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Teacher Education at the University of Zambia and Teacher Quality with Specific Reference to English Language

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Abstract. This paper presents an analysis of the quality of teacher education at the University of Zambia by combining the findings of two PhD theses conducted at the University of Zambia and in secondary schools in the last two years. Using self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected from 191 and 200 participants respectively, comprising of students, newly qualified teachers (NQTs), heads of department (HoDs), deans, and lecturers. The findings in the two studies indicate that there are a number of institutional weaknesses in the provision of teacher education at the University of Zambia. Prominent among these weaknesses is the inadequacy of teaching practice experiences for student teachers and the mismatch between subject content offered at the University of Zambia and content taught at the secondary school level. The paper concludes that this combination of poor teacher preparation affects teacher quality, which in turn affects educational delivery by the teachers.

Keywords: Teacher education; Curriculum innovation; Reform.

1   Introduction

This paper presents an analysis of the quality of teacher education at the University of Zambia by combining the findings of two PhD theses conducted at the University of Zambia and in secondary schools in the last three years. The study by Mulenga (2015) titled 'English language teacher education curriculum designing: A mixed methods analysis of the programme at the University of Zambia'[1] has been labelled study 1 while the thesis by Banja (2016) titled 'Mentoring of newly qualified teachers in Zambian secondary schools: An introspection of teachers' and head teachers' perspectives in selected districts of Zambia'[2] has been labelled study 2. The studies reported here are an attempt to

provide part of the solution to problems of teacher education and teacher quality in Zambia. This paper attempts to analyse the connection between teacher education and teacher quality by examining the nature of teacher education being offered by the University of Zambia and retrospectively how the quality of teacher education impacted on the quality of teacher produced, the quality of his/her work and how all this impacted on the education system as a whole.

1.1 University of Zambia

The University of Zambia (UNZA) was established in 1966 by an Act of Parliament specifically to provide an education related to the economic, political, social and cultural conditions of Zambia and which would reflect the wishes and aspirations of Zambians and provide skilled human resources in answer to the national requirements. The university operates within a general government policy framework anchored on two cardinal principles, namely that the university must be responsive to the real needs of Zambia and that it must, on the basis of merit, win the respect and proper recognition of the university world. The idea behind establishing the University of Zambia was to develop a cadre of educated and skilled technocrats that would bring about increased productivity and ultimately increased revenue and wealth for the nation. To achieve the dream of providing highly skilled personnel for the nation, the University of Zambia offers various programmes through the following schools: Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Law, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Agricultural Engineering, Mines, Engineering and Natural Sciences.

1.2 Models of Teacher Education in Zambia

This section of the paper describes the context of teacher education at the University of Zambia by looking at the different models of teacher education available globally and specifically the model used at the University of Zambia.

The literature on teacher education has continued to claim that teacher quality is one of the most important factors that inhibit the quality of education (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Darling-Hammond and Ball, 1997). In Zambia, as may be the same in other countries, learning to become a teacher involves the acquisition of certain skills and knowledge types which can be categorized in three components.

First, there are those knowledge types and skills which relate to educational theory (philosophy of education, history of education, educational psychology, sociology of education, educational administration and planning, school effectiveness and curriculum development). In Zambia, education programmes offer educational theory to student teachers in such a way that it informs the teacher's professional judgements and actions, and provide sufficient range of

concepts and skills for professional growth later in the years. Secondly, there are those skills and knowledge types relating to the content area of the subject (s) that one is to teach and thirdly, there are pedagogical content knowledge or methodological knowledge and skills, that is, knowledge and skills relating to classroom techniques and procedures of teaching a subject. This is a very important component in every teacher education programme because it directly prepares the prospective teacher for teaching.

The foregoing three areas of teacher preparation are basic to all programmes in teacher education in Zambia and they make the three foundations on which the profession is built. As Renshaw (2010) acknowledged the challenge that might exist if the three components are studied concurrently is that teaching subjects designed for the education of students may be pursued for their intrinsic value. Certain conflicts and tensions may arise in the process of achieving the balance, for instance, study for its intrinsic value as opposed to that with an instrumental end; theoretical as distinct from practical activity. Hence a balance between theory and practice need to be maintained in knowledge and skills of the teacher education curriculum.

