

# A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE EFFICIENT ASSESSMENT OF FOUNDATION MODULES IN BOTSWANA COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

**Bawisisi Gloria Nchabe**

Tlokweng College of Education

[bnchabe@gov.bw](mailto:bnchabe@gov.bw)

**Gloria Gaofenngwe Moampe**

Tlokweng College of Education

[ggmoampe@gmail.com](mailto:ggmoampe@gmail.com)

## **Abstract**

Prior to the admission into the Diploma in Primary Education program, the student teachers indicate their focus area by selecting two major subjects to pursue. However, in their first year these teacher trainees are required to do all subjects at that level as an introduction. These subjects are referred to as foundation modules. The modules are studied for the whole academic year and the trainees are required to pass these modules in order to proceed to year 2 where they will now focus on their areas of specialisation. At the end of the year 1, the trainees are expected to attain 50% when the module coursework mark and the examination mark are averaged. A performance graded between 40 and 49% permits the learners to take supplementary examination. If the averaged mark is below 40% the trainee is given one chance to repeat the whole year in order to attain the required score. If a learner is unable to pass after being allowed to retake, they are discontinued from the programme for one academic year and could re-apply for admission. If the trainee fails again after readmission, they are excluded from the programme and will never be given any more chance to enrol (UBAI, 2011). It has been observed that a considerable number of the student trainees do fail to complete the DPE programme due to their failure to pass foundation modules in year 1. This study sought to determine how foundation modules could be assessed so that they do not inhibit progression of learners. The findings of the study show that both lecturers and trainees are not satisfied with how foundation modules are assessed in as far as they disadvantage learners. The study recommends that there should be no examinations for foundation modules.

**Keywords:** *Assessment, College of Education, foundation modules, Diploma in Primary Education, student teachers*

## **Introduction**

The thesis of this paper is that suitable, trustworthy and fair forms of assessment could be effectively used to improve the quality of the programmes offered in teacher training Colleges of Education (CoE), especially those that train primary school teachers in Botswana. The specific focus is on how assessment for year one learners is interpreted for progression to the next level in Colleges of Education (primary). It is important to indicate that assessment should be valid and reliable enough so that learners are not disadvantaged in anyway (Teacher Training & Development, 2007). For this paper, assessment will be taken to refer to any form of evidence acquired about the learner in which sound judgement and decisions are made regarding performance achievement for the Diploma in Primary Education (DPE) curriculum.

According to Botswana Examination Council (2018), any form of assessment that is not well sought of “may lead to poor decision-making about the learner achievement and system quality” (p.15). Botswana like all other countries is to redirect its education system to be out-come based (Republic of Botswana, 2017) and henceforth all education providers should comply. However, the current DPE programme is none outcome based compliant. According to Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (ETSSP), teacher education programme and its assessment system needs to be reviewed so that it becomes more competency based (Republic of Botswana, 2015).

## **DPE programme structure**

The current DPE programme is a course aimed at producing quality teachers for primary school sector. It is currently offered in two government Colleges of Education; Tlokweng and Serowe Colleges of Education and other private owned institutions in the country. In government owned Colleges of Education (CoE) it is a three year course that comprise of subject component, research component and teaching practice (Academic Regulations, 2011; Tlokweng College of Education, 2018). Thus, DPE is a fulltime programme extending over six semesters whereby each semester consists not less than thirteen (13) weeks (including mid-semester break). Normally before any examination, candidates are given a week as a revision period. During this time there is no teaching going on in the College, however, candidates are free to consult with lecturers.

In year 1, teacher trainees are assessed in each of the subjects offered in DPE programme for that level. The teacher trainees are therefore required to attain an average score of fifty percent (50%) in each subject in order to progress to year 2. The researchers who are also lecturers in a government college of education had realised that some of the trainees fail to complete the course, and to be precise, fail to progress to year 2 where they could mainly be focusing on areas of specialization. Hence the DPE programme year 1 results for the past four years at Tlokweng College of Education were used to lay the background and problem statement for the study.

