

3 | Section **THREE** c case studies

Introduction to the case studies

Selection of case studies

In this section, we present fourteen case studies that are intended to illustrate the criteria in Section Two and apply them to practice.

The case studies were not selected from a thorough examination of available good practice in distance education in South Africa - there are numerous other South African examples of good distance education practice. Nor were they the result of a process of external evaluation.

The case studies were selected by a task team set up by NADEOSA in response to a request that the Quality Criteria should be published.

The task team sent out an invitation to all NADEOSA members to submit case studies of good practice that illustrate or exemplify one or more of the criteria. Eight case studies were submitted from the University of South Africa (UNISA), two from Technikon South Africa (TSA) (now part of the new UNISA), three from the University of Pretoria, one from the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), and two from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg.

In the majority of instances, the case studies are based on self-reported data. Practices, as reported by the writers, illustrate the quality criteria well, but the editors have not verified the information in a triangulated research process, as this was not the aim of the project. The purpose of this set of case studies is to use accounts of practice to exemplify the criteria, and assist providers in applying the criteria to their own work.

In the initial reading of the case studies, the task team made a selection based on the following criteria:

- Whether or not the case studies show innovative attempts to address distance education challenges;
- How representative the case studies are of the range of South African distance education programmes;
- How comprehensively the quality criteria can be illustrated through the case studies.

After the initial reading, the decision was made not to include five of the case studies because they did not represent a sufficiently substantial attempt at successful innovation. A number of gaps were also identified. Firstly, it was noted that there had been no submissions from private providers. Secondly, there was an under-representation of case studies of distance education courses/programmes using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Thirdly, there was an under-representation of postgraduate programmes using distance education methods. Finally, fairly late in the process, it was realized that none of the case studies focused specifically on quality issues related to course materials - a key dimension of distance provision.

Unfortunately, although approached, private providers did not submit any case studies. With regard to postgraduate programmes, the gap was filled through the adaptation of a case study on the Master of Law programme from Stellenbosch University, originally prepared as background research for the Council on Higher Education report, *Enhancing the Contribution of Distance Higher Education in South Africa: Report of an investigation led by the South African Institute for Distance Education* (Pretoria: Council on Higher Education, 2004). A late submission of a case study from the University of the Witwatersrand on an online Masters course provided a second postgraduate example. Both these case studies also contribute to discussion on the use of technologies other than print for distance education. Finally, with permission of the provider, a case study was written by one of the editors on the approach to the development of course materials for the teacher upgrading degree offered by the University of Fort Hare's Distance Education Project.

The role of the editors in the preparation of these case studies was threefold:

- To edit the work for readability, focus and unnecessary repetition;
- To prepare an introduction to each case study indicating the focus;
- To annotate the case study with the insertion of relevant elements from the quality criteria.

However, as far as possible, the style of the original author has been retained.

Applying the criteria to the case studies

The criteria in Section Two are applied to the case studies in this section in a particular way for particular reasons.

Firstly, although the criteria in Section Two are communicated through lists for ease of reference and represent one way of categorizing the components of good distance education practice, it is not intended that when applied to practice, they should be seen as operating in

isolation from each other. An attempt to try to apply criteria discretely could mean, for example, that the necessary relationship between assessment, learner support and management (through, for example, carefully scaffolded assignments, individual feedback on assignments, and an assignment management system that allows students to receive comment on one assignment before the next is due) is lost. As a result, though the focus in each of the case studies in this section may be on one or two criteria, relevant elements from other criteria are also included.

Secondly, the criteria are an updated description of the understanding of good practice in distance education in South Africa. However, they should not be regarded as definitive. There should be space to allow good practice to show the limitations of the criteria. In a number of the case studies in this section, the practice described goes beyond the criteria. In addition, it became clear to the editors as the criteria were applied to the case studies, that though sound pedagogical approaches (based on an understanding of how learning happens and the kinds of teaching that promote learning) underpin all quality practice, pedagogical issues are implicit rather than explicit in the criteria. The criteria, like any attempt to describe good practice succinctly, have their limitations.

The spirit in which the criteria are applied to practice in this book is highlighted in the University of KwaZulu-Natal case study on *Leadership and Management for Change*. The case study uses the Freirian notion of ‘dialogue’ and describes a quality course as ‘dialogic space’. In this section of the book, we adopt this notion of dialogue and attempt to model the two-way process of dialogue between criteria and practice. The criteria are applied to practice not as a checklist of questions is applied to a product in the process of quality control. It is understood that quality arises not from merely applying criteria, but from interpreting criteria in the light of experience, and experience in the light of criteria. And we hope, though we cannot insist, that through this dialogue, those who read the book will be given insights that will inform better practice. This is the reason for the way the case studies have been formatted - relevant criteria are placed in the margins so that practice and criteria are juxtaposed and can ‘speak’ to each other.

The case studies

What types of distance education practice do the case studies represent?

Provision by both dedicated distance education institutions and predominantly face-to-face providers

Some case studies illustrate clearly how the demands for quality distance education delivery are creating the need for dedicated distance education providers to look to methods used by face-to-face providers, particularly in the area of learner support, as well as to refine the art of creating course material that supports independent learning. Conversely, other case studies illustrate how face-to-face providers take on the challenge of developing not only the systems and human resources to deal with large-scale distance delivery, but also learner support for the more diverse group of learners that is attracted when access and reach are increased.

A spectrum from small scale courses and programmes to large scale programmes reaching thousands of students

If distance education is going to fulfil its potential of increasing access, then it must take on the challenge of providing cost effective education to large numbers of diverse students. However, it is critical that when programmes enrol large numbers of students, they have the systems and the personnel to provide students with the necessary support to be successful. The case studies include programmes such as the *Leadership and Management for Change* course offered by the University of KwaZulu-Natal with as few as 13 students (tutored by three lecturers), as well as programmes such as the teacher upgrading programme offered by UNISA with an intake of 2 318 students in the first cohort. The case studies show how the criteria are applicable to large and small programmes alike.

A spectrum from traditional paper-based provision to state-of-the art technological provision

Some of the case studies in this collection are traditional paper-based programmes, but others make use of state-of-the-art technology appropriately deployed for the target audience and demand of the curriculum. Principles behind choice of media and technology are the same for distance education provision as for all education. What this collection shows, is that, as Mary Thorpe says:¹

The future does not consist of focusing on what makes distance education different, but on ensuring that it cannot be ignored, because it continues to work with the latest and the best ideas, about both pedagogy and technology.

Much discussion of distance education focuses on the description of systems that make distance education different from other provision. This is for good reason, because systems required for large-scale delivery are much more complex than those required for small-scale provision in which frequent no-cost adjustments can be made in response to interactions with learners. However, although quality distance education does depend on good systems, these need to support quality teaching and learning. What Mary Thorpe is referring to above is the frequent observation that the degree of planning required for distance education to function at all often means that distance education works with 'the latest and best ideas' in order to achieve what seems impossible.

A spectrum from provision for under-prepared learners who would not normally qualify for tertiary studies, to provision for learners in upper-postgraduate studies

At one end of the spectrum is a case study on an upgrading programme for teachers, some of whom may not even have a senior certificate. At the other end is a postgraduate Masters in International Trade Law offered to learners not only in South Africa, but also abroad, and a critical language awareness course for a Masters in Education delivered by three universities on different continents. There are case studies of programmes/courses for technical, vocational and professional career paths (such as animal health, court interpreting and teaching), as well as case studies of courses on purely academic subjects (such as linguistics and theology). The case studies illustrate how distance education methods can be used for courses at varying levels across education and training.

What criteria are the focus for each of the case studies?

As has been mentioned, an attempt has been made to select case studies which exemplify aspects of all thirteen quality criteria.

An under-represented criterion is that on Information Dissemination or Marketing. This might be a result of the fact that there are no case studies from private providers. Public providers of distance education do not yet have very systematic ways of working with or reporting on marketing/information dissemination.

There is also a weakness in the representation of the criterion on Policy and Planning. This is because there are no case studies included that describe distance education at an institutional or broader systemic level. Comment on the criteria from the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA) revealed that a major critical success factor for distance education programmes is a national understanding of and commitment to institutions in their policy and planning for distance education. South Africa is better off in this respect than many of its fellow Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries. Section One of this book indicates that, as far as national commitment to open learning and distance education is concerned, South Africa does not have the kind of problems experienced by such countries as Lesotho and Botswana. In the last ten years, statements about distance education and open learning thread through policy and policy implementation documents. Furthermore the recent research of the Council on Higher Education² indicates that, at least in higher education, institutions have a high degree of awareness of the need for policy in respect of distance education. Increasingly, the Higher Education Quality Committee's audit process will insist that this translates into systems and processes for quality distance education delivery.

What is interesting however, is not only the under-representation of two of the criteria, but the space given to the discussion of one particular criterion in all the case studies - the criterion on learner support. Given the contexts from which learners come in South and Southern Africa, it is unsurprising that a strong emphasis on learner support is essential in distance programmes even at upper-postgraduate levels. This is because most South African learners:

- Are working in an additional language;
- Come from disadvantaged educational backgrounds; and
- Are in environments that are not conducive to independent study, either in terms of access to study resources or in terms of the daily social difficulties that beset particularly those that distance education is seeking to reach.

In the South African context, learner support is not only for the learners for whom the programmes are designed. In large-scale provision of distance education programmes, numbers of tutors need to be employed to support learners in remote areas. But these tutors cannot support learners effectively unless they themselves are trained, monitored and supported. In technical and vocational programmes, where there are many sites of learning, the need for learner support expands still more. It is not only learners and tutors that need support, but mentors in the workplace.

The table below lists, next to each criterion, the case study that focuses most closely on it as well as other criteria to which the case study refers in a substantial way.

Table 1: Case studies and the quality criteria they illustrate

Criterion	Case study with this criterion as the main focus	Other criteria referred to
1. Policy and planning	Some reference to this criterion can be found in the case study from the University of Pretoria (see no 9 below) and from the University of Stellenbosch (see no 13).	
2. Learners	<i>Accommodating diversity: supporting learning in an in-service teacher education programme offered by the University of the Witwatersrand.</i> This case study focuses on the importance of obtaining and using learner information as a basis for the design of a layered system of learner support that deals with not only the academic needs of diverse learners but also their personal needs.	Learner support Quality assurance Assessment
3. Programme development	<i>Addressing the needs of learners and addressing the needs of the nation: a module in UNISA's BA in Court Interpreting</i> This case study focuses on needs analysis as a basis for programme development.	Course design Assessment
4. Course design	<i>Engaging students online: a module in an international M Ed in Language and Literacy Education</i> This case study describes the pedagogical design of online discussions in an M Ed course in critical language awareness offered collaboratively by the University of the Witwatersrand, the University of South Australia, and the Mount Saint Vincent University (Canada). It shows how course materials design, learner support and assessment are very closely related in the design of online learning courses.	Course materials Learner support Assessment
	<i>Learner support from a 'pilgrim companion' and student journals as a form of summative assessment in a UNISA religious studies module.</i> This case study is an example of innovative course design, particularly with respect to learner support and assessment.	Learner support Assessment
5. Course materials	<i>Something new and different: the key roles of 'imithamo' and 'abakhwezeli' in the University of Fort Hare's B Prim Ed programme.</i> The contextualization of course materials and the need to use active learning and teaching approaches is the focus of this case study.	Learner support Assessment
6. Assessment	<i>Assessment in the Diploma in Animal Health Practice at the former Technikon Southern Africa</i> This case study illustrates how flexibility in terms of entry and exit points as well as in the provision of various sites of learning can be achieved in a single programme through the careful design of assessment.	Programme development

Criterion	Case study with this criterion as the main focus	Other criteria referred to
7. Learner support	<i>Student support in the first two years of a teacher upgrading programme offered by UNISA</i> It is not easy to design and manage a decentralized learner support system for a large-scale teacher development programme. This case study reflects honestly on the achievements and difficulties.	Assessment
	<i>Peer Collaborative Learning at the former Technikon Southern Africa</i> This case study shows an effort to respond to low retention and pass rates through the introduction of a cost effective learner support system additional to that already in place for the institution.	Results Human resources strategy
8. Human resource strategy	<i>Tutor learning, student learning: the B Ed Honours programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal</i> In this case study, learner support is about designing ways to select, train, monitor and support the tutors who are responsible for supporting the learners.	Learner support Assessment
9. Management and administration	<i>The establishment of a unit for distance education in a face-to-face institution: the University of Pretoria</i> The decision to offer distance education programmes for teachers resulted in the need to design systems for the management of large numbers of learners across the country.	Programme planning Learners Human resources strategy Collaboration Information dissemination
10. Collaboration	<i>The Leadership and Management for Change course at the University of KwaZulu-Natal: quality criteria and dialogic space</i> The case study illustrates the benefits of collaboration between an organization with expertise in electronic media and distance education and a university department with strengths in adult education, materials development and organizational development.	Course design Course materials Learner support Assessment Quality assurance
11. Quality assurance	<i>Self-evaluation in the e-learning unit at the University of Pretoria</i> This case study is of interest both to readers wanting to study instruments and methods of analysis of self-evaluation data and readers who are interested in what questions to ask about the quality assurance of web-based and online courses.	Human resource strategy Learner support Management
	<i>The quality assurance process for undergraduate courses in the Department of Linguistics at UNISA</i> This case study focuses on an easy-to-implement but comprehensive course level quality assurance process.	Course design Course materials
12. Information dissemination	Some reference to this criterion is to be found in the case study from the University of Pretoria (see no 9) as well as that from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (see no 8).	

Continue on page 64

Criterion	Case study with this criterion as the main focus	Other criteria referred to
13. Results	<p><i>The Masters programme in International Trade Law offered by the Faculty of Law, University of Stellenbosch</i></p> <p>This case study, while focusing on the use of satellite broadcasts as part of the course design, also discusses thoroughly issues related to pass and throughput rates in distance education programmes.</p>	<p>Course design Collaboration Learner support</p>

In conclusion, it must be said that while the case studies represent good practice, they do not show perfect practice. They represent providers using their initiative to improve learning using available resources. Quality provision is achievable if providers use the range of resources at their disposal - such as human resources, available technologies, existing materials, and partnerships - sensibly and creatively.

Endnotes

- ¹ Thorpe, M. (2003). 'Continual Reinvention: The future for open and distance learning'. Keynote presentation at the 10th Cambridge International Conference on Open and Distance Education, September 26th, 2003.
- ² Council on Higher Education. (2004). *Enhancing the Contribution of Distance Higher Education in South Africa: Report of an investigation led by the South African Institute for Distance Education*. Pretoria: Council on Higher Education

Case One: Accommodating diversity: supporting learning in an in-service teacher education programme offered by the University of the Witwatersrand

Carola Steinberg
School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand
steinbergc@educ.wits.ac.za

With Heather Barclay, Judith Inglis, Lucas Magongwa, S'mangele Mayisela, Dawn Snell, Mpunki Nakedi

Editor's introduction

The Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) programme at the University of the Witwatersrand (commonly known as 'Wits') illustrates the following criterion well:

- 11.6** There are demonstrable processes and ongoing efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning according to priorities identified through monitoring and evaluation processes.

Despite the fact that the forerunner of the ACE programme (the Further Diploma in Education) was favourably evaluated as part of the President's Education Initiative research in 1998, that the materials won the NADEOSA Courseware Awards in 2002, and that a book on research into the programme (Adler and Reed, 2002) has received wide acclaim, the programme team was still concerned that aspects needed improvement.

This case study focuses on the improvements to **learner support** introduced during 2003. The programme staff have made an effort not only to gather information about **learners**, but to use this information to understand these learners and design learner support which meets their diverse needs:

- 2.4** Learner information is used to design programmes, courses, materials, learner support, and counselling services that are flexible and learner-centred.

The depth and care of support offered in this programme goes way beyond what is required in the quality criteria, and in significant areas (such as learner support for the Deaf, and the use of contact sessions for modelling and drawing attention to good teaching and learning practices) indicates how the quality criteria should be extended.

The ACE goals and structure

In 2003 the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) introduced several Advanced Certificates in Education (ACE) (Upgrade). These ACE qualifications followed on from the Further Diplomas in Education that Wits has been offering since 1996.

The goals of the Further Diploma in Education (FDE) programmes were:

- To broaden and deepen teachers' subject knowledge, pedagogic subject knowledge and educational knowledge;
- To extend teachers' reflective abilities;
- To facilitate professional growth;
- To enable access to further education (Adler et al, 2002: 11).

The FDE thus aimed to ensure both professional and academic growth and combined the best aspects of university and NGO teacher in-service programmes on offer at the time: it was a formal programme leading to recognized certification, yet it was also school-focused, with many of the activities requiring reflection or research on school and classroom issues. The materials were written with depth and clarity - in 2000 the FDE in English won the NADEOSA Courseware Award.

Quality
Criterion

5.8 The materials are periodically reviewed in the light of ongoing feedback from learners and tutors and advances in knowledge and research.

In constructing the ACE, we followed the tradition of the FDE, yet took the opportunity to adjust the programme structure, as well as rework and update the learning materials. Our aim was to provide improved support structures within learning materials and to ensure that our various modules were in line with current educational policies.

Quality
Criterion

4.10 Various forms of learner support are built into the design of the course.

The format of the ACE is mixed-mode: teacher-students engage with interactive learning materials, as well as attend contact sessions. The learning materials present knowledge and activities, enabling teacher-students to work through them systematically on their own. For three of the education modules we use books from the SAIDE teacher

education series,¹ while the fourth education module and all specialization modules use materials written by Wits staff. Contact sessions involve a weekend in February and a week each during the school holidays in April, July and September. The programme places emphasis on students working together in study groups.

Quality
Criterion

3.15 To facilitate access, entry requirements for the programme are as open as possible, and include recognition of prior learning and experience.

In South Africa, where 20% of all teachers within the school sector are regarded as under-qualified, it is obviously important for higher education institutions to create access for teacher-students² who were formerly not eligible. The ACE has achieved this by relaxing entry requirements to allow for a senior certificate (not matriculation exemption) and a three-year teacher's diploma (not a degree) from any college (not just accredited ones).

Attendance requirements are adapted to fit into week-long contact sessions during school holidays. But, as Bertram reflects, 'open access does not necessarily mean equal opportunity for success' (2003:80). Having opened up access, we now see it as our responsibility to enable success - by which we mean providing learning experiences that promote deep learning, improved classroom practices and a more confident sense of professional identity. Our focus therefore is on developing competence, not merely on ensuring a pass mark.

Quality
Criterion

3.16 Where entry is open, care is taken to provide sufficient academic support to learners who may be under-prepared.

In this case study we reflect on the different forms of support underpinning our practices across the ACE. There are compulsory Education modules and a choice of subject specializations in education for Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN), Deaf Education or Science. We found that the types of support we offer are surprisingly specialization-specific. Education modules are concerned with academic development and focus on instilling the skills and habits of intellectual work, while the Science specialization is concerned primarily with professional development. The LSEN specialization is experimenting with and modelling ways of including learners that rely on the creativity of the teacher rather than on an increase in material resources. By contrast, Deaf Education is insisting that specialized people be employed and time be invested in the effort to include the formerly marginalized population of Deaf students. All of us pull together for the counselling service and cultural activities during contact sessions. Our main contention is that for teacher-students to achieve success, we need to provide them with support structures and practices specifically geared to meeting their needs.