A survey of the practices in different parts of the world reveals that the three areas explained in the foregoing paragraphs are structured in two ways. The first one is where the student teacher first obtains a qualification in one or more subjects, usually a first university degree, and then studies for a further period to gain an additional qualification in educational theory and methodological knowledge and skills. This model of teacher education is referred to as the serial model.

In the alternative concurrent model, a student studies all the three components at the same time, leading to a qualification as a teacher of a particular subject. The preparation of teachers at UNZA is a four-year university degree consisting of academic majors and minors in teaching subjects and an education programme coursework and field experiences (teaching practice) in the schools. Teacher education in Zambia like most universities in Africa follows the concurrent model. The main challenge with the concurrent model, however, is that students and staff tend to be compelled to focus more on the subject content knowledge at the expense of the pedagogical content knowledge.

With the serial model, there is an advantage of allowing students to concentrate more on the different aspects of their teacher education programmes. However, the aims in either the serial or concurrent model should be to produce an effective teacher of a particular subject area. Therefore, conducting analysis of the job of teaching is vital in both the serial and concurrent model before designing the teacher education programme. Analysing the models that are used in teacher education leads us to reflect on the theoretical approaches that may guide the design of teacher education programmes in such a way that they produce a quality teacher.

1.3   Theoretical Approaches to Teacher Education Curriculum Design

Zeichner (2010) explained that the old paradigm of university-based or college-based teacher education where academic knowledge is viewed as the authoritative source of knowledge about teaching was based on the content-based approach to teacher education. Chishimba (2001) described a content-based teacher education curriculum as one that follows a common curriculum which is based on the traditionally accepted subject divisions which do not take into account the link that exists between theory and practice in teaching. More often than not each course outline or syllabus is designed independently of the others, thereby risking a considerable amount of overlap and repetition. Thus the fundamental integration that is required in order to give direction and meaning to the diverse components is not achieved. Teacher education courses in the content-based approach, as Shulman (1987) explained, are developed without having in mind the school curriculum subject matter which the student teacher is being prepared for. Therefore, such programmes tend to be very academic, scholarly, and remote from classroom teaching. Consequently, content-based teacher education creates a gap between theory and practice in teacher education. This is the gap that Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005), Hammerness (2006) and Korthagen *et al.* (2001) have all identified between theory and practice as the core problem for teacher education. The lack of connection between school-based practical experience and the academic content in teacher education programmes is believed to be the main reason why graduating teachers are not adequately prepared for teaching their subject areas in schools.

On the other hand, Bowles (2012) described the Competency Based Teacher Education (CBTE) curriculum designing process as one in which there are specific competencies to be acquired, with explicit corresponding criteria for assessing these competencies. Chishimba (2001) further explained that the CBTE programme development ensures that the competencies to be learned and demonstrated by student-teachers are specified in advance. It also ensures that the criteria to be used in making this determination are indicated. What Bowles (2012) and Chishimba (2001) are explaining is achieved through a process of job analysis which must be done prior to curriculum design. Job analysis, or situational analysis as some scholars put it, helps to ensure that all knowledge and skills in the CBTE curriculum are based on what is taught in schools. Eventually, whatever student teachers will study following the CBTE will be similar, in respect of all situational factors, to what they will be expected to do in their subsequent teaching. In this connection, Haberman and Stinnett (1973) stated that many educational administrators and curriculum scholars feel that the graduate of the content-based teacher education curriculum is not adequately prepared for the job of teaching, while the graduate of CBTE is more likely to acquire the relevant knowledge and skills for teaching. Therefore, the CBTE

curriculum is a vehicle that can provide clearly discernible results which give a definite response to the public's demand for accountability in education as explained by Frazier (1999:138) when he stated that;

> Teacher education has a particular place in the university mission. Unlike other professional development and career programmes, teacher education comes into the university culture loaded with public expectations and a sense of urgency of meeting needs and demands of the school curriculum for which the student teacher is being trained.

