

Full Length Research Paper

Poverty alleviation through teaching for thinking: A case of one teachers' college in Masvingo Province

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There is an assumption that education is incapacitated to alleviate poverty. The objective of this study is to explore the nature and impact of education being offered at one teachers' college in Masvingo Province. The study argues that the college is not offering education, which is instrumental for poverty alleviation. Qualitative data were generated using in depth interviews, focus group discussions and observation. The researcher used content analysis to analyze the data. The study revealed that the college curriculum is examination driven at the expenses of practical subjects which may see the college going a long way in alleviating poverty. The study also established that students leave the college with useful skills but are not empowered to realize the utility of acquired skills. The study concluded that although learners pass their examination poverty is rampant. The research recommends policy makers to align education to poverty alleviation as well as incorporating innovation for socio-economic change.

Key words: Critical, thinking, poverty, teaching, alleviation.

INTRODUCTION

Africans had their own type of education which was relevant and functional (Akinpelu, 1981). Colonialists who came to Africa considered Africans barbaric and a people without an education system (Asante, 2007). This excuse was used by the colonialists to introduce their type of education which was not relevant to the African way of life. The advent of western education saw a shift from the way indigenous education was viewed yet it was instrumental in solving societal problems. In this paper, the author examines and discusses poverty alleviation through teaching for thinking at one teachers' college. The paper intends to explore the necessity of teaching students in teachers' colleges to think in order to alleviate poverty. One may wonder why students should be equipped with thinking skills yet colleges have been

training teachers for years. This has been necessitated by its products who are not doing enough to alleviate poverty. Women of Zimbabwe Arise (2010) states that the entire education system promotes blind obedience and rote learning than developing critical and imaginative thinkers. The argument above indicates that education is not doing enough to equip students with critical thinking which is key to problem solving vis-a-viz poverty eradication.

Background to the study

The problems of utility of education in Zimbabwe are situated in the colonial context (Zvobgo, 1994) The need to have an education system to alleviate poverty is

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necessitated by the legacy of inheriting an education system from the Western imperialists. At any given time education should serve the purpose of transforming a society for the better. However, the education system that was introduced by Western imperialists was geared towards producing submissive and docile citizens (Zvobgo, 1994). Therefore, it requires a deconstruction of colonially inherited education system and reconstruction of one that emanates from the needs of the society (Hapanyengwi and Makuvaza, 2014). The stand point is that education seems to be incapacitated in equipping students with critical thinking skills (Women of Zimbabwe Arise, 2010). Therefore, this study calls for the infusion of thinking skills in teaching and learning at Masvingo Teachers' College. Before Zimbabwe attained its independence it was rooted in the history of colonialism. Whites were educated for key posts in economic political and other spheres of life. On the other hand, Africans were trained for menial jobs on the farms and whites' homes (Zvobgo, 1994). The transformation of education following the fall of colonial rule was a move to alleviate inequality. The government wanted to bring education to all people and also to make education an instrument for social and economic reformation. However, nothing was done to equip students with critical thinking skills to eradicate poverty. The argument is that education being offered at Masvingo Teachers' College does not equip students with thinking skills needed to alleviate poverty to enhance socio-economic development.

Research has shown that a number of people are lamenting that education offered in teachers' colleges and the tasks which they are given are not aligned to problems they encounter in real life situations (Chartered Institute of Management Accounts, 2001). The most important practical thinking skills education should equip one with is how to identify a problem. Dewey in Akinpelu (1981) and Beyers (1988) suggests that finding strategies of solving problems is by way of participatory learning where students will use skills they have learnt in class to solve similar problems they will encounter in life. Nziramasanga (1999) recommended that the curriculum from pre-school to tertiary be practical to enhance critical thinking. Thus this research sought to find out the extent of implementing the recommendations proffered by Nziramasanga Commission.