The ACE students

Wits has between 200 to 260 teacher-students enrolled over the two years across various ACE specializations. Through the use of autobiographical questionnaires and introductory projects we get to know the students at the beginning of the academic year, and have found a wide diversity among them:

- **Geographical diversity.** Teacher-students enrolled in Deaf Education and LSEN are based in various provinces, with a large proportion from rural areas in Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal, some even from as far as Swaziland. By contrast, teacher-students enrolled for the Science specialization are located in Gauteng.
- **Diversity of professional practice.** Teachers work in all phases: Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Phase. Still others work in areas of early childhood development or adult education. A substantial number of teacher-students work in 'special schools' for the blind or deaf. A few district support specialists have enrolled for LSEN and a few teacher-students are heads of departments and principals. Some teacher-students have been teaching for decades, others have limited teaching experience. A few work in relatively well-resourced conditions, while others work in schools with limited access to even basic amenities such as water and electricity, never mind learning materials.
- **Diversity of academic experience and knowledge.** While a few educators have academic experience - one even with a Master's degree, most have enrolled in a university for the first time. They received their pre-service education in rural teacher

training colleges, which placed little emphasis on subject knowledge and a high value on the educational perspectives of fundamental pedagogics and behaviourism. Thus many arrive with the expectation of receiving an educational ‘quick fix’ or ‘tips for teachers’, or are motivated by the prospect of a prestigious certificate and salary increase. Others, though dedicated and committed to improving their classroom practice, do not always have a clear understanding of the demands that studying at a university places on them, so are unprepared for the intensive academic and time input required.

- **Diversity of access regarding technological and educational resources.** While a few teacher-students have access to computers, telephones, photocopying machines, libraries, book shops and cars, the majority do not. Some even struggle to find paper on which to write their assignments. This diversity requires specific support as it relates directly to basic needs required for student success.
- **Linguistic diversity.** Students have diverse home languages covering most of the official languages of South Africa, including South African Sign Language. Many use English as a second, third and sometimes even fourth language. This directly affects how successfully a student can interact with learning materials written in English or take part in discussions.
- **Emotional and motivational diversity.** Within the current climate of rapid and confusing change in educational policies and practices, many teacher-students exhibit symptoms of high stress, demoralization, depression and confusion. They are overwhelmed by the pace of change and feel their role as professional practitioners has been eroded and undermined. As a student wrote in a portfolio activity:

As a Curriculum 2005 student, I paid a visit to some of my colleagues. That is where I observed the following: they are very dishonest when coming to honour time because of their hesitance towards their lesson introduction. They feel unsure. They feel empty. They would rather give learners instructions for how to find learning for themselves. And thus the noisy scenarios (as described by Jansen) are created.

Quality
Criterion

2.1 The provider has developed a learner profile that identifies the characteristics and situation of distance education learners.

Accommodating and supporting the needs of a diverse student population as promoted in current inclusive education policy is complex enough in a contact programme. When done at a distance, there are additional complications. Although students have the freedom to study at the pace that is most suitable to them, they may not necessarily have

the skills to manage their learning situation. As Bertram argues (2003: 75), on the one hand, ‘responsibility for turning public information in the Learning Guide into private knowledge lies firmly with the students’. But on the other hand, ‘students who have previously been denied access (because of apartheid laws, lack of qualifications, lack of finances or because they were living in areas remote from a university) are the very students who would most benefit from strong support from lecturers and fellow students’ (2003:76).

We have thus instituted a range of support mechanisms so that we can promote real learning and success for our students, both academically and professionally.

Socialization into academic practice

The core of the academic challenge is the large number of students who are 'under-prepared for specific tasks' (Craig, 2001:50). This under-preparedness for academic work manifests in several interconnected ways. Teacher-students struggle with the level of academic literacy in English required by the learning materials. When reading, they find it difficult to recognize different opinions or arguments and counter arguments in a text. They understand assignment writing as summarizing or paraphrasing the learning materials, and they do not plan for the time it takes to re-read texts or write several drafts. So the Wits ACE takes on the challenge of developing the skills needed for access to higher education.

Quality Criterion	7.7	Tutor training places particular emphasis on equipping tutors to analyze and assist learners with language and learning difficulties.
----------------------	------------	---

Academic Support at a Distance

The starting point for any distance education programme is the quality of the learning materials. There is no space in this case-study to describe the materials we use in detail, but it has been said that the SAIDE and Wits learning materials are comprehensive, accessibly written, clearly structured, interactive, and encourage reflection on the text as well as reflection on teaching experience in the light of the text. Without this baseline, our academic support work would not be able to focus on mediation and extension in the way that it does.

Quality Criterion	5.	The content, assessment, and teaching and learning approaches in the course materials support the aims and learning outcomes; the materials are accessibly presented; they teach in a coherent way that engages the learners.
----------------------	-----------	---

We provide a framework for developing habits of study

All modules provide a study plan that structures the timing and sequence of students' educational progress. Students who manage their time in accordance with this plan spend about fourteen hours studying per week (seven hours per module) and spread their studies evenly over the year. The study plan provides for a coherent encounter with the materials, with a steady build-up of knowledge and sufficient time dedicated to assignments and examination preparation. The introductory booklet gives examples for how these hours could be spread throughout the week for people with high energy in the mornings or for women who can only study after their children are in bed, and also includes group study time. This enables many students to manage their time and develop regular study habits. Of course there are always a few students frantically finishing off their assignments at lunchtime on the first day of the contact session, but because the norm is set by the study plan and late assignments are penalized, they are in the minority.

Quality Criterion	9.8	Appropriate schedules are developed for all activities forming part of the distance education system, with due attention given to lead times needed to meet deadlines.
----------------------	------------	--

In accordance with the study plan, students write weekly portfolio activities, two assignments and an examination or examination-equivalent project. The portfolio activities require

Quality Criterion	6.1	Assessment is recognized as a key motivator of learning and an integral part of the teaching and learning process.
----------------------	------------	--

students to give a written response to what they are reading, developing a habit of writing that explores ideas. The portfolios also serve as drafts for assignments. Students receive formative feedback, but no marks. The assignments are marked and count 50% towards the module mark.

We provide scaffolded assignments

Assignment tasks have detailed instructions and clear assessment criteria. Instructions provide not only the essay topic, but also a possible structure for the essay, a reason for why that structure is useful, and notes about what is part of the task and what is not. This scaffolding makes explicit the academic skills that are required. For example, a note in the second education assignment reads:

Whenever you have a complex essay topic like this, you need to work out for yourself what the sub-questions are that need to be answered. In order to 'critically analyze' the topic, you need to first describe, explain, compare and demonstrate understanding of the topic. Then you can go on to make the links with other readings and your experience, analyze the implications and state your evaluations. So, as this is your first essay assignment, here are some sub-questions that might help you to think about the topic and to structure your essay. Please integrate them into your essay - they are not a list of questions to answer.

Notes like this one clearly state the academic processes and conventions that are often assumed and hidden. Assignments also contain assessment criteria we use for marking, in the format of a grid or rubric. Students are required to assess themselves in the light of these criteria before handing in the assignment, so that they are pushed into engaging with the criteria and encouraged to reflect on their own writing. In particular, the criteria give them a sense of what they are striving towards, of what counts as good practice in academic writing. The criteria are separated by content and form (Craig 2001: 47), spelling out what is required for a qualitatively better piece of work in each category.

We have found a tendency for weak students to overestimate and strong students to underestimate the quality of their work in relation to the criteria. Nevertheless, as the students come to understand the criteria from the inside over two years of study, they grow towards an increasingly realistic self-assessment. The ability to take a step back and reflect on their work rather than just handing it over to the marker is a valuable aspect of metacognition.

We provide dialogical feedback

We consider written feedback for each student a non-negotiable aspect of the marker's work. In addition, for each assignment, we send out general feedback letters that engage with common issues. The feedback has several components: it clarifies common misconceptions in relation to the assignment topic; it comments on what students have achieved in the light of the criteria; and it emphasizes aspects of academic literacy that we think students are now ready to understand. Of course we also encourage students, but our first purpose is to give cognitive feedback.

We are experimenting with different forms of individual feedback, so that it is less onerous on us and there is more reliability between markers. For example, for portfolio activities we have devised individual feedback sheets which allow markers simply to tick whether a student has understood the core content of an answer fully, partially or not at all. Then students can review their answers against the learning materials or a general feedback letter. This also gives us insight into patterns of answers, which in turn feeds into an ongoing adjustment of our materials and teaching.

Feedback is an influential aspect of dialogue between old timers and newcomers in a community of practice. Students have told us that their writing improved simply because for the first time in their lives they knew their work was being read properly.

Quality Criterion	6.13 Marking procedures for both formative and summative assessment ensure consistency and accuracy of marking, grading, and the provision of feedback to learners.
----------------------	--

Academic Support during Contact Sessions

The contact sessions aim to introduce new ideas, clarify students' misconceptions and model the processes of academic learning. There are lectures to introduce and highlight important aspects of new topic areas, videos to ground theoretical ideas in teachers' practice, and tutorials for guided discussions.

Quality Criterion	7.10 Contact sessions are integrated into the course design, rather than being an add-on extra.
----------------------	--

Students reflect on content knowledge

Lectures and tutorials during contact sessions are not a repetition or summary of the learning materials. Instead, work done is premised on the expectation that students have done their reading. In other words, students cannot come to the residential, take notes and get everything they need for the examination. Instead, they need to engage in activities, discuss problems, reflect on their practice and work with what they have read.

Quality Criterion	4.11 Teaching, learning and assessment activities encourage critical thinking and independent learning.
----------------------	--

One way in which we encourage reflection, is to work a great deal with questions. The tutor and learning tasks use questions to stimulate reflections. In addition, there is a focus on questions asked by the students. At the beginning of each residential there is time allocated for students to ask questions of clarification or exploration about what they have read in the learning materials. Without these questions, no input is given. In this way, even when the tutor is present and working with students, it is clear that students take responsibility for their share of the learning.

Another way we encourage reflection is through structured group tasks that require making connection between the readings and classroom practice. For example, students act out and analyze lesson transcripts or videos of lesson extracts. They plan a possible sequence of assessment tasks. They discuss manifestations of the hidden curriculum in their own schools. One source of heated argumentation is always Curriculum 2005, with students veering from

Quality
Criterion

4.12 The teaching and learning strategies of the course acknowledge learners' existing knowledge and experience, and provide opportunities for guided integration of new knowledge.

adamant advocacy to endless complaint. So discussions of Curriculum 2005 offer ideal opportunities to show the complexity of educational issues and how theory can illuminate practice. As much as possible, activities during contact sessions model the reflective cycle of theory and practice. Tutors work with students to bridge the gap between experiential anecdotes on the one hand and sophisticated sounding educational jargon on the other.

A third way we encourage reflection is to 'unpack' the language of policy documents and current political discourse. We achieve this through examples and activities provided in the learning materials as well as through case studies, practical examples, and teaching of specific skills within a problem-solving framework. For example, we discuss what it might mean to provide 'support to overcome barriers to learning.' The term 'support' has become an educational buzzword. Policy documents talk about '*School/Site-Based Support Teams*' and '*District Support Teams*', '*learners in need of support*' and at school-level, teachers are constantly being told to '*support*' their learners and need to complete forms where they explain the *type of support the learner needs*, the *support provision already offered*, and the *effects of the support* that have been provided. We explore the concept of different types of support through the eco-systemic approach to understanding learning differences and types of support that would be appropriate for, and appreciated by different learners in different circumstances. We also model a 'culture of support', by offering teacher-students individualized support depending on their needs and the stressful life events facing them.

Students practise academic literacy

During contact sessions we also focus specifically on explaining and giving students practise in academic skills. For example, students are shown techniques for approaching articles or how to ask themselves questions while they are reading. They practise recognizing an author's argument and making links to what other authors are saying. They learn about qualities of academic argument and practise rewriting paragraphs to make claims more logical or substantiated by evidence. They discuss how to acquire specialized academic language without falling into the trap of plagiarism. They learn how to write-up classroom research projects and how to present their work in well-ordered files. With all these activities, our intention is to gradually make academic conventions explicit, thus providing a conscious process for acquiring the cognitive skills needed to cope in a world of written knowledge.

Making resources of a university available

Quality
Criterion

7.17 Learners have access to the facilities (for example, libraries) and equipment that are necessary for their successful learning.

During contact sessions there is often little time or energy left for students to explore the broader aspects of the university. Nevertheless, we fit in at least one session per year that requires research in the library. We draw on the Writing Centre to offer individual support to students whose writing is weak. The Science specialization introduces students to computers and the Internet. We lift the heaviness of intellectual work by organizing a visit to the planetarium, distributing information about shows at the Wits Theatre and inviting jazz musicians to perform during lunchtime.

Modelling educational practice

We believe that students learn at least as much, if not more, from what we do rather than from what we say. So during the contact sessions, we consciously model the kinds of practices that we hope to inculcate in our teacher-students.

For example, we deliberately face the challenge of managing diversity. We know that teachers have to teach learners with diverse abilities and backgrounds in their classrooms, yet modelling how to do this in an overcrowded classroom provides us with a challenge. On the one hand, we know it is in the best interest of students to have smaller tutorial groups with greater individualized support. On the other hand, our concern is that small group teaching is often not an option for teachers in their own classrooms. So we have opted for teaching several of the sessions with all the students together in an ‘overcrowded classroom’ and have then modelled group work methods, innovative tasks and classroom management strategies that can be implemented in school classrooms.

This approach has confronted us with disturbing social and moral issues that also occur in overcrowded school classrooms. For example, academic theory informs us that learners from deprived backgrounds are more likely to fear failure and take steps to ensure their success through non-conventional methods than those who come from more privileged backgrounds. We experienced this when a textbook on loan to a particular study group was stolen during a tutorial session. Instead of showing our dismay at this act and ‘punishing’ the entire class by taking away all textbooks on loan, we used this example as a means of demonstrating how a teacher could deal with this behaviour in a classroom setting. We discussed the incident in detail and linked theory to actions and feelings to practice (praxis). In so doing we managed to diffuse a volatile situation and discover more about our teacher-students’ perceived needs and motivations. While we never did discover who had taken the book and it was never returned, this incident and the way it was managed was exciting and we have experienced no further thefts since then.

Our modelling approach also requires that we take time to develop students’ cognitive and meta-cognitive awareness. We need to make explicit the theoretical thinking behind the carefully-developed and sometimes unconventional strategies we use. Activities that have worked well in developing links between knowledge and practice include a ‘salad activity’, during which students make a fresh salad as an illustration of the diversity and unity envisaged in the policy of inclusion and a ‘bridge-building activity’ in which students assist each other verbally on how to build a bridge with straws, thus illustrating the concept of mediation. This has led to laughter, heated discussions, and numerous revisions of strategy and planning.

Taking care to model good teaching practice is based on the understanding that what we *do and how we succeed* will have important implications for how teachers in classrooms around the country make use of limited resources to provide their own learners with support aimed at accommodating diversity.

Encouraging communities of learning

Collegiality, collaboration and supportive communities are increasingly acknowledged as critical elements in teacher development. Collaborative support can encourage innovation, boost teacher confidence, foster professional enthusiasm and more importantly, reduce the teacher's isolation. The ACE students are not only learners at university, they are also life-long learners in their jobs and professional communities. So we make an effort to link studies and professional development.

Quality
Criterion

7.1 Learners are encouraged to create and participate in 'communities of learning' in which the individual learner thinks and solves problems with others engaged in similar tasks. This is facilitated through a range of learner support mechanisms - peer support sessions, tutorials/contact sessions, teaching on assignments, support in the workplace (mentoring), email and Internet communications, for example.

Firstly, we ensure that all students have one or more study partners. We encourage them to meet regularly, show them how to prepare for study meetings and accept the occasional jointly written portfolio activity. Many teacher-students have expressed frustrations related to lack of support and, in some cases, sabotage from their colleagues and seniors in their schools. So the peer support provided by fellow students is crucial for their morale.

Secondly, we try to build a support base for the teachers in their identity as professionals, mainly through cluster workshops and affiliation to Science/Mathematics associations.

During 2003 we ran three one-day cluster workshops for Science teachers from the same school districts. The teachers worked together on different Science themes using micro-science kits. With assistance from tutors they used the new curriculum statements, micro-science activities and Science textbooks to develop two-week learning and teaching programmes. Teachers from each cluster nominated a leader teacher, were allocated a budget and committed themselves to organizing and running a workshop for other teachers in order to present their learning and teaching programmes. Due to budgetary constraints, these teacher-led workshops have not yet happened, but they are still in the pipeline.

In 2004, it was proposed that the Mathematics teachers become affiliated to the Association for Mathematics Education of South Africa (AMESA) to ensure their continual engagement with professional learning. But efforts to identify a Science educators' association are proving to be difficult, as most of the science associations do not cater for primary school teachers.

Enabling access and success for a particular group of students - the Deaf

The National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) state that learners with special needs can be provided for in an inclusion model by designing an inclusive context or setting in such a way that the barriers to the students' education are removed.

The Wits ACE is catering for Deaf students by taking a bilingual approach to meeting their communicative needs. Including Deaf students into a mainstream class requires the inclusion

of South African sign language and we thus provide sign language interpreters for Deaf students and Deaf teaching staff. Sign language interpreters are essential if Deaf students are to have full access to the knowledge provided and thus an equal chance of success.

The role of a sign language interpreter

Using sign language interpreters has involved a learning process for teaching staff on the ACE. We have learned about the role of the interpreter, the process of interpretation and we have needed to change some of our teaching practices to accommodate Deaf students.

Interpreting is a profession and sign language interpreters are qualified for different contexts, such as church, court, social functions, schools and institutions of higher learning. The Deaf Federation of South Africa has a pool of sign language interpreters available for different situations. The role of a sign language interpreter is to facilitate communication between individuals who do not share a common language. The interpreter neither speaks for, nor in place of, Deaf people, but serves only as a conduit for message transmission.

Message transmission through the use of sign language takes longer than direct verbal communication between hearing teaching staff and learners. Sign language occurs in the visual-gestural modality, while spoken languages occur in the aural-oral modality. There is an interpreting process between the two languages in the minds of Deaf teacher-students that needs to be accommodated.

Let us see how the process works:

- The lecturer speaks;
- The South African sign language interpreter hears words;
- She internalizes and understand the meaning;
- She picks the appropriate way to say the message in sign language;
- She signs;
- The Deaf student sees the signs;
- The Deaf student makes sense of the sentence and understands the meaning.

Then:

- The Deaf student signs;
- The interpreter sees his/her signs;
- The interpreter internalizes and understands the meaning;
- The interpreter picks the appropriate way to say the message in spoken language;
- She speaks;
- The lecturer hears the words;
- The lecturer makes sense out of the sentence and understands the meaning.