Thus the rationale for the CBTE curriculum design forces teacher educators to take a hard look at what their curriculum is designed to accomplish and to review carefully the way they go about accomplishing it. This makes the teacher education curriculum 'fit for the purpose' which is a definition of quality teacher education curriculum as defined by Biggs (2001). 'Fit for the purpose', is what Ball, Thames and Phelps (2008) also meant when they stated that there is a special domain of teacher knowledge and skills, for each subject, which is key to the profession of teaching. By conducting job analysis, teacher educators are likely to identify the relevant knowledge and skills. In the case of the Zambian teacher education curriculum, there has been for a very long time a tendency by curriculum designers to programmes that are content based. That is why the findings of the studies being reported in this paper reveal a mismatch between what teachers are to teach and what they learn while in college or university.

2 Related Literature

The section that follows presents a brief review of the literature relevant to the topic under discussion. The early years of the development of western education in Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia, had no proper and co-ordinated education programmes for teachers. Snelson (2012) and Mwanakatwe (2013) both acknowledged that teacher education, was a responsibility of different missionary societies, and was haphazardly done. Zambia has had three major educational policy documents since independence, and these are; the *Educational Reforms in 1977, Focus on Learning in 1992* and *Educating our Future in 1996.* These three documents have tried to give guidelines to the development of education in Zambia.

The education system in Zambia had it clear through the Educational Reforms of 1977 that the teacher education curriculum should produce a teacher who is well prepared in the subject matter and in the methods of teaching in relation to what was relevant for schools. Thus, it was clear in the minds of those who were

behind these reforms that in order to have a well prepared teacher there was a need to design a curriculum which was relevant to what was obtaining in schools.

Fifteen years later, another educational policy called *Focus on Learning* was drafted resulting from the influences of the 1990 World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand. Focus on Learning, gave some general guidelines about the expected quality of teachers graduating from colleges and universities. It stated that:

> The quality of Zambia's schools reflected the quality of the teachers manning these schools, while the quality of the teachers reflects the effectiveness of the institutions that train them. … The programme for teacher education, therefore, must be kept under constant review to ensure that it responds to the real needs of Zambia's schools (MoE, 1992:97).

In the 1992 education policy document, teacher education curriculum in Zambia was expected to be designed in such a way that it would prepare teachers with knowledge and skills that were relevant to their job description in their different subject areas. In 1996 a new policy document on education known as *Educating Our Future: National Policy on Education* was issued. Regarding teacher education it was recognised that:

> The quality and effectiveness of an education system depend heavily on the quality of its teachers. They are the key persons in determining success in meeting the system's goals. The educational and personal well-being of pupils in schools hinges crucially on their competence, commitment and resourcefulness (MoE, 1996:107).

The Ministry of Education through this policy advocated that essential competencies that are required in every teacher are mastery of the material that is to be taught and the skill in communicating that knowledge and skills to learners. Therefore, quality teacher education was emphasised. However, the extent to which teacher education reforms have been implemented over the years in view of the quality of teachers graduating from universities and colleges of education has raised concern among Zambian scholars (Banja, 2012 a & b; Chabatama, 2012; Manchishi and Masaiti, 2011; Manchishi, 2004). These scholars have all seriously questioned the quality of the products of the Teacher Education curriculum from the universities and colleges of education in terms of the knowledge and skills that they possess for teaching.

3   Methodology

A descriptive survey design was used in both the studies reported. This design was chosen because it allowed for the collection of in-depth data and its

description relative to such issues as, values, attitudes, beliefs and characteristics (cf. Cresswell, 2009). The approach helped to provide in-depth insight into the perceptions of students and newly qualified teachers.

Both studies used a mixed methods research approach. Mixed methods research combines the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data into one empirical study. The rationale for mixing the two was for the reason that neither quantitative nor qualitative approach was deemed adequate in itself to capture and reveal the details of the situation of the quality teacher education curriculum designing and the quality of its products. Of the six research designs that scholars such as Creswell (2012) proposed in a mixed research methods approach, the two studies being reported here used the convergent parallel design. Using this design the researchers simultaneously collected both qualitative and quantitative data, compared them, and then used the results to provide answers to the research questions (Creswell, 2012).

