

**AN ANALYSIS OF LEARNER-CENTREDNESS WITHIN
TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS:
A CASE STUDY**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Notice.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Summary.....	vi
Opsomming.....	ix
List of tables.....	xii
List of figures.....	xiii

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Problem statement	1
1.2 Purpose of this study.....	3
1.3 Central theoretical statement.....	3
1.4 Method of research.....	3
1.5 Chapter outline.....	4

CHAPTER 2

An analysis of the extent to which English Second Language teacher educators are implementing learner-centred teaching and learning

Abstract.....	5
2.1 Introduction.....	5
2.2 Exploring learner-centredness.....	7
2.3 Method of research.....	9
2.3.1 Design.....	9
2.3.2 Participants.....	9
2.3.3 Instrumentation.....	10

(i)	Questionnaire.....	10
(ii)	Interviews.....	10
(iii)	Observations.....	10
2.3.4	Data collection procedure.....	11
2.3.5	Data analysis.....	11
2.4	Results and discussion.....	11
2.4.1	The nature and scope of ESL teacher educators' tasks.....	11
2.4.2	The extent of the implementation of a learner-centred teaching and learning approach.....	16
2.4.3	Factors impeding a transition to learner-centredness.....	18
2.5	Conclusion and recommendations.....	21
2.6	Bibliography.....	25
	Appendix A.....	29
	Appendix B.....	39

CHAPTER 3

A framework for implementing assessment within a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning

	Abstract.....	41
3.1	Introduction.....	41
3.2	Assessment and learner-centredness.....	43
3.3	Method of research.....	45
3.3.1	Design.....	45
3.3.2	Participants.....	45
3.3.3	Instrumentation.....	45
(i)	Questionnaire.....	45
(ii)	Interviews.....	45

(iii) Observations.....	45
3.3.4 Data collection procedure.....	46
3.3.5 Data analysis.....	46
3.4 Results and discussion.....	46
3.4.1 Current assessment practices and possible shortcomings.....	46
3.4.2 A framework for implementing assessment within a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning.....	51
3.4.2.1 Stage 1: Planning assessment.....	52
3.4.2.2 Stage 2: Implementing assessment.....	55
3.4.2.3 Stage 3: Responding to assessment.....	57
3.5 Conclusion and recommendations.....	58
3.6 Bibliography.....	59
Appendix A.....	63
Appendix B.....	71

CHAPTER 4

Conclusion and recommendations for future research

4.1 Conclusion.....	72
4.2 Recommendations for future research.....	75
Bibliography.....	77

NOTICE

This dissertation has been written in an article format. Both Chapters 2 and 3 are, therefore, presented in article format according to the in-house style of the journals to which they have been submitted.

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SUMMARY

Keywords: *teacher education; learner-centred; learning environment; learning community; learning paradigm; academic learning time; professional development; educational technology; cooperative learning; assessment; formative assessment; classroom assessment; assessment framework.*

Over the past few years many changes have taken place in the content and presentation of teacher education programmes in South Africa due to the paradigm shift from teaching to learning. As a result, the primary learning environment for undergraduate students, the fairly passive lecture-discussion format where teacher educators talk and most students listen, is contrary to almost every principle of an optimal student learning setting. The current view in teacher education is that teacher educators should create learner-centred and learner-controlled environments where student learning and success determine the boundary.

The idea of focusing on learning rather than teaching requires that teacher educators rethink their role and the role of students in the teaching and learning process. When focussing on learning rather than teaching, teacher educators must challenge their basic assumptions about how people learn and what the roles of teacher educators should be. It may be necessary to unlearn previously acquired teaching habits, and rethink the role of assessment and feedback in learning.

Meaningful, formative assessment can play a key role in shifting to a learner-centred approach because it provides important information to both students and teacher educators at all stages of the learning process. To achieve this, it is essential that teacher educators do not simply add assessment as an extra to an existing, non-interactive scheme of work, but that they integrate assessment effectively and efficiently with their instruction. This requires a major shift in how assessment is planned and integrated and a working framework for integrating assessment with instruction can be most valuable to teacher educators.

The purpose of this study was to:

- Determine the nature and scope of ESL teacher educators' tasks, within a Faculty of Education Sciences, at a tertiary institution.
- Determine the extent to which ESL teacher educators are implementing a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning.
- Identify the factors, if any, that impede the transition to a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning.