## **Background of the research problem**

The quality of teacher programme is to a large extent dependent on the relevance of the programme structure, comprehensibility and the goals of a country. As already mentioned earlier, the Diploma in Primary Education programme is a three-year teacher education course and it targets mostly candidates

with Botswana General Certificate in Secondary Education (BGSCE) with at least three credits and a pass in English. The aspiring candidates apply and indicate two subjects as their intended major area of specialization for their entire study (Tlokweng College Prospectus, 2018). According to the Academic Calendar, the subjects focus areas are in four categories as follows: **Category 1:** English and Setswana; **Category 2:** Mathematics and Science; **Category 3:** Religious Education and Social Studies and **Category 4:** Any two combinations from the following: Agriculture, Art, Craft and Design, Home Economics, Music and Physical Education.

In addition to the two major subjects, candidates do take Communication and Study Skills, Special Education, Guidance and Counselling and Foundations of Education as general and compulsory subjects.

According to the current education system and requirements, a primary school teacher should be an all-rounder and be able to teach all subjects offered at that level (Republic of Botswana, 1994). Hence the DPE programme is envisaged to equip graduates with skills and competencies of teaching all subjects in a primary school set up. Therefore, all aspiring teachers admitted in a College of Education (primary), in addition to the areas of specialization, are expected to take all subjects in year I of the DPE programme. Each subject is offered in two components; content studies and professional studies. The content studies provide aspects of the discipline which is a bit higher than BGCSE syllabus whereas, the professional studies mainly focus on equipping teacher trainees with necessary skills and competencies of how to teach content offered by primary school syllabus. The candidates are expected to pass each subject in order to progress to second year as already mentioned. However, when they fail depending on the scores attained and the condition thereof the results could be as follows (Academic Regulations, 2011):

**Fail and Supplement:** the candidate failed to attain 50% in the subject during the first attempt.

**Fail and Repeat:** the candidate failed to attain 49% for the subject or had failed the supplement Examination.

**Fail and Discontinue:** the candidate had failed the *Repeat* opportunity once; and could be re-admitted into the programme after a lapse of one academic year.

**Fail and Exclude:** the candidate has twice failed the repeat opportunity at the same level and will never be readmitted into the programme.

Reflecting on the results of the candidates in year 1 for the past four academic years at Tlokweng College of Education results, it became evident that some of the aspiring teachers are unable to complete the course due to the subjects they had never indicated to take as areas of specialization. These candidates are failing not the professional studies of the subject in most cases but the content studies. The tables below show a summary of performance for some of those candidates who were unsuccessful in year 1 as well as their current status.

**Table 1: Candidates from 2014/15 Intake**

<b>Pseudo candidate numbers</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Area of specialization Opted for</b>	<b>Subject failed</b>	<b>Final Result outcome</b>	<b>Current/final status of the candidate</b>
201400ATkCE	F	Agriculture & Home Economics	English	Fail & Repeat	<i>Completed a year after normal duration</i>
201400BTkCE	F	Religious Education & Social Studies	English & Home Economics	Fail & Repeat	<i>Withdrew</i>
201400CTkCE	M	Religious Education & Social Studies	Mathematics, Science & Agriculture	Fail & Repeat	<i>Withdrew</i>

**Table 2: Candidates from 2015/16 Intake**

<b>Pseudo candidate numbers</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Area of specialization Opted for</b>	<b>Subject failed</b>	<b>Final Result outcome</b>	<b>Current/final status of the candidate</b>
201500ATkCE	F	English & Setswana	Mathematics	Fail & Discontinue	<i>Should have been re-admitted for academic year 2018/19 but never turned up.</i>
201500BTkCE	F	English & Setswana	Mathematics	Fail & Repeat	<i>Now in year 3 but could have completed last year</i>
201500CTkCE	F	English & Setswana	Mathematics, Science & Physical Education	Fail & Exclude	<i>Excluded from the programme as had failed twice</i>

**Table 3: Candidates from 2016/17 Intake**

<b>Pseudo candidate numbers</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Area of specialization Opted for</b>	<b>Subject failed</b>	<b>Final Result outcome</b>	<b>Current/final status of the candidate</b>
201600ATkCE	M	Art & Music	Science & Physical Education	Fail & Repeat	<i>Doing Year 2 instead of final year</i>
201600BTkCE	M	Religious Education & Social Studies	Physical Education	Fail & Repeat	<i>Doing Year 2 instead of final year</i>
201600CTkCE	F	Agriculture & Home Economics	Science	Fail & Discontinue	<i>Now repeating year 1</i>