Study 1 used self-administered questionnaires that comprised both qualitative and quantitative questions. It also used interviews with lecturers of both content subjects and methodology from the School of Education at the University of Zambia. In addition tests in different components of the Senior Secondary School English syllabus were administered to 4th year students to test their knowledge levels. And lastly, content analysis was conducted on courses in the School of Education.

In the quantitative phase of this study, two research questions were addressed: a) to what extent did the English language teacher education programme have the content required in Zambian secondary schools? b) What was the quality of the products (teachers) of the English language teacher education curriculum? The data which helped to answer these two questions was collected by administering questionnaires and tests to the student and graduate teachers. Factor variables which contribute to producing an effective teacher of English were identified by analysing the job description of an English language teacher in Zambian schools.

Study 1 had 200 final year student teachers who were studying English language as a major teaching subject. These participated in the study by writing tests based on the content that they were to teach in secondary school. They also responded to a five point Likert scale questionnaire on their confidence to teach English. Study 2, on the other hand, had 191 participants broken down into 92 NQTs and 99 HoDs (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1: Profile of Newly Qualified Teachers (Study 2)

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	37	60.6
	Female	24	39.3
	Total	61	100
Age	19 – 24	10	16.4
	25 – 29	38	62.2
	30 – 35	8	13.1
	36 – 40	3	4.9
	No response	2	3.8
	Total	61	100

Table 2 shows the profile of the HoDs in the sample. All the HoDs were purposively included in the sample because by virtue of their positions they were directly in charge of day-to-day supervision of classroom teachers.

Table 2: Profile of Heads of Department (Study 2)

Variables	Values	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	63	63.6
	Female	36	36.4
	Total	99	100
Age	Less than 35 years old	14	14.1
	35 - 40 years	35	35.4
	41 - 45 years	20	20.2
	46 - 50 years	21	21.2
	Above 50 years	9	9.1
	Total	99	100
Highest level of qualification	College Diploma	50	50.5
	Bachelor's Degree	49	49.5
	Total	99	100
Length of period as head of department	Less than 5 years	46	46.5
	5 - 10 years	36	36.4
	11 - 15 years	7	7.1
	16 - 20 years	4	4
	Above 20 years	3	3
	No Response	3	3
	Total	99	100

Two self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data in study 2. One was administered to NQTs and the other to HoDs. In addition, this study made use of qualitative document review which was conducted on documents relating to the training of teachers at the UNZA. These secondary sources provided

further insight and a useful check on information generated from self-administered questionnaires. The documents analysed consisted largely of the Ministry of General Education policy documents. Triangulation of different data sources was important in collecting qualitative data as it helped in comparing and contrasting information from different sources.

In study 1 data analysis for questionnaires was preceded by a statistical scrutiny of the quantitative data. For instance, a normality test was thus used to determine whether the data had a normal distribution and to determine how likely an underlying random variable was to be normally distributed. Respondents' responses were analysed by means of a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics. For data regarding their confidence to teach, content and methodology coverage of different aspects of English language, an independent samples t-test was used to compare the in-service and pre-service mean scores so as to determine the students' coverage and understanding of the different aspects of the English language as it is taught in secondary school. Data on the adequacy of the participants' preparedness in applying types of teaching methods and designing of professional materials was analysed using independent samples t-tests too. Data on the quality of products (teachers) from the English language teacher education curriculum were analysed using independent samples t-tests so as to compare the performance of in-service and pre-service students.

In study 2, quantitative data were analysed to obtain frequencies and percentages. Chi-Square was used to aid comparisons between responses given by the two subpopulations. Qualitative data from both the self-administered questionnaires were analysed through grouping and coding of themes emerging from the study as well as qualitative document analysis which was done through the reduction of data to come up with patterns of dat. Data from different schools was processed until saturation.