Critical thinking in teaching and learning is facilitated by a physical and intellectual environment that encourages the spirit of experimentation and discovery (Keefe and Walberg, 1992; Adsit, 2015). If students are encouraged to be critical thinkers they would be less dependent on teachers and authoritative sources (Karakoc, 2016; Murawski, 2014). If a person is independent he or she can think independently and thus can solve problems encountered in the society (Heyman, 2008). Further, the student would be able to evaluate situations as they arise and change structures in society. Thus considering teaching students to think would allow them to find

means and ways to alleviate poverty. If education is geared towards teaching for thinking poverty would be curbed and thus enhance socio-economic transformation. There is an outcry that what is being taught in schools is not appropriate for the world we are moving into. The outcry is necessitated by the fact that poverty has emerged as the main concern in Zimbabwe (Mlanga, 2018; Machamire, 2015; Zhangazha, 2018). The argument is that knowledge grows out of date due to the dynamic nature of society. It is important to admit that knowledge which used to be relevant long ago may not be doing enough today (Dewey in Akinpelu, 1981). So the most important thing we can do is to teach students to think well. This means giving students practice in reasoning through class discussion involving concepts that cut across disciplines rather than only those that are embedded in each discipline. This can only be realized through teaching for thinking.

Nziramasanga (1999) argues that both parents and children no longer see any tangible gains from education. Students need to be equipped with thinking skills in order to survive in the challenges of ever changing needs of the labour market. Nziramasanga Commission went on to recommend a new education that familiarized students with vocational and technical skills which were intended to develop skills that could be useful in specific jobs. However, some changes and innovations were not as good and relevant as they should have been (Women of Zimbabwe Arise, 2010; Zvobgo, 1994). In as much as vocational subjects may be useful in poverty eradication, they should be punctuated with critical thinking.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Major research question

To what extent can critical thinking be aligned to teaching instructions at Masvingo Teachers' College?

Sub-questions

- (1) What is critical thinking?
- (2) To what extent do subjects offered at Masvingo Teachers' College promote critical thinking.
- (3) How does critical thinking assist to alleviate poverty?
- (4) How can critical thinking be promoted in the college curriculum?

Statement of the problem

The problem is that the education being offered in the teachers' college is not geared towards poverty alleviation. Critical thinking involves thinking about real problems in a bid to find solutions. Therefore, critical

thinking is a vital tool in solving problems.

Limitation of the study

The main limitation was that the respondents may have given biased responses as the research was unraveling attitudes and feelings about the education being offered. However, the use of three data collecting instruments counteracted the biases.

Delimitations

The study was situated at Masvingo teachers' College in Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe.

Significance of the study

The significance of the study is to give some insights into the importance of teaching for thinking. The research was also carried out to raise some awareness to curriculum planners on the need to anchor what is taught in teachers' colleges to critical thinking. It is assumed that the research is going to add value to the theory of education. To add to that if students at teachers' colleges are equipped with thinking skills poverty might be minimized.

Theoretical framework

This study is hinged on pragmatism and philosophy for children (P4C); from colonial bondage brought about by the British by introducing an education system which aimed at producing docile, sub missive and aimless people (Zvobgo, 1994). Pragmatic views of John Dewey among others are influencing the argument for teaching for thinking. The idea of critical thinking emanating from (P4C) is to be explored.

Pragmatism

Pragmatism is a philosophy that encourages people to seek processes and do things that work best to achieve results (Ozman & Craver). Traditional ways worked very well in their time and may not be doing enough to solve today's problems. So pragmatism seeks to challenge traditional ways of thinking and practices and reconstruct our approach to life in line with our needs.

Bacon in Stumpf (2003) argues that the method used during his time, that is deductive reasoning was based on religion and speculative philosophy. In other words Bacon encourages people to refrain from putting faith in old beliefs, generalisations which may not have validity and reliability today. The philosophy calls for people to think outside the box and develop valid knowledge which will help in curbing societal problems (Curren, 2011). So this

philosophy is informing this research in that it aims at alleviating poverty which is also a social problem.

