to reach tentative conclusions and to refine the research questions." After initial analysis of the data I had collected it appeared that the information I had collected did not provide enough information for the claims participants were making with regard to the negotiation of meanings of their daily practices. To get more information about processes in teams I had to expand my data by focusing on two specific teams to explore processes that respondents had highlighted in more detail and depth.

In addition to interviews I also conducted documentary analysis. As the research is in the context of policy implementation, I analysed policy documents about credit accumulation and modular scheme. They include RNQFR, KIEQFR,

National learning, teaching and assessment policy, Student Support and Guidance Policy, Student evaluation questionnaires, memos and so on. The analysis of these policy documents was intended to provide information about key aspects of the policy of CAMS pertaining to lecturers' work.

To get additional information on what the participants would claim they do in their teaching practices I collected some teaching materials to help in the analysis. These teaching materials include completed module description forms and exam papers the lecturers set. As I could not access these course materials for all modules and analyse them due to time constraints, I selected a sample.

As an active member of KIE staff on research leave I was a participant observer. My affiliation with KIE had both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand it facilitated me in selecting and getting access to participants and documents, to conduct my interviews and to gather other data. Maybe this could have been a bit difficult if I were a researcher from outside. On the other hand, however, some lecturer participants although few seemed to withhold some information they considered sensitive and didn't want me to access them. However, after I had explained the purpose of the research and the ethical issues further they were open to talk. Despite the considerations above, as a researcher participant observer, I made sure that all the information provided by the respondents remained confidential and the analysis of the data and inferences made were done without any bias or influence.

### **3.4. Data analysis**

The present research is a qualitative study. In a qualitative study the goal is to analyse the participants' understandings, perceptions from their perspective. The data which were in the form of transcribed texts corresponding to the participants' answers to the questions asked of them as well as their teaching materials were analysed and interpreted in the light of the aims and research questions of the study. The data were coded and the codes generated categories

or clusters which were interpreted. The coding and interpretation were informed by concepts, themes and issues that were addressed in the literature review. For example literature on implications of integrated curriculum for course designing, teaching and assessment informed the coding of lecturers' perceptions of the changes CAMS has introduced in their work. Moreover literature on team teaching including interdisciplinary team teaching helped in generating models of teams with regard to how lecturers negotiated these changes in their teaching practices within modules.

### **3.5. Ethical considerations**

Ethics is fundamental for all research. As O' Leary (2004) puts it researchers are unconditionally responsible for the integrity of the research. Hancock and Algozzine (2006, p.40) stipulate that "the researcher must adhere to legal and ethical requirements, for all research involving people. Interviewees [or research subjects] should not be deceived and are protected from any form of mental, physical or emotional injury." Given the nature of my case study research, I made sure research participants were treated with care, sensitivity, and respect for their status. For this matter I had to observe the following procedural principles. Informed consent is one of them. This concept has been defined by different scholars (Bailey, 2007; O' Leary, 2004; Oliver, 2003). It places upon the researcher the obligation to ensure that before respondents agree to take part in the research, they are made fully aware of the nature of the research and of their role within it. It is argued that participants can only give informed consent if they fully understand their involvement in a research project. It is within this context that I first contacted prospective participants and provided them with the key aspects of the research. I met all the participants, handed to them an information sheet I had prepared for them and then had a short conversation with them. These short conversations also provided me with further information on how to conduct my interviews.

Another important element is confidentiality. While analyzing data and reporting them I used some coding so that the respondents' responses are kept confidential. With the permission of some participants I mentioned their subjects but their names were kept confidential.

## **CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This section will present the analysis and interpretation of the findings. The analysis and interpretation will focus on the lecturers' perceptions of the new policy and how their understandings and meanings came into play in their sharing and negotiation of their teaching practices in modules. The main themes and arguments that emerged in the literature review will guide the discussion of data. To reiterate the review of literature mainly concerned the following key points: general considerations and characteristics of curriculum, integrated curriculum and its implications for curriculum designing and delivery as well as team teaching experiences.

### **4.1. Lecturers' perceptions and understandings of CAMS policy.**

#### **4.1.1. General understanding of CAMS**

One of the objectives of this research was to analyse lecturers' perceptions of CAMS and the intended and actual changes it has introduced into their work and their sense of the logic of these changes. Analysis of participants' understandings of the new policy of CAMS revealed, at the first level, that lecturers recognise changes and differences that have been introduced in the teaching and learning environment. Many of these changes and differences are similar to the main characteristics of shifts from collection type curriculum to integrated curriculum as discussed in the literature review.

All participants appear to have a common acknowledgement that CAMS was a shift in focus from the teacher to the learner, from teacher-centred to learner-centred approach to teaching and learning. Lecturer participant 3 from Arts and Languages encapsulates this view:

*...new method of modular system which use uh the methodology called learner- centred... it gives power to students ... so what is good in modular system is that students are responsible for their learning teaching, they are*

*independent in learning teaching.(L<sub>3</sub>)*

This view indicates that CAMS is intended to increase the status and the rights of the student. The learner should be viewed as 'independent', 'autonomous', 'active', 'responsible' of their learning. Almost all participants understand this to be in contrast with the previous teaching and learning system where the learner was viewed as 'passive receiver' or someone to be 'spoon-fed' with lecturer's knowledge – 'encyclopaedic knowledge'- and as a 'reproducer' of the same knowledge. This recognition of attention and power given to the learner- the redefinition of the role of the learner- implies redefinition of the role of the lecturer. In the new curriculum of CAMS the lecturer is perceived as a 'facilitator', a 'guide' of the teaching and learning process'; the lecturer is 'no longer the only source of knowledge, 'the master of knowledge' as it was in the previous curriculum:

*lecturers are there as just to guide, as facilitators uh so what happens in classroom is turning around students. (L<sub>3</sub>)*

Participants are aware that intended shifts in the role of the learner as well as in the role of the lecturer have implications for their pedagogy. They reported that in the previous system the pedagogy was 'didactic' with emphasis on encyclopaedic knowledge or established knowledge but in the current system the emphasis is on the learner's self-study, self-regulation. It is within this understanding that participants understand that they should perceive the learner as critical thinker, problem solver. This implies an intended shift from states of knowledge to ways of knowing, to 'knowledge and skills' that can be applied to the field' as some participants reported. The emphasis is on helping students explore issues, real problems in life rather than on established knowledge. Lecturer 1 from Arts and Languages acknowledges this:

*studies in universities are not for making people with their heads full of knowledge which they've read from books ... I think the role of university is to make people responsible for their own lives who can who can find solutions to their own problems and who can help the society to develop and find solutions...Teaching should go that way... objectives are defined in the way of understanding certain issues. (L<sub>1</sub>)*

This lecturer indicates that CAMS wants lecturers to direct their pedagogy towards this philosophy. This is one of the intended shifts.

In their understanding of CAMS some participants also noted the introduction of accountability and quality assurance procedures. Two broad considerations have emerged: official or external quality and internal. With regard to official quality the following was reported: validation of programmes and modules through institutional procedures, revision of programmes and modules, student evaluation, and external examiners. Not all participants reported awareness of all these quality assurance procedures. Some were aware of one, two or three. Lecturer 14 from Sciences provides insights into official accountability and quality assurance procedures that were introduced:

*There is control today on what we teach and how we teach it. Before we teach the module it must be validated by the academic managers. Sometimes it comes back to us to change. Teaching is also controlled by module leaders and evaluated by students. It is different from before. I prepared my course and taught it without official and frequent control; today all we do is public and controlled(L.14)*

This indicates that the official accountability and quality assurance have required lecturers to account for what they teach and how they teach it. It implies that there is external control on what to teach and how to teach it. Teaching was also reported to be controlled by students through student evaluation of module teaching.

Although it appears that in their understanding of the policy participants first referred to the aspects above, the analysis uncovered that the most salient change that all participants were aware of was about course structures and subsequent lecturers' relationships. All participants reported the main shift from individual courses to integrated courses as the main change that they have experienced in the new curriculum framework of CAMS. Two main types of integration of curriculum have emerged: integration within one subject and integration across subjects. For the former one can give an example of a module

comprising different specialisms of Geography while for the latter an example could be a module comprising units of Linguistics and Literature. For both types of integration participants reported that integration of courses has had various implications with regard to organisation, transmission and evaluation of knowledge as described by the participants while referring to their knowledge areas. Lecturer participant 4 from Arts and Languages provides some insights into the main changes brought about by the shift from individual courses to integrated curriculum:

*the big difference is that before the lecturers responsible for individual courses taught their courses without consultation with other lecturers and the content of their courses depended upon their knowledge whereas today there is a programme which is established and it is delivered in collaboration with other members of the team who teach the module.(L.4)*

The lecturer's comments indicate that there have been changes with regard to organisation of courses and social relationships between lecturers. Lecturers reported that in the previous system-collection type- courses were in isolation and taught as individual and autonomous contents. Lecturers had control on their courses, the content was in their hands and knowledge was an end in itself. In the integrated curriculum, it is indicated that the boundaries of courses which were discipline-based have been disturbed as the contents that were formerly isolated, separate and self-referential are subordinate to an established and explicit programme. This is in line with Price's (2005) argument that contents stand in an open relationship to each other; they are no longer solely in the hands of those who teach them; they are no longer the remit of individual academic. Contrary to the previous system the current teaching system has placed obligation on them to account for what they teach, be accountable to each other within the module team as lecturer 4 commented:

*even if the colleague's eye is not administrative there is in fact a kind of mutual control and respect within modular system between colleagues to know whether such or such colleague gives an acceptable content or not acceptable content... our courses are no longer independent, they are in the same structure the module as a whole, they belong to the same structure... we have to follow the same requirements. (L.4)*



This has had implications for lecturers' teaching arrangements as described by lecturer participant 8 from Social Sciences:

*you see some people think that what they know is what they know and that is out of doubt; but in modular system you bring in what you think would be taught and you put it on the table as a matter to be discussed so you are open- minded; your colleagues may challenge you and say this is rubbish (laugh) you should bring in something else; this is really something to be touched and reviewed. You're open-minded and open to other people's mind, people's minds with regard to your expertise (laugh) which is good and you're challenged.(L.8)*

This was acknowledged by a number of lecturers from other disciplines. Some lecturers recognised that in the previous system they taught their courses and no other lecturer could see or know what was going on there. It would appear that teaching was done in privacy, confined within disciplines. But today, as implied by the lecturer's statements above, boundaries between disciplines are believed to have been weakened, where knowledge, pedagogy and assessment are no longer a matter of "private property" (Bernstein, 1975, p. 82); they must be made public and visible to others. Module-based teaching and learning has made teaching something that is visible, something that can be discussed and negotiated among lecturers. The research established that this discussion and negotiation among lecturers concerned various aspects of module curriculum designing, teaching and assessment. They include content to be taught, teaching and learning strategies, assessment strategies and many other educational activities. Lecturers reported that their discussions were guided by a working document –module description form- which specifies key areas pertaining to teaching, learning and assessment strategies and activities.

When speaking at a very general level the majority of participants have described this shift as beneficial. Different advantages have been identified. Lecturers acknowledged that the new curriculum framework has brought about a sense of 'team work', 'team spirit' with perceived opportunity to *share* experience, and as lecturer 2 from Arts and Languages suggested "*it is just like a kind of socialising between ourselves and we come to know each other more than last time when one had his own course, teach it and then you go.*"(L<sub>2</sub>.) Implicit in

this comment is the isolation that many academics experience and that they find joint teaching as an alleviation of this problem (Letterman and Dugan, 2004). Other lecturers went further by talking about perceived opportunity for increased accountability; learning from other disciplines in terms of teaching and assessment practices; philosophical and scientific discussions in which they confronted and critiqued one another's ideas.

Although lecturers appear to perceive these changes as having affected their work positively to some extent, further analysis suggests that in fact they were quite ambivalent. As will be shown lecturers found these changes as compromising in various respects.

#### **4.1.2. CAMS: implications for curriculum designing, teaching and assessment**

The analysis of lecturers' accounts of their experiences established that the shift from individual courses to integrated courses was the main change that drew participants' attention in their understanding of CAMS with regard to their teaching work. The findings above concern the more general level of understanding in terms of intended changes and the most overt changes. The next level of understanding concerns how these perceived changes and differences have affected lecturers' teaching work, the point I want to discuss in the following section. In their accounts of teaching practices lecturers identified implications for three main aspects of their work: course designing, teaching and assessment. I will discuss each of these aspects.

##### *a) Module course designing*

According to lecturer participants, the shift from individual courses to modules has brought about reconceptualisation or repositioning of knowledge. Content to be taught is one of the main implications that have emerged. Almost all lecturers reported that they had to redefine the contents of their disciplines in order to fit

into the new module framework. They described this repositioning of their contents as problematic.

It is perceived as problematic from different perspectives. Participant 11 from Education encapsulates some of these perspectives:

*I know what I have to teach... this the course I have taught for many years. I even designed these courses for the modules of distance learning. The content is huge and it requires much time... but time is limited... the module structure is challenging. (L<sub>11</sub>)*

The lecturer's comments indicate that the repositioning knowledge in module is perceived as problematic from the perspective of time loss. This implies that his course has little time comparing to what he believes is the relevant content.

As required by module-based teaching and learning, courses should be designed according to credits and established module learning outcomes, thus the content must be repositioned irrespective of its particularities as some lecturers suggested. For example lecturer 8 from Social sciences complains about units that are randomly put together:

*The difficulty may be that you have units which are put randomly together and by the end this doesn't see the inherent link between those units. (L<sub>8</sub>)*

The module structure is believed to be compromising with regard to the epistemological nature of disciplines. Lecturer 11 provides insights into this by mentioning implications for practice:

*You are obliged to review the contents so that they will fit in the module credit counting...you cut what you know is important for your students. You remove it to comply with the module requirements. (L<sub>11</sub>)*

The actual process of trying to reposition courses or knowledge was perceived to be a challenge as suggested by a number of lecturers.

Trying to make links between their contents, harmonising their modules was challenging as lecturer 8 suggested:

*It has been difficult because... you have to find out how to harmonise the units and make it a whole and not making things randomly one another... that's what actually it involves. (L8)*

The statement above indicates that lecturer 8 and other lecturers who shared the same view were aware that there needs to be some kind of relational idea or principle of integration and that it is one of the challenges of integration. Sometimes the actual process of integrating courses generated conflicts between lecturers as some participants suggested.

Lecturers are aware that CAMS has asked them to account for what they teach and to negotiate their courses with other lecturers. However they perceive this as compromising as participant 4 from Arts and Languages lamented:

*... today everything is to be checked and discussed between many teachers. Sometimes you propose the content and methodology but knowing that it will be rejected, what is not good at all. Sometimes lecturers get in conflicts, some people are not happy because their courses are challenged. (L4)*

The lecturers above and a number of others appear to complain that their authority and control on the selection of knowledge to be transmitted has been compromised and the significance of the particulars of their disciplines has reduced. It would appear that they are worried their disciplines have been 'diluted'. Not only are lecturers worried about the perceived loss of authority and autonomy to select knowledge, but they also appear to be worried about the impact this would have for their students who they think will not get relevant knowledge in the field. As discussed earlier, disciplines are both epistemological and social entities and academics have built identities within them and students are socialised in them. As Bernstein (1975) suggests any attempt to weaken boundaries is likely to bring about worries, unhappiness and conflicts. Lecturers appear to lament that they no longer have freedom, power and authority on decision making with regard to syllabus and the way to deliver it.

Some lecturers took this point further by suggesting that the established module structures were incompatible with their disciplines so that they were forced to integrate their disciplines into the new curriculum framework. The result was that this compromised the developmental sequencing of their disciplines. For these lecturers, modularity has led to incoherence of course programmes and this has had negative implications for designing effective courses as well as for students' learning experiences. Participant 3 from Arts and Languages describes this incompatibility as follows:

*[It] is just to put things together which are not related... modules contain units which are not uh compatible in content so much so that sometimes to define the objectives for the whole module create problems how can you put together units which are completely different...where the objectives are completely different... we are forced to do incompatible things and we know it affects our students.(L.3)*

These lecturers seem to believe that the linkages were established and imposed by external forces and now they are forced to do things against their beliefs. It would seem they believe the established module structure has deprived them of power and authority on the organisation of their courses. It seems that lecturers are worried that they have lost control on what students will have to learn. Although contexts and module frameworks differ, this finding can be related to Trowler's (1998, p. 90) argument on some of his respondents' comments with regard to the new credit framework that for some academics, "a common modular structure is a Procrustean bed into which a discipline is expected to fit regardless of its (perceived) epistemological characteristics".

All the above concerns, meanings and understandings could explain tensions and disagreements that lecturers reported arose while they were designing, developing modules. In some cases allocation of hours for content areas making up modules was experienced as problematic because each lecturer wanted to give much time to his/her discipline. Moreover, it was reported that lecturers wanted to bring more content from what they taught before and seemed to see

things not in the overall objectives of the module. They tended to keep boundaries of their disciplines.

CAMS is perceived to have affected the organisation of courses and therefore lecturers' perceived control and autonomy on them. There is another aspect that drew some participants' attention. As module course designing requires lecturers to negotiate it within teams, some lecturers reported this team arrangement to be problematic when they compared it to their course designing in the previous curriculum framework. They reported that in the past they were free to design their courses when and how they wanted, but in the current context they have to compromise in the name of the team. This is understood as compromising as lecturer 12 from Education observed:

*Putting people together is a challenge on its own doing tasks accomplishing them it's a challenge on its own because ... for example you decide you are going to do this but may be because somebody else has got other things you find may be he has not accomplished it or he is not around; so meeting together it becomes not easy for people all the time .(L<sub>12</sub>)*

The statement above suggests that course designing presents logistical problems in the current context. Lecturer 12 contrasts this with the previous teaching context:

*... [but] when someone is given a task alone he knows he is solely responsible for that so you do it you know how to do it even you can do it at home ... in the past we knew how to manage our time but today we have to conform to others' availability and you know some people are hard to work with.(L<sub>12</sub>)*

This indicates that CAMS has affected lecturers' autonomy and decision over the organisation and management of their work in terms of time and space. Some lecturers find it hard to accommodate themselves to these working conditions because it affects their time management. Moreover some find it disturbing because, as they observed, they get into 'unnecessary conflicts with colleagues'. This implies that some lecturers may be committed to the new curriculum and invest themselves into it while others may show little or no commitment to it.

Thus while on the one hand teamwork is perceived as beneficial on the other hand some lecturers see it as a problem.

