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Middle school mathematics teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge regarding teaching strategies on quadrilaterals

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Pedagogical content knowledge is consisted of two components: student knowledge and teaching strategies. Teaching strategies was defined under two sub-headings as strategies for specific topics and specific strategies for any topic. The purpose of this study was to examine the method with which quadrilaterals were taught by mathematics teachers with regard to the teaching strategies component of pedagogical content knowledge. 30 middle school mathematics teachers working at 12 different schools in Turkey participated in this study. Interview method was used for data acquisition. The interview was intended to put forth the strategies that the teachers used for defining, classification and visualization which were included in the strategies of the framework used for the study. Content analysis was used to analyze the data acquired in this study. Study results showed that the definition strategy was used together with the visualization strategy. It was also determined that informal definitions were used in addition to formal definitions and that in general a personal definition was given by listing the various properties of quadrilaterals. The teachers who participated in this study generally used the partial classification of quadrilaterals and the transformation classification of quadrilaterals.

Key words: Pedagogical content knowledge, teaching strategies, quadrilaterals.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher education research has been suggested as a new field of study by Shulman (1986) and has created a framework to determine what teachers need and develop effective teaching according to some factors. In this framework, Shulman (1987) has examined pedagogical content knowledge as consisting of two components: student knowledge and teaching strategies. When components of the knowledge to understand students in various different pedagogical content knowledge models are examined (Grossman, 1990; Fennema and Franke, 1992; Schoenfeld, 1998; Magnusson et al., 1999; An et al., 2004; Ball et al., 2008; Park and Oliver, 2008; Kovarik, 2008) it is observed that student knowledge is examined in six different sub-components such as revealing the current knowledge of students, associating preliminary knowledge with new knowledge, valuing...
student questions and thoughts, taking into consideration the individual differences, predicting student thought and determining-knowing the misconceptions of students. It is also observed that the teaching strategies component in these models is examined under six different sub-components such as strategies for specific topics, specific strategies for any topics, demonstrations, (examples, real world problems, problems), analogies, illustrations, samplings, explanations.

Various researches have carried out on the pedagogical content knowledge components which was put forth by Shulman (Park and Oliver 2008, different components have been listed in detail by different researchers). In this examination, Park and Oliver (2008) have determined that many of these researchers generally use two components determined by Shulman and that in addition to these components they also create new components called knowledge of assessment of subject matter along with knowledge of curriculum.

When studies carried out on mathematics teachers are examined in terms of pedagogical content knowledge, it is seen that there are other studies that examine different topics in mathematics in terms of pedagogical content knowledge (Haciomeroglu, 2009; Basturk, 2009; Yesildere and Akkoc, 2010; Bukova-Guzel, 2010). These studies have also put forth certain clues as to how education for this topic should be.

The determination of strategies for specific topics in geometry are important for effective teaching. When teaching the topics, the awareness of the teachers of these strategies, the usage of them appropriately and the pedagogical content knowledge are effective in terms of teaching strategies component. When the studies carried out are examined (Grossman, 1990; Fennema and Franke, 1992; Schoenfeld, 1998; Magnusson et al., 1999; An et al., 2004; Ball et al., 2008; Park and Oliver, 2008; Kovarik, 2008; Haciomeroglu, 2009; Basturk, 2009; Yesildere and Akkoc, 2010; Bukova-Guzel, 2010) it is seen that the number of studies examining the subject of quadrilaterals in terms of pedagogical content knowledge is fairly low. The aim of this study is to examine middle school mathematics teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge regarding teaching strategies on quadrilaterals.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, the teaching strategies sub-component of pedagogical content knowledge was used. Magnusson et al. (1999) have presented teaching strategies defined for use in science and mathematics education under two sub-headings as strategies for specific topics and specific strategies for any topics. Specific strategies for any topics are defined as strategies containing the various stages used in the teaching of a specific field whereas strategies for specific topics are defined as examples, models and activities used in teaching of a specific topic or concept.

The focus of this study was the teaching strategies sub-component of pedagogical content knowledge developed by Magnusson et al. (1999). Quadrilaterals have been selected in this study in the context of teaching strategies.

There are various studies on students' perceptions and concept images on geometry. When studies carried out on the learning of students for quadrilaterals are examined, it has been observed that specifically two factors played a role in understanding, perception and comprehension. These being the definition of the concept image and figural concept. Concept image put forth by Tall and Vinner (1981) is not only limited to the concept definition and they have defined concept image as “the total cognitive structure that is associated with the concept, which includes all the mental pictures and associated properties and processes” (p. 152).

Individuals may perceive the same concept in different ways due to their individual epistemological and psychological attributes. Definition of the concept is defined as the whole set of words used to distinguish one concept from the others, whereas concept image is defined as what is conjured up in the mind for that concept either consciously or unconsciously. Concept image includes partially correct definitions and misconceptions.

Hershkowitz (1989, 1990), Tall and Vinner (1981) have interpreted their definition of concept image along with the definition of concept in critical attributes and non-critical attributes putting forth that non-critical attributes belong to the concept image. Geometrical shapes have certain visual structures in addition to certain formal definitions. Another important factor that should be considered when giving examples of geometrical shapes is that there may be one or more prototypes. Hershkowitz (1989) has explained this by stating that all samples have common specific visual features thereby prototypes. Tsamir et al. (2008) have accepted prototype samples as the heuristic representative of the concept. In this sense, the prototype factors comprise the key factor. Each concept may have more than one prototype sample. These prototype samples are those that represent some of the features included in the long list of features for the concept. These prototype figures always have an effect on the concept image (Fischbein, 1993; Hershkowitz, 1990).

Many geometrical figures contain familial relations. Hence, the apprehension of these familial relations is important in the mathematics curricula for the teaching of geometrical concepts. The classification of quadrilaterals is as important as definition and visual properties. The classification of quadrilaterals seems to be important to create relations between quadrilaterals and thus for the solution of geometrical problems along with proof studies. That is why it has been the focus point of many studies. De Villiers (1994) points out two different classifications that can be made by individuals for quadrilaterals. One of these is the hierarchical classification made by relating the quadrilaterals as subsets according to their properties.
strategies of quadrilaterals. In this study, interview method has been preferred within the context of qualitative research.

Participants and setting

30 middle school mathematics teachers working at 12 different schools in the city of Izmir in Turkey have participated in this study. The teachers were selected based on the principle of voluntary. These teachers have 1 to 20 years of experience in their fields. The mathematics teachers who participated in this study have graduated from 4 years of mathematics teaching program in faculties of education. The teachers have graduated from these programs by taking the courses for major field of study as well as pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge. The topic of quadrilaterals has been examined in this study. Quadrilaterals are included in the 5 and 8th class curriculum at middle schools as well as the 5 and 7th class curriculum in Turkey. At these class levels, the topic of quadrilaterals included recognizing and understanding special quadrilaterals, drawing special quadrilaterals, determining their diagonals along with interior and exterior angles, measure-ment, forming area relations and solving problems.

Data collection

Interview method has been used for data acquisition. The questions that were asked to the teachers during interviews have been prepared in accordance with the pedagogical content knowledge teaching strategies component. The interview consisted of six questions which were intended to put forth the strategies that teachers use for defining, classification and visualization included in the strategies for specific topics sub-heading of the framework used for the study. These questions were reviewed by three field experts prior to being directed to the teachers and the required corrections were made. The questions of the interview which were prepared in such a manner were asked to a teacher and thus the pilot study for the interview questions was carried out. Two mathematics researchers who carried out the study reviewed the questions after the pilot interview thereby deciding on the final form of the questions.

The teacher was informed prior to the interview that the interview would be recorded. The interviews lasted in an average of 30 minutes. In addition to the data acquired during the interviews, the drawings of the teachers drawn during the interview were also used.

Data analysis

Content analysis was used to analyze the data acquired in the study. The basic process carried out in content analysis is to bring together the data that resembles each other within the framework of certain concepts and themes and to arrange and interpret these in a manner that will be understood by the reader (Simsek and Yildirim, 2006).

Data analysis was carried out in two stages. In the first stage, the voice records were analyzed. In the second stage, two researchers came together to determine the possible codes for the three strategies (defining, classification, visualization) used in the study. All these processes were carried out separately for each of the 30 teachers after which the analysis results were collected and reported.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Based on the analysis, the strategies used by teachers in

Whereas the other is the partition classification which means classifying quadrilaterals into different sets according to their independent properties. De Villiers (1994) has stated that hierarchical classification makes familial relations more understandable.

When all the aforementioned theoretical structures effective in understanding and apprehending quadrilaterals are taken into account, it will be important during teaching how the teachers define and visualize quadrilaterals and how they structure familial relations. As a result, strategies for specific topics within the framework created by Magnusson et al. (1999) for the quadrilaterals have been examined under 3 sub-categories in this study; which are: strategies to define quadrilaterals, strategies to visualize quadrilaterals and strategies to classify quadrilaterals.