Dewey's instrumentalism is considered as the answer to problems faced by Zimbabwe. Dewey states that instead of dealing with fixed theoretical constructs societies need to focus on a philosophy which concerns itself with human problems in a world which is uncertain and changing (Ozman and Craver, 1986). For Dewey ideas are instruments in solution to problems in a society. In his book "How we think" Dewey illustrated how ideas can be used to solve problems (Akinpelu, 1981). Pragmatism views education as instrumental in solving problems. So education can be used to solve or alleviate poverty if learners are equipped with the necessary thinking skills. If education some time ago was used to solve problems, it is the same education which should be crafted to suit the current trend. Pragmatists argue that the world is not closed, existence is precarious and unpredictable and people cannot expect to find lasting solutions (Ozman and Craver, 1986; Karakoc, 2016). The answer is equipping students with thinking skills. The role of education is to renew people so that they are able to solve problems they encounter in life (Kneller, 1991; Bailey et al., 2010). Like Plato, Dewey is against treating education as separated from life (Kneller, 1991; Blake et al., 2008). Thus education has to promote understanding. Freire (1972) is against the banking approach where learners are treated as empty vessels when knowledge is poured. Teaching should enhance understanding, thus promoting utility of the gained knowledge to useful ends. Helping students to think becomes education and not just training. This can be done through learning directed towards growth. Education is seen as an experimental enterprise as well as a tool that assists in social renewal (Dewey in Akinpelu, 1981; Curren, 2011). A useful education promotes humanistic spirit in people as well as the desire to find new answers to our day to day problems in economics, politics and social problems. Angelo (1995) and Murawski (2014) highlight that a true education should develop thinking skills that produce true individuals who are self-reliant and who do not rely on tradition or custom in solving problems. People have to rely upon their intelligence in solving problems. Hence education is viewed as having the potential for thinking to alleviate poverty (Dewey cited in Ozman and Craver, 1986).

Education is not about readymade answers to every problem but formation of mental attitudes in attacking contemporary problems (Stumpf, 2003). When poverty arises, education should be reconstructed to meet the challenges. This simply means an education which is pragmatic aimed at doing processes that work.

Philosophy for children (P4C)

Philosophy for children is not to make children to do

philosophy (Beyers, 1998). It is argued that children or students at colleges lack reasoning skills and yet these skills are the foundation of solving problems. Students lack the ability to analyze, to evaluate, to make decisions, judgment and the ability to be independent thinkers. To buttress this view, Lipman (1991) and Adsit (2015) point out that schools are failing to equip students with skills and competences that will enable them to respond to the changing world. The researcher argues that there is rampant poverty in Zimbabwe because products from colleges lack thinking skills to enable them to minimize poverty.

It seems the curriculum at Masvingo Teachers' College does not equip students with thinking skills yet these are the pillar for problem solving. The researcher is not calling for the inclusion of thinking in the college curriculum but that teaching for thinking be the main thrust in teachers' colleges. Oliver and Utermohlen (1995:2) posit that "students are passive receptors of information through technology." Hence students need a guide to weed through the information. Therefore, students at colleges need to be taught to analyze information that they get and by so doing they will learn to think through issues and be prepared to solve real problems in life. Oliver and Utermohlen (1995: 2) further highlight that "students need to develop critical thinking in their academic studies so that they can apply the learnt skills to the problems they will encounter in life". P4C also borrowed a lot from Plato and Aristotle who argue that learning should be centred on creative thinking as opposed to passive thinking. Murawski (2014) supports by saying critical thinking is a key in education as it helps students to solve problems in school and at home. Thus education should provide a base for teaching for thinking to make it more relevant and useful.

Philosophy for children is concerned with cognitive, moral and affective development. The community of inquiry, the major tool for teaching philosophy for children is rooted in Socrates' claim that collaborative communities have the capacity to foster critical thinking (Beyers, 1995; Adsit 2015). Therefore, lecture rooms become community of inquiry in which the focus will be on dialogue. Research has shown that philosophy for children improves cognitive abilities of participants by developing general thinking and reasoning skills (Halpern, 2001; Letseka and Zireva, 2013). Knowledge grows out of date and if people continue using it without much thought societies will continue having problems such as poverty. Therefore, the most important thing is to teach students to think well. This can be enhanced through classroom discussions involving concepts that cut across disciplines. If students are given instructions in reasoning they become accustomed to asking each other for reasons thereby developing critical thinking. Philosophy for children aims at teaching reasoning and argumentative skills to children. If students lack critical thinking skills they cannot alleviate poverty.

