https://dspace.org/

A study of the distance teacher education programme (DTEP) offered by the Lesotho College of Education in Maseru Lesotho.

Chaka, Claurinah Malemohang

2012-03-13
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/11422

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

A STUDY OF THE DISTANCE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME (DTEP) OFFERED BY THE LESOTHO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION IN MASERU LESOTHO

Ms. Claurinah Malemohang Chaka
Student no: 334891
Supervisor: Dr Francine De Clercq

A research report submitted to the Wits School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment for the Master of Education
October 2011

ABSTRACT

The study set out to assess the quality of the DTEP offered by the LCE by examining its strengths and limitations regarding student teachers' home and academic background, mode of delivery, entry requirements, course materials, content and pedagogic approach. This was done through analysis of some course documents and materials, interviewing course designers, tutors as well as final year student teachers. DTEP appears to be doing well in some areas and not so well in others. To start with, the programme came as the main answer to qualifying the teachers that were employed as un/under qualified at the pressing demands of UPE and FPE in the early 2000s. DTEP goes beyond teaching primary school content and methodology, onto teaching content aimed at opening doors for further study and thus other careers for its clientele. But there's still dire need to convince student teachers that this is good practice and for their benefit and not an unnecessary burden, as they perceive it to be. DTEP also appears to be succeeding in not just changing the negative attitudes and/or perceptions that most of its clientele tend to have at entry point, but also in them actually changing from wrong practices as well.

However, the programme is characterized with some serious administrative challenges such as lack of transport which results in late delivery of study materials and irregular school visits. Also the DTEP entry qualifications are very low and yet there's no form of bridging course put in place to compensate for this. It as well seems that, though they are the only means of course communication, the DTEP course materials tend to be well written, interactive and thus of a good quality. The revisions of such materials, started late 2009, was completed early 2010. DTEP tutors as well stress to their students the importance of learner centred methods of teaching even though they are not able to demonstrate their use to them most of the time.

DECLARATION

I hereby make my declaration that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment for the Master of education Degree at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. The report has never before been submitted for any degree at any university.

Malemohang Chaka
October 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people whose love, guidance and/or support made a great contribution to my completing this research report:

1. My Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for the power of His Holy Spirit that lives in me, the ever present helper who always guides and strengthens me
2. My supervisor, Dr Francine De Clercq, for her guidance and mentorship
3. The Lesotho college of education; The LCE Director and The DTEP Director for granting me permission to study their DTEP
4. All the tutors and/or course designers and the student teachers who participated in the study
5. My two baby sisters, Konosoang and Nyefolo Letlala, for looking after my sons back home in Lesotho while I was studying
6. And last, but by no means least, my two beautiful boys; Lemohang and Tumelo whose love, trust and dependence on me kept me going and made me determined to succeed against all odds.

DEDICATION

With all the love in my heart I dedicate my work to the memory of my late parents; my dad Michael and mum Mamatobo Letlala/Leutsoa. Daddy used to say when I was young that I will one day go to Wits University; I did it in his honour and memory; two degrees from his dream university for his little girl.

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1-51 (DTEP staff profiles)

Table 2-52 (Student teachers profiles)

ACRONYMS

ACE-Advanced Certificate in Education

ADEA-Association for the Development of Education in Africa

ASEI- Activity, Student, Experiment and Improvisation

CEMASTEA- Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa

C.O.S.C -Cambridge Overseas School-Leaving Certificate

DPE-Diploma in Primary Education

DTE-Diploma in Technical Education

DTEP-Distance Teacher Education Programme

EFA- Education for All

FPE- Free Primary Education

GCE-General Certificate Education

INSET-In-service Training

LCE-Lesotho College of Education

MOET-Ministry of Education and Training

MUSTER -Multi-Site Teacher Education Research

NADEOSA– National Association of Distance Education Organizations in South Africa

NTTC-National Teacher Training College

PDSI- Plan, Do, See and Improve

PTC-Primary Teaching Certificate

SAIDE-South African Institute for Distance Education

STC-Secondary School Teaching

UPE-Universal Primary Education

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....2
Declaration.....3
Acknowledgements.....4
Dedication.....5
List of Tables.....6
Acronyms.....7
Table of Content.....8

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....11
1.1. Background Information.....11
1.2. Statement of the Problem.....13
1.3. Aims and Research Questions.....14
1.4. Rationale.....15

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....17

2.1. Introduction.....17

2.2. Quality In-service Teacher Education and Distance Education.....18

2.3. Home Background.....20
2.4. Teachers' Perceptions 21
2.5. Teacher Identity 21
2.6. Course Duration and Entry Qualifications 22
2.7. Quality of Inset Programmes 25
2.8. Quality of course materials 27
2.9. Inset Pedagogic Approach 29
2.10 Teacher Practice Change Models 31
2.1. Conceptual Framework 34

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....37
3.1. Research Design.....37
3.2. Site Selection and Participants.....39
3.3 Data Gathering Tools.....41
3.4. Document Analysis.....41
3.5. Interviews.....42
3.6 Reliability and Validity.....45
3.7 Data Analysis.....46
3.8 Ethics.....47

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION.....49
4.1. Introduction.....49
4.2 Profiles of the DTEP Staff and Student Teachers Sample.....50
4.3. Reasons for Becoming Teachers.....53
4.4. Quality of Admitted Students.....55
4.5. DTEP's Origin and Aim.....59
4.6. The DTEP Course Development, Mode of Delivery and Pedagogy.....61
4.7 The DTEP Content and Outcomes.....65
4.8. The DTEP Pedagogical Approach.....69
4.9 Teacher Pedagogical Change Models.....73
4.10 Quality of DTEP and its Tutors.....75
4.11. DTEP Course Materials Design and Delivery.....78
4.12 Programme Improvements and Suggestions.....81
4.13. Conclusion.....83

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION.....84
5.1. Introduction.....84
5.2 DTEP's Origin and Aim.....84
5.3. DTEP Student Teachers' Background.....85
5.4 Reasons for Becoming Teachers and Choosing a Distance Education Programme.....85

5.5. Course Duration and Mode of Delivery.....86
5.6. DTEP's Entry Requirements 87
5.7. DTEP's Course Content 88
5.8. DTEP Course Administration Challenges 88
5.9. Course Materials Design and Quality..... 89
5.10. Change of Pedagogic Approach.....90
5.11. Student Teachers' Attitude Changes 91
5.12. Revision and Programme Improvements 91
5.13. Conclusion ……..92

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 93
6.1. Introduction 93
6.2. Academic and socio-economic background of DTEP trainees 93
6.3 Quality of the DTEP philosophy, content, pedagogical methods, learning materials.....94
6.4 Engagement of DTEP with different students' attitudes, background and identities.....94
6.5 Student teachers' perceptions of the relevance of DTEP's course content, delivery and pedagogy.....95
6.6. Recommendations for Further Research 95

REFERENCES 97
APPENDICES……101
1. Letter to the Lesotho College of Education Director……101
2. Letter to school principals 103
3. Information Document 104
4. Informed Consent Form 105
5. Interview Schedule for Student Teachers 106
6. Interview Schedule for DTEP Staff 108
7. Additional Interviews for student Teachers 110
8. Additional Interviews for DTEP Staff 111

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background Information

Since the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in 1990, most developing countries have committed themselves to universal primary schooling. Lewin (2002) explains that as a result, primary school enrolments have increased rapidly in many developing countries. He says that this rapid increase of enrolments in turn led to a rapid increase of demand for teachers.

Lesotho is not an exception in this regard. Since the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in the year 2000, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has had to employ more and more unqualified teachers, and thus faced a more serious call for the provision of in-service training. This explains why in-service education has become a major priority to supplement pre-service education.

The former National Teachers Training College (NTTC), now Lesotho College of Education (LCE), was and is still the only teacher training college in the country. It was established in 1975 by the Lesotho Government to replace the teacher training colleges which were run by the Lesotho Evangelical, Roman Catholic and the Anglican Church. This decision was taken in response to a need for a centralised teacher training institution for both pre and in-service teachers. The NTTC, which was renamed the Lesotho College of Education in 2002, when the college officially gained autonomy from government control, offers four full-time pre-service programmes for teacher training, each of which is of three years duration: the Primary Teacher Certificate (PTC), the Secondary Teacher's Certificate (STC), the Diploma in Primary Education (DPE) and the Diploma in Technology Education (DTE).

The rather limited capacity of the existing teachers' college in Lesotho was challenged by many factors, given its limited annual admission and the many unqualified primary schools teachers who could not study full-time. The distance education mode of teacher training was therefore adopted as an alternative strategy to reach already serving teachers who needed more training

and qualifications. It was also believed that such a delivery mode would enhance the accessibility to teacher education of some marginalised groups less expensively. (NTTC: 2001).

Thus, in addition to these pre-service programmes, the Lesotho College of Education provides a number of in-service programmes for both qualified and unqualified teachers working in Lesotho schools. But what counts as in-service teacher training? Tatto (1997) points out that the term in-service education has different meanings across countries. On the one hand, in the more industrialised countries, it is used to refer to the process of updating the knowledge of teachers who have at some point received pre-service teacher training. On the other hand, according to Tatto (1997), in-service teacher training in the less industrialised countries is for many primary school teachers the first formal training that they get. In Lesotho's context, in-service teacher training refers to both of Tatto's definitions.

Thus, people who only have the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (C.O.S.C) and minimum two years' teaching experience are sent for additional training to the LCE. In 2002, the college decided to introduce the Distance Teacher Education Programme (DTEP), a form of in-service training aimed especially at producing a quality and quantity supply of needed primary school teachers, who were either under-qualified or unqualified because they did not get the traditional pre-service training. Teachers who have a Primary Teaching Certificate qualification and minimum two years teaching experience are also admitted into this programme at the second year of the programme as their entry point, to get further training and obtain a diploma qualification. The distance education mode of delivery was also chosen because of the demand for teachers to start working immediately now that there was free education which suddenly increased the demand for primary teachers in Lesotho (NTTC, 2001).

Today, many developing countries rely on distance teacher education as a cost effective form of in-service teacher training. According to Robinson and Latchem (2003: 28), distance education has been defined as: "An educational process in which teachers and learners are separated in space and\or time for some or all of the time of study." They go further to show that most distance education programmes include some face–to-face contacts, which are offered either at local centres and/or residential schools and that, the balance of time between the face-to-face

contact and self study in these programmes vary widely across different countries and their specific contexts.

It is important also to understand distance education not as a mode of delivery with just one identity, but also as various methods put to use in various combinations so as to support the achievement of specified educational outcomes. According to the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) (2003 in Glennie and Mays, 2009), "Distance Education needs to be conceived as a sophisticated collection of methods for the provision of structured learning in institutions, increasingly the norm, where students are unable primarily to attend fixed classes at a centralised venue and in the physical presence of a teacher" (Glennie and Mays, 2009, 1).

The DTEP programme is a part-time four-year diploma programme that uses a bi-modal learning system with occasional face-to-face residential sessions, lasting about three weeks every year. To facilitate access to this programme and to ensure relevant and appropriate texts, the LCE provides course materials which are specifically designed by local staff members. These materials take into account the socio-cultural needs of learners, so as to cover all the courses that in-service trainees are expected to take and complete (NTTC, 2001). The DTEP's objective is also to produce graduants who engage with curriculum change in an informed manner.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In the period 2000-2002, a number of studies were undertaken on teacher education in Lesotho as part of a Multi-Site Teacher Education Research (MUSTER), with interesting recommendations about how to improve teacher education programmes. Some of the findings pointed to the importance of the quality of in-service teacher education which, it was argued, depended on two main set of factors: the quality of the student intake and the quality of the programme in addressing their needs. (Lefoka and Sebatane; 2002)

The concern about the quality of the people who apply for in-service teacher education emanates from their relatively poor previous academic achievements and socio-economic background. According to Akyeampong and Stephens (2000, in Akyeampong 2002): "the input characteristics and qualities of typically beginning student teachers are important indicators of the quality of

trained teachers at the point of exit...” (p9). Coultus and Lewin (2002) follow this argument by pointing out that new entrants bring with them into the teaching profession a level of cultural capital which is, among other things, broadly influenced by their home background and the educational attainments of themselves and their parents.

Another concern is these teachers’ attitudes and/or perceptions with regard to their identity as in-service trained teachers. Beijarard et al (2000) argue that: “Teachers’ perceptions of their own professional identity affect their efficacy and professional development, as well as their willingness to cope with educational change and implement innovations in their own teaching practice.” The researcher is mainly concerned with the fact that people who get into the profession with such low school academic achievements, are highly likely to have low self esteem and negative attitudes as far as being a teacher is concerned.

The LCE’s academic entry requirements for this programme tend to be very low, compared to those for the full-time pre-service training as well as to those for other types of training elsewhere. For instance, the minimum direct entry requirements into this programme is GCE **(**General Certificate Education**)** with five minimum passes (40-50%), including English Language and two years teaching experience. While for the pre-service programme the minimum requirement is C.O.S.C with four credit passes (65% and above), including English Language. So, one could argue that the majority of people in the DTEP programme could have enrolled for it just because their poor C.O.S.C results did not allow them entry into any other form of training.

Above these concerns about the quality of DTEP’s clientele, there is also the imperative of offering a programme of high and relevant quality to the students. More specifically, it is important to examine whether the distance education mode of delivery provides these students with enough or appropriate support in the form of learning materials as well as face-to-face support by the programme’s tutors and other officials.

1.3. Aims and Research Questions

The study aimed to explore the potential and limitations of the Lesotho Distance Teacher Education Programme (DTEP) for primary school teachers in achieving its intentions. More specifically, it looked at the socio-economic and academic background of the primary school teachers who enrol for the DTEP as well as their attitudes and motivation towards the upgrading of their qualifications. It then examined the quality of the DTEP by focusing on three aspects:

1) The DTEP's philosophy, form, mode of delivery, curriculum content, method of instruction
2) The way in which the programme and its course design addresses the attitudes, beliefs and/or conceptions developed and acquired by student teachers about teaching and being a teacher
3) Student teachers' perceptions about the quality and relevance of the course.

The following research questions were formulated;

1. What is the academic and socio-economic background of DTEP trainees?
2. What is the quality of the DTEP philosophy, content, pedagogical methods, and learning materials?
3. How does the programme engage with different students' attitudes, background and identities?
4. What are student teachers' perceptions of the DTEP and the relevance of its course content, delivery and pedagogy?

1.4. Rationale

The researcher's interest in conducting this study came from the fact that the DTEP has not yet been assessed since its introduction in 2002. Also, there were a number of studies on teacher education (MUSTER, 2002) completed in 2002 in Lesotho, with interesting recommendations about how to improve teacher education programmes. The DTEP was introduced in 2002 and it will therefore be interesting to find out whether this programme has learnt from these studies.

In addition, there is a need to understand this programme because of its importance in assisting with the upgrading of under-qualified or unqualified teachers in primary schools, an issue which will remain high on the Lesotho education agenda because of the massive increase in primary

school enrolment since Free Primary Education was proclaimed in 2000. Such an important and much needed programme is therefore important to study to find out how it could be improved and have a better impact on the trainees. In the process the study hopes also to find out if there are other areas in need of further research in such in-service programmes in Lesotho.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The review firstly discusses quality in-service teacher education and why distance and/or in-service teacher education has become a necessity in certain countries' teacher education systems, as well as the conditions for effective distance education. Secondly, the review presents the debate about the importance of understanding the biographical characteristics of in-service trainees, such as their age, religious affiliation, home background as well as the educational qualifications with which they were admitted into college. Thirdly, the review discusses the entrance requirements, the duration as well as the mode of delivery of successful In-service Training (INSET) programmes. Fourthly, the discussion deals with the issue of quality of inset programmes in terms of content knowledge, curriculum and competences or learning outcomes of inset programmes, as well as how the latter engage with the attitudes and values of the INSET trainees. From there the quality of inset course materials is also taken into consideration, and lastly, the review examines the different pedagogical approaches that are dominant in many schooling systems today, why there is a need to change and why it is difficult to carry out the desired pedagogical change.

To start with, it seems there are some challenges facing the provision of Universal Primary Education (UPE). Lewin (2002) shows that, with most developing countries being committed to providing Universal Primary Education, primary school enrolments have rapidly increased in many developing countries with low participation rates, thereby creating a rapid increase in demand for teachers. And Murphy and Zhiri (1992) point out that although almost every country in Southern Africa emphasizes the need for UPE, one of the impediments that militate against it is the lack of trained teachers and too much experimentation that it comes with.

Many issues related to teacher education have become a controversial issue in these countries. The answer to how much formal teacher preparation is needed and how it should be delivered depends on several factors such as, the level of financial resources, the demand for teachers to be trained, how to train them, who chooses to be teachers as well as the level of attraction of the teaching profession itself. In future, there is going to be a need for more teachers to be recruited

if EFA is to be achieved in the developing world. For instance, in Sub-Saharan Africa alone there will be need for another 1.6 million teachers in the classroom by 2015. These teachers will as well need to be provided with professional development opportunities. (Schwille et al: 2007).

Robinson & Latchem (2003), in Glennie and Mays (2009), share a similar idea when they say that distance education is largely and increasingly used for teacher development all over the world. Also, "in Africa in particular in pursuit of EFA goals and a global shortage of teachers in general and primary level teachers in particular." (ADEA 2002, Mattson 2004, and Sayed 2006; in Glennie and Mays, 2009)

2.2. Quality In-service Teacher Education and Distance Education

Teacher education programmes should not just be about improving the quantity of teachers but about improving their quality as well, this dual purpose can present some contradictions. For instance, Akyeampong (2002) indicates that the concern about teacher quality in many parts of Africa, and the role played by teacher education, is becoming an important subject in developing education in the continent. He says that this has become more so since the implementation of Education for All (EFA) initiatives in 1990 and the decline in student achievements that followed those initiatives.

Robinson and Latchem (2003) point out that the challenge of training, retraining as well as upgrading the skills and the knowledge of teachers is both enormous and urgent, more especially in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. They argue that, apart from relying on traditional ways of providing this training, there is a need for governments and other interested parties to explore other forms of teacher education and training. One option they suggest is the use of distance teacher education to ensure that teacher education is delivered more efficiently and effectively. Lefoka et al (2000: 21) show that, over the years the Lesotho Government has worked hard towards solving the situation of too many untrained teachers serving in the primary schools, this they do by training teachers through "short courses, vacation courses, on the job training, seminar workshops and self-instructional materials."

There are several reasons why in-service teacher education tends to be preferred as against its pre-service counterpart. For instance, Brock (1996) indicates that scepticism about the relevance and effectiveness of initial teacher training has led to the general agreement that, in-service teacher education is the most effective way of ensuring that teachers adapt to the changing demands of UPE. In-service teacher education is also regarded as less expensive than pre-service teacher training. Schwille et al (2007) point out that, generally speaking, distance teacher education has been designed as an in-service or professional development strategy for practising teachers with some years of experience. They say that it needs to be evaluated in terms of the following; its advantages, disadvantages, its benefits and costs as far as beginning teachers are concerned. Perraton and Potashnik (1997, cited in Schwille et al, 2007:52) state that: "Distance education can be cost effective, enrolling and teaching students or producing graduates at a lower cost than that of conventional education..."

Schwille et al (2007) further point out that critics of formal pre-service teacher preparation accuse it of being both ineffective and highly expensive. They say that the funds used on this form of teacher training could be better spent by strengthening in-service training programmes. They also assert that, whether these critics are right about the effectiveness of initial teacher education, it is definitively more costly just like any other fulltime residential programme, educational or otherwise. For example, Lewin and Stuart (2003 in Schwille et al, 2007:49) found out that: "Up to 75 per cent of the direct costs of teachers' colleges lie in the expenditure on student teachers' stipends in the countries covered by the Multi-Site Teacher Education Research MUSTER project."

There are some challenges to distance education due to the long distance nature of the programme, which makes it difficult to keep students motivated as they are lonely due to the limited peer and student-teacher interaction and to the quality of the course materials. When he talks about some such problems, Monk (1999: 14) shows that: "generally, distance education is marred by slow administration, poor turn-around in marking assignments and still relatively high costs…; distance education is a solution with its own problems." He also notes that it lacks school supervision and that its students are lonely for they are only linked to their tutors through textual resources. However, Monk (1999) shows that distance education has many advantages

for developing teachers' knowledge and that it can be used to develop and affect their beliefs and values. What is more difficult, he says, is to support change in teachers' skills through distance learning although the use of new curriculum materials is also a possible strategy to help in the development of new pedagogic skills.

