

M U S T E R

Multi-Site Teacher Education Research Project

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Discussion Paper

27

**New Teachers on the Job:
The Impact of Teacher
Education in Lesotho**

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Multi-Site Teacher Education Research Project (MUSTER)

MUSTER is a collaborative research project co-ordinated from the Centre for International Education at the University of Sussex Institute of Education. It has been developed in partnership with:

- The Institute of Education, University of Cape Coast, Ghana.
- The Institute of Education, The National University of Lesotho.
- The Centre for Educational Research and Training, University of Malawi.
- The Faculty of Education, University of Durban-Westville, South Africa.
- The School of Education, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine's Campus, Trinidad.

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MUSTER is focused on generating new understandings of teacher education before, during and after the point of initial qualification as a teacher. Its concerns include exploring how new teachers are identified and selected for training programmes, how they acquire the skills they need to teach effectively, and how they experience training and induction into the teaching profession. The research includes analytical concerns with the structure and organisation of teacher education, the form and substance of teacher education curriculum, the identity, roles and cultural experience of trainee teachers, and the costs and probable benefits of different types of initial teacher training.

MUSTER is designed to provide opportunities to build research and evaluation capacity in teacher education in developing countries through active engagement with the research process from design, through data collection, to analysis and joint publication. Principal researchers lead teams in each country and are supported by three Sussex faculty and three graduate researchers.

This series of discussion papers has been created to provide an early opportunity to share output from sub-studies generated within MUSTER for comment and constructive criticism. Each paper takes a theme within or across countries and offers a view of work in progress.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

DRT	District Resource Teacher
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
NTTC	National Teacher Training College
NUL	National University of Lesotho
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
UT	Unqualified Teacher

ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a small-scale study of six Newly Qualified Teachers and three untrained teachers in five Lesotho primary schools. The aim was to gain some understanding of how training affected the way teachers perform, how they are perceived, and what kinds of support is available in the schools. While no firm conclusions can be drawn, the study suggests that NQTs do draw on knowledge and skills learnt at college, and are considered to teach better than untrained teachers. However, those observed taught mainly through traditional presentation or question-and-answer methods, and used few teaching/learning aids. While their relationships with pupils were good and class management was largely satisfactory, headteachers criticised them for poor professional attitudes and bad time-keeping. The schools offer little in terms of formal induction or support. The report recommends the introduction of an induction or probationary period with structured support.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

The Lesotho Education system operates in an extremely difficult context, particularly where primary schools are concerned. Classes are often very large, schools continue to employ unqualified teachers, and the infrastructure is poor. Great value is put on passing external examinations, which can undermine the learning of practical life-skills, and mean that students may leave school without relevant knowledge and skills. When new primary teachers graduate from the National Teacher Training College (NTTC), they join schools by answering advertisements for posts but no follow-up studies have been done to see how well they cope with the system they encounter.

This study looks into the impact of teacher training on the Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), as they enter their first jobs. The purpose is to understand how far the initial training influences NQTs in their teaching and how far the receiving schools impact on their ability to use their training, thus shaping the type of teacher they become. From such an understanding it is hoped the study will shed light on how far the NQTs fall back on their college curriculum to help them teach and on what kind of environment and support the receiving schools offer to enable them to teach. The results of the study will provide the National Teacher Training College (NTTC) with insight on the impact initial training has on NQTs and how they apply it in their new jobs. From such information, the College would be able to organise its training programmes efficiently, and support new graduates more effectively.

1.2 Research questions

The study was undertaken within the overall framework of the MUSTER research questions :

- **What are the characteristics of college graduates, in terms of self-perception, motivation and attitudes?**
- **How have they been changed by their course?**

More specifically, the Lesotho study sought to address the following:

- (1) How has the NTTC training affected the way the NQTs teach
- (2) How much do they use what they were taught?
- (3) How far are the NQTs influenced by the school in the way they teach?
 - (a) What kinds of support do they get?
 - (b) What constraints do they find when they try to apply college ideas?
- (4) How are the NQTs perceived by the Heads and mentors?
- (5) Is there a difference between trained and untrained teachers?

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND

Understanding the impact of teacher training on Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) as they enter their first jobs, is a problem that has drawn the attention of a number of educational researchers, though these have been mainly in industrialised countries. Some of these researchers point out that people who become teachers have, in one way or another already been socialised into teaching, prior to entering training colleges, (Feiman-Nemser, 1990). At the same time, they raise the issue of how well the college that prepares teachers and schools that employ them cultivate and support their NQTs' capacity to learn from their teaching and to grow in their work (ibid).

Calderhead (1987) emphasises the complex nature of teaching. He points out that "beginning teachers' practices are sometimes constrained by the way the teachers' task is defined within the school ... beginning teachers must learn how to negotiate and compromise in order to establish their own preferred approach to teaching". Whilst faced with the task of developing their own sense of identity as teacher, in their first year of work, the newly qualified teachers find they have to battle with the harsh realities of teaching. One such reality is that content knowledge is not enough if the teacher lacks the pedagogic knowledge and skills that are essential for competent teaching (Calderhead, 1987).

Other critical problems faced by newly qualified teachers are highlighted by Bullough et al (1991:16) as "serious disciplines and management problems, problems with consistency and with providing a suitable and responsive curriculum for students and finally; problems of finding a productive and fitting teaching role". Such problems therefore, often lead the newly qualified teacher to feelings of self-doubt and high vulnerability. Teachers often experience conflict which can result in anxiety and confused thinking, and sometimes prevent teachers from finding a practical solution to the difficulties they face (Calderhead op.cit). All these difficulties can result in poor self-perception, low motivation and negative attitudes towards teaching in general.

