UNIT 10 THE ZIMBABWE INTEGRATED NATIONAL TEACHER EDUCATION COURSE, ZIMBABWE

B. S. M. Gatawa (1986)*

Editors’ note:

What interests us in this case is that it

1. brings out the potential of distance education in terms of its flexibility, or its ability to be moulded to suit a very complex socio-educational problem – training first generation teachers for first generation learners when neither the trainers nor the resources for training are available adequately.

2. serves as a very convincing illustration of how distance education may motivate curricular reforms in the conventional system of education – following the ZINTEC approach, the conventional three year teacher training programme in Zimbabwe has been reformed to be given over four years now.

3. presents a model of how emphasis on term-end examinations may be reduced by making continuous evaluation objective oriented. This is a major reform in the system of examinations.

4. brings to our notice yet another variation of the mixed-mode model of the distance education institutions (see the University Sains Malaysia model).

5. raises a question of great pedagogic significance – should and can a trainee function both as a full time teacher and a full time trainee at one and the same time? Of course, we notice that under compelling circumstances they should; but it is debatable how effective the training will be if the trainee remains over-taxed all through.

Introduction

Zimbabwe became independent in April, 1980, after 90 years of colonial rule. These years of colonial rule were characterised by a systematic neglect of educational provision for the majority of the population. About half of Zimbabwe’s population of eight million had been denied access to any organised and meaningful education. This situation was clearly unacceptable, and could not be allowed to continue after Independence.

Hence, the first national Government declared education a right for all citizens. A number of factors prompted this position. Firstly, in line with its moral-political philosophy, the ZANU(PF) government holds that education is a basic human right. Secondly, there is the socio-economic argument that all-round national development cannot be realised if the majority of the people are uneducated. It is argued that the greatest asset of a nation is its human capital, which should be fully nurtured and guided towards productive development through education. Investment in education, therefore, is seen as a judicious development policy which has economic pay-offs. Thirdly, Independence led to a crisis of expectation among the masses who had hitherto been largely denied access to education. They regard education as an escape route from rural poverty, a gateway to the bright lights of urban dwelling and white collar jobs. They want to see provision extended so that their children can gain access to meaningful education.

In response to these pressures, educational provision expanded phenomenally after Independence. By the end of 1981, the number of schools doubled and enrolment more than trebled. From a primary school population of 850,000 in 1980, the figure rose to a record high of 2 million plus by the end of 1981. Apart from committing Government to a programme of building new schools and equipping them, this development led to a high demand for teachers. Although, as will be discussed below, a bold initiative in teacher training was taken to address this problem, the need is far from being met. Human and infrastructural constraints have so far frustrated the evaluation of a comprehensive, all-embracing strategy to resolve the teacher supply shortage which has resulted from the unprecedented expansion in primary education. Naturally, this situation leads to the ‘quantity-quality dilemma’ which is so familiar in developing countries.

The number of primary school teachers rose from 35,000 in 1981 to 54,000 in 1983. About 15,000 of these teachers were unqualified. To meet this challenge the Zimbabwe Integrated National Teacher Education Course (ZINTEC) was started in 1981, using a combination of distance and face-to-face teaching in order to train primary school teachers on the job. However, the combined annual teacher output from the seven formal and four ZINTEC colleges is about 3,900. Mathematically, it would appear that within a period of five years, the 15,000 strong pool of untrained teachers would be wiped out. Unfortunately, this has not been the case because the situation is not static. The pace of expansion at the primary school level is still brisk, as Zimbabwe strives to achieve universal primary education. New schools are going up. Enrolment figures are swelling. Untrained teachers continue to enter the system. It would appear that the annual teacher output only matches the rate of annual expansion in the system. The existing element of untrained teachers remains unchanged. In fact, its ranks are continually augmented by attrition factors such as retirement, conversion to secondary and college teaching, promotion to administrative/supervisory positions, resignations and deaths. Also, as Zimbabwe moves towards improved teacher-pupil ratios (at present, classes of 40-60 pupils are common), the system is compelled to employ more untrained teachers.

The ZINTEC programme has helped to reduce this teacher shortage. Its course
structure has produced teachers in large numbers in a relatively short time without sacrificing quality.

Aims and objectives

The ZINTEC programme operates around a set of developmental and pedagogical aims and objectives.

Developmental objectives

1. to overcome the existing shortage of teachers in primary schools;
2. to produce teachers with a sense of service to society;
3. to transform the education system from a capitalist to a socialist;
4. to meet the needs of a highly democratized society where education has become a right for everybody and not a privilege for the few;
5. to create an education system that will meet the development needs of the Zimbabwean society through integrating theory and productive activities.