2.3. Home Background

Student teachers' home background is another important factor that needs to be looked into. That is because, as Coultus and Lewin (2002: 247) point out: "The cultural capital that new entrants to teaching bring with them to the teaching profession is broadly influenced by their home background and the educational attainment of parents." According to Akyeampong (2002), the literature suggests that teachers' conception of themselves, their roles and identities, are shaped by their own biographical experiences, such as their home environment, which play a crucial role in their teacher education. Thus, Berry et al (2007) suggest that teacher educators have to be aware of the diverse backgrounds and experiences of their students, aim and work towards supporting them in the process of reconsidering and reconstructing their views of teaching, in order for them to form new visions and understandings of learners and learning.

Student teachers' parents' occupations and education levels may provide insight into their socio-economic background, and are likely to influence those students on both their personal and professional aspirations. (Akyeampong and Stephens, 2002). In Lesotho, according to the study conducted by Lewin and Stuart in 2002, only about 3% of the fathers of the Basotho student teachers had a degree level qualification. About 17% had fathers with a Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) or a Junior Certificate, a quarter had a primary leaving certificate and under a quarter had no qualifications. More of the mothers than fathers were qualified above secondary school level, although none of the mothers had a university degree. Over a third of the mothers had a primary leaving certificate, and 17% had no qualifications. (Lewin and Stuart, 2003). In Lesotho mothers are in general better educated, and many are teachers, reflecting patterns of male employment and migration associated with the mining industry, and half the parents have no more than primary education in this country.

2.4. Teachers' Perceptions

Many studies have explained the importance of teachers' perceptions regarding their teaching career. The term, 'teachers' perceptions', refers to, "... ways in which teachers [think] about their work, e.g. purposes, goals, conceptions of children, curriculum) and the ways in which they [give] meaning to these beliefs by their behaviour in class." (Tabachnik and Zeichner, 1994 in Tabulawa, 1998: 251). Lewin and Stuart (2003) go on to show that many trainees enter college with ambivalent attitudes towards the profession and that as a result, they tend to be confused about some of the key pedagogic concepts. They thus suggest that teacher educators need to be aware of such views and inconsistencies so that they can constructively address them when teaching.

This is also advocated for by Nemser (2001 in Berry et al, 2007) who state that these entering beliefs will continue to shape prospective students' ideas and practices, unless teacher education engages them in a critical examination of these beliefs with compelling alternatives, and help them develop powerful images of good teaching and strong professional commitments.

2.5. Teacher Identity

Teacher identity is considered to be of great importance in many research studies in terms of how student-teachers view themselves as teachers. Fitzgerald (1993 in Cochran-Smith et al, 2008: 734) defines identity as, "the academic metaphor for self in context, contexts inevitably shape our notions of who we perceive ourselves to be and how others perceive us." Ball and Goodson (1985) also point out that the ways in which teachers achieve, maintain and develop their identity, their sense of self throughout their careers, play a significant role in understanding their actions and their level of commitment in their work. This is echoed by Beijarard et al (1999) who argue that teachers' perception of their own professional identity affects their efficiency, their professional development as well as their ability and willingness to cope with educational change and to put into practice innovations in their own teaching practice. Thus, a healthy teaching profession requires continuing efforts to maintain a more broadly defined sense of a common professional identity, since different students tend to make different sense of their experiences in the program because they bring different levels of experiences and subjectivity to the teacher education programme. (Freeman-Moir et al 2007)

For instance, according to Samuel and Stephens (2000), in South Africa for example, student teachers bring to the course their heritage of experiences of primary and secondary schooling under the apartheid era of mono-racial schooling. Thus they say that policy makers involved in design and implementation of teacher education programmes, need to learn much more about the 'identity baggage' that those student teachers bring with them into the professional arena. They go on to say that during their training, the transition from personal self to professional identity calls for a much closer understanding of the matrix of complex, contradictory and complementary agendas that influence the making of a teacher because, "What they carry with them into the classroom determines the educational experience of future generations"(Samuels and Stephens. 2000: 491)

2.6. Course Duration and Entry Qualifications

The review looks now into what the literature says about the duration and entry requirements for in-service education programmes. Schwille et al (2007) state that the drive toward Universal Primary Education (UPE) has led many developing countries into reducing the duration of their inset teacher preparation programmes, in some cases to a few months and/or even weeks. Many writers have also expressed their views about this seemingly short time allocated to in-service teacher education programmes. For example Dembele (2003, in ADEA, 1999) has quoted Verspoor (2001: 39) stating: "In-service training cannot continue to be an event that teachers participate in for a few days every 5-10 years."

The basic dilemma, according to Schwille et al (2007) is that long teacher education programmes can be extremely expensive on the one hand, while on the other hand, shorter ones have difficulties in achieving anything worthwhile. Thus, Freeman-Moir et al (2007, in Lewin and Stuart, 2003) argue that balancing the time and money spent on teacher preparation and continuing professional development is a critical policy question. However, Schwille et al (2007: 69) believe that short in-service teacher preparation, beyond having effective course materials, can still be effective depending on the strengths and weaknesses of the people entering formal teacher preparation as well as the quality and intensity of the induction programme which

follows." But Lefoka and Sebatane (2002) point out that, in Lesotho, there are no structured induction programmes for newly qualified teachers.

On the people who enter the inset programmes, Schwille et al (2007) argue that the pool of prospective teachers from which teacher education institutions are able to draw is often far from optimal, especially in developing countries. They argue that this is due to the status of teachers which is said to be declining throughout the world and more especially in low income countries, where the difficulties facing teachers (such as low salaries and poor working conditions) are often much worse than they are in higher income countries. Schwille et al (2007) also state that there are other factors influencing entry into teaching, such as the poor working conditions, compensation offered to teacher education students and practising teachers, in comparison with those of other occupations. Thus they suggest that those responsible for planning programmes of teacher education need to be well informed about the background and attitudes of potential entrants, their motivation to enter the teaching field and the knowledge and attitudes they have acquired from their prior experience.

The design of a distance teacher education programme so that it is of good quality is of great importance. According to Welch and Reed (2005), in the NADEOSA quality criterion, the distance education courses are designed with national needs taken in mind. The needs of prospective learners and employers are as well taken into consideration. The course elements together with the relationships between them are consciously planned.

Welch and Reed (2005: 26) state that;

> "For each course, there is a publicly accessible and learner-friendly description of the aims and learning outcomes; entry-level skills, knowledge and experience; credit rating and/or notional hours of learning; target learners; teaching and learning strategies; content outline; items in the learning package (including elements such as study guides, textbooks, tutorial letters, audiotapes and videotapes); assessment strategy; and a year plan containing key dates for learners."

Welch and Reed (2005) show that, in order to ensure quality of the course, relevant competence of authors, consultants and others are necessary requirements in the course design process. Such authors, consultants and others involved in the course design and development process, are provided with the necessary guidance and training by educational providers on all different aspects of distance education to ensure quality. There is also a timetable followed for the sole purpose of regular revision and updating of courses and course materials.

There is also a problem with the academic and professional background of the students. According to Kunje (2002), that is due to the fact that many student teachers are likely to have been five years out of school and had probably not studied any particular subject during that time, thus giving them a weak academic background. He thus suggests therefore that there is need for a more consistent approach to ensure that teachers would have a good understanding of their subjects and how to teach. UNESCO (2004 in Schwille et al, 2007: 37) also point out that available data suggests that: "Large proportions of primary-school teachers lack academic qualifications, training and content knowledge, especially in developing countries. This suggests that much pre-service training may be ineffective." They show that most of the research conducted in developing countries suggests that the qualifications of teachers have little impact on their students' achievement, suggesting that teacher training, as it is organised in many developing countries, is not very effective. They state also that, in most cases, it was found that students learnt as much when taught by teachers without formal preparation as when taught by teachers with formal preparation. (Schwille et al, 2007: 37)

On the entry qualifications in South Africa, the NADEOSA criteria, according to Welch and Reed (2005), stipulate that, to facilitate access, entry requirements for in-service programmes are as open as possible, and include recognition of the entrants' prior learning and experience. But the advice is that where entry is open, care needs to be taken to provide sufficient academic support to learners who may be under-prepared. This may be by the provision of access or bridging courses, additional units within existing courses, or increased face-to-face support, how teachers are trained, educated and who trains them matters.

The admission requirements of student teachers into teacher training in Lesotho are very low. Lewin and Stuart (2003), in their study of Lesotho and other three developing countries, say that most trainee teachers have achieved relatively low results at the end of their secondary school career, which leaves them under qualified for higher education. Lefoka and Sebatane (2002) believe that, since the Lesotho College of Education will continue to admit weak students, it needs to develop a bridging course whose main aim should be to focus on consolidating the trainee teachers' academic weaknesses.

Another issue to be taken into account by inset programmes is what teachers have learnt in the past from observing their own teachers when they were in elementary or secondary school. Schwille et al (2007: 48) state that: "Trainees are ready to model themselves on memories of their own teachers, without being able to analyze clearly what made their methods successful." They say this apprenticeship of observation often has a powerful effect on how future and beginning teachers think about teaching. And thus they suggest that the formulation of inset policy and design programmes, must take into account teachers' opportunities to learn from the beginning of their own schooling and throughout their teaching careers.

Apart from that, when entrants to teacher education programmes have prior teaching experience but are not fully qualified teachers, this experience is rarely taken into account in the programmes designed to bring them to full qualification. The design and implementation of the curriculum should take into account students' experiences and perceptions about teaching and teachers and these students should be challenged in terms how they think about teaching. Also a key issue when evaluating teacher education and professional development programmes is to document how the understanding, views and knowledge of people entering these programmes change during the course of the programme. (Schwille et al (2007)

2.7. Quality of Inset Programmes

An important issue in this study is the quality of inset programmes, in terms of aim and philosophy, as well as in terms of its content/learning outcomes. According to Glennie and Mays (2009), distance programs, like any other teacher education programs, involve a complex integration of at least three components. The first one is subject content, the knowledge and

understanding of the school subjects or learning areas to be taught. Secondly, there is the pedagogic content knowledge and skills; this refers to the effective knowledge and skills to employ in the actual teaching subjects as well as how to teach. The authors show that: "Increasing emphasis is being placed on pedagogic content knowledge and skills. This is the area where distance education has often not demonstrated success." (Glennie and Mays, 2009:6)

The teacher education curriculum that is familiar to most readers is one that is made up of courses from a variety of subject matters. It consists of the content that is going to be taught, as well as the foundational disciplines that, in turn, contain information concerning the primary processes entailed in teaching and schooling in general. These include processes such as learning, motivation, social expectations, historical perspectives as well as the arrangement of both the organization itself and its administration. Also included in the curricula of study are the methods, specifications and procedures to be followed in the conducting of lessons, as well as the predetermined ways in which common problems that teachers come across in classrooms could be tackled. According to this curricular framework, "knowing precedes doing, action is a consequence of knowing, and the highest form of knowing is propositional." (Tom, 1997:2). However, Elmore (2002, in Schwille et al, 2007: 18) has a different idea and argues that: "changes in attitudes and beliefs generally follow, rather than precede changes in behaviour... in other words, practice changes attitudes rather than vice-versa."

The mode of delivery as well as whether they produce quality teachers is another factor that quality distance teacher education programmes have to take into consideration. The 2002 MUSTER study also examined the underlying philosophies of some teacher education programmes in Africa, and their potential for producing effective teachers' classroom practices (Wideen et al., 1998; Knowles, 1992 cited by Akyeampong, 2002). According to Glennie and Mays (2009:4), "Research suggests that distance education has shown a positive impact on teachers general and specific knowledge gains but that effecting improvements in classroom practice may require additional strategies." Even though teachers tend to overestimate the impact the course has had on their overall professional practice, there tends to be improvement in subject knowledge and in the self confidence of teachers who complete their programmes. (Glennie and Mays, 2009)

To sum up, Akyeampong (2002) notes that some recent studies in some sub-Saharan African countries recommend that teacher education programme structure and content are in serious need of radical reforms and that these should ensure that teacher education is culturally sensitive and relevant to local needs.

2.8. Quality of course materials

Quality course materials are another crucial part of any inset programme. According to Clive (1982), distance education course design teams are the main sources of inset expertise available to an authority, be it its advisory, staff, its teachers themselves and individual staff members of institutions of higher education. This author goes on to show that the individuals concerned in the design and developing of course materials need detailed briefing from the management group and must have expertise in both distance training methods and the subject of the training. On one hand, where an individual is used the problems of management of the work are much reduced and the work generally proceeds more quickly. On the other hand, using larger design groups represents greater local credibility that such groups enjoy with teachers who are to use the material and the considerable in-service training provided incidentally to the group members by being involved in the planning group (Clive, 1982).

Different inset teacher programmes in different countries tend to use different forms off materials to deliver their programmes to the clientele. For example, according to Murphy and Zhiri (1992) in Kenya, correspondence study materials constitute the main medium of instruction; they are prepared by the department of distance studies of the University of Nairobi. These study materials are developed in instructional units that are, to a large extent, self contained and written in a manner that makes them highly interactive. The study units include all the basic information needed to understand the subject matter, and the course adopts the problem solving approach in presenting the study materials so as to teach the various subjects. The delivery of study materials and basic textbooks is done through education or during residential sessions. This helps to minimize losses delay experienced when using postal services. Radio lessons are designed to support and reinforce the correspondence component, radio is used

primarily to motivate the teachers and to pace them as they work through the study materials. (Murphy and Zhiri, 1992)

Similarly, the research undertaken by Kunje (2002) showed that most tutors use the handbooks exclusively as source of books and teachers' guides, hence making little or in other cases no reference to other material. It was also found out in this research that Tutors' visits were much less frequent than planned and the structure of the training programs allowed little space for tutors to leave college and follow their students into schools, particularly as they were scattered country wide (Kunje, 2002).

Coming closer to home, according to the Welch and Reed's (2005) study in South Africa, in a distance education programme in which the main means of communication of the curriculum is the course materials, it is only when learners receive the materials that they can start learning. And failure to produce and dispatch materials on time has dire consequences as non-delivery of the programme. In many courses, there is little attempt to explain different elements of the course and provide learners with a guide to different components of the course material. Learners are not advised even about the sequence in which they should study courses in the programme. Sometimes learners receive incomplete sets of course materials, receive them in the incorrect order, or too late to make use of them for assessment purposes. And also even though the materials are periodically reviewed in the light of ongoing feedback from learners and tutors and advances in knowledge and research, there is however reason for concern because of the difficulties of revision of printed/published course materials, and often distance education courses are used for too long and are not updated (Welch and Reed, 2005).

The Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) offered by the University of the Witwatersrand is considered to be an example of a good inset teacher education programme. According to Welch and Reed (2005), the format of the ACE is a mixed mode in which teacher students engage with interactive learning materials, as well as attend contact sessions. The learning materials used in this programme present knowledge and activities meant to enable teacher-students to work through them systematically on their own as the programme emphasizes on students working together in study groups. These authors go on to show that the starting point of any distance

education programme is the quality of the learning materials, and that it has been said that the SAIDE and Wits learning materials are comprehensive, accessibly written, clearly structured, interactive, and encourage reflection on teaching experience in the light of the text. All modules a study plan that structures the timing and sequence of students' educational progress. Assignment tasks are scaffolded in that the tasks have detailed instructions and clear assessment criteria and also provide possible structures for essays and reasons why such structures are useful (Welch and Reed, 2005).

To sum up, Perraton (1993) points out that, until recently the performances of various distance education providers have been very uneven in terms of education quality. These, he points out, have ranged from approaches which have individual lecturers 'sending out some notes', to well organised systems which have slowly improved the scope and quality of their performance overtime and that the established providers now provide printed and audio visual teaching materials of high quality (Perraton, 1993). Thus, whatever materials any inset programme employs the most important thing is that: "The effectiveness both of individual materials in meeting objectives and of the overall strategy of partial inset through materials, need to be kept under review within the context of the overall inset programme" (Clive, 1982: 20).

2.9 Inset Pedagogic Approach

Inset should aim to transfer effective content and pedagogical approaches to student teachers so that the latter are in a position to put such content and pedagogic approaches into practice in their own classroom teaching. These programmes have to impart to their students the necessary knowledge and competences and also with positive attitudes and professional commitment, in order to improve the quality of basic education. Teacher educators have to be aware that learning to teach involves the task of constructing a professional identity, learning the professional norms and ethics associated with desirable practice and that consequently, the curriculum of teacher education should deal with prospective teachers' knowledge and competences but also with their existing identity and beliefs (Dembele and Miaro, 2003:11).

In relation to this, Lewin and Stuart (2003) found out that, while college teachers in many developing countries are aware of and understand the recommended shift to learner-centred

teaching, there is less of an understanding when it comes to incorporating this approach into their own teaching methods. This is confirmed by MacNeil (2004, in Schwille et al, 2007:111) who says that: "There is less disagreement about what constitutes a good professional development programme than there is about *how to actually implement one."*

In fact, similar teaching approaches and patterns are found in teacher training institutions and in primary school classrooms. Avalos (1991, in Akyeampong, 2002) argues that teaching in teacher education institutions of many developing countries is often characterised by authoritarian, teacher centred approaches linked to a behaviourist approach to learning. Akyeampong (2002:3) also points out that many educational institutions rely on this behaviourist position which "emphasises the ways in which knowledge, communication and practical skills of the teacher bring about learning in terms of observed changes in pupils; teaching is fore grounded". Akyeampong (2002) shows that, in the MUSTER studies, it was found that, in both schools and training college institutions, the pedagogy was prescriptive and teacher- centred. There was little indication of teacher education being a transforming experience that shaped motivation and pedagogic belief. In their study of fifty Ghanaian teachers' understanding of learning, teaching and understanding in INSET workshop settings, Akyeampong et al (1999, in Akyeampong 2002) found that teachers instinctively understand learning based on models consistent with transmission which are based on behaviourist theories. Such pedagogy in Ghanaian teacher education workshops creates a certain mindset about teaching that legitimised the behaviourist approach.

There is a need for an alternative approach to teaching for these student teachers so they can learn to play an active and not passive role. It is important to produce teachers with the sort of professional agency that can address the challenges of improving student learning and achievement outcomes. Tabulawa (1998) argues for this approach because he believes that student teachers are not empty vessels but that, they come to the classroom with already existing knowledge and prior experiences which interact with their current observations and interpretations.

There is a debate that emphasises the need to understand the knowledge and beliefs that guide these student teachers' practices because these practices and classroom behaviours are mainly influenced by their thoughts, beliefs, judgements and decisions. Tabulawa (1998: 253) explains that: "Teachers' adoption of innovations or new practices depends on the degree to which the assumptions inherent in the innovation are congruent with the teachers' beliefs." Thus, as Hurst (1981 in Tabulawa, 1998) points out, it is important to know what these teachers think and know about their own practices in order to know what they are likely to accept or reject.

2.10. Teacher Practice Change Models

When a change of pedagogy or curriculum is introduced, often the dominant approach to this curriculum change is technicist. Tabulawa (1998: 251) explains that such technicist framework for pedagogic change "implies that teaching is a value-free, objective activity whose problems are solvable through the application of the rigorous procedures of the scientific method." According to him, this technical rationality has had a pervasive impact on curriculum development in general and pedagogic change in particular. This approach tends to ignore the role of agency, i.e., of teachers, in pedagogical change. Tabulawa (1998) argues that the hierarchical way in which the technicist change model structures the practice of curriculum planning is known as the top-down or centre-periphery model. He also shows that the technicist rational model, though it has dominated the management of pedagogical change for the past two decades, has not led to any significant improvement or change in the model of teaching, which remains didactic and authoritarian with little or no recognition of the learner's potential to actively construct classroom knowledge (Tabulawa, 1998).

Tabulawa (1998) studied attempts by teacher education programmes in Botswana to improve the quality of education by introducing a learner-centred pedagogy. According to him, the in-service teacher education programs adopted a new curriculum which reflected the government's emphasis on learner centred education. However, he shows that, because the technical rational model of curriculum change was used, these colleges' classroom practices were not changed.