Researchers agree that first year of teaching impacts greatly on beginning teachers, and may go a long way to deciding how teachers are eventually shaped, their motivation levels and their decision to stay on in teaching or opt out. The training college has to train and prepare the NQT to face the challenges of teaching but schools also have a responsibility for creating an enabling work environment for new teacher. In some high income countries there is support for NQTs in the form of induction programmes and mentoring systems. In Lesotho, an induction programme for secondary "beginning teachers" was set up for graduates from the Faculty of Education at the National University of Lesotho, but there is no support for graduates from the NTTC.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN AND METHODS

The study follows a case study approach using five selected primary schools in Maseru, Butha-Buthe and Mafeteng districts. It investigates the impact of teacher training on newly qualified teachers entering the teaching jobs for the first time. The study focused on those NQTs with a maximum of two years in the field. As a strategy for addressing the question on whether or not there is a difference between trained and untrained teachers, a very small number of unqualified teachers (UTs) participated in the study. These were UTs who were practising in the same sample schools as were the NQTs selected for the study. Further information was sought from headteachers and District Resource Teachers (DRTs)

3.1 Population and sampling

The five sample schools selected were within easy travelling distance of the college. Three were in Maseru while the other two were in Butha Buthe and Mafeteng. Because of the time constraints, the two latter were selected from those where the College's student teachers were on teaching practice, so that the data could be gathered alongside supervision visits. The selected teachers were the NQTs serving in the sample schools. Since no sample school had more than two NQTs, those whom the school had were thus selected for the study.

Table 1: Case study schools

School	Location	Proprietor	No. of pupils	Total no. of teachers	NQTs	UTs
1*	Urban – Maseru	RCC,	34	5	1	-
2	Peri-Urban. MSU	RCC	326	8	-	1
3	Peri urban. MSU	Community	625	12	2	-
4	Urban, Mafeteng	Community	488	10	1	1
5	Urban, Botha-bothe	LEC	1,000	23	2	-

* School 1 was a special unit for blind children within a larger school

Over and above the five headteachers, six NQTs and three UTs, 21 headteachers and nine District Resource Teachers (DRTs) who were registered in the University B.Ed part-time degree programme for primary school teachers also participated in the study. The following Table shows the number of DRTs and headteachers and where they came from.

Table 2: Number of DRTs and headteachers by district

District	Position	
	DRTs	Headteacher
Berea	1	4
Butha-Buthe	1	2
Leribe	1	4
Mafeteng	-	3
Maseru	-	3
Mokhotlong	1	1
Mohale's Hoek	1	1
Quthing	1	-
Thaba-Tseka	3	3
Total	9	21

The group comprised 19 women and 11 men.

3.3 Data collection instruments

The following instruments were used to collect data: classroom observations schedule, interviews and questionnaires.

3.3.1 Classroom observations

Six NQTs and two UTs were observed teaching in their classrooms. The purpose was to gain evidence of the impact of teacher training on the life and work of the teacher. The NQTs who participated in the study were observed teaching a variety of subjects: English, Mathematics, Agriculture, Religious Education and Sesotho. It has to be noted that primary teachers would normally be required to teach all the subjects, unless they were in schools that practised subject teaching.

3.3.2 Interviews

Interviews were held with the five headteachers of schools in which NQTs were observed teaching, to gather their views on the NQTs' competence in different areas of teaching like knowledge of curriculum content, teaching style, classroom management and other pertinent issues related to teaching. Also, three Unqualified Teachers (UTs) were interviewed. The purpose was to collect data that would help to draw comparisons between NQTs and UTs in the way they teach, their perceptions about teaching and finally, to establish whether or not teacher training has an impact on one's ability to teach by comparing teaching as undertaken by individuals from each of the two groups.

3.3.3 Questionnaire

A short questionnaire was administered to the headteachers and District Resource teachers who were enrolled in the B.Ed Primary programme; a total of 30 responses were received.

3.4 Access

Access into the schools was sought through visiting the concerned schools, meeting the headteachers, explaining and introducing the MUSTER Project as well as explaining about who the subjects in the study would be. Access to the B.Ed students was through negotiating directly with them. Only those who worked directly with NQTs were required to respond to the questionnaire.

3.5 Data analysis

As already reported, classroom observation was used to collect data. Large sheets of paper were used to record the lessons as they were being enacted. The observation sheets had the following columns: Teacher activity, student activity, teaching and learning materials as well as comments. The recorded information was used to establish themes that emerged from the various observations made.

In order to study the different situations in which the NQTs were working, informal observation was used to record information concerning school infrastructure and equipment. Description has been used to present the various schools situations and their culture.

Analyses of the observations, questionnaire responses, and interview data were brought together to establish the emerging themes.

3.6 Limitations

There were constraints regarding the data collection phase. While the headteachers, the NQTs and UTs were agreeable to participating in the study, the fact that this could only be done during the teaching practice visits was a great handicap on the part of the researchers as they also had to undertake the assigned College duties of TP observations. As a result the NQTs and the UTs were observed only once except for one female NQT at school 5 who was observed twice. Problems were also experienced in schools 1, 3 and 4. Once when they were visited (per appointment), the NQTs and/or UTs were not available because the school had scheduled other activities and did not want to be disrupted.

An important reflection is that the NQTs that had graduated in 1997 were personally known to one of the researchers. The male NQT who graduated in 1998 did not seem at ease with the presence of the researcher during observations. For instance, he had strongly cautioned pupils to behave because there was a visitor who would come to see how they (pupils) learnt. As a result pupils were very quiet during teaching and only responded to the teacher's questions.

CHAPTER 4

THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

4.1 Descriptions of the schools

School 1

School number 1 is a special section/unit within a larger primary school in Maseru. The school is referred to as “the school for the Blind”; it has five teachers and caters for 34 blind children. They are integrated in the larger regular primary school, but also undertake part of their studies at this special school. The school has very good resources such as desks, classrooms, Braille equipment, well-paved surroundings, games facilities and other suitable needs for Blind pupils. According to the interviewees, all these resources have been made possible through the almost 100% funding from the Danish Government. The Lesotho Government only pays the teachers’ salaries. The NQT in the school was a female and had graduated in 1997.

School 2

School number 2 is badly located on a narrow strip of land between a huge ditch and a main road, in the Maseru peri-urban area. It has a very small site such that there are no playgrounds for pupils. There is a small piece of land in front of the classes, where pupils practise agriculture; but the soil is quite rocky. The school has eight teachers and 326 pupils, and there is an adequate number of furniture of chairs, tables and desks for pupils. Pupils who go to that schools are mostly from very poor families that struggle even to pay children’s fees. Generally, even the teachers seem to regard themselves as inferior to those from neighbouring schools. However, they seem content to remain at the school because it is close to their homes. The unqualified teacher was female and had been in the school for five years.