Pedagogical objectives

The pedagogical objectives embrace all the psychomotor, affective and cognitive skills that a teacher needs to operate effectively in the classroom. These include, among other things, the following:

1. ability to organise and manage a class/school in response to the needs of children;
2. ability to read and interpret curricula (i.e. to scheme, plan and evaluate teaching-learning programmes);
3. ability to think objectively and critically, to assess options and to accept divergent points of view;
4. ability to relate fruitfully to children, colleagues and parents;
5. knowledge of the conditions of service for teachers and the universal ethics which govern their professional conduct;
6. meaningful participation in community affairs;
7. ability to relate classroom/school experiences to life in the wider society,
8. ability to promote a socialist world-view and respect for productive work, etc.

Entry qualifications

The basic academic qualifications for entry to the ZINTEC programme are the same as for formal colleges. This was a deliberate decision intended to maintain the high standard of teacher education in Zimbabwe. The planners did not want
to produce a second-rate programme, inferior in status to the formal system.

The entry qualifications are:

Either five ‘O’ level passes (grade C or better) including a language (English, Ndebele or Shona) or six Grade XI passes including a language (English, Ndebele or Shona). Grade XI was a four-year secondary school programme introduced in the 1970’s by the colonial regime for a number of secondary schools for Africans. It was discontinued at Independence.

These entry qualifications meet the requirements of the University of Zimbabwe for colleges preparing students for the University Certificate in Education.

4. Organisational structure

a. The ZINTEC programme is a project under the Teacher Education section of the Ministry of Education. It has a status equal to other Ministry institutions. The programme is headed by a Director who is answerable to the Chief Education Officer, Teacher Education. In turn, the Chief Education Officer is answerable to the Deputy Secretary, Education Development, who is responsible to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education.

The Director is directly in charge of the ZINTEC National Centre which produces distance education materials for ZINTEC students. He also coordinates and monitors the activities of the four ZINTEC colleges which are in different parts of the country.

The ZINTEC National Centre has two units: the Professional and the Administrative Units. The Professional Unit is headed by a Principal Lecturer. He is assisted by two senior lecturers, one responsible for course development and the other for course editing. Below them, are lecturer-writers involved in course writing and radio lessons. Apart from producing distance education materials (correspondence texts and radio broadcasts), the Professional Unit has the additional responsibility of pre-testing materials, evaluating course effectiveness and sensitizing course materials to the needs of the target students through school visits and discussions with students. They also join college lecturers for week-end seminars and vacation courses organised for students and headmaster-supervisors. The Administrative Unit provides support services. It is headed by a Senior Executive Officer. Under him is an Executive Officer who supervises the work of registry clerks, accounts clerks typist-stenographers, printers, collators, despatch clerks, drivers and office orderlies.

Each of the four colleges is headed by a Principal. The Principal is assisted by two Vice-Principals, Vice-Principal (internal) responsible for residential college-based courses and Vice-Principal (external) in charge of field supervision. The Vice-Principals work with four Principal lecturers in charge of college departments. Below the Principal lecturers are senior lecturers who have a number of college-based and field lecturers. Each college has an Executive Officer.
who looks after the administrative and financial affairs of the college.

Both the professional and the administrative staff in ZINTEC work full-time.

b. In addition to this official structure, there is a support structure in the form of:

- the Department of Audio Visual Services (for graphics and radio broadcasts);
- the National Radio Service (for air-time);
- school Heads and Education Officers (for student supervision);
- the formal colleges (for student supervision);
- the Planning and Evaluation Division in the Ministry of Education (for programme evaluation);
- the University of Zimbabwe (for consultancy on curriculum, staff development, examinations and certification).

c. For purposes of education, Zimbabwe is divided into six regions. Four of these regions have ZINTEC Colleges as shown:

- Mashonaland region Morgan ZINTEC College
- Matabeleland region Gwanda ZINTEC College
- Manicaland region Marymount ZINTEC College
- Masvingo region Andrew Louw ZINTEC College

The two regions which have no ZINTEC colleges are Midlands and Harare. Although there is no ZINTEC college in the Midlands, there are ZINTEC students deployed in the region who are the responsibility of the Principal of Mkoba Teachers’ College, a formal teachers’ college. He is assisted by a Vice-Principal (External), a Principal lecturer, Senior lecturers and a team of field lecturers. They run short vacation and week-end courses, but not long residential courses. ZINTEC presence in the Harare region is thin because of the rural thrust of the programme. The few students in that region are people who have been exempted from the rule on account of personal problems.