**Table 4: Candidates from 2017/18 Intake**

<b>Pseudo candidate numbers</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Area of specialization Opted for</b>	<b>Subject failed</b>	<b>Final Result outcome</b>	<b>Current/final status of the candidate</b>
201700ATkCE	F	English/Setswana	Music	Pass	<i>Proceeded to year 2</i>
201700BTkCE	F	Physical Education/Home Economics	Music	Pass	<i>Proceeded to year 2</i>
201700CTkCE	F	Physical Education/Home Economics	Music	Pass	<i>Proceeded to year 2</i>
201700DTkCE	F	Religious Education/Social Studies	Music	Pass	<i>Proceeded to year 2</i>
201700ETkCE	F	Agriculture/Home Economics	Mathematics	Pass	<i>Proceeded to year 2</i>

The study was prompted by the fact that candidates in year 1 do not fail the subjects they opted to specialize in. It seems there is a trend that candidates either supplement or repeat non specialization subjects and also some of those who are to repeat never turn up for the opportunity which defeats one of the aims of ETSSP for tertiary education of student retention and progression (Republic of Botswana, 2015). Therefore, the researchers wanted to get the views of both lecturers and students regarding the current Colleges of Education curriculum, especially, the mode of assessment.

### **Problem Statement**

The assumption is that quality and capable teachers on specific disciplines might exit the DPE programme due to failure on the subjects they did not opt to specialize in. Very few, if any studies have addressed assessment in teacher Colleges of Education (primary) in Botswana, particularly on using year 1 results from none specialization area for progression to year 2 by encompassing the results of areas of non-specialization. The current study attempts to seek views from both teacher trainees and lecturers regarding progression of year I candidates by encompassing the results of the subjects candidates did not opt to specialize on.

### **Purpose of the study**

The main aim of this study was to seek views of both teacher trainees and lecturers regarding the use of non-specialization subjects results for progression to year 2. The study further sought suggestions from the participants regarding the structure for DPE programme year 1 curriculum basing on the fact that teacher education “need to produce high quality teachers... who are up-to-date with concepts and methodologies.” Republic of Botswana, 2015: p.76).

The study attempts to answer the following research question:

1. What are your views regarding assessment of year 1 of the DPE programme?
2. At what stage of the DPE programme do you think teacher trainees should start specialization?
3. In your view, what should the curriculum in year 1 of the DPE programme focus on?

## **Theoretical Framework**

The researchers based the theoretical framework on the reviewed literature that focuses on teacher education and assessment. The theoretical framework for this study is embedded on the progressivism perspective as one of the educational philosophies that influence the learning and teaching as well as assessment worldwide (Abraham, 2008; Jonassen, 2008). The theory emphasizes that assessment should be more focused, fair and relevant to the learner and should also be outcome based. Thus the objectives and form of assessment should be SMART (simple, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely). That is for this particular study, assessment should allow learners to complete the programme in the specified period of three years. As such pedagogical knowledge is more relevant for foundation modules of the DPE programme as learners are to execute qualities and skills of teaching in primary schools.

## **Literature review**

According to the reviewed literature, Colleges of Education in Finland view assessment for teacher trainees as an effective pedagogical tool that leads to self-reflection, self-redirection and sound decision making (Halinen, 2018). Finland has two types of teachers; Classroom teachers and subject teachers (Chang & Tsuruta, 2010; Dobbis & Martens, 2012; Sahlberg, 2010). According to this literature, classroom teachers are trained to teach all subjects relevant for the class they handle and they teach lower grades (1-6). On the other hand, subject teachers teach upper level (7-9) and these teachers specialize in one or two subjects (major and minor) during their training, but the teacher teaches only one subject. However, for both groups of teachers the curriculum emphasizes the following: pedagogical studies, research, content and ICT studies.

Similarly, a study by the Holland International Study Centre (2019), believes that a foundation course should be designed to help students attain the correct level of qualification and skills from a tertiary institution and is made up of academic modules and specific modules related to the learner's area of specialisation. This is contradictory to how foundation modules are viewed at primary teacher training colleges of education where trainees are expected to do all course content which is not related to their areas of specialisation. For an example a Mathematics and Science specialist is expected to do Art, Craft and Design as well as Religious Education contents. Also literature refers to specialisation content as series of related courses designed to help a learner master a specific subject in order to be a well-rounded teacher (Bain, 2004, Gopang, 2016; Halinen, 2018). Bain (2004) views the best teacher as someone who knows the subject exceedingly well, well-rounded in their training and equipped with all relevant theories of the subject. This concept is in agreement with the concept of specialisation in the colleges of education context. However, the whole concept is nullified by the fact that in year 1, teacher trainees are expected to do all subjects in the programme.