Having discussed how CAMS is understood to have affected lecturers' course designing the next discussion turns to its implications for module teaching.

### *b) Module teaching*

It was previously noted that lecturers recognise that the integrated curriculum in the framework of CAMS requires lecturers to negotiate teaching, to make it public to all lecturers involved in the module. While this appears to be a common acknowledgement lecturers view this as having affected their teaching work in different ways.

One of the major implications as felt by many lecturer participants is the disturbance of course delivery with regard to time. Many lecturers reported that their teaching time has been significantly reduced. The new teaching framework has led lecturers to teach 'under pressure' to give time to the following lecturer to continue with their 'parts'. Lecturers contrasted this with the previous system in which independent courses could extend to a term and lecturers taught them without any pressure. In the current system teaching time appears to be squeezed, and some lecturers lamented that they didn't finish their contents they wanted to teach because the teaching time has reduced as lecturer 6 from Social sciences suggested:

*I will give you an example of a 45-hour course which was given for 30 hours for theory and 15 for practicals today the same course is incorporated within a module of 150 hours shared out between lecturers and the one who used to teach the course is now given 12 hours of teaching so the lecturer doesn't finish the content.(L6)*

The lecturer's comment is not only showing us that lecturers worry about their teaching time. It also suggests that the lecturers are still trying to hang on to their old content and have not yet reconceptualised what should be presented and

what can and cannot be included. While it appears that the majority of lecturers worried that their teaching time has reduced they seemed to be more concerned about the epistemological nature of their disciplines as lecturer 6 from Social Sciences went on to suggest:

*the problem is that there are courses which are specialised and which necessitate some time to explain technical words but we don't have time to do so and this has implications on students' learning. You can't teach your course as you wanted, what is a challenge... students do not get all the basic knowledge. (L.6)*

This points to a need for a much deeper consideration of what should be taught. This concern was reported more specifically in Social Sciences and Arts and Languages. Implicit in the above comments and other lecturers' accounts of the effect of CAMS with regard to their teaching is the argument made earlier that disciplines are epistemological entities with their own modes of inquiry, their traditions of teaching and learning. It appears that lecturers believe that credit and module-based teaching has deprived them of their control on what to teach and how to teach it. This implies that they know what their students need to learn in their disciplines but the existing module structures prevent them from providing students with relevant and enough discipline knowledge and skills required. They believe they have been denied an opportunity to follow the progress of their students as lecturer 9 (who works in the same module as lecturer 6 above) from Social Sciences observed:

*When we taught our own courses before we made sure our students understood the course but today I don't know whether my students understood my course. You don't follow the progress of your students because of time. (L.9)*

Lecturers who hold this view seem to suggest that there is not enough contact time with students. The time allocated does not allow to cover what they believe is the relevant knowledge. Given all the concerns above it would appear that lecturers are worried that the existing module structures have diluted their courses and students seem not to be immersed in the subject matter which is



believed to be a source of identity. This is commensurate with Trowler's (1998) and Martin's (1999) findings.

The focus put on student independent work whereby more teaching and learning time is allocated to the learner was also perceived as challenging. In the discussion of lecturers' general understanding of CAMS it was noted that all lecturers are aware of the shift in emphasis from didactic approaches to teaching and learning to self-regulation approach- student independent work. In other words, it is an emphasis on active learning whereby students go and search for information. One of the ways used in this regard is the use of information technology tools. Some lecturers view these as contextual constraints in respect of their teaching. Two main aspects have emerged in this regard: internet and library. Lecturers consider these tools as having prevented them from following the progress of their students to make sure they get the right and relevant knowledge. Some lecturers reported that they recommend some readings and other material when they know that students will not access these because of constraints on the ground. These include: too few computers, problems of internet connectivity, poor library. Some lecturers reported that they do this for the purpose of quality assurance procedures; what they regret however.

From another perspective, they find the emphasis on student independent work as compromising in that they recommend some readings and other materials when they know that their students do not have required skills to do so because of their educational background as lecturer 7 from Social sciences suggested:

*This time students are not receiving [are not passive recipient of knowledge ]they should go and do research and come and deliver... the difficulty is that the most of our students have been accustomed has been used to receive notes from [the teacher] and now this time they should go and fetch and find out the materials and these ...this is something new to them...(L.7)*

This implies that the new system presupposes a new role for learners but they are not yet capable of performing these roles. Learners are meant to be more independent but some lecturers do not trust they can be independent. This is a

tension between the perceived and intended shift in role of the learner and what actually happens in practice.

Lecturer 5 from Social Sciences takes this issue further by noting what this means for his teaching:

*With the students we have, modular philosophy of teaching this is student-centre is a challenge. These students need much contact with the lecturer but we send them to search for the information. It's a contradiction. I think we should have more time for lectures but the system doesn't accept it. (L.5)*

This indicates that some lecturers would like to have more time so they would make sure students get connected with the relevant subject matter. It could be that lecturers believe the emphasis on student independent work has reduced relationships between the lecturer and the student which are necessary for students to be socialised into the subject.

From the perspective above one might infer that lecturers who hold the views above think courses are not learner-centred. Although courses are meant to be learner-centred they don't think learners are really oriented to working or reading independently.

Besides the perceived effects above, some lecturers also reported implications or challenges with regard to teaching approaches. Lecturer participants recognised that module-based teaching requires a common philosophy with regard to teaching as lecturer 8 from social sciences suggested:

*A module is a whole and requires all lecturers teaching it to use common approach ... You have to find out how to harmonise the units and make it a whole, harmonise the content... harmonising the content because if I'm teaching one unit and my fellow is teaching another unit we should find out a way of making a link between these units. (L.8)*

This approach contrasts with the previous one in which the lecturer was free to decide on their pedagogy. Almost all lecturers from different disciplines

appeared to be open to this common pedagogy but expressed their worries that it has affected their teaching. Different compromising aspects were reported: some lecturers may be committed to new curriculum while the others may not; incompatible personalities and working styles. But the findings uncovered that the main challenge that lecturers reported to have affected their teaching is teaching decisions with regard to module teaching. All lecturers perceived CAMS as having brought about a shift in emphasis from states of knowledge to ways of knowing as noted earlier. They are also aware that the intended shifts in the role of the learner as well as in the role of lecturer has implications for their pedagogy- shift in pedagogy from didactic to self-regulation on the side of the student as discussed earlier. Lecturers recognised that in the previous system the focus was on content coverage whereby the learner was passive receiver of knowledge, the focus was on memorisation. In the new curriculum the learner is perceived as independent, autonomous, at the centre of creation. The focus of teaching should be on issues, problems as the lecturer participant 1 from Arts and Languages observed:

*... a module has got objectives I try to make an effort to see how different components, different units of a module could go towards these objectives, this is the most important thing. If the objectives are defined in the way of understanding certain issues then all the units should go ... should be geared towards those objectives, towards solving those problems... (L<sub>1</sub>)*

However, he seems to believe that his colleagues affected his teaching because they had a different focus in their teaching. They focused, as he understood, on content coverage-states of knowledge- when the new curriculum requires them to have a common pedagogy, a common understanding of focusing on ways of knowing:

*There are tensions in teaching. While some are committed to the new curriculum others are not. Teaching becomes difficult because you don't reach a consensus. They [lecturers] teach units in order for students to memorise the units and that's all, the objectives are not there, the overall objectives of the whole thing. The course is not just to have very many things which they have to memorise... the one who can reproduce as many*

*things as possible. But the one who can think and see solutions to problems.*  
(L<sub>1</sub>)

A number of lecturers from different disciplines reported conflicts or disagreements in their modules with regard to teaching styles. Some accused their colleagues of 'teaching as they taught before'. These tensions should be located in the context of the comments made earlier that integrated curriculum calls for a harmonious, common pedagogy, common teaching practices. However, as it was argued, this is likely to generate differences. In the above there is indication that some lecturers appear to have shown flexibility in committing themselves to the intended pedagogy while others didn't. One may infer that while on the one hand almost all lecturers appear to espouse their new role as facilitator of teaching and learning in practice some seemed to hang on to their old role of master of knowledge and their view of the learner as receiver of knowledge. If lecturers' accounts of their teaching experiences were taken true this would constitute another tension to the idea of learner-centeredness which is at the heart of CAMS.

Another important effect reported by lecturers is that their teaching load has intensified. The reduction of face-to-face teaching is believed to have increased lecturers' work as lecturer participant 13 from Sciences observed:

*In the past I spent much time with students in classroom I could of course give them some assignments but much of the time students were together. However the new system often students work on their own and are always knocking on your door and you conduct many face-to-face classes in your office when you have other modules to teach. It is time consuming to be honest.* (L<sub>13</sub>)

The focus on student independent work is believed to have displaced teaching into lecturers' offices whereby much of their time is perceived to be consumed by students who seek support and guidance. This implies a paradox given what is formally required by the policy and what actually happens. Although the system formally reduces contact time, it is actually intensifying it.

Some lecturers perceived this to be a real challenge in that if they are not available to students the latter will report them to the academic managers because, as was mentioned, they have rights to evaluate their teaching.

Lecturers also reported that CAMS has had implications for course organisation, time and pacing. They reported issues related to course scheduling with regard to final assessment. The new system has required them to wait until the last lecturer finishes teaching his or her part for them to assess the module. Participant 10 from Education views this as compromising:

*... it is actually problematic because actually you have to some for instance you might require to give an assessment of a module but one has not finished teaching... why should we wait for the end of the semester to set examination at the same time? The problem is that you have to pile everything until the time of examination that is not a very good thing. (L<sub>10</sub>)*

Lecturer 10 appears to lament the loss of control and flexibility on the organisation of his courses he used to have. In the current system he is no longer free to assess his course as he wishes.