- Provide recommendations to facilitate the implementation of a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning.
- Determine how, when and how often ESL teacher educators are currently conducting assessment.
- Identify possible shortcomings of the existing assessment system of ESL teacher educators.
- Provide a framework for implementing assessment within a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning.

A one-shot cross-sectional survey design was used in this study. The participants included all the teacher educators (N=5) within the Subject Group English in the Faculty of Education Sciences at the Potchefstroom University.

Three data collection techniques were used in this study, namely a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The purpose was to triangulate the data in order to get as complete a picture as possible of the extent to which the teacher educators' teaching and learning practices reflected a focus on learner-centredness.

The results of the study can be summarised as follows:

Descriptive statistics (means and percentages) were used to analyse the data. The data collected during the interviews were reported as narratives.

The results indicated that the teacher educators in this study spent a significant percentage of their time on preparation for class meetings and assessment. Each teacher educator taught for the full twelve weeks of each semester and, therefore, did not have one week free of teaching the entire year.

Although the teacher educators embraced some learner-centred methods such as group work and interactive class discussions, they still assumed most of the responsibility for the learning processes and classroom behaviour of the students. They mainly focused on what to present in the contact sessions and spent time organizing presentations of information rather than developing materials to facilitate learning. The teacher educators often reverted to more familiar, traditional approaches and emphasized the following issues as affecting the effective and efficient transition to learner-centredness: curriculum coverage and lack of time, lack of proper training, size of student groups, other teacher educators' cynical attitudes and students' attitudes towards learning.

The teacher educators made use of a variety of assessment methods and assessed students continuously, but these assessments were not used for promoting student learning, but rather for grading purposes. Students received traditional feedback such as grades, marks and scores, but they seldom

received feedback on what they did wrong and how they could rectify it. Overall, it was assessment of learning and not assessment for learning.

A major factor impeding the implementation of a learner-centred assessment approach was the demand formative assessment methods placed on the professional time of the teacher educators. In order to utilise time effectively and integrate assessment with the instructional design, teacher educators expressed the need for a workable framework to assist them in planning their assessment practices.

OPSOMMING

Sleutelwoorde: *Onderwyseropleiding; leerdergesentreerd; leeromgewing; leergemeenskap; leerparadigma; akademiese leertyd; professionele ontwikkeling; opvoedkundige tegnologie, koöperatiewe leer; assessering; formatiewe assessering; klaskamer assessering; assesseringsraamwerk.*

Die afgelope aantal jare het menige veranderings met betrekking tot die inhoud en aanbieding van onderwyseropleidingsprogramme plaasgevind wat toe te skryf is aan die paradigmaskuif van onderrig na leer. Die gevolg hiervan is dat die primêre leeromgewing vir voorgraadse studente, die passiewe lesing-besprekingsformaat waar onderwysdosente hoofsaaklik die woord voer en meeste studente luister, teenstellend is tot bykans elke beginsel van 'n optimale leeromgewing. Die huidige beskouing in onderwyseropleiding is dat onderwysdosente eerder 'n leerdergesentreerde en leerdergekontroleerde omgewing moet skep waar studenteleer en -sukses die grense bepaal.

Ten einde 'n effektiewe paradigmaskuif te maak van onderrig na leer is dit noodsaaklik dat onderwysdosente moet herbesin oor hulle rol en diè van studente in die onderrig-leerproses. Onderwysdosente sal hulle basiese veronderstellings van hoe studente leer en wat die rol van die dosent moet wees in oënskou moet neem. Dit mag dalk nodig wees om reeds gevestigde onderrigmetodes af te leer en te besin oor die rol van assessering en terugvoering in leer.

Betekenisvolle, formatiewe assessering kan 'n sleutelrol speel in die verskuiwing na 'n leerdergesentreerde benadering omdat dit belangrike inligting aan beide studente en dosente voorsien op alle vlakke van die leerproses. Om dit te bereik is dit noodsaaklik dat onderwysdosente assessering effektief en voldoende integreer as deel van die leerproses en nie net beskou as 'n addisionele verpligting aan die einde van 'n leereenheid nie. Ten einde die integrering en beplanning van assessering te vergemaklik kan 'n werkbare raamwerk uiters waardevol vir onderwysdosente wees.