Critical thinking

Critical thinking is considered as the fountain of all learning processes. That being the case it is suggested teachers' colleges to teach it (critical thinking). Beyers (1995), Murawski (2014) see teaching of critical thinking as pivotal to the development and advance of the nation. He further states that to live successfully people have to think critically. Critical thinking is the intellectually, disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating information so as to guide action (Scriven and Paul, 1996). Angelo (1995) highlights that critical thinking is characterized by the application of rational, higher order thinking skills such as reflection analysis, synthesis, problem recognition and problem solving; Letseka and Ventor (2013) and Zireva and Letseka (2013) argue that critical thinking is judging the authenticity worth of something. Critical thinking is thus a process of precise and objective analysis of any claim so that judgment can be passed. Letseka and Zireva (2013) are of the view that the main aim of education should be to foster critical thinking. Letseka and Zireva went on to say critical thinking is the most important skill a student both at school and college can be equipped with. In the same line Oliver and Utermohlen (1995) aver that students need to develop and effectively apply critical thinking skills in their learning and to the critical choices they will make in life. In the same vein, Beyer (1995), Radulovic and Stanic (2017) pin-point that critical thinkers are open minded, respect evidence and will change positions whenever there is need and when reason leads them to do so. Critical thinking is also marked by the ability in such a way that one is able to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of an idea and then focus the thinking to produce better results (Centre for Critical Thinking, 1996).

Critical thinking also involves thinking about real problems. One can reason out but the essence of critical thinking comes to the fore when one is addressing real problems rather than artificial ones (Angelo, 1995). The argument is that real problems are unclear. Hence they need great thinkers. Critical thinking is not just a mere mental exercise. It is an analysis of results (Letseka and Zireva, 2013). A person with good memory and knows a lot of facts is not necessarily a critical thinker. Angelo (1995), Zireva and Letseka (2013) argue that a critical thinker is one who can deduce consequences from what he or she knows and is able to make use of information to solve problems. At the heart of critical thinking is thinking about real problems (Beyer, 1995). So critical thinking involves noticing that there are problems that need to be addressed and in this case eradicating poverty. A mental engagement may not be considered as critical thinking. When one is thinking critically he or she would be thinking through a decision about what to do in a situation, and then followed by an action. So

when people are faced with poverty they should think through ways of eradicating it.

It is the author's contention that if critical thinking is infused in teachers' colleges curriculum the students will be able to cope with problems they will face in their societies and the world at large. As alluded earlier, students at teachers' colleges are not able to think critically. This might be attributed to the Zimbabwean society which is examination driven. The scenario may result in producing students who leave colleges without being equipped with the relevant skills they will use in their day to day lives.

Poverty alleviation through teaching for thinking

The ability to think critically is important whenever people face problems because it enables them to reach their ends (Beyer, 1995). Being able to think critically and solve problems is an asset in poverty alleviation. In societies characterized by problems such as poverty the society needs critical thinkers who can reflect on issues at hand. Thus critical thinking is instrumental in solving problems. Chan (2002) argues that critical thinking is attached to creative solution to a problem. Hence the author suggests that at teachers' colleges students be taught critical thinking so that they would be able to assist in minimizing poverty thereby promoting innovation for socio-economic transformation.

Thinking critically is crucial in solving societal problems. For people to tackle challenges they encounter in life they need critical thinking skills. Therefore, if students are equipped with this skill (critical thinking) they would be able to analyze and evaluate ideas, select best ones and apply them to solve problems. As critical thinking is the ability to recognize the existence of problems it may help in reducing poverty. Students will be able to identify problems and think about ways of addressing them.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study a qualitative case study was adopted. Arthur et al. (2013), Chisaka (2013) and Cresswel (2014) defined a case study as a particular phenomenon in its natural setting. Similarly, Flick (2014) and Silverman (2013) highlighted that a case study has an advantage of allowing the researcher to ask participants questions and observe incidents in their contexts. Mills and Birks (2014) and Clark (2016) in support aver that a case study is an inquiry which gives detailed information. The researcher adopted a case study because it allowed the researcher to get rich information which allowed analysis on the data obtained to build a theory or phenomenon.

Research paradigm

A research has to be informed by a philosophical base. Sinclair (2007) and Flick (2014) argue that a theoretical framework of a research is the base on which the research is taking place. This

research is informed by the critical theory. The theory strives to challenge existing practices. The theory is suitable because it aims to unravel the attitudes, feelings and beliefs of lecturers and students.

Research design

Arthur et al. (2013) and Magwa and Magwa (2015) state that a research design is a plan which shows how a research is conducted. In this research a case study was adopted. Cohen et al. (2011) define a case study as an instant designed to illustrate a general principle. Therefore, the findings of this study will be generalized for other teachers' colleges information. The researcher used a case study so that focus would be on a small population. This enabled the researcher to obtain deep and rich information. The researcher carried out a pretest on a small scale to check the practicability of the instruments.