A study on *Teacher education and professional development programs in Pakistan* (Gopang, 2016) showed that in addition to content knowledge of a subject, teacher training institutions should focus mainly on professional skills and teacher development. The pedagogical content knowledge, use of technology and curriculum design is highly commended. It concludes by indicating that teachers should be trained to provide effective teaching such as "presenting authentic material logically and systematically, ensuring students' active participation, developing students' abilities practically and pragmatically and focusing on

application and practice, providing quick feedback on students' assigned tasks and their performance", (Gopang, 2016: p.3).

Similarly, a study by Darling-Hammond (2006) conducted in America reflected a number of aspects expected from teachers and are; pedagogical content knowledge, classroom management, effective communication and use of technology in the classroom. The study further indicates that teachers should homogenously prepare all learners equally for critical thinking and skills development. This therefore implies much emphasis on professional studies for teacher training institutions. Also, in Australia, a report based on *improving consistency in teacher judgments*, (Meiers, Ozolins & McKenzie, 2007) revealed the following:

- i) Assessment should be reliable and valid in order to enhance learning.
- ii) Teachers' judgments are interwoven into all assessments practices, and the quality of these judgments determine the extent to assessment is valid and reliable
- iii) Assessment is the manner in which evidence about a learner is gathered in a more planned and systematic way in order to draw inferences about the learner.
- iv) "Although assessment by teachers is used as the main source of information in some national and state assessment systems, in other countries, it has the image of being unreliable and subject to bias"(p.10).

In summary the reviewed literature put much emphasis on pedagogical content knowledge and use of ICT in the classroom. Also the literature reflected the following with regard to assessment:

- a) Assessment should be fair and equitable (Halinen, 2018; Standards & Testing Agency, 2018; Korthagen, 2011). The assessment should not disadvantage or advantage any candidate. Thus assessment should provide social justice and equity for all learners.
- b) Judgment from the assessment should be valid and reliable (Standards & Testing Agency, 2018; Korthagen, 2011; Ladwig & Gore, 2006). The assessment results should be appropriate and accurate and should be able to maintain the same results when given intervals or to similar group of learners.
- c) Assessment for Teacher trainees should be more skewed on pedagogical knowledge and skills (Gopang, 2016; Maaranen, 2018). The implication is that the training of teachers should be mainly focused on equipping teacher trainees with professional skills and development.
- d) Knowledge of the subject matter is significant construct in teaching effectiveness (Halinen, 2018; Gopang, 2016; Cengizhan, 2012) and as such teacher trainees should be able to plan, deliver and design curriculum for the subject areas they specialized in.

This literature review is too scanty, you should engage with the literature to show the reader what has been done already and the gaps thereof.

### **Methodology and Research design**

In order to find out the validity of decisions made regarding year 1 results for the DPE programme a qualitative study was designed for teacher training Colleges of Education. It was hoped that the pragmatic

study would not only contribute to our current problems on none completion of the DPE programme by some of the aspiring teachers, but will also contribute towards the alleviation of similar problem in the entire national education system.

### **Target Population**

The study targeted both lecturers and second year teacher trainees in College of Education (primary). The second year teacher trainees were targeted because they had just progressed from year one where they were subjected to examinations in all subjects.

### **Sample and sampling procedures**

Participants for the study were drawn from Tlokweng College of Education. The researchers stratified random sample for teacher trainees according to areas of specialization. The researchers wanted to have a balanced representation according to gender, therefore, names of female students were separated from those of male students per area of specialization and the first to be picked were used as sample for the study. However, for languages (English and Setswana) there are only four male candidates in the category and were purposefully selected for the study. The entire teacher trainees sample representation is as shown on table 5.

**Table 5: Candidates from 2017/18 Intake**

<b>Candidates' area of specialization</b>	<b>Number per Gender</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	
English/Setswana	4	3	7
Mathematics/Science	3	4	7
Religious Education/Social Studies	4	3	7
Art/Home Economics	1	1	2
Art/ Music	1	1	2
Art/Physical Education	1	2	3
Agriculture/Home Economics	1	1	2
Agriculture/ Music	1	1	2
Agriculture/Physical Education	2	1	3
<b>Totals</b>	18	17	35

The same stratified random sample was used to select eight female and seven male lecturers, thus bringing the total number of participants for the study to fifty.