### *C) Assessment*

Participants reported that module-based teaching affected their assessment of courses: the content to be assessed and how to assess it. With regard to the content to be assessed the majority reported that they no longer have autonomy and flexibility to assess what they think is relevant for their courses. They construe this as having affected their work as described by participant 10:

*sometimes the examinations are not balanced because what you would have wished the students to answer in the examinations you find that it's out because of the modular system. You are forced to include what you have not wished to include, so you find that there are so many things you don't ask, you don't examine, you don't assess. (L<sub>10</sub>)*

Lecturer 10 appears to lament the loss of decision, autonomy and control on what to assess. Participant 6 from Social Sciences appears to have similar perceptions by observing

*Sometimes you set questions and you expect given answers given the content you've taught and you have of course in mind some learning outcomes you are expecting to achieve and a colleague comes and tells you this question doesn't fit the outcomes of the module. You discuss and at the end you may reach an agreement but sometimes you are forced to accept for the purpose of the module. You have to make concessions. Normally each lecturer should be given opportunities to set questions according to the content he taught. (L<sub>6</sub>)*

The lecturer points to the problem of accountability to each other. This implies that it has also led to a loss of control and autonomy.

Some lecturers took this point further by raising issues related to the importance and contributions of each content area in the module. For example Lecturer 12 from Education reported that in their module his course unit had more teaching hours but in the assessment he was forced to put it at an equal level with others that had fewer hours. He believed this was unfair. It would appear that lecturers who held this view were worried that their disciplines were diluted in the integrated curriculum. The result was that this compromising assessment arrangement created tensions and conflicts among lecturers whereby each wanted to bring many questions from the content they taught. This implies issues of power relations between disciplines in the integrated curriculum as reviewed in the literature (for example Bernstein, 1975).

Four lecturers were also concerned about the time allocated to exams. They found it difficult in the integrated curriculum to set exams because the time that was allocated to their individual courses was three hours and in the current system it is the same time allocated to exams when the module comprises for instance three or four 'courses'. This distribution of time is also believed to have prevented lecturers from setting tasks as they wished because they have to squeeze it so that it will fit the time allocated to the module.

While some lecturers lament the loss of autonomy and opportunities to assess what they want and how they wish, there is another category of lecturers who

view assessment as compromising in a different way. For these lecturers module-based assessment requires lecturers to adopt a common assessment approach, a common examination style, a common philosophy. In their view, all the assessment tasks, criteria should go towards the outcomes of the module. However, they feel affected by the assessment approach of some of their colleagues who they believe complicate the assessment process by setting questions as if they were setting questions within their disciplines. Participant 1 from Arts and Languages encapsulates these worries:

*Some lecturers have compromised our assessment... the new system wants to impose the new way of thinking , new way of reasoning ... however, they still set questions as they did before. We agree on assessing the outcomes of the module but they always set questions that require students to memorise, they set questions as if they were assessing individual courses; this affects us because we are always in tension with them and we are always blamed by academic managers. (L<sub>1</sub>)*

Another assessment related issue is marking. Some lecturers have found marking in integrated curriculum problematic. Marking issues were reported by lecturers from a module in Arts and Languages which combines Languages/Linguistics and Literature. Lecturers reported that in the past they set their exams within their disciplines and were free to mark at their convenient pace. In the current system, all the exam questions are in one exam booklet that must circulate from one lecturer to another. Lecturers have found this as compromising and disturbing in that in some cases some lecturers retain exam booklets for long and these impacts on lecturers' time management and commitment. Some lecturers also extended their concern to issues of sharing module responsibility. They felt that if one lecturer delays marking it is the whole module team that is blamed by the academic managers. This was reported to be source of conflicts between lecturers. These lecturers appear to be concerned that a module as a joint enterprise is compromising in that when some are committed others are not. This would question the perceived mutual accountability within module teams. Lecturers also mentioned issues related to calculating and compiling marks. Each lecturer marks their part and then all lecturers put marks together what some lecturers found difficult and confusing.

Although this appears to be an important element of lecturers' work with regard marking and it appears to be more on technical level, there is another aspect of marking in a team that was mentioned. Some lecturers seemed to be concerned about confidentiality on their marking as participant 9 noted:

*the problem of delay yes. That's the main one but also the problem of influence you see how this one has marked . That's a problem even confidentiality. We have a marking scheme but each has his style to mark.*

Although lecturers who raised this issue didn't elaborate much on this it could be that they were concerned about the loss of privacy about assessment and marking they enjoyed within their disciplines when they were independent.

I have discussed how lecturers understand CAMS and the meanings they attach to it with regard to their teaching practices. Lecturers have identified the main changes brought about by CAMS. These changes concern mainly course designing, teaching and assessment. They perceive these changes as having affected their work. The findings have revealed that the majority of lecturers expressed worries that they have lost autonomy and control on what to teach, what to assess and how to teach it or assess it. Lecturers have also identified other contextual pressures that have affected their work vis-a-vis pressures and demands of CAMS. Another finding is that not all lecturers have the same understanding with regard to these changes. It was found that some lecturers appeared to be willing to commit themselves to the integration of their courses while others appeared to hang to their old practices. Some conflicts or tensions were reported by lecturers while giving accounts of their teaching experiences in their respective module teams.

These understandings can be said to be for individual academics although some academics may have the same understandings. The next step in the analysis of participants' accounts of their teaching experiences in the framework of CAMS was to investigate how they shared and negotiated the changes in their teaching practices within their module teams. It was found that CAMS has required



lecturers to work in teams, and the shift of emphasis from content coverage (states of knowledge) to learning outcomes has asked them to discuss and negotiate course designing, teaching and assessment as well as other educational activities. As was argued the way academics understand the curriculum influences the way they respond to it in practice. For example some literature revealed that for some academics or lecturers the perceived epistemological characteristics of their disciplines were important in conditioning their responses in practice (Young and Kram, 1996; Trowler, 1998; Perry and Stuart, 2005; Shibley, 2006).

## **4.2. Negotiation of teaching practices in module teams**

### **4.2. 1. Integrated curriculum: implications for practice**

The analysis of lecturers' accounts of how they shared and negotiated teaching practices (course designing, teaching and assessment) in their module teams as well as the analysis of some of their course materials (including completed module description forms and exam papers) revealed two major models of integration that I have termed functional or procedural integration and critical collaborative integration. The two models are different in the way module teams interpreted the changes and the sense they made of them in their practices. At a more general level, in the first model, lecturers appeared to have failed to negotiate and lay conditions for an effective integration of their joint courses. In the second model lecturers seemed to have managed to negotiate and establish conditions for integration of their joint courses. Each model will be discussed by highlighting the main processes and dynamics that underpin it.

#### **4.2.1.1. Procedural integration**

In the first model it *appears* that courses have been integrated in modules but the integration seems to be functioning more at a superficial level as lecturers in this category suggested. On the one hand they recognised changes in their

course structures (shift from individual courses to integrated courses) while on the other hand they acknowledged that in practice they integrated their courses superficially. They were aware that their modules lacked 'logical link'; 'coherence' between knowledge units that make up modules. They were also aware and conscious of negative effects that this has had with regard to their students' learning experiences.

Asked why their courses were not integrated in an effective way the majority of lecturers in this model sample suggested that the idea of integration and the integration structure was imposed on them, and they believed it was incompatible with the nature of their disciplines. Lecturer 3 provides insights into this issue while referring to his module context in Arts and Languages:

*This [integration structure] was not done by lecturers; it was just done by academic authority who said 'do this...*

and the result was that

*lecturers, I think, resist to this but then after they were obliged to do like that. We say a module is something which is coherent... but in practice you find that it is they aren't coherent. We have mixed literature and Linguistics and when we say please let us change this, we know that and Linguistics we can not put them in the same one module they [academic managers] don't understand...So we used those modules knowing that they were not modules. (L.3)*

Lecturer 3 suggests that they made superficial rather than substantive changes because there was not a clear conceptualisation of the basis of integration. The lecturers believed that the two disciplines – Linguistics and Literature- are two different disciplines which are not closely related; do not have 'affinities', thus they cannot be integrated. They seem to suggest that there was no consensus on the integration principle.

Similar comments were made in other subjects whereby some lecturers lamented that disciplines that were integrated in modules were incompatible given their particular characteristics. For example lecturer 5 from Social sciences observed:

*Some courses are randomly put together and you find that they don't complement each other in teaching because they are different.(L<sub>5</sub>)*

However, it was in Arts and Languages where the issue was explicitly felt. Lecturers reported tensions that arose between academic managers and lecturers with regard to the implementation of CAMS. The former accused the latter of resisting change while the latter seemed to give epistemological reasons of incompatibility in module structures as indicated in the statements above.