Tabulawa (2008) explains that learner-centred approach implies teachers are facilitators in the learning process and that learners are not culturally deficient but rather active participants in their

own learning processes. This, he says, calls for the disintegration of teachers' and students' taken for granted classroom world and the realisation that these values around learner-centred pedagogy are incompatible with teachers' deeply-held views and perspectives about teaching (Tabulawa, 2008).

Thus, it becomes clear that the model used with college teachers did not address their assumptions about the nature of knowledge, about how knowledge ought to be transmitted, their perceptions of students as well as the goal of schooling. This is because the technicist model of curriculum change that has been used is faulty and condescending towards teachers in the sense that it completely disregards teachers' voices (Tabulawa, 1998). He concludes that any model of pedagogical change must recognize that classroom practices are informed by teachers' conceptions and understandings of teaching and learning, of schooling and its purpose as well as the contexts within which these have evolved.

Another example is found in Namibia where, after gaining its independence in 1990, a paradigmatic shift also occurred from a content-based education for a few to a learner-centred system for all. Dembele and Miaro (2003) point out that this shift required fundamental changes in the content and processes of teacher education, as well as the promotion of practitioners' critical inquiry and reflective practice. They show that, in many cases, Namibian teacher education did not reflect in their practices the curriculum and classroom practices that future teachers had to follow once in schools.

What is needed is an understanding of classroom practices from teachers' own perspectives to facilitate any change in these teachers. Jessop and Penny (1998) understood the importance of studying teacher voices and vision among rural South African and Gambian primary school teachers. Their study reveals that teachers possess authoritarian values about teaching, have a notion of knowledge as objective that teachers need to transmit to students. According to these authors, research exploring African teachers' roles and competencies in practice suggests that prescriptive instructional behaviour has become so deeply entrenched in the professional culture that progressive teaching methods, such as child-centred, reflective practice approaches, stand little chance of gaining ground in classroom practice (Jessop and Penny, 1998).

As a result, alternative frameworks have been sought to understand and facilitate more effectively the process of teacher change. In search for an answer to the problems and complexities of pedagogical change, Tabulawa (1998), in his study of teachers' perspectives on classroom practice, argues that the technicist model of curriculum change should be abandoned because it is faulty and condescending towards teachers and that any model of pedagogical change must recognize that classroom practices are informed by teachers' conceptions and understandings of teaching and learning, of schooling and its purpose as well as the contexts within which these have evolved. Elmore (2002 in Schwille et al, 2007:18) argues that: "changes in attitudes and beliefs generally follow, rather than proceed; changes in behaviour... in other words, practice changes attitudes rather than vice-versa." His point concurs with Fullan (1991) who argues that, disregarding what teachers know and think about their classroom practice when effecting change may lead to disappointing results. It is important to understand and address the existing realities of teachers in a change process because teachers attach subjective meanings to what they think and what they know about classroom practice.

An alternative approach, according to Tabulawa (1998), is closely associated to the constructivist perspective that perceives teachers as purposeful sense-makers who constantly construct ideas in order to understand situations and events. This is more appropriate because, as Tabulawa (1998) argues, teachers are thinking beings who attach meanings to their actions and who are capable of subverting planned change. He argues that, because the two teaching approaches (the behaviourist and the constructivist) are based on different social values about interaction and behaviour, interactive teaching methods based on a constructivist learner-centred approach will continue to face an uphill task in dislodging the dominant authoritarian pedagogical style in African schools. Akyeampong (2002) agrees and mentions that there is some evidence to suggest that teachers' resistance to pedagogical change comes from clashes in social values. This, he says, is because in many traditional African societies, knowledge is seen as something fixed, finite and to be handed down, rather than something to be explored, questioned and developed along new lines. Therefore, Akyeampong (2002) concludes that what have to be changed are the values that inform the way in which societies view knowledge and define teachers' classroom roles and responsibilities.

This pessimistic view can be countered by another argument, according to which the impact of traditional social values and knowledge on teacher roles and identities is not fixed forever and not immune to the influence of globalisation, which is changing the way in which societies view themselves. Akyeampong (2002) argues that teacher education in Africa has an important role to play in changing the way teachers have traditionally viewed their professional roles and responsibilities in the classroom. He shows that, despite the complexity of becoming a teacher, teacher education programmes can be used to shape directly the values and perspectives that society expects from teachers. They have to counter, in the prospective teachers attending the training, their strong notions of what teaching is all about. Lortie (1975) and others (Akyeampong, 2002) conclude that the task of teacher education is a big challenge because they are the ones which need to effect desirable changes in student teachers.

2.11. Conceptual Framework

This study understands from the literature review that, to assess the quality of a distance education programme, it is important to develop criteria and research its key aspects, In particular, what is important are the programme's aims, how these are translated, the kinds of students targeted, whether adequate support or appropriate materials are developed and provided to students as well as the limitations and possible improvements in its modes of delivery and pedagogical approach.

This is why this study acknowledges, firstly, the importance of locating the DTEP in its context and origin to understand its origin in response to the bigger demand for higher quality teachers following the introduction of free primary education (Lewin, 2002; Robinson and Latchem: 2003).

Secondly, it will focus on the quality of the home and academic backgrounds of students and teachers. As Coultus and Lewin (2002: 247) point out: "The cultural capital that new entrants to teaching bring with them to the teaching profession is broadly influenced by their home background and the educational attainment of parents." The access into the DTEP programme, according to Schwille et al (2007), is often far from optimal, especially in developing countries.

When entry is not exclusive, sufficient academic support should be provided to under-prepared learners with bridging courses, additional units within existing courses, or increased face-to-face support. (Welch and Reed, 2005). Akyeampong (2002) also argues that teachers' conception of themselves, their roles and identities, are important to understand and that they are shaped by their own biographical experiences, such as their home environment, and this plays a crucial role in their teacher education.

Thirdly, the quality of the mode of delivery of distance education has also to be put under scrutiny because, as Robinson and Latchem (2003: 28) mention, distance education has to find the appropriate balance of time between face-to-face contact and self study which vary widely across different countries and their specific contexts. The literature also points to the importance of the content of the programme which should incorporate three components: subject content, pedagogic content knowledge and skills; and pedagogic content knowledge and skills; the last one suffering in distance.

Equally important are the design teams, as they are the main sources of inset expertise, the course materials and the type and/or types of resources to communicate to students. As Welch and Reed (2005) argue, the starting point of any distance education programme is the quality of the learning materials which should support and enable students to work through them on their own as well as in study groups or residential contact session. Kunje (2002) explains that tutors should not use the handbooks as the exclusive source of teachers' materials, as other supplementary material should also be used.

Fourthly, it understands the importance of focusing on the pedagogy used, especially with the adoption of a new learner-centred approach to teaching. Lewin and Stuart (2003) found out that too many trained teachers do not have a good understanding of this approach and how to incorporate it into their teaching. Students will engage more effectively if the material and pedagogy allow them to revise and experience concretely new teaching practices. As Elmore (2002 in Schwille et al, 2007) argues, changes in attitudes and beliefs generally follow, rather than precede, changes in behaviour and practices.

Finally, the study will have to research the problems and/or challenges of distance education programme such as administration, costs, lack of school supervision or follow up, and students isolation. (Kunje, 2002)

These are the reasons for this study to collect data on these key criteria or dimensions of the DTEP to assess its quality and relevance.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

Cohen and Manion (1994) explain that a research study requires an approach that guides one to infer and interpret the information s/he gathered from the respondents. In this study, a qualitative research method in the form of a case study was used as a tool to assess the potential and limitations of the DTEP, a form of distance-based INSET offered by the Lesotho College of Education. Macmillan and Schumacher (2006) define qualitative research design as a research method used in describing and analyzing people's individual and collective actions, beliefs, thoughts and predictions. These authors also explain that qualitative research designs emphasise gathering of data in a naturally occurring phenomena. They say that, in this type of research design, most of the data is in the form of words rather than numbers and that, in general, the researcher must search as well as explore with a variety of methods until a deep understanding of a subject and/or theme is achieved. Freebody (2003: 56) points out that: "All qualitative researchers are interested in what people say and do, ordinarily, and during the cause of mundane social activities."

Similarly, qualitative research is also defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990:17) as: "Any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification." This means that, unlike the quantitative approach, this approach does not use statistical information; rather it is interested in how people make sense of their lives, experience and their structure of the world. It therefore provides information about the human side of issues such as behaviours, beliefs, emotions and their relationships as individuals (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

The use of this approach in research is considered to be very suitable to the study as it is concerned with an understanding of the quality of an INSET programme and the perceptions of the people involved in it. According to Weinriech (2006:26), qualitative research helps: "to generate rich, detailed data that leaves participants' perspectives intact and provides a context for a healthy behaviour." Another advantage of using this approach, as identified by Mack et al. (2005), is that the relationship between the researcher and participants is less formal, which

presents the participants a chance to elaborate on and give details in their responses as the researcher is able to employ probing questions in order to obtain more information.

However, qualitative research has some limitations, some of which are identified by Smith (2008), who argues that subjectivity in this research design leads to problems of reliability and validity of the information gathered and also that it is difficult to prevent researcher-induced biasness. Other disadvantages include the inability to study a big number of subjects and its data collection methods, and its labour intensiveness. Also, its findings cannot be easily generalized as they may not be applicable to other subjects or settings (Hancock, 1998). Macmillan and Schumacher (2000: 321) state that, the major reason behind this is the fact that: "Typically, a qualitative sample seems small compared with the sample needed to generalize to a larger population."

A case study as another form of qualitative research design was employed. This research approach, as explained by McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 26-27), is usually used to examine bounded systems or cases, this is done over time and in detail and through employing multiple sources of data found in the setting. The case under study could be either of the following; a program, an event, an activity or a set of individuals bounded in terms of both space and time. One the importance of case studying these authors state is that, "A case study promotes better understanding of a practice or issue and facilitates informed decision making." (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006: 333). Also Stake (1995) shows that a case study is intended to catch the complexity of a single case in order to understand its activity and circumstances, that people also study a case and they go out to study the details of its contextual interaction when it is of a specific interest to them.

This study is considered a case study because it is dealing with a single teacher education programme, according to Payne and Payne (2004: 31), a case study is a, "detailed study of a single social unit that is usually located in one place. People making up the unit being differentiated from others who are part of it... case studies, by definition, would not compare two or more schools, factories..." And in practice case studies are conducted by single researchers such as postgraduate students studying towards higher degrees and who have no access

whatsoever to substantial research funding and occasionally these cases can be re-visited over time. Such a particular social unit under study is usually selected as just an example of many of its kind, and as such findings from a case study cannot be automatically generalized to similar situations since they can only be treated as examples and not necessarily as samples. However it is fairly reasonable that ideas derived from such findings should be reconsidered by other researchers and for them to be seen as a contribution to the pool of knowledge. A good case study is considered to be one whose data sustains its theoretical statements and one which, while normally carried at a smaller scale, it is nevertheless highly detailed. (Payne and Payne: 2004)

Payne and Payne (2004) differentiate between three types of case studies the first of which they call a 'critical case' which mainly challenges a hypothesis or a theory, and in whose case the unit being studied is often being deliberately chosen because of its high potential and likelihood to provide evidence that is required to mount a certain challenge. Secondly there is the 'unique case' in which a unit is being chosen because of the researcher's own intrinsic interest, and lastly they talk of the revelatory case which normally provides fresh access and generates new ideas. It's important to note that a case study is not by any means a separate research methods technique and that it can in practise be treated as either a quantitative or qualitative study and it is commonly associated with the later as is the case in this particular study.

While there may be a variety of specific purpose as well as specific questions in a case study, the general objective is, however, to develop a full understanding of the case as much as possible. Punch (2009) states that the case may be anything starting from an individual person to a role, a small group of people, a policy, a process and many more. And that a common criticism of case studies is with regard to their lack of generalizability, but Punch (2009) explains that even though case studies cannot be generalised, they can however suggest such generalization by putting forth concepts as well as propositions for further testing and research.

3.2. Site Selection and Participants

This study researches one INSET programme in one college, the Lesotho College of Education, for it is the only institution in Lesotho that offers primary school teacher education. As Cohen et al. (2000: 92) mention, "Researchers must take sampling decisions early in the overall planning

of a piece of research. Factors such as expense, time and accessibility frequently prevent researchers from gaining information from the whole population."

The study uses a purposeful sampling method of population selection which refers to a sample which "select information-rich cases for study in-depth", (Patton, 2002:242 in Macmillan and Schumacher, 2006). The idea is to understand something in-depth about those cases but without the need or desire to generalise his/her findings to similar cases. This author explains that purposeful sampling is employed when one wants to increase the utility of the information that has been gathered from samples. The reason for choosing such sample is because it is highly likely to possess much knowledge and information about the phenomena under investigation. According to Macmillan and Schumacher (2006: 322), the logic behind sample size in a qualitative research method is determined or influenced by the "purpose, the research problem, the major data collection strategy, and the availability of information-rich cases."

Thus, the study had to sample DTEP personnel and tutors, and some student teachers attending this programme from different kinds of schools. On the selection of the DTEP personnel, the researcher interviewed five DTEP staff: the director, two senior module designers involved in module development and/or monitoring, as well as two more DTEP staff members who specialize in different subjects/areas and are involved in the residential sessions as well as cluster workshops were also interviewed. It also sampled six students from six different primary schools in the Maseru district close to where the researcher lives, which made it easier to conduct the research without major accommodation or transport costs.

The researcher also realised the importance of including schools and participants from the rural parts of the country as distance education is about reaching out the more marginalised groups with no access to formal education institutions. However to severe financial and time constraints the researcher could not afford fulfil this requirement, and this is thus one the limitations of the study.

All the sampled schools, though all found in the Maseru district from, were selected to get as much diversity as possible in terms of their settings and characteristics. Two schools, or school A

and B, are located in the city centre of the Maseru city, another two schools, C and D, are about three to five kilometres outside the city, the other two schools, E and F are located at about 10 kilometres from the city centre. The selected six student teachers also differed according to their socio-economic, academic background, motivation to be a teacher and interest in improving their teaching, professional knowledge/experience. They were all in their final year of the DTEP teacher education programme.

3.3. Data Gathering Tools

Research methods, as defined by Cohen and Manion (1980: 26), refer to: "The range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction."

This case study research collected data mainly through document analysis and interviews. The focus of the data collection was on the following issues;

- The meaning of good teaching (in terms of knowledge, pedagogy and other competences)
- The quality and relevance of DTEP course philosophy, content, pedagogic approach, and learning materials
- The way the DTEP engages with different student teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards teaching and being teachers.
- The way in which the DTEP is implemented
- The expectations and responses of student teachers

3.4. Document Analysis

There are important documents to examine in relation to this research as they are valuable sources of valuable information. According to Macmillan and Schumacher (2006: 426), "Documents are records of past events. They comprise both written and printed materials and may be official or unofficial, public or private, published or unpublished, prepared intentionally to preserve a historical record or prepared to serve as intimate practical purposes." Document analysis, according to Punch (2009) refers to the analysis of both historical and contemporary documents which are a rich source of data for education and social research. According to him, some studies may depend entirely on documents as the primary source of data while others can

employ documentary data as just one source of data that is collected in conjunction with interviews as well as observations. Thus he states that documents are very important in the triangulation, where an intersecting set of different methods and data types is used in a single project. Keith (2009: 160) further shows that "documentary products provide rich sources of analytical topics which include; How are documents written? How are they read? Who writes them? For what purposes? On what occasions? With what outcomes?"

Thus, the researcher examined first DTEP documents, as authored by the NTTC (2001), which relate to the programme's aims and objectives, targeted clientele, curriculum and general regulations. Then it looked at some DTEP modules (Education, one Science and the other one Accounts course module), and other course documents such as course outlines, curriculum, learning outcomes, assessments as well as teaching and learners' materials for the residential and cluster workshop sessions. This was done with the view to determining whether the information provided in the documents tally or contrast with what the programme practice with student teachers.

Bauer and Gaskell (2000: 131) stipulate that as well as people can express their views in talk, they can also do so through writing for various reasons such as creating records, planning... establishing norms and rules and even sometimes to argue over controversial issues. "So texts", they say, "are sometimes more telling than their authors realize... Documentation is an essential ingredient of the 'objectivity' of the data." These authors also talk of content analysis which they say is the only form of text analysis that has been developed within the empirical social sciences. However they caution that most content analysis projects face two reliability problems namely the demarcation of units within the sequence of materials and the coding of contents. And that the main fallacy of content analysis is contained in its nature of the inference of particular intentions or understandings based on the text alone (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000).

3.5. Interviews

The other data gathering tool used is the face-to-face interviewing conducted with four college staff, two curriculum designers of the modules and the eight student teachers. According to Cannell and Kahn (1968, in Cohen et al, 2000: 269), interview refers to "a two-person

conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information." Macmillan and Schumacher (2006) point out that the face-to-face research encounter allows for a greater depth as opposed to the other methods of data collection because it allows the researcher to probe and ensure that the interviewee stays on track. Apart from that, Macmillan and Schumacher (2006: 353) assert that "qualitative in-depth interviews are noted more for their probes and pauses than for their particular question formats. Establishing trust, being genuine, maintaining eye contact, and conveying through phrasing, cadence and voice tone that the researcher hears and connects with the person elicit more valid data than a rigid approach."

Veerma and Mallick (1999) add that interviews are flexible and adaptable because the interviewer can probe responses, investigate feelings, motives, experiences and attitudes which other research instrument cannot reach. The interviews therefore allow for greater depth information than other methods of collecting data. Tuckman (1972 in Cohen et al, 2000) argues that the interview method provides access to what is inside a person's head and makes it possible to measure what a person knows, what the person likes or dislikes as well as what s/he thinks. Open-ended questions are useful to obtain general data about how participants conceive of their world and how they explain or make sense of the important events in their lives. However, while qualitative interviewing requires asking truly open-ended questions, McMillan and Schumacher (2006:351) explain that, "In the standardized open-ended interview, participants are asked the same questions in the same order, thus reducing interviewer flexibility; however, standardized wording of questions may constrain and limit the naturalness and relevancy of the response."

According to Cohen and Manion (1980), interview questions are of four types namely, structured, unstructured, non directive and focused interviews, but for the purposes of this study only the first two will be described. They describe structured interviews as having the content and procedures are organised in advance and thus they are characterised by being a closed situation while unstructured questions on the other hand are an open nature situation, they have greater flexibility and freedom, however it is not a casual affair and it also has to be a carefully planned.

In the same manner, MacMillan and Schumacher (2006) talk of structured questions that are referred to as limited response questions while on the other hand they say there are semi-structured questions which are open-ended and yet have a fairly specific intent. For instance they allow the interviewer larger latitude by asking broad questions in any order appropriate to them. And they show that a combination of the two types can provide a high degree of objectivity and uniformity while at the same time they allow a chance for the researcher to probe and seek for clarifications. However they caution that probing shouldn't be misused or else it would lead to incomplete as well as inaccurate responses and they say that it is crucial for the researcher to avoid anticipating and cuing for potential answers.

However, like any other tool of data collection, the interview technique is not completely free from limitations and disadvantages. Macmillan and Schumacher (2006) argue that the interviews have the disadvantage of being prone to subjectivity and bias on the part of the interviewer. Scott and Usher (2004: 45) argue that: "the interviewer can offer a number of clues as to how the interviewee should respond." They point out that interviews are usually high cost and time consuming, because they involve a one-to-one conversation, and that they normally lack the possibility for anonymity. These authors go further to say that, depending on the training and expertise of the interviewer, the respondent may be both uncomfortable and unwilling to report their true feelings. They suggest that, "to mitigate potential bias, the interview should be thought of as a neutral medium through which information is exchanged" (Scott and Usher, 2004: 203).

The researcher's original intention was to tape record interviews and transcribe the information as soon as possible, so as to ensure the completeness of the verbal interaction and the provision of material for reality checks. Macmillan and Schumacher (2006: 204) explain that: "Taped answers can be analysed by several judges and used to estimate reliability... a tape recorder will obviously collect the information more completely and objectively than notes." However these authors also mention that these advantages can be offset by either mechanical failure or distrust and unease on the side of the participants, especially if personal questions are asked. Initially the researcher's intention was to tape record the responses, but this was abandoned because of the unease detected among the majority of participants, with some of them out rightly asking not to be tape recorded. This is why the researcher settled for taking notes of the answers from the

interviewees at the same time as they were speaking. After the interview, the researcher re-examined and typed her notes. However, this is not ideal and may constitute a limitation of the study.