### **Data collection procedures**

Data was collected from teacher trainees and lecturers through oral interviews. Before collecting data, the researchers thoroughly explained the purpose of the study to the participants that it was aimed at improving the manner in which curriculum for year 1 for the Diploma in Primary Education is executed, especially issues of assessment. The participants were also informed that pseudo candidate numbers will be

used for teacher trainees and no real names will be used in reporting the findings of the study. Participants were also given liberty to opt out of the study if they so wished, however all were willing to participate.

Both teacher trainees and lecturers were then subjected to focus group discussions. The trainees were grouped according to areas of specialization while lecturers were grouped according to gender. In total there were seven groups. The trainees' groups were Mathematics/Science; English/Setswana; Religious Education/Social Studies; Art and lastly Agriculture. The researchers wanted first-hand information and also to be exposed to body language of the participants. The interviews gave researchers a chance to seek for immediate clarity among group members. The participants were to respond to the three main guiding questions for the study while the researchers transcribed the responses. At the end of the interview, the responses under each research question were read out to each group for confirmation, corrections and or additions. This was done in order to establish the trustworthiness (credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability) (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2014) of the information collected. To analyze data, the researchers relied on the information from the participants and used words to describe and elaborate on the information collected. The researchers looked closely for similarities and differences of data collected from the groups.

## **Results of the study**

In general, the results of the study revealed that lecturers in Tlokweng College of Education apply the Academic Regulations (2011) to the latter as the trainees who fail to score 50% in a subject do not pass or progress. The results are presented in two categories, first those from the interviews for teacher trainees and those from the lecturers. Thereafter a summary of results for the two sets of participants is provided.

### *Teacher trainees' interviews*

All the interviewed teacher trainees have no problem with the Academic Regulation 10.2: "To progress from year to year a student shall attain a minimum average mark of at least 50% in each of the subjects studied" (UBAI, 2011, p.12), when it is applied to area of specialization. However, the trainees are unconformable with the same Academic Regulation when it is applied to learners who fail to pass the non-specialization subjects, they felt it was unfair. Out of 35 teacher trainees who were interviewed, 28 (80%) suggests that it should not be applied to learners who do not specialize in a subject, whilst 7(20%) think that it should be reviewed to allow learners to progress in non-specialization areas with at least End of Year Mark of 40% for each subjects. However, the general feeling of teacher trainees is that no learner should *repeat or be discontinued or excluded* from the programme because of the subject area he or she was not specializing in. Trainees indicated that some learners do sponsor themselves and only to be disadvantaged by what they did not opt for and it also seem to be costly for those candidates who are government sponsored.

All the five teams of participants agree that teacher trainees should indicate subjects they want to specialize in at year 1 of the DPE programme. The teams further indicated that the only wrong thing Colleges of Education do was to teach them "difficult content" for the subjects they did not choose. One trainee had this to say: *"just tell me where will I use the content I am taught from mathematics just to give an example, I am not interested in continuing with it because it gave me headache in form five, but I know and I am confident that as for primary mathematics content I will be able to teach it effectively if I am*

*assisted properly*”. One also said, *“I am not interested in music and I will never be a choir master after completion, so I wonder why I should be learning all those difficult notations, I like Setswana and I am aspiring to hold a PhD along that line, not Music or Mathematics or Science, you name them”*.

All teacher trainees interviewed were not sure of how the curriculum for year 1 of the DPE programme should contain besides saying they only wanted to focus on their area of specialization so that they can graduate without failing. Below are some of the selected teacher trainees responses per research question.