Research instruments

The research was based largely on qualitative using interactive methods. The researcher used open ended questions in in-depth interviews which were semi-structured. Cohen et al. (2013: 382) point out that "open ended questions enable participants to write a free account on their own time, to explain and quantify their responses"; Chilisa (2012), Clark (2016) and Magwa and Magwa (2015) cohere by saying open ended questions allow participants to give information without limitations. Therefore, open ended questions were adopted as they allowed participants to give information as much as they could. Magwa and Magwa (2015) and Cohen et al. (2013) state that an interview is a method of asking questions to get information. The study employed in-depth interviews as they allowed the researchers to get a lot of information. Cresswel (2014), Riches et al. (2014) and Chilisa (2012) agreed that in-depth interviews allow researcher to get information about thoughts, attitudes and feelings. The researcher used this method because it allowed multiple sensory channels; hence it enabled participants to stress their views.

Interview

An interview is a direct verbal interaction between individuals with the aim of collecting information. Clark (2016) and Magwa and Magwa (2015) describe an interview as a tool which allows the researcher to get information from participants. It involves one on one interaction. The researcher chose the interview methods because this allowed further probing for more information. Interviews were conducted with ten lecturers. The researcher had more time to explain the questions to the respondents and also could see more verbal clues.

Interview guide

The researcher used an interview guide to guide the interview process. The questions were written on paper and were used by the researcher to keep the participants on track. The guide also contained questions which were used by the researcher to probe the participants for more information. To avoid misunderstanding of questions the researcher asked clear and precise questions. The researcher also carried out a pre-test with 2 lecturers and 4 students who were not among the chosen participants. This was done to check the reliability and validity of the instruments. The researcher checked for ambiguous words, redundancy and irrelevant issues.

Focus groups

The researcher also used focus group discussions with students. Magwa and Magwa (2015) and Clark (2016) indicate that a focus group refers to a group of people who are asked the same questions at the same time. Similarly, Authur et al. (2013) posit that focus groups are a way to obtain many opinions from people within a group setting. The researcher used one focus group composed of ten students. The aim was to get numerous views in an interactive way. This enabled the researcher to get rich information. The researcher also used focus groups to verify the responses that were obtained through interviews. This coheres with Authur et al. (2013) and Flick (2014)'s submission that focus groups can be used to support other methods. The researcher ensured that the group did not go off topic by focusing the participants on issues under discussion.

Sampling

Of the six hundred general course students at the college under study the researcher purposely selected twenty students and ten lecturers. The students who were selected were the products of the education offered at the college. The lecturers who were selected were the implementers of the curriculum in question. Hence both the students chosen and the lecturers had an experience of phenomenon under study. The researcher used the stratified sampling. The researcher used two sub-groups, that is, males and females. The researcher selected 5 males and 5 females to ensure the likelihood of representativeness.

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are taking into account, the confidentiality and rights of participants (Cresswel, 2014; Flick, 2014). Ethical issues such as respect of privacy, confidentiality, informed consent, non-maleficence (Cohen et al., 2013; Authur et al., 2013) were observed. The consent of all the participants was sought by making them (participants) to sign a concept form. The form indicated that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from participation if they wanted. The researcher also told the participants that she would use pseudonyms. Participants were also informed that the research was not going to harm them in any way since the purpose of the study was purely academic.

Data analysis

The data that were purely qualitative were presented in a narrative form. The transcribed data were presented verbatim so that the flavour of the participants' responses was not lost (Mills and Birks, 2014; Magwa and Magwa, 2015). The researcher came up with themes that were derived from the research questions. The data that focused on a particular issue were put together (coding) and analyzed following those themes. Cresswel (2014) and Hamilton and Whittier (2013) highlight that content analysis focuses on the analysis of human communication. Thus it focuses on summarizing pertinent issues in the text and the contents in it. As the data were collected by means of communicating with participants the content analysis was appropriate (Table 1).

FINDINGS

The study revealed that education that was offered at one of the Teachers' college in Masvingo province did not

equip students with skills to think critically. These are some of the views that were given by the participants: Students are taught a number of practical subjects; however, the subjects are not improving their livelihood. Our children are receiving useless education. Our students cannot upgrade their lives when they leave teachers' college.