The theoretical framework synthesized above and presented in Figure 1 has been used in this study.

METHODS

The purpose of this study is to examine the middle school mathematics teachers’ (10 to 13 year olds’ teachers) teaching
teaching quadrilaterals were coded as strategies for visualizing quadrilaterals, strategies for defining quadrilaterals and strategies for classification. The determined strategies were examined under these classifications.

Strategies to define quadrilaterals

Defining is an important aspect in learning quadrilaterals. Hence, the strategy of defining stands out in teaching quadrilaterals. The mathematics teachers have expressed in the interviews that they use strategies for defining quadrilaterals with visualization strategies when teaching quadrilaterals. When interviews were analyzed, it was determined that the teachers followed two basic methods while using definition strategy. One of these is the using of formal definition of quadrilaterals whereas the other is to define quadrilaterals by listing their properties.

Some of the teachers who use formal definition strategy have expressed during the interviews that they use the definitions given in textbooks. Whereas some have stated that they define quadrilaterals specifically themselves during the course and tell this definition to the students. When these definitions were examined it was observed that they were formal definitions. Statements by teachers who use formal definitions have been given below:

“I use the textbook and I make the students write down the definitions”
“It’s actually based on the book, similar to the definition given in the book”
“I adhere to the textbook, making a definition is my priority.”

As a result of the interviews carried out by the participants, it was determined that some teachers use a strategy in which they list the properties of the quadrilaterals instead of making a definition. It can be stated that teachers who follow this method generally use their own personal definitions. Statements by teachers who use this strategy have been given below:

“.. I generally include properties within the definition”
“.. We call out the properties one by one and count them together.”
“It is important to emphasize the properties and to list them when making a definition”
“We make a definition by using a few of the most distinct properties”

It was determined that some of the teachers who use this strategy emphasize only some of the properties of quadrilaterals, whereas others use the strategy by listing all the properties. The teachers who use the strategy to define by listing a certain number of properties generally use definitions such as “a shape with four equal sides” (for squares and rhombus), “a shape with opposite sides equal” (for rectangles and parallelograms) “a shape with opposite sides parallel” (for all quadrilaterals).

Mathematics teachers who participated in this study gave clues during the interviews as to how and in what way they used the formal definition strategy or the informal property listing strategy. Almost all teachers (except one) have indicated that they use these definition strategies in conjunction with visual representations. Some of the teachers have indicated that they use physical examples from their surroundings while some have stated that they use the models they draw on the board. Only one teacher has stated, “my priority is definition, I make the students draw after giving the definition” emphasizing that he has used the strategy to define quadrilaterals independent of drawing.

In addition, two different ways have been determined for using the definition strategy according to the statements of the teachers. One of these has been determined as the teacher defining quadrilaterals directly or listing their properties while the other consists of the teacher asking students to give a definition or list the properties themselves. Two different expressions by two different teachers have been given below regarding the use of definition strategy:

“I ask the students to define the quadrilaterals and they define the quadrilaterals by listing their properties”
“I first define the quadrilaterals one by one, after that I complete my definition by listing the properties of the quadrilateral”.

Middle school mathematics teachers who participated in the study have generally used definition strategy together with visualization and have preferred asking the student directly or making the definition themselves.

Strategies to classify quadrilaterals

Another strategy used by the teachers for this topic has been determined as classifying quadrilaterals. Three different classification strategies have been determined as a result of the analysis of data acquired from the teachers. These are hierarchical classification, partial classification (used by De Villiers). The third one is the transformation classification which as has been named by the researchers. The teachers who use hierarchical classification have related quadrilaterals as sub-sets according to their properties. The teachers who use partial classification have used the different properties of quadrilaterals independent of each other to classify them. Whereas the teachers who use transformation classification have related quadrilaterals by transforming them into one another.

The teachers have generally stated that they use partial classification or transformation between quadrilaterals
when teaching quadrilaterals. The general tendency observed among the teachers when making partial classification has been the expression of "we draw a table". When asked "What do you pay attention to when forming this table?" the teachers have generally replied by stating that this table is used to put forth the general differences between quadrilaterals. An example has been given in Figure 2 (English translation is given under the original table). The teachers who make a correct hierarchical classification take all relations between quadrilaterals into consideration and have carried out the classification by relating the quadrilaterals correctly as sub-sets. The classification of this teacher can be seen in Figure 3.

Finally, the commonly used classification strategy is making a classification by transforming the quadrilaterals into one another. The teachers have stated that they relate quadrilaterals by transforming them figuratively (changing the sides, cutting, bending, twisting). The dialogue carried out with a teacher who makes such a classification is given below and the figure drawn by this teacher can be seen in Figure 4;

"I form a parallelogram when I stretch a rectangle from its top right corner, I form a square when I cut it into two equal halves, the figure formed when I connect the rectangle from the mid-point of its sides is a rhombus and I obtain a trapezoid when I connect two points from the top side with the bottom. So in short, rectangle is the grandfather of this family."

The classification drawing and explanations of the teacher who has made a classification similar to the one given above but who has changed sides and angles has been given in Figure 5;

The middle school mathematics teachers who participated in the study have generally explained their classification strategy by way of drawings and have preferred transforming quadrilaterals into each other as a strategy of classification. The interviews carried out have put forth that the teachers make some mistakes when classifying quadrilaterals. However, these have not been
Square > Four equal sides. Angles 90°  
Rectangle > Opposite sides equal. Angles 90°  
Square has all the properties of a rectangle but the converse is not true  
Parallelogram > Opposite sides parallel and equal. Opposite angles are equal  
Rectangle and square has all the properties of a parallelogram. Square and rectangle are parallelograms.  
Since a rhombus has the same properties of a parallelogram, every rhombus is also a parallelogram.

Figure 3. Drawing Made By Teacher Using Hierarchical Classification

Figure 4. Drawing Made By Teacher Using Quadrilateral Transformation Classification
listed since it is out of the scope of the study.

**Strategies to visualize quadrilaterals**

Research participants have stated during the interviews that they use visual representations when teaching quadrilaterals. Visual representations contain the drawing models, the concrete models, etc., of quadrilaterals and have been defined as visualization strategies. Mathematics teachers have generally used visualization strategies when first mentioning a topic, when making a definition or when listing properties. Visualization strategies have been examined under three sub-categories. These are; visualization using examples from daily life, visualization using materials and visualization by drawing. Middle school mathematics teachers who participated in the study have stated that they use one or more of these strategies when teaching quadrilaterals.

Some participants have stated that they give examples from their surroundings such as door, window, kite, etc., to define quadrilaterals. Whereas some have stated that they visualize quadrilaterals by way of materials such as geometry board, pattern blocks, etc. Below, expressions of the teachers who use these two visualization strategies have been given as examples:

“I try to start by examples as much as I can and I give examples from daily life. I bring a geometry board to the classroom.”

“I ask the students to give examples of quadrilaterals around us; like doors, windows, floor of the classroom, etc.”

“We cut A4 paper and use pattern blocks and rubbers to form the quadrilateral.”

Almost all the teachers who participated in the study have stated that they use drawings when teaching this topic. According to the analysis results obtained from the answers of the teachers, it has been determined that the teachers pay attention to two strategies for drawings. These are using tools to draw the quadrilateral properly and using the hand to draw the quadrilateral without any tool. Some of the teachers who use drawing tools and who give importance to drawing the quadrilateral in accordance with its properties have emphasized that they do not accept drawings made without using rulers. Whereas some teachers have stated that they use graph notebooks to make drawings.

Another result obtained from the analysis of the answers given by the teachers for quadrilateral drawing is that it is important to “draw the quadrilateral correctly”. The teachers have defined the correct drawing of a quadrilateral as realizing the distinctive features of quadrilaterals when faced with other quadrilaterals. In addition, some teachers have stated that it is important to
introduce the quadrilateral to students by drawing it in different positions. This result indicates that the teachers can move away from typical prototype drawings and use the critical properties of quadrilaterals in their drawings.

In this study, emphasis has been given on “teaching strategies” component. The data acquired has enabled us to give details on special teaching strategies of quadrilaterals. All strategies obtained as a result of the study have been given in Figure 6.

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study has examined the pedagogical content knowledge of the teachers within the context of “quadrilateral specific strategies” by carrying out interviews. Quadrilateral specific strategies have been classified as defining quadrilaterals, classifying quadrilaterals and visualizing quadrilaterals. The study results have put forth that the teachers use these three strategies one by one or in unison. The size of the study group is not suited for various generalizations. However, since this study was carried out with the teachers who teach at different schools and different grades (5th and 7th Grade), it is possible to make some distinctions about the strategies used for teaching quadrilaterals.