**1. What are your views regarding assessment of year 1 of the DPE programme?**

- *“Progression should be on areas of specialization only not everything, the Regulation that make us fail should be deleted completely”*
- *“It is really unfair and uncalled for to fail a learner on something that he had never wanted to do from the onset. I would understand if I fail what I indicated to do, not something that I never liked even at Cambridge, the Regulation being applied is not good at all”*.
- *“I hate mathematics, to be taught about advanced algebra that I will not even teach at primary school is not a good thing. Like now I supplemented year 1 examinations, it’s by God’s grace that I progressed and I believe it is because of professional studies, not content; the Regulations are hard on us.”*

**2. At what stage of the DPE programme do you think teacher trainees should start specialization?**

- *“Specialization should start straight away from year 1 so that we are well prepared in our areas of specialization”*
- *“Year 1 and let it be actual specialization as indicated in the advert, not all subjects specialization”*
- *“Year 1, but I hate other subjects that I did not choose, they destructed me on what I wanted to focus on as I spent much time cramming so that I should not supplement or fail. Thank God I made it”2.?*

**3. In your view, what should be the curriculum in year 1 of the DPE programme focus on?**

- *“I don’t know, lecturers should know better what makes us better teachers, but not difficult subject contents.”*
- *“What I am only sure of is that I want to be a quality teacher who can compete globally, what content or focus of the curriculum make such kind of a teacher, I am really not sure, but I think is not difficult subject matter from all areas that were are currently taking.”*
- *“I am not sure but I think the curriculum should be more on how to teach the content offered at primary school since we are going to teach at that level.”*
- *“I just want to focus on my specialization, nothing else, we are tired of failing”*

The sample quotations show that teacher trainees are uncomfortable with the application of the current Academic Regulation on those who are not specializing. They however agree that candidates should start focusing on their areas of specialization in year 1. Lastly they are not sure of what the curriculum for year 1 should focus on besides emphasizing on their areas of specialization.

#### *Lecturers' interviews*

The lecturers in their interviews seem to be in agreement with teacher trainees that assessment in foundation modules does disadvantage students and there is need for change. Below are some of the selected direct response from the lecturers. The letter next to the response shows the gender of the interviewee as either female (F) of Male (M).

1. **What are your views regarding assessment of year 1 of the DPE programme?**
  - *The results interpretation is fine; the problem is the content of the curriculum for such candidates. There is need for Colleges of Education (primary), to ensure fairness when assessing learners. We see that the curriculum is not fair on learners but there is nothing we can do for now". (M)*
  - *"Using results for progression to year 2 is not a problem; the problem is what the candidates are subjected to that makes the results and decisions made to be unfair to candidates. The current curriculum does not take into consideration the individual learner's, needs and consents, but this will go on until it is reviewed and structured properly." (F)*
  - *"We have a certain forced and prescribed form of content to teach and assess and we have to comply and meet those requirements, there's nothing we can do for now." (M)*
  - *"As long as the curriculum and the Academic Regulations have not changed, candidates will continue to be subjected to examinations in content and professional studies of each subject areas." (F)*
  
2. **At what stage of the DPE programme do you think teacher trainees should start specialization?**
  - *"Specialization should start in year 1 and learners should only do the content of their area of specialization, non-specialists should be trained on how to teach topics of subjects in a primary school syllabus" (F)*
  - *"There is nothing wrong in indicating specialization in year one, but all is wrong to teach non-specialists the content of the subject they did not opt for, why can't Colleges of Education focus on professional studies for these candidates?" (F)*
  - *"The current procedure is fine, the problem is the nature of the curriculum content for non-specialists candidates. Why do we bother them with content of the subject they did not want to specialize in? Why can't we be concerned with whether they will be able to teach all subjects in the primary school syllabus effectively?" (M)*
  - *"Indicating specialization area when there are admitted is okay, the problem we are currently faced with that we need to challenge is relevance of the curriculum for these learners" (M)*
3. **In your view, what should be the curriculum in year 1 of the DPE programme focus on?**
  - *"I think professional studies content is enough for non-specialists candidates." (F)*

- *“Obviously we want these students to teach effectively in primary schools, then why don’t we just concentrate on that and forget about content studies?” (M)*
- *“We should be mainly concerned about how to teach specific subjects in primary schools and also holistically look at issues of classroom management; use of ICT in the classroom, lesson presentation, schemes of work and lesson plans, production of learning aids, evaluation and self-reflection.” (F)*
- *“I think each department should focus on how to teach that subject at primary school and this will be an effective way of training a generalist teacher for primary school teaching” (M)*
- *“We thought semesterised curriculum would be the solution, but the idea died a natural death”, we are just waiting for anything.” (M)*

The lectures did confirm that non-specialists trainees do both content and professional studies in different disciplines. However, they all agree that the content for these learners is not the same as that of those who are specializing in the subject, though the content is a bit above that of BGCSE. The lectures did indicate that as professionals, it was their duty to implement approved policies including the current curriculum and Academic Regulations in Colleges of Education. The ideal suggestion from lecturers was to change the curriculum content for non-specialization areas and retain the Academic Regulations as they are. The argument was, if the Academic Regulations could be made lenient to allow learners to progress without even passing the professional studies of these different subjects they are likely not to effectively teach them in primary schools.