School 3

School number 3 is an English Medium School that is quite popular with many middle – income families, also in the Maseru peri-urban area. Interviewees indicate that parental participation and interest in the school is quite high as evidenced by the attendance at teacher meetings. The school has recently moved to good classroom blocks. There are 12 teachers and 625 pupils. The headteacher does not teach but stands in if any teacher falls absent for any reason. He co-operates and works well with the staff and is willing to improve the school a lot. However, pupils in the lower classes (reception class up to class 4) have no desks or tables, so they have to write on their laps, until suitable furniture can be bought. The two female NQTs both graduated in 1997.

School 4

School number 4 is an English medium school in Mafeteng and, being the only one in the town, also attracts children of workers and parents who can afford the slightly higher fees. It has ten teachers and 488 pupils. The school operated without a headteacher since 1998 until March 2000. As a result, the acting headteacher(s) never felt they could take strong decisions pertaining to certain issues in the school. Consequently, during that period, teachers just taught without also being able to firmly implement or carry out certain duties, because nobody had the power to direct them. The current new headteacher was recruited from a rural, non-English medium school; therefore he still has to learn a lot about such a school.

School 4 had one female unqualified teacher with six months teaching experience and a male NQT who graduated in 1998.

School 5

School number 5 is a very large school with a population of about 1,000 pupils and 23 teachers. The only male teacher is the headteacher, and when new teachers apply to the school, he only considers male applicants, since he would like to have more men in the school. However, since few men train at NTTC as primary teachers, even among the NQTs there are very few males and it is always very difficult to get these. The school has very good resources in terms of furniture, playgrounds and adequate classrooms. The school also integrates children with various disabilities. Some teachers in the school have been trained as Resource Teachers and so are used by the National Curriculum Development Centre as resource persons during workshops to train other teachers in the district. The school had two female NQTs who graduated from NTTC in 1997.

4.2 Lessons observed

The classroom observations were conducted in various standards in these schools. Class sizes in the regular schools varied greatly, from 24-72, while there were only 5 pupils in the class for blind children. Generally, most lessons observed were of 40 minutes duration or longer. Four English lessons were observed, and one each of Sesotho, maths, home economics, religious education and agriculture. As explained above, observations had to take place during the time the researcher was in the participating school, so it was not possible to select the subjects. The description of seating arrangements indicates that sitting in rows is probably the most common seating pattern to be found in the Lesotho primary school classrooms. The following table presents what has been discussed in this paragraph in summary form.

Table 3: Lessons observed, class size, subject, topic, time and seating arrangement

School	Std.	Class size	NQT/UT	Subject	Topic	Time (mins)	Seating
1	5	5 / 5	NQT	Home Ec.	Functions of food	35	Rows
2	1	23 / 24	UT	Sesotho	Compositions	45	Own desks
3	3	38 / 38	NQT	Maths.	Shapes e.g. Square	45	Groups
3	1	42 / 42	NQT	English	Functions of parts of body	40	Groups
4	5	28 / 28	NQT	Agriculture	How to market crops & vegetables	48	Rows
4	2	61 / 64	UT	English	Formulating questions	45	Rows
5	4	48 / 58	NQT	English	Present tense (oral)	45	Rows
5	1	63 / 72	NQT	English	Plurals and singular	40	Rows
5	1	63 / 72	NQT	Religious Ed.	Thanksgiving	65	Rows

It can be seen that most classes observed were quite large. For instance, the standard 1 class that was observed in school 5 had two streams based on ability: Standard 1 (a) had fast learners and Standard 1 (b) had the slow learners. The NQT in this school was observed teaching standard 1 (b), which had 72 pupils although there were only 63 present on the day observations were conducted. The other stream had about forty-six pupils. The availability of furniture varied from school to school. School 5 had adequate and good quality furniture in the form of desks or tables and chairs. On the contrary, school 3 had no desks. However pupils had their own chairs and they wrote on their laps. It was observed that the seating

arrangement of pupils was in the form of rows, such that desks were arranged one after the other leaving only walking space for teacher, from front to the back of the classroom. Such arrangement is not perceived to encourage maximum pupils' participation in the lesson, or to allow teachers to reach individual pupils who might be seated farthest from them. In evidence, in one class, some pupils seated at the very back of the classroom and by the window, got distracted when a visitor's vehicle came into the school. They repeatedly looked outside despite the teacher's attempts to gain their attention. It has to be noted though that large class sizes may work against the desire to use other types of seating arrangement. The seating arrangement referred to here is very common even at the college. The Education course does, ironically, teach about various alternative seating arrangements.

CHAPTER 5

OBSERVING THE NQTS AND UTS IN ACTION

This section discusses the lessons observed. All in all, nine lessons were observed. Seven of these lessons were taught by the NQTs while two were by the unqualified teachers. A brief description of the practice as played out by those observed might help provide a general view about teaching by the NQTs and the UTs.

5.1 Introducing a lesson

All the nine teachers observed tended to start a lesson by greeting pupils and followed this by writing something on the chalkboard. This might be the date, subject and the standard being taught. They might also tell students what the lesson is about and then, if there are materials to be distributed, they would do so. The variation observed during the opening of a lesson was with one of the UTs who started her lesson differently. Pupils entered carrying improvised materials which they put on the teacher's desk. They were then asked to tell a story on the latest news they heard. While the majority of the teachers observed spent between 5 and 10 minutes on lesson introduction, this particular individual spend 21 minutes on the introduction alone.

5.2 Lesson presentation

A common method of teaching employed by the NQTs was lecturing/explanation. The pattern observed was that teachers either started by asking a question and then explaining concepts, or started with a lecture and then asked questions. For example, one lectured on changing singular to plural, another on changing one tense to the other, and followed this with questions. In some situations, pupils were instructed to role-play or discuss issues such as how they would celebrate a Christmas holiday. In another case they discussed selling and marketing vegetables then reported back to class what they discussed.

Another common method of teaching was question and answer and pupils tended to answer in chorus, since all the questions came from the teachers and pupils responded and never asked questions themselves. For example, in one English lesson teacher held a stick in one hand and a book in the other then asked the class questions, and pupils responded. The lesson went thus:

Teacher: Class, what do I have in my right hand?
Pupils: [whole class]: a stick
Teacher: what am I holding in my left hand [Row one is asked to respond]
Row 1: A book
Teacher: Is it only one or many?
Pupils: Many
Teacher: What do you say if it is many? [Asks row 4 to respond]
Row 4: Stick, [Others repeat after row 4] sticks.