From this brief description of the role of a sign language interpreter, we have begun to understand that:

1. The process of interpreting can be very tiring. Research has indicated that at a fast pace the interpreter can process about 20,000 words per hour, that interpreting is a cognitively challenging process, and that interpreters and Deaf teacher-students or Deaf teaching staff need 'mental breaks' at 45 minute intervals. Research has also revealed that for whole day intensive teaching and learning situations there is a need for more than one interpreter.
2. Due to mental processing, there is a slight delay as the message is passed from one language to another and it is important that teaching staff and teacher-students understand and respect the role of an interpreter as both use the service to facilitate communication between them.

This has meant that teaching staff need to bear in mind the following:

- An interpreter should not be used as a teacher, tutor, editor, mentor or classroom assistant;
- Staff should address Deaf students directly - not the interpreter;
- Interpreters should not be involved in discussions;
- Allow the interpreter to finish the message;
- Pause while the Deaf students look at visual aids.

In addition, staff need to learn how to make use of an interpreter during class discussions. As an interpreter can only interpret one message at a time, staff must ensure that only one student speaks at a time. Physical positioning is crucial: the interpreter needs to stand close to any visual aids so that deaf students can refer to both quickly and easily. When videos are shown, it often requires two interpreters so that voice-over communication can be distinguished from the people seen on the screen.

Note-takers and additional time

Additional support structures that we have not yet managed to put in place are, for example, note-takers for Deaf student-teachers. The speed at which lectures are conducted and the fact that Deaf students cannot look down to write because they have to look at the interpreter all the time makes it impossible for them to write their own notes. This problem is compounded when lecturers use overhead projectors. During discussions we may use a slower pace to allow for deaf students to participate, but it becomes difficult to ask hearing students to wait while deaf students write notes, highlighting the value that this support could contribute to the learning experience.

In addition, Deaf students often require extra time during examinations or tests, once again as a result of the translation process and the difference between spoken/written language and sign language. Deaf students do not have natural exposure to the written language and thus find understanding and responding to written text a time-consuming process.

Organizing a counselling service for personal support

A prevalent special educational need among students at higher education institutions is coping with stress and stress-related difficulties. In particular, adult students are faced with stressful situations in their personal and work lives. Once they add the pressure of studying to their lives, it creates new stresses, often magnifying existing stresses and allowing less time in their lives to deal with problems. It is generally accepted that stress has an inhibitory effect on thought processing, which results in inability to think clearly or the avoidance of thinking at all. So if we want our students to experience academic success, we need to provide a service to relieve some of the stress.

Quality Criterion	7.13	Learners have access to counselling for personal difficulties/advice related to their study before and during their course or programme, as well as after its completion.
-------------------	-------------	---

The Wits Counselling and Careers Development Unit, staffed by professional psychologists and student-peer counsellors, is unable to support the distance students because its service is on a different campus, has a long waiting list and does not operate during the holidays. So we have organized a counselling service that relies on full-time students studying for a Masters Degree in Educational Psychology (M Ed). As they require 30 hours of counselling experience as part of their Masters programme, they can accumulate these hours by offering counselling to the distance students. Masters students are not yet professionals in their own right, so they receive support from their lecturers who provide debriefing and supervision after each counselling session. The Masters students are trained to listen, to identify problem areas needing immediate attention and to support the counsellee in their problem-solving. This allows the person seeking help to think aloud, and during that process, movement in thought is stimulated or asserted. Our experience is that most counselled students end the session in a problem-solving phase, which indicates unlocking of thought inhibition, which is the primary goal of our counselling service.

During 2003, 20 to 30 students came for counselling during each contact session. Not all students could be accommodated, so priority was given to students coming from rural and semi-rural areas where there are no counselling services, while those from areas with services were referred to appropriate centres. 95 % were women, which reflects the nature of the student population. A breakdown of the nature of problems presented in counselling revealed that 30% were cases of abuse by husbands, 20% were marital, family and relationship problems, 20% bereavement and illness, 10% academic difficulties, 10% financial problems and 10% depression emanating from childhood abuse and neglect.

Traditionally counselling is viewed as a process that involves consultation over a number of successive sessions. This view of counselling does not consider the one-off counselling sessions as offered to distance students to be an effective form of counselling. Nevertheless, we have noticed a positive impact and improvement in students who were exposed to the service. As one student wrote:

To the organizers. Thank you for organizing therapy sessions for students, really we can see that you care for your students. You are not only interested in keeping more students in your university to keep it going, but you also have shown care and support for us through your personal lives. From RRRR

We therefore operate from the premise that although several successive counselling sessions might be the ideal, one session within a hectic contact session is still effective.

Conclusion

In writing this case study as a collaborative effort, we were struck by the diversity of approaches across subject specializations and by the complexity of what we are trying to achieve. This diversity of support structures makes up the richness and value of what it means to have access and, hopefully, also success in studying for an ACE at Wits.

Secondly, we noticed how much of the support takes place during the short contact sessions. It seems that in order to ensure success we are skewing the mixed-mode of delivery more towards contact than towards distance. It might be useful to use Bernstein's concept of classification to explore this idea more deeply. It seems that what we are doing on the Wits ACE is to weaken the boundaries of the classification between distance and contact modes of teaching. Bernstein describes classification as the relations between educational categories and states that 'the stronger the insulation between categories, the stronger the boundary between one category and another and the more defined the space that any category occupies and to which it is specialized' (1996:23). Modes of distance and contact teaching are often strongly classified in South Africa - they are considered to be different modes of teaching and learning, receive very different levels of subsidy from the state and are explicitly assigned to different institutions. The pre-conception is that distance mode depends on input from and interaction with learning materials, while contact mode depends on input from and interaction with the educator and student peers. Distance is pre-set, rigid and structured, while contact is flexible and adaptable to student needs. Distance is low-quality, while contact is high-quality education. But it seems to us that on the Wits ACE we are weakening the boundaries between this classification by using high-quality aspects of both modes. Students' prime sources of information are clear and interactive learning materials, but tutors and lecturers work in the classroom to make knowledge in those materials accessible and meaningful to particular groups of students.

In the process though, our conceptions of what counts as teaching are changing. We are adjusting our classroom interactions so as to focus more on strengthening the skills of learning and reflection. We take care to model and create spaces for professional development. We put in place support structures like counselling and interpreters that create the inner and outer possibilities for students to learn.

Thirdly, we acknowledge the fragile state of student success on the ACE programme. Without creative effort and constant adjustment of means of support put in by the teaching staff, and their insistence on utilizing the resources of the university in new ways to satisfy needs of these non-traditional students, the students would find it far more difficult to achieve success. Translating the promise of access into success depends not only on the willingness of students to sacrifice an easier life in order to commit to their studies, but also depends on the willingness of university staff and structures to find appropriate mechanisms of support.

References

- Adler, J. and Reed, Y. (eds). (2002). *Challenges of Teacher Development: An Investigation of Take-up in South Africa*. Preservice Science Teachers, *Science Education*, 77(1).pp.47-73.
- Appleton, K. & Kindt, I. (1999). 'Why Teach Primary Science? Influences on Beginning Teachers' Practices'. *International Journal of Science Education*, 21. pp.155-168.
- Bertram, C. (2003). 'Moving Towards Massification: Reflections on a Mixed-mode Teacher Education Programme'. *Perspectives in Education*, 21 (12). pp.71-82.
- Bernstein, B. (1990). *The Structuring of Pedagogic Discourse: Class Codes and Control*, Volume IV. London: Routledge.
- Craig, A. (2001). 'Education for All'. *SA Journal of Higher Education*, 10, (2). pp.47-55.
- Department of National Education. (2001). *Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education-Building an Inclusive Education and Training System*. Pretoria: Department of Education.
- Department of Education, Technical Committee on the Revision of Norms and Standards for Educators. (1998). *Norms and Standards for Educators*. Pretoria: Department of Education.
- Gunstone, R.F., Slattery, M., Baird, J. and Northfield, J. (1993). 'A Case Study Exploration of Development in Pre-service Science Teachers'. *Science Education*, 77. pp.47-73.
- Kruger, C. and Summers, M. (1989). 'An Investigation of Some Primary Teachers' Understanding of Changes in Materials'. *School Science Review*, 71 (255). pp.17-27.
- Nakedi, E. M. (2003). Pending M Sc Research Report, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.
- Papadimitriou, V., Solomonidou, C. & Stavridou, H. (1997). 'An Attempt to Improve Student-Teachers' Ability to Use the Particulate Theory in Explaining Properties of Matter.' *Nonlinear Analysis, Theory, Methods & Applications* 30, (4). pp.2075-2085.
- Roberts, R., Webb, P., Isley, J., and Rouhani, S. (2003). *JET/UPE/DOE Evaluation of the Microscience Primary School Project*. Unpublished report.
- Thorne, B. (1990). 'Conceptions of the Particle Model held by Pre-service Elementary Science Teachers'. M Sc Research Report, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Endnotes

- ¹ Curriculum: From Plans to Practices, Creating People-Centred Schools, Learners and Learning
- ² We are using the term 'teacher-students' to indicate that our students are all practising teachers who have decided to study part-time at the university. We are not using the term 'educator' as we agree with the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education that it is a more precise use of language to refer to 'teachers' when talking about classroom-based teachers and 'educators' when referring to everybody involved in education. http://education.pwv.gov.za/DoE_Sites/Curriculum/Ne... language_and_terminology.ht

Case Two: Addressing the needs of learners and addressing the needs of the nation: a module in UNISA's BA in Court Interpreting

Kim Wallmach
 Department of Linguistics, University of South Africa
 wallmak@unisa.ac.za

Editor's introduction

This case study describes a module which addresses the needs of a 'non-traditional' learner constituency: court interpreters with limited academic background but substantial work experience. The module and larger qualification of which it is a part, respond to quality criterion 3 on **programme development**:

Programmes are flexible and designed with national needs as well as the needs of prospective learners and employers in mind.

An unusual feature of the module, in a distance learning context, is the teaching and **assessment** of oral interpreting skills from one language to another. This is done through extensive use of audiocassettes for both teaching and assessment purposes. Examples of assessment criteria developed for the assessment of module outcomes are included in the final section of the case.

Background to the development of the module *Liaison and Consecutive Interpreting*

In many countries, while a range of languages might be used in a courtroom, interpreting is likely to be needed in only a very small number of court cases. South Africa is unusual in that the *majority* of court cases require interpreting. In magistrates' courts, where the majority of criminal cases are heard, about 90% of court cases require interpreting, at least in Gauteng, the most multilingual province. Even in post-apartheid South Africa, English and Afrikaans still function as the *de facto* official languages of court proceedings, and English is the official language of record, which means that those who do not speak English and/or Afrikaans are compelled to make use of interpreting services in exercising their right to be tried in their own language. The Department of Justice therefore employs around 2 500 court interpreters (mostly male) on a full-time basis, and a number of part-time interpreters, mainly for foreign

languages. Most interpreters are assigned to particular courtrooms, where they interpret every case brought before that court. In a normal day, the South African court interpreter might be required to interpret in five African languages plus English and Afrikaans.

Given the enormous challenges facing the court interpreter in South Africa, and sheer numbers of interpreters employed full-time by the Department of Justice, the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, and South African National Defence Force, one would expect training of court interpreters to be given a high priority. Unfortunately, this has not been the case. Historically, court interpreters had a low standard of education, at best a poor Grade 12 qualification and at worst, only a Grade 10 qualification. After selection and appointment as court interpreters, they were (and still are) provided with a six-week training course by the Justice College, a division of the Department of Justice. This training course is supposed to take place before the court interpreter is assigned to a particular court, but in some instances, court interpreters wait for up to five years before attending the course, and therefore must acquire any interpreting expertise through self-training. With the advent of learnerships through SETAs, it is to be hoped that this situation will change. In the past, prospects for professionalization, career advancement, recognition for excellent services or opportunities for following extra training courses in court interpreting were negligible. The only avenue upwards was to study law, and thereby leave the court interpreting service. This clearly unacceptable situation prompted court interpreter unions and representatives of the Department of Justice to consult with a number of academic institutions regarding the possibility of a more comprehensive training programme. In response to this, in 2000 the University of South Africa (UNISA) introduced a Bachelor of Arts degree with specialization in Court Interpreting (BACT), in line with the tenets of outcomes-based education. Roughly one third of the modules for the programme are devoted to interpreting, one third to language and one third to law modules. The latter are offered through the Faculty of Law and provide students with some credits towards an LLB degree. The Department of Justice issues bursaries to any full-time employees who wish to enrol for the degree.

The module, *Liasion and Consecutive Interpreting*, and indeed the BA with Specialization in Court Interpreting, has been designed to meet very specific needs of society. It is vital that this module and others in the specialization be offered in distance learning mode because South African court interpreters, who are employed full-time in courts throughout the country, cannot easily travel to attend courses at residential universities in the cities. It is equally relevant for other countries in Africa, with similar requirements related to court interpreting. This BA programme is currently the **only avenue of training** for court interpreters in South Africa, since a number of South African universities, which used to offer such training, have now ceased to do so.

Quality Criterion	<p>3.1 The programme is developed in terms of a needs analysis based on an audit of existing courses and programmes, market research, liaison (where appropriate) with industry and professions, national and regional priorities, and the needs of the learners.</p>
-------------------	--

Learner profile and learner needs

Most of the students currently registered for the BA in Court Interpreting are practising court interpreters, who require theoretical and practical skills to reinforce their existing practical experience in court, and who also need to be exposed to practical interpreting situations outside the courtroom so as to open up other avenues in terms of freelance job opportunities in interpreting. (Full-time court interpreters are currently not well-paid.) Students with no previous professional exposure to interpreting, but with experience in less formal settings such as church, health, tourism or other liaison contexts, are in the minority. These students need to learn both practical interpreting skills as well as certain theoretical aspects of interpreting. As mentioned earlier, court interpreters do not receive training in interpreting skills, so this module addresses a very important need.

Currently, 88 students are registered for the degree. For the module outlined in this case study, there were 11 students in 2001 when the course was first offered, 23 in 2002, 17 in 2003 and there are 15 in 2004. To date, all of the students except one have been additional language speakers of English. The majority are full-time employees of the Department of Justice, aged over 35 years. Some students gained access to UNISA via the Senate over-23 years of age discretionary clause. Most come from disadvantaged backgrounds, but have passed language tests in order to be employed in the courts, and therefore are generally able to articulate coherently their ideas orally and in writing in their first language and additional

language(s) (English and/or another language). They are generally adequately prepared for the module, although very few have ever studied at tertiary level. A minority of students are additional language speakers of English, but with foreign languages (French, Spanish, Italian, Chinese) as their first language.

Quality
Criterion

2. There is up-to-date information about past, present and potential learners.

The module

Principles of Interpreting II: Liaison and Consecutive Interpreting (PIN201-U) is a second year module, National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 6, offered by the Linguistics Department in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at UNISA. The duration is one semester and is part of the BA (with Specialization in Court Interpreting). It can also be taken as an elective by BA (Languages & Literature) students.

The word *liaison* means 'link' in French, and thus the term refers to the type of interpreting that takes place in a number of different settings where two or more interlocutors do not share a language and where the interpreter must be present in order to bridge the communication gap. Gentile *et al* (1996: 1) support the use of this term as follows:

We use the term 'liaison interpreting' to refer to a growing area of interpreting throughout the world: in business settings, where executives from different cultures and languages meet each other; in meetings between a society's legal, medical, educational and welfare institutions and its immigrants who speak a different language; in relations between a dominant society and indigenous peoples speaking different languages; in a whole host of less formal situations in tourism, education and cultural contexts.

While the module is part of a learning programme for court interpreters, it teaches practical interpreting skills independently of setting; therefore learners who are not court interpreters, but are involved in other kinds of liaison interpreting can register for it for non-degree purposes. What makes this module unusual in a distance learning context is the fact that oral interpreting skills from one language to another are taught and tested.

Given the fact that most students registering for the programme are already working in courts as interpreters, one aim of the programme is to increase their awareness of tasks they are faced with every day and to improve their ability to reflect upon the realities of court interpreting. A purely theoretical course which deals with the standard do's and don't's in interpreting and which produces students who can only parrot idealized rules without being able to solve problems and real-life situations themselves, would be of very little use. In court, interpreters are constantly faced with contradictions between ideal conditions and actual conditions, between idealized notions of performance and actual constraints. It is also hoped that some of the most motivated graduates of the programme might study further to become inspectors or managers of interpreters in the future.

As most students do not have access to a computer, the module makes use of print-based materials and audio cassettes. It has been designed so that learning of concepts is reinforced through the completion of written activities and tasks contained in a workbook. With guidance, learners are expected to analyze and think critically about the liaison interpreting process and be able to apply this knowledge to given texts which typify specific liaison interpreting situations and/or to their own practical experience. Learners must be able to structure their answers in the form of paragraphs and/ or short essays. As they work through the module, all learners receive in-text support as in the form of detailed feedback on all activities. In addition, two optional five hour workshops are held in Pretoria and in 2003, one such workshop was also held in Polokwane. The Pretoria workshops have been well-attended, but the first Polokwane workshop was not.

As regards the oral practical interpreting skills, this is a skills-based module, so extensive use is made of audio-cassettes for oral tasks. Learners are required to listen to an interview or monologue in English recorded on a UNISA cassette and interpret it into their first language onto their own cassette (which is assessed and returned to the student).

Successful learners are able to demonstrate practical interpreting skills and apply these skills professionally to liaison interpreting settings in the legal, health and business contexts. With limited guidance, learners are expected to be able to interpret competently in the short consecutive mode *without notes* (two to three sentences at a time for approximately 15 minutes in total) as well as being able to competently interpret a narrative/descriptive text of approximately 500 words at sight (i.e. from written text to oral mode) from second language into first language. With guidance, learners are expected to be able to interpret in the short consecutive mode *with notes* (three to four sentences at a time for approximately 15 minutes in total) and interpret a basic narrative/ descriptive text of approximately 500 words in the long consecutive mode *with notes* from second language into first language.

Quality
Criterion

11.6 There are demonstrable processes and ongoing efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning according to priorities identified through monitoring and staff evaluation.

In 2003 the tutorial letter for the module was quality assured to assess its suitability for transformation into a study guide. Participants in this quality assurance process were a representative from UNISA's Bureau for Learning Development, the course leader, members of the

Linguistics Department and an external critical reader. As a result, the layout of the tutorial letter was revised and the content of the course more closely aligned with the intended module outcomes. The two audio-cassettes that accompany the module were also revised, with greater inclusion of relevant topics (health, education, legal matters for example) and more interviews or dialogues. The language used on the tape is extemporaneous speech as far as possible, since this is easier to interpret than prepared speeches which are denser in terms of terminology and are delivered at a faster pace.

Formative and summative assessment

UNISA staff members assess all theoretical work plus Afrikaans-English, English-Afrikaans, French-English and German-English interpreting work and a number of outside markers assess the practical interpreting work in other language combinations (Spanish, Italian, isiZulu, XiTsonga, Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, Arabic, Portuguese, isiXhosa, Tshivenda, for example).