It has been determined that the definition strategy is used together with visualization strategy. Informal definitions are used in addition to formal definitions and that in general a personal definition is given by listing the various properties of quadrilaterals. When studies on understanding quadrilaterals and the concept image are examined, it has been observed that individuals define geometric concepts by way of an image they form of the concept and that they use personal definitions instead of formal ones (Sarfaty and Patkin, 2013; Turnuklu et al., 2013; Hershkowitz, 1989; Burger and Shaughnessy, 1986). To this end, it can be stated that the definitions used by mathematics teachers who participated in this study are shaped pursuant to their perceptions. A more detailed study is required to put forth why they go out of formal definitions. In addition, the results obtained in this study putting forth that the teachers find it more effective to have the students make the definition instead of the teacher expressing the definition directly is in accordance with literature data (De Villiers, 1998; Walcott et al., 2009).

The teachers who participated in this study have generally used partial classification of quadrilaterals and transformation classification of quadrilaterals. According to De Villiers, hierarchical classification is more effective. Because it is stated that hierarchical classification is important in geometrical thinking and problem solving (De Villiers, 1998; 1994). In addition, the study results indicate that the teachers use classification strategy by transforming quadrilaterals into one another. The teachers perceive relating quadrilaterals and making classifications as “transformation”. No study has been found in literature which examines classification between quadrilaterals as transformation [changing quadrilaterals formally (changing the sides, cutting, folding, twisting, etc.)].

The study has been carried out with 30 middle school mathematics teachers. A study can be carried out with a larger group of teachers in order to determine different strategies that the teachers use in teaching quadrilaterals or make generalization the strategies. In addition, making
observations in classes to determine how these strategies are used can provide a more depth and rich data. Various other studies can be carried out to find how effective these strategies are. In addition, the strategies used in the teaching of quadrilaterals are used for educating teacher candidates.

In this study, strategies for specific topics of teaching strategies, component of pedagogical content knowledge has been examined. Different studies can be carried out on different pedagogical content knowledge components to examine the relationship between the results.

**Conflict of Interests**

The author(s) have not declared any conflict of interests.

**REFERENCES**


Democratic involvement of students in high school governance in Lesotho

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This paper is premised on the thesis that there is importance and necessity of involving high school students in school governance in Lesotho as well as consideration of cultural values’ impact on this issue. The possibilities and limits of involving the high school students in school governance in Lesotho are examined. There are two opposing positions: some feel that such an exercise is right while others regard it to be wrong and should not be tried. The paper reaffirms that cultural values are highly regarded in Lesotho. But notably that students should participate in decision making in their schools is a rational idea because it means moulding future leaders who will become better citizens with decision making capacity that will benefit their communities in Lesotho. This study is indeed, necessary because this is a time when the very meaning of democracy and citizenship is contested (Arnot and Dillabough 2000). Furthermore, this is in line with Lesotho Vision 2020 goal that emphasizes wide influence of Lesotho to have strong leadership and democracy in the context of Africa and world at large.

Key words: Democratic involvement of students in high school governance.

INTRODUCTION

Research on students’ democratic involvement in school governance.

The issue of students’ involvement in school government is very crucial in the smooth running of today’s schools in Lesotho. When other countries like Republic of South Africa involve students in school governing bodies, the present practice in Lesotho does not allow students to be members of school boards. In Lesotho high school governance parents are the ones who represent students in the boards in which decisions to run the schools, are made.

The reasons advocated for involvement of students in high school governance are: first, the present schools exist in a democratic era and the term democracy implies participation of all stakeholders in matters that affect them. So the understanding is that high school students are stakeholders in their own right and as such are entitled to be presented in school boards not to be represented by their parents. Second, their involvement in school boards is hoped to minimise perpetual strikes that are so imminent in schools in Lesotho. Strikes result in vandalism, injuries and sometimes deaths. It is believed that if students are part of governing bodies, they would be part of decisions made to run the schools hence they would have ownership of such decisions and obviously stand a better chance to convince fellow members of student body about good intentions of decisions from...
the board. Third, if high school students learn to make decisions by being members of their school board at early stage of their life, the understanding is to breed good future leaders who will be better citizens with decision-making capacity. The hackneyed statement “Practice makes perfect” would be in place and adhered to.

Total quality management advocates for involvement of all those who constitute stakeholders of a particular organization in decision-making processes and that are intended to run it. Principles of democratization of education are based and anchored on this process. Adult education as part of education in general, particularly has inherited this style of approach that values opinions of all members that are stakeholders of an organization. The underlying assumption is that the views of those at the lower echelons of the educational hierarchy may be very important for providing solutions to the problems and that, schools are a primary resource for developing new values. Based on this understanding it is assumed that if high schools in Lesotho could involve their students in decision-making, they would be abiding by democratic principles and ensuring democratic practices.

To get into details of the topic, the following three themes are discussed: arguments in favour of student involvement in school governance, arguments against student involvement in school governance and the influence of cultural values on student involvement in school governance.

The aim of this paper is to explore possibility of involving students in school governance by addressing questions in the following areas:

- Arguments relating to student involvement in school governance. There are two contending arguments around the issue of student involvement in school governance. Some people negate it while others advocate its trial in Lesotho. Is it necessary to involve students in school governance or not necessary because children are minors?
- Issue of cultural values: Scholars regard cultural values as the ones that mediate and determine the limit and extent to which students have to behave when involved in decision-making. What is the role of cultural values in the whole issue of student involvement in school governance in Lesotho?

METHODOLOGY

This article, as indicated earlier in the introduction is based on the research that is quantitative in nature. A number of stakeholders in education were approached to inquire their perceptions on the topic as it stands.

Sample

The final sample of this study totaled four hundred and twenty-six. The sample included all the constituencies involved in the governance of a school. Ten schools were randomly selected: five in the rural areas and five in the urban areas. It was from each of these schools that twenty students (ten boys and ten girls), ten teachers (five males and five females) and five prefects (with a gender ratio of 3:2, with either gender constituting the larger number) were randomly selected. The principal of each schools was also included (n =10). In Lesotho, six churches own schools. These are the Roman Catholic Church (RC), the Lesotho Evangelical Church (LEC), the Anglican Church of Lesotho (ACL), the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (Meth), the Assemblies of God and the Apostolic Methodist Epistolic Church (AME). The six educational secretaries of these institutions were also included in the sample. In addition, ten government officials (five males and five females) were randomly selected from central and district educational offices.

In order to interview parents, the researcher had to approach one family after another, especially in the rural areas where people are scattered. In urban areas, it was easier to access and interview respondents in centres around shops. A total of fifty parents were interviewed (twenty-five males and twenty-five females).

Perceptions of respondents

Perceptions of those who are in favour of student involvement in school governance.

As mentioned previously, it is interesting to note that contrary to Lesotho government policy on school governance which does not allow students to be members of school committees or staff meetings, the majority of all respondents, except parents, support the involvement of students in school governance. For example, 60% of students indicated that, if chosen, they could represent other students in the board, 87% of teachers feel that it is necessary to involve students in decision-making, 89% of prefects suggest that students should be consulted and involved when decision in their schools are made, 60% of principals support the involvement of students in decision-making, 60% of government officials and 67% of educational secretaries argue that it is advantageous to involve students in school governance. Only 48% of parents support the idea. All these cohorts of respondents advanced reasons based on principles of democratic education which advocated the involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making that affects them as a way of enhancing good student-teacher relationship. The reasons given by each cohort are presented below:

Students

1. It is the right of students to know what is said in the board because it affects them.
2. Students can learn procedures about how to make and assess decisions.
3. The board will know the students’ needs and requirements and therefore act accordingly.
4. If students are involved, they cooperate fully when policies are implemented.
5. They learn responsibility and accountability when they participate in decision-making.

**Prefects**

Prefects supported student involvement in school governance by indicating that their representation in boards and staff meetings would allow authorities to know what affects students.

**Principals**

Principals advanced the following reasons:

1. Students develop positive attitudes towards their school and regard themselves as valued members of that community.
2. Students have a better understanding of matters related to their school particularly its administration.

**Parents**

The forty-eight percent of parents who supported the idea of student involvement in school governance provided the following reasons:

1. The outcomes of decisions affect students and as such they need to be involved to avoid unnecessary resistance.
2. It is their opportunity to know and be part of decisions that are made. For example, they should know about budgets as this is the sole cause of strikes.
3. Students should be involved in the board in order to grow up with knowledge of how to make decisions and account for their consequences.

**Government officials and educational secretaries**

Government officials and educational secretaries claimed that:

1. Students become active and supportive members of their school if they are involved in decision-making.
2. The undertaking promotes good teacher-pupils relationship and enhances good academic and governance results.
3. Students grow both mentally and academically sound as future democratic leaders.

All these reasons advanced by the respondents, as indicated earlier, embrace the importance of democratic involvement of students in school governance with the major aim of avoiding problems pertaining to discipline which are characterized by crime, vandalism and violence (McDaniel, 1981). A central theme derived from these reasons provided by respondents, is that students do not easily strike if they are involved in decision-making because they regard any such decisions as their own.