4   Findings

4.1   Study 1

This section examines the issues affecting teacher education and teacher preparation at the University of Zambia. Study 1 reports student teachers' performance in Secondary School English Language tests at the University of Zambia.

4.1.1   Student Teachers' Performance

Table 3 shows the minimum, maximum, range and mean of the scores out of ten that student teachers got in the tests that they wrote in various aspects of the

secondary school English language. For instance in sentence transformation the lowest got zero while the highest got four however the mean was 0.89, an indication that most of the students where batched around zero and one. Take summary as another case where the lowest got zero while the highest got seven. However, the mean gives the true picture that most of the students got around three. The same thing applies to reported speech. The total which is out of seventy indicates that the lowest got 17.6 while the highest got slightly above half, 36.5, and a mean of 26.49 which is far way below half, an indication that the student teachers' masterly of the skills and knowledge for teaching these skills was far from what is expected of a teacher.

Table 3: Student Teachers' Scores on English Language Skills taught in Schools

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Mean
Sentence transformation	0.00	4.00	4.00	0.89
Pronunciation	1.00	9.00	8.00	4.78
Comprehension	2.00	7.00	5.00	4.39
Punctuation	4.00	10.00	6.00	6.52
Summary	0.00	7.00	7.00	2.77
Reported Speech	0.00	6.00	6.00	1.77
Composition	3.00	7.50	4.50	5.44
Total	17.60	36.50	18.90	26.49

This cohort of students was composed of pre-service and in-service student teachers. The in-service students were those who already had a secondary teacher's diploma in English language as s teaching subject. An independent sample t-test was performed to compare the two groups, so as to find out if there was any significant difference in the means of the two groups. It was expected that in-service students should be better than the pre-service ones. Thus, the test scores were subjected to an independent t-test. Table 4 shows in the p value column that they was no statistical significant difference at $p < 0.05$ between the pre-service students and the in-service students. These results therefore points to the fact that both groups were the same in terms of their skills and knowledge acquisition of teaching English language in secondary schools in Zambia.

Table 4: Independent t-test of student teacher's Scores on English language Skills

Variable	Type of Student	Mean	SD	t	Df	p
Sentence	Pre-service	1.03	0.96	1.39	80.00	0.17
Transformation	In-service	0.77	0.72	1.37	70.01	0.18
Pronunciation	Pre-service	4.87	2.09	0.41	80.00	0.63
	In-service	4.69	1.75	0.41	74.48	0.69
Comprehension	Pre-service	4.46	1.29	0.49	80.00	0.62
	In-service	4.33	1.21	0.49	77.84	0.63
Punctuation	Pre-service	6.54	1.42	0.08	80.00	0.94
	In-service	6.51	1.76	0.08	79.04	0.94
Summary	Pre-service	2.92	1.91	0.69	80.00	0.49
	In-service	2.62	1.93	0.69	79.35	0.49
Reported Speech	Pre-service	1.46	1.67	-1.56	80.00	0.12
	In-service	2.05	1.72	-1.59	79.62	0.12
Composition	Pre-service	5.38	0.69	-0.58	80.00	0.56
	In-service	5.48	0.77	-0.59	79.99	0.56
TOTAL	Pre-service	26.67	4.32	0.36	80.00	0.72
	In-service	26.34	3.83	0.36	76.37	0.72

4.1.2 Student Teachers' Rating of their Competence

Student teachers were asked to rate themselves on their competence to teach some English language skills during their teaching practice. Most of the students indicated that they were not competent enough to teach the secondary school English language skills since the majority of them indicated that they were either not well or were fairly well competent. This actually matches with the test results in tables 3 and 4 which revealed poor understanding of the knowledge and skills that these student teachers were being prepared for.

4.1.3 Student Teachers' view of the Link between English Language Teacher Education and the Secondary School Syllabus

Student teachers were asked in the questionnaire about their opinions on the nature of the English language teacher education curriculum in relation to their future job of teaching English to learners in secondary school.