Because the module aims at teaching practical skills as well as theoretical principles, it is vital that the students work consistently throughout the semester. For this reason, there is a structured programme of self-assessment (Assignment 1), consisting of activities in the workbook (both oral and written) which learners can work through at their own pace.

In addition, **written assessment** (which counts 50% of the final mark for the module) consists of a written examination plus a written assignment (Assignment 2) which tests learners' ability to critically reflect on the liaison interpreting process and to express themselves in an academically appropriate way. They are required to read the material critically, synthesize information and express their answers in the form of paragraph-type questions.

Quality
Criterion

6.4 There is a range of formative and summative assessment tasks and methods which ensure that all learning outcomes are validly assessed.

Assessment of oral skills (which counts 50% of the final mark for the module) consists of an oral, taped assignment (Assignment 3) and an oral, taped take-home examination (Assignment 4) which tests learners' ability to interpret consecutively with and without note-taking. Assignments 2 and 3 together count 20% towards the final examination mark for the module.

Quality
Criterion

6.13 Marking procedures for both formative and summative assessment ensure consistency and accuracy of marking, grading, and provision of feedback to learners.

Learners are provided with detailed feedback for both the self-assessment assignment (Assignment 1) in the form of model answers and for the marked assignments (Assignments 2 and 3). Assessors use an outcomes-based assessment grid for both written and oral tasks. The emphasis in marking oral tasks is not on marking learners'

interpretations as simply good or bad, but in helping learners to identify their strengths and weaknesses in particular areas.

This system is based on four criteria, namely:

1. Accuracy - the correct transfer of information and evidence of complete understanding;
2. Absence of misinterpretations - where the meaning of the source language (SL) is lost;
3. Appropriate choice of vocabulary, idiom, terminology and register;
4. Grammar and coherence of the target language (TL) message;
5. Interpreting technique and performance.

The following is an example of the marking system used for undergraduate interpreting tasks.

Outcome 1: Accuracy of message

(Transfer of information, including dates, names, figures etc.)

Outcome not achieved (0)	Outcome achieved (+1)	Outcome exceeded (+2)	Distinction (+3)
Inadequate. Some understanding of message. But a number of minor errors and occasional major errors lead to false transfer of information.	Adequate. No major errors. Some minor errors may be present.	Good. No major errors. Less than 2 minor errors.	Excellent. No major or minor errors. Totally accurate transfer of information.

Outcome 2: Vocabulary, Idiom, Register, Purity in target language (TL)

Outcome not achieved (0)	Outcome achieved (+1)	Outcome exceeded (+2)	Distinction (+3)
Inadequate. Number of clumsy or inappropriate renderings which seriously impair/distort the message. Little/no sense of register.	Adequate. Some peculiarities but will not impair overall acceptability of message. Some incorrect choice of register and idiom.	Good. Vocabulary, terminology and idiom are appropriate throughout. Register is mostly appropriate	Excellent. Language and register entirely appropriate to subject matter and intention of original.

Outcome 3: Grammar and Coherence in TL

Outcome not achieved (0)	Outcome achieved (+1)	Outcome exceeded (+2)	Distinction (+3)
Inadequate. Blatant grammar errors. Inappropriate structural features. Does not read as original. Stilted/incoherent; far too literal rendering of structure of SL.	Adequate. Some grammar errors present. Structure is sound, but there may be some awkwardness or lack of coherence which makes the translation stilted in some parts.	Good. Near-perfect grammar. Structure and organization are sound; coherent links between ideas.	Excellent. Grammar perfect. Fluent and natural expression in target language. Sounds like an original message. Structure, links and discourse organization are all entirely appropriate to TL.

Outcome 4: Interpreting technique and performance (presentation, confidence, fluency of delivery, hesitations, backtracking, irritating habits, etc)

Outcome not achieved (0)	Outcome achieved (+1)	Outcome exceeded (+2)	Distinction (+3)
<p>Inadequate. Some major faults in technique, making interpretation unacceptable in professional terms.</p>	<p>Adequate. Correct in major technical elements but more than 2 faults in technique.</p>	<p>Good. Good public speaking skills; Less than 2 minor faults in technique.</p>	<p>Excellent. Faultless public speaking skills. No hesitations or irritating habits; absolutely fluent and confident delivery.</p>

Ticks are made against the quality category achieved for each outcome, ranging from outcome not achieved to a distinction.

Quality
Criterion

6.2 Assessment information (including learning outcomes, assessment criteria as well as assessment procedures and dates) is provided in all courses, modules or topics.

four outcomes and distinctions to those who achieve distinctions for at least three outcomes. Marks are calculated as follows: each student starts off with seven marks out of 20 marks, and then the marks for outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4 are added.

For example: 7/20 plus:

1 mark for Outcome Achieved (accuracy of message),

3 marks for Distinction (vocabulary, idiom, register, purity in TL),

2 marks for Outcome Exceeded (grammar and coherence in TL),

0 marks for Outcome Not Achieved (interpreting technique and performance).

Total: 7+1+3+2+0=13/20 = 65%

The detailed assessment procedure is helpful in promoting reliability across a range of markers, and is also helpful to the learners who have a good chance of understanding the reason for their mark, as well as in which areas they may need to improve.

Case Three: Engaging students online: a module in an international M Ed in Language and Literacy Education

Hilary Janks
 Applied English Language Studies, School of Literature and Language Studies
 University of the Witwatersrand
 janks@languages.wits.ac.za

Editor's introduction

In the first part of this case study of an on-line M Ed module the author describes two forms of **collaborative relationship**: (i) among universities in South Africa, Australia and Canada and (ii) between a writer-teacher and specialists in web-based language. It illustrates Criterion 10:

In the interests of cost-effective provision of education and training, collaborative relationships are formed and collaborative projects undertaken wherever possible.

The author then describes how interactive pedagogy, which has evolved through her many years of experience in face-to-face teaching, could be transferred productively to an on-line environment in which asynchronous discussion is central to learning for both students and their teacher. In particular, this description addresses element 5.5.7 of the criteria for course materials:

Active learning and teaching approaches are used to engage learners intellectually and practically, and cater for individual needs.

The case study illustrates the integration of **course materials**, **learner support** and **assessment in course design** for online learning.

It still amazes me that I can sit in my study at home in Johannesburg, South Africa and teach my critical literacy course for the University of South Australia (UniSA¹) in Adelaide, South Australia, to students registered for a Masters degree at Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU) in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, particularly as these Canadian students might live anywhere in Canada, or indeed in Saudi Arabia or Korea. The richness that is achieved by developing understanding across diverse contexts with students who are themselves diverse, enables exploration of local knowledges and practices in relation to global perspectives.

MSVU has a long tradition of work in the area of education and social justice, as has the Centre for Studies in Literacy, Policy and Learning Cultures (LPLC) at the University of South Australia

(UniSA). MSVU has sought to broaden the experience of its students by putting them in touch with academics with expertise in different aspects of literacy from across the world. To that end it has involved staff from the LPLC who teach at UniSA, one of the premier distance education institutions in Australia. In addition, the Centre collaborates with academics at other institutions in Australia and elsewhere to provide a rich menu of options in their Masters in Education in Language and Literacy Education. This programme for in-service teachers which uses a socio-cultural orientation to literacy, places emphasis on critical literacy - literacy education with a focus on issues of identity, power and social justice across different modalities of meaning-making (verbal, visual, gestural, spatial) using a range of media (including new digital media).

UniSA has invested in software needed for online teaching, developing its own programme that is user friendly for both teachers and learners. All a teacher has to do is to write the course and teach it. The teacher writes the course in MS Word based on knowledge of what the design of the website makes possible. The website is divided into

- Areas of input from the teacher: an introduction to the course, course information, course topics, resources;
- Live areas for interaction during the course: a noticeboard, a discussion area for each course topic and an area for pooling and sharing material. Each of these separate areas

Quality
Criterion

5.6.6 Support in the use of the various functions on the site is provided both in the site itself and from external technical assistance.

on the site has a hot-button on the home page and more than one area can be open at a time. Different software on the market (including the UniSA) software has different strengths and weaknesses. What matters is that specialists, who know the necessary web-based language, upload courses, leaving academic staff free to concentrate on the academic content and pedagogy. The only computer skills I need are MS Word, Internet and e-mail.

My course, *A Critical Language Awareness (CLA) Approach to Literacy Education*, is divided into three topics: The history of CLA; CLA in practice; Critical text analysis, and Critical discourse analysis. In writing the course I tried to strike a balance between providing information, guiding students' reading, and activities. I have tried to use my face-to-face experience to design activities that develop and scaffold students' understanding (Bruner, 1985) by using interactive activities and keeping information and definitions to a minimum. Additional input is provided online on the discussion sites if the students need it and only after students have had a chance to develop their understanding through the reading or the activities. The way this works in practice is that students are given activities to do and are required to post their work, their ideas or their findings on the discussion site for all to read. This forms the basis of an online discussion in which I participate as the teacher. Other activities require students to respond to other people's postings. This generates online discussion, which, by the end of the course, is established as an expected participative practice. In teaching the course I also generate further questions or ideas to encourage further discussion online.

The online discussion is at the heart of the pedagogy. This is much like any classroom discussion with some important differences:

- Every student has to contribute to the discussion and respond to fellow students.

- Responses are written, so tend to be more thoughtful than off-the-cuff oral contributions to discussions in face-to-face classes.
- Responses are more permanent (students are taught how to save discussion sites) and both students and the teacher can read postings on the site, think about them and return to re-read them. One activity asks students to review discussion on a topic and to list everything that they think has been learnt.
- The teacher can keep track of each individual's development as well as the class's progress.
- Students are disembodied, so that judgements about them are formed only on the basis of their work.
- Teachers can time their interventions more carefully and can vary between responding to individual postings or collectively to the class as a whole. All responses to all postings are available to everybody and everyone is expected to read everything that is posted. Everyone is encouraged to respond to any posting at any time.
- Responses can be threaded. There are two ways of posting on the site. You can start a new message at any time or you can reply to a posting. If you reply then the response appears as indented under the response you have replied to. In this way, all responses to one message or one idea can be kept together. This is called threading.

Quality
Criterion

5.5.8 Content is presented in the form of an unfolding argument, rather than discrete bits of information that have no obvious connection.

- It is possible to cut comments from a posting and paste them into your own posting so that you can comment specifically on what someone else has said, without having to re-type it.
- All discussion is asynchronous. I can go onto the site at any time to post new responses or to reply to existing responses. This means that everyone can work at a time of the day or week that suits them. Not only is this flexibility essential for mature students who have jobs and/or domestic responsibilities, but it also caters for time differences between Australia, South Africa, Canada and wherever else students might be located.

Course resources, such as academic articles that we have copyright permission to use online, appear in the resources section of the site; other such material, including prescribed texts, are sent to students by post. With each course, students receive a printed reading pack. They also receive a disc with software they need such as an Internet

Quality
Criterion

5.5.4 The content of the course is accurate and up-to-date.

browser, a word processing programme and an e-mail package. Students are also encouraged to post additional resources - scanned texts, academic articles, classroom materials they develop as part of a course assignment, photographs, course essays, interesting URLs - onto the 'pool and share' part of the site. I often add material to the course here.

This enables me to keep the course current and to add resources in relation to students' needs and interests and in relation to how discussion develops, making the course organic rather than static.

Quality
Criterion

5.5.10 Course materials are designed in an accessible way. Access devices (such as contents pages, headings), graphic presentation of information and layout facilitate use by the target learners.

Passwords control access to the site. Teachers and students have differential access. In addition to the topics, course information, discussion and resource sites that the students have access to, teachers can also post messages on the notice board, which is used to manage the course with, for example, instructions pertaining to assignments, procedures, and so on. Teachers also have access to course statistics which at the push of the button will, for example, count the number of responses from each student. Teachers have the power to delete postings from the site should the need arise.

Having provided some idea of how the course content and readings are delivered and how online teaching enables students to interact with each other and the teacher, what follows is an example of students' engagement with the meaning of the word 'critical'. In designing this course, I was conscious that the word 'critical' has different meanings in different discourses and that for most teachers the word 'critical' relates to critical thinking - the ability to provide a reasoned position based on evidence and argument. Most teachers do not make any link between the word 'critical' and oppressive relations of domination and subordination, which is how 'critical' is tied to questions of power in Marxist and neo-Marxist discourses (Fairclough, 1989; Thompson, 1984; Eagleton, 1991). Nor are they familiar with Foucauldian theories of disciplinary power and subjectivity (Foucault, 1975). The course activities are therefore designed to help teachers, who are students on the course, to acquire these new meanings, which are embedded in socio-cultural theories of literacy.

I have designed a sequence of activities that takes students from what they know already to a different understanding, that takes them from the every day meanings of the word 'critical' to specialist meanings of the word, what Vygotsky describes as the move from a spontaneous to a scientific concept (Vygotsky, 1962:117). The activities occur in the following order:

1. I ask students to list all meanings of the word 'critical' they can think of. To help them, I suggest that they think of words that collocate with the word 'critical' such as 'critical condition', 'critical thinking' etc.
2. I refer students to the British national corpus web site: <http://sara.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/lookup.html>. The web site explains how the database taken from British sources, was created. On this site when you enter a word, the programme generates 50 random uses of the word you have entered. If you look up the same word again, you will get a different random sample of 50. Students have to enter the word 'critical' and classify data according to the different uses of 'critical' that they find in the data.
3. Next students have to look at educational documents in their own context: (textbooks, policy documents, national curricula) and find five examples of the word 'critical' used in context.
4. Finally students are asked to examine work by Comber (1992) and Janks (1993a and 1993b) to work out what 'critical' means in relation to 'critical literacy' and 'critical language awareness', located in the specialist field that is the subject of the course.

With each activity, the meaning of 'critical' shifts or one of its different meanings is privileged. After each activity students are asked to post their findings on the discussion site and to compare their findings with their own previous findings and with the findings of other students.

Instructions such as:

Post to the online discussion some of the examples you found, with a comment on any patterns you see in the way the word is used in educational contexts. (University of South Australia, 2002).

Post your list of meanings to the online discussion with a comment on what you learned from this activity. (University of South Australia, 2002).

Respond in the online discussion to at least one other student's list of meanings commenting on any differences, similarities or surprises you find. (University of South Australia, 2002).

invite students to enter into discussion online and to compare and contrast their answers. Finally at the end of the whole of Topic One students are asked to comment on how their understanding of the word 'critical' has developed during this part of the course. This is demonstrated by extracts from the online discussion.

Quality
Criterion

4.12 The teaching and learning strategies of the course acknowledge learners' existing knowledge and experience, and provide opportunities for guided integration of new knowledge.

The following two extracts are typical of students' responses to Activity Two, at the beginning of the sequence.

1. Some of the meanings of the word 'critical' that I found after working through activity #2 include:
 - inclined to judge severely and find fault
 - characterized by careful, exact evaluation and judgement
 - being in or verging on a state of crisis or emerging
 - fraught with danger
 - indispensable, essential, of utmost importance, urgent
 - in dire need.

Throughout this activity I have learned that one word can have many definitions. It is the way in which we use it verbally or in written text that gives it meaning. It is important for us to choose our words carefully so that others can interpret the context of a sentence correctly. A reader needs to understand what we are trying to say and for that to happen each reader needs to be able to choose the appropriate definition of our words based on the contexts we use them in.

2. To discriminate between good and not so good; To view discriminately; To analyze; To judge with disdain or disfavour; An adjective of something serious ie critical illness critical condition; To evaluate with thought; To be serious, to look at all angles; To highlight the errors of something or someone; Look beyond the surface; To digest, think, contemplate, reflect on something before providing an answer or opinion; To observe with intelligence and thought; To be negative; Of importance, more important than something else. To view all sides of something before making a decision; To weigh the positive and negatives

of something: (You're so critical of me - Negative; You did a fine job of critiquing that assignment. - Positive; Teaching children (and adults) to critically analyze text is a life skill that will be required throughout their lives - Positive). This little activity highlights how one word can mean so many different things. Yes, we want to be critical in our thinking and observing and be opened to critical assessment and critical dialogue but no one wants another to be overly critical of what they do and yet positive criticism helps a person to grow in whatever area of life. Criticism of a child's work can be done in a very positive, nurturing way or can be just plain and simple negative criticism.

The examples students found in education texts, Activity Three, were all similar.

1. After looking very carefully at my textbooks and documents I came up with a few examples where the word 'critical' is used directly in the outcomes. The following are two Language Arts outcomes:
 - Students will be expected to respond critically to a range of texts, applying their understanding of language, form and genre.
 - Students will be able to communicate information and ideas effectively and clearly, and to respond personally and critically.

In both of these examples I take the word 'critical' to mean by careful evaluation and judgement. In my observation the way the word 'critical' is used in educational contexts directs the focus on students analyzing information carefully and thoroughly and developing a response based on this analysis. Let me know what you think.

2. 'Its goal is to create critical media consumers who can, and will, bring critical analysis to their use of the media'. 'Major studies are being carried out in the areas of critical thinking, literacy, cognitive studies, and career counselling.' In examples from educational documents, I have found the use of the word 'critical' has a positive connotation and has one of two general meanings; either clear/concise/judged objectively or essential/crucial.

By the time students have worked with texts in the field of critical literacy, they understand that 'critical' has a specialist meaning that is not reflected at all in the British corpus and that is rare in educational materials. Here are the responses of two students to Activity Four

1. Meaning of 'critical' in 'Critical Language Awareness' & 'critical literacy'. Critical in these two instances means:
 - to carefully and thoroughly analyze texts, both spoken and written, from a perspective that can challenge and question the choices that the author/speaker has made about what/who to include/represent or omit/silence.
 - to exert one's right to challenge the relationship between power and language and how this relationship privileges certain users of language over others.
 - to approach language in a way that questions the unnatural and unfair positioning of one group over another.
 - to exert power so that topdogs are challenged and the underdogs are empowered.
 - to question the status quo, how language meanings are maintained, to raise consciousness, to explore and challenge language use in different social contexts, to not always accept texts as truths, and to bring about change.

The onus is on us as teachers to provide opportunities for our students whereby they can question the author's intended meaning and to accept or reject these meanings when making comparisons to their own experiences, beliefs, morals, and values. Teachers have to provide opportunities that stimulate and encourage students to question more so the 'why' of texts than to explain the 'what' of texts. By providing a classroom environment that is inviting, encouraging, and welcoming of different ideas and views, students, when shown how, will be better able to question the intentions of authors and to challenge injustices of the status quo.

2. Critical Language Awareness explains how dominant belief systems are maintained. In the traditional classroom, children were/are expected to sit quietly, answer questions posed by the teacher, and accept meanings of texts as they are 'supposed' to be. The teacher is in power and this is not to be shaken by children thinking and questioning the teacher's or author's viewpoint.