Positive responses were elicited from the majority of principals (60%), government officials (80%) and educational secretaries (66%) relating to whether there is relationship between disturbances in schools and the exclusion of students from decision-making process. These positive responses further highlighted an understanding of why students should be involved in school governance. It is obvious from these results that the majority do realise and confirm that the exclusion of students from decision-making is a situation that may result in disturbances in schools.

**Perceptions of those who argue against student involvement in school governance**

Cultural values have some bearing on the reasons given by students (40%), teachers (13%), prefects (11%), principals (40%), government officials (40%), educational secretaries (23%) and parents (52%), as a source of not allowing students to be involved in decision-making. All responses emphasise that culturally it is not permissible to allow student participation because children are young and cannot be entrusted to make decisions while their parents are still there. These responses clearly show that the relationship between students and adults is based on the traditional cultural perceptions that students are children who are untrained. Thus, they have to obey instructions while adults are regarded as legitimate authority figures who have an inalienable right to make decisions.

**Arguments in favour of student involvement in school governance**

Lifton (1970) has long advocated for the issue of involvement of students in their school governance by arguing that as future citizens, students need to be prepared for making sound decision. According to him they need to try-out experience in planning and decision-making that gives them the chance to feel some of the consequences of their actions. He maintains that they need to learn how to put job and self-knowledge together on their own, rather than to accept the interpretation of others. McDaniel (1981), Frymier (1980) and Bottery (1990) share with Lifton this notion of students’ involvement in decision-making that concerns their schools.
McDaniel (1981) insists that power should be shared with students. Students should be helped to learn how to make decisions and take responsibility for the consequences of their decisions. By doing this, minimization of problems of crime, vandalism and violence will be ensured. Frymier (1980) also sees student responsibility as central to betterment of education. He claims that students should be helped to learn to choose wisely and well. Towing the same line Bottery (1990) cautions against the signs for immediate results. He claims that students take a long time to learn and initial failure by students should not be taken as an evidence of inability.

Adeyemi et al. (2003) also concur to the notion of student involvement by indicating that students engaged in service learning are challenged to exercise leadership and responsibility. They claim that citizenship education is something we learn, not something we merely inherit. Learners need to get involved in taking action that makes difference to others. They need to experience being part of the solution rather than remaining passive observers and listeners. While National Policy in Pakistan (1998 to 2010:5) in Dean (2005:38) suggests that education should strive to build up the characters of future generation so that they would possess the highest sense of honour, integrity, responsibility and selfless service to the Nation. This is the nature of future citizens we need in Lesotho.

Based on these arguments, this article stresses that a failure to expose student to the process of decision-making in the early years of their high school level in Lesotho, encourages docility, stereo-typing and blind acquiescence to authority. This is evidenced by students not participating in decision-making processes in Lesotho schools. Decisions are taken by their parents who are part of school structures referred to as school boards. Education Act No 3 of 2010 in Lesotho clearly indicates that students as part of stakeholders are not elected in making decisions that affect all constituencies, including students (Davies and Kirk Patrick 2000). These series of exchanges need to be formalized in the appropriate meetings in which proper guidance and counseling are advanced. This democratic relationship forms the basis of the foregoing argument of this article that participation of student’s in their school governance is central to democratic citizenship in Lesotho.

There are numerous sound reasons for providing children with access to information that is essential for making and sharing decisions in schools (Dean 2005). This is done with an understanding that such transparency may help to circumvent the accusations made by rebelling students and the repercussions of their actions. School ought to be a place where people realize differences, accept them and master them. It should be a place to accept the dignity of individuals (Jensen and Walker 1989). The contention is that the role of the young, if they are to become adults who will make their own decision, is already to be making decisions and the best way to learn decision-making processes is by participating when such decisions are made (Calvert, 1975).

Rich and Books (1982) state that there are compelling needs to develop intellectual skills and concepts of civic competence in the adolescent in order that he/she successfully assumes his/her citizenship role in the community independently of parents. While van Zyl (1975) cautions that the child needs to set his/her foot in decisions that affect him/her and needs to determine his/her
own future.

This means time is now upon the schools in Lesotho to ensure that decisions are acceptable before they are ever made. All varied sections of stakeholders have to be involved and feel that they have been honoured to play some part in making decisions that affect them (Morris 1975). Annot and Dillabough (2000) also contend that young people should be provided with an understanding of democracy and the choices that flow from it, the knowledge, understanding and power to make those choices positive, responsible and informed. They must be made to learn through actual practice and the promotion of active participation. This therefore, means schools in Lesotho should provide opportunities for students to develop decision-making skills by allowing them to be involved in structures such as school boards. This in essence will imply equitable treatment for all those who constitute stake holding in educational system and schools will become democratic in Lesotho.

Arguments against student involvement in school governance

Those who oppose the involvement of students in decision-making in Lesotho have an alarmist position that students will have disproportionate amount of power and will control the governing of schools. Frymier (1980) agrees with them when he shows that because of lack of experience and childish world-view, students will bring their own agendas which tally with their interests. It is recognized that children have their own developmentally appropriate ways of seeing, thinking and feeling. It is true that inner life during childhood is essentially different from that of adults. In this case opponents to the idea of student involvement in decision-making, understand that it is quite possible that children may blunder a lot when exposed to this task.

In general, it is argued that these children are too young for such participation and will, therefore, do bad job of it. Dedrick and Foyen (1980) endorse this notion by indicating that adults should make decision for the youth. They claim that students should not be consulted because they are not competent to make judgments about schooling. It is believed that they will abuse any attempts made by teachers to involve them in decision-making.

This exercise in Lesotho is regarded as the realm of parents and teachers. It is seen as the sole prerogative of adults who are believed to have right reasoning power necessary for proper decision-making. Children in Lesotho are taken and treated as minors who have to be coerced in ways that are constant with approved ethical and moral standards. Blishen (1969) in Meighan (1986:33) rounds it all by saying, “you do not consult the clay about what kind of pot it wants to be”.

But, however, in view of the changing world and the multiplying problems in education, such as student strikes characterized by vandalism, gangerism and sometimes deaths, the author is inclined to believe that student involvement in decision-making is necessary in order to promote democratic participation in society and broadening understanding of democracy.

The Influence of cultural values on involvement of students in school governance

Cultural values in Lesotho prohibit autonomous decision-making by children. What it means is that students’ behaviour is controlled by value systems that prevail in their school environment. Perception is supported by traditional transmission educationists who insist that adults as representatives in Lesotho should take courage and resoluteness to stand firm against the clamouring of the youth to be free of adult constraints. They should not dance to the whims of children. The argument continues to show that cultural values constitute authority and authority determines the extent to which student behaviour should be allowed.

There are rules, norms and sanctions to control student’ behaviour or discipline. Discipline being the existence of orderly or prescribed conduct (Rich and Books 1982). This suggests that even if there could be a reasonable dialogue concerning decision-making, the moral authority of adults should not be compromised because if authority is lost or not respected there is going to be chaos. The loss of authority means absence of discipline and once there is no discipline there is going to be no control over the behaviour of students (Dedrick and Foyen 1980). As Ramphele (1992) states, the youth would assume enorous powers and become law unto themselves, reject authority of parents, schools and national structures. All in all, it means authority is the framework on which discipline rests (Rich and Books 1982).

It is true that being equal partners stimulates cooperation and contributes to concerted effort to achieve mutually agreed upon rules but the warning is that there should be limits on the freedom enjoyed by students and citizenship education is necessary to help them cope rightfully (Arke-Cobbah 2005). Students’ actions should be controlled by rules which embrace the moral values, beliefs and attitudes of the society in which the school exists. It is correct expectation that the schools in Lesotho should produce an educated person who has to know the common culture, morals and mores which are crucial to the self and society (Meighan 1986).

What this means is that schools in Lesotho exist within the context of cultural values which are highly regarded by the society and as educational institutions, they should not only teach subjects’ matter per se but also teach students even common culture, morals and mores which determine students’ correct behavior even when they happen to be elected into being members of school
boards.

This again emphasizes the notion that schools are not isolated institutions which operate independently, but which function within the context of their social and community environments. The school milieu directly or indirectly dictates school processes and students' behaviour. When involved in governing bodies, students should understand that they are still children and should know their limits as stipulated by principles of norms and morals of their society and by so doing they will be conforming to disciplinary democracy (Abrahamsen 2000).

They are expected to respect adults and their authority and behave in an appropriate manner that is orderly when engaged in dialogue with them. An important issue to note is that the involvement of students in governing bodies is empowering students as future leaders. The transmission of powers and skills results when students are exposed to democratic role models, and are allowed as participants not only a voice in what happens but also an opportunity to develop and implement choices emanating from decisions they have made (Dick 1991).