3.6. Reliability and Validity

Macmillan and Schumacher (2006) explain that reliability refers to the consistency of measurement and the extent to which the results are similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasions of data collection. These authors say that another way to conceptualize reliability is to determine the extent to which measures are free from error. That is, if an instrument has little error it is considered to be more reliable and if it has a great amount of error then it is less unreliable. Therefore, interviews of different parties to the DTEP and document analysis of DTEP goals and regulations and of some course materials were employed to assist with checking the reliability of the data collected. Interviews are not full proof and are considered to have problems of reliability because of its subjective nature and interaction between interviewee and interviewer.

However, if well conducted and with a sound relationship between interviewee and interviewer, interviews have the advantages of allowing probing and therefore yielding more information than in the case of administering questionnaires (Best, 1997). They can also provide the former with certain types of confidential information which they might have been reluctant to put in writing. Moreover, the interviewer can explain more clearly just what information s/he wants and if the subject misinterprets the question, the interviewer is in a position to clarify it for them. The interviewer is also in a position to evaluate sincerity and reliability of the interviewee, as well as being able to verify the genuine character of the response by seeking the same information in several and different ways at various stages of the interview (Best, 1997).

Macmillan and Schumacher (2006) further mention that reliability scores should be defined before the research is undertaken in order to enhance the reliability and that it is best to establish standard conditions of data collection. This means that all subjects belonging to the same category should be given the same directions, and with the same time frame in which to answer questions. This point was taken into consideration in carrying out this research interviews with

student teachers participants and DTEP staff. After realising that certain bits of the required information were missing or contradictory, a second set of interviews was done.

Validity refers to the accuracy of measurement or whether the research truly tests or measures what it intends or claims to test. According to Bauer and Gaskell (2000: 144), "Validity traditionally refers to the degree to which a result correctly represents the text or its context. Thus, validity rests on appropriate research design, data collection and analysis techniques. Macmillan and Schumacher (2006: 324) mention that: "The degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the world. Validity of qualitative research designs is the degree to which the interpretations have mutual meaning between the participants and the researcher." Qualitative researchers typically use many strategies, such as the triangulation of data by using different sources of data collection (such as interviews, questionnaires and observations) to ensure validity. On this issue, the researcher realised the need and value of using many appropriate data collection strategies. However the scope as well as the time constraints within which this particular project was carried out does not allow much room and/or flexibility for that, hence the researcher settled only for interviews, document and materials analysis as data collection tools.

However, Cohen and Manion (1980) point out there are some problems which tend to accompany the use of interviews as a research technique, one such problem is invalidity and it has to with whether the questions actually measure what they are set out to measure. They explain that invalidity is mainly caused by biasness which is "A systematic or persistent tendency to make errors in the same direction" (Cohen and Manion, 1980:252), through either over or under stating the true value of a certain attribute. For instance in a case where interviewers tend to see the respondent in their own image or tend to seek answers that are in support of their pre conceived notions or by misunderstanding on the side of the respondents o what they are being asked.

3.7. Data Analysis

The study adopted a qualitative data analysis approach because qualitative methods had been used in data collection. Macmillan and Schumacher (2006) describe qualitative research analysis

as a primarily inductive process of organising data into categories as well as identifying patterns/relationships among such categories. They as well point out that: "Making sense of the data depends largely on the researcher's intellectual rigor and tolerance for tentativeness of interpretation until the entire analysis is completed." (Macmillan and Schumacher, 2006:364)

Thus, after the data was collected, it was analysed by relying on the triangulation of various sources of data. The answers of the five DTEP staff and six student teachers, as well as the document analysis, on the various dimensions of the programme were compared and contrasted. The results were then interpreted in relation to the literature in terms of the main research questions. It was hoped that this kind of analysis could shed some light as to the extent to which the DTEP programme is successful or not.

3.8. Ethics

According to Macmillan and Schumacher (2006), a credible research design involves not only the selecting of informants and effective research strategies, but that it also has to adhere to some kind of research ethics. They go further to show that as qualitative research is likely to be more personally intrusive than other research designs; qualitative researchers need to plan how they are going to handle the ethical dilemmas that are involved in this interactive data collection. As Scott and Usher mention, "One of the principles of this procedure is that the researchers should not in any way compel participants to take part in the research, and this may involve resisting imperatives from powerful people in the organization" (2004:72).

In the light of the above, this study's proposal and interview schedule were submitted for approval to the Wits School of Education ethics committee, to ensure that the research process was not in any manner likely to offend, injure and/or be any way harmful to anyone of the study's participants. It was only after the committee approved the proposal, as per the committees principles and standards, that the researcher went ahead to collect the data.

Bearing in mind all the above ethical details and procedures, the researcher then asked for permission from the Ministry of Education in Lesotho to conduct research in the selected primary schools in the Maseru District, and this was granted. At the schools, the researcher also

sought further permission from the principals to interview the 4th year DTEP student teachers. Similarly, the researcher requested permission from the relevant DTED authorities to carry out the research at the Lesotho College of Education.

Participants at both the college and the selected schools were clearly informed that their participation was voluntary, that they were free to withdraw from the study at anytime they wanted to and also that their names and those of their schools were not going to be mentioned anywhere or anyhow throughout the course of the study. And last and most important that, they were provided with information documents explaining in detail the terms and conditions of their participation and with consent sheets to sign as proof that the researcher gained their consent to be participants in the study.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study on the identification of both the potentials and limitations of the Distance Teacher Education Programme (DTEP) for primary school teachers, as offered by the Lesotho College of Education in Lesotho. In collecting the data, the researcher conducted two different sets of interviews because, after the first attempt of data presentation, some gaps as well as some poorly clarified points were identified, leading to a second round of interviews.

In the first set, six final year DTEP student teachers from six different schools around Maseru (the capital of Lesotho) were interviewed. Two of these schools are situated in the Maseru City centre (schools A and B), the other two (schools C and D) are about five kilometres from the city while the last two (schools E and F) are about some eight to ten kilometres from Maseru city. The six student teachers interviewed are ST A, ST B, ST C, ST D, ST E and ST F respectively, correspond to the codes given by the researcher to the schools they come from. The researcher also recognised the importance of and had the desire to include student teachers from rural areas in her sample to address not just the issue of availability but also the accessibility of the programme, but due to time and financial constraints, this desire could not be realised.

In the second set, the researcher also interviewed five DTEP staff members. One came from the programme's senior officials, two are fulltime tutors and the other two are fulltime tutors and course designers for different subjects, namely Science and Accounts. These five DTEP staff members are referred to as senior official (SO), tutor 1(T1) and tutor 2 (T2) and materials designers (MD 1) and (MD 2) respectively throughout the study. It is important to note that T1 also took part in the designation of the course modules, though the researcher found out about this in the later stages of the research. The two respondents, ST E and T 2, were no longer available in the second round of interviews.

Other sources of information used and analysed were the following; the NTTC's (2001) document, DTEP's General rules and regulations and course curriculum, the DTEP's Year 3

Science and Accounts modules as well as Year 2 Education module were also consulted to shed more light on the findings of this study. Course outlines for these modules were examined as sources of evidence, not on the grounds of pre- arranged criteria but, because they were the only modules, the researcher found through a student in the first 2002 student cohort. The analysis of these documents was useful for information on the following issues: course aims and objectives, conditions of admission in to the programme, course content, pedagogic approaches and change models to mention to mention but just a few.

The findings from the above mentioned sources are now presented and discussed, using the following categories or themes: firstly, student teachers' profile and reasons for becoming teachers; secondly, presentation of data on entry qualifications and quality of students admitted; thirdly, DTEP's origin and aim as well as DTEP course duration and mode of delivery and then discussion of DTEP course content and outcomes. After this, the discussion deals with the program's pedagogic approach as well as pedagogical practice change models. Then, the discussion looks into the design and delivery of course materials and any improvements of the programme so far as well as suggestions for further improvements.

4.2. Profiles of the DTEP Staff and Student Teachers

The five participating DTEP staff members include: T1, who holds MED qualification, is both a site-based fulltime tutor, a course designer for the Education modules and who has been serving in the in-service department of the LCE (former NTTC) for 17 years teaching the Education courses. T2 holds a BA qualification, works as an assistant lecturer and has been with the DTEP for two years teaching music. The SO holds a PHD and has been with the college's in-service education department for 30 years, and is now directing this department. The last two, MD1 and MD2, are also, like T1, fulltime tutors and module designers for the Accounts and Science modules respectively. MD 1, whose highest qualification is M.Ed, is DTEP's regional coordinator since 2003 and has majored in management and commercial studies. MD 2, with MEd in Higher Education Studies, is a site tutor for sciences who also works as a counsellor and/or mentor to student teachers. The profiles of the five participants are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: DTEP Staff Profiles

DTEP Staff	Highest Qualification	Length of Service with In service Department	Specialization and Role in DTEP
SO	PhD	30yrs	Programme Director
T1	M.Ed	17yrs	Fulltime/Site Tutor and course Designer (Sesotho)
T2	BA	2yrs	Assistant lecturer (music)
MD 1	M.Ed (management and commercial studies)		Fulltime/Site tutor and course designer (Accounts)
MD 2	M.Ed (Higher Education)		Fulltime/Site tutor and course designer (Science), also a counsellor and mentor for student teachers

From the above presented findings on DTEP staff qualification, it is clear that the majority staff members, three out of five have Master of education as their highest qualification, one has a PhD and the other one has BA qualification. Thus it is evident DTEP has well qualified staff and that staffing qualifications may probably not a problem as far as DTEP is concerned.

Apart from the DTEP staff, six final (4^{th}) year DTEP student teachers from six primary schools in the Maseru cluster were interviewed. Two of them (ST A and ST B) are males while the other four (ST C, ST D, ST E and ST F) are females and all the student teachers are aged between 24 and 40 years. These student teachers come from families with parents of differing levels of education, majority of which have fathers with only primary education except for one who has the Cambridge Overseas School Leaving Certificate (COSC). Half of the student teachers' mothers have standard 6 and less education while the other half have mothers with tertiary education. ST A's mother is a qualified primary school teacher; ST B's mother has a diploma in education and works as a Senior Education Officer for Early Childhood Care and Development

at district level in Lesotho; and STE's mothers holds a Diploma in Business Administration and works as a Post Office trainer. The student teachers profiles are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Student Teachers' Profiles

Respondents	**Gender**	**Age**	**Classes and subjects taught**	**Mothers' Qualification**	**Fathers' Qualification**
ST A	M	35	Class 4; all subjects	PTC; primary school teacher	Std 7
ST B	M	24	Classes 5, 6 and 7; English and Social Studies	Diploma in Education; Senior Education Official (ECCD)	Std 6; Carpenter
ST C	F	32	Class seven; Maths, Science and Home Economics	Std 2	Std 6
ST D	F	34	Class 5; Maths, Science and Sesotho	Std 6	ST 2
ST E	F	31	Class 4; all subjects	Diploma in Business Administration ; Post Office Trainer	COSC; Customs and Excise Clerk
ST F	F	40	Class1; all subjects	Std 5	Std 4

Generally speaking, from these findings, it is clear that the majority student teachers' parents are not educated, most of them have only primary education and only one has high school education. In addition only three out of all the 12 parents have a tertiary qualification, and these three are mothers. Research conducted by Lewin and Stuart (2003) also revealed similar findings to those of this study that in Lesotho, teacher trainees' mothers are in general better educated that their fathers are.

Also according to this study's findings, even those are either diploma or certificate holders none of them have a bachelor's degree. According to Coultus and Lewin (2002: 247), "The cultural capital that new entrants to teaching bring with them to the teaching profession is broadly influenced by their home background and the educational attainment of parents." Student teachers' parents' occupations and education levels may provide insight into their socio-economic background, and are likely to influence those students on both their personal and professional aspirations (Akyeampong and Stephens, 2002). So, the findings show clearly that parents' qualifications cannot likely be cited as a motivating factor for the majority of DTEP students' desire to be educators and be teachers.

4.3. Reasons for Becoming Teachers

Student teachers chose teaching as a profession for different reasons. For instance, ST E and ST F got interested in teaching because they loved what their teachers did in their schooling days and they claim that they were motivated by them to become teachers. However, ST F also added that teaching was the only career she was exposed to. The following, ST A, ST B, ST C and ST D stated that they chose teaching as a career mainly because they needed a job, but they pointed out that they loved the experience of teaching once they started. However, four of the student teachers (ST B, ST C, ST E and ST F) said that they chose to become primary school teachers rather than secondary teachers, because of their COSC results, which did not qualify them to enrol for the Secondary Teaching Certificate (STC) programme. ST F however said she had already developed a love for young kids from teaching Sunday school at church. Also, four of them (ST A, ST C, ST D and ST E) admitted that they were scared of the troublesome and peer-pressurised secondary school kids who cannot easily be controlled.

One third of the student teachers chose teaching as a career/profession because they were motivated by their former teachers. This particular finding similar to Schwille et al (2007: 48) who state that:

> "Trainees are ready to model themselves on memories of their own teachers, without being able to analyze clearly what made their methods successful."

They then suggest that the formulation of inset policy and design programmes, must take into account teachers' opportunities to learn from the beginning of their own schooling and throughout their teaching careers. (Schwille et al, 2007: 48).

An overwhelming two thirds majority became teachers by default and only due to their need of jobs and also because their COSC results did not qualify them for a secondary teaching admission. None of them chose to be a teacher solely because they loved it; they only claim they loved the experience once they started teaching. Schwille et al (2007) suggest that those responsible for planning programmes of teacher education need to be well informed about the background and attitudes of potential entrants, their motivation to enter the teaching field and the knowledge and attitudes they have acquired from their prior experience.

Student teachers provided a variety of reasons for choosing to enrol for the distance education programme as opposed to its full time counterpart, face to face pre-service diploma programme. Half of the student teachers (ST A, ST C and ST E) indicated their preference for the in-service programme because they needed to earn their living throughout their course of study so to keep supporting their families. For ST B, it was because this programme allows him the opportunity to implement solutions immediately, while for ST F and ST D, it is because of the limited space to do the pre-service course and because they did not have the entry requirements needed to enrol for the pre-service programme.

Three main reasons for the student teachers to enrol for a distant education course is so they could still get remunerated and be able to support their families alongside studying, did not qualify to be admitted in the pre service programme and also that DTEP provides them the chance to experiment immediately what they have learnt. So it becomes clear that, for the majority of students, DTEP or any inset programme is probably regarded as a second best

programme to the full time pre service programme, one in which people end up if and when they are not able to satisfy the pre service course entrance requirements.

All six student teachers stated that they love their teaching job, with five of them (ST A, ST B, ST C, ST E, ST F) qualifying their statements with "very much". They gave different reasons, such as their love for kids, long school breaks and because teaching gives them opportunity to guide their students. Apart from that, they all stated that, if they were given another chance to become teachers, they would still choose to be primary school teachers because they love students and their job allows them to shape and direct students' lives. ST B even said that,

> "primary school kids are easily controlled and redirected into the right direction with love and patience."

None of them would have wanted to teach secondary school students because they are troublesome, and according to ST F, this is due to the fact that,

> "Secondary school teachers are specialists who are just concerned about delivering the content and who do not take time to get to know their students."

Apart from that, if they were given a chance to choose a career again, five of the student teachers (ST B, ST C, ST D, ST E and ST F) said they would still choose to be teachers because they love their job and kids, one of them (ST C) even said that, she cannot imagine herself performing in another field other than teaching, only one student teacher (ST A) said he would choose a different profession, but even he could not provide reasons for this.

Even though majority participating student teachers became teachers mainly and purely by default and/or out of convenience, all of them however claim to love their job as primary school teachers since they love young kids. They indicated that at this young age kids are easily controlled and directed to the right direction. And majority five of them would still be teachers if ever given another chance.

4.4. Quality of Admitted Students

Like with any other educational programme, the DTEP clientele has to meet and satisfy certain expectations and requirements. To start with, direct entry into the programme entails the

following requirements; minimum Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) with 2 credits, 3 passes and 2 years teaching experience, or GCE with five subjects passed and 2 years teaching experience. However, there are some entrants who are exempted from the first year of the programme because they already have some primary school teaching qualifications such as Primary Teaching Certificate (PTC) and Advanced Primary Teaching Certificate (APTC) etc. (NTTC, 2001).

The programme's entry requirements are much lower than those for the full-time face to face diploma in education programme almost by fifty percent, but the clientele do come with minimum two years teaching experience. And already certified primary teachers are exempted from the first year of the programme. It thus came as no surprise therefore for the this study to have found out that all student teachers interviewed have all obtained either GCE or a third class at COSC level. This can undermine the academic quality of DTEP's clientele. Welch and Reed (2005) show that, in South Africa, to facilitate access, entry requirements for in-service programmes are as open as possible and include recognition of the entrants' prior learning and experience. But the advice is that where entry is open, care needs to be taken to provide sufficient academic support to learners who may be under-prepared. This may be by the provision of access or bridging courses, additional units within existing courses, or increased face-to-face support (Welch and Reed, 2005).

All participating DTEP staff members highlighted that the college is not doing much to consolidate for the low academic entry requirements into DTEP. They said that they do not see the need for that because, as they pointed out, the two years teaching experience, as one of the pre entry requirements into the programme, already compensate for this concern. However, all also agreed that training and/or educating teachers is a complex process, even though for different reasons. According to T1, this is because the DTEP entrants are not at the same qualification level (e.g. COSC and PTC), and it is thus difficult to treat them as one group. This remark by T1 is a bit inconsistent with what the three staff members said earlier that the different entry points consolidate for the gap between the unqualified and qualified DTEP students, in that by the time the COSC holders get to second year and are joined by their PTC holding colleagues they already have a rich idea of what teaching and the whole teaching field is all about. So in

actual sense, all the staff members agree that the two years teaching experience is enough consolidation for the student teachers low academic entry requirements.

The participating DTEP staff members share the following viewpoints about the programme's entry requirements; firstly in T2's opinion, 2 years teaching entry requirement is government policy and thus has to be abided by. T1 pointed out that, this particular requirement is meant to ensure that entrants have experience and are already exposed to the classroom situation and what really happens in schools before they start with the programme. According to MD 1, the two years experience is important, as the programme is designed for people with exposure to what happens in teaching and different types of learners such as slow learners. This experience is needed, according to SO, because the course will help student teachers to change from wrong practices and they will learn how to apply theory into practice.

All participating DTEP staff agree that the two years teaching experience is a necessary entry requirement for it gives student teachers exposure to what is happening in real life teaching, and thus as SO said, the course intends to help them change from wrong practices when they apply theory in action. However, the DTEP does not give clear strategy as to how this could be realised, they tend to take it for granted and consider it a given that when one has teaching experience, it automatically follows that they will make good teacher trainees who are willing to let go of the wrong practices they might be so well accustomed to and which to them are the right way to do things. Research also shows that this is rather a complicated and not so straight forward exercise.

One tutor (T2) argued that the time should not be increased because the DTEP is already going out of its way to reach these people by not just being a distant but a part time programme as well. But the other four staff members (T1, MD 1, MD 2 and SO) consented that the time needs to be increased to make sure that the residential time table is not too tight and that there is enough time for practicals (e.g. lab tests/experiments) especially in Maths and Science. A majority 80 percent of the participating DTEP staff agreed the residential time needs to be increased.

Since the DTEP admits high school and PTC graduates, the research also sought to find out how the programme bridges the gap between these entrants' different values and experiences. Four participating DTEP staff members, SO, T1, MD 1 and MD 2 agreed that student teachers' experience in teaching and the different entry points help the unqualified teachers to be upgraded towards the level of their PTC holding colleagues, before they are brought together with them in the second year of the programme. This refers to the fact that the unqualified student teachers' entry point is first year while the already qualified student teachers are admitted into year two of the DTEP. And according to the remaining staff member MD2; considering the fact that some student teachers have COSC while other have PTC, individual tutors address such gaps as they come across them. All the four staff members agree that the two entry points helps to bridge the gap between already certified primary school teachers and those with high school qualification. This could be regarded as one of DTEP's strengths in that it tries to ensure that their students are on more or less on the same level of understanding before they could be treated as a whole.