The word 'critical' in critical language awareness means challenging the status quo. Being able to challenge and possibly effect change comes from an understanding of the relationship between language and power. It also comes from an accepting and encouraging atmosphere in the classroom, where there is a balance of power and a respect of differing opinions. As a critical reader, the child understands that a producer of text makes choices that empower some and disempower others. The critical reader reads with awareness and weighs what they know and value against what is being said. They question what they read and decide if they can incorporate that view into their belief-system; they do not blindly accept text as fact or as being 'right' just because it is published. They have a clear awareness that the person that created the text had a purpose for writing it and made choices in what would be included, emphasized, or excluded. As a critical learner, they have a clear vantage point for scrutinizing text and being able to discern who and what is maintaining power through the production of the text. They realize that writers have a right to make decisions, but critical readers can question these decisions and consider other ways the text could have been written. Critical readers are aware of the power of language, but realize that they too have power - they can approach text with awareness and choose to accept.

Only once students have understood the meaning of 'critical' in the field of critical literacy, does it make sense to ask them to design critical literacy activities. Students need to understand that critical thinking is an important part of reading texts but that critical analysis, as used in the field of 'critical literacy', 'critical language awareness' and 'critical discourse analysis', requires that readers also ask whose interests are served by the texts, who benefits and who is disadvantaged? Do the texts work to maintain or challenge unequal relations of power? How does the way the texts are constructed work to position readers? The focus shifts from what texts mean to how they mean and *what work they do*. Students are asked to think about effects rather than intentions.

In addition, in the process of working on these four activities, the students, all teachers with a great deal of classroom experience, raise other issues that are of interest to them and that arise in relation to the online discussion.

Quality
Criterion

5.6.7 The site encourages interactions with other learners as well as with the tutor / mentor.

In 2004, the following ideas were discussed:

- Cross-cultural confusion in relation to what words mean, particularly in English Second Language (ESL) and English First Language (EFL) classes;
- Similarities and differences between teaching English and French in the Canadian context;
- Critical awareness of environmental issues;
- Supporting one another with technical issues relating to accessing parts of the site;
- Critical literacy and ESL;
- Possibilities and challenges in teaching critical literacy in the early years of schooling;
- Ways of criticizing their own students' work that are positive and nurturing;
- Canadian geography and weather;
- Equity in relation to gender and indigenous populations;
- Critical literacy across the curriculum;
- Marginalization of Newfoundland in Canada and negative attitudes to Newfoundland English;
- Production of a Newfoundland English variety dictionary and pleasurable exchanges about the meaning of dialect-specific words;
- Denotation and connotation.

Quality
Criterion

7.1 Learners are encouraged to create and participate in 'communities of learning' in which the individual learner thinks and solves problems with others engaged in similar tasks. This is facilitated through a range of learner support mechanisms - peer support sessions, tutorials / contact sessions, teaching on assignments, support in the workplace (mentoring), email and Internet communications, for example.

Online discussion provides a space for students to make sense of new ideas in their own time and in relation to their own classrooms. Although written, the style of their online postings is often conversational and students tend to be both supportive and questioning of one another.

Students also use online discussion to voice their doubts and disagreements with the whole critical literacy enterprise and they work together to tackle these issues. The questions they raise are important and defy easy answers; they

provide salutary cautions and help to nuance their pedagogies in relation to conditions of possibility in the contexts in which they actually work. Here are some of the students' concerns:

- How can children think about things that they aren't aware of yet, due to their age? Are we taking away their innocence?
- I am wondering if we teach this to our students in class will we lose some of our control? I don't mean control over learning, but control over the class with rules and regulations? If we encourage them to always question and criticize, they will do this with rules we live by! Parents will lose control too. 'Why do I have to go to bed at 8:00!' I can see some negative impacts here.
- I am also still concerned with taking the pleasure out of reading by picking it apart with too many questions!!

- So, now comes the issue facing us. Society has a set of values and norms that we are expected to adhere to. School systems and individual schools have certain expectations of their teachers. And as a part of that staff, you are expected to 'follow' whether you agree or disagree. I have taught in schools where teachers have been taken aside (in private) and verbally reprimanded. Why? Well, because they asked some 'critical' questions regarding assessments that were being done only within our own school. These teachers were told that they were having a 'negative' impact on the other staff members. So, I asked how do we teach critical language awareness to our students if we are discouraged from being critical question askers? I realize that to destroy the pleasure one experiences in any story is not what critical language awareness is all about. I think that children need to experience the magic and excitement in fairy tales like 'Snow White' and cartoons like 'Bugs Bunny'. Yet, at the same time they need to be critical readers. Maybe, with very young children, more emphasis should be placed on the enjoyment of such texts, rather than on the critical reading of it. Just a thought.
- Over half of my 21 kids are from ESL backgrounds and just getting some to write proper sentences is hard going at times. I realize it is not an over night nor a one year stint in my class that will get their English up to snuff but perhaps if we get the message along with teaching 'proper' sentence structures [and] the importance the two have in relation to their lives at even an early age we will be getting somewhere.

One of the miracles of online teaching is that every word is saved. It is possible to trace students' learning, to discover which activities are generative and which are not and to analyze how the teacher interacts with students and the effects of these interventions. It is clear from this overview of the online 'classroom' data that by the end of the first topic students have been actively involved in the activities and that their understanding has developed; they have been able to spin off these tightly scaffolded tasks into other issues that interest them in relation to their teaching contexts; and they have been able to offer critical readings of the course itself. If South African institutions of higher education are not to be left behind in the age of digital communication and a global higher education market, they need to take seriously the opportunities provided by virtual classrooms to extend their reach. It is clear that online pedagogies have the power to engage students cognitively, socially, and professionally and to connect them with academics and fellow professionals from whom they would otherwise be separated by time and space.

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the support given to me by Phil Cormack in the early stages of writing this course for online teaching and for his responses to this article.

References

- Bruner, J. (1985). 'Vygotsky: a Historical and Conceptual Perspective'. In Wertsch, J. V. (Ed) *Culture, Communication and Cognition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Comber, B. (1992). 'Critical Literacy: A Selective Review and Discussion of Recent Literature'. *South Australian Educational Leader*, 3 (1). pp.1-10.
- Eagleton, T. (1991). *Ideology*. London: Verso.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Janks, H. (1993a). 'Critical Language Awareness'. In *Language, Identity and Power*. Johannesburg: Hodder & Stoughton. p.iii.
- Janks, H. (1993b). 'Critical Language Awareness'. In *Language and Position*. Johannesburg: Hodder & Stoughton. p.iii.
- Thompson, J. (1984). *Studies in the Theory of Ideology*. Oxford: Polity Press.
- Vygotsky, L. (1962). *Thought and Language*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Endnote

- ¹ The acronym UniSA for the University of South Australia should not be confused with the acronym UNISA for the University of South Africa.

Case Four: Learner support from a ‘pilgrim companion’ and student journals as a form of summative assessment in a UNISA religious studies module

Madge Karecki
 Department of Missiology, School of Theology and Biblical Religion,
 University of South Africa
 karecm@unisa.ac.za

Editor’s introduction

This case study is an example of innovative **course design** in terms of both **learner support and assessment practices**.

In the first part, the author describes a very unusual kind of **learner support** which is provided by people outside the university who participate in ‘learning pilgrimages’ with UNISA students. The case demonstrates that it is possible to bring together students and non-students for their mutual benefit. In particular, it illustrates the following element of the criterion for learner support:

- 7.1 Learners are encouraged to create and participate in ‘communities of learning’ in which the individual learner thinks and solves problems with others engaged in similar tasks.

The second part describes the use of journals throughout the module and as a summative assessment tool. It illustrates the following element of the **assessment** criterion:

- 6.1 Assessment is recognized as a key motivator of learning and an integral part of the teaching and learning process. It is used to inform teaching practice and improve the curriculum.

In 2004, *Dynamics of Interreligious Encounter* won the NADEOSA Courseware Awards for independently developed material.

Learning in partnership with a pilgrim companion

Quality
Criterion

4.9 Content, teaching and learning strategies and assessment are carefully structured to facilitate the achievement of learning outcomes.

In the University of South Africa module *Dynamics of Interreligious Encounter*, learner support is situated in the real life context of the student. The student is encouraged to embark on a 'pilgrimage' in the company of a person of another faith who acts as a 'pilgrim companion'.

Throughout the learning pilgrimage the student is involved in on-going dialogue with his or her pilgrim companion, with the novel *The Poisonwood Bible* and with texts in the Course Reader. In addition to completing activities in the study guide, the student is also required to make regular entries in a personal journal.

Quality
Criterion

4.13 Where appropriate, experiential learning opportunities are designed into the course. There are suitable methods for recording and assessing this (such as portfolios, logbooks, project reports, learner interviews, or reports from the mentor).

The pilgrimage metaphor challenges the student to approach the module as a journey, a pilgrimage to a sacred space 'inhabited' by his/her pilgrim companion. The student needs to be willing to give hospitality to another person, to new ideas and to new challenges. In this learning experience the relationship that is established with the pilgrim companion is of vital importance. As one student,

LM, observed: 'The exchanges with my pilgrim companion helped me to translate in real life what I was learning through reading. At the beginning I was very critical of people of other faiths, but JM taught me never to assume I know something about what others think; so I did learn about her faith, but I also learned to be more open.' This learning happened because the student was willing to let her pilgrim companion into her life. Palmer regards hospitality as a central value in education that seeks the truth. From a Christian perspective he wrote:

It is a virtue central to the biblical tradition itself, where God is always using the stranger to introduce us to the strangeness of truth. To be inhospitable to strangers or strange ideas, however unsettling they may be, is to be hostile to the possibility of truth; hospitality is not only an ethical virtue but an epistemological one as well (Palmer, 1983:74).

The activities in the module make use of articles in the Reader which provide foundational theological knowledge relevant to interreligious encounters. The second assignment seeks to help transform the perspective of the student about people of other faiths by deepening relational ways of learning (Taylor,2000:306). In collaboration with the pilgrim companion the student is asked to participate in a community service project that is sponsored by the pilgrim companion's religious community. This kind of relational learning enables the student to move beyond the cognitive level of rational discourse to create meaning from experiences. The students' assignments and entries in their journals indicate that this happens as they critically reflect on their experiences with their pilgrim companion. BK noted in her journal

Quality
Criterion

4.12 The teaching and learning strategies of the course acknowledge learners' existing knowledge and experience, and provide opportunities for guided integration of new knowledge.

that she was changing her mind about how she viewed Muslims because of her interaction with her pilgrim companion and other women. She wrote: 'Over the past several weeks I have worked with TN at the soup kitchen to prepare vegetables for soup for the homeless people. All the women are diligent about their roles in the whole

endeavour. I have learned how important charity as a part of their religious faith is for Muslims. What a different picture I am getting from the one I see on the news. I'm learning to be more open and not prejudice people. I was able to see what was meant by a theology of attention. Now I always try to be attentive whenever I am with my pilgrim companion.'

As the student works through the study guide and its activities and writes in the journal he or she also continues to work with articles from the Reader and to respond to *The Poisonwood Bible*. In this process the student's level of engagement with the module is expected to deepen. He or she must set up meetings with his/her pilgrim companion, integrate foundational knowledge with actual experience and spend time in reflection so as to construct meaning for his/her life. The module concludes with a list of supplementary readings. One student, RM, noted: 'I never consulted the suggested supplementary reading and then one afternoon LW, my pilgrim companion and I started talking about our identity. I then went to the library and took out the book by Barnes and he seemed to be listening in on our conversation. I learned a lot about the importance of knowing who I am as a Christian and respecting the identity of my companion as a Muslim.' Another student, LB, had this to say about supplementary reading: 'My pastor told me that I should not be visiting and talking with people who still practice African Traditional Religion. I explained to him that since I have gotten to know my pilgrim companion I have learned that even if she does not accept Jesus she is a good person and that I don't have to believe the same things as my companion, but we are still sisters and brothers.'

Quality
Criterion

4.11 Teaching, learning and assessment activities encourage critical thinking and independent learning

Learner support is extended beyond the boundaries of the university as the module locates learning within a community context that is represented by the student's pilgrim companion. Learner support is experienced in the lived reality of the student's interaction with his/her pilgrim companion. In the context of participating in a project in the local community, learning is expanded and applied in ways that help students to develop foundational knowledge and to acquire skills for transferring that knowledge into various situations in society. As the facilitator of this module I have seen that learning in the context of a relationship with a person from the community studied can bridge the possible divide in distance learning between printed texts, the designers and producers of these texts and the 'real life' contexts described in the texts. Such a relationship enhances the relevance and immediacy of the learning process. In short, the distance in distance education can be bridged in this way.

Quality
Criterion

4.10 Various forms of learner support are built into the design of the course.

Using journals for learning and for summative assessment

In the first year that the module *Dynamics of Interreligious Encounter* was offered, I asked a colleague in the field of missiology to be an external examiner for the journals which were to constitute the summative assessment. He wanted to know why I had chosen this form of assessment because it seemed to be what he called a 'soft option.' I explained that my

research had led me to believe that this would not be the case. After assessing the journals according to the criteria outlined in the first tutorial letter for the module, it became clear to my colleague that we had entered into a new learning space and that a pattern was emerging in the learning process.

Huba and Freed (2000:239) give two reasons for using journals for the purpose of assessment: to evaluate learning and to promote learning. Moon (1999:19) maintains that 'journal writing accentuates favourable conditions for learning.' As a result of the experience I have gained from requiring learners to use a journal I have come to agree with the viewpoints of these authors. Through tutorial letters I guide the students in developing their journals and most have produced writing that has far exceeded my expectations.

The entries in the journals reveal a student's ability to enter into a missiological discourse in relation to interreligious encounters and also demonstrate a high level of metacognition. The students are learning about ways that they learn and what strategies are most helpful to them. JN observed: 'As I wrote down my thoughts about going to the temple with my pilgrim companion I suddenly realized that I was doing what I was reading about. I was participating in a common social action with people of another faith and I experienced a sense of common purpose and oneness with them. I was learning by doing something, not just reading about it.' New concepts were being applied by the student and he was checking their validity by putting them into practice. PK noted: 'I used key questions to prepare for my visit to the monk at the Buddhist temple who agreed to be my pilgrim companion. I read about Buddhism in the Reader and I was determined not to have the same approach as that of Pastor Price in the novel (*The Poisonwood Bible*) and all these things helped me to prepare for my visit with RG. Now back at home I realize that I need to know about the context of other people's beliefs. I was so impressed by the discipline of the monks. I have to think about the role of discipline in my own life.' What is clear is that a process of reflective thinking occurs through the use of the journal (Moon 1999:84). Students reinterpret

the learning experience from different points of view, they link theory with praxis and the reflection goes on long after an event. The students move between free writing exercises and required writing through which their skills of critical thinking and reflection are developed. But all activities are part of the material for assessment.

Quality
Criterion

6.4 There is a range of formative and summative assessment tasks and methods which ensure that all learning outcomes are validly assessed.

A fascinating three-phase learning process is revealed in the journals. First, there is often a measure of resistance to meeting with a person of another faith tradition. Sometimes this occurs because of a certain denominational stance, or insecurity about the learner's own faith or for the simple reason that it takes effort to find a person who is willing to share the learning experience at the level of faith.

The second phase begins once the student has established a relationship with his/her pilgrim companion and both have shared together and participated in some common action. When this happens the student becomes fascinated by elements of the other faith tradition as these are manifested by his/her pilgrim companion and his/her colleagues. More questions are recorded in the journals. The momentum of the learning process increases with more

meetings and deeper discussions. There are conversations about reading material that are summarized. Engaging in authentic tasks serves to bring together theological discourse and lived experience. Students want to dig deeper as they learn about another faith.

Towards the end of the academic year when journals have to be submitted, students enter into a time of reassessment. They step back from their experience and what tends to emerge is a person more convinced of his/her faith and yet more open to people of other faiths. GB wrote: 'I feel liberated. I have grown stronger in my faith, but I am no longer afraid to meet with people of other faiths. In fact, I want to meet with them. I feel like there is so much more to learn and my SM and I will continue to discuss about our faith and read more. I'm sharing my Reader with him. I thought this would be an easy module, but it wasn't. I learned more than I had ever learned before.' TM recorded his experience: 'At the beginning I was wondering why I should keep a journal. But now I like it so much. I really feel I have been on a pilgrimage. I want to keep up being attentive. Thanks for the good articles. It was hard to keep a journal, but I got something for my life.'

Quality
Criterion

6.3

The level of challenge of the assessment in a programme is appropriate for the level of the qualification to which it leads.

'I got something for my life.' Is this not what learning is about? Complex thinking skills and reflexive competence are very apparent in the students' comments throughout their journals. The whole process of journal writing helps them to integrate what they learn and when necessary to transfer this 'embodied knowledge' into other areas of their lives. By facing their fears, prejudices and stereotypes they experience a kind of liberation that can serve them well in multi-cultural and multi-religious contexts. The learning outcomes are achieved and some extra benefits are that students are able to deepen their learning and to move at a pace that allows for reflection. Analytical skills are honed through critical thinking about issues and events and the capacity for theological reflection is deepened as are writing and organizing skills. As a summative assessment tool the journal facilitates integrated learning. Free writing exercises enable the learner to become familiar with journal writing and key questions link feelings with cognitive learning processes. Analytical skills are developed through responses to issues raised in the readings and values are deepened through reflexive thinking. The journal as a form of summative assessment is far from a 'soft option'. It represents the best of integrated learning assessment.

References

Huba, M.E. and Freed, J.E. (2000). *Learner-centered Assessment on College Campuses: Shifting the Focus from Teaching to Learning*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Moon, J. (1999). *Learning Journals: A Handbook for Academics, Students and Professional Development*. London: Kogan Page.

Palmer, P.J. (1983). *To Know as We are Known*. New York: Harper & Row.

Taylor, E.W. (2000). 'Analyzing Research on Transformational Learning Theory'. In *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress*. Mezirow, J. & Associates (Eds.) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. pp. 285-328.

Case Five: Something new and different: the key roles of *imithamo* and *abakhwezeli* in the University of Fort Hare's B Prim Ed programme

Yvonne Reed
 Applied English Language Studies, School of Literature and Language Studies
 University of the Witwatersrand
 yvonne_reed@languages.wits.ac.za

Editor's introduction

While most of the case studies in this book have been written by 'insiders' to the practices described and discussed, this case has been written by an 'outsider' who participated in one of several research projects which have investigated an initiative designed specifically to address local needs in one region in South Africa. The focus of the case is on **course materials** and **learner support**. In particular, the following are foregrounded:

- 5.5.6 Care is taken to understand the contexts in which learners live and work, as well as their prior knowledge and experience. This knowledge is used in the design of the materials.
- 5.5.7 Active learning and teaching approaches are used to engage learners intellectually and practically and to cater for individual needs.
- 7.1 Learners are encouraged to create and participate in 'communities of learning' in which the individual learner thinks and solves problems with others engaged in similar tasks.

In 2004, the materials described and discussed in this case study won the NADEOSA Courseware Award for collaboratively developed material.