Asmal (1999) also emphasizes the notion of learner’s involvement in issues that concern them by indicating that values cannot simply be asserted, they must be put on the table, be debated, be negotiated, be synthesized, be modified, be earned in order that they truly and meaningfully constitute code of conduct that controls behaviour of learners. In this way learners should be made to know and understand that values are only realized when they are reflected in one’s actions (Malobe and Salewski 1999) in Adeyemi et al (2003).

It is obvious that cultural values mediate the whole process of student involvement in decision-making. The South African policy allows student involvement in school governance while the Lesotho policy does not (refer to Act No.3 of 2010 on post primary school boards). However, even though the former allows students, the cultural values are still taken into account and are respected because there are demarcations restricting the extent to which students should be involved. The restrictions are stated as follows:

“No learner member of a governing body may participate in any business of the governing body related to the following matters: (a) inefficiency, misconduct and grievance procedures or complaints relating to persons employed at the school; (b) misconduct procedures relating to learners at the school; (c) interviews of applications for posts at the school; (d) appointment of persons to posts at the school; (e) employment, promotion and discharge of persons in posts at the school.” (Gauteng School Education Regulation for Governing Bodies of Public School 1996:8).

Asmal (1999) further indicates the importance of nurturing of culture of communication and participation in schools that it opening up channels of dialogue between parents, educator and learners in such a way that moral respect develops between them and that each side treats the other with respect, realizing each has something to offer. The understanding derived from what Asmal delivers, is that culture of communication and participation will have the effect of enabling learners to become open, curious and empowered as future citizens.

When other countries are accepting changes and democratizing their education as is the case in South Africa, within the particular context of Lesotho, involvement of students in decision-making has to be negotiated with prevailing value systems which act to control students’ behaviour when they happen to become members of school boards.

CONCLUSION

Despite obvious importance and necessity of student involvement in decision-making of their school, the present policy of education in Lesotho does not allow such undertaking. Moreover, the reasons, advanced against student involvement truly, do not sound robust enough to deny them their right to contribute in decision-making that concerns the issues of the school in which they are stakeholders. The fact that students are young does not automatically mean that they are inept of making rightful and sound decisions. Students need to be guided and counselled in order that they can ultimately know how to choose well and reasonably. This being the case, this article concludes that students need to be included in decision-making processes undertaken in schools they attend, by being allowed to be members of the school boards in Lesotho as Total Quality Management advocates that all those who are stakeholders of an organization should be involved in decision-making.

The article further concludes that cultural values are highly regarded and respected by school communities in African context and particularly in Lesotho. They mediate both the process of school governance and students' behaviour. Possibly this is because in Lesotho parents are highly influential members of the school boards and in this regard it is clear that students need to be aware and respectful of these values. Considerably on the basis of change and democratic principles some of these values need to be revised, redefined and accordingly modified to suit requirements determined by life issues of the present like involvement of students in decision-making processes that concern some matters affecting their school. It is hoped that if cultural values are transformed meaningfully, they could facilitate democratic participation of students and eliminate the gap that seems to exist between the ways of doing certain practices in the past and in the contemporary transitional democracy in Lesotho. This further implies that when involved in decision-making processes, students should know their limits relative to the authority of adults.
However, observing the current situation on the ground, seemingly this issue of student involvement in decision-making will take some time before a change can be experienced in Lesotho High Schools’ Governance. Up to now there are no outstanding signs of dissatisfaction from any stakeholders, including students themselves on this matter. The educational policy in relation to exclusion of students in school governance has not been openly challenged in Lesotho. It has not been part of the agenda or debate in Lesotho parliament. This could mean changing some sections of the Education Act No 3 of 2010 that so far has nothing on students’ involvement in high school boards.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

REFERENCES

Full Length Research Paper

Ethics education adherence by teacher trainees during teaching practice: A Botswana perspective

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This paper presents the results of a survey conducted to find out the extent to which teacher trainees understand and observe professional ethics. It also sought the contribution of the Faculty of Education and secondary schools make in promoting teacher ethics among trainees on teaching practice. Data were gathered from randomly chosen 90 participants as follows: 70 teacher trainees on teaching practice at schools, 10 school teaching practice coordinators and 10 lecturers in the Faculty of Education at the University of Botswana. A predominantly qualitative based empirical approach to data gathering that used an open-ended questionnaire was used. The results show that teacher trainees have a fair understanding of what teacher ethics and teacher professionalism entail. However, this knowledge does not translate into practice. Still teacher trainees indulge in love affairs with their students, which the study reveals. Such teacher behaviour undermines the academic performance of students particularly the girls as they are the most affected by such relations. Male teachers have been reported to be the ones who make advances towards girls more than female teachers to the boys on sexuality matters. Such behaviour by teacher trainees, as the survey suggests, has likely been partly influenced by the absence of an enacted code of ethics that teachers can relate to in their practice which has partly contributed to some teachers to flout professional conduct with impunity. The paper ends by recommending that a code of ethics for teachers is very necessary in order to raise the image of teaching as a vocation and that ethics education should be mandatory to all students of education at the teacher training institutions in Botswana.

Key words: professionalism, ethics education, morality, teacher trainees, teaching practice, code of ethics.

INTRODUCTION

The quality of education in many countries including developing countries is equated with how school perform academically. If students’ achievement is low, this is translated into low quality of the education system (Moswela, 2004). Improving the quality of education often focuses on quantitative data such as learning time, class size, teacher qualification, infrastructure and facilities. Equally important but often neglected are issues of punctuality to work, teacher conduct in relation to those whom he/she regularly interacts with including the community around him/her. Whereas the academic performance of the individual schools is the main criterion...
people judge schools as purported by Beare et al., the way teachers at a particular school portray themselves (ideals and values) in the public eye is also important but often an overlooked measure. A teacher may be good in pedagogy; may have adequate and quality teaching resources at his/her disposal, his/her students may be performing well, but if he lacks professional ethics his good classroom teaching can be overshadowed by this. Jacques (2003) refers to lack of adherence to professional ethics as a violation of the ethical requirements of the teaching profession. A lack of such qualities may impact negatively on the students’ learning. This being the case, teacher conduct has a direct link with students’ academic achievement.

Competence and performance are ideal virtuous acts and elements every professional teacher must possess (Whitty, 2006). Based on many years of experience in teaching practice supervision, the researchers believe that these two aspects can be more enhanced by the conduct of the teacher. Previously, the assessment of students on teaching practice focused more on the teaching and learning methodology than on the student teacher’s conduct. Focusing on these issues only does not adequately reveal a teacher’s conduct outside classroom teaching. The tool used for assessment, the Lorf Form, was not able to assess such out of the lesson student teacher behaviour. Teacher ethics of the teacher trainees is an important aspect and a worthwhile topic to investigate. The findings can assist schools and teacher training institutions review their approaches towards teacher education generally and specifically help them assist new comers into the profession become all rounded in their profession including in ethics education. This is important because teacher ethics can affect the image of the individual teacher; the image of the school; the image of the teaching profession as a whole; and the image of the country.

In Botswana the admission system of students into a secondary school is such that students go to a school close to their home. Parents have little choice in this regard. If they had, all things being equal, they would, particularly those residing in towns where transport to school is less a problem than in rural areas, send their children to schools of their preference, looking at the performance of the school in public examinations, a criteria often used as an indicator of school effectiveness (Beare, Caldwell and Millikan, 1989). Regardless, there have been cases despite the initial posting of students to certain schools according to the catchment area where children have ended in schools preferred by their parents. High performing schools are characterized by teachers who are committed to service ideals and values (Beare, Caldwell and Millikan, 1989; Dunham, 1995). Commitment to ideals and values are key features of a code of ethics. Between two performing schools, parents would entrust their children to one whose teachers adhere to professional ideals and values over one whose teachers are only good in content delivery but have a poor public image. Teachers from other countries with useful skills and knowledge for the country’s economy may not want to work and have their children attending an education system where the ethical conduct of teachers in below standard.

Teaching practice, a component of the teacher education programme in the Faculty of Education, is a qualification requirement for teacher trainees to become teachers. Teacher trainees are posted to schools during their training to fulfil this requirement. To the group of students pursuing the post graduate diploma in education (PGDE), this would be their first experience to conduct a lesson in a classroom setup. The majority PGDE students who enrol in this programme possess a Bachelor’s degree from the Faculty of Humanities though students from other faculties who want to become teachers can also enrol. The PGDE group of students is the interest and focus of this paper. Students from other programmes in the Faculty of Education who mostly are on in-service training would have prior teaching experience before their Bachelor of Education degree enrolment. Before teaching practice school teachers (referred herein as school coordinators) who will be involved in the teaching practice exercise undergo orientation workshops. These workshops focus mainly on the portfolio, a collection of documents that together give evidence of the trainee’s teaching philosophy statement; a lesson plan; its objectives and methods used; the syllabus; tests, assessment procedures; teacher reflections on the lesson and provides context of the evidence (http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/teaching-portfolio/) and so on. This is a case because school supervisors have little knowledge on the portfolio. Issues of trainees’ conduct during teaching practice, if discussed at all, and done superficially. Schools on the other hand are expected to conduct orientation workshops for the teacher trainees upon arrival at the schools. This is discretion of the individual trainee receiving schools. The nature and extent of these orientations or whether they are held at all is not clear. The teaching practice office does not ascertain this. At the training institution, the Faculty of Education at University of Botswana, ethics education is not a core subject in the curriculum. In Educational Management and Counselling and Human Service it is taught as one-off topic within a core subject.