Three DTEP staff members T1, T2 and SO have strong opinions about the level of complexity of the programme. T2 highlighted that training teachers can be simple or complex depending on students' attitudes and whether they are ready and committed to be trained and study hard. For instance he pointed out that they have had challenges with some student teachers not doing their assignments, bunking workshops and only coming to the college for examinations. SO also highlighted that it is a challenge training future teachers to deal with different people, students and parents, with conflicting expectations about what they think good education of their children should entail or comprise of.

However, SO explained also that, even though complex, the training of teachers needs to emphasise to student teachers that "Unity is Diversity" and that the major goal is to educate their students despite their diverse socio-economic backgrounds. And though for different reasons, these staff members all agreed on one thing, that training teachers is a complex process. This attitude by tutors that DTEP is a complicated course is on itself a factor to be cautious about, as it is likely to impact on the kind of messages they are likely to directly or indirectly pass onto their students.

4.5. DTEP's Origin and Aim

According to the NTTC (2001: 2),

> "the proposed Distance Education Programme (DTEP) came as a precursor to quality and quantity supply of the needed primary school teachers".

This was particularly urgent because the introduction of the Free Primary Education in Lesotho in 2000 had led to the recruit of many under-qualified and unqualified teachers at primary school. The adoption of a distance teacher education mode was therefore introduced as a strategy devised to deliver educational product to these serving under and unqualified primary school teachers. It aimed, among other things, to improve the efficiency and the performance of existing teachers without making them suffer any kind of disruption as far as their social and family lives are concerned. It was believed that it would enhance the accessibility to teacher education for some marginalized groups at a relatively cost effective means (NTTC, 2001).

The DTEP include studies which are not part of the programme's central focus (primary school subject content) so as to contribute to the student teachers' professional confidence and competence as their knowledge is extended, their intellectual practical skills are refined and they are encouraged to develop strong personal interests (NTTC, 2001). The DTEP also has other objectives such as to: demonstrate an understanding of fundamental concepts and principles underlying the primary school curriculum and impart the appropriate levels of teaching skills and the general expertise necessary for their application in primary schools. Another aim is to assist with meeting the requirements of the teaching situation and contribute to the improvement of schools' educational programmes (NTTC, 2001: 2).

According to the programme designers, MD1 and MD2, the former inset programme was phased out with the introduction of DTEP due to the following reasons; firstly it was not continuous since it just took a few students at a one cohort basis. Also MD1 and MD2 both pointed out, what has been stated earlier from the NTTC (2001) that the introduction of free primary education saw a flush of many students into Lesotho's primary schools, which in turn lead to the need for many more teachers being employed, many of which were not qualified and thus a programme like DTEP was needed to ensure that these teachers got trained, are qualified to offer quality education and to upgrade the standard of education in Lesotho to the international level.

Similarly T 1 and SO also stated that this programme was introduced in 2002, not only to replace the then in-service (certificate) programme, but also as a much needed answer to the 2000 Free Primary Education (FPE) which saw the employment of many unqualified teachers, while T2 was not aware of the reasons that led to the introduction of the programme. A majority 80% of the participating DTEP staff gave a similar answer that DTEP was mainly born as a result of the introduction of FPE in 2002.

One of DTEP's main aims as indicated by T1 is to equip teachers already into practice with further skills and knowledge to alleviate the problem of large numbers of unqualified primary school teachers. Also, T2 and SO pointed out that the programme also contributes to the Programme's goal of having no unqualified teachers in the school system by the year 2012/2013. SO also added that:

> "DTEP aims to open the doors to quality teacher education to all aspiring teachers."

According to NTTC (2001:3), the DTEP also aims at producing teachers who can "demonstrate acceptable standards of professional behaviour in the teaching field and the community at large." T1 stated that DTEP builds a professional identity among its students through the professionalism modules, such as methodology and life skills education, which teach them how to build their social standing. Both T1 and T2 said that this goal is also achieved by teaching courses intended to prepare students and open for them doors for further study and other careers. SO said that the main aim of the programme is to equip with skills the unqualified teachers and to upgrade the under qualified and also to prepare them for further study. He said they also make their students aware that DTEP is a diploma course, just like the pre-service one, and that some of the DTEP modules are equivalent to those used at university level. SO also stated that DTEP is successful in meeting this aim and that their students increase every year, and that though it is not perfect and there is need to identify and fill gaps.

In short, DTEP also ensures that it builds professional behaviour and confidence among its clientele while at the same time the programme tries to ensure that the student teachers are introduced to knowledge and information that creates opportunities for them to further their studies and even breach other careers. Thus one can say in this regard that DTEP is not some

kind of a narrow minded programme focusing only on offering primary education content to its clientele.

4.6. Distance Education Course Design, Delivery and Pedagogy

DTEP is a programme that was designed to be completed within a period of four years under normal circumstances. However, because of its part-time and distant nature, students are allowed to pursue the programme for a maximum of seven years. This is allowed to provide flexibility for those students who may be unable to cope adequately with the demands of the programme and those who might have found themselves failing and/or repeating some years of study (NTTC, 2001).

According to NTTC (2001:3):

> "There shall be on-campus sessions at least twice a year for an orientation session, distribution of materials and examinations. There will be regional workshops twice a year".

The DTEP has been designed to be a part-time diploma programme that uses a bi-modal learning system. It entails the occasional face-to-face residential sessions lasting for about three weeks in each of the four years. This is intended to complement the distance education printed course materials which are specifically designed for learners across all the subjects in the DTEP curriculum. Students are encouraged to fully utilize such course materials during their own private studies as a process of knowledge acquisition (NTTC, 2001).

According to T1 and T2, the DTEP's main mode of distant delivery consists of 2 weeks residential per semester, the first of which is meant for revision of the main concepts and the second one for examinations. They pointed out that there are three assignments per semester, exams twice a year as well as school visits and class observations by site tutors throughout the year. They pointed out that there are also 3 workshops of two days each, which are held over weekends at cluster level and delivered on the main concepts of the course by both site/fulltime and part time tutors. Apart from that, all the participating DTEP staff unanimously indicated that, apart from being introduced to new content, at every workshop, students submit an assignment, are given a new one and are assisted on how to approach it. They also said that in every

workshop student teachers also get feedback for the previous assignments, which the part time tutors are expected to have finished marking two weeks before every workshop.

T1 and SO indicated that, even though the programme is distant by nature, their students are kept motivated through workshops, school visits and tutors' observations where they discuss both their personal and professional problems, and provide them with counselling where and when necessary. T1 also stated that their students are given the freedom to contact either in person or via the phone, both the fulltime/site tutors whenever they need assistance regarding their academic work and are also encouraged to engage in site groups with their fellow students so as to help and motivate one another. According to T1, the college ensures that there are full time tutors to follow up on the students as well as school visits on site. T2 more or less echoed what T1 said when he stated that students are encouraged to work in groups and to approach the full time/site tutors in case of either personal or professional problems. She said that tutors are expected to provide counselling for any problems students may approach them with. The consensus is that student teachers are kept motivated through school visits by fulltime tutors, by being provided with counselling whenever necessary and being encouraged to engage in peer groups.

According to MD 2, most of the people joining the program are already motivated and are bound to work hard since they are adults and want to pass. MD 2 said that examinations are some of the learner support activities intended to observe how student teachers are performing and that the continuous assessment exercises administered throughout the year are another form of motivation and a built up to the examinations. In all the three course modules that the researcher analysed she found out that; each unit in the modules begins with a pre-test whose objective is to provide a brief summary of the previous unit and/or also to find out how much one already knows about the contents of the unit. At the end of every unit, there is a post-test which is used as a self assessment tool, helping student teachers to check their understanding of the unit in question. One realised that the modules already have three assignments outlined for students after every four or so often units; each of the assignments has three alternative questions and the student teachers have to choose one to answer, all these accompanied by instructions on how to go about answering the question (LCE, 2003).

Continuous assessment and regular feedback is also considered to be a motivating factor for student teachers. It seems also that DTEP has in place various strategies to ensure that their students are kept motivated and could be one of the programmes strong points.

According to MD 1, DTEP is working with qualified tutors who encourage and provide counselling to those student teachers who dodge workshops and residential sessions and who have personal problems; she said that this is done through individual counselling done during school visits and classroom observations. According to MD 1 the programme provides clinical supervision and also assignments' feedback to students in the next workshop so they remain motivated. MD 1 stated that they keep students motivated through Psychology that is taught in the education courses which address motivation theories. The researcher could not find any unit on psychology in the analysed education module, but some units' were found on guidance and counselling and areas of the guidance and counselling process. The bottom line in this regard is that, as another way of keeping student teachers motivated, they are provided with counselling sessions when in need, clinical supervision during school visits and also through education psychology courses.

However the DTEP staff also identified some challenges and/or limitations with the programme. For example, MD 2 showed that the administration part of the programme, especially with regard to course work, is sometimes bad in that student teachers are not being given their feedback in time. And also that examination results are often released late due to pending student cases, especially of those students who do not have all their course work marks because they might have failed to submit some of the assignments.

MD 2 went on to say that there is a limitation of resources especially transport to conduct school visits and class observations and that, even though the plan is to visit students 2-3 times per semester, it is very difficult to achieve this in most cases and that some student teachers end up being visited only once a year. She said this is due to the fact that there is a high student-tutor ratio. SO however feels that the programme's time duration of 3-4 years is ok; and he said that it was born out of the pre-service diploma's duration time-residential time. He also said that due to

the limited accommodation resources at the college they cannot afford to increase the residential time for DTEP. And MD 1 felt that,

"There is need to give learners more time not just two weeks residential time per semester."

The main challenges identified here are that there is poor management of course work, also there is a severe shortage of transport for fieldwork school visits such that the plan to visit students two to three times sometimes fails.

The participating DTEP staff identified several advantages of this programme compared to the fulltime pre-service programme. Firstly, SO and T1 and MD 2 indicated that DTEP takes services to people and give them a chance to stay with their families throughout their studies, thus distance education learners are working and studying and yet are at the same time able to continue taking care of families, children and their other personal businesses. MD1indicated that the advantage of the DTEP is that its content can be applied immediately after being learned, it is thus easier for student teachers to identify and rectify mistakes and errors they might have been making in their teaching. However it seems though that the first two years of teaching where teachers have no one to guide or provide them with any form of support, and thus the whole of these may be characterised with a whole lot of trial and error which DTEP has to correct when they start with the programme.

Student teachers expressed differing opinions concerning the length of the programme, on one hand two of them, ST B and ST C, felt that the workshops and contact session time are enough for them because they are already experienced teachers. But majority student teachers (ST A, ST D, ST E and ST F) felt that the 4 years period is too long and needs to be reduced to three years, they expressed their concern that contact sessions and workshops time are too limited and that they are given too much work to do within a short time and just before exams, a fact which, according to ST F, does not give them time to gain enough general knowledge. And if they were given a chance to re-design DTEP, two student teachers ST A and ST D would increase workshops from 3 to 6 times per semester.

Generally, student teachers think all DTEP contact sessions have to change in the following manner; the four years duration be reduced to two years, and the workshops number be increased from three to six times per year. But this also raises another concern of cutting down costs on one side (by cutting down the number of the years of the programme, while actually raising them in another, in the form of extending the length of both the residential and the workshops' time).

4.7. The DTEP Content and Outcomes

According to NTTC (2001), the programme emphasizes professional education, general and particular methodologies and teaching practice. Teaching practice is not given any special period of occurrence as DTEP students have to be teachers for a certain time period before being admitted into the programme. Rather, teaching practice is considered to be an integral activity and part and parcel of student teachers' daily assignments at their different schools. However, the plan was that from the second year of the four-year-programme duration, when students get to choose their subject/area categorisation, arrangements would be made with head teachers of schools to allow college tutors to visit student teachers' classes three times a year, as part of their teaching practice assessment which forms 30% of their course work (NTTC, 2001).

As to what content is dealt with when, by whom and how, all six participating student teachers indicated that workshops are offered mainly by part time tutors who according to ST B are mainly teachers from the neighbouring high schools, and by college tutors occasionally and the content addressed in this workshops are topics in the modules which according to ST D are taught chapter by chapter, as well as assignment submission/feedback, as ST A pointed out. The on campus sessions, as all student teachers pointed out, are conducted by DTEP fulltime tutors who during the first week conduct revision sessions of the content done during workshops, address assignments done and anything which was not understood by student teachers in the modules, and, according to ST B and ST F, they are also given the examination, while the second week is for writing examinations.

In addition to that, three participating DTEP staff members (T1, T2 and SO) stated that the main emphasis in the subject matter of the programme's modules is on the following areas: subject

content for primary school learners, constructivist and learner-centred methods of teaching to impart the content, methods of self instruction for distance education learners and content that allows and facilitates further study and development for the student teachers. This appears to be in agreement with some of the programme's learning outcomes that, diplomats shall be able to demonstrate an understanding of fundamental concepts and principles underlying the primary school curriculum and possess the appropriate levels of teaching skills and the general expertise necessary for their application in primary school, as well as implement appropriate teaching and learning procedures and participate in educational innovation in the school content (NTTC, 2001:2).

These three DTEP staff members further indicated that apart from ensuring that student teachers are introduced to the content they will teach at primary school, in every module, they are taught more than the content they need to teach at primary school so as to open doors for further education and study. Similarly, T1 stated that the main content and/or learning outcomes of DTEP is to produce teachers who are highly motivated and confident teachers who can also qualify to further their studies. It is evident that DTEP is not just about equipping student teachers with primary school content but also about ensuring their clientele are provided with better chances to further their studies as well. Therefore even though majority DTEP students were disadvantaged by their poor results at COSC and could not qualify to be accepted in other careers or programmes of their choice, they are however through DTEP provided another chance to further their studies not just in the education field, but doors are opened for them to pursue other areas too such as music and arts, as T2 indicated. MD 2 stated that the programme, through the content taught and methodologies used, is mainly intended to assist its clientele to deal with work and phase out misconceptions, and also how to construct good lesson plans, schemes of work as well as learn how to improvise.

Another tutor and course designer MD 1 explained the outcome of the course content is to mentor and have content and/or knowledge to deliver and serve the country with commitment, and to apply methodology and/or techniques that ensure effective learning and teaching. According to SO, DTEP students are also sensitised about how to deal with:

> "suddenly emerging issues such as HIV/AIDS and how to participate in community development".

This matter highlighted by SO, about newly emerging issues like HIV/AIDS, Drug Abuse, gender issues, violence etc., is also briefly addressed in the Life Skills Education Unit of the Education module. This implies that DTEP is concerned about the social wellbeing of teachers they are producing together with the children that they are going to teach.

MD 2 went on to show that the Maths and Science content is of COSC level and that, since some student teachers are doing subjects such as Mathematics and Science for first time, they find the content in these two subjects quite challenging. She agreed with some students' teachers concerns that much of the content in courses like Accounts does not address much of what to teach at primary level, but mainly content aimed at developing them as individuals for daily handling and solving of financial problems. MD 1, who is one of DTEP's Accounts tutors, agreed with the above view when she said that the Accounts course content is not relevant to primary teaching since it is more managerial and commercial, and it focuses on things such as cash book and school transactions, as is intended to ensure that those student teachers who will end up as school principals will have the necessary basic skills required for one to handle and account for school funds. Looking in the course outline of the Accounts module, MD 1's statement became evident for, among other things, the course units are on issues such as: sources of school finances, managing school finances and investments, school banking, budgeting etc. So DTEP also ensures that its clientele are equipped with necessary skills to handle their own funds as well as those of their school should they end up being principals.

Student teachers have varying opinions about the DTEP's content. On the one hand, the first three student teachers ST A, ST B and ST C agree that the DTEP's content is good and straight to the point. But, on the other hand, ST D, ST E and ST F said that only certain courses such as education (where they learn, among other things, lesson planning, scheming, the different stages of child development, how to handle conflicts without taking sides), English (spelling regulation) and Social and Development Studies (SDS) have relevant content. They find the other modules, such as Maths and Science, irrelevant because, these courses cover a content that is more suitable

for high school teaching (ST D, ST E and ST F). MD 2 also said: “the content in Maths and Science is of COSC level.”

Regarding this concern, SO agreed that the content of some courses is not relevant to primary school teaching and that it is too advanced and sometimes student teachers find it very difficult. However, he indicated that, at the end of the first and ongoing programme content review, the difficult content in Maths and Science will have been reduced. And while there is need to moderate the programme by putting more emphasis on how to teach mathematics at primary school level, he said that the program has to be kept in line with the pre-service one, so as not to end up offering two different education diploma courses by one institution. T1agreed that the accounts course is meant to help student teachers on how to manage school funds but that some content seems to be too much for student teachers e.g. spread sheets and that Maths taught to their student teachers is not meant just for primary teaching but for further studies as well.

It appears that the DTEP staff and student agree on the fact that some content taught in the course is beyond primary school content and teaching methodology, but, while the student teachers see this an unnecessary load and burden, the staff members consider it to be an opportunity for their students to further their studies not just for being teachers but in other professions as well as to enable them to deal with daily school and even home activities such as handling of finances.

But how easy or challenging is it for student teachers to put new information they are learning in DTEP into practice in their classrooms? Three student teachers, ST A, ST B and ST E, stated that they are always eager to put into practice in their schools what they have learnt in the DTEP, and that it is easy to do so because of the principal’s and parental support they get, especially with regard to learning materials. The school and parents do all that is in their capacity to ensure that teachers and the children have the necessary materials. For student teachers, ST C, ST D and ST F, it is not easy for them sometimes to apply what they have learnt because of a lack of materials to put certain content and methods into practice. According to ST F, they do not gain assistance from parents or from schools, especially in science where they have to improvise with teaching materials. They complained that this usually appears to be a limiting factor as they do not have

the right skills and time to improvise. Some student teachers find no resources related challenges putting into practice what they have learnt due to both parental and school support that they get, while the others are not so privileged and often find themselves having to improvise materials using the limited skills and time. So it could be said that the extent to which parents and schools themselves are able to support teachers in terms of acquiring certain materials intended to improve learning opportunities varies from one school to the next, may be determined by the level of education and affordability on the side of parents and the level of wealth of the schools themselves.

4.8. The DTEP Pedagogical Approach

The LCE (2003) does give specific information on the pedagogical approach of the DTEP. For example, in the science course module and its outline, the last unit "Contemporary Methods of Teaching Science" mentioned the usage of methods such as pupil-centred and investigative methods of teaching science. The first three DTEP staff members (T1, T2 and SO) agreed that the programme has a specific pedagogical approach whose importance is stressed among student teachers, even though they each explained it in rather different terms. According to T1, the programme emphasises breakthrough to learning through pictures leading to building sentences and how to move from sentences down to words and from words to letters. T2 said that DTEP students are encouraged to move from teacher-centred to learner-centred methods of teaching, while SO stated that students are encouraged to provide facilitation to learning as well as engage in construction of materials that can assist facilitation. SO also said that students are encouraged to employ learning principles of constructivism once they get back to their schools; he explained that the school curriculum is already learner-centred and has changed recently. As mentioned earlier, there is a unit on the contemporary and more learner-centred methods of teaching in the analysed Science course-outline and module.

So, according to the DTEP staff, the programme raises awareness among its students about the importance of breakthrough to learning, learner centred and constructivist approaches to teaching. These three DTEP staff members agree that it is a legitimate concern to move from teacher to learner-centred approaches of teaching; because they realise that students are not empty vessels but people who have already learnt and seen something worthwhile to bring into

their classroom from their environment they believe these methods allow students greater understanding since as T2 said “Practice makes perfect”.

According to MD 2, the new Activity, Student, Experiment and Improvisation (ASEI) and Plan, Do, See and Improve (PDSI) lesson plans are designed in a way that there has to be learner centeredness in any classroom; for instance she said they make it possible for kids to do activities on their own and in groups and then present to the teacher. MD 2 also indicated that the acronyms, ASEI and PDSI, were developed by the Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTEA) based in Kenya and that these types of lesson planning have been introduced by the MOE in Lesotho to help teachers to move away from teacher-centred approaches of teaching.