Introduction

The first page of the first module in the University of Fort Hare's Bachelor of Primary Education (B Prim Ed) materials begins with the following paragraph:

Once upon a time, in a new country, there was a new project. And the people in the project were starting something completely new and different and special, something that had never been tried before and they were very excited. But there was a problem. When they used the old names and the old words, like

‘modules’ and ‘tutorials’, to describe new things that they were trying to do, it didn’t work. Everyone had their own ideas about what these old words meant. And they couldn’t shake off these old ideas no matter how hard they tried. (University of Fort Hare, Umthamo 1, 1998:1)

A two page account, written in the genre of a traditional tale or fairy story, describes the process of deciding on new names and new practices for the project of designing and implementing an in-service teacher education programme for primary school teachers in the Eastern Cape.

The project had its origins in a feasibility study undertaken in 1995 by the University of Fort Hare (UFH), the Eastern Cape Education Department and the University of South Australia (UniSA) under the leadership of Basil Moore of UniSA. This study yielded expressions of interest in professional development through distance education programmes from over 5000 teachers.

Quality
Criterion

3.1

The programme is developed in terms of a needs analysis based on an audit of existing courses and programmes, market research, liaison (where appropriate) with industry and professions, national and regional priorities, and the needs of learners.

In South Africa it was a time of transition in regard to teacher education qualifications and so work on the B Prim Ed curriculum began in earnest only in early 1998 with the first modules offered to teachers in the second half of that year. As has often been the case with distance education initiatives in South Africa, curriculum designers and materials writers did not have time to develop the entire curriculum prior to its delivery to the first cohort of students. Alan Kenyon, the initial academic co-ordinator (the programme is now managed by Liz Botha), described the programme development process in these words: *Invent things as you go. Solve things as they immediately hit you* (SAIDE, 2003: 27). While this description might suggest an ‘ad hoc’ approach to curriculum design and materials development, this was not the case. The programme had been carefully conceptualized and decisions made that its focus would be on the following:

- Providing award-bearing and accredited courses that are commensurate with South Africa’s new curricular thrusts;
- Addressing the scarcity of trained teachers in maths, science and technology education, language teaching and its use across the curriculum, school management and early childhood development;
- Introducing and modelling the training of teachers in multi-grade teaching, a situation that faces many of our province’s primary teachers but is mostly not addressed in their development;
- Enhancing the classroom performance of teachers through researching and propagating comparative best practices - generic and learning area specific, determined both locally and internationally;
- Impacting whole school development through teacher learning activities and programmes. (Distance Education Project: Input to Fort Hare Institutional Plan, quoted in SAIDE, 2003: 14)

In terms of the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF), a B Prim Ed is a four year 480 credits programme. However, as the Fort Hare programme was designed as an in-

service initiative, 240 credits are derived from teachers' pre-service qualifications and classroom experience. The programme comprises eight semesters of part time study (i.e. teachers make a four year commitment, accumulating 60 credits per year).

The decision to use *imithamo*

One of the innovative decisions that was made at the outset of the materials development process was that instead of using one lengthy course book or study guide for each module each semester, students would work with a total of eight booklets in each semester. The name *umthamo* (plural *imithamo*) was decided on for each of these 'bite-sized chunks' - 36 to 48 page texts designed to be used for 40 notional learning hours. One of the findings of research on the programme is that there have been several advantages to this decision. Firstly, students have reported that the *imithamo* are 'user-friendly' - less intimidating than one large book and easier to transport to work and to contact sessions. Secondly, the booklet format has facilitated the introduction of one topic in each of the four key learning areas (Literacy; Numeracy and Mathematics; Natural Sciences; Technology) and one in each area of Core Educational Studies (Learning about Learning; Helping Learners Learn; Schools as Learning Communities; Learning in the World) each semester. The booklets have enabled the offering of an integrated curriculum in which aspects of Literacy or Numeracy or Science or Technology

Quality
Criterion

5.5.8 Content is presented in the form of an unfolding argument, rather than discrete bits of information that have no obvious connection.

or Learning Theories can be worked on during one semester rather than sequentially in different semesters, as would be the case if a whole course in one of these areas were to be 'delivered' in one text. Writers of one *umthamo* frequently refer readers to content and activities in other *imithamo*.

Quality
Criterion

5.5.9 The various elements of the course materials and different media are integrated, and the integration is clearly signposted.

Thirdly, use of small booklets has made it possible for designers and writers to respond more easily to feedback on early booklets and to introduce some changes to later ones. For example, writers found that additional explanatory or signposting icons needed to be added to the booklets.

Quality
Criterion

5.7 The materials development plan includes provision for evaluation during the developmental process in the form of critical commenting, developmental testing or piloting.

On the advice of colleagues from UniSA it was decided that in the final year, only eight of the originally envisaged 16 booklets would be produced and that students would be required to re-visit and reflect on earlier *imithamo* as part of the process of consolidating their learning from the overall programme.

While the logistics of distributing so many separate booklets could be a problem for some distance learning programmes, in general it has not been problematic in the UFH programme because students are required to attend fortnightly Saturday morning contact sessions at which the next booklets in the sequence are given to them. Initially there were occasional difficulties when booklets did not reach a particular contact session venue in time, but it has been possible to address these in various ways.

Designing and producing the *imithamo*

The curriculum development team consulted widely - particularly with academics from UniSA, the Open University (United Kingdom) and the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE). The initial academic co-ordinator, Alan Kenyon summed up advice from the Open University UK which guided the materials development process:

Write to the target audience. Don't worry about the academics. If you look after your target audience and lead them along, you're going to astound the academics anyway. More of the same isn't going to fix it. (SAIDE, undated: 27)

With this advice in mind, the team decided to do the following:

- Affirm teachers as experienced in the classroom, in community and family life;
- Foreground the local;
- Offer an integrated curriculum with explicit links between one umthamo and another;
- Guide and support a process of change in classroom practices;
- Assist teachers to theorize old and new practices and to become reflective practitioners.

Throughout the programme students are referred to as teacher-learners, a name which is intended to give recognition to their professional experience while indicating that there is learning to be done as they engage with the *imithamo*.

The emphasis in this learning is on pedagogic content knowledge (Shulman, 1986;1987) rather than on subject or learning area content knowledge. In the materials a distinction is made between in-text activities and key activities which must be submitted for assessment.

Quality Criterion	6.1 Assessment is recognized as a key motivator of learning and an integral part of the teaching and learning process.
----------------------	---

Both kinds of activities occur at regular intervals in the materials (usually every four to five pages) and are carefully scaffolded. While answers to the in-text activities are not provided, many are followed by related discussion which provides feedback to the student. The majority of both the in-text and key activities are classroom focussed. Some of the in-text activities require teachers to write in **learning journals** which they are to keep for the four years of the programme. Others require the production of evidence of work done by teachers and their learners in the classroom. The latter is to be submitted as part of a **portfolio of evidence** of professional growth which is submitted for assessment at the end of each year.

Quality Criterion	6.4 There is a range of formative and summative assessment tasks and methods which ensure that all learning outcomes are validly assessed.
----------------------	---

While all teacher-learners study the same modules, there are often different activities for teachers working in different phases. According to Viv Kenyon, the leader of the Language, Literacy and Communication curriculum team, the activities have been designed along a continuum from relatively straightforward in the first year to much more challenging in the final year. In an interview in 2000 she described the activities as being at four 'levels':

Year One is about describing what is being done and providing evidence of this. Year Two is about ‘unpacking’ the above and asking questions such as: Why is it like that? Why did it / did it not work? How could I do it differently? Year Three will require teacher-learners to become more ‘critical’ and start to bring in more theory. By the end of Year Four, the teacher-learners should be fully able to question, justify and improve their practice using theory as a tool. (SAIDE, 2003: 28)

Another of the innovations in the UFH B Prim Ed materials is the focus on the ‘local’. There are frequent references to Eastern Cape place names and to people likely to be known to the teachers. Some of the *imithamo* include articles from Eastern Cape newspapers. Much of the content, especially in regard to explanations of how to plan and execute particular classroom activities, has been trialled in local schools and so there are references to school names and to teachers who participated in the trials. The materials include numerous instances of code-switching from English to isiXhosa - the language assumed to be the

Quality
Criterion

5.5.5 The language level of the materials is appropriate for the target learners and the materials assist learners with the particular difficulties that learning-through-reading and learning at a distance require.

home language of the students. This code-switching both affirms the local and provides opportunities for writers to explain complex concepts. The writers also provide glossaries of terms and concepts with which readers may be unfamiliar and write in an accessible, if sometimes very directive, style throughout.

One of the ways in which the UFH materials differ from many other examples of Southern African distance learning materials is in extensive use of photographs - in colour on front and back covers of the *imithamo*, in black and white at intervals in each text. Many of these photographs show learners at work in Eastern Cape classrooms. Van der Mescht (2004) makes the following observations on the photographs of learners and their classroom ‘world’:

These learners have been photographed showing the kind of distance that teachers usually keep from their pupils as they move around the classroom. This suggests a social distance and level of emotional involvement that teachers are familiar with. Closer would be an invasion of privacy for the learner. These medium shots allow the reader to see the co-operative learning of learners in groups. Teachers would want evidence that all or most of the learners are focusing on their work, and the photographs provide that evidence (2004:93).

This world appears more real as it is a bit battered and poor, with raw brick interiors and old desks and chairs. Some subjects do not have school uniforms. The home-photography, snap-shot quality parallels this sense of unpolished reality: subjects are not posed and black and white reproduction gives surfaces a grainy, rough texture. The combined effect of subject and production is to suggest that lessons promoted in this course will work in the unvarnished poorer schools of the Eastern Cape (2004:95).

Quality
Criterion

4.13 Where appropriate, experiential learning opportunities are designed into the course.

Some photographs focus on teachers at work on an activity and demonstrate to teacher-learners how to implement a new practice. In some places line drawings are also used for giving such guidance.

In research which investigated the responses of 64 teacher-learners to the UFH materials, they expressed their approval of the photographs both because they valued the guidance

offered for activities and because they could identify with the classroom contexts in the photographs (SAIDE, 2003: 47-48). Many of them expressed their appreciation of writers who understand the contexts in which Eastern Cape teachers and learners live and work. Of course this very strength for these teacher-learners could be a weakness if the same materials were to be used in other parts of South Africa as they could be viewed as alienating by students who are not Xhosa-speaking and not from the Eastern Cape.

The role of the *abakhwezeli*

The Xhosa word *umkhwezeli* means ‘someone whose job is to keep the fire burning just right so that the food in the pot cooks well’. This is the word chosen by the UFH curriculum development team to describe the role of tutors who facilitate the fortnightly Saturday morning contact sessions and who mark key activities submitted for assessment. At the Saturday sessions teacher-learners report and reflect on activities which they have tried out in their classrooms and receive guidance from an *umkhwezeli* for their continued engagement with the current *imithamo* or initial work with new *imithamo*. The majority of the *abakhwezeli* are teachers or principals from schools in the local area or lecturers from former colleges of education in the region. They attend quarterly centralized training sessions and are paid a stipend for their work. In response to questions from a SAIDE researcher about their reasons for taking on this demanding task, the opportunity for professional development was more frequently expressed as the main reason than was the money earned.

Quality
Criterion

7.6

Tutors are selected and trained for their role of mediating learning from course materials.

Some of the *abakhwezeli*, together with additional staff from the Eastern Cape Education Department, also visit teacher-learners in their schools to provide support to their classroom and whole school change initiatives.

Data from interviews with 40 teacher-learners indicate that they felt their learning was supported by the ways in which content and activities are presented in the *imithamo*. However, 38 of the 40 believed that they would not be successful in the programme without support of the contact sessions (SAIDE, 2003: 54). Osei-Agyakwa and Botha report a similar finding from their questionnaire-based survey of teacher-learners in the same programme, with ‘face-to-face sessions which give teacher-learners an opportunity to share and discuss’ placed first in their list of five factors that support learning (2001:13). As almost all the *abakhwezeli* are Xhosa-speaking they can assist teacher-learners who may be struggling with the academic literacy demands of materials written in English (though as indicated above, writers include glossaries of terms which they consider may be new to teacher-learners and write in an accessible style). Important as these contact sessions are, they may have one unintended negative consequence: teacher-learners can often get the ‘gist’ of what is required to complete the assessed activities without careful and critical reading of an *umthamo*. If they do not do such reading, then they miss out on much of the richness of the materials. Close reading could be encouraged by making it central to some of the assessed assignments and by explicitly guiding teacher-learners in how to further develop their academic literacy.

Conclusion

The enrolment of approximately 1400 teacher-learners in the programme at one time suggests that it is popular with Eastern Cape teachers and that it is meeting a need. The UFH B Prim Ed has succeeded in (i) opening access to professional development for teachers with limited qualifications and (ii) providing opportunities for learning of high quality through carefully developed materials and through learner support in the form of both contact sessions and school visits.

References

- Shulman, L. (1986). 'Those Who Understand: Knowledge Growth in Teaching'. *Educational Researcher*, 15 (2). pp.4-14.
- Shulman, L. (1987). 'Knowledge-base and Teaching: Foundations of the New Reform'. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57 (1). pp.1-22.
- South African Institute for Distance Education. (2003). *Consolidated Report on Research into the Bachelor of Primary Education Offered by the University of Fort Hare's Distance Education Project*. Johannesburg: SAIDE.
- Osei-Agyakwa, C. and Botha, E. (2001). 'Systems of Delivery and Learner Support in the Fort Hare Distance Education Project: a Look at the EG Kei Region'. Paper presented at the 2001 NADEOSA conference.
- Van Der Mescht, C. (2004). 'Creating a Relationship: A Discourse Analysis Focusing on the Construction of Identities and Relationships in Distance Education Materials for a Teacher Upgrade Programme.' Unpublished M Ed dissertation, Rhodes University.

Case Six: Assessment in the Diploma in Animal Health Practice at the former Technikon Southern Africa

Cama Brandt

Academic Development Centre, former Technikon Southern Africa
cbrandt@tsa.ac.za

With Antje Bartkowiak-Higgo, Godfred Humphrey, Phillemon Mhlangu, Rachel Prinsloo, Estelle van Rensburg

Editor's introduction

It is important that programmes aimed at building professional competence in the workplace are delivered not only at institutional sites but also in work-based and/or service learning contexts: it is practical application of the theory in authentic contexts that is required, rather than merely theoretical knowledge of how to practise. However, delivery at multiple sites is difficult to manage - what is learnt at one site may contradict or repeat what is learnt at another, resulting in learner confusion or boredom.

Similarly, it is important for programmes such as the Diploma for Animal Health Practitioners to have multiple entry and exit points and arrangements for recognition of prior learning in order to meet the needs of adult learners who have a range of life and work experiences as well as time and study constraints. However, there is a danger that if too much flexibility is built into a programme, it may lose coherence and learners will not achieve the competence required in terms of the purpose of the programme as a whole.

Integrated assessment is a useful strategy for promoting coherence while retaining the advantages of flexibility and multiple sites of learning. This case study illustrates how assessment needs to be designed into the programme at the outset, and how carefully designed assessment can both develop and measure applied competence in terms of the purpose of the programme as a whole.

The case study therefore addresses two main criteria - **programme development**, and **assessment**:

3. Programmes are flexible and designed with national needs as well as the needs of prospective learners and employers in mind; their form and structure encourage access and are responsive to changing environments; learning and assessment methods are appropriate to the purpose and outcomes of the programmes.
6. Assessment is an essential feature of the teaching and learning process, is properly managed, and meets the requirements of accreditation bodies and employers.

The case study shows how responsiveness and access can be managed through a careful assessment strategy.

Introduction

This case study describes the assessment strategy and, in particular, the integrated assessment in a three-year first degree/diploma programme for Animal Health practitioners offered in a distance learning environment at Technikon Southern Africa (TSA) - since 2004, merged with the University of South Africa.¹

Quality
Criterion

3.19 Wherever possible, programmes allow for flexible exit points.

The diploma is a professional qualification designed as a tiered career-focused qualification leading to a four year Bachelor of Technology (B Tech: Animal Health). It provides easy access and exit points for adult and lifelong learning, creating pathways enabling learners to return to learning at various stages in their lives.

The Animal Health programme aims to qualify the learner as an Animal Health practitioner, competent in applying animal health care, disease control and management techniques in the prevention and control of animal diseases to support animal and human well-being. Graduates of the programme can assume professional responsibilities as animal health practitioners, meat inspectors, feedlot managers, pharmaceutical representatives and stock farm managers.

Such work requires knowledge from a range of disciplines - from veterinary science to rural development and management. Animal Health graduates are required to use this varied knowledge and skills base to contribute to the improvement of South African agriculture and rural development.

In order to equip them for this, the programme has two components:

Quality
Criterion

3.12 In the case of professional and vocational programmes, work-based learning forms an integral part of the curriculum, and, where appropriate, placement in a work-based environment is an essential component of the programme.

- An institution-based distance education component, with theory as well as practicals;
- A context-based component, with opportunities not only for workplace practice, but also for community service in which learners confront social issues and apply their knowledge and skills in needy communities.

The programme not only has a purpose and overall outcomes, but also what is called at Technikon Southern Africa 'statements of graduatedness'. These statements define the requirements at key exit points of the programme (or points at which a learner can graduate). They describe the expected levels of expertise (intellectual knowledge and skills), general and specialized professional roles, professional workplace and community service of graduates of the Animal Health programme. The underpinning philosophy of the 'statements of graduatedness' is that graduates of the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences

should become knowledge workers and productive citizens. They should not only have the necessary expertise (intellectual knowledge) and professional knowledge (being able to apply what is learnt), but they should also be able to apply their knowledge in a professional situation, taking into account the needs of others (professional ethics). The assessment strategy therefore needs to assess whether or not graduates are knowledgeable, practical, productive and critical citizens striving to improve the quality of life for all.

Quality
Criterion

6.5

Assessment, especially of experiential or workplace learning, is designed in terms of predetermined outcomes and criteria.

Integrated assessment in the programme as a whole

In most educational programmes in schools and tertiary institutions, different subjects or courses or modules that make up a programme are assessed separately. A pass or fail in the programme as a whole is worked out in varying ways from the collection of assessment results of different modules/courses/subjects. However, there is little attempt to assess more than one module/course/subject together, or to develop an assessment that requires the integration of the knowledge and skills from the other modules. For some programmes (such as a first Bachelor's Degree) this may be appropriate. But for other programmes designed to equip students for a particular vocation or profession, it may be important not only to assess discrete knowledge and skills, but also whether or not students will be able to use the knowledge and skills appropriately in the workplace. This calls for one or more opportunities for integrated and applied assessment. Students should not only have the knowledge, but be able to apply it reflectively in practical situations. In other words, they need to develop 'applied competence', which is understood as:

the ability to put into practice in the relevant context the learning outcomes acquired in obtaining a qualification. ²

The assessment strategy in the Diploma Programme for Animal Health practitioners contains opportunities for assessment both of discrete knowledge and skills, and of the ability to apply knowledge and skills in an integrated way in the workplace. The ability to integrate and apply knowledge and skills is built cumulatively. The first tasks are relatively simple: self- or peer assessment of two or more outcomes of a single distance learning unit to stimulate comparisons or associations, to explore relationships, or to challenge learners to draw conclusions. However, even at this level, integration is encouraged. The next level of assessment is of the outcomes of an entire module in a written or practical examination. Finally, modules from various disciplines and professional fields are assessed through logbooks and research projects in context. At this level, the exit-level outcomes and critical cross-field outcomes of the qualifications are assessed to ensure that the learner achieves the key purpose/s of the programme.