Die doel van hierdie studie was om:

- Die aard en omvang van die werk van Engels Tweede Taal onderwysdosente binne 'n Fakulteit Opvoedingswetenskappe aan 'n tersiêre inrigting te bepaal.
- Die omvang waartoe Engels Tweede Taal onderwysdosente 'n leerdergesentreerde benadering tot onderrig-leer implementeer te bepaal.
- Faktore, indien enige, te identifiseer wat die oorgang tot 'n leerdergesentreerde benadering tot leer vertraag of strem.

- Aanbevelings te maak met betrekking tot die implementering van 'n leerdergesentreerde benadering tot onderrig-leer.
- Te bepaal hoe, wanneer en hoe dikwels Engels Tweede Taal onderwysdosente huidiglik assessering uitvoer.
- Moontlike tekortkominge van die bestaande assesseringstelsel van Engels Tweede Taal onderwysdosente te identifiseer.
- 'n Raamwerk te verskaf vir die implementering van assessering binne 'n leerdergesentreerde benadering tot onderrig-leer.

'n Eenmalige dwarsdeursnit navorsingsontwerp is in hierdie studie gebruik. Die studiepopulasie het al die onderwysdosente (N=5) binne die vakgroep Engels aan die Fakulteit Opvoedingswetenskappe van die Potchefstroomse Universiteit ingesluit.

Drie dataversamelingsmetodes is in hierdie studie gebruik, naamlik a) vraelyste, b) semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude en c) klaskamerwaarnemings. Die doel was om die data te trianguleer om sodoende en sover moontlik 'n volledige prentjie te kry van die mate waartoe die onderrig-leerpraktyke van onderwysdosente 'n leerdergesentreerde fokus reflekteer.

Die resultate kan as volg opgesom word:

Beskrywende statistiek is gebruik om die data te analiseer. Die data wat versamel is gedurende onderhoude is in 'n narratiewe formaat aangedui.

Die resultate het aangedui dat die onderwysdosente in hierdie studie 'n merkbare persentasie van hulle professionele tyd spandeer het aan voorbereiding vir kontakssessies en assessering. Elke onderwysdosent het onderrig gegee vir die volle 12 weke van elke semester en het dus gedurende die jaar geen enkele week vry gehad van dosering nie.

Alhoewel die onderwysdosente van sommige leerdergesentreerde metodes soos groepwerk en interaktiewe klasbesprekings gebruik gemaak het, het hulle steeds meeste van die verantwoordelikheid vir die leerproses en klaskameroptrede van die studente op hulle geneem. Die fokus was steeds op die inhoud wat tydens kontakssessies aangebied moes word en heelwat tyd is spandeer om aanbiedings of inligting te organiseer eerder as om materiaal te ontwikkel ten einde leer te bewerkstellig. Die onderwysdosente keer ook menigmaal terug na meer bekende, tradisionele benaderings soos lesings en dosentgesentreerde onderrig. Die volgende faktore speel 'n rol in die onvermoë om 'n effektiewe en voldoende leerdergesentreerde benadering te implementeer: dekking van die kurrikulum en 'n gebrek

aan tyd, 'n gebrek aan voldoende opleiding, klasgrootte, ander onderwysdosente se siniese houding jeens nuwe metodes en studente se negatiewe houding jeens leer.

Die onderwysdosente het wel gebruik gemaak van 'n verskeidenheid van assesseringsmetodes en het studente deurlopend geassesseer, maar sodanige assessering is nie gebruik om leer te bevorder nie, maar eerder om aan studente punte toe te ken. Studente moes staatmaak op tradisionele terugvoering soos byvoorbeeld simbole en punte en het selde terugvoering ontvang oor wat hulle verkeerd gedoen het en hoe om dit reg te stel. Oor die algemeen was dit assessering van leer en nie assessering ter bevordering van leer nie.

'n Belangrike faktor wat 'n negatiewe rol gespeel het in die implementering van 'n leerdergesentreerde assesseringsbenadering, was die eise wat formatiewe assesserings-metodes op die professionele tyd van die onderwysdosente geplaas het. Om tyd effektief te benut en assessering volledig met die onderrig-leerontwerp te integreer, het die behoefte aan 'n werkbare raamwerk waarvolgens assessering beplan kan word, ontstaan.