The student teachers said they are encouraged to use the following learner-centred methods of teaching; ST A talked about the demonstration methods which they are encouraged to use, and which make it easy for students to understand because they are able to see and be part of what they are being taught. ST B and ST C said that they are also encouraged to use group discussion as one of the important methods of teaching as well as the Socratic question-and-answer method, and other discovery methods. According to ST C, these methods are important in that they allow kids to reach conclusions by themselves. They are important as they enable children to interact with one another, and bring deeper and lasting understanding to students because the children cannot forget easily what they have discovered for themselves. ST F, like MD 1, said emphasis is made about the importance for teachers to function as facilitators and explainers, and all student teachers believed that these methods are really superior to the ones with which they were taught at school.

According to T1, in order to model active learning among DTEP clientele, in Sesotho modules some of them are assigned to carry out research on some cultural practices such as initiation. She stated that:

> “the current Child Friendly and Caring Schools Programme emphasize learner centred teaching and all DTEP full time staff is currently being trained now for this programme.”

T1 also stipulated that their trainees are very keen on the new learner centred methods of teaching. For instance, he says that table/desks arrangements in most classrooms of student teachers whom they have observed are in favour of group learning and that there are no major challenges regarding this approach. SO said that some students are keen on the new learner-centred methods, but others are not due to lack of ideas and that they tend to do more of what they have learnt from their own teachers. He showed however that, in most schools, there is a lack of resources and teachers have to be creative and innovative as far as resources that are needed to complement learner centred methods of teaching are concerned.

MD 1 stressed the importance of tutors being facilitators of discussions only and that student teachers are expected to read ahead and only ask questions and seek clarifications from their tutors in both the workshops and residential sessions. However, according to MD1, sometimes tutors don't do perform this facilitation role but instead they lecture to and she said this is a sign of irresponsibility on their side. MD 2 similarly said that tutors don't often practise what they preach to their student teachers, but as far as she attributed this to the fact that there is not enough time for tutors to always demonstrate the use of learner centred approaches to their students, and yet they always make them aware of the importance of such methods.

Tabulawa (2008) explains that learner-centred approach implies teachers are facilitators in the learning process and that learners are not culturally deficient but rather active participants in their own learning processes. Similarly all participating student teachers except ST D also stipulated that tutors use mostly lecturing and only sometimes grouping methods of teaching in both workshops and residential revision sessions due to limited time and ST A added that there is no time for practicals. They went on to show that tutors only tell them about learner-centred approaches to teaching but do not demonstrate it to them how to clearly to them how to practice and apply these learner-centred teaching methods when they get back to their schools.

What is clear is that, even though both student teachers and DTEP agree of the importance of the learner centred methods of teaching, due to time limitations the DTEP tutors themselves are not able to put these methods into practice. That is, they do not practice what they preach.

Among participating DTEP staff, only T1 and SO were able to identify and explain strategies that they employ to encourage critical reflection in their students; and the other three said so far they are not doing that. T1 said that they ensure critical reflection by student teachers through bringing them together from their various schools so that they can observe each others' teaching, and they are then asked to evaluate themselves in the presence of a tutor. Then, their peers are asked to critically assess them and the tutor also gives them critical feedback. SO responded that, critical reflection is encouraged among DTEP student teachers though not in a formal way. He indicated that, starting 2011, mandatory class observations are to start regularly more especially in the first year of the programme and that the plan is to keep track of such student teachers until their final year of study and before they graduate.

According to T1 and SO, critical reflection is ensured through classroom visits, observations and critical peer, self and tutor evaluation and assessment. Similarly only three student teachers (ST D, ST B and ST A) agreed that critical reflection is encouraged and/ensured amongst them, the other three student teachers(like majority DTEP staff did) said that it is not promoted at all. To start with, ST D showed that student teachers are encouraged to ask other teachers in their schools to observe their teaching, ST B said that critical reflection is done through observation and clinical supervision provided to them by their full time tutors, while ST A said they are able to critically reflect in their teaching because they are able to immediately put into practice what they have learned.

The majority three out of the five participating DTEP staff, as well as half of the participating student teachers were not aware of critical reflection and how it is promoted among their students. The implication is either that the programme does not facilitate critical reflection at all or that most of the staff and student teachers are ignorant of the fact that critical reflection is part of their daily activities, which may in turn mean that there is lack of understanding among DTEP staff as well as students as to what this critical reflection actually is.

Three student teachers (ST F, ST C and ST D) were able to comment on the importance and/or relevance of them being encouraged to engage in peer study groups with their fellow student teachers in the same area as them, and they said they are part of such groups. They expressed

certain views. According to ST F, engagement in peer sessions is very important because it allows them a chance to discuss modules' content and to tackle assignment questions together, and this student indicated that there have been no major challenges regarding this practice since all her peer group members have been committed. ST C said that she is part of peer sessions and that she and her group used the college as their meeting place, she said these sessions are very much important and that they help them to understand better what they have been studying each on their own once they get to discuss it as a group.

However, ST C also stated that sometimes it is not easy to meet due to other student teachers' personal and/or family commitments. ST D, ST B and ST A indicated that the main challenge for most student teachers to engage in peer sessions is time limitations since according to ST D; they already have other commitments as full time teachers, such as spouses and parents at home. Therefore while the fact that distance teacher education students are advantaged since they are able to study while they are still working and able to take care of their families as well, these could also be their downfall in the sense that they are not able to participate in some activities aimed to promote their learning such as peer study groups because their commitment as family members and full time teachers does not allow them such opportunity.

4.9. Teacher Pedagogical Change Models

T1, T2 and SO think it is important to change student teachers' attitudes such as beliefs that teaching the way their own teachers taught them is 'the way' before they attempt to do anything about changing their practices; T1 said that this could be done through positive approaches intended to make such students see the value/importance of, and need for, such a change. T2 emphasised that there should be some kind of regular follow up on student teachers to ensure that the intended changes of practice are being put into action when they get to their classrooms. SO stated that DTEP does this by making student teachers develop a lesson plan to teach a content that is aimed at changing student teachers' attitudes, which is then supposed to lead to a change of behaviour. He also said that student teachers are given a chance to discuss and explain how and why they do things the way they do, before they are given any feedback.

Since they started with DTEP, five student teachers said they have had to change the way they used to do certain things. ST A stated that he has been able to improvise with teaching aids when his school could not afford to supply him with some; this has been the case since he started with the programme. ST A and ST D mentioned that they have since been able to draw up proper lesson plans. ST B said that he had to change how he used to deliver lessons; for instance, he had to refrain from always solving problems for students, telling them what to do, and doing the talking most of the time, as opposed to leaving the kids discovering doing and more things by themselves.

ST C says she has had to change from teacher to learner-centred methods of teaching so as to promote more understanding in students, as this approach to teaching and learning allows students a chance to find things for themselves and also develops their ability to argue. For example, in English, ST C says tutors often times seek common problems that students experience in their learning of English and then give them a chance to address them in groups. ST C also said she uses learner-centred methods of teaching in the form of what is called Break-Through-to-Learning (BTL), more especially in teaching Sesotho, where, instead of first teaching learners single words, they rather go straight to introducing them to sentences from the word go and this, she said, results in having students who do not dodge school work or responsibilities since the learning activities are rather interesting.

Thus, since they started with DTEP, student teachers have had to change certain ways in which they used to do things such as the way they used to deliver lessons, have been able to improvise teaching materials, and been able to properly draw lesson plans that facilitate learner centred methods of teaching. This implies that DTEP is doing something to change certain attitudes, values and behaviours that its clientele may have accumulated and have been practising before they joined the programme.

According to ST F, ST D, ST B and ST A, the move from teacher to learner-centred methods of teaching makes students more independent since they learn to find out things by themselves. ST B believes leads them to more understanding and thus promote constructivism and makes them an integral part of their own learning. According to ST A:

"it is easy to use these methods since today's students are not shy to express themselves and they easily relate with their teachers."

However, student teachers also identified some challenges that accompany the change to learner-centred methods of teaching. According to ST C, such methods require lots of materials to be reproduced, for example, by photocopying them to address different students' capabilities, but that, in many cases in Lesotho, schools don't have resources to cater for such requirements. Another challenge, identified by ST D, is that learner-centeredness is not particularly easy to practice, more especially when teaching young kids in lower grades. She feels that some tasks are difficult for such kids to do by themselves, for instance, the use of measure sticks in Mathematics. ST D also concurred with ST A and S TF indicated that, most of the time, they fail to apply these methods because they are too time consuming, which, according to ST A:

"is a challenge for them as they already have heavy workloads since they are full time teachers and students".

It appears that the issue of majority schools lacking important resources and thus not being able to facilitate learner centred approaches is a recurring one. This therefore emphasises the need for DTEP to equip its clientele with as much improvising skills as possible. Also keeping coming up is the complaint that student teachers are not able to put into practice all they have learnt since they are pressurised by time as they are full time teachers who happen to be studying as well. So distance education has its own inherent challenges. Tabulawa (1998) concludes that any model of pedagogical change must recognize that classroom practices are informed by teachers' conceptions and understandings of teaching and learning, of schooling and its purpose as well as the contexts within which these have evolved.

4.10. Quality of DTEP and its Tutors

What kind of training do DTEP staff members undergo both before and after they embark on the distance education tutoring journey? On the one hand, according to MD 2, the World Bank helped the Lesotho College of Education to train tutors in distance education, and she was one of the first three trainees who obtained a certificate in distance education. MD 2 indicated that she also individually did a one-year distance programme with UNISA and she was able to complete it in just 6 months. Apart from that, she stated that two DTEP tutors were sent to Durham University in the United Kingdom to study for a Masters Degree in Distance Education. She said

that the then assistant Director of the programme was sent there to do a PHD in distance education. She further indicated that she is one of the programme's tutors who were given training on how to write modules and, in her view, this training was very relevant and of good quality.

On the other hand, MD 1 showed that she got no special training, except for a short orientation to introduce her and others to the programme. However, she said that there are no hindrances to her doing her job properly because of lack of training. She however acknowledges the importance and contribution of the several conferences of Distance Education she has been part of both locally and regionally, and in various universities and countries such as Wits, Fort-Hare, Namibia and Ghana (to name but just a few). She stated that it was the Department of Education and Training (DET) Africa which motivated the college management to send tutors to conferences.

According to SO, since fulltime tutors are already lecturers and they have all been part time tutors before, training for them is not formal and is done informally by regional coordinators. He also said that part time orientation workshops for DTEP tutors were held in September 2008 and that the materials used to train them in these workshops were mainly power point presentations, which he would like to print for all tutors. SO further indicated that part-time tutors are given documents and schedules to assist them on how to do their job. This training, he said, is necessary and needs to be strengthened as site tutors are not just responsible for students, but are also involved in administration work such as organizing trips for cluster workshops, and thus in order for them to be efficient, the beginning orientation is necessary**.**

It seems that only a few participating DTEP staff member have been fortunate enough to attend a series of long and short training courses while the majority have only been to conferences on distance education. Those who did feel that the training courses were very relevant while the rest does not in any way feel inhibited from doing their job by the fact that they have never been exposed to any formal training for distance teacher educators

According to all student teachers, the programme has played a major role in their life and they agreed that everything they have learnt in DTEP is of great importance. ST B said:

"it was a prominent role in improving them as teachers."

All of them, except ST D, pointed to different important lessons that the programme has taught them. S T A stated that he learnt how to deal with and handle young kids, while ST B said that DTEP has taught them how to ensure that their students can learn without teachers talking all the time or being harsh on them. ST E pointed out that they have also learnt about school administration and have been introduced to better teaching methods.

The programme, as ST F points out, has also made them more confident in their job as teachers, as they have gained more knowledge and understanding of their job. ST C indicated that it was good because they are always able to implement immediately the new knowledge and skills they have acquired. However for ST B and ST F, while the DTEP equipped them with the necessary knowledge and skills to teach at primary school, it also taught them too complicated stuff in subjects such as Mathematics and Science. ST B went on to say that other courses have to be revised so that they focus on primary school teaching content only and that:

"DTEP should not be used as a bridging course to university."

As far as he is concerned, DTEP's concern should be to equip its clientele with content and skills that they need for primary school teaching and nothing more.

So clearly student teachers have a very high regard of the role that DTEP has played to improve them as teachers and the way in which they deliver the teaching service to their students. But there is still the now familiar complaint by some student teachers about the unnecessary complicated content in some of the courses.

Student teachers also vary in the way they range DTEP as a programme; the majority four of the six student teachers (ST A, ST B, ST C and ST F) consider the DTEP to be a good and successful programme which brings a lot of change to both unqualified and PTC-graduate teachers. However, two student teachers (ST D and ST E) rate the DTEP as average because of

its too short contact-time. This implies that DTEP generally has a positive impact on its clientele who consider it to be a good and successful programme.

On the progress quality of DTEP students the participating staff members had the following to say; T1 said that their students are already fulltime adult teachers, who perform well in most of the courses and who can easily progress into B. Ed primary or any other equivalent programme. However, she pointed out that there are a few subjects such as Maths, science and Commercial studies in which students' progress isn't going well. SO also said that very few student teachers fail, that only a few of them drop out, due to different reasons which he could not mention, but he is generally satisfied with students' progress. SO also said that they provide supplementary exams and that DTEP students are allowed to string along to the next year of study one or two courses which they have failed in the previous year of study. It appears the DTEP staffs are generally satisfied with the progress and quality of their students' work and, while there are challenges, there also seems to be strategies in place aimed at addressing them.

4.11. DTEP Course Materials Design and Delivery

In order to facilitate access to and utilization of relevant and appropriate texts, the institution provides students with course materials specifically designed by local staff members who take into consideration the socio-cultural needs of the learners and cover all the courses expected to be taken during the four years of the course duration (NTTC, 2001). All participating DTEP staff echoed this by explaining that the DTEP course materials are designed by full-time tutors in their subject specialisation, either by themselves or with the assistance of some external subjects' specialists such as lecturers from the National University of Lesotho (NUL), where necessary.

According to MD 1, the DTEP lecturers are using the National Curriculum Development Centres' (NCDC) curriculum to meet the Ministry's requirements built on the pre-service modules. She indicated that there is not much difference between the pre-service and in-service modules, since lecturers in both programmes actually work and design their course modules together. MD 1 further said that they get information about other countries' distance education programmes from attending local and international distance education conferences. The researcher found out through consultation of year 3 science module that course development

teams are indeed made mainly by the course fulltime tutors themselves, as in the case of this particular module which has been developed and written by three science tutors, who are still with the programme even now. So the DTEP subject specialists are responsible for designing course materials in their different fields with the assistance of other specialists from other institutions such as NUL.

SO summed it all up by showing that DTEP staffs are work shopped (by UNESCO) on how to develop the modules with a two-weeks training for all DTEP staff. SO stated that the training is relevant in assisting them to develop materials for the distance learner and there is a continually monitored and edited format for all subjects.

MD 1 indicated that the module booklets are so far the only mode of delivering information to their students and that, since 2004, there has been plans to have the modules in both audio and visual form but there has been no development in this regard whatsoever. Talking of radio lessons, Murphy and Zhiri (1992) argue that they are designed to support and reinforce the correspondence component and primarily to motivate the teachers and to pace them as they work through the study materials.

According to SO, these materials were moderated in 2004 and are being reviewed now with inputs and/or changes to be made effective by January 2011. SO said that their course modules are of excellent quality, even though they do not have much on the pedagogic approach. The researcher found out this was also the case, maybe to a greater degree because, in all the three modules analysed, only the science module has a chapter on pedagogical approach, the other two did not. Like their tutors said, ST D, ST A, ST C and ST F showed that the modules are their only main source of information for the course and they all said that they are encouraged to use the college library which is very well equipped. ST B also shared the same ideas with the other four student teachers, but he and ST C added that, apart from the course modules and the college library, they also use the internet as a source of information.

So DTEP uses only one source of information: the module booklets to deliver information to their students, the plans to develop both visual and audio materials have only been talk so far

since there are still no materials six years after they were devised. The danger of this, as revealed in the research undertaken by Kunje (2002), is that most tutors use the handbooks exclusively as source books and teachers' guides, hence making little or in other cases no reference to other material. This clearly shows that there are severe limitations when it comes to DTEP's course delivery materials and if any student/s may find a certain module or chapter in it to be difficult they are still however stuck with it since there would no other tool to turn to, except for a few student teachers who claim that they have access to the internet.

The course materials have been reviewed for the first time in 2010, approximately 9 years since they were developed. There is however reason for concern because of the difficulties of revision of printed/published course materials, and often distance education courses are used for too long and are not updated (Welch and Reed, 2005).

On the quality of the course materials, T1 stated that the course materials designed by the DTEP staff members are of good quality and that they are relevant to the needs of students. She said that this is so because they have used different sources to develop their materials per chapter and that their modules suggest further reading. The researcher found this to be so in that; all the three modules analysed and their course outlines refer student teachers to further readings at the end of every chapter. So, while the course modules are the main sources of information and learning for the course, student teachers are not confined to relying only on them as they are often referred to other sources of information.

In addition, MD 2 said that their modules are self-instructional, are written in learner friendly language, have continual activities and are also communicative as well as conversational, and T1 added that the modules are clear and detailed with questions and answers sections at the back. The researcher confirms, by her analysis of some modules, the fact that the writers are talking directly to learners as in the Year two module unit three, where the writers introduce the unit by writing:

> "In this third unit we are going to deal with.... and at the end of this unit, you should be able to...."

All the three modules are using only the first and second person pronouns to address student teachers directly; there is no third person pronoun usage. Similarly, all these student teachers, except ST C, said that the course modules are well detailed, conversational, clearly expressed and thus easy for student teachers to study on their own and to understand. ST C expressed a view that that, while generally the course modules are easy to read, clarity of materials differs from one person to another and from one course to another, as in the case with some student teachers who think that the Maths and Science modules are very complicated. But generally speaking it is evident that the DTEP course modules are to a high degree very direct in addressing students and are thus making them feel like an integral part of their learning.

However, all participating student teachers complained that modules were usually delivered to them very late, especially in the first two years when they get them, often just before examinations even though in some instances, some modules were not delivered at all (ST F said that they still miss one Year 2 module). MD 1 shared the student teachers' sentiment when she showed that recently the delivery of course materials to student teachers was done in time, while up to 2008 some students would even write examinations while they still missed some modules. Student teachers said there has been some improvement and that, in the last two years, they were given their modules immediately upon registration. According to Welch and Reed (2005), in a distance education programme in which the main means of communication of the curriculum is the course materials, it is only when learners receive the materials that they can start learning. And failure to produce and dispatch materials on time has dire consequences as non-delivery of the programme. So DTEP's delivery of course materials was poor in the first two years of this student teacher group, but is said to have improved in the last two years of the programme.

4.12. Programme Improvements and Suggestions

None of the NTTC/LCE documents analysed mention either long or short term innovative/ improvement strategies for the programme. According to T1 and SO, there have not been any major innovations or new practices brought into DTEP since it was founded in 2002. T1 said that there have been proposals to use tapes and videos and to improve transport to remote areas and resource centres so as to strengthen the operations and to improve accessibility, but that up until now it has all just been talk that never materialised into reality. SO emphasised that there is much

room for improvement and that their main concern is to have more resources, this he indicated is something yet to be answered by the Ministry of Education.

The DTEP staff appeared to have differing information concerning the review of the course materials. T1 and MD 2 showed that DTEP materials' reviewing started in February this year 2010 for use in 2011. According to MD 1, MD 2 and T1, the DTEP curriculum started undergoing a review in November 2009 to February 2010, with the intention to add or make changes where necessary. T1 added that through this review, new staff got exposure as to how the reviews are done. The whole process, she says, was closely monitored and edited by a UNDP specialist who came for a year. However, T1 says this has not been successful due to the writers' financial grievances which the college administration has still not attended to (i.e. refusing to pay them for the extra job of reviewing the materials). The whole process, she says,

"is being closely monitored and edited by a UNDP specialist who came for a year."

There is consensus among participating DTEP staff that their course materials have or are being reviewed for 2011. But there appears to be obstacles, for example where the LCE became reluctant to reward reviewers, thus slowing down the process and/or putting it even to a halt.