The unclear conceptualisation of the basis of integration was perceived by some lecturers as having disempowered them especially with regard to course designing. In established module structure, some lecturers raised issue of knowledge-based differences. In this regard lecturer participant 4 from Arts and Languages suggested:

*... we didn't have a word or many words to say on those some themes or chapters we or some didn't master for example you are a linguist and you don't master a given term in literature it was indeed difficult to say any word on a content in Literature. (L<sub>4</sub>)*

The lecturers suggested that they felt disempowered in the planning process. This implies issues of power relations in module teams between lecturers but also between disciplines and to larger extent between departments as lecturer 3 from the same discipline and module observed:

*... those modules do not have ownership... by ownership I mean a department of literature cannot say these are my modules, the department of, neither the department of Linguistics, language and linguistics can say those are my modules... (L<sub>3</sub>)*

The comments above can be located in the framework of the argument of Mansilla et al. (2000) that disciplines are both epistemological and social entities as reviewed in the literature. It would seem that lecturers tried to defend their disciplines because as was discussed earlier disciplines constitute a source of professional identity and any attempt to break their boundaries would be seen

as the undermining of the disciplinary knowledge, of the status of academics as experts as Beane (1995, p. 619) and Trowler (1998, p. 75) contended. The findings also revealed that in some other subjects the issue was also existent although not as overtly as it was in Arts and Languages.

Lecturers' understanding of curriculum influence the way they respond to it. The findings have revealed that lecturers in this model tended to work individually or to some extent to work within their own disciplines when in theory they claimed to be in modular system. This was reflected in module designing, teaching and assessment. The analysis of lecturers' accounts of their experiences and the analysis of some course materials provided some empirical evidence in this regard.

As regards module course designing lecturers claimed to have discussed the planning processes as required by the module description form (e.g. allocation of hours to different teaching and learning activities for both the lecturer and the student, module learning outcomes, teaching strategies, assessment strategies). However the analysis showed that they did it at a superficial level. In some instances lecturers acknowledged that although they met to design modules and complete module description forms, 'you could find individual courses within one course' (module); or 'a course with many sub-courses'. They acknowledged that they designed courses superficially. Lecturer 4 from Arts and Languages provides insights into how lecturers integrated their courses in their module:

*What we did is just putting things together which are not related. It is indeed former courses that we pasted together to make modules. (L<sub>4</sub>)*

Lecturer 4 suggests that they went through the motions, but in Bernstein's (1975) terms they didn't really think about or didn't feel the need for an organising idea and principle although they claimed to have discussed different issues pertaining to integration of their courses. The lecturers suggested that their courses were not actually integrated or to some extent were not learner-centred. This implies that their courses were still subject-based. This is the

tension between the espoused shift from individual courses to integrated courses and what happened in practice. The analysis of one module description form completed by one module team revealed that on the curriculum document it was mentioned one course with learning outcomes and other educational activities. However it could be seen that boundaries between disciplines were strong. Such an approach was a source of tensions with academic managers as a number of lecturers reported. Academic managers wanted lecturers to design modules that comprise coherent units.

In other modules lecturers acknowledged having discussed some points but other issues were taken for granted. These are for example teaching and learning strategies, assessment strategies which some lecturers believed were common for the whole institution. These lecturers seemed to believe that when lecturers work in the same teaching and learning environment they share the same assumptions and beliefs about teaching. However the analysis showed that lecturers had different assumptions and beliefs about teaching as manifested in lecturers' perceptions of implications of CAMS for their work. For example while some lecturers were concerned about the content to be taught their colleagues on the same module were of a different view that the new system wants lecturers to focus on module outcomes.

With regard to module teaching the evidence showed that lecturers in this model taught individually and there was little communication between lecturers teaching the module. Even for the little communication lecturers reported that it was limited to organisational and logistical issues like telling the next lecturer to teach, exchanging documentation, sharing complaints about inappropriate teaching facilities and infrastructures, and reporting on students' attending classes. Lecturer participant 6 from Social Sciences commented:

*there have been some instances where we have seen each other in our offices to talk about one or two issues regarding the module. Sometimes you meet a colleague in the corridor and you share... What we do may be to talk about students' performance; students' difficulties...(L.6)*

The same lecturer seemed to evaluate this approach by acknowledging:

*we haven't set specific time to meet may be that is the shortcoming in our module; I don't know whether the others do it. We don't consult each other to discuss strategies to use in our teaching.(L6)*

This lecturer suggests that although lecturers met to discuss the issues mentioned above- and one can say that those issues are important with regard to teaching practices- there are deep pedagogical issues that they should have addressed as they viewed them as crucial for the achievement of their joint courses. In fact a number of lecturers expressed concern that they didn't know what happened in colleagues' classes. They seemed to be suggesting that teaching should be visible to all module team members and lecturers should negotiate all that happens in practice explicitly. They should think about the relational idea of integration in the course of teaching. This observation appears to dispute some beliefs that once the module has been designed and validated all lecturers will abide by it as some lecturer participants seemed to believe by taking for granted some aspects of their module development. It also appears to agree with the comment made earlier that lecturers should explore and discuss openly underlying beliefs and assumptions about classroom learning process (Perry and Stewart, 2005, p. 571) if they want to effectively integrate their courses. Lecturer 1 from Arts and Languages seems to think within this framework when he suggested:

*There would be a more coordination and people would be working in teams, meeting regularly so they share ideas, they think of the objectives, they look at the kind of activities that can be organised for students and also the kind of tests that can be organised for them and they should be going in one line... have the same objectives for the formation of graduates who know what they are doing.(L1)*

Asked why it was so difficult to integrate their teaching, time constraints appeared to be the first commonly cited reason. Lecturers suggested heavy workloads prevented them from meeting regularly when in designing modules they agreed to do so. Heavy workload included designing and revising modules, teaching in many modules because of the shortage of lecturers, increased work

because of a very big number and other leadership activities lecturers are asked to carry out. Another related issue reported by lecturers is lecturers who have work at other institutions and therefore are inaccessible in time and space as lecturer 8 from Social Sciences lamented:

*Some come here and they already have classes (laugh) and while others are regularly here in their offices and therefore you can find them in their offices in case you intend to ask them something. And this is actually what is mostly bringing about the difficulties, because you can't consult somebody when he or she is not in the office.(L.8)*

Although time constraints and lecturers who have work at other institutions appear to be the perceived reasons, and these factors can be said to play a role, a deep analysis of their accounts of experiences of teaching uncovered issues related to knowledge-based differences and power relations issues. The lecturers reported that they respected each other as 'experts' or 'specialists' in their subjects or disciplines. This belief appeared to have influenced their teaching as lecturer 11 from Education suggested while responding to the question of why in their module lecturers tended to teach individually:

*we respect each other one another so that when you are teaching that part others they respect you as expert of that; you are one who has been chosen among the group as a person who masters that area than others; they will respect you because you are mastering the content even though they have the knowledge about it.(L.11)*

The lecturer suggested that it was taken for granted that lecturers would teach their parts and therefore no need to consult each other. This trust and respect appears to rely on one's competences. This seems to be similar to cases reviewed earlier in which some teaching-team functions by relying on the perceived expertise, reliability and competence of its members (Benjamin, 2000, p. 196). While this belief could partly explain why boundaries between disciplines became strong in actual teaching and might have made academics feel little or no need to integrate their teaching, further analysis revealed that there were underlying issues that were at play. It may well be that lecturers taught

individually to try to retain control over teaching as participant 6 from Social Sciences observed:

*all lecturers are not specialists in all courses or let's say academic areas  
...when we prepare the module text there we work together and prepare  
the content together the global content but we can't have situations  
whereby lecturers control others' contents.(L6)*

The above comment indicates that the lecturer wanted to keep control over his discipline contents. Implicit in the comment above could be lecturers' attempts or strategies to see how to teach their contents. The findings established that a number of lecturers expressed worries that module-based teaching has affected their work in that it prevents them from teaching their disciplines as they wish and from finishing their contents. Lecturer 6 is one of them. It could also be that, as some lecturers suggested, if it became open to others, they would lose control or power on their teaching and maybe they would feel uncomfortable as lecturer 6 appeared to suggest:

*in teaching there may be some lecturers who think that they are super  
professors who would like to impose their academic authority to others and  
that's not good.(L6)*

These perceived differences reveal issues of power relations within modules. This tends to accord with Young and Kram's (1996) argument that in cross-disciplinary teaching one feels as an expert in one area but not necessarily in others and this influences their participation in the teaching team. One might also infer that this "sense of territoriality" (Perry and Stewart, 2005, p. 571) and all the understandings and meanings attached to it underpin conflicts and tensions that have come to surface in module teaching practices and processes. Some conflicts or tensions were explicit while others were implicit. For example some lecturers believed that their colleagues were teaching as they taught before simply because they didn't understand the curriculum framework they are working in. It may well be that lecturers may not understand the policy very well because it is new to them and that they were used to working in the previous system. Indeed, some lecturers recognised this. However, based on analysis of their perceptions and meanings they attached to CAMS, it seems that



lecturers tended to think and function more within the boundaries of their disciplines than towards modules as seen above.