Quality
Criterion

6.7

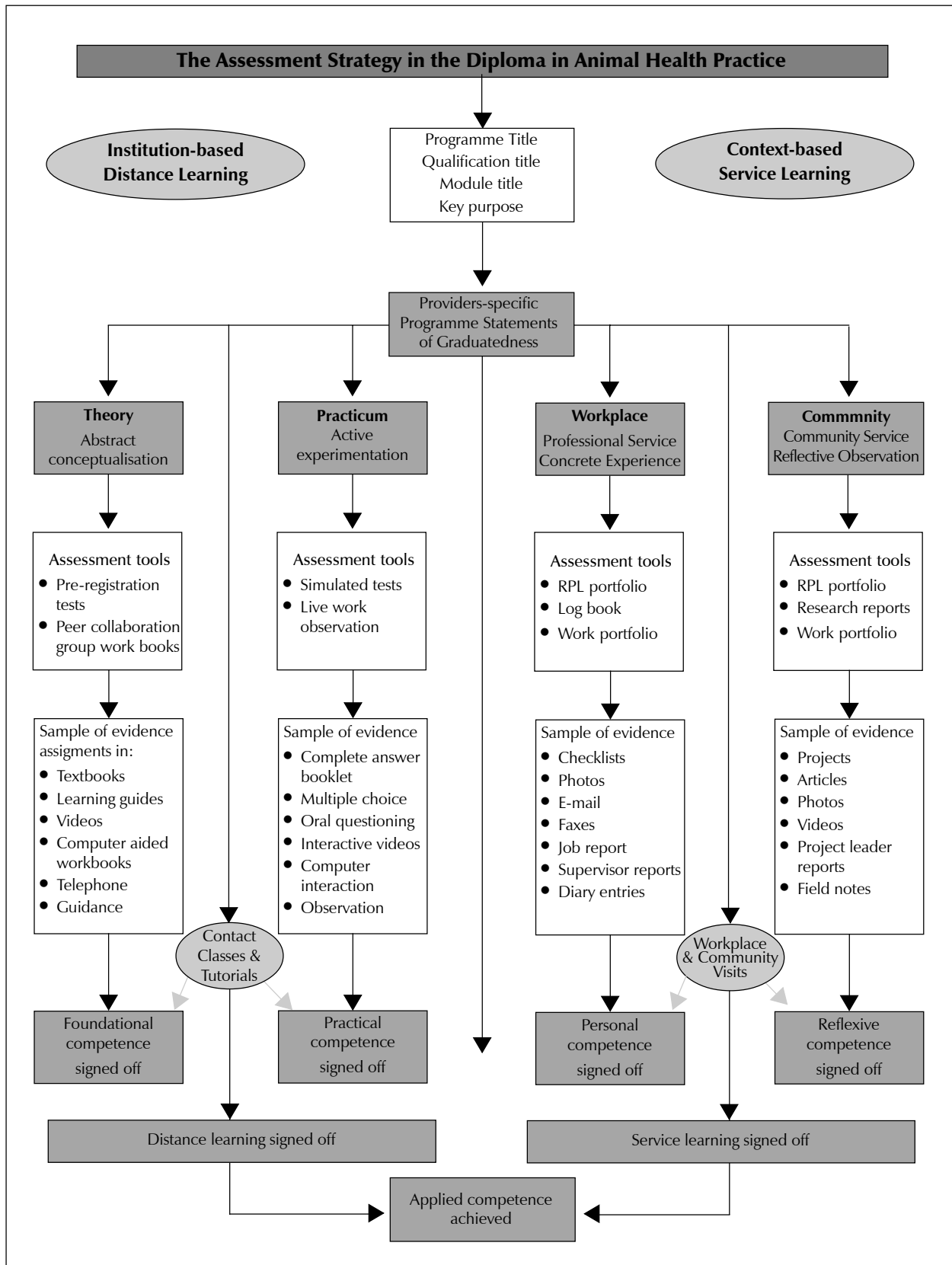
For each programme, there is at least one integrated assessment procedure which is a valid test of the key purposes of the programme.

It is clear from the diagram on the following page that assessment is an integral component of programme and course design, and not something added on afterwards.

Quality
Criterion

6.1

Assessment is recognized as a key motivator of learning and an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

Figure 1: The Assessment Strategy in the Diploma in Animal Health Practice

The 'openness' of the Animal Health qualification is managed with integrated assessment at each entry and access point - before the programme starts, at the end of the first year, at the end of the second year and at the end of the third year. Access to the Animal Health qualification is informed by pre-registration assessment and Recognition of Prior Learning Assessment (RPL).

Quality
Criterion**6.8**

There are effective procedures for recognizing prior learning and for assessing current competence.

The results of assessments are used to place prospective learners appropriately in the course and to provide support services to learners with special needs and/or to identify and acknowledge prior learning.

Learners on the programme come from diverse backgrounds including mature learners returning to study, or ill-prepared full-time distance education learners, or learners who are the first in their family to be studying at a higher education institution. Such learners are often worried by the prospect of submitting their work for assessment. The assessment strategy of the Animal Health Programme includes multiple assessment tasks at an early stage of the programme with feedback designed to allay these fears and get learners on the right track. Learners with special needs have access to personalized learner support, including peer -collaboration groups (see the case study on the Peer Collaborative Learning project) and tutorials.

Quality
Criterion**7.22**

Learner performance is monitored and learners at risk identified. Timeous educational intervention is provided for such learners.

Learners with potential are identified through assessment and offered accelerated and/or enriching modules to keep learning challenging.

Ensuring that applied competence is developed and assessed

In order to ensure that applied competence is developed and assessed, Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle is applied to the theoretical and practical learning in each year.

This cycle begins with abstract conceptualization provided via distance learning activities and active experimentation offered in five practical contact courses in collaboration with industry and accredited laboratories. Learners are assessed by means of oral, written and practical tests. The following table represents the five practical courses offered in the programme.

Table 1: Practical courses offered in the Diploma in Animal Health Practice

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Anatomy & Physiology (5 days)	Laboratory Diagnostics (10 days)	Meat Hygiene (VPH) (2 days)
	Artificial Insemination (10 days)	Tuberculosis/Brucellosis (10 days)

The theory components and practicals (practicums) are followed by concrete experience in the workplace where learners get the opportunity to deliver professional services as animal health practitioners in training which continues with self- and group reflective observation. This leads to the derivation of general rules describing the experience in a logbook, or the application of known theories and the construction of ways to modify the theory or practice through research projects. These learning and assessment processes therefore provide the opportunity to develop foundational competence (understanding of what is being done and why), practical competence (ability to do a particular thing), and reflexive competence (reflect on the action in order to learn from it and adapt to change and unforeseen circumstances).

Foundational and practical competences are predominantly learnt through institution-based teaching interventions while personal and reflexive competences are most commonly achieved through context-based service learning. Theory is assessed through written assignments and a summative examination, while practice is assessed through practical examination complemented with written and oral tests. Workplace learning is assessed by

Quality
Criterion

6.4 There is a range of formative and summative assessment tasks and methods which ensure that all learning outcomes are validly assessed.

means of logbooks based on quantitative and qualitative assessment of the performance of the learner by his/her workplace mentor(s) and his/her lecturer(s), while community service learning is assessed through a portfolio and integrated research projects adding self, peer and other stakeholder reflections to the assessment procedure.

In the course of the cycle, assessment is used for a variety of purposes - diagnosis, feedback and/or grading. During the cycle, evidence of formal learning is collected as well as naturally

Quality
Criterion

6.6 A range of parties is involved in assessment of learners: for example, there might be self-assessment, peer assessment, tutor assessment and/or assessment by workplace mentors.

occurring evidence of informal learning in the workplace or community. Assessment is conducted by multiple assessors (self, peers, tutors, coaches, line managers, clients, lecturers, markers, RPL assessors, workplace mentors, internal and external assessors/moderators and/or subject specialists).

An example of the assessment strategy applied to the key service learning module in the programme, *Animal Health Practice*

Animal Health Practice is an experiential service learning module which uses the key purposes of the whole programme as its benchmarks for assessing performance. Animal health practitioners support veterinarians, biological workers and other animal scientists by performing more routine tasks, freeing them up for the more specialized complex tasks. *Animal Health Practice* is therefore multidisciplinary and draws together knowledge and skills from a range of different modules. It also allows an opportunity for theoretical and practical learning in institutional sites to be applied in a specific service learning context. Through successful completion of the assessment of this module, the learner will demonstrate professional competence as an Animal Health Practitioner.

The learner who enrolls for *Animal Health Practice* is supposed to work and learn for a minimum of six months (120 days) at an approved institution, organization or with a private professional in the field. The learner is responsible for selecting a suitable organization and mentor, and for agreeing with the mentor on the tasks to be performed. The tasks resemble the real life role which learners will assume when they apply for work.

The assessment strategy for the experiential learning component requires learners to compile a logbook of all workplace activities as well as structured service learning projects which are put together in a portfolio. Learners register once for this module and the registration is valid for five years. They are expected to complete six projects over a period of three years.

The role of the logbook in the development and assessment of competence

The learning and assessment opportunities support learners from the stage of working under supervision to taking responsibility for their own work and later for the work of others. In the logbook the learner records on a daily basis the date, place/premises, work done/activity, remarks, number of animals/samples, signature of the mentor or the person present. The tasks listed in the logbook cover an extremely broad range of activities in large repetitive numbers to ensure the learner develops the necessary skills such as inoculation, fertility investigation, inspections, sample taking, disease testing, clinical procedures, etc. The experiential learning tasks are measured both quantitatively (number of repetitions) and qualitatively (performance level).

People involved in assessment

Formative assessment is undertaken largely by the workplace mentor, but also through occasional monitoring visits by the lecturer as well as personal communication between mentor and lecturer. The experiential learning manual also contains various assessment rubrics which can be used as performance descriptors and/or anchored checklists for feedback from the mentor and peers and most importantly for self-assessment. Thus experiential learning involves the ability of individuals to observe and record their own progress, an important part of becoming a lifelong learner.

Feedback on assessment and the development of reflexive competence

Learning requires frequent feedback if it is to be sustained. Animal Health staff train tutors and mentors to be constructive critics of learners and to provide positive feedback specific to the situation and the critical incident that took place as a tool for learning. Care is taken that the time between the moment of feedback and the occurrence of a critical incident is not too long. It is easier to reconstruct an incident and analyze the learner's professional behaviour if the incident is still vivid in the minds of the actors. The feedback given to the learner is written down in the logbook.

Learners are expected to write down what happened in the critical incident and also the feedback regarding the incident, and analyze the feedback given to them by various stakeholders. Learners are encouraged to write short personal reflective statements regarding what they have learned to test theory against practice and refine theory based on practice and also mention how they will improve their professional behaviour in future. In this way reflexive competence is developed.

Service learning projects for the development and assessment of critical professionalism

To ensure that the Animal Health graduate is a productive and critically engaged citizen and professional in the broader community, learners carry out service learning projects. In the community service research projects, learners can choose to pose their own problems and with the help of the environment, find their own solutions. Learning is grounded in particular contexts and individual experiences. For example, learners may decide to perform research on an animal health related problem they encounter in their work field, analyze their findings and use the results gained from this project to inform and advise farmers involved accordingly. Another project would be to identify the characteristics of a specific animal breed and analyze the suitability of this breed for specific production purposes and financial value for a farmer in a certain area using an animal health related approach.

The assessment guide for service learning projects contains guidelines for research as well as an assessment grid with assessment criteria. There is also space for learners' reflective statements based on feedback from others. For the final integrated assessment learners have to submit a portfolio containing all elements of the professional training assessed (that is, logbook and projects) as well as a CV, reports on in-service training and evidence of practical courses passed. It represents a collection of information gathered to show the learner's achievement of the professional competence over time.

Conclusion

One of the most important lessons from this case study is that learners should not only be assessed in institutional settings on how to apply a single theory to practice. If the purpose is to train practitioners rather than merely technicians, there needs to be assessment in service learning contexts where real problems which require a range of contextually relevant solutions, are located. Through integrated assessment in service learning contexts, learners can demonstrate their professional competence in terms of the key purposes of the programme.

Endnote

- ¹ Since the programme referred to in this case study was developed at Technikon Southern Africa prior to 2004 when the merger with UNISA took place, it is referred to as a case study from TSA.
- ² South African Qualifications Authority. (2000). *The NQF and Curriculum Development*. Pretoria: SAQA. p.18

Case Seven: Student support in the first two years of a teacher upgrading programme offered by UNISA

Tony Mays
 Department of Further Education, University of South Africa
 tonymays@mweb.co.za

Editor's introduction

As outlined in this case study, UNISA was faced with the challenge of designing and implementing a new teacher upgrading programme - the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) - in a very short period of time. Given that the majority of students would be full-time teachers who had not participated in academic study for some time and who use English as an additional language, it was clear to UNISA staff that learner support would be a vital part of the programme. Providing such support would be difficult because of the very large numbers of teachers enrolled on the programme - with 2 318 teachers in the first cohort. The author's reflective account of achievements and difficulties in the first two years of implementation addresses quality criterion 7:

Learners are provided with a range of opportunities for real two-way communication through the use of various forms of technology for tutoring at a distance, contact tutoring, assignment tutoring, mentoring where appropriate, counselling (both remote and face-to-face) and the stimulation of peer support structures. The need of learners for physical facilities and study resources and participation in decision-making is also taken into account.

This case study demonstrates that it is possible to meet the criteria for quality distance education even in a programme with very large numbers.

Introduction

The National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) is targeted at educators who are already in the classroom but who are not fully qualified in terms of the requirements of the South African Council of Educators.¹ The average age of these educators is around fifty and many have not studied for many years and/or have dropped out of previous upgrading programmes. They may not be well-equipped or motivated for further study and thus are likely to require 'learner support'.

The term 'learner support' has been used very broadly and in relation to a range of diverse activities. The following list (derived from SAIDE, 2000; Mays, 2000; 2003) illustrates the broad range of activities which are offered to distance learners and which are listed under the rubric of learner/student support.

Related to learning and teaching processes/needs:

- Pre-course study skills training;
- Learning and teaching contracts;
- Network of learner support centres;
- Compulsory residential sessions;
- Practical sessions for professional training, e.g. nurses, educators; for artisan training, e.g. access to workshops, etc; for natural scientists, access to laboratories, etc;
- Academic advising, tutoring;
- Tutor marking and feedback and quick turnaround time on assignments;
- Orientation and ongoing training of tutors to ensure provision of quality support;
- Supply of high quality learning materials;
- Pre-examination counselling;
- Administration of examinations;
- Peer support/study groups;
- Technology enhanced learning, e.g.
 - radio broadcasts to promote live discussion of issues and problems
 - audio and/or video tapes
 - telematics
 - newspapers (internal and mass media).

Related to access and information processes/needs:

- Record management;
- Information on admission and registration;
- Information on administrative procedures and regulations;
- Bookshop services;
- Library services;
- Personal timetables;
- Information on fees and financial support;
- Access to information technologies;
- Career guidance.

Related to social and personal needs:

- Pre-course registration counselling;
- Counselling in person and by letter, telephone and e-mail;
- Internet and e-mail support;
- Peer support/study groups;
- Disabilities support;
- Minorities support;
- Adult learners support;
- English as a second or other language (ESOL) and languages teaching unit;
- Multicultural education coordination;
- Social events.

This case study discusses the learner support offered in the UNISA NPDE programme under the three broad categories outlined above. In each part of the discussion, a distinction is made between what was planned and what actually happened with a view to identifying some useful lessons from experience. The case study includes feedback from a student evaluation of the programme as a whole, with a particular emphasis on the effectiveness of the learner support.

Support related to learning and teaching processes/needs

Supporting the development of academic literacy

Many prospective NPDE students will not have been studying for some time and many are Foundation Phase teachers whose main classroom language is one of the indigenous languages rather than English - the language of instruction in the UNISA NPDE. In recognition of their likely need of academic literacy support, at the start of the NPDE programme all students are required to work through a module called *Language and Learning Skills*. On successful completion of the module, it is hoped that students will have extended their language and study skills in English in order to engage effectively with the rest of the programme. In a recent survey of NPDE students, however, only 33/707 students rated *Language and Learning Skills* as the most useful module on the course. This was the lowest rating among the five first-year modules. It may suggest that students have not seen the relevance of the module to their other studies but given the phrasing of the question, it may also be that the module was found useful but not as useful as some others. Responses to the module will need to be explored more fully.

Quality
Criterion

7.2

Academic support is built into the design of the course materials

Provision of contact sessions as an integral part of programme delivery

One of the biggest differences between the UNISA NPDE programme and other UNISA mainstream offerings is the provision of contact sessions as an integral part of the programme delivery.

Quality Criterion	<p>7.5 Care is taken to place suitable sites of learning close to where students live/work.</p>	<p>UNISA promised that it would offer contact sessions wherever there was an average of 30 students studying the same modules and these contact sessions would account for at least 10% of the notional learning hours of the programme i.e. at least 60 hours of direct face-to-face contact in a typical 60 credit academic year.</p>
Quality Criterion	<p>7.9 There are sufficient contact sessions to ensure that the learners are able to achieve the outcomes of the course.</p>	<p>Learning from the University of Fort Hare programme (SAIDE, 2001), the contact sessions were intended to orientate, maintain and conclude students' study of each module, with the tutors playing a facilitating/motivating role rather than teaching the content of the modules. In addition, the tutors were to mark and give feedback on the two assignments per module which, taken together, counted for 50% of the final mark for each module. It was intended that tutors would complete marking between contact sessions and that in subsequent sessions teachers would have an opportunity for a frank discussion of the assessment feedback and the possibility of challenging the assessment given.</p>
Quality Criterion	<p>7.10 Contact sessions are integrated into the course design, rather than being an add-on extra.</p>	<p>Towards the end of 2003, the 2318 students on the UNISA NPDE programme were invited to participate in an</p>
Quality Criterion	<p>7.6 Tutors are selected and trained for their crucial role in encouraging active engagement of each learner in the course/programme.</p>	<p>anonymous evaluation of the programme from various perspectives. Of the 707 (30,5%) who submitted an evaluation form, 661 students provided a ranked response to an enquiry about the extent to which the contact sessions had helped them to be successful on the programme. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest rating, the weighted average was 4,84, indicating a high rate of value attached to contact sessions. One student commented that 'Most of us wouldn't have made it without the tutors' and in an open response section at the end of the evaluation form, 58/707 (8,2%) of students indicated that they would have liked more contact sessions.</p>

However, the provision and management of these contact sessions was not unproblematic and the following problems arose from time-to-time:

• Data on where centres would be needed was often not available before such centres needed to be identified and booked. It has proved necessary to start the programme with centres in projected key regions (using not only UNISA learning centres but also booking rooms in technical colleges, teacher centres, schools and sometimes even church halls) and to then expand the number of centres as viable new groupings become clear.