DTEP staff also shared grievances regarding transportation, according to MD 1, "DTEP suffers as if it is a 2nd class mode of teaching, it is disadvantaged financially in a controversial teacher college and DTEP vehicles are abused and not in the good condition for site transport." SO highlighted a similar situation when he showed that the only challenges that they are experiencing are logistical with a shortage of vehicles "since the new administration". The shortage raises concern as to how it affects the transporting of tutors to workshop areas and for school visits as well as the delivery of course materials. MD 1 feels that distance education works well where it is operated in an isolated campus, and does not get treated like it is of a secondary importance compared to the full time programmes offered in the college.

Apart from that, T1's view point is that, if DTEP was to be changed, it would be important to make sure that it had more collaboration with inspectors and other stakeholders, such as school managers, to learn from them what type of teacher they are expecting and to include their views

when the programme is reviewed. SO, T1 and T2 said that they would also introduce innovations to use advanced technology such as online communication where possible. T2 emphasised the need to continue put into place more resource centres and transport to cater for those in remote areas. SO also wants to see the use of audio tape and visual materials (such as radio and DVD lessons) for selected instruction. DTEP staff members have suggestions in the form of a range of innovations, ranging from inclusion of all stakeholders, incorporation of advanced technology in delivering the course, having more resource centres and reliable transport system, which they would want to see put into place in order to make the programme a success.

Finally, if they were given the chance to re-design the DTEP, a vast majority of five student teachers (ST A, ST B, ST D, ST E and ST F) would cut down on general information not necessary for primary school teaching and would focus more on primary school content, especially in Maths, Accounts and Science. ST C said that the programme is generally fine as it is and does not need any major changes. The majority DTEP student teachers would be happier if DTEP could just focus on primary school content. This implies that the course has so far failed to communicate to the student teachers the importance/s of learning beyond the content they are teaching in their classrooms.

4.13. Conclusion

This chapter presented the data by way of triangulating the information found in the analysed course documents with the one derived from interviews with the DTEP tutors, material designers and student teachers. In the process, certain trends, patterns and relationships started to emerge between the different data. For example the poor academic background (poor parental academic achievements) and low entry requirements, are likely to be the main reason behind the student teachers negative attitude towards any other content they are taught that goes beyond what they need to teach at primary school level. The following chapter analyses and interprets the above presented data in the light of the literature reviewed, as well as discusses these trends and patterns in detail.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Introduction

While the previous chapter focused on the data presentation, this chapter aims at analysis and interpretation of such data. This step is crucial because this is where the researcher attempts to give meaning to the data collected. The chapter does this by looking at the data and drawing comparisons with the literature already presented in Chapter 2 concerning the DTEP's origin, students, content and outcomes as well as pedagogical mode and impact. In the process the chapter attempts to identify emerging relationships, trends and patterns between the different themes of the data.

5.2 DTEP's Origin and Aim

This study shows that DTEP's origin is closely related to the implementation of the demands for UPE and FPE. The analysis of some NTTC/LCE documents and study materials as well as data from interviews with DTEP staff members reveal that the Lesotho's Ministry of Education and Training introduce put the policy and programme for the first time in 2000. It aimed, among other things, to improve the efficiency and the performance of existing teachers without making them suffer any kind of disruption as far as their social and family lives are concerned. As mentioned by various authors, the Lesotho primary education system experienced a serious shortage of teachers as a result of the introduction of the FPE policy, and thus a great number of un/under qualified teachers had to be employed. This is similar to what Lewin (2002) mentioned that, with most developing countries being committed to providing Universal Primary Education (UPE), primary school enrolments increased rapidly in many developing countries with low participation rates, thereby creating a rapid increase in demand for teachers.

In responding to this predicament, the Lesotho MOET had to put into place through the NTTC, a distance teacher education programme and; "the proposed Distance Education Programme (DTEP) came as a precursor to quality and quantity supply of the needed primary school teachers" NTTC (2001, 2). This particular programme replaced the former INSET programme which functioned at a one-cohort basis.

5.3. DTEP Student Teachers' Background

Another important issue that emerges from the findings is that DTEP student teachers are of more or less similar socio-economic backgrounds, with more than 90% of parents being of similar and very low academic achievements (many of them only have primary education), and with only a few of the female parents have diplomas but no university degree**.** A similar situation was revealed in Lesotho by Lewin and Stuart (2003), namely that more mothers than fathers were qualified above the secondary school level, although none of the student teachers' parents had a university degree. This matter is of significant importance in this study because researchers like Akyeampong and Stephens (2002) pointed out that, student teachers' parents' occupations and education levels provide insight into their socio-economic background and are likely to influence students on both their personal and professional aspirations.

It is difficult to assess the impact of parental qualifications on student teachers' desire and determination to pursue their studies. On the one hand, students who watched their parents struggle to make it in life, may be inspired by that very fact to work hard to achieve a better way of living and be a in a position to assist their parents later in life. On the other hand, some students may have been so accustomed to the difficult way of living so much that, to them it may seem or appear to be normal and hence the reason for them not to see the necessity for continued studying.

5.4 Reasons for Becoming Teachers and Choosing a Distance Education Programme

This study indicates however that none of the participating student teachers have come into DTEP as their first choice programme, but they chose the course because of their poor COSC results. This may mean that these student teachers are not as enthusiastic and motivated to do their work as students and teachers. The finding also confirms concern in the literature about the quality and motivation for teacher education programmes clientele in general, not just inset and/or distance teacher education programmes. For example, Schwille et al (2007) argue that the pool of prospective teachers from which teacher education institutions are able to draw on is often far from being the most favourable, especially in developing countries. It is often characterised by people with low motivation to become teachers. Thus, as Schwille et al. (2007) suggest, it is important that those responsible for planning programmes of teacher education are

well informed about the background and attitudes of potential entrants as well as their motivation to enter the teaching field.

The study also revealed that some participating DTEP student teachers ended up in the teaching field by taking after their own teachers whom they considered to be role models for them. This is not surprising since most of them do not have educated parents who could give them some kind of career guidance. Their former teachers were the only educated people they were ever exposed to, hence the desire to take after them. According to Schwille et al (2007:48),

> "trainees are ready to model themselves on memories of their own teachers, without being able to analyze clearly what made their methods successful."

Schwille et al (2007) believe that the apprenticeship of observation has often a powerful effect on how future and beginning teachers think about teaching. They also suggest that the formulation of inset policy and design programmes must take into account teachers' opportunities to learn from the beginning of their own schooling and throughout their teaching careers.

5.5 Course Duration and Mode of Delivery

This study revealed that the DTEP is a 4 year-course whose main mode of distant delivery consists of two weeks residential per semester as well as three workshops of two days each per year. There are three assignments per semester, exams twice a year as well regular school visits and class observations by site tutors throughout the year.

This responds to what Welch and Reed mention using the NADEOSA criterion;

> "For each course, there is a publicly accessible and learner-friendly description of the aims and learning outcomes; entry-level skills, knowledge and experience; credit rating and/or notional hours of learning; target learners; teaching and learning strategies; content outline; items in the learning package (including elements such as study guides, textbooks, tutorial letters, audiotapes and videotapes); assessment strategy; and a year plan containing key dates for learners." (2005: 26)

However this finding refutes what Schwille et al (2007) state that the drive toward Universal Primary Education (UPE) has led many developing countries to reducing the duration of their inset teacher preparation programmes, in some cases to a few months and/or even weeks, as the DTEP is not a short-term course.

5.6. DTEP's Entry Requirements

The findings of this study confirm the concern in the literature about the poor or low academic performance and/or qualifications of entrants into inset and distance teacher education programmes. For example, according to Welch and Reed, (2005), the NADEOSA criterion shows that, in South Africa, to facilitate access, entry requirements for in-service programmes are as open as possible, and include recognition of the entrants' prior learning and experience. This research revealed that the DTEP's entry requirements are rather open, and therefore low, compared to those for the face-to-face fulltime pre-service diploma programme. **S**imilar to the NADEOSA criterion, the DTEP does some form of recognition of prior learning of student teachers in that those who have some form of primary school teaching qualification are exempted from year one of the programme (Welch and Reed, 2005).

The impact of the DTEP's low entry requirements could contribute to low self esteem and/or morale, self-doubt and even poor performance among such student teachers, as they and the outside could see the DTEP as a second-best programme because of its low entry requirements. This could also be a reason why the DTEP student teachers feel that any content they are taught that is not primary school subject content constitute too much of an unnecessary/unwanted burden. Student teachers' lack of enthusiasm to learn more than what is needed to teach primary school may be a direct or indirect result of the poor entry requirements.

This points to the need, as pointed out in the NADEOSA criterion that, where entry is open, care needs to be taken to provide sufficient academic support to learners who may be under-prepared. This can be done through the provision of access or bridging courses, additional units within existing courses, or increased face-to-face support (Welch and Reed, 2005). However, none of these measures or bridging courses exists in the case of the DTEP. Lefoka and Sebatane (2002)

also assert that, since the Lesotho College of Education continues to admit weak students, it needs to develop a bridging course whose aim should be to counter the trainee teachers' academic weaknesses.

5.7. DTEP's Course Content

The study established that the DTEP, like any other teacher education program, is made up of three components: primary school subject content, teaching methodology as well content that prepares them for further study, not just in the education field, but in other areas, such as humanities, music and arts. However, all participating DTEP student teachers, except one, are not in favour of the third component which they tend to view as unnecessary since it goes beyond what they need to teach at primary school. As ST B said,

> "The DTEP should not be used as a bridging course for university".

This could be as a result of the students feeling that they do not have what it takes to deal with anything beyond primary school teaching content.

Few of the analysed DTEP course modules appear to focus on teaching methodology (except for the science module), revealing that the DTEP does not put enough emphasis on teaching methodology. This concurs with Glennie and Mays (2009: 6) who argue:

> "increasing emphasis is being placed on pedagogic content knowledge and skills. This is the area where distance education has often not demonstrated success."

However, in the case of DTEP, this could partly be due to the fact that the researcher did not gain access to many course modules.

5.8. DTEP Course Administration Challenges

The research revealed that the DTEP has some administrative problems, ranging from poor transport for students, high student: tutor ratio, irregular school visits and late delivery of course materials. These confirm what Monk (1999:14) mentioned that; "in general terms, distance education is marred by slow administration, "as well as Kunje's (2002) study findings that tutor visits are much less frequent than planned and the structure of the training programs allowed little space for tutors to leave college and follow their students into schools, particularly as they were scattered country wide.

As a result, student teachers were often frustrated by the late delivery of course materials and struggled to get assignments done in time. The not-so-frequent school visits left students to be lonely, something Monk (1999) noted about student teachers left to fend for themselves without regular supervision. Lack of transport could be one reason behind the late delivery of materials as well as the irregular tutor visits to student teachers.

5.9. Course Materials Design and Quality

On the design of course materials, this study found that DTEP course materials are developed by internal subject specialists in collaboration with some external specialists from the National University of Lesotho.

DTEP course materials have been structured following the sequence that student teachers are expected to study/cover within the time frames. Each module comes with three assignments, completed with guidelines as to how each question has to be tackled. This finding is in line with what Welch and Reed (2005) propose that modules need a study plan that structures the timing and sequence of students' educational progress, assignment tasks are to be scaffolded with detailed instructions and clear assessment criteria and possible structures for essays and reasons why such structures are useful. Welch and Reed (2005) assert that the starting point of any distance education programme is the quality of the learning materials. According to them, the SAIDE and the Wits distance education learning materials are of high quality because they are comprehensive, accessibly written, clearly structured, interactive, and encourage reflection on teaching experience in the light of the text.

The fact that the DTEP relies on local and external specialists to work together to design the study packs can be perceived as one important factor of quality for the DTEP course materials. As Clive (1982) argues, the use of larger design groups ensures that the learning materials are more credible, reliable, plausible and for the enjoyment of students and teachers who use the materials. However, the downside is that these learning guides or materials are the only means of communicating the course. Yet, it is not pedagogically effective for the programme to rely only on one form of course communication, namely single books/learning guides. Such materials

should be complemented in the course design by other components to produce an entire self-contained package.

Murphy and Zhiri (1992) warn that, since correspondence study materials constitute the main medium of instruction, study materials should be developed in instructional units that are, to a large extent, self contained and written in a manner that makes them highly interactive, something that informs the DTEP materials.

The study also revealed that DTEP course materials have from the beginning of the course been dispatched late, with some not delivered at all. However, by 2008 and 2009, this was changed with course materials being given out at registration time. According to the NADEOSA criterion, this is important as it is only when learners of distance education programmes receive the materials that they can start learning. Failure to produce and dispatch materials on time has dire consequences for the delivery of the programme (Welch and Reed, 2005).

The study revealed that, even though the course modules are the only source of course communication, reference is made in each module to more reading materials for student teachers. In addition, the college library is well equipped with valuable and relevant reference materials. This finding contrasts what Kunje (2002) said about the problem in tutors using exclusively the handbooks, hence making little or no reference to other material.

5.10. Change in Pedagogic Approach

The research also shows that DTEP tutors emphasise the importance of using learner-centred methods of teaching, but they do not usually demonstrate to them the use of such methodology, except in rare occasions during the brief contact sessions. This confirms what Lewin and Stuart (2003) found out that, while college teachers in many developing countries are aware of, and understand, the recommended shift to learner-centred teaching, there is little understanding of how to implement and practice this approach into the programme itself. DTEP student teachers understand the importance of such methods and claim that they do put them into action, although they complained about the lack of support and necessary teaching aids needed to use learner-centred teaching approaches in their classroom. Thus, well written study materials does not assist

student teachers to effectively put into practice learner-centred methods in their own classrooms, as these methods are never thoroughly modelled for them. It is one of the study's weaknesses to have not been able to visit the student teachers' classrooms, to assess whether they do employ these teaching methods.

Another interesting finding is that DTEP student teachers are not resistant to change or new practices that the DTEP introduces them to. For instance, they acknowledge that they have learnt a lot from DTEP and that they have changed certain ways in which they used to do things and deliver their lessons. Tabulawa (1998) explains that:

> "Teachers' adoption of innovations or new practices depends on the degree to which the assumptions inherent in the innovation are congruent with the teachers' beliefs." (p. 253)

What is more difficult, as Monk (1999) says, is to support change in teachers' pedagogical skills through distance learning beyond new curriculum materials. But the DTEP does not have such materials, even though it has been planned and agreed to as early as 2004.

5.11. Student Teachers' Attitude Changes

DTEP student teachers changed their attitudes and developed positive attitudes towards teaching in general, and distance teacher education in particular over the four years of the programme. For instance, a majority (83%) of the participating student teachers said they would still choose the inset programme to become better teachers if they were ever to do it again. As Schwille et al (2007) argue, the key and crucial issue, when assessing teacher education and professional development programmes, is to document the change in the views and knowledge of people entering and then completing these programmes. This finding implies that DTEP is contributing to a change in student teachers' initial lack of motivation and negative attitude towards teaching and the programme.

5.12. Revision and Programme Improvements

This study found that the DTEP study materials were developed and used in 2002 with one review in 2004. The plans to improve them were made but were only planned for use at the end of 2009 - early in 2010. One DTEP staff member hinted that this could have been due to the disputes about remuneration as well as conflicts between course materials writers and the college

administration. Related to teaching materials is also the important point of adequate tutor and/or lecturer training on the materials, which can be costly or time-consuming.

According to Welch and Reed (2005), the lack of update materials was a problem according to the NADEOSA criterion, which requires distance education courses to be updated and revised even though there are always difficulties in revising printed/published course materials as well as training tutors. This is also what Clive (1982:20) warns about when he suggests that:

> "the effectiveness of individual materials in meeting objectives and of the overall strategy of partial inset through materials needs to be kept under review within the context of the overall inset programme"

5.13 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to analyze and interpret data in terms of the reviewed literature and the study's conceptual framework. It identified some trends and patterns which are similar and which sometimes contradict or add to the literature. The findings show that DTEP staff members are aware of the programme's limitations and what needs to be strengthened and/or improved, especially the review/update and adequate use of various learning materials by tutors and lecturers during the contact sessions. They suggested a range of innovations that DTEP could benefit from, such as greater resources to incorporate advanced technology in delivering the course, the establishment of more resource centres and reliable transport system.

The next chapter draws conclusions and recommendations on the findings of this study in terms of the original research questions of this study.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter draws some conclusions to the study and as well gives recommendations based on the data analysis and interpretation of the data as discussed in the preceding chapters. Apart from giving recommendations on how the DTEP's mode of delivery, administration and other features could be improved and/or strengthened to ensure the programme has a greater impact and is made more accessible, the chapter makes a few recommendations as well as point to areas for further research. Such conclusions and recommendations are made around the original research questions of the study.

6.2. Academic and socio-economic background of DTEP trainees

The study found out that majority student teachers' parents are not educated; most of them have only primary education. The study assumes that these parental qualifications are one of the main influencing factors as to why most of the participating student teachers want to acquire only a primary school teaching diploma. To them, this is a great achievement since they do not know many people with a higher education qualification to look up to.

The DTEP's aim is to train as many primary school teachers as possible and to make sure that this addresses the increasing number of unqualified teachers in the Lesotho's primary education system by 2012/13. The programme's content consists of primary school subject content, teaching methodology as well as content that prepare student teachers for further study, beyond the essentials for primary teaching. However, DTEP student teachers are not keen to study content that prepares student teachers for further study as they view this as an extra and unnecessary load. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, this is probably a result of the lack of motivation and career aspiration due to their poor family academic background, poor COSC results, which make student teachers perceive the third part of DTEP content as an extra and unnecessary burden.

Thus, a recommendation could be that the LCE and DTEP administrators put into place some bridging course/s and induction programmes to compensate for the poor entry requirements. The LCE also needs to devise motivation strategies through which student teachers could be

encouraged to think of a career path and life-long learning that includes going further than studying for a primary diploma teaching certificate.

6.3. Quality of the DTEP content, pedagogical methods and learning materials

DTEP's course materials are developed by groups of subject specialists made up of local subject specialists and external fellow specialists, from the National University of Lesotho. As a result, DTEP's course materials are reasonably well written, interactive and of acceptable quality.

It is suugested that such good practice is maintained and strengthened and that to bring in more specialists from other institutions and even other countries where possible is a positive aspect.

However, these materials are the programme's only mode of DTEP course communication which were only revised and adopted late 2009/early 2010 (i.e. nearly 9 years later). What are also needed are more comprehensive learning packages that go beyond the learning guides. Beyond more frequent revision of course materials (every 5 years), more forms of course delivery instruments, such as CD's, DVD's, radio lessons etc, should also be devised and invested in to complement the existing course materials for the greater good and success of both student teachers and DTEP.

DTEP tutors emphasise to their students the importance of using learner-centred methods of teaching, but they do not ever demonstrate to them the practicalities of using such methodology because of time limitations. This, together with the fact that the materials should be updated and revised, points to the need to have more frequent training of tutors and lecturers including training of how to model the new teaching learner-centred approach.

6.4 Engagement of DTEP with different students' attitudes, background and identities

It is of interest to note that the DTEP student teachers do not resist changing their wrong or uninformed practices with new and most effective ones. Even though most of them enrolled for DTEP by necessity, they have developed positive attitudes towards teaching in general, and distance teacher education in particular. The DTEP could be praised for succeeding in changing student teachers' negative attitudes prior to commencing the programme. This could partly be the

result of student teachers being able to work and stay with their families throughout the course of the programme. This is one of the main strengths of the current DTEP.

6.5 Student teachers' perceptions of the relevance of course content, delivery and pedagogy

The DTEP is a 4 year-course, whose distance mode of delivery consists of residential sessions, workshops, assignments, exams as well as school visits and class observations by site tutors throughout the year. Some student teachers feel that 4 years is too long but others believe it is necessary. However, both concur that the number of contact workshops should increase. However, a distinction is needed between what the workshops aim to achieve and what student teachers should learn on their own

It is therefore recommended that the LCE, through its distance education department, emphasise to both tutors and student teachers that a distance education programme means that workshops are not meant for tutors to teach the whole content of the course, but that they are there to assist student teachers to make the best use of distance education by relying on all the course materials, since such materials are the main form of communication of the course.

6.6. Recommendations for Further Research

Following the findings of the study, it is clear that some areas need further research. Firstly, more studies relying on classroom observations as a tool of data collection are needed to understand how competently DTEP qualified teachers use learner-centred methods of teaching as the challenges they encounter in the process. This is because both the literature review and the participants of this study point that teaching methods are of utmost importance to improve learning, especially at primary school level and that learner-centred approaches are difficult to impart.