[School 5, Std. 1(b) English]

Teaching methods variations between one NQT and another were observed. In one English class, the NQT seemed to provide limited interaction between her and the pupils. Responses were mainly questions asked by the teacher. The pupils were not lively; they mainly listened to the teacher and waited to answer questions or follow instructions. Teacher talked a lot and pupils listened.

A further analysis of the teaching indicates that NQTs did not readily use groupwork method of teaching. The tendency was to deal with the class as a whole, however large. For example, a Std. 1 teacher was teaching the whole class and was making all 63 pupils to listen to her and do as she told them. Even though pupils were asked to respond to questions in their groups/rows, the rest of the class was made to participate and listen to the others. During that time, those pupils seated farther from teacher, did not seem to participate satisfactorily in the lesson; some were fidgety or looking out through windows.

Related to group work is the expectation that students are supposed to interact among themselves. In one of the classes observed it became apparent that pupils were not relaxed and that there was no visible interaction among pupils themselves. Pupils sat quietly listening to teacher and not talking among themselves. The following quotation illustrates the low pupil interaction and the high question and answer method instead:

- Teacher: Class, can you remember the project we did last week on agriculture and what vegetable farmers do with their produce?
- Pupil: Yes, crop cultivation.
- Teacher: Who can tell us what the vegetable farmers do with their produce?
- Pupil: They sell it or eat with their families.
- Teacher: What vegetables do you cultivate at your houses?
- Pupil: Spinach, tomatoes and green peas.
- Teacher: Why we sell our vegetables and crops? Why we do not store them?
- Pupil: For money ... to be a rich person.
- Teacher: Good, let's see ... [Pages through text, pauses for half a minute. Turns to blackboard, writes words: profit and enterprise].

[School 4, Std. 5, Agriculture]

In contrast to what happened in this Agriculture lesson in school 4, the NQT in school 3 had ample interaction between herself and the pupils. For example, social chatting was frequent by the teacher with different groups and individual pupils, to ensure maximum participation. The following from a Mathematics lesson in the same school illustrates the point:

[Teacher explains to pupils how they are going to count the faces of the shapes of objects like rectangular box, square object etc.]

- Teacher: Rethabile, stand up and show the class your face.
- Rethabile: [stands up, goes to the front, faces other pupils and point at his face]. Here it is.
- Teacher: Alright, we can see that even people have faces. [Holds a square box and asks pupils to look at it carefully]. Before we begin counting faces of these objects, I am going to go round to check how many of us have clean faces this morning. [Starts to move among pupils]
- Likeleli: Teacher, I forgot to smear a lotion on my face.

[Pupils burst into laughter. Others begin to check others' faces and report to teacher if they think those are clean or not. For about three minutes, this activity goes on, and pupils and teacher seem animated.]

[School 3, Std. 3, Maths]

The two UTs who were observed used different methods of teaching. One of them did a lot of writing from when the lesson started. Her lesson was on asking questions using “who, what and when”. The questions posed were also written on the chalkboard. She involved pupils in the lesson by asking those who responded to the instruction to form questions and, to do so standing in front of the classroom. The second lesson taught by the second UT seemed to wonder from one point to the next in that although the lesson was clearly on birthdays and students had brought relevant teaching and learning materials, she had spent ten minutes on the topic road safety. She did not relate this topic to the topic of the lesson. Both UTs had mainly used the question and answer skill mainly.

5.3 Closing lessons

The timing of lessons by both the NQTs and the UTs was unsatisfactory. Of the seven NQTs who participated in the study, two closed with an assignment and one closed with a Christmas hymn which clearly reflected relationship of the song to the topic lesson. The other three were forced to stop teaching because the bell had rung for short break and, for one of the three lessons, because another teacher wanted to teach. (The latter teaches in a school that practices subject teaching). The two UTs experienced a similar problem to that of the majority of the NQTs who participated in the study. They were both forced to stop teaching because it was time for short break

5.4 Teaching and learning materials

The NQTs and the UTs who participated in the study used a variety of teaching and learning materials. The most common of these was the chalkboard. One of the NQTs had established learning areas in her classroom. Pupils sometimes participated by bringing improvised materials from their homes; this was done for one of the UTs and one of the NQTs. Moreover, some of the NQTs used real objects and posters for some of their lessons.

Although teaching aids and materials were used by many of the teachers observed including UTs, many of these teachers touched and handled the materials themselves and only required pupils to observe them from their desks. Teaching young children becomes more effective if they are allowed to explore materials and use all their senses to interact with those, so that learning can occur. In those lessons where such opportunity was not accorded pupils, one cannot conclude there was evidence of effective learning. Another obvious omission was that there was no visible display of pupils' written work even though the learning centres were visible, well assembled and adequately resourced. For example, in one class the Mathematics corner had numbers 1 to 10 and shapes such as circle, square, rectangle and colour. The idea of area corners is emphasised at the College. However, the NQTs seem not to have grasped the value of involving pupils in manipulating the teaching and learning aids nor have they established the value of displaying children's work on classroom walls.

5.5 Subject/content knowledge

Concerning the handling of didactic teaching, most teachers who were observed seemed to have mastered the subject content adequately. In one standard 1 English lesson where the topic was on changing singular forms into plural, the teacher explained accurately to the pupils the rule that governs changing into plurals, and also used simple vocabulary that pupils easily understood. For instance, teacher explained that changing from one to many, the letter “s” is added at the end of the word as in “stick” becoming “sticks”.

Therefore good knowledge of content was observed. In addition, some teachers used a lot of gesture and body language to illustrate and ensure that students do what they were expected to. It was observed – which might support the headteachers’ comment that NQTs have a good knowledge of English - that these teachers used the English language to revise an English lesson. For example, the Standard 1 teacher in School 5 placed a book under the table, on top, on the side and asked pupils to tell the exact location of the book.

Teacher: Mpho, where is the book
Mpho: the book is on the table
[School 5, Std. 1, English]

However, in other situations NQTs could not provide sufficient explanation of concepts. For example, the teacher asked pupils what they understood about profit and enterprise. Pupils attempted correctly “profit” and asked what “enterprise” meant but teacher did not explain it. He told pupils he would explain that later but never did.