- 78% expressed the view that the content courses were too theoretical and 65% further held the view that most of the content courses were irrelevant in relation to what they were expected to teach in secondary school.
- 30% had put it that what was they learnt on the teacher education curriculum was difficult to apply in secondary school.
- 10% of the student teachers also expressed the view that it was important for the lecturers who teach them on the programme to have had taught in secondary school themselves.

From these views given by the student teachers just after they had a real school experience of their future duties, it was apparent that there was something amiss in the teacher education curriculum designing and implementation in the institution in question.

After administering a Grade 11 level test to 4th year students, group interviews were conducted to find out from student teachers, as a way of triangulation, their opinions and views about the relevance of what they had learnt at university in relation to the knowledge and skills that they were to teach in secondary school. One participant expressed the following view;

> As a prospective teacher, am honestly worried and disappointed that I was struggling to answer a number of those questions which I remember meeting in secondary school. (Participant 12).

When asked to describe the link between what they studied at university and the items in the tests, student-teachers' perceptions were that there was a very weak link since most of the courses were too academic and theoretical. Some participants expressed the following views;

> There was no direct link. Otherwise I would have managed to confidently answer most of the test questions (participant 4).

The study also sought to find out what the intentions of the curriculum designers were. The question was thus framed on the premise that the intentions of the curriculum designers of the programme had implications on how the programme was implemented and what kind of a product the designers visualised for the intended industry and future duties of the prospective teacher. The participants who were mainly Deans and lecturers were asked for their understanding and their schools' aims regarding the BA Ed (English) programme on which the students that they were teaching were registered. The responses that the lecturers from the two schools (School of Education and School of Humanities and Social Sciences) gave revealed that, although the two schools were teaching the same students, their understanding of the intent of the programme was different. For instance, upon being asked Dean 1 said;

> Our vision in the department is to produce a graduate who would develop a critical sensitivity to the question of power, ideology, and good public relations. But if they go to teach in school they should have enough formation to teach. We need teachers who are fully baked, however, the courses they do are not 100% preparing them for teaching. But it would be good if they can become analytical.

A lecturer from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences attested as follows:

I have taught in secondary school before and I know that there is a big gap between what is taught in secondary school and what we teach here. We do not talk about the simple things they have to teach in secondary school.

The researcher understood that the curriculum for preparing a teacher cannot be exactly the same as what was taught in secondary school. The student teacher needs to be better in the understanding of the subject matter than the pupils. However, this is hardly achievable in a scenario where what is taught is completely alienated from what is taught in secondary schools. This represents an extreme case of content mismatch for a professional curriculum such as the teacher education one. This vague understanding of the English language curriculum for education students by Dean 1 was shared by all the participants from his school (School of Humanities and Social Sciences) who were interviewed. While the respondents indicated that they partly knew about the students' primary needs regarding preparation for teaching, it did not seem to be one of their important points of focus as was expressed by the head of section that;

In my department, we do not only teach education students but we also have students from other programmes although education students tend to be more. So concentrating on education students will not be the right thing for me to do as a lecturer.

This comment came from the lecturer who was teaching one of the first year courses, which is an introductory course for students of English. Another lecturer from HSS had this to say:

To tell you the truth, we just aim at finishing what is in the course outline. As to whether students have skills and knowledge to teach English language in secondary school or not that is not our mandate. I am a lecturer of linguistics. Actually I do not teach English as it is meant for secondary school. I teach linguistics.

The lecturer above is referring to herself as being a lecturer of linguistics and that seemed to be more important for her than the needs of the students of education and their future.

Another lecturer from School of Education with regard to establishing a linkage between university content and secondary school content observed as follows:

Yes, I am aware of the content students are to teach in school and it is not very much related to what they do here. What they are doing here is way too advanced and sometimes may give them problems when it comes to coming down to the level of pupils in school.

4.2   Study II

While study 1 looked at the quality of training by drawing on the views of students still undergoing training and those who had just graduated, study 2 (retrospectively) investigated the quality of training that teachers had received in their various teacher education across programmes, by investigating the reasons why NQTs needed professional help from long serving teachers; and obtained data only from teachers that had just graduated from the University of Zambia's teacher education programme and had just started work and linked this to the kind and quality of training they had received through the School of Education at the University of Zambia. In this paper these are referred to as Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs).