Course structure and course content

ZINTEC is a four-year programme which combines face-to-face contact and distance teaching. The programme package is patterned on the curriculum of formal colleges but with a deliberate orientation towards development-related activities. The programme is divided into three phases with distinct but interlocking course components.

Phase 1

Phase 1 is a four-month (i.e. one school term) college-based, face-to-face residential programme. This is a full package intended to give students a broad spectrum of baseline classroom skills before they are placed in schools. At the
spectrum of baseline classroom skills before they are placed in schools. At the same time students are introduced generally to all facets of the course content. The major activities during this period are:

1. Classroom management and organisation, which is done through micro-teaching and lesson observations in local schools.

2. Introduction to Professional Foundations (i.e. the psychology, sociology, history and philosophy of education, education and development and curriculum studies).

3. Applied Education, which is a study of methods of teaching all primary school curriculum subjects.

4. Introduction to Curriculum Depth Study (i.e., an in-depth study of the content and methods of teaching one curriculum subject). The aim is to develop the student personally and make him/her a resource person in at least one subject.

5. Development studies, which is a study of Home Economics and Agriculture by all students, in order to give them the knowledge and skills they need to participate meaningfully in community development projects.

6. A course on study and research methods and ways of conducting production oriented community projects.

7. College-based productive work in the form of gardening and keeping rabbits and chickens.

8. The organisation of evening classes in preparation for running similar classes in rural areas.

At the end of this first residential programme, students are assessed through short written examinations and course assignments in order to determine whether they can proceed to the second phase of the programme.

Phase 2

After Phase 1, students are placed in schools in rural areas and given classroom responsibilities. The deployment is done in consultation with Regional Education Offices which have up-to-date statistics on the quality of teachers in their areas. The plan is to service the poorest staffed schools.

This period of placement in schools is forty months (10 school terms). It is the critical component of the programme. It has many courses which are done through a combination of correspondence texts (modules), radio broadcasts and face-to-face contacts. Students receive modules at the rate of four per school term and write two assignments (i.e., a tutor-marked assignment after going through two modules). They attend college-based, two-week long vacation courses after every two school terms. In addition, they attend problem-specific fortnightly day seminars (usually on Saturdays). At school level, there are school-based tutorial sessions and lesson observations conducted by field lecturers, education officers and
headmasters. They participate in cluster meetings and demonstration lessons involving qualified teachers and themselves. They carry out production-oriented community projects, such as building Blair toilets. They run evening classes for adults and youngsters who are unable to enter the formal system. They listen to radio broadcasts once a week. These broadcasts are intended to complement correspondence materials and make announcements on administrative issues.

The major course components covered during this phase are:

1. Professional Foundations
2. Development Studies
3. Curriculum Depth Studies
4. Teaching Practice
5. Applied Education.

Apart from these course inputs, students are examined in Teaching Practice during the last two terms of this phase. This is done by field lecturers and a team of University of Zimbabwe external assessors. There is also a mid-course assessment in the second year of the course which serves the purposes of revealing to the student his strengths and weaknesses and informing the decisions of colleges on individual students.

Phase 3

The last phase is a final college-based, four-month, residential programme. During this period, students re-visit all courses of the programme with a view to gathering all loose ends together. They go through schedules of studies intended for consolidation, reinforcement and revision. At the end, they write examinations which lead to certification by the University of Zimbabwe.

Funding and equipment

ZINTEC is a fully constituted department within the Ministry of Education. All organs of the programme are run on annual allocations made by the Permanent Secretary from the Education Vote. Salaries for lecturers and students, capital development and recurrent expenses are met by the Ministry.

The programme, however, enjoys substantial material support from UNICEF in the form of vehicles for field supervision, books, printing equipment, a variety of teaching aids and funds for staff development programmes.

Assessment, examination and certification

ZINTEC Colleges, like formal colleges, are associate colleges of the University of Zimbabwe. The students are examined and certificated by the University. The process of assessment takes various forms:
Growth and Innovations: Glimpses-I

- At the end of the first residential programme, students are assessed through course assignment and short written examinations. On the basis of their performance, decisions are taken on whether individual students proceed to the second phase or not.

- In the second year of the course, there is a mid-course assessment. This provides feedback to the student and helps colleges decide on the future of the student in the programme.

- During the forty months of placement in schools, students write tutor-marked assignments, write three projects and carry out production-oriented projects which have a weighting of 50% in the final assessment.