5.6 Use of English language

Most headteachers when referring to the English language were of the view that NQTs were fluent in English. On the other hand, there were some headteachers who strongly felt that NTTC should place more emphasis on the mastery of English language. In particular, this concern was raised very strongly by the headteacher of School 3. Asked to suggest any recommendations for the pre-service/initial training programme, he reiterated: “teach English. No candidate should be admitted into NTTC without a credit pass in English, particularly primary school teachers. They form the foundation for further education, so they must be the best teachers”.

Such concern was therefore easy to understand as it came from the headteacher of an English medium school, who perhaps might have been unhappy with the NTTC product concerning the mastery of English language. On the other hand, experience from the researcher’s personal insights of teaching and learning at the College, suggest that there are many instances when some tutors resort to explaining in mother tongue those concepts they feel are hard for their students to grasp.

5.7 Classroom management/discipline

The observations highlighted that in almost all the lessons observed, the classroom atmosphere was relaxed, as evidenced by the fact that pupils talked to their teachers and interacted with them on the subject content. In one Mathematics lesson on the topic “counting

faces of different shapes,” one pupil told the teacher “... *the puppets that appear on the T.V shows have faces only without bodies*”. This type of relaxed atmosphere and interaction shows the important influence a teacher has in setting a positive learning environment for pupils. There were some differences. In the lesson where pupils appeared to be bored, as one standard one English lesson and the Agriculture lesson, this might result from the style of teaching, where the question-and-answer method was mainly used. These particular lessons were teacher-centred and pupils were not sufficiently stimulated to enjoy participating in the lesson.

Despite the fact that pupils were often noisy and inattentive during lessons, some teachers satisfactorily maintained good discipline among pupils and did not use either corporal punishment or heavy reprimanding. In one instance for example, the teacher, in handling a discipline problem, moved towards two pupils fighting over a pencil, and gently took it from them without hitting or rebuking them. A condition such as this could ensure that pupils feel safe with their teacher hence would not shy away from him/her. It can be argued that this particular NQT skilfully managed her classroom. To add to that, even most of the headteachers expressed a view that generally, NQTs had good classroom control and management. The few who had a different view, mainly felt that their (NQTs) classes were poorly managed. One headteacher felt “*NQTs have rather weak class control, the tendency is to be too playful with the pupils. Therefore, their classes get noisy sometimes*”.

5.8 Time management

Managing time proved difficult for all those who were observed. The tendency at least for the NQTs was to teach for a longer time than allocated for a period. With the UTs it was more a problem of spending adequate time on teaching, that is, managing time for specific parts of a lesson.

5.9 Assessment/homework/written work

The College emphasises the importance of closing a lesson by giving a piece of written work as an assignment, giving a summary or asking pupils questions. Classroom observations and visits showed that mostly, written work were adequately checked and marked though gaps existed among different pupils. For example, there was work that pupils wrote but was unmarked and in some cases pupils did not have it at all or it was incomplete. In one case, the pupils were assigned the task of copying into their exercise books two words, “ruler” and “pen” then had to repeat writing these words several times. In another case, pupils were given homework after the lesson.

Teacher: Complete class work at home. On page 34 of the textbook, use the table provided to work out our profit on each of the products and suggest two reasons why farmers must sell at a profit and not a loss.

[*School 4, Standard 5, Agriculture*]

5.10 Reinforcement/praise

Young pupils thrive on praise and reinforcement awarded for any good behaviour or point they score in a teaching/learning situation. For example, when pupils gave correct answers, others were quick to praise them, and the class chanted “*shine Thabo shine!*” or they simply clapped hands in other classes.

CHAPTER 6

VIEWS OF THE HEADTEACHERS

One of the responsibilities of the primary school headteacher, as stipulated in the Ministry of Education “Criteria for evaluation” booklet distributed in schools, is supervision of their subordinates. The headteachers were asked to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of NQTs.

6.1 Strengths, weaknesses and general problems

A number of strengths and weaknesses were identified. The strengths included the following:

- Hardworking and dedicated to work/very energetic/performs well and is duty conscious.
- Competent/knows subject matter and are very innovative as well as creative;
- Ability to handle young learners and patience with blind children;
- Shows signs of having been trained to teach using relevant methods of teaching etc.
- NQTs have very good content knowledge mainly in newly introduced subjects like art and health education;
- NQTs practise a lot of teaching methods that are quite good;

The headteachers’ comments are perhaps based on their general views of teachers rather than the specific NQTs currently in their school. They indicate as a strength, that NQTs practice a lot of teaching methods but fail to elaborate on the type being referred to. This very comment contradicts what was observed in this sub-study; NQTs tended to use only the question and answer method and explanations. They further suggest that teacher training should also enable the NQTs to master the English language yet the observation data seem to suggest that NQTs are comfortable with using English language for teaching.

The following were identified as weaknesses on the part of the newly qualified teachers.

- They are not always punctual;
- They are poor at blackboard work;
- They do not have good skills of handling technical books such as record keeping.

Asked to comment on some of the general problems faced by the NQTs, the headteachers indicated that punctuality, especially making sure that pupils are in class after class intervals, remains one of the difficulties that they observed over the years of receiving NQTs in their schools. This problem seems to suggest the need for the College to emphasise time management in their programmes. Another and very interesting problem described by the headteachers was that NQTs were reported to be practising corporal punishment. This view seems to suggest that corporal punishment is not going to easily go away in Lesotho schools. The question to ask is whether or not schools in which the NQTs are employed practice corporal punishment themselves. Some headteachers also indicated that NQTs were lacking skills required to handle pupils with disability such as teaching the blind pupils effectively.

The 1991/2-1995/6 Government sector plan indicates that NTTC should train teachers to teach children with special needs. It may be argued that the College, through infusing special education in the new diploma curriculum is aware of the need to provide student teachers with necessary skills needed for special education.

It has to be noted though that although the headteachers indicated a number of problems that NQTs encountered, they seem to have taken steps towards assisting them to handle these problems. In asking them to comment on the action taken towards solving the problems, they indicated that:

- Concerning NQTs who are not punctual one school met with the concerned teachers to discuss the issue. During the staff meetings, the issue was discussed and thereafter constant reminders were given to all teachers. One wonders whether or not addressing all teachers suggest that NQTs have learned this practice from the experienced teachers. This could mean that the headteacher was, in addressing all teachers, soliciting co-operation of all staff to help her address the issue of punctuality.
- One school has put out a policy to bar corporal punishment after meeting with the staff and parents who agreed upon this. Where corporal punishment had to be practised the headteacher had to be informed first by the concerned teacher.
- An in-house training of NQTs on special education teaching methods was provided where appropriate.