This finding could also dispute some meanings academic managers attributed to lecturers' responses to CAMS with regard to actual teaching; what has been source of conflicts and tensions. The common perceived reasons given by the academic managers I interviewed are that lecturers don't read policy documents and that it is common for academics to resist change. The comments of Participant PL<sub>1</sub>, a programme leader, are instructive here:

*Some lecturers teach as they taught before; they teach individually and courses are not integrated... sometime it is very difficult to change and to follow to accommodate so this the resistance it is always in human nature sometimes there is resistance to change... there is also a culture of lecturers not willing to read policy documents. (PL<sub>1</sub>)*

Other academic managers seemed to think in the same perspective when they reported that seminars and meetings were organised to explain modular-based teaching and learning and to exchange experiences on it but some lecturers continued to teach as they taught before or have failed to design modules that are coherent to reflect the expected learning outcomes. Although meetings and seminars are key factors in ensuring effective implementation of a policy, it could be that these academic managers were not taking sufficient cognisance of the range of factors that come into play in negotiating the curriculum. The literature on curriculum policy implementation states that the understanding or interpretation of curriculum is influenced by various factors including physical, social, epistemological (Kelly, 1989; Cornbleth, 1990). Moreover the meanings the actors on the grassroots level (Trowler, 1998) attach to it can be explicit, visible, explicit or implicit (Thompson, 1990).

The tendency of defending subject boundaries was also salient as regards assessment. The analysis showed that lecturers were more oriented to their disciplines than to the learning outcomes of the module. A number of lecturers acknowledged that in their modules each lecturer prepared questions about

what they have taught and what they did was just to 'put together those questions' without putting much attention to the learning outcomes of the module. Lecturer 11 from Education provided insights into this approach. He started by describing how they proceeded in his module:

*Every member of the team prepared the questions related to his or her part... and we grouped we put together those questions and we gave them to students.*

He then went on to question this approach:

*What have I assessed have I assessed if my students have accomplished my part or the module that is a question. I assessed my part ... the objectives of the module have not been achieved because I only assessed my part and I didn't assess other parts. I don't know what happened to other parts.*

Lecturer 11 indicates that in this module lecturers worked within their disciplines and failed to negotiate the integration of their courses. While the members on the module claimed to have discussed assessment issues, moderated exams, the statements above indicate that this was done at a superficial level; it didn't go deep to consider issue of module learning outcomes. They seem to have failed to think about the organising idea or principle of integration. This was also acknowledged in other modules as suggested by lecturer participant 1 from Arts and Languages:

*in the way the exams are composed you see we have difficulties ... to sit together to find questions which would reflect the knowledge [the module] and also of the different units this hasn't happened yet; it still remains a problem. The exam could not be coherent. Each wanted to defend their contents and were ignoring the module. (L<sub>1</sub>)*

The lecturers suggested that they failed to integrate their assessment towards the learning outcomes of modules. However, on the module description form they completed they indicated the learning outcomes to be covered at the final assessment. Participant SL<sub>1</sub> in this model, who is a subject leader, provided an example of assessment whereby the learning outcomes of the module are clearly set, and assessment criteria have been agreed upon but when you read questions

lecturers set you find that they have prepared many exams in one exam when they are supposed to set one exam paper which reflect the learning outcomes of the module. As the subject leader went on to suggest at subject level these issues are discussed and modules are revised but he still finds examinations which do not reflect the module as a whole:

*There is a tendency to work individually ... one says I will be dealing with my part and another will come he will deal with his part and then you see a module is not a whole but you see different courses ...there is a tendency that if they want to prepare a question paper one is interested to put many questions from his part. It becomes very complicated... because we don't need many question papers in one question paper(SL<sub>1</sub>).*

An analysis of the examination paper that was set in one module uncovered strong boundaries between disciplines. The exam paper was set so that it looked like one exam No reference was explicitly made to specific disciplines. However, it could be seen that boundaries were still implicitly there. Questions were referring to specific disciplines and did not refer to the whole module.

One might conclude on this model that at superficial level courses may be perceived as integrated, as learner-centred. However, at bottom there might be closed ideologies in Bernstein's (1975) terms. In the cases above, boundaries between disciplines seemed to be blurred at superficial level but at bottom each lecturer tried to defend their subject identities. The lecturers seemed to keep existing boundaries. Their responses were either explicit or implicit. As some lecturers suggested they failed to openly and explicitly discuss their joint enterprise of integrating courses and the result was that it affected their courses and students' learning experiences as a number of them acknowledged.

#### **4.2.1.2. Collaborative critical integration**

Not all module teams responded in the same way in developing integrated module courses. Unlike the first model in which lecturers tended to keep boundaries of their disciplines with regard to module course designing, module

teaching and assessment, there are teams in which lecturers *tried* to go beyond the boundaries of their disciplines to function towards a module as a coherent integrated curriculum.

Like in the previous model lecturers seemed to think in terms of the epistemological and social considerations of their disciplines. They considered themselves as 'experts' and 'specialists' in their disciplines and perceived the module-based teaching framework as compromising: not allowing them to design, assess and teach their courses as they wished. However, instead of considering these concerns as something that would separate them *they negotiated their differences to some extent*. These discussions and negotiations were done at module course designing, teaching and assessment.

With regard to module designing some lecturers reported that they discussed openly the importance of each discipline in the integrated curriculum as lecturer 6 observed while reflecting on his experiences in his module team:

*It would have been better if we had structured the content as a general outline. But in our discussion we did it in terms of separate parts of the module or different branches of the module... we opted for the structure because we wanted to reflect the importance for each part.(L6)*

These lecturers appeared to be concerned about the epistemological importance of their disciplines in the integrated curriculum, but resolved to integrate them by maintaining their contents. An analysis of the module description form they completed revealed that in setting the learning outcomes of the module they tried to make sure the distinct disciplines or branches of the module course interact in a way that students would use some concepts from one discipline to another. In another module the analysis showed that disciplines were not explicitly mentioned but still discipline lines could be identified. Lecturers in this module reported that they had agreed on that format in their meetings to design the module. In both cases it would seem that lecturers resolved to keep the boundaries of their disciplines while trying to work within the requirements of the module framework at the same time. However, the main focus seemed to be put on learning outcomes of the module. It appears that they made conscious

decisions to maintain or change certain things. Although the lecturers did not provide sufficient information on the processes they went through or how they negotiated that integration this implies that they thought about an organising idea and principle. They felt the need to spell out the role and the form of knowledge in Bernstein's terms.

It cannot however be concluded that this integration was straightforward and that all module lecturers agreed on everything they did. Some disagreements and conflicts were reported in some modules but were dealt with through negotiation. The comments of Lecturer participant 2 on the experiences in his module are instructive:

*these are the same lecturers who were in the former curriculum. Most of the time they seemed to be comfortable with what they were used to... most of lecturers wanted what they taught before to be included in this module. (L<sub>2</sub>)*

The same participant went on to comment on some disagreement that occurred:

*disagreement would arise such that there are courses we thought they were outdated and should be replaced by more modern, more practical... But you would find that some lecturers were not comfortable with that. They even got angry at each other.(L<sub>2</sub>)*

Although these disagreements and conflict arose it didn't prevent lecturers from reaching a consensus on the level of integration of their module courses as was observed by a number of participants including lecturer 2:

*as a group we managed to convince them that some contents were not fitting in the current curriculum ... some lecturers thought that you are taking them back to square one and there was some opposition; but still guided by commonsense and the fact that we wanted to introduce the students we wanted to produce a curriculum that would help the students develop some important skills ... for example critical thinking and creativity such lecturers ended by agreeing(L<sub>2</sub>)*

This suggests that these lecturers felt the need to work together for their joint enterprise despite their differences. It appears that these lecturers managed to

design an integrated module course because they openly discussed their concerns and made sense of them. This is similar to other findings as discussed earlier whereby lecturers were concerned that their disciplines were diluted but were willing to give up some content for the common good of the joint enterprise (Schlesinger, 1996; Murata, 2000).

As regards their actual teaching, like in the previous model some lecturers recognised that much of the time they taught individually. However, in this case there is a module in which lecturers agreed that *each lecturer would adapt their teaching styles to meet the learning outcomes that were jointly set* for the common achievement of the module. They could meet, although not as frequently as they had wished, to reflect on the progress of their courses, on what has been covered and on the way forward. In another module lecturers agreed to observe each other's teaching in class in a bid to know what colleagues have taught. Although they did not do it many times because of time constraints, as they suggested, they seemed to believe that this approach contributed to directing their teaching approaches to the philosophy of the module. Lecturer participant 12 from Education commented:

*module teaching requires lecturers to meet regularly in the course of their teaching... in the beginning of the system it was difficult when it was time to go to teach one was alone but after we realised that it was like teaching independent courses. There was many repetitions and contradictions in our courses. We decided we had to be together as a team in class to solve these problems. We wanted to harmonise our teaching.*

Although there isn't enough information on processes of how they interacted during class time one might suggest that they felt the need to focus on the integration of their courses; to direct their teaching towards the module as a coherent whole. Moreover, implicit in this approach could be the awareness of *the need to openly and explicitly discuss assumptions and beliefs about classroom processes*. One may consider this as a key difference between this approach and the procedural approach that went through the motions but didn't explicitly engage with differences and integration.

In respect of assessment there are also instances where lecturers openly discussed assessment issues. Lecturers reported they had diverging views on how to assess the module they had taught. For example some wanted the exam to have questions with specific reference to the disciplines that comprised the module while others opposed the idea saying that students should answer questions in one exam. Other discussions were about the types of questions to be asked; some tended to ask questions that reflect knowledge in their disciplines while others wanted them to reflect the whole module. Others had tendency to bring more questions concerning the parts they taught.