THE PROBLEM

The fact that trainees are not taught ethics during their training and the fact that the orientation sessions conducted for both the school supervisors and trainees do not focus on ethics education per se, suggest that students go into teaching practice ill-equipped on issues
of teacher ethics. This situation is exacerbated by the absence of a code of ethics for teachers in the Botswana education system. Such conditions can make the teacher trainees vulnerable and make them easy prey to teachers who have little regards for ethical behaviour and they can become affected by such behaviour. These concerns came at a time when the standards of teacher behaviour and teachers’ approach towards work, are issues of concern to schools leadership and society generally (Seretse, 2013).

Focus of the paper

This paper seeks to find out the extent of ethics education knowledge among the PGDE’ and how such knowledge affect their conduct during TP.

Research question

Do teacher trainees have informed and knowledgeable practice in teacher ethics?

Conceptualization and theoretical framework

The terms ethics and professionalism and to some extent morality dominate this paper because of their close similarity in usage. Ethics and professionalism, for example, cannot adequately be discussed independent of each other although they do not conjure the same meaning. Both morality and ethics are however, elements or embodiments of professionalism and in all the three terms the value aspect is the common denominator that binds their commonality. When we speak of the professionalism or morality or ethics of a person in a work place, essentially we are referring to how the person values his/her work; how he/she relates with those that he/she works closely with in the organization (Bottery, 1992). However, whereas professionalism and morality are also key words in this paper, ethics used in the context of education, is the key term upon which the study is anchored. The usage of the terms ‘professionalism’ and ‘morality’ is also made in the context of education or schools in this paper.

Professionalism

The definition of professionalism as a concept is rather illusive. Its meaning can be understood in terms of its features or by making reference to some of its characteristics that illustrate its essence. Professionalism is associated with mainly:

1. Skills and specialized knowledge acquired over long periods of training and certified by examination which renders the received professional authority and autonomy (Whitty, 2006; Botha, Mentz, Roos, van der Westhuizen, van Kerken, 2003).
2. A code of professional conduct (Barrell and Partington, 1985; Whitty, 2006).
3. Continuing research that increases the effectiveness of the educator or the education system (Botha et al. 2003).
4. Service orientation that requires the professional to put his/her clients’ interest first before his/her. (Fombad and Quansah, 2006; Botha et al, 2003)

Morality

Morality is a descriptive term which is difficult to define on its own. We can speak of Christian morality, African morality, a certain group of people’s morality. What is moral to one group of people may not to the other. Certain groups may find the teaching of sex education to children as immoral while others may find it empowering to the child. Morality refers to any code of conduct a person or group understands and can govern their behaviour (http://businessdictionary.com/definition/morality.html). It is about what is right and fitting, that is the goodness, righteousness, virtue, uprightness etc. (Harris, 2004). Morality is the principles of cultural or religious behaviour by which an individual belonging to that group determines what is considered to be right or wronghttp://www.thefreedictionary.com/morality.

Ethics

Ethics deals with standards set by a profession to regulate members’ behaviour in the profession. The professional has a personal commitment to individual clients; to the general public; and to the profession and its stature (Kfir and Shamai, 2002). It refers to the moral value of human conduct and moral principles that control or influence a person’s behaviour (Hornby, 2000). The principles that regulate or influence behaviour referred above also protect both the practitioner and his/her clients by ensuring against possible malpractice and exploitation, thus promoting fairness in the work place between the professional and his/her clients (Botha et al., 2003). Ethics may refer to individuals or group of people tied together by a common purpose such as the medical, legal and teaching professions. That, which ties them together appears in the form of a written code of rules and principles that specify actions which have already been declared by them to be unprofessional, unethical or immoral. The code applies only to members of the association (Barrell and Partington, 1985).

Infringement to the code has consequences to the
infringing party which can amount to a suspension or termination from the profession (Anangisye, 2010). For example, it is against medical professional ethics for a doctor to disclose without his/her patient's permission, the nature of disease the doctor is treating. A lawyer will be charged with unethical conduct by his/her law society if he/she made a dual and conflicting representation to two litigants (plaintiff and defendant) in a court case at the same time (Fombad and Quansah, 2006). Aloni (195) in Kfir and Shamai (2000:1) define ethics as dealing with “what is appropriate and what is proper”. Similarly, ethics deal with principles of conduct that are considered correct in a given profession (Dictionary of the Contemporary English, 1987). Integrity, truth, fairness, impartiality, objectivity, respect and other virtues, underpin ethical norms among members of the teaching profession (Jacques, 2003; Poisson, 2009). The concepts of ethics offered by the different authors, particularly by Kfir and Shamai; Botha et al (no year), and Jacques are all concerned with the relationships which should exist between colleagues, including responsibilities towards those in a subordinate position. The two definitions of morality and ethics given above portray a similar meaning. Both emphasize conformance to a recognized code of certain values and ideals of a group, the infringement of which implies action taken against the offender.

Purpose of ethics

Teachers have power to make or ruin society. They interact, particularly, with children, in a social relationship, and the fact that children do not enter the world with knowledge of how their conduct affects others they need to acquire knowledge and skills about relations through lived experiencing of their mentors, the teachers (Fenstermache, 1990:132 in Anangisye, 2010). It is said that educators at the school are mirrors of good conduct to their clients - children in this respect. Ethics defines the powers, duties and responsibilities and conduct of members at the work place. Specifically, in the teaching profession, ethics gives teaching its cooperate personality and defines teachers' rights, responsibilities, remedies and those of the employer (ibid). It protects, in essence, both teachers and their employer against breach of employment agreement (Employment Act, 1984; Public Service Act, 2008). In short, a code of ethics is an empowerment document to the teachers with respect to their services to their clients and their employer. Whitty (2006) sees the purpose of teacher ethics as raising, maintaining and promoting the status of teaching to the highest standards of professional practice and affords teachers to exercise authority, justice and passion to those under their subordination.

As ethics details what teachers can do and cannot, in a way, a code of ethics provides self-directing, self-regulating and self-disciplining (Barrel and Partington, 1985; Jacques, 2003). The teachers through the code of ethics can in turn empower their students and enable them to practice new and effective ways of learning, thus improving the standards of their performance (Bottery, 1992). This sense is supported by Jacques's (2003) who belief that a code of ethics increases the professionalization of teachers in aspect of moral conduct and commitment to work and is the cornerstone of quality teaching that leads towards students' excellent performance. According to Barrell and Partington (1985:106), “The code reminds teachers that they must handle carefully any confidential information they may receive; bearing in mind the requirements of the law and the best interest of children”, and that the head teacher and senior officers should be consulted before confidential information is disclosed (ibid). Further, they caution that professionals are not entitled to infringe on the rights of their clients to treat information that they possess by virtue of their position with discretion. To do the contrary would be a violation of the code (Kfir and Shamai, 2002). The challenge to this in Botswana is that teachers have not received training in education law pertaining particularly in this context, to human rights in general and the rights of children in particular (Moswela, 2008).

What documents guide the teaching profession in Botswana?

Many countries have codes of ethics for teachers. These codes are supplemented by other statutes (Jacques, 2003). In some countries like Botswana, a code of ethics or conduct for teachers is still yet to be introduced. But what guides the teacher's practice in the profession? Professional guidance to teachers in Botswana is provided through statutes, such as the Education Act (1967); the Teaching Service Act (1967); subordinate legislation such as the Unified Teaching Service Code of Regulations (1976); (not an Act) and of late, the Public Service Act, 2008). The impact of these statutes on the teacher's conduct is questionable given that teachers have limited access to them. Teachers have never seen the need to buy one as a personal document. They feel the documents should be provided freely to them by the employer. Only few copies, one kept in the staff room (which easily disappears) are one of two copies kept by the school management. Trainees on teaching practice would therefore not have easy access to these statutes.

Who are the framers of a code of conduct/ethics?