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 2

Table 1:	Changing the focus from teaching to learning.....	8
Table 2:	Biographical information of ESL teacher educators.....	10
Table 3:	ESL teacher educators' task analysis for full time modules.....	12

CHAPTER 3

Table 1:	An overview of current assessment practices of ESL teacher educators.....	48
Table 2:	Assessment report.....	55

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 2

Figure 1:	Contact time.....	13
Figure 2:	Preparation.....	13
Figure 3:	Assessment.....	14
Figure 4:	Administration and outside class contact.....	14
Figure 5:	Time spent on flexi modules.....	15
Figure 6:	Complete task analysis.....	15

CHAPTER 3

Figure 1:	Hours spent on assessment.....	47
Figure 2:	A framework for implementing learner-centred assessment.....	52

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Problem statement

Historically, educators were trained to produce students who could memorise formulae and textbook paragraphs with the sole aim of remembering enough information to pass the next examination (cf. Mayer-Smith & Mitchell, 1997; Pond, 2002). However, Boggs (1999:3) states that the paradigm that has defined colleges and universities for decades, no longer fits. There is a concern that colleges and universities are not as effective as they need to be. One such critique by the Wingspread Group identified the main issue confronting higher education as the mismatch between what society needs and what it is receiving from the higher education system (cf. Wingspread Group, 1993). Advocates of change (cf. Boggs, 1999; Barr & Tagg, 1995; Pond, 2002) consider the teaching paradigm to be inadequate to meet changes in work, knowledge and citizenship while serving a greater number of students with diverse backgrounds and educational objectives and experiences (cf. Slaughter, 1998; Schrum, 2000).

Academic institutions in South Africa are expected to contribute to the transformation process by redressing past inequities and transforming higher education to serve the new democracy (cf. Department of Education, 1997). The crucial insistence of the present government on institutions producing graduates with "skills and competencies that build the foundations for lifelong learning, including critical, analytical, problem-solving and communication skills" (Department of Education, 1997) has placed a formidable challenge on higher education institutions. These skills would ensure that graduates are embraced in a learning society. According to Nel et al. (2001:239), higher education institutions in South Africa are currently challenged to think very differently about how education and training are organized and delivered to meet the educational needs of an increasingly diverse student population as well as society at large in the 21st century.

The Potchefstroom University for CHE is one such institution that has committed itself to transformation and the phasing in of outcomes-based programmes (Senate decision, 1999-06-03). Efforts are, therefore, being made to transform traditional lecture-based learning experiences into more active and participatory ones for students in order to provide a firm basis for lifelong learning.

It is inevitable that with the shift to a focus on learner- and learning-centred education comes a change in role for virtually all educators, and then specifically teacher educators. When the instructional paradigm reigned, lecturers were conceived primarily as disciplinary experts who impart knowledge by lecturing. In

the learning paradigm, on the other hand, lecturers are conceived primarily as the designers of learning environments; they study and apply best methods for producing learning and student success (cf. Barr & Tagg, 1995:3). In addition, assessment practice also becomes more student-centred, and teacher educators' own assessments of students' understanding sit alongside peer and self-assessment as central parts of the social processes "that mediate the development of intellectual abilities, construction of knowledge and formation of students' identities" (Shepard, 2000:4). Thus, assessment is now defined and seen as an integral aspect of the teaching and learning cycle (Biggs, 1996:14; Hattie & Jaeger, 1998:112). Rather than being an event that describes students' typical performance at the end of a course or period of learning, it is a fundamental process that describes students' best performance across time and uses a range of methods to capture evidence of best performance (Gipps, 1994).

Changing the way teacher educators view and conduct their roles will not be easy (Boggs, 1999). They have invested a tremendous amount of time and energy in the "teaching paradigm" and may be resistant or not know how to change (cf. Boggs, 1999). Teacher educators have been trained by example that they are to provide instruction and to grade students (cf. Barr & Tagg, 1995; Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2002). Students themselves may be resistant to change, having spent twelve years in an educational system that required them to be passive in class and to be competitive rather than cooperative outside of class (cf. Dreyer, 1998; Dreyer & van der Walt, 1996). Research conducted by Lunenberg and Korthagen (2002) indicates that teacher educators have not been overly successful in making the change to student-directed learning. It, therefore, seems necessary and appropriate to determine whether teacher educators are coping with and implementing the change to learner- and learning-centred education.