- During the last two terms of the period of placement in schools students are examined in Teaching Practices.

- At the end of the final residential course, they write examinations which contribute 50% towards the final assessment. The examination papers are set by the colleges and moderated by the University. The same procedure applies to examination scripts, which are marked by college lecturers and moderated by University external examiners.

- Successful students receive the University of Zimbabwe Certificate in Education.

- Students who fail to make it in the final examinations are allowed to repeat a term or two. Pregnant students are not expelled from the course. They are demoted by the number of terms equivalent to the period of their absence from the course.

The ZINTEC scheme of assessment, in short, combines continuous assessment (in the form of course work) and written examinations - each contributing 50% towards the final results.

Student population

The programme has had eleven intakes of students recruited at termly intervals from January 1981 to May, 1984. In a year, three intakes are recruited (in January, May and September). The size of an intake per college is 210. The four colleges have a combined intake of 840 students per term. The total number of students per year is 2,430. By May 1984, when the colleges took their last intake, the student population was 8,720. However, from December 1984, the figure has been going down because students are graduating from the programme at the end of every school term.

The age of students ranges from 18 to 50 years. The sexes are evenly represented in the student population. About half are married.

An important aspect of the programme is that ZINTEC student teachers (unlike students in conventional teacher training colleges) receive a salary from the very beginning of their training.
Salary Structure

Term 1    $218 p.m. [Zimbabwean $ is equal to nearly half a £]
Terms 2-4 $298 p.m
Terms 5-7 $348 p.m.
Terms 8-10 $390 p.m.
Terms 11-12 $440 p.m.

These salaries are adjusted whenever there is a review of salaries for public servants. Like other teachers, ZINTEC students receive an annual bonus of 10% of their annual salary. On completing the course, they move to the starting salary of qualified non-graduate teachers which is $600 plus per month. This financial incentive has undoubtedly contributed to the popularity of the programme.

The conditions of service for the students are the same as for qualified teachers except that they are not on the pension scheme until after qualifying. They are bonded to government for a period of three years after qualifying. The drop-out rate is statistically insignificant. In fact, the programme is so attractive that its student numbers are continuously augmented by 'drop-ins' from the formal system!

Staff establishment

The present number of professional staff in the programme is about 150. This figure consists of lecturers at National Centre and in the colleges. In the colleges, there are two groups of lecturers: college-based lecturers and field lecturers. College-based lecturers are recruited on the ratio of 1 lecturer for every 20 students while the ratio for field lecturers is 1:50. The lecturers are recruited from among the ranks of successful secondary school teachers who join the programme on promotion. There are also a number of experienced primary school trained teachers in the specialist subjects of Art and Craft, Physical Education and Music.

There is vertical and horizontal movement of lecturers between ZINTEC and formal colleges. This has facilitated much-needed cross-fertilisation of ideas and encouraged the development of a community of interests among all teacher-educators in the country.

Staff development programmes

The importance of developing staff through a variety of in-service strategies is fully realised in the programme. The programmes offered take a number of forms:

★ College-based departmental or inter-departmental programmes.
★ Inter-college programmes.
★ All-college programmes (ZINTEC and formal).
Growth and Innovations: Glimpses-I

* University-sponsored non-certificate programmes.
* University diploma and degree programmes.
* University-examined college certificate programme in Art and Craft, Physical Education and Music.
* In-house workshops or workshops by outside experts on specific topics e.g. writing distance teaching materials.
* Study tours abroad.
* Short courses on specific topics outside the country.
* Secondments and attachments abroad and at institutions within the country.

Underlying these programmes is the realisation that lecturers need support, upgrading and development. Teachers who have left the familiar and supportive environment of the school and taken up the daunting challenges of college teaching need ‘conversion’ courses to help them cope and develop confidence. Programmes are also run for headmasters and education officers to help them support students. In addition, headmasters receive a brochure on how to supervise student-teachers.

Programme implementation

Figure 1 on the next page shows how the programme operates on the ground. It gives all the institutions within the programme and how they relate to each other. It defines the content of communication that exists between the institutions. All communication is dialogical, a two-way process. It is important to note that all the institutions relate directly with the student.

Student Deployment

Students are placed in schools in the rural areas where the need for trained teachers is greatest. This is a deliberate policy to spread development to all corners of the country. Successive colonial administrations relegated remote rural areas to the backwaters of development efforts.

The students are deployed in clusters of three or more per school to facilitate interaction and school-based tutorials.