Like the teacher trainees, lecturers are also of the view that specialization should start at year 1 of the DPE programme and those that are not specializing in a subject should only do the professional component of the programme. Lecturers also feel that the professional component should be the same for specialists and non-specialists candidates as it would be focusing on the pedagogical knowledge of the discipline and should sit for the same examination paper.

#### *Summary of results*

The general findings of the study from both lecturers and student-trainees support the findings in the literature that assessment should not disadvantage any learner and the judgments or decisions from the results should be valid and reliable. (Halinen, 2018; Standards & Testing Agency, 2018; Korthagen, 2011; Ladwig & Gore, 2006; Meiers, Ozolins & McKenzie, 2007). Teacher trainees fail not because they are not capable but they are being subjected to what is not of their interest or within their cognitive structures. This was emphasized by those trainees who indicated that they will never pursue a certain discipline and by lectures when they indicated that they only implement the current curriculum and the Academic Regulations as required. One significance finding from the results is that though lecturers were both quick to point out that the current curriculum for Colleges of Education is the problem, the trainees feel that the current Academic Regulation that fail them have a negative impact on both the learners as well as the government of Botswana and should be deleted. Both lecturers and students trainees agree that there should be no examination for non-specialization subjects, that is, progression should be based on the coursework for the subjects. However, the researchers seem to agree with the lecturers that instead of deleting the Academic Regulation, the curriculum for DPE programme needs to be reviewed and restructured to allow focus on professional studies for non-specializing students in a subject.

## **Discussion**

The qualitative study sheds light on the nature of Colleges of Education current curriculum and the form of assessment and also opened many interesting avenues for further research. Nonetheless, both lecturers and teacher trainees seem to agree that the current pedagogic training, especially assessment of year 1 end up perpetuating problems for candidates. Lecturers and students also agree that specialization should start in year 1 of the DPE programme; however, they only vary when it comes to how results are interpreted. It is also evident that the current curriculum for Colleges of Education needs to be reviewed so that it is focused more on professional development of teachers. If teacher trainees are to teach all subjects at primary school level they need to be well equipped with sound methodology for all of these subjects. The 21<sup>st</sup> century teacher according to reviewed literature should be a critical thinker, researcher; ICT oriented and should have relevant teaching competencies for the class/level taught (Gopang, 2016; Halinen, 2018; Chang & Tsuruta, 2010; Dobbis & Martens, 2012; Sahlberg, 2010).

For education of social justice and equity, as literature (Halinen, 2018) has shown, no learner should be disadvantaged. The researchers feel that Colleges of Education seem to unintentionally disadvantage some of the teacher trainees, especially those that cannot complete the course due to failure in discipline they did not choose. Furthermore, it might be an indication that Colleges of Education do not recognize prior learning of the aspiring teachers. The ideal situation would be to assist the trainees to be professional teachers not to give them more content of the subjects that they would not even pursue during further education (Sahlberg, 2010).

According to Republic of Botswana (2016), it is the wish of the government to empower the youth with necessary skills and competencies that would develop the country and make it globally competitive. Colleges of Education as teacher trainers should ensure that graduates acquire necessary competencies that would effectively transform Botswana into the knowledge based society and be internationally competitive. The researchers agree with the two parties that specialization should start in year 1 of the DPE programme and also that non-specialization trainees should focus on pedagogical knowledge of each discipline. Therefore the researchers call for the review of the current curriculum and for the implementation of a teacher programme that will function effectively in the information and globalization world.

Based on the results from oral interviews and the reviewed literature it is clear that tests and examinations for teacher training institutions could be interpreted to mainly be assessing the trainees' knowledge of procedures, formulas and facts. Those learners who cannot do the procedural memory replacement correctly might panic and as such suffer failure and loss of self-chosen career. Therefore, such antiquated and crude processes of assessment have to be thoroughly overhauled if Botswana is to achieve the international outcome based education system which is being advocated for at all levels.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

The main purpose of this study was to seek views of both lecturers and teacher trainees regarding assessment in year 1 of the DPE programme in order to make informed recommendations for implementation. However, referring to the reviewed literature and the comparison of the actual situation in Colleges of Education (Primary) such as Tlokweng the researchers conclude that it seems as if the overall

judgments based on the results of non-specialization subjects are biased since the needs and consents of candidates are not taken into consideration, and as such they are likely to be disadvantaged. One might also conclude that Colleges of Education (Primary) do not take prior learning into consideration since the candidates had already covered the material that is above primary level and as such they only lack professional growth and development in the discipline they are to teach.