Despite these diverging views which in some cases generated conflicts and tensions, lecturers finally reached an agreement. Lecturer 8 from Social Sciences states this negotiation:

*The experience has been that every unit leader [every lecturer on the module] would like to bring more questions... everyone would tend to affirm the relevance, the importance of his or her unit. It's a common attitude to everybody but the good thing is that we should come to an agreement and comply with this agreement. The module belongs to all lecturers and it is our common responsibility to think in terms of students' learning not for us only. (L<sub>8</sub>)*

It would seem that lecturers were conscious that although they had differences and different priorities these could be communally and mutually negotiated for the joint enterprise of contributing positively to students' learning experiences.

An analysis of an exam paper lecturers set in one module uncovered that for each section (there were three sections, each corresponding to a specific discipline) lecturers set short questions that appeared to focus on knowledge in the discipline and then questions that required students to apply concepts from one discipline to another. The lecturers in this module felt this was the effective way of assessing the course they taught together. Although I didn't have enough time to analyse the exam questions and exam format deeply; and that for some disciplines it was difficult for me to analyse because I don't have expertise in them one might infer that lecturers while seemingly they were committed to the module as an integrated course they also still had considerations for their disciplines. However, these considerations were to some extent made explicit

and openly negotiated as described through lecturers' accounts of their assessment experiences.

One may conclude that the key feature of this model is that module team members were willing to explicitly explore conflicts and differences and to negotiate some solutions and compromises. To some extent they were more effective in developing integrated courses than the previous model. The difference with the previous model may be that they felt the need to discuss the relational idea and principle of integration for an effective integration.

Although lecturers' accounts of their module teaching experiences have provided valuable insights on which characterisations of this model were based, it should be noted that the discussion is limited because ultimately my research design did not enable me to actually explore the processes of negotiation that members of this model engaged in.

#### **4.2.2. Conclusion**

In this chapter the research findings were presented and discussed. Firstly I presented and discussed lecturers' understandings of CAMS and the changes it has introduced in their work. Lecturers are aware of the emphasis CAMS lays on learner-centred approach to teaching and learning and its implications for their work. They claimed that CAMS has affected their course designing, teaching and assessment from different perspectives. In the second part of the chapter I discussed how lecturers' perceptions of CAMS and the changes it has introduced in their work were negotiated in their actual teaching practices. Two models of integration emerged: procedural integration and critical collaborative integration. The key difference between the two models is that in the former module team members went through the motions but were not willing to engage with differences and integration while in the latter team members manifested more willingness to explicitly and openly negotiate issues pertaining to their teaching practices.



## **CHAPTER 5. GENERAL CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

The research aimed to investigate lecturers' perceptions of how CAMS has affected lecturers' work. More specifically the aims of this case study were to analyse lecturers' perceptions of CAMS and the changes it has introduced in their work and how they negotiated these changes in their actual teaching practices.

At a very general level lecturers espouse the intended changes and are aware of their implications for their work. However there is tension between the perceived changes and actual changes in practice. While lecturers are aware of changes that were made to their courses and implications for their teaching arrangements the findings suggest that many of them still hang on to their old practices with regard to course designing, teaching and assessment. While on the one hand lecturers claimed that CAMS has required them to reconceptualise knowledge and think in the philosophy of focusing on module outcomes, on learner-centredness the findings suggest that many lecturers still hold onto old contents by trying to defend their subject identities. While at superficial level or on curriculum documents boundaries between disciplines appear to be weakened, at bottom courses appear to be not effectively integrated and not learner-centred as perceived by many lecturers. However, some lecturers' accounts of their module experiences seem to suggest that their courses were integrated. With regard to teaching, while lecturers perceive their role as facilitator of students' learning many of them still hang on to their traditional role of master of knowledge so that in practice teaching is not learner-centred as suggested by a number of lecturers while reflecting on internal dynamics within their modules. One may suggest that lecturers may espouse changes, agree with the official ideas but that doesn't necessarily mean that they will translate them into practice. There are other underlying factors that come into play. The findings revealed various factors: physical (internet and library, big classes), social and essentially epistemological.

The new policy of CAMS required lecturers to function in teams while designing, teaching and assessing. The lecturers espoused this intended change and some

perceived it as beneficial in terms of learning, social relationships, increased accountability between lecturers and to what is to be taught. However in actual practices the perceived team spirit has been a tension with regard to integration of lecturers' courses. Even though lecturers are required to function in teams and are trying to do so, the analysis of their accounts of dynamics within module teams revealed that many of them have not yet worked out how to make more substantive changes to the way they think about the knowledge to be taught, their actual teaching and assessment practices. While in many cases lecturers claimed to have integrated their courses, to have collaborated, consulted each other, the findings suggest that the integration was done at superficial level and lecturers failed or lacked commitment to negotiate the relational idea or principle of integration. They tended to keep boundaries of their subjects strong especially in actual teaching whereby lecturers tried to retain their control over teaching. There were few teams that explicitly tried to work out how to make substantive changes for an effective integration.

This research has shown that module-based teaching and learning requires all agents involved to work in an environment of negotiation of meanings. In module teams lecturers might have different understandings, meanings of what they are doing, might have concerns over the integrity and power of their areas of specialisation and express it explicitly or implicitly. They might also have disagreement and even conflict may arise in practice. All these aspects seem to come into play in the integration of course and teaching.

The way teams handle these aspects of thinking, feeling and perceiving will determine the level or success of integration. The study has shown that not all of the teams actually subordinated their teaching to a central organising principle. Many teams failed to openly and explicitly discuss the integration principle and the result was that their courses were problematic.

Bernstein (1975, p. 107) argues that if educators want to integrate courses "there must be consensus about the integrating idea and it must be explicit" because even when at surface level boundaries between disciplines are blurred

but at bottom there may be underlying ideologies, assumptions and beliefs. This case study has shown that lecturers may meet to integrate courses, may consult each other, may claim to collaborate but if at these meetings, course designing sessions they are not open and explicit to put in the open their beliefs and assumptions; or if some issues are taken for granted or neglected, the consequences will be visible at the level of knowledge and social relationships. Thus, if teams are going to work their members will have to be willing to openly explore and work through differences to achieve a mutually negotiated endeavour. In the framework of this understanding one might suggest that module-based teaching (module teams) can be a basis or opportunity of developing communities of practice around teaching whereby all lecturers would be mutually engaged, in negotiating meanings around their joint enterprise and shared repertoire. As some lecturers suggested, it could also make a basis for action research.

This case study affirms arguments in the literature on integrated curriculum that lecturers perceive and interpret integration as having disturbed their existing identities, power and authority with regard to course designing, teaching and assessment. These perceptions may come into play in actual teaching practices either explicitly or implicitly and they influence processes and dynamics of curriculum implementation. While academic managers and policy makers have often blamed lecturers for simply resisting change and not wanting to show willingness and commitment to the new curriculum of CAMS this case study uncovered some social, philosophical and epistemological issues that underlie lecturers' overt and covert responses to the new curriculum. The only way to uncover these issues is through establishing strategies for an open negotiation of the idea of integration and reflects on the progress of its implementation.

Although the study findings suggest that the Rwandan KIE experience is similar to those of academics in other parts of the world, there are some distinctive points that are worth mentioning. Lecturers in this study reported that quality assurance procedures have affected their course designing, teaching and assessment as did lecturers in other research contexts. However, this issue was

not at the fore front of the KIE lecturers' perceptions of the implications of CAMS for their teaching practices. It could be that, as some lecturer participants suggested, quality assurance procedures were not systematically and rigorously implemented at the institutional level.

Lecturer participants in this study appeared to bemoan the loss of autonomy of their disciplines in the integrated curriculum as did other academics in other research contexts. However, there are some variations. For example in other parts of the world lecturers were critical of the external requirements imposed on their disciplines such as transferable skills and common skills. While these elements were part of the KIE lecturers' understandings and perceptions of CAMS their concerns were more oriented to the issues resulting from the integration of individual courses they considered as independent before the shift from subject-based curriculum to integrated curriculum.

### **Limitations of Research**

The present research used interviews and documentary analysis to analyse and investigate lecturers' experiences of teaching in the framework of CAMS. While acknowledging that the findings have revealed valuable and significant information on lecturers' perceptions of how CAMS has affected lecturers' work, there are some limitations that are worth mentioning.

The methods used did not allow me to access all the information that could have helped to do a deep analysis of lecturers' experiences. Most of the data came from lecturers' accounts of their experiences within their module teams. For example lecturers reported that they discussed aspects on the module description form but in some cases they did not provide enough information of what they discussed even after I asked probe questions; most of the time they could give the result of the discussion. Had I have enough time I would have tried to observe teams in the processes of designing and teaching their courses. This could have shed light on some of the issues and claims that have emerged in the findings but do not have enough evidence. It could also be that there are some

aspects of teaching practices that lecturers did not talk about maybe because they thought they were not significant to them or because they are so taken for granted that they are not seen as salient. This suggestion is premised on the fact that in some instances lecturers tended to talk about what they described and viewed as challenges or problems in their actual practices rather than focusing on all the processes they went through.

Another limitation concerns the analysis of course materials. Although I accessed some course materials I acknowledge that the analysis was not deep enough. This was partly due to the fact that initially I hadn't thought of using them for the purpose of the research. After I realised I had to use them I didn't have enough time to analyse them deeply. Thirdly for some materials I didn't have enough expertise in the disciplines in question.

Another limitation is about the sample I selected. It would have been better if I had selected one or two modules to make a deep analysis. It could have also been better if I had selected one aspect of lecturers' work for example assessment for in-depth analysis.