The views of the participants indicated that education given to the young generation is not serving any purpose. The students cannot think outside the box to make ends meet. This confirms to Dewey's assertion that education should be instrumental (Akinpelu, 1981). The fact that students are taught practical subjects but cannot improve their livelihood means that they lack critical thinking skills, yet these are the keys to solving societal problems. In support, Letseka and Ventor (2013) highlighted that critical thinking is the ability to assess the problem or situation of something. In the same vein Letseka and Zireva (2013) point out that the major aim of education is to equip students with critical thinking skills so that they can solve problems encountered in real life situations. One participant indicated/cited philosophy for children (P4C) as pivotal in teaching children to think critically. From the participants' views it is apparent that the education that is given to students teachers is not doing enough to alleviate poverty. To verify the views that were given by lecturers, the researcher had focus group discussion with the students. The results from focus group discussions revealed that the type of education that was in Teachers' Colleges was too academic. These are some of the views they preferred:

Our curriculum is not practical oriented. The curriculum is too academic. Further, the subjects that are offered do not make us critical thinkers. Most of us are languishing in poverty yet we acquire certificates of education. This is a testimony that we cannot think critically. Our education does not equip us with thinking skills that are necessary to make us survive in these hard economic situations. Most of the time we run out of ideas. I feel our education teaches us to memorize facts and this does not assist us in any way to solve problems.

The participants were in agreement that the type of education they were receiving was not doing enough to assist them to survive. These views seem to confirm Zvobgo (1994)'s submission that Zimbabwean education is too much centered on academic issues. The participants revealed that whilst many people had acquired certificates or a diploma in education poverty was rampant in the society. This signifies that education given in teachers' colleges was not assisting students in any way to think for solutions. This is in congruency with Dewey's argument that education is not a preparation for life but a tool for problem solving (Ozman and Craver, 1986). The students further indicated that:

Technology was to blame in making students non-thinkers since they got ready made answers in the

Table 1. The demographic profile of participants.

Participants	Profession	Gender	Experience
A	Lecturer	Female	Principal
B	Lecturer	Male	Lecturer
C	Lecturer	Male	Senior Lecturer
D	Lecturer	Female	Lecturer
E	Lecturer	Female	Senior Lecturer
F	Lecturer	Male	Principal Lecturer
G	Lecturer	Female	Principal Lecturer
H	Lecturer	Male	Principal Lecturer
I	Lecturer	Male	Senior Lecturer
J	Lecturer	Female	Senior Lecturer
Participant	Status	Gender	Experience
1.	Students	Male	Final Year
2.	Students	Male	First Year
3.	Students	Male	Final Year
4.	Students	Female	First Year
5.	Students	Female	Final Year
6.	Students	Male	Final Year
7.	Students	Female	First Year
8.	Students	Male	First Year
9.	Students	Female	Final Year
10.	Students	Female	First Year
11.	Students	Male	Final Year
12.	Students	Male	First Year
13.	Students	Female	Final Year
14.	Students	Female	First Year
15.	Students	Male	Final Year
16.	Students	Male	Final Year
17.	Students	Female	Final Year
18.	Students	Male	Final Year
19.	Students	Female	First Year
20.	Students	Female	First Year

internet without any effort. During assignments writing most students just cut and paste other people's work. This also contributes to the production of docile products.

The study revealed that the education offered at the teachers' colleges was not geared towards equipping students with thinking skills. It emerged that technology which characterized most educational activities had a stake in the production of students who lacked critical thinking skills. In support, Oliver and Utermohlen (1995) avers that that technology is assisting in the production of students who are not thinkers. This contributed to the production of passive and docile students who just copy answers from the internet without thinking. This scenario brings challenges to sustainable development.

Conclusion

The study demonstrated that student teachers at

Masvingo Teachers' College acquire some skills. However, the findings revealed that the skills that the students get at the college are not sufficient to help them to alleviate poverty in society in which they live in. It emerges that the college curriculum is too much focused on subjects that do not assist students to think critically yet education should be instrumental in solving societal problems. The results further revealed that teaching for thinking is critical if poverty is to be alleviated. The findings indicated that the college curriculum was characterized by colonialist tendencies which was academic oriented and was not addressing problems in Zimbabwe.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- (i) Students be taught critical thinking skills.

- (ii) The college curriculum should incorporate Philosophy for children (P4C) which teaches children to think critically.
- (iii) The students be taught entrepreneurship skills in schools.
- (iv) Practical subjects to be compulsory at the teachers' colleges.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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