6.2 Suggestions for improving the NTTC course

The headteachers were asked to give their opinion regarding possible changes that could reform NTTC teacher education programmes. It was said that recently-graduated NQTs render support to teachers who have been long in the service and may need to be upgraded with content. This is particularly so in the teaching subjects such as Art and Crafts, Music and Physical Education, which are new subjects in the school curriculum. This view therefore points to the need for the College to weave in the content that the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) of the Ministry of Education continuously disseminates to the practising teachers. Thus, the College needs to up-date the Curriculum all the time if the completing student teachers are to fit in the school system where there are on-going changes in practice.

To those headteachers with a longer experience of working with NQTs, there seems to be a feeling that the NQTs are hardworking, very innovative/willing to try new methods and introduce new ideas, they are getting better at subject content and new teaching ideas/strategies and most importantly that they show some potential for growth in the teaching profession. The headteacher from School 1 indicated that having to work with NQTs provides one with an opportunity to compare them objectively instead of making generalisations about NQTs as though they are a homogenous group. The headteacher put it thus: *“I am hopeful for more change in the future. Like I said, this is the first NTTC graduate I have, so I have nothing to compare her to”*.

The headteachers thought there was need for an extended probation period before the student teachers could be considered for promotion, which suggests they find the graduates lacking in certain aspects. Asked to provide recommendations for the initial teacher training programme, the headteachers indicated the need to improve professionalism of teachers in

order to help NQTs became more duty conscious, committed and willing to undertake extra-curricular activities. The headteachers also recommended that teacher trainers should emphasis proper blackboard work and good handwriting. It is interesting to also note that the headteachers feel that there is need to increase the teaching practice duration. In their opinion, the longer duration might help to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The headteachers also believe that the College should strengthen the special education courses and above all, to try as much as possible to provide the student teachers an opportunity to do teaching practice in schools that have children with disabilities. Commenting on possible recommendation for initial teacher training the following was said by the headteacher of School 1 (the special school) *“I learn since 1997, NTTC has a training module on special education. To strengthen their trainees on that, they should also attach them for TP to schools such as ours”*.

6.3 The role of co-operating teachers and mentors

It was reported that NQTs are attached to class teachers so that the two share a class. This means either the NQT or the class teacher is free to observe each other teaching. This is intended to provide support in all the NQTs related work activities. The main purpose of doing so, in their view, is to assist towards making NQTs improve in the school work of teaching and all its related tasks. Some examples given were:

- Teach NQTs strategies and methods used to teach the blind/teach NQTs the Braille;
- Mentor helped to provide NQTs with all support she needs in the school (For example, school and community relations, parent-teacher relations, teacher-pupil relations; professionalism as a teacher and code of conduct. The support programme includes follow-up on co-operating teachers and NQTs concerning the teaching activities they engage in. That is done through discussions, meetings, checking record books (lesson plans, scheme and record of work done and register).

However, contrary to what the headteachers said concerning the role of co-operating teachers, some NQTs pointed out that the co-operating teachers/mentors did not render adequate support. The co-operating teachers/mentors only worked very closely with them during “scheming of work to cover” and setting examination or test questions. Otherwise during normal teaching times, they did not contact them or assist them that much.

Concerning the assistance rendered by the headteachers, the NQTs thought that headteachers were generally helpful. However, none of the NQTs felt that the headteacher was the best person to offer them (NQTs) classroom support; instead the co-operating teachers/mentors were considered much more favourably than the former. Perhaps a feeling of this nature could stem from the fact that headteachers are possibly perceived mainly as administrators who guide the entire school, rather than knowledgeable about classroom teaching and learning.

Headteachers said that mentors and co-operating teachers needed training in order to play their role competently. This is because no training has been given. Head-teachers and the mentor agree on key issues to target. Thus, as the two groups rightly point out, the training of teachers who are to serve as mentors is vital. The interviewees indicated that either the Ministry of Education or NTTC should introduce a national mentor/induction programme like that of the university. Some interviewees felt that the task of training and introducing the

induction concept in schools should also be a responsibility of the churches that are proprietors of schools.

6.4 School policy/attitude towards NQTs

The headteachers were asked to comment on the needs for newly qualified teachers. They unanimously agreed that NQTs are a source of energy and new ideas. Examples of the headteachers' views are listed below:

- *NQTs are indeed a source of new ideas and energy.*
- *They (NQTs) are new brooms, so they must sweep clean. I accept them because they are qualified and trained teachers.*

In their opinion, there is need to induct and provide support to the NQTs. The headteachers pointed out that NQTs need a warm welcome in the school; they need to be introduced to parents and have them respected. The headteachers' comment that "*Ministry of Education should pay them on time*" imply that the Ministry of Education does not issue newly employed teachers their first salary cheque on time and therefore this slack practice of paying teachers could contribute to de-motivating new teachers.

The headteachers also indicated that there is need for national induction programmes for NQTs. On their part as headteachers, they would have to provide the support that these newly qualified teachers might need especially as it concerns school and community relations, integration and interaction with old teachers and to reduce the tendency on the part of the new teachers to isolate themselves. In essence, the headteachers seem to suggest the need for an overall supportive environment from school, parents, pupils, community and the Ministry of Education itself. They also indicated that there is a need to provide these teachers with in-service training on areas of special education to enable NQTs to serve children with disability effectively.

Interviewees were asked to comment on the relationship between NQTs and a variety of the school stakeholders such as pupils, parents and the community. They indicated that on the whole, pupils have shown "good to very good" attitudes; and that usually pupils are friendly and cooperate well with the NQTs.

Most parents too were reported to have "good to very good" relationships with NQTs. On the other hand, there were some parents who disapproved of content taught by NQTs mainly in new subjects such as health education. The concern expressed was specifically on the teaching of reproduction and HIV/AIDS. Comments from the general members of the community were not as enthusiastic as comments of pupils and parents. It was said that some members of the community "*are comfortable with NQTs,*" whereas some perceive them "*as too young in age to be good teachers*" and that sometimes negative views are expressed of NQTs. One criticism given was the "*lack of professionalism*" on the part of these young teachers.