The study found that NQTs and HoDs agreed that NQTs needed help from long serving teachers. The reasons why NQTs needed help from long serving teachers can be summarised into two themes. The first theme relates to inadequate exposure to classroom situation and activities during training. Forty-four (72%) of the sixty-one NQTs in the study indicated that they needed help from long serving teachers because they had inadequate exposure to classroom situation and activities during training. In terms of gender, 24 of these were males, while 20 were females.

Classroom situations or experiences and activities during training are obtained during teaching experience or school experience. To succeed in their career teachers must demonstrate ability to pass on subject content to learners. These skills are solidified during teaching practicum. Yet, teacher education at the University of Zambia has tended to undervalue the teaching practicum component to teacher education which was essential for teaching but had focused on academic and professional content. As Koehler (1988) has advanced, methodology enables a teacher to know which teaching approaches and strategies fit the content, and to know how to arrange the content for it to be effectively delivered to the learners. An adequate period of school-based experience is therefore crucial to quality preparation of quality teachers.

Unfortunately at the University of Zambia students spent very little time doing teaching practice/school experience. This denied students the much-needed exposure to classroom situations and activities during their training. At the University of Zambia for instance, at times teaching practice had been as short as three weeks only. The problem of an inadequate if ineffective teaching practice is acknowledged by the University of Zambia, School of Education as being too short a time for school experience when it states that:

> Students pursuing a degree in teacher education can never stay in a secondary school by way of having some school teaching experience (practice) for a satisfactory length of time, like one full secondary school term, since they

have to be with other UNZA students doing the same content courses but for a different degree problem.

This called for a re-visitation and strengthening of teaching practice as a teacher training strategy and not just use it as a fault-finding exercise as it seemed to be the case in current practice. The second theme on why NQTs needed help from long serving teachers related to the mismatch between content learnt at the University of Zambia and the secondary school syllabus or content for classroom teaching. Twenty-seven (44%) out of 61 NQTs indicated that they needed help from long serving teachers because of the mismatch between content learnt at university and content for classroom teaching. Out of these 27, 17 were males while 10 were females. Arising from the two themes, NQTs indicated a number of specific areas in which they needed help (Table 5).

Table 5: Areas in which NQTs Need Help from Long Serving Teachers

	NQTs (N=61)		HoDs (N=99)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Improve teaching skills	48	79	97	98
Develop understanding of subject area	42	69	91	91.9
Prepare lesson plans and schemes of work	41	67.2	90	91

In all three items in Table 5 HoDs held a stronger view than NQTs on the reasons why NQTs needed help from long serving teachers. Further, with regard to why NQTs needed help from long serving teachers, the researcher wanted to find out if there were any statistically significant differences between the views of the NQTs and the HoDs. To determine if any significant difference existed, a Chi Square test was conducted; the null hypothesis (H_0) being that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of NQTs and HoDs regarding their perceptions on why NQTs needed help from long serving teachers. The alternative hypothesis (H_1) was that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of NQTs and HoDs regarding their perceptions on why NQTs needed help from long serving teachers. The statistical tests were run at significance level of 0.05, significant levels (p values) which were less than or equal to 0.05 were significant (Table 6).

Table 6: Rationale for NQTs Needing Help from Long Serving Teachers

Variable	Chi Square	Df	P value
Improve teaching skills	20.082	1	1.000
Develop understanding of subject area	8.672	1	1.003
Prepare lesson plans and schemes of work	7.230	1	1.007

Significant at p≤ 0.05, n=160

The results in Table 6 indicate that there was no statistical significance in all the three items: Improve teaching skills (x^2=20.082; p=1.000), Develop understanding of subject area (x^2=8.672; p=1.003), Prepare lesson plans and schemes of work (x^2=7.230; p=1.007). Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of the two groups on why NQTs needed help from long serving teachers is therefore accepted. NQTs saw their inadequacies in more or less the same way that HoDs saw them.