A deep analysis of module processes may reveal other aspects that did not arise in lecturers' accounts of their practices. A deep study of one module could be important in this particular regard. For instance the researcher could access lecturers' meeting sessions when they design their modules and their meeting sessions when they are setting assessment tasks for the module. The researcher could also access other meetings lecturers hold to reflect on the progress of their teaching. The researcher could also attend lecturers' teaching sessions. This approach might provide more insights into the module internal processes and dynamics. Moreover, a deep analysis of course materials could provide valuable findings about how lecturers' understanding of CAMS influences their actual practices. For example the researcher could compare course materials in the previous system with completed module description form, with lecturers' CATs tasks and final exam questions and format. This investigation could reveal how the new policy has affected lecturers' work to some extent.

The findings of this research study have revealed some crucial issues with regard to students' learning experiences. For example some lecturers acknowledged that their tendency to work individually and to defend the boundaries of their disciplines had negative effects on students' learning and performances. These claims could be investigated for instance by investigating students' perceptions of how CAMS has affected students' learning. The researcher could look at different aspects of learning: students' experiences of self-study; students' experiences of assessment in the context of CAMS, students' experiences of understanding concepts in a module course.

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## **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix one: request for permission to conduct research study**

University of the WITWATERSRAND  
Faculty of Humanities  
School of Education  
E-mail: [ndagiclaude@yahoo.fr](mailto:ndagiclaude@yahoo.fr)  
Tel: 00 277 10 74 48 64 or 00 250 788 57 24 61

Date: 09<sup>th</sup> October 2009

Rector, Kigali Institute of Education  
P.O.BOX. 5039 Kigali-Rwanda

Dear Sir,

### **Re: Request for permission to conduct research at KIE**

My name is Jean Claude NDAGIJIMANA. I am a student at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. I am writing to request permission to conduct research at Kigali Institute of Education. The research is in partial fulfilment of requirements for the completion of the degree of Masters of Education for which I am registered for the academic year 2009. The title of my research is *Credit accumulation and modular scheme in higher education in Rwanda: A case study of the redefinition of the role of the university lecturer*. More specifically, I aim to analyse how the new curriculum of credit accumulation and modular scheme has affected lecturers' work particularly their teaching and how they have responded to it.

The subjects who will participate in my research are both academic staff and line managers. To gather research data I intend to use the following research instruments: interviews with a sample of lecturers and senior managers, and document analysis (policy documents, minutes of meetings, module evaluation reports).

I wish to affirm that all the information I gather from the participants and from documents available at Kigali Institute of Education will be used for my research purposes only and that confidentiality of all participants' contributions will be guaranteed.

I am looking forward to receiving the best of your considerations.

Jean Claude NDAGIJIMANA

## Appendix two: Consent letter from Kigali Institute of Education



*Kigali Institute of Education*

P.O. Box : 5039 Kigali – Rwanda

Tel: (250) (0)255100591/(0)252586823 (reception)

Fax: (250) (0)252586890/(250)(0)252586885

E-mail: [admin@kie.ac.rw](mailto:admin@kie.ac.rw)

22<sup>nd</sup> October 2009

Mr. Jean Claude Ndagijimana  
University of the Witwatersrand  
School of Education  
**South Africa**


Dear Mr. Ndagijimana,

RE: **Permission to conduct research at KIE**

Your e-mail dated 9<sup>th</sup> October 2009 refers.

Reference is made to your request for permission to carry out your research at Kigali Institute of Education. I am pleased to let you know that you have my permission to carry out your research here at KIE. However, participation of the mentioned members of staff in your research will be subject to an understanding between you and the participants.

Yours sincerely,

  
Prof. George K. NJORGE (PhD)  
Rector

**CC.**

- Vice Rector Academic
- Vice Rector Administration and Finance
- Faculty of Education

### **Appendix three: Self information sheet, letter to lecturers**

Dear lecturer,

My name is Jean Claude NDAGIJIMANA, and I am a student at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. For the completion of the degree of Masters of Education for which I am registered for the academic year 2009, I am conducting a research. My research is about Credit accumulation and modular scheme in higher education in Rwanda, a case study of the redefinition of the role of the university lecturer. More specifically, I aim to analyse how the new curriculum of credit accumulation and modular scheme has affected lecturers' work mainly teaching and how they have responded to it. In my research I will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. How has credit accumulation and modular scheme affected lecturers' work mainly teaching?
  - c) How do lecturers understand official policies with regard to Credit Accumulation and Modular Scheme?
  - d) How do they share and negotiate academic practices within that new curriculum?

To achieve this, I would like to have interviews with some lecturers in Kigali Institute of Education. Participation is voluntary and no person will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not participate in the study. I would like to have a forty-five- minute interview with you. Your responses will be kept confidential, and no information that could identify you will be included in the research report. The interview materials (tapes and transcripts) will not be seen or heard by any person other than myself and my research supervisor. In the interview, you may refuse to answer any questions you would prefer not to, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point. Please complete the enclosed consent form if you are willing to assist me with this research:

- by participating in an individual interview with me at a time that is convenient to you;
- by allowing the interview to be tape-recorded for later transcription and use in research report with total anonymity;

Your participation in this study would be highly appreciated. It is anticipated that this research will provide evidence on the implementation of the new curriculum of credit accumulation and modular scheme and will serve as a tool for lecturers to reflect on their academic practices and for all actors in the policy implementation to have more insights in the implementation process.

Yours sincerely  
NDAGIJIMANA Jean Claude

## **Appendix four: Self Information Sheet, letter to line managers**

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Jean Claude NDAGIJIMANA. I am a student at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. For the completion of the degree of Masters of Education for which I am registered for the academic year 2009, I am conducting research on curriculum transformation. My research focuses on *Credit accumulation and modular scheme* in higher education in Rwanda. The research is a case study of the redefinition of the role of the university lecturer. More specifically, I aim to analyse how the new curriculum of credit accumulation and modular scheme has affected lecturers' work particularly teaching and how they have responded to it. In my research I will attempt to answer the following question:

How has credit accumulation and modular scheme affected lecturers' work particularly their teaching?

To answer this, I would like to interview some line managers in Kigali Institute of Education. The interviews are in the broader framework of the research. Participation is voluntary and no person will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not participate in the study. I would like to have a forty-five- minute interview with you.

Your responses will be kept confidential, and no information that could identify you will be included in the research report. The interview materials (tapes and transcripts) will not be seen or heard by any person other than myself and my research supervisor.

In the interview, you may refuse to answer any questions you would prefer not to, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point.

Please complete the enclosed consent form if you are willing to assist me with this research:

- by participating in an individual interview with me at a time that is convenient to you;
- by allowing the interview to be tape-recorded for later transcription and use in research report with total anonymity;

Your participation in this study would be highly appreciated. It is anticipated that this research will provide a deep understanding of the implementation of modularization and curriculum transformation both at Kigali Institute of Education and in the context of the reforms nationally and globally.

Yours sincerely,  
Jean Claude NDAGIJIMANA

## **Appendix five: Interview consent form**

I hereby agree to participate in an individual interview with Jean Claude NDAGIJIMANA. I understand that:

- He will be inquiring about how credit accumulation and modular scheme has affected the lecturers' work mainly teaching.
- Participation in this interview is voluntary.
- I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to.
- I may withdraw from the study any time.
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Tape recording consent form**

I \_\_\_\_\_ consent to my interview with Jean Claude NDAGIJIMANA for his research *Credit accumulation and modular scheme in higher education in Rwanda: A case study of the redefinition of the role of the university lecturer* being recorded. I understand that:

- The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person other than his supervisor at any time, and will only be processed by the researcher.
- All tape recordings will be destroyed after the research is complete.
- No information identifying me will be used in the transcripts or the research report.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix six: Ethics clearance

### Wits School of Education

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 • Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa  
Tel: +27 11 717-3007 • Fax: +27 11 717-3009 • E-mail: [enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za](mailto:enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za) • Website: [www.wits.ac.za](http://www.wits.ac.za)



STUDENT NUMBER: 416590  
Protocol: 2009ECE141

29 October 2009

Mr Jean- Claude Ndagijimana  
P O Box 5039  
KIGALI

Dear Mr. Ndagijimana

#### Application for Ethics Clearance: Master of Education

I have pleasure of advising you that the Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate has agreed to approve your application for ethics clearance submitted for your proposal entitled:

**Credit accumulation and modular scheme in higher education in Rwanda: A case study of the redefinition of the role of the university lecturer.**

#### Recommendation:

Ethics clearance is granted

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Matsie".

Matsie Mabeta  
Wits School of Education

Cc: Supervisor: Ms L Slonimky (via email)

## **Appendix seven: Interview guide questions (for lecturers)**

1. What is your understanding of the new policy of the *Credit accumulation and modular scheme*? (Probe: Shift from courses to credit units)
2. What differences have you noticed since the introduction of the new policy?
3. What if any changes has it brought about in your teaching arrangements and your teaching?
4. How has it affected your work?
5. How did you design your module courses?
6. How did you teach your courses?
7. How did you assess your courses?
8. What were your main experiences/ Challenges/Problems?
9. Are there any experiences that stand out for you in relation to the introduction of the new policy?
10. Do you have any other comments or issues you would like to raise?

## **Appendix eight: Elite interview guide questions (for line managers)**

1. What is the background to the policy of credit accumulation and modular scheme?
2. What are the main strategies you use to implement the new policy?
3. How have academic staff responded to the new policy?