A code of ethics for teachers as its description suggests, is meant for teachers. In most countries it is a product of the teachers through their unions or associations and is
shared by significant others in the education enterprise. As in the legal and medical professions, the professionals in the area assisted by knowledgeable others, frame their own code. This makes sense with regard to ownership, compliance, and commitment to the code’s ideals and values (Botha et al., 2003). Participating in the development of their own code of conduct would make teachers view the document as not an administrative instrument to be enforced by the employer but as a code for teachers enforced by the teachers themselves. The maintenance of the register of qualified member teachers is the duty of the council. In Australia (Victoria State), the Code of Conduct has been developed for and by Victorian teaching profession. "The code identifies a set of principles, which describe the professional conduct, personal conduct, and professional competence expected of a teacher by colleagues and the community. It is based on the values set out in . . . the Code namely: Integrity, Respect and Responsibility". However, the definition of a code of conduct by Poisson (2009:16) as " . . . a written document produced by public authorities . . ." suggests that in some countries the code is framed by other people other than the professionals themselves. In South Africa, for example, Council for Educators developed a professional code of conduct for teachers as provided by Act 145 section 1 of 1993" (Botha et al., 2003). The function of a Council of Teachers is to maintain a register of qualified teachers, recommend to the Permanent Secretary standards of entry to the profession, control probation and discipline registered teachers (ibid). In Botswana there is not yet a purposely developed formal code of conduct for teachers and a Council of Educators the way it exists in South Africa.

**Should teacher ethics be taught at teacher training institutions?**

Professional ethics need to be part of the colleges and universities’ curricular and be part of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education just like in the nursing field (Jacques, 2003). Tanzania has made some strides in this area as already, teacher trainees are taught professional ethics in a formal way for the preparation of licensed secondary school teachers although the practice is undermined by poor implementation (Anangisye, 2010). The benefits that accrue to the trainees are among other things; the enhancement of positive attitudes and dispositions in a classroom setup; trainees begin to appreciate and display qualities of a good teacher while still at training; because of consequences for violating college rules, trainees comply with the regulations. Consequences include suspension or dismissal from the college (ibid). As pointed out previously in this paper, ethics at training institutions in Botswana is not a stand-alone but is an integrated topic within a core-course. The current Dean of Education is a proponent a teacher who is a product of a diverse disposition that includes his/her social interaction with students, colleagues and the community. To this extent, in 2009, he marshalled and introduced a new teaching practice assessment tool, the portfolio that would produce a teacher who is broad-minded, rounded, and diverse. Trainees on teaching practice are assessed on how they relate with community, their involvement in extra-curricular activities and of course including classroom teaching activities (Tabulawa, 2009) and different from the earlier assessment instrument.

At the junior secondary schools in Botswana Moral Education is an examinable subject. At some senior secondary schools especially church schools, Religious Education is compulsory to all students, essentially aimed at promoting virtuous acts. The teaching is from a Christian perspective, emphasizing conformance to religious values and beliefs. In his study of effective schools entitled “Sharing Wisdom”, Moswela (2008) revealed that at one senior secondary school, the teachers, school managers and the students, attribute the sustainable good academic record over the years to the compulsory study of Religious Education. Also, there used to be a general belief, supported by public examination results to a great extent, that some church secondary schools (such as Materspei, Maun and St. Josephs) perform better than government secondary schools and that this is partly because Moral and Religious education is offered to all their students (ibid). If ethics education promote positive attitudes and dispositions in classrooms; and if students can perform better because they are taught subjects that enhance morality, then teachers training institutions should teach ‘ethics education’ as a core course in the curriculum.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research design and approach**

The paper sets to investigate the extent of ethics education knowledge among the PGDE and how such knowledge affect their conduct during TP. The design of this paper asks the question ‘what is happening’ and the method used to gather data asked ‘what’ ‘how’, ‘where’ and ‘from whom’ questions. These are open-ended that describe and explain phenomena (Carlson and Ducharme, 1987; Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). Erickson (cited in Bogdan and Biklen, 1992:32) refers to this approach as seeking a “participant perspective”. The questions seek the views and experiences of respondents on the subject to be investigated. These questions lead to responses expressed in words and text which are characteristics of qualitative approaches to research investigations (Ary, et al., 2010). This approach according to Corbin and Strauss (1998), allows the researcher to explore substantive areas about which little is known or about which much is known to gain deeper understanding. In many respects the qualitative approach is a multi-method in focus involving among others an interpretive and naturalistic approach to its subject matter (Denizin
and Lincoln, 1994). To this extent schools are natural settings to all the groups that participated in the investigation.

Data collection

As indicated, open-ended questions were means that collected the data. These questions to the three groups of respondents, that is. The teacher trainees, the school coordinators and the Faculty lecturers were in semi-structured form.

Population and Sampling

The population of this study was all the Post Graduate Diploma in Education students in the Faculty of Education who were on teaching practice during the 2012/13 academic year. A sample of the population was restricted to the PGDE group because the researchers preferred students who had not participated in teaching practice before. In this regard the sampling was purposive as it was done with a specific purpose and needs of the investigators in mind (Martella, Nelson and Martella, 1999; Creswell, et al., 2007). A sample of seventy (70) students was randomly chosen from the target group. Before the investigation, this group of student were left only with the practical component (teaching practice) of their programme to graduate with a PGDE qualification. Teaching practice spreads students throughout the country based on where the trainees can find their own accommodation. The researchers took advantage of their involvement in the teaching practice supervision and assessment to collect data from the teaching practice students’ participants on a random basis. Cooperation and involvement in the investigation was solicited from ten (10) teaching practice school coordinators on a random basis. All lecturers in the Faculty of Education supervise teaching practice to the Bachelor of Education and PGDE students. Ten (10) lecturers were involved in the data collecting exercise and were chosen also on a random basis. Altogether, there were 90 respondents from three groups namely; the trainees, school coordinators and the Faculty lecturers.

Data analysis

The data produced by the approach used (qualitative) will emerge or unfold since the method used to collect data does not allow the prediction of responses to be produced (Yvonna et al., 1985). The qualitative approach to data gathering did not establish frequencies, means and other parameters but sought opinions on a particular subject and therefore it adopted a descriptive approach to analysing the data (Jansen, 2010). The data collected were analysed basing on the emerging themes which predominantly were aligned to the sub-headings in the questionnaires. Data, to some extent, were therefore analysed simultaneously together with the responses, an analysis approach which is possible according to Bogdan and Biklen (2003).

RESULTS ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

There were three groups of respondents to this study namely; the teacher trainees on teaching practice; the schools teaching practice coordinators and the Faculty of Education lecturers. As indicated in the methodology, the questionnaire for each group of respondents asked questions which predominantly required respondents to answer at some greater length. The results are discussed according to these three groups under salient themes that emerged from the responses.

Responses from teacher trainees

Understanding the concepts of ethics and professionalism

Altogether, sixty seven (67) teacher trainees responded to the questionnaire. Trainees were asked their understanding of what a professional teacher is and what an ethical teacher is. The questions were separate but they are discussed simultaneously. It was clear from the responses that student teachers cannot differentiate between the two terms. What they described as a professional teacher was more or less the same as what they described as an ethical teacher. The attributes of the two terms, in a number of cases overlapped. Some trainees used the same description of one term to describe or explain the other. To them the usage of the two terms is synonymous. They understood and described a professional teacher as one who:

“Has passion and commitment”; “maintains confidentiality”; “Adheres to the code of ethics that guide behaviour”; “dresses properly, disciplined and relates well with both colleagues and the students” and many other positive dispositions that can reasonably be accepted by society generally.

An ethical teacher was viewed as one who:

“Respects the culture of students”; “has good morals and good conduct”; “is sympathetic and empathetic”; “portrays a good image of the teaching profession”; can differentiate between right and wrong or good and bad”; “follows the code of conduct and doing what is right”.

Indeed the attributes of a professional teacher can overlap with those of an ethical teacher and are similar if not the same in a number of examples. That is why there are words like professional ethics. The characteristics of professionalism and ethics as provided by the trainees corroborate the researchers’ argument that there is little difference between the two terms in usage. But if one were to hazard a distinction between the two as provided in the literature, it can be said ethics deals more with behaviour towards one-self and towards other people. For example, “professional commitment towards clients . . .”(Kfir and Shamai, 2002); “integrity, respect, truth, impartiality towards others . . .” (Dictionary of Contemporary English). Professionalism on the other hand emphasizes more on behaviour or attitude towards service or work. For example, Whitty (2006) and Botha et al. (2003) emphasize in professionalism “skill and
specialized knowledge”; Fombad and Quansah (2006) emphasize: service orientation . . . ”; while Botha et. al. (2003) define professionalism as to do with “continuing research . . . ”.

What is important to the future teacher’s practice, however, is not so much the difference between professionalism and ethics, but an understanding of what it takes to be a teacher with professional ethics. A combination of the attributes of a professional teacher and those of an ethical teacher as understood and provided by the trainees is sufficient to the trainees in understanding what constitutes a quality teacher. A positive disposition and good relations with clients and colleagues in the teaching environment is what is asked of a teacher. Students on teaching practice are not exonerated from an adherence to the statutes that guard against teacher conduct and this is an important fact trainees must be aware of. The general public knows a teacher and not a teacher on teaching practice. So the latter’s conduct can affect the public image of the school.