- With at one time more than 25 centres operating in five different provinces, it was not possible to visit all the centres for quality assurance purposes. In the second year of the programme, some tutors were asked to assume an additional co-ordinating role as centre managers in larger centres. This proved to be a useful approach in most cases (albeit at an added cost for the extra hours and responsibility) but a complete disaster in one centre where the wrong person was chosen as centre manager and managed to single-handedly confuse and alienate the students, the other tutors and the people whose centre was being used.
- Occasionally, tutors failed to arrive for a planned session. However, tutors were required to submit attendance registers with their claims and this ensured that unexplained tutor absences were rare.
- Tutors were often good facilitators but not necessarily good assessors or administrators. Although tutors were required to submit mark-sheets by certain deadlines in order to claim for marking, and were also required to submit copies of marked assignments for moderation, many tutors failed to meet the agreed deadlines and as a result students did not always receive assessment feedback timeously. In addition, there have been a number of irregularities where students have apparently marked their own assignments or pressured tutors to accept and mark assignments long after the deadline had elapsed. For 2004, the roles of tutor and assessor have been de-linked and students have been required to post all assignments to UNISA for centralized marking.
- In addition to weaknesses in the administration of the assignments, a review of marked assignments (SAIDE, 2002) indicated that tutors had not been able to make full use of assignment feedback as a supportive learning strategy.

Clearly, some if not all of the problems outlined above could be addressed by more intensive tutor training. In general, UNISA tutors receive 2.5 days of training a year. In 2002, the programme manager met with tutors at the beginning of the year to orientate them to the programme, to their roles as tutors and to the first year modules; in the middle of the year, to reflect on observations of contact sessions, examples of marked assignments and challenges that had arisen; and then again towards the end of the year, to prepare tutors for guided marking of examination scripts. With some 60 tutors all offering the same module, it proved quite cost-effective for the programme manager to conduct such sessions in three main locations, namely, Pretoria, Nelspruit and Durban. In the second year, the number of different modules on the programme had grown to 39 and the number of tutors to 90, and it was necessary to add an additional training session for portfolio development for integrated assessment and assessment for recognition of prior learning (RPL). With so many different requirements, it was necessary to establish a programme team and either bring all the tutors to a central location or have the team travel to regional centres. The latter was chosen. In order to contain costs, it was not possible to do this twice in the year. A two-day workshop was offered prior to the start of the programme, and a half-day workshop for Gauteng-based tutors involved in examination marking was held in October/November 2003. Whilst it is clear that tutors required more training and support, it should be noted that UNISA had been requested to offer an NPDE programme that was as affordable as possible, and accordingly did so at a student fee that was less than half that of most other

providers. Thus the UNISA NPDE has been offered under severely constrained budget limitations.

Attempts to offer school and classroom based support

In its original proposal, UNISA indicated that whilst classroom and school-based support was desirable, it would not be affordable at UNISA's standard fees as charged for the NPDE and that therefore additional funding would be required for classroom- and school-based support. However, no additional funding was made available. Offering a decentralized model of provision meant that UNISA needed to make use of tutors for this purpose. Given that on average a suitably qualified tutor costs R2 500 a day for time and transport, the extent to which any form of school visit could be accommodated was severely constrained. However, in order to provide some feedback on the impact of the programme it was planned that each tutor would visit one volunteer from their tutorial group on three occasions during the course of the year to observe, discuss and evaluate the cumulative impact of the programme on classroom practice. In the event, most tutors were unable to organize this since they were also teaching at the same time, and of those who were able to make such arrangements few were able to produce reports of any significant value. In future, it is planned that academic co-ordinators will conduct these longitudinal studies with 10 students. Attempts to involve district officials in a school-based assessment and/or mentorship role for the NPDE, have so far proved unsuccessful.

Provision of high quality study materials

Crucial to students' successful completion of the programme is that they receive study materials that are appropriate and accessible. The NPDE was launched in the same period that UNISA had to incorporate SACTE (South African College of Teacher Education) and SACOL (South African College for Open Learning), and accreditation for UNISA's NPDE proposal was received in September 2001 for a programme start in 2002. Thus for 2002 and 2003, UNISA chose to make use of the best available UNISA, SACTE and SACOL materials or materials published elsewhere and to develop in 2002 for 2003 only those materials for which no suitable source material could be found. During 2003, as a complementary process to the national NPDE evaluation process, UNISA embarked on its own internal review of the NPDE study materials. As a result of this process, three of the five first year modules have been replaced for 2004, about 50% of specialist modules have been substantially revised and eight new modules have been developed so that the UNISA NPDE now caters for all three primary school phases and all eight learning areas in the senior phase. In the student evaluation cited earlier, 15,8% (112/707) of students said that they had found **all** of their NPDE modules helpful in improving their practice and an

astonishing 42,4% (300/707) indicated that **none** of their modules could be classified as 'least' helpful. As one student commented, 'All the modules were useful and brought a great change in my career. The modules are not separable because all of them they built a teacher in totality (in all aspects of teaching).' (sic).

Quality
Criterion

5.7 The materials development plan includes provision for evaluation during the developmental process in the form of critical commenting, developmental testing or piloting.

Provision of formative and summative assessment

At UNISA, examinations are managed separately by specialized staff in the Examinations Department. For the UNISA NPDE programme, examinations are open-book since this seems a more appropriate way to examine applied competence. The examinations count for 50% of the final module mark with the other 50% coming from assignments (thus reinforcing the programme's message of finding a balance between formative, continuous assessment and summative assessment for reporting purposes). There were a few problems in 2002, when some invigilators were not familiar with the process of the open book nature of the NPDE examinations, when NPDE students found that a two hour examination did not give them sufficient time (subsequently it was changed to three hours) and when some very mature NPDE students felt offended when asked to be quiet in and when leaving the examination room. However, since the January 2003 supplementary examinations there have been no further problems in this regard. Students are required to get a final mark of at least 45% to qualify for a supplementary examination and most final results that are not good are due either to the fact that students performed poorly in both assignments and examinations or that not all assignments were submitted. The UNISA NPDE team has an open-door policy with regard to querying of final marks. Any assignment can be submitted for re-marking and any examination paper can be re-marked for a fee.

Running parallel to the standard process of assignments and examinations, UNISA NPDE teacher-learners are also engaged in the development of professional portfolios for integrated assessment and RPL purposes. The focus of these portfolios is lessons that are planned, taught and reflected upon and which are subjected to self-, peer- and tutor assessment. For some students, the development of a professional portfolio has been a particularly enriching experience, both personally and professionally, with one student commenting in her evaluation report: 'Apart from the structure of assignments which were so challenging and interesting, compiling the integrated assessment portfolio was very interesting to me. At first I thought it would be simple to do it, but I found it very challenging and it was really an eye-opener. It was as if I were a new teacher entering the profession. I would look at the learners' portfolios and selecting their best work was always fascinating. It inspired them and they would all try their best to write neatly and correctly.'(sic)

Quality Criterion	6.4	There is a range of formative and summative assessment tasks and methods which ensures that all learning outcomes are validly assessed.
----------------------	------------	---

Reflections on the support provided

The designers and producers of UNISA's NPDE predicted that the majority of teacher-learners would be under-prepared for independent study at tertiary level and, in general, this prediction has been confirmed. In 2004, tutors have been expected to make more use of the guidelines provided in the Language and Learning Skills module to help teacher-learners to engage meaningfully with their study material. They have also provided much more guidance and support to teachers in managing their study time. The general tutorial letters for the NPDE programme are integral to this process. At the same time, however, it is necessary to guard against spoon-feeding of content since one of the purposes of the NPDE is to provide teacher-learners with a pathway to studies at a higher level. Whilst continuing to provide motivational support and offering more systematic academic study skills development, the programme needs

to retain an explicit agenda of fostering independent studying by empowering individual teacher-learners and their peer study groups to engage 'reflexively' with the materials provided.

Support related to access and information processes/needs

In general, UNISA's systems are predicated on an individual adult learner, who registers and pays for him/herself and who is highly self-motivated. Generally, students are required to pay half their study fee on enrolment and the balance in August, and students in arrears may be barred from their final examinations and/or may have their results blocked. In most UNISA programmes, submission of a number of assignments is a pre-requisite for examination entry and the final mark for a module is the examination mark. An increasing number of UNISA programmes offer some form of contact support and UNISA does have a Department of Student Support which offers general guidance and counselling services and can organize contact classes where significant numbers of students request them and are willing to pay an additional fee. However, the NPDE - with help of the Departments of Computer Services, Student Affairs, Assignments and Examinations - needed to establish new systems and procedures for dealing with extensive decentralized support and assessment and for reporting on groups of students. For 2002 and 2003, students were registered under three different account codes for Gauteng and Mpumalanga bursary holders and for self-financed students. Reports which summarized information on individual assignment submission and performance in examinations were generated on a quarterly basis.

The vast majority of students were able to progress through the programme with few problems, but there were some anomalies, such as:

- Students whose results were withheld because their application process was non-standard or their registration forms were incomplete so that they were not allocated to the bursary cohort and their accounts appeared to be in arrears;
- Bursary students who registered for the second year programme before getting their supplementary results and whose accounts were accordingly reported as in arrears and whose results were withheld even after they had paid their supplementary examination fees;
- Students who did not understand that their bursary did not cover repetitions of any kind and accordingly left it till very late to pay the outstanding supplementary examination fee and so access their results;
- Students who assumed that payment of the supplementary examination fee meant that if they were not successful that they would automatically be registered to repeat the module(s).

To accommodate these kinds of problems, the registration deadline for the NPDE was officially extended until the end of March (the registration period at UNISA usually closes at the end of the first week of February) and students who worked through the NPDE office directly were able to be helped back into the programme until the end of May. After the end of May 2003 it was no longer possible to accommodate late registrations because the student system needed to be closed for auditing purposes.

In their study packages, UNISA students receive a booklet entitled 'Policies and Procedures' which outlines what to do and whom to contact with respect to issues such as changing an examination centre. In addition, the general NPDE letters contain contact details for all NPDE staff (including cell phone numbers in most cases) as well as for the support service departments of registration, assignments and examinations. Unfortunately, it has been the UNISA NPDE experience that many students do not consult these resources and become frustrated, telephoning the general UNISA number for queries that could be better handled by contacting the relevant department or authority. Although the first contact session each year includes a session which focuses on these issues, some 30% of registered students each year choose not to attend the contact sessions.

Quality Criterion	9.5	There are effective systems of communication with current and potential learners.
----------------------	------------	---

In recognition of the fact that most NPDE students are likely to be teachers working in rural areas with limited access to information resources, UNISA has tried to make its NPDE programme as self-contained as possible. All resources required for assessment are supplied as part of the study package and no NPDE students are required to purchase additional study material. However, like all other UNISA students, NPDE students have full access to the UNISA library and services.

In the general tutorial letters, NPDE students are provided with a timetable of contact sessions for the year, whilst the module specific tutorial letters contain assignment deadlines. Each student also receives an individualized examination timetable.

All UNISA registration points provide information on fees and Edu-Loan financial support services.

Students who visit the main campus or one of the main satellite campuses have access to information technologies. (In Pretoria there are regular free training sessions for registered students on how to use these facilities).

In the NPDE programme, career planning is built into a compulsory first year module which deals with the new qualifications framework for educators and guides teacher-learners through the developmental appraisal process.

Support related to social and personal needs

Support available to all students

UNISA mainly relies on its calendars which are updated annually, to convey information about its programmes. In addition, there are staff at all UNISA regional offices and learning centres who have been trained to offer general guidance on UNISA programmes. There is a call centre for general enquiries and contact numbers for the NPDE office are freely available. Within the NPDE offices, there is always at least one person available for students who arrive to make enquiries without an appointment. If the junior programme administrator is unable to assist them, s/he can facilitate making an appointment to speak to the programme

Quality
Criterion

7.14 Administrative staff are trained to be helpful, clear and consultative in the way they relate to and make arrangements for learners.

administrator or co-ordinator or one of the academic co-ordinators. Unfortunately, students very often refuse to speak to any one other than the person whose name they know.

Once students are registered on the NPDE programme they have the option, as noted above, of attending contact sessions and receiving the guidance of a tutor. Students also receive contact details of all the academic co-ordinators with whom they can discuss issues that they were not able to address locally with their tutor. Since most staff have also provided

Quality
Criterion

7.12 There are opportunities for individual academic support for learners either by telephone, by appointment or online.

their personal cell-phone numbers, there should be no problem with contacting NPDE staff and, if necessary, setting up an appointment for an individual consultation. In addition NPDE staff respond to individual letters and enquiries that have been posted, faxed or emailed.

A review of the contact details of UNISA NPDE students reveals that only two to three students a year have an e-mail address and, possibly, easy access to the Internet. Nonetheless, for 2004 all tutorial letters are available online as is some additional support material for the Intermediate Phase module ,Numeracy 1. Because the UNISA NPDE programme uses a wide variety of venues for contact sessions, the programme has been designed primarily as a print-based learning experience. However, for 2004, the first year study package has included a video, which is supplied to tutors who are responsible for either making arrangements for the video to be shown during a contact session or to manage a process of circulating the video among study groups at the centre.

One of the purposes of contact sessions is to help students to form peer support or study groups. The programme has found that these groups rarely continue outside the contact sessions, though there are some exceptions. The main difficulties appear to relate to finding common free-time and having access to reliable transport. These issues could be addressed if groups of teachers from each school could be encouraged to register for the NPDE. In the student evaluation cited earlier, several students said that they valued the engagement with their peers. As one student noted, 'I liked and enjoyed the contact session period, whereby our self-esteem were enhanced when we were together sharing ideas in different groups as old didactic educators.'

Support available to students with special needs

UNISA has a special unit devoted to promoting ease of access for students who need to overcome various barriers to learning. In 2003, for example, the NPDE had one student who was blind and was teaching both blind and partially-sighted learners in the Foundation Phase. For such a learner it is intended that study materials be supplied either on audio-cassette or typed into Braille. Although this process was started, the student concerned did not receive her converted study materials timeously and indeed, with the help of her colleagues, did much of the work of the conversion herself. Despite the challenges she nevertheless managed to: complete nine of the ten first year assignments, to submit both integrated assessment and RPL portfolios, and to pass three of the five first-year modules. In recognition of the particular challenges faced by this student, she was invited to Pretoria

for a week and offered the opportunity of an oral examination for the two modules she had not been able to complete successfully on her first attempt due to inadequacies in the materials supplied. Similar alternative assessment arrangements were made for other students who had a good case to make for not having been able to meet the normal requirements of the programme. The UNISA NPDE has demonstrated that even in a large-scale distance programme, it is still possible to cater for individual needs when the programme is offered by people who share a common commitment and in which learners and staff are willing to meet each other half-way. As noted previously, however, a minority of students will attempt to exploit what they see as loopholes in a very flexible programme and so each case needs to be carefully scrutinized before any departures from the norm are sanctioned and create a precedent for subsequent engagements.

Conclusion

In general, the NPDE has been designed with the understanding that the target audience are mature people, with many years of practical classroom experience but probably limited academic study skills, that most will be studying in a language that is not their first language and that they represent a diverse range of cultures and contexts. In seeking to address these issues, the UNISA NPDE curriculum has an overt academic language skills development programme incorporated into the main stream course. In selecting tutors, preference is given to mature people who are able to code-switch when it is useful to do so. Contact sessions emphasize the use of small group discussion (which can be conducted in students' home language). Case studies and scenarios included in the materials try to be broadly representative and assessment emphasizes reflection on the teacher-learners' own classroom and context.

In the UNISA NPDE programme, teacher-learners are required to pass three or more of the five first year modules before entering the second year of the programme. This is to ensure that they meet the University's general requirements for a minimum number of credits passed in a particular period, to ensure that there is sufficient general groundwork done on which to build the second year specialist programme and to ensure that they do not carry so many modules that they become overburdened with academic commitments during their second year, which has the added workload of finalizing one or more portfolios.

Some 67% of the 2052 NPDE teacher-learners who registered for their first year in 2002 successfully met the requirements for entry into the second year programme in 2003 - a pleasing result in a distance learning programme for students who are in full-time employment. At the end of their second year many of these students still have one or two modules or some compulsory portfolio work to complete, but should graduate in 2004. 39% of the first cohort completed the two year programme in minimum time.

The breakdown of this throughput in minimum time is as follows: Gauteng Department of Education registered 910 students in 2002.

- 720 (79%) qualified and registered for year two in 2003.
- 499 (69% of those registered) completed in 2003.
- Overall throughput rate for Gauteng students in minimum time is $499/910 = 55\%$.

Mpumalanga Department of Education registered 1056 students in 2002.

- 566 (54%) qualified and registered for year two in 2003.
- 188 (33%) of those registered completed in 2003.
- Overall throughput rate for Mpumalanga students in minimum time is $188/1056=18\%$.

The equivalent pass rate among self-financed students is $199/286 = 69.6\%$.

These figures suggest that UNISA needs to find more effective strategies for motivating and supporting bursary holders in general and, in particular, for supporting students in more rural contexts.

From the experience of the first two years of the UNISA NPDE, it is clear that in future more attention will need to be given to the selection, training and monitoring of tutors; the development of teacher-learners' academic study skills and time management; the selection and management of centres; the quality of feedback on assessment. Further attention will also need to be given to strengthening the partnership with the Department of Education so that there is increasing synergy between what the Department expects and what the programme delivers and so that learner support functions can be optimized.

The last word is left for one of the 707 2003 NPDE students who submitted an anonymous evaluation form:

'What I learned is correlated with what I am teaching. I've changed totally and I feel great.'

References

- Glennie, J. (1996). 'Towards Learner-centred Distance Education in the Changing South African Context'. In: Mills, R. and Tait, A. *Supporting the Learner in Open and Distance Learning*. London: Pitman Publishing.
- Mays, T. J. (2000). NADEOSA Conference 2000 Keynote Address Based on SAIDE. (2000). *Learner Support: A South African Programme Perspective*. Johannesburg: SAIDE.
- Mays, T. J. (2003). 'Distance Education and Open Learning: The Challenge for Satellite Campuses'. *Journal for New Generation Sciences*, 2003, (2). pp.41-58.
- SAIDE (2000). *Learner Support: A South African Programme Perspective*. Unpublished research report. Johannesburg: SAIDE.
- SAIDE. (2001). *Fort Hare Distance Education Project B.Prim.Ed.* Unpublished case study. Johannesburg: SAIDE.
- SAIDE. (2002). *A Review of Selected UNISA NPDE Marked Assignments*. Unpublished report. Johannesburg: SAIDE.

Endnote

- ¹ The South African Council of Educators requires teachers to have the equivalent of a three year qualification after a senior certificate - commonly known as M+3 or REQV 13.