The evidence suggests that Colleges of Education syllabus Regulations need to be reviewed and restructured especially in non-specialization areas to focus on pedagogical content in primary schools. Basing on the research findings, the researchers make the following recommendations:

- a) Review the current Colleges of Education programme to accommodate professional learning curriculum. The programme should mainly focus on how to effectively teach the national primary school curriculum. The programme should be taken by both specialists and non- specialization teacher trainees as it would be focusing on pedagogical knowledge of the national primary school curriculum.
- b) Year 1 teacher trainees should only do the professional component of the subjects they are not specializing in.
- c) Progression for non-specialization area should be based on coursework and an examination for professional studies only, which focus on how to teach content of different subjects at primary school level.
- d) There is need for review of assessment for year 1 learners in Colleges of education (Primary).

## **References**

- Abraham, M. R. (2008). Importance of a theoretical framework for research, Acs Symposium series, (976), 47-66.
- Bain, K. (2004). *What the best college teachers do?* Cambridge MA: Horward University Press
- Botswana Examination Council. (2018). *Issues and Options paper: A context paper used to inform development of a National Assessment Policy for General Education* . Gaborone
- Cengizhan, L. (2012). *Teacher portfolios are on stage for professional development: A qualitative case study*. Texas: Trakya University.
- Chang, J. & Tsuruta, Y. (2010). *An investigation of reasons for Finland's success in programme for international school Assessment (PISA) compares*. Journal of Comparative and International Education, 40(4), 551-553.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). *Constructing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teacher Education*. Journal on Teacher Education, 57(10), 1-15, The American Association for Teacher Education.
- Dobbis, M. & Martens, K. (2012). *Towards an education approach in Finland*. Journal of Education policy, 27(10), 23-43.
- Gopang, I. B. (2016). *The teacher education and professional development programs in Pakistan*. The international journal of research in teacher education, 7(1)1-14.
- Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E. & Airasian, P. W. (2014). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Halinen, I. (2018). *The new educational curriculum in Finland*. <http://www.allianceforchildhood.eu/publications>.
- Jonassen, D. (2008). *Meaningful learning with technology* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall
- Korthagen, F. (2011). *Making teacher education relevant for practice: The pedagogy of realistic teacher education*. Orbis Scholae 5(2), 31-50.
- Ladwig, J. & Gore, J. (2006). *Classroom practice guide: Quality teaching in NSW public school*. Newcastle: Department of Education and Training.
- Maaranen, K. (2018). *Finnish teacher education* .University of Helsinki: Faculty of educational Sciences.
- Meiers, M., Ozolins, C. & Mckenzie, P. (2007). *Improving consistency in teacher judgments*. Victoria: Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) report.

- Republic of Botswana. (2017). *Botswana Qualification Authority Criteria and Guidelines for Accreditation of learning programmes*. Gaborone:
- Republic of Botswana. (2016). *Vision 2036: Achieving prosperity for all*. Gaborone: Lentswe la lesedi (Pty) Ltd on behalf of The Vision 2036 Presidential task team.
- Republic of Botswana. (2015). *Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan 2015-2020*. Gaborone: Government of Botswana.
- Republic of Botswana. (1994). *Revised National Policy on Education*. Gaborone: Government Printers.
- Sahlberg, P. (2010). *The secret to Finland success: Educating teachers*. Stanford: Centre for opportunity in education.
- Standards & Testing Agency. (2018). *Teacher Assessment guidance: Key stage 2 for schools and local authorities*. United Kingdom: National assessment-open government license.
- Teacher Training & Development. (2007). *The code of examinations: Assessment standards for Colleges of Education*. Unpublished.
- UBAI. (2011). *Diploma in Primary Education Academic Regulation (Revised)*. Gaborone: University of Botswana- Centre for Academic Development.
- (2018). *Tlokweng College of Education Prospectus: 2018-2020*.