Should ethics be a curriculum topic?

The majority of respondents (55%) were of the single view that the inclusion of ethics in the curriculum would be a good thing to the teaching profession. They suggested that it should be a stand-alone course and not taught as an infusion into core subjects. Thirty percent (30%) suggested that it should be integrated with Education Law which also should be introduced as a core subject. A small minority (3%) held a different view. They were of the view that only an integration of ethics into existing topics will be enough.

Excerpts of their justification are that:

“Teaching is full of challenges, including legal challenges”. “Teaching ethics at teacher training institutions can reduce the number of embarrassing cases we hear about teachers’ professional misconduct”. “It would help teachers make informed judgment in the interaction with students”. Trainees will enter the profession more informed and more prepared about the profession, “it is necessary particularly on the aspect of teacher/student relationships”. “The image of the teacher and that of the profession will be protected and respected”.

The views of the trainees get support from Anangisye’s (2010) argues that “teachers need to acquire knowledge and skills about relationships” . . . and also from Whitty (2006) who sees ethics education as “raising and promoting the status of teaching to the highest standard . . . ”. Young people in Botswana no longer find teaching exciting. If they had the options, the Faculty of Humanities at the University would have very few students. Teaching has not been portrayed as an exclusive profession partly because people without a teacher’s certificate are engaged as temporary teachers whereas this is not the case with professions like medicine and law. When government jobs were graded in the early 1990s for salary differentiations, teachers were not included in the professionals category where architects, engineers, lawyers were categorized (Government Paper, 1994). This, together with the fact that teachers do not have a code of ethics, might have undermined and lowered the status of teaching to the public eye. The regard for teaching may be a lost tradition this way but certainly it is not a lost art. However, making ethics education and Education Law core subjects at training institutions can redeem the lost image of the teaching profession. The introduction of Education Law partly arises from the ethics related comment on teaching, that it has many challenges including legal challenges. Parents nowadays would be quick to take legal action against teachers who infringe on the rights of their children.

Trainees listed a number of courses taught at the university, some of which have dedicated topics on ethics education namely; ethical and legal studies, professional studies, school organization, moral education and a few that integrated ethics in certain topics. A good number of these courses are, however, not provided as core to all students of education. The statements; “in order to curb the present teacher unprofessional conduct” and “to reduce the number of cases we hear about teacher professional misbehaviour” are justifications for the need to introduce as a subject/course ethics education to future teachers.

Orientation of trainees at the University and at schools on teacher ethics before teaching practice

Fifty eight per cent (58%) of the trainees said they received orientation at the schools they did their teaching practice and have expressed satisfaction in the quality of the orientation. Forty per cent (40%) said that professionalism and ethics dominated the orientations. This should have been deliberate by the school considering that in the previous year there was general concern about some student teachers’ unprofessional conduct during teaching practice. The teaching practice office conducts workshops for school coordinators in advance of teaching practice and coordinators use this chance to raise concerns. The revelation by the teacher trainees that 60% of them did not receive orientation prior to their departure to schools can be accounted for by orientation sessions which are conducted by lecturers on a group of subject basis without any formal checking whether students have been oriented or not. Apart from oral orientations at the schools, trainees did not have access to statutes that guide teachers’ conduct such as the Education Act nor did they see one in the staff room.
Responses from university staff and school coordinators/mentors

Ten (10) school coordinators and ten (10) lecturers from the Faculty of Education participated in the investigation. Asked whether orientation sessions were conducted for the teacher trainees upon arrival at the schools for teaching practice, six school coordinators (60%) said such sessions were conducted. Four (40%) school coordinators said they did not. Four lecturers (40%) said they conducted orientation sessions for the teacher trainees while six said they did not. This observation corroborates findings from the trainees. Lecturers who did not conduct orientation sessions pointed out that the responsibility to do so was not clear. Three thought it was the teaching practice office’s responsibility while one thought that it was the responsibility of those lecturers who taught the methodology courses. School coordinators who did not conduct orientation sessions said they could not orientate trainees because they did not attend training workshops conducted for school coordinators by the teaching practice office at the University.

The offering of ‘ethics education’ as a subject in the curriculum of teacher training institutions received a lot of support from both lecturers and school coordinators. They justified its continued teaching or introduction thus: “in order to respect the profession”, “it instils discipline among teachers”, “for the promotion of the image of the teaching profession”, “for teachers to appreciate to work in unity or respect each others’ points of view” “since teachers are in the forefront in reflecting the culture and norms of society, so they must be exemplary in their deeds and actions”. While both school coordinators and lecturers were in common agreement on the teaching of ‘ethics education’, they differed in the method in which it should be offered. Most lecturers (80%) suggested that an exposure through the integration of ‘ethics’ as a sub-topic taught within existing topics would suffice. School coordinators were for the teaching of ‘ethics education’ as a stand-alone topic. Practicing teachers have more practical experience of how teachers behave in the field than lecturers who deal with ethics on a theoretical approach. This could account for the differences between teachers and lecturers views on how ethics education should be exposed to teacher trainees.

Two school coordinators and one lecturer opined that the teaching of ethics would be more meaningful if after acquiring knowledge, there was a teacher council that monitored the conduct of teachers and take adverse consequences against members who infringe. This contractual requirement in the form of a code of conduct would augment the only existing statutory which guards against professional negligence and teacher inaptitude. Another school respondent proposed the unionization of teaching, arguing that “as long as the present setup continues unabated where unions are fighting for teachers’ rights only and not fighting to become professionals in the strict sense of the word, we will always have in our education system teachers who are not professionals”. This, he argued, has implications for quality education delivery. For many years the teachers’ unions have been advocating for the improvement of the conditions of service for teachers. The battle still continues. And for many years there has been talk about the development of a code of conduct for teachers which until to-date has not come to any fruition. Instead, there are at least three teacher unions all pursuing the same objective of fighting for teachers’ rights and improved working conditions but from different camps.

CONCLUSION

The teacher trainees to some extent understand what teacher professionalism and teacher ethics entail although they do not make a clear distinction between the two terms. Despite lack of a clear distinction, nevertheless the important thing is that they understand what it takes and means to be a professional teacher. Attributing to their fair understanding of the two terms is the efforts made by the training institution and the schools, through one-off orientation sessions and the integration of ethics as a topic into some courses at the training institutions. Be that as it may, a large percentage (65%) of teacher trainees on teaching practice revealed that unprofessional relationships between teachers on teaching practice and their student are very prevalent, what Barrell and Partington (1995) called an abuse of the teachers’ professional relationships. To this end this study suggests that teaching can only truly become professional provided that there is a code of conduct that has consequences for teachers who infringe it.

Almost all teacher trainees (66 out of 70), school teachers and University lecturers support that ethics should be a curriculum subject at teacher training institutions. This, they believe, can promote good conduct on teacher trainees at an early stage and could help them enter the profession more prepared and informed about professional expectations from them. Issues of discrimination and confidentiality were not singled out but rather, were implied in the trainees’ conceptualization of teacher professional ethics. These are sensitive and crucial matters trainee teachers must have a clear comprehension on as they equally determine the integrity and moral values of a professional teacher. Trainees as teachers, on a daily basis deal with students from different social backgrounds and with different abilities (physical, emotional, and intellectual) and it is a legal requirement that the teacher treats all of them equally without favour. Also, issues of health and social problems emanating from home confided to the teacher need strict observance of confidentiality because if not carefully handled the affected students may withdraw their respect for the
teacher. Teacher trainees look up at the regular teacher as a role model.

RECOMMENDATION

In view of the findings on the importance of ethics education, three main recommendations are made:

1. A code of ethics is indispensable to the teaching profession. Collaboration between the teachers and the employer on professionalizing teaching, if done in good faith should result in the development of a professional code for teachers that teachers on teaching practice can refer to. The Ministry of Education and Skills Development should expedite the facilitation of a Teacher’s Council to this effect.

2. Orientation programmes conducted by both the Faculty of Education and schools are important to the student who is about to go for teaching practice and therefore should be made compulsory to the Faculty, schools and to the trainees.

3. A course on teacher ethics education should be offered by teacher training institutions as a core course to all teacher trainees.

Conflict of Interests

The author(s) have not declared any conflict of interests.

REFERENCES


UPCOMING CONFERENCES

20th International Symposium on Society and Resource Management, Hannover, Germany Hannover, Germany
June 8-13, 2014

9th International Conference on the Arts in Society, Rome, Italy
25-27 June 2014 Sapienza University of Rome Rome, Italy
Conferences and Advert

**April 2014**

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) Conference on Educational Leadership, Los Angeles, USA

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