6.5 General expectations of headteachers

6.5.1 Type of teacher expected: attitude

The headteachers were asked to provide views about the kind of teacher that NTTC is producing. A variety of views were expressed. On commenting about the kind of teacher the school is expecting, the headteachers felt that schools need teachers who are duty conscious, able to help children, are patient, are loving and caring to both parents and children, have parental traits, are dedicated and committed and are able to teach. These comments are similar to those expressed by the Diploma in Education (Primary) student teachers in their response to the question of the type of teacher that they considered good.

6.5.2 Type of teacher expected: attitude to work

Commenting on the issue of being able to teach, the headteachers indicated that schools expect teachers who master their content matter and have ability to communicate/teach such content effectively through use of appropriate teaching methods. The concern about ability to prepare and integrate disabled children with normal ones was also expressed. Moreover, headteachers indicated that they thought an NQT should have the following qualities: be a professional who is time conscious/punctual, creative, confident, approachable and above all sincere. The extent to which these expectations are modelled and or emphasised at the NTTC could be established through observing the College activities. For example, in observing the College tutors who teach the Diploma in Education (Primary) programme, it would seem that good timekeeping on the part of some of these lecturers as well as students is not observed. This relaxed atmosphere about starting and finishing lectures on time might have the effect of producing student teachers who are not time conscious.

6.5.3 Aims of the schools

The Headteachers pointed out that some of the aims of the schools are: to serve the surrounding community by providing good education to the children, to work hard and to strive for excellence in all that the school does, as well as aim for quality teaching and learning. In the special school, it included laying a solid educational foundation for children with special needs in order, among other things, to integrate them successfully into the normal school system. The interviewees further pointed out that schools are there to produce pupils who are to be competent and creative so that they can handle other levels of education with ease. This way, the school would strive to be the best in the area. The headteachers seem to suggest that a school that would have laid a good foundation of primary education, provided all children with education regardless of their family and socio-economic backgrounds and most importantly a school that would strive for high performance so that it can favourably compare with other schools in the area, is the type of school that they themselves want to work in. These views tend to suggest that the headteachers expect to have NQTs who would be prepared to fit well in such school cultures.

6.5.4 Orientation and/or induction

Responses on the issue of socialising newly qualified teachers into the school culture and working patterns varied. Some headteachers claimed that schools have informal structures in place. These structures enable them to orient NQTs into the school. It is this group of headteachers that claimed that they hold training workshops and assign NQTs responsibilities such as being in charge of sports, music competition, cultural events and school choir. Other headteachers indicated that it is difficult to socialise NQTs because of their negative attitudes.

The primary school system does not have a formal induction programme for teachers joining the school system. Studying the comments by headteachers who believe that assigning NQTs responsibilities is one strategy of orientation, it is apparent that these are extra-curricular activities. Those who responded that they have workshops failed to indicate the topics of such workshops.

6.5.5 Development issues

Another very critical question asked was on the changes that are likely to take place in the next five years. In essence, the intention of asking this particular question was to determine the interviewees' vision concerning the Lesotho education system given the responsibility they hold as headteachers. Gender balance and high standards were among the issues emphasised. In their own words, the interviewees had this to say: "*to have at least male teachers in the school and to have a headteacher in the school*"; and to maintain high pass rates, increase the enrolment rate and the number of teachers.

CHAPTER 7

THE UNTRAINED TEACHERS

Three unqualified teachers were interviewed. Two of them were teaching in the sample schools, one in Mafeteng and the other in Maseru; these were also observed. The third was not in the sample schools but was invited because she had easily become available during the period of data collection.

7.1 Unqualified teachers' entry pathways

Asked to explain how they came into teaching, two of the three unqualified teachers indicated they had been invited to serve in the place of teachers temporarily away on confinement or sick leave. The third teacher joined teaching after applying for the job since she was unemployed. This indicates that teachers probably enter the profession through a variety of pathways, but perhaps stay on in their jobs either because the job assures them of a monthly income or because they undergo certain experiences that eventually attract them to continue teaching.

7.2 Unqualified teachers' teaching experience

Upon relating their experiences since they joined their schools, the three UTs unanimously agreed that they had experienced good times as teachers and, according to one "*... I always feel I teach satisfactorily particularly when the headteacher has observed me and encourages me and, helped me to do better*". Another teacher said, "*I feel these experiences were a challenge I had to face and tackle*", while the third felt, "*I look back and feel these were fruitful experiences as I learnt many things about teachers' lives and their work*". The three teachers each indicated the best lessons they still cherish to date. Among the reasons given were because pupils responded positively to the lesson or because the teacher was able to teach successfully using various teaching methods. In one Science lesson the teacher indicated Science was generally her best subject from school, and when teaching that herself, she enjoyed the teaching methods of using the environment, helping pupils explore it and discover things. Concerning this, one would say that despite being unqualified the teacher clearly understood the importance of pedagogic content knowledge and practice in teaching.

7.3 Unqualified teachers' memorable events

Additionally, the teaching experiences gained by the UTs in their schools went along with the important, memorable events each teacher experienced. For one teacher, it was a negative encounter with a parent whose child had lost school shoes and the teacher was blamed. Another teacher felt that her work was routine because of the young age of children, hence they did not pose any serious discipline problems to her. However, an interesting event for one teacher was when a College trainee on teaching practice was attached to her class and they worked together, apparently as the trainee's supervisor or co-operating teacher. The narration goes

[on the day] an NTTC trainee arrived and was attached to my class, she taught using play methods ,[and] said she studies early learning at NTTC. The pupils immediately fell for her and preferred her to teach not myself. I felt bad, but she was good and taught many good things and explained to me what they did at College

This particular quotation points to two important issues. The first is that the Early Learning Specialisation Programme whose aim is to provide student teachers with skills for teaching foundation classes has an impact on those who enrol in it. Secondly, the quotation suggests that a trained person can perform far better than an unqualified person, hence the reaction by the children.

What is even more interesting though about this quotation is that schools attach student teachers to any teacher in the school regardless of whether they are qualified or not. Most importantly, it would seem that NTTC does not inquire about the person to whom the student teacher is being attached. It is not common to attach learners/trainees to people who are not professionals in the field of study. Despite this anomaly, there is however a general practice by those schools having few qualified teachers, to make special applications for teacher trainees to go on teaching practice in their schools. In such situations, the trainees would be placed with an UT with the hope that the latter would benefit from the former. However, NTTC always encourages the schools to attach the student to trained teachers but the schools realities sometimes do not allow it. In such cases, again, for the sake of the NTTC trainee to “benefit” a qualified teacher/headteacher would supervise the NTTC trainee and not have the unqualified teacher do it.