The difficulties in training associated with University of Zambia graduates was an age-old problem that pointed to a training regime that among others, focused on content information that were more advanced than the students needed for secondary school teaching. This finding agreed with the evidence adduced by other researchers on the matter (Mulenga, 2015; Manchishi and Masaiti, 2011) who pointed to a mismatch between content learnt at university and content for classroom teaching. This is in line with the problems acknowledged by administrators in the School of Education (UNZA, nd: 1).

It has been observed that most of the relevant content skills in some subjects are not taught at all on the grounds that a university degree should not be tied to a secondary school syllabus content specification. The key stakeholders in the country, the Ministry of Education, have for many years consistently pointed out the misalignment between the course content in the degree programme offered for teachers at the University of Zambia and the needs of the secondary school teachers as determined by the content specification in the syllabuses that the teachers will need to follow in their job after graduation.

The mismatch between content learnt during training and the school syllabus as discussed above did not just lead to NQTs needing help in their professional work; it actually created numerous challenges. These challenges pointed to evidence of pedagogical/instructional difficulties *(See Banja, unpublished)*.

The findings pertaining to the inadequate initial teacher training as reported by the participants, and the consequences of this resonates well with the position taken by Lankau and Scandura (2007) who have traced the many needs of NQTs back to their time during initial training and argued that poor initial training has the potential to affect the competence, effectiveness and efficiency of a newly qualified teacher.

4.3   Implications

From both studies that have been presented in this paper, several implications arise. The findings by these two researchers about the inadequate exposure to classroom situations and activities during training and the mismatch between content learnt at the UNZA and the secondary school syllabus inevitably

contributed to students coming out of university ill-prepared to teach, thereby making them highly unlikely to be effective in their work. Student-teachers in the two studies had shown that as prospective teachers they were not being adequately prepared to teach and their lecturers were most likely not providing them with quality learning experiences of the relevant curriculum. In short, as defined by Biggs (2001) these teachers were not 'fit for the purpose.'

The core function of any teacher preparation programme is to help students acquire appropriate skills, knowledge, values and attitudes so that they can offer quality teaching learning experiences to their learners (Futrell, 2010). If the institutional curriculum does not allow for this to happen, student-teachers can experience learned helplessness, the end result of which could be that expected quality outcomes will not materialise. In the case of the findings in these two studies it is unlikely that student teachers and NQTs graduating from the programme would effectively facilitate the process of helping learners to acquire competence in their respective subjects.

The student-teachers in these two studies expressed concern about the balance between theory and practice in their teacher preparation programme. They felt that they were not getting enough practice in their preparation for classroom teaching. Practice in teacher preparation is critical as this is what allows the student teacher to interact with lecturers, fellow student teachers and content; engage in proactive decision-making then model observed behaviours. One assumes therefore that this process should translate into helping student teachers acquire the competencies for teaching a particular subject area. Creating a balance between students' expectations and institution expectations can be more problematic for some institutions. While university education would want to make the student study theories and abstract content, it is also important that this is guided by job analysis of the particular future duties of the profession. The curriculum of any teacher preparation programme is one of the criteria used to judge the quality of the programme. Therefore it must be carefully designed to incorporate all the elements that will contribute to positive outcomes.

4.4   Recommendations

The findings of the two studies revealed the perspectives of teachers, head teachers, and lecturers on the quality of the teacher education programme at the University of Zambia. Based on these findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The University of Zambia in conjunction with the Ministry of General Education through the Curriculum Development Centre should develop a teacher preparation curriculum that should have clearly defined outcomes which may then be used to judge its quality, with a balance between subject

matter and pedagogy. This teacher preparation programme should be in harmony with the secondary school syllabus.

2. The University of Zambia through the School of Education should strengthen the School Experience aspect of teacher education by lengthening the period of School Experience to a reasonable period of time.

3. There was need for UNZA to periodically review its teacher education programme and performance to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of trainee teachers by raising the quality of teacher education and the quality of the teachers it produces.

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