Field supervision

Students are supervised in their schools by field lecturers who are appointed on the ratio of 1 field lecturer per 50 students. The field lecturers visit students in the schools, monitor their work and ensure that they meet course requirements. Their work is often frustrated by the distance they have to travel before they make contact with students.

Other officers involved in student supervision are education officers, lecturers...
supervision cannot be over-emphasised. They establish in their schools a local supervisory presence.

Figure 1 Delivery system within ZINTEC

Key

1. Face-to-face teaching, field supervision, marking assignments
2. Supervision and counselling.
3. Feedback on students, seminars and workshops.
4. Feedback on students, workshops.
5. Consultation on curricula, guidelines, coordination, feedback on modules and assignments, student performance profiles, decisions on students.
6. Modules, field visits, feedback on modules and assignments, radio broadcasts, decisions on students.
7. Consultation on curricula, student performance, examinations, certification, staff development.
8. Consultation on curricula, student performance, examinations, staff development, certification.
10. Feedback on students.
11. Reports on students.
12. Supervision.

Study facilities for students

Students have no ready access to libraries which are located in urban centres. To overcome this problem, there is a library loan system whereby students borrow books from colleges. At the same time, as far as possible, modules are self-contained and there is a prescribed list of 25 books which every student must acquire.

Poor accommodation and absence of electricity in the majority of rural schools militate against effective study. In view of this, students are given light co-curricular duties so that they can use afternoons for study.
Evaluation and programme monitoring

There are two forms of evaluation employed in the ZINTEC programme. Firstly, there is on-going formative evaluation intended to sensitize course materials to the needs of the target students. Secondly, there is programme evaluation intended to expose strengths and weaknesses in the programme, thereby furnishing decision-makers with information needed to improve the overall quality of the programme. The first major evaluation exercise in 1982, for instance, revealed the need to mount staff development programme for lecturers since most of them had substantial school teaching experience but very little college teaching experience.

At the end of 1982, the Ministry of Education transferred programme evaluation to its Head Office where it has been incorporated into the evaluation activities of the Planning Division.

Conclusion

In terms of its objectives, ZINTEC has been a success. About 8,000 student-teachers have been enrolled and placed in rural schools. They are now at different stages of the course. Intakes one to four have graduated from the programme and are now full-fledged teachers. The students have displayed aggressive professionalism, which is manifested by their readiness to participate in community development projects and professional forums.

The programme has radically affected the formal mode of teacher education. This has abandoned the three-year college-based course structure, and adopted a four-year programme in which student-teachers take full teaching responsibilities during the second and fourth years of training while they continue the course through distance teaching.

The ZINTEC programme has had its share of problems. From the beginning, the question of adequate and appropriately qualified teaching staff was contentious. The majority of lecturers were recruited direct from schools without any experience of college training. In addition, colleges did not have their full complement of teaching staff. This was particularly so in the case of field lecturers where the lecturer-student ratio was well above the official 1:50. As a result, student-teachers were not visited as frequently as had been planned. Financial constraints also limited the number of visits to students in schools.

At the school level, the majority of students did not receive adequate local supervision because most of the headmasters had poor academic and professional qualifications. They could not give the professional support students needed.

Initially, there was a separation between college instruction and field supervision, since residential colleges were physically and administratively separated from field lecturers. There was therefore no continuity of instruction. This problem was solved when field lecturers were brought under residential colleges as teaching practice departments.
solved when field lecturers were brought under residential colleges as teaching practice departments.

A problem often overlooked is the work load of the student-teacher. He or she teaches full-time and carries all the responsibilities of a teacher. At the same time, he/she is a full-time student with a full programme of assignments. It is not always possible for him/her to do justice to the requirements of these two positions.

At the beginning, and to an extent, even now, the programme has been subject to unsupportive attitudes resulting from a lack of conviction in using distance teaching for training teachers.

In spite of these problems, the programme, as indicated earlier, has met the targets set for it. Zimbabwe, however, still has a serious shortage of teachers at both the primary and secondary levels. What is needed, perhaps, is for us to use the positive lessons from ZINTEC, and come up with a programme targeted at improving the professional competence of the untrained teachers in schools without removing them from their classrooms. Such a programme would not produce standard teachers, but it would certainly improve the quality of instruction and, therefore, the quality of education.

References


Dear Student,

While studying the units of this block, you may have found certain portions of the text difficult to comprehend. We wish to know your difficulties and suggestions, in order to improve the course. Therefore, we request you to fill out and send us the following questionnaire, which pertains to this block. If you find the space provided insufficient, kindly use a separate sheet.

Questionnaire

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3. Any other comments:

Mail to:
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New Delhi – 110068, India.