7.4 Support accorded to unqualified teachers

Asked to comment on the support their schools rendered them, two of the three UTs indicated that their headteachers gave them very good support at all times. The support was in the form of observing their lessons, encouraging them to work closely with NTTC student teachers and also introducing them to other teachers in the same standard who could then advise on certain important matters. Furthermore, the three UTs indicated that their colleagues were also very helpful in providing information, advising or guiding as necessary, and giving them access to most of the reference materials they need like syllabuses, and scheme books. Nevertheless, they pointed out that they do not gain anything significant in the way of training. The fact that the NQTs are regarded positively by the UTs was emphasised by the UTs themselves. One said that she spent most of her time at school talking to the NTTC student teachers who are on teaching practice. The other reiterated that the major problem she experienced in the school was “*mainly about teaching deaf and lame children who need special attention*”. She said, “*I was helped by the NTTC trainees on teaching practice in our school ...*”. An indication such as this one goes a long way to saying how much teacher training is important in really providing both pedagogic and didactic content.

On the other hand, the three UTs regarded training to become certificated teachers very important. One UT said:

I would appreciate training a lot. In fact, I have applied to NTTC since joining this school. In fact I have considered going to NTTC not to nursing ...I realise I am enjoying teaching. I have also been influenced by the young NTTC teacher trainers

who come to our school on teaching practice and realise primary teaching is also done by young people.

Another UT observed that teacher training could improve her morale and spirits as she would be fulfilled, confident and earn a better salary because of the teaching certificate.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

Though it is not possible to generalise or draw firm conclusions from such a small-scale study, the findings nevertheless offer some interesting insights into the impact of college training.

One of the strengths of a teacher training college is providing trainees with teaching skills in order for the latter to be able to transmit knowledge to students appropriately. While there is no doubt that the NTTC graduates leave the College with content and pedagogic knowledge, it seems their most common methods of teaching are explanation and question and answer. The large classes that NQTs have to cope with leave them with little choice but to resort to teaching methods that enable them to address all students at once, even though these methods allow them to pay little attention to individual students' needs. The College lecturers need to make efforts to understand, be sensitive to and respond to the nature of the Lesotho primary school realities with the aim of, among other things, equipping trainees with skills of handling large classrooms in poor rural schools, some of which do not even have proper infrastructure and school furniture.

Interestingly though, the reputed strength of the teacher education programme is confirmed by the unqualified teachers who have come to realise that their own pupils tend to prefer the NTTC graduates' styles of teaching. There is no doubt that there is some cross-fertilisation as NQTs learn about the schools' cultures or get socialised into the school system and that those who come directly in contact with them also learn how to teach.

Practices that socialise NQTs into the school culture include: running school-based workshops by headteachers as a form of induction, and attaching them to other experienced teachers. Moreover, headteachers assign NQTs responsibilities such as being sports masters so they too can learn on their own how to handle students outside classroom situations.

Despite these efforts by some schools to induct NQTs into the profession, the general view was that the enthusiasm that NQTs demonstrate on entry declines after two years of being in the school system. A national question is therefore: what contributes to the observed decline in teaching and professional ethics? If indeed NQTs demonstrate willingness to contribute to school development, are innovative and bring new ideas to schools, but these are not sustained throughout the life of a teacher, then something is wrong. Collaboration between the pre-service and the in-service institutions with the aim of ensuring that work ethics are maintained, is desirable.

Such a collaborative effort might go a long way towards maintaining both professional and work ethics and therefore an improved education system for the entire country. The need to have a formal induction programme facilitated by NTTC with the help of the school authorities and sponsored by the Ministry of Education is long overdue. A supervised probation period could help NQTs to remain effective for a longer period than the first two years of their being in the school system.

Moreover, the probation might substantially reduce the poor attitudes that NQTs are said to enter the school system with. They lack professional ethics as demonstrated by poor commitment to work, poor time management, lack of respect particularly towards school authorities and their communities and in general terms, their negative attitudes towards work and therefore in-efficiency. The attitude might have been internalised during their stay at the College. Other MUSTER sub-studies (Lefoka et al 2000; Lefoka and Ntoi 2002) suggest that some of the observed behaviour and attitudes might be attributed to the way the College lecturers go about their business. Slack time management and poor attitudes towards work were reported quite frequently among College lectures.

Use of teaching and learning materials is facilitated through teaching the content of the relevant module and involving student teachers in constructing their own aids and asking them to use these during their teaching practice. However, there seems to be a need on the part of the College to emphasise the application of this skill.

However, the NQTs, particularly when compared to unqualified teachers, demonstrate a number of skills acquired from the College. They are able to choose relevant content and are systematic in presenting it to learners, do so with confidence, show clear understanding of the use of a school syllabus, manage their classrooms fairly well and to a large extent are able to plan their lessons and use suitable resources as well as assess students and ensure they get feedback. By implication, the College training has an impact on the graduates, particularly in the way they teach and the content they transmit.

That student teachers master content knowledge is consistent with the fact that the College teaching seems to emphasise content knowledge, whereas knowledge on how to handle young children can be attributed to the early learning specialisation course.

Overall, there are consistencies in a number of things showing the relevance of curriculum content knowledge and application by NQTs. Moreover, there is a clear difference between NQTs and unqualified teachers concerning issues that are pertinent to the teaching profession. The former has acquired pedagogic and content knowledge while the former might be using their high school content knowledge, as was spelled out later by one of the UTs who indicated that science was her best subject at high school.

What is of critical importance is to ensure that the benefits of training are retained and built on as part of the on-going development of the teacher and the development of primary education in Lesotho. There is no doubt that a properly managed induction programme would facilitate the transition into work. The link which NTTC has established with schools should extend beyond teaching practice, and incorporate such an induction programme. It could be run in close collaboration with the Inspectorate Section of the Ministry of Education. In this way the inspectorate would become involved in teacher development in a more meaningful way, and the regression which the NQTs seem to experience after joining the teaching profession would no doubt be minimised.

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