Secondly, further research could be conducted on a much larger scale by including student teachers population from the remotest and most rural parts of the country, to determine the issue of access and what transpires with these remotely situated people as they have to attend workshops, residential sessions as well as peer study groups, etc. Such studies need also to

analyze a larger number of study materials across various disciplines and years of study to draw more informed and specific conclusions regarding their quality.

Thirdly, as this study did not manage to do much in this regard, more in-depth research should be conducted on the quality of the DTED distance learning materials, looking at their scope and their progression over the 4 years.

Finally, the study suggests further research to determine the extent to which DTEP's aim to eradicate unqualified teachers' practice in the Lesotho's primary schools by 2012/13 would have been realised. This should be done through a large-scale survey, to be carried out across the whole of Lesotho,

REFERENCES

Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). (1999). *What Works and What's New in Education: Africa speaks.* Paris: ADEA.

Akyeampong, K. (2002). Reconceptualising Teacher Education in the African Context. *Journal of International co-operation in education,* 5(1) pp. 11-30. US: University of Sussex.

Akyeampong, Kwame (a) and Stephens David (b). (2002). Exploring the backgrounds and shaping beginning student teachers in Ghana: towards greater contextualization of teacher education. *International Journal of Education*, 22 (3-4), pp 261-274.

Anderson, L.M. and Holt-Reynolds. D. (1995). *Prospective Teachers' Beliefs and Teacher Education Pedagogy.* Michigan State University.

Ball, I. and Goodson, S. J. (1985). *Teachers' Lives and Careers*. London: The Falmer Press.

Bauer, M.W. and Gaskell George. (2000). *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound.* UK: SAGE Publications.

Beijarard, D, Verloop, N and Vermunt, J.D. (1999). *Teaching and Teacher education.* Netherlands: Leiden University.

Beijaard, D, Verloop Nico and Vermunt Jan D. (2000). Teachers' Perceptions of professional Identity: an explanatory study from a personal Knowledge Perspective. *Teaching and teacher education,* 16 (7), pp 749-64. Netherlands: Leiden University.

Berry, A., Clemans, A and Kostogriz, A (eds). (2007). *Dimensions of Professional Learning; Professionalism, Practice and Identity.* Rotterdam: Sense publishers.

Brock, C. (editor). 1996. *Global Perspectives on Teacher Education.* UK: Triangle Journals Ltd.

Clive, Neville (1982). *Development and Use of Materials for In-Service Training of Teachers.* London: Council for Education Technology.

Cohen, L. and Manion, L. (1980). *Research Methods in Education.* London: Helm.

Cohen, L. And Manion, L. (1994). *Research methods in education*. London: Routledge.

Cochran, M. and Zeichner, K. M. (2005). *Studying Teacher Education.* New York: Routledge.

Cochran-Smith, M., Feiman, N., Mclntyre, D.J and Demers, K.E. (eds). (2008). *Handbook of Research on Teacher education.* New York: Routledge.

Coultus, J.C and Lewin, M.K. (2002). Who Becomes a Teacher; The Characteristics of Student Teachers in Four Countries. *Special Edition of Journal of Education,* 22 (3-4), April-July, pp 243-260

Dembele, M. and Miaro-11, B.R. (2003). *Pedagogical Renewal and Teacher Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Thematic Synthesis*. Paris: International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP).

Diamond, C.T.P. (1991). *Teacher Education as Transformation*. Philadelphia University Press.

Duffy, Jim, Warren Kelly and Walsh Margaret (2001). Classroom Interactions: gender of Teacher, gender of student, and Classroom Subject. *Sex Roles,* 45 (9/10), pp. 579-593. Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Fischman, G. and Nelly, P. (2000). *Rethinking gender Dynamics in Teacher Education.* USA: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Freebody, P. (2003). *Qualitative Research in Education*. London: SAGE Publications.

Freeman, D. (1982). Observing Teachers. Three Approaches to In-service Training and Development. *TESOL Quarterly,* 16 (1), pp 21-28, Japan: TESOL

Freeman-Moir and Scott, A. (Eds). (2007). *Shaping the Future; Critical Essays on Teacher Education.* Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Fullan, M. (1991). *The New meaning of educational Change*. London: Cassell.

Glennie, J & Mays, T. 2009. Teacher Education through Distance Education – Rising to the challenge. Paper presented at the DETA conference, University of Cape Coast, August 2009.

Grossman, P. (2005). *Studying Teacher Education.* London: SAGE Publications.

Henderson, E. S. (1978). *The Evaluation of In-service Teacher Education.* London: Croom Helm.

Kunje Demis. (2002). The Malawi Integrated In-service teacher education programme: an experiment with mixed-mode training. *International Journal of Educational Development,* 22 305-320, UK: University of Sussex.

Lefoka, P.J. and Sebatane, E.M. (2002). Initial Primary Teacher Education in Lesotho. *MUSTER Research Report No.2,* UK: University of Sussex (Centre for International Education).

Lefoka P.J and Sebatane M.E. (2001). New Teachers on the Job: The Impact of Teacher Education in Lesotho. *MUSTER Discussion Paper 27.* UK: University of Sussex (Centre for International Education).

Lefoka, J.P. et al. (2000). Lesotho: A baseline Study of the Teacher Education System. *MUSTER Discussion Paper No.8*, UK: University of Sussex (Centre for International Education).

Lewin, M.K. (2002). *The cost of supply and Demand for Teacher Education; Dilemma for development. International Journal of Educational Development*, 22 (3-4), pp 221-242. UK: University of Sussex.

Lewin, M.K. and Stuart, J.S. (2003). Researching Teacher education: New Perspectives on Practice, Performance and Policy. *DFID Research Series 49(a)*, London: DFID.

MacMillan, J.H. and Schumacher, S. (2006). *Research in Education.* New York: Pearson.

Monk, M. (1999). *In-service for Teacher Development in Sub- Saharan Africa*. London: DID.

Murphy, Paud and Zhiri, A. (eds). (1992). *Distance Education in Anglophone Africa.* USA: The WB.

NTTC. (2001). *Distance Teacher Education Programme (DTEP). General Regulations and Course Curriculum.* Maseru: NTTC.

Payne, Geoff and Payne, Judy. (2004). *Key Concepts in Social Research.* London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Perraton, H.D. (1993). *Distance Education for Teacher Training.* New York: Routledge.

Punch F. Keith. 2009. *Introduction to Research Methods in Education.* London: SAGE Publisher.

Robinson, B and Latchem, R.C. (2003). *Teacher Education Through Open and Distance* New York: Routledge.

Robinson, B. (1997). *Distance Education for Primary Teacher Training in Developing Countries; Innovations in Delivering Primary Education*. New York: Routledge.

Rodriguez, J.A and Kitchen, S.R. (2005), *Preparing Mathematics and Science Teachers for Diverse Classrooms*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Samuel, M. and Stephens, D. (2000). Critical Dialogues with Self: Developing Teacher Identities and roles – A Case Study of South African Student Teachers. *International Journal of Educational Research,* 33 (2), pp 475-491. UK: University of Brighton.

Schwille, J., Dembele, M. and Schubert, J. (2007). *Global Perspectives on Teacher Learning; Improving Policy and Practice.* Paris; UNESCO/IIEP.

Stake E. Robert. (1995). *The Art of Case Study Research.* Chicago: University of Illinois.

Stallings, A. S. (1997). *Following Through: A Model of In-service Teacher Training in Curriculum Enquiry.* Canada: Blackwell Publishing.

Strauss, A.L. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research; Grounded Theory procedures and Techniques.* California: Sage.

Strauss, A.L. and Corbin, J. (1997). *Grounded Theory in Practice.* California: Sage.

Tabulawa, R. (1998). Teachers' Perspectives on classroom Practice in Botswana. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education,* 11 (2), pp 249-268. New York: Routledge.

Tatto, M.T. (1997). *Limits and Constraints to Effective Teacher Education; International Handbook of Education and Development.* Oxford: Pergamon.

Tom. R. A. (1997). *Redesigning Teacher Education.* New York State University.

Usher, R. and Scott, D. (1999). *Researching Education.* London: Cassell.

Welch, T. and Reed, Y. (eds) (2005). *Designing and Delivering Distance Education: Quality Criteria and Case Studies from South Africa.* Johannesburg: NADEOSA.

World Bank. (2005). *Primary and Secondary Education in Lesotho; A country Status Report for Education.* Africa Region: World Bank.

APPENDIX l: Letter to the LCE Director

School of Education
Wits University
P.O Box 2050
22 September 2009

The Director
Lesotho College of Education
Maseru
Lesotho

Dear Sir;

I am **Malemohang Chaka**, a Master of Education student at Wits University and as part of my studies I am expected to conduct a research project. My choice of research is concerning the Distance Teacher Education Programme (DTEP) as it is offered by the Lesotho College of Education. The main aim is to find out both the potentials and the limitations of the programme so as to identify the areas of the programme that can be improved on.

I thus kindly request you to grant me permission to use the name of the college in my study and to analyse the DTEP's Rules, Regulations and Curriculum document as well as some DTEP course materials in my report writing. Please also allow me to interview the following of your employees; Head of the DTEP, two DTEP coordinators and two DTEP tutors. The interviews are scheduled to take 60 minutes (1 hour) each.

Please note that there will be no health, emotional or any kind of risk that any of the participants will incur as a result of taking part in the study. Also kindly note that, participation in this study is totally voluntary and that any of them is free to withdraw from participation any time during the course of the study, and I give guarantee that none of them will be victimised in any way if they choose not to take part in the study.

Please be ensured that the researcher will maintain absolute confidentiality with regard to the names of the participants, that is, all participants will be referred to anonymously throughout the

study. And also note that the final written document of my written report will be made available to you to reflect on.

For further information please contact me at this cell no. +27734973161 or email me at this address; mmalemohang@gmail.com. And should you want to lodge any complaint, please contact my research supervisor; Ms Francine de Clercq at this phone number and email address respectively; +27117173090 and Francine.declercq@wits.ac.za.

Yours Faithfully
Malemohang Chaka

APPENDIX 2: Letter to Principals

School of Education
Wits University
P.O Box 2050
22 September 2009

Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to kindly request you to grant me permission to interview one 4th year DTEP student teacher that is employed in your school, the interview is scheduled to take 60 minutes (1 hour). I am **Malemohang Chaka**, a Master of Education student at Wits University and as part of my studies I am expected to conduct a research project. My choice of research is concerning the Distance Teacher Education Programme (DTEP) as it is offered by the Lesotho College of Education. The main aim is to find out both the potentials and the limitations of the programme so as to identify the areas of the programme that can be improved on.

Please note that there will be no health, emotional or any kind of risk that the concerned student teacher will incur as a result of taking part in the study. Also kindly note that, participation in this study is totally voluntary and that the student teacher is free to withdraw from participation any time during the course of the study. Also he/she will get no kind of reward or payment whatsoever to for his/her participation and those who do not want to take part in the study will not be victimised in any way.

Please be ensured that the researcher will maintain absolute confidentiality with regard to the name of the teacher and the school they come from. That is all participants and their schools will be referred to anonymously throughout the study. For further information please contact me at this cell no. +27734973161 or email me at this address; mmalemohang@gmail.com. And should you want to lodge any complaint, please contact my research supervisor; Ms Francine de Clercq at tel: +27117173090 and Francine.declercq@wits.ac.za.

Yours Faithfully
Malemohang Chaka

APPENDIX 3: Information Document

STUDY TITLE: A Study of the Distance Teacher Education Programme (DTEP) for Primary School Teachers in Lesotho.

Dear Participant

I, **Malemohang Chaka**, am conducting a research project concerning the Distance Teacher Education Programme as it is offered by the Lesotho College of Education. The main aim is to find out both the potentials and the limitations of the programme so as to identify the areas of the programme that can be improved on.

I kindly would like to invite you to be one of the participants in this study by allowing me to conduct a 60 minutes (1 hour) long interview with you as my interviewee. You are going to be one of the twelve participants in this study.

Please be informed that there will be no health, emotional or any kind of risk that will be encountered due to participating in the study. The results of the study will be made available for you to reflect on upon such kind of request from you. Also kindly note that, participation in this study is voluntary and that you can discontinue taking part at any time during the course of the study and that, there will be no kind of reward or payment whatsoever to be provided for your participation.

Please be ensured that the researcher will maintain absolute confidentiality with regard to your name and you will be referred to anonymously throughout the study. For further information please contact me at this cell no. +27734973161 or email me at this address; mmalemohang@gmail.com. And should you want to lodge any complaint, please contact my research supervisor; Ms Francine de Clercq at this phone number and email address respectively; +27117173090 and Francine.declercq@wits.ac.za.

Yours Faithfully
Malemohang Chaka

APPENDIX 4: Informed Consent Form

I, (participant's name), agree to be a participant in Malemohang Chaka's study in which she wants to identify, the main potentials and limitations of the Distance Teacher Education Programme for primary school teachers offered by the Lesotho College of Education. I willingly allow her to interview me for one hour.

I fully understand and agree with the following terms and conditions:

1. There are no risks entailed in taking part in this study.
2. The results of the study will be made available for me if I so make a request.
3. Participation in the study is voluntary and I can withdraw anytime I want to.
4. I am not getting any reward or payment for participation.
5. Neither my name will be mentioned anywhere or at any time during the course of the study.

I willingly give her my contact details so she can refer back to me should she need some kind of clarification regarding my contribution in the study.

Signature; Date;

APPENDIX 5: Interview Schedule For Student Teacher

1. Teacher's age
2. When did you complete your C.O.S.C?
3. What pass grade did you get?
4. What is teaching experience (in years) before enrolling for DTEP?
5. Did you get a teaching job immediately upon completion of C.O.S.C?
6. If no to 8 above, what were you doing before you enrolled for DTEP?
7. What are your parents' qualifications and jobs?

(a)Mother;

(b) Father;

8. What is your religious affiliation?
9. Why did you become a teacher?
10. Why did you choose primary teaching as opposed to high school teaching?
11. And why did you opt for the in-service as opposed to the full time teacher education programme?
12. According to you what is each the following aspects related to your role as a teacher?

(a) Your age

(b) Your gender

(c) Your religious affiliation

13. (a) Do you love your job as a teacher?

(b)Why or why not?

14. Since you started the DTEP what changes did you have to bring into the way you used to do things before you started with the programme?
15. You are in the final year of the programme; would you say the programme has played a major or minor role into your improvement as a teacher? Explain.
16. What is your opinion and experience about the DTEP in terms of the following?

(a) Its time frame (the length of time that you actually get to be trained as a teacher).

(b) Its content (what the programme has taught you this far)

(c)Its pedagogic style (the way you are being taught).

(d)What you have gained in the 3.5 years that you have been in the programme.

17. (a) Suppose you were given a chance to re design the programme, what changes would you make?

(b) If any why and if no changes why not?

18. What is your conception of your identity as a teacher? Explain.

19. (a) After you have learnt some new content and methods of teaching, do you always find them easy to put into implementation when you get back to work? Explain why or why not?

20. In your opinion is everything that you learn and/or have learnt at the college of importance to your teaching? Explain.

21. Which teaching methods are you mainly encouraged to practice and why is that so?

22. Which teaching method/s do you personally prefer and why?

23. What's your general opinion about DTEP as offered by the Lesotho College of education?

24. What is your understanding of the relationship between teacher training and being a good teacher?

25. If you were given another chance to choose a career would you still choose to be a teacher? Why or why not?

26. If you still chose to be a teacher would you be a primary or secondary school teacher? Why?

APPENDIX 6: Interview schedule for DTEP Staff

1. Highest qualification

2. Position at the college

3. What's your experience as a teacher educator?

4. When was DTEP introduced in your college and what let to its introduction?

5. What is the programme's main mode of delivery and how was it reached at?

6. One of the entry requirements into this programme is 2 years teaching experience, how is that relevant to the programme?

7. What are considered to be the main advantages of this distance/inset programme as opposed to the full time pre service programme?

8. Considering the programme's distant nature how do you keep your learners motivated?

9. How does DTEP handle the submission and feedback on students' assignments?

10. How does the programme bridge the gap between entering students' differing values and experiences and cater for their different in-service needs?

11. How does the course address certain student teachers negative attitudes towards teaching and learning?

12. What measures does the programme employ to build a positive professional identity among its students?

13. I understand that the programme's time duration is three to four weeks per year, how is DTEP's broad curriculum dealt with within such a limited time frame?

14. (a) Do you think the time frame for the course should be increased?

(b) Why or why not?

15. What is your understanding of the relationship between teacher training and being a good teacher?

16. (a) The academic admission requirements into the programme tend to be pretty low as compared to those needed into the other courses offered by the college. Does the college do anything to consolidate for this?

(b) If yes, what does it do?

(c) If no, why not?

17. What are DTEP's main philosophy and/or aim(s)?

18. What are the main content and/or learning outcomes of this programme?

19. How does the college ensure production of good quality teachers through this programme?

20. What is mainly emphasised in the subject matter of the modules of this teacher education programme?

21. (a) Apart from ensuring that student teachers are introduced to the content that they are going to teach, what other important learning areas make up the DTEP?

(b) Explain the importance of each learning area named above?

22. (a) Does the programme have any specific pedagogic approach whose importance is stressed among the student teachers?

(b)If yes, name that approach and/or approaches?

23. (a) In the current literature a need has been identified for teacher educators to change to the more learner centred methods of teaching. Do you consider this to be a genuine concern? Why or why not?

24. (a)Has there been any innovations and new practices introduced into the DTEP since you were part of the programme?

(b) If no, why not?

(c) And if yes, what are those innovations and why were they deemed necessary?

(d) Were any challenges met in the implementation of these innovations?

25. According to DTEP, which of the following two is targeted to be changed first in the student teachers? Their behaviour or attitudes.

26. Why is that order in 27 above is considered to be important?

27. In your opinion and experience, is the training and/educating of teachers an easy or complex process? Explain your answer.

28. If the DTEP were to be redesigned, what would you recommend to be to be included or taken out of the programme?

APPENDIX 7: Additional Interviews for student Teachers

1. What was your teaching experience before you enrolled for DTEP?
ST B-
ST C-

ST D-

2. Parental Highest qualification (ST B)

Mother (SEO)-

Mother (district or national education officer)-

Father (carpenter)-

3. Most important thing/s learnt from DTEP;

St A-

ST B-

ST D-

ST F-

4. Do you think the concern to change to the more learner centred methods of teaching, in current literature is a genuine one? Why or why not?

5. Do you think these changes you had to do were for the better and are they practical enough for you to do when you get back to your school?

6. Do you always receive learning materials in good time? If not how does the delay affect you?

7. I understand you are advised to engage in communities of learning/peer sessions with your fellow students, is it easy for you to engage in such groups? Why or why not?

8. Apart from the modules booklets what are the other ways of communication with the course?

9. In the workshops what is the main content taught?

10. And what is mainly taught in the residential face to face sessions?

11. Which is the main method of teaching used in workshops and residential?

12. Is any of your teaching supervised by the DTEP staff? If yes how often?

APPENDIX 8: Additional Interviews for DTEP Staff

1. Most student teachers complain that content in courses such as Accounts, Maths and Science is too complicated and not relevant to their primary teaching. What's your opinion on this?
2. What can you say about the progress quality of your students? I.e. how good are they at the beginning and at learning what they are taught?
3. Is there any student teachers' practice supervised by DTEP staff, after the student teachers have started with the programme?
4. (a) In your opinion, are student teachers keen on the new learner-centred pedagogic style of teaching?
(b) What are the main difficulties in changing?
5. What can you say about the time at which materials are delivered to students?
6. And apart from teaching materials in the form of books, what other resources do you use to communicate the course to students?
7. Is the course designed such that it could be taught in learner-centred methods? (In what way?) And do the tutors have autonomy to change here and there and adapt to their students?
8. Do you have appropriate teaching materials for you to teach the course for in a learner centred approach? How does that help or impede with your teaching?
9. Is the programme about upgrading primary teachers but also bridging for going to university?
10. What is your general view about the quality of DTEP's course content and outline? How do you approach the teaching of the course?
11. Do you have the right to improvise on the syllabus to meet your students' needs or is it a teacher-proof syllabus?