The following research questions need to be addressed:

- What does the work of English Second Language (ESL) teacher educators, within a Faculty of Education Sciences, currently entail?
- Does the work of ESL teacher educators reflect a change to learner- and learning-centred education?
- What factors, if any, according to the ESL teacher educators impede the transition to learner- and learning-centred education?
- How, when and how often are ESL teacher educators currently conducting assessment?
- What are the possible shortcomings of the existing assessment system of ESL teacher educators?

1.2 Purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is to:

- Determine the nature and scope of ESL teacher educators' tasks, within a Faculty of Education Sciences, at a tertiary institution.
- Determine the extent to which ESL teacher educators are implementing a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning.
- Identify the factors, if any, that impede the transition to a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning.
- Provide recommendations to facilitate the implementation of a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning.
- Determine how, when and how often ESL teacher educators are currently conducting assessment.
- Identify possible shortcomings of the existing assessment system of ESL teacher educators.
- Provide a framework for implementing assessment within a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning.

1.3 Central theoretical statement

Teacher educators have not made an efficient and effective shift to learner- and learning-centred education.

1.4 Method of research

A one-shot cross-sectional survey design was used in this study. The participants included all the teacher educators (N=5) within the Subject Group English in the Faculty of Education Sciences at the Potchefstroom University.

Three data collection techniques were used in this study, namely a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The purpose was to triangulate the data in order to get as complete a picture as possible of the extent to which the teacher educators' teaching and learning practices reflected a focus on learner-centredness.

The teacher educators were asked to complete the questionnaire at the beginning of the second semester of 2003. Individual appointments were scheduled for the interviews with each of the teacher educators. The observations were conducted during the second and third week of the second semester.

Descriptive statistics (means and percentages) were used to analyse the data. The data collected during the interviews are reported as narratives.

1.5 Chapter outline

Article 1, presented in chapter 2, gives an outline of the nature and scope of ESL teacher educators' tasks as well as the extent to which they have shifted to a learner- and learning-centred educational approach. Factors identified by teacher educators as affecting their shift to learner- and learning-centred education are also discussed and critically evaluated. Recommendations to facilitate the implementation of a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning are provided.

Article 2, presented in chapter 3, focuses on one critical issue confronting ESL teacher educators in this new context, namely assessment. In this article, the current assessment practices of the teacher educators are investigated and possible shortcomings are identified. The emphasis is on the development of a framework for conducting assessment within a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning.

Chapter 4 contains the conclusion and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

An analysis of the extent to which English Second Language teacher educators are implementing learner-centred teaching and learning

Abstract

The primary learning environment for undergraduate students, the fairly passive lecture-discussion format where teacher educators talk and most students listen, is contrary to almost every principle of an optimal student learning setting. The current view in higher education is that teacher educators need to focus on student learning rather than on teaching. One of the challenges in moving a university, and in this case specifically a Faculty of Education Sciences, toward learner-centredness is to help teacher educators understand what learner-centredness means and to help them overcome implementation barriers. The purpose of this article is to a) determine the nature and scope of English Second Language (ESL) teacher educators' tasks at a tertiary institution, b) determine the extent to which ESL teacher educators are implementing a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning, c) identify the factors, if any, that impede the transition to a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning, and d) provide recommendations to facilitate the implementation of a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning within a Faculty of Education Sciences.

2.1 Introduction

The environment around us is changing at a dramatic, ever-accelerating pace. Earlier strategic planning efforts are no longer adequate to deal with the circumstances of the time. Major transformations, especially in education, are now the order of the day (Barker, 1992; Barr & Tagg, 1995; Reynolds, 2000). In order to ensure that students are able to cope with the major changes in the nature of the work force as well as the diverse and frequent skill updates required to cope with the information age and rapidly changing business needs (cf. Slaughter, 1998; Schrum, 2000), teacher education needs to become more learner-centred (Bitzer, 1999; van den Berg & de Boer, 2000; Niemi, 2002).

In 1999, the Senate of the Potchefstroom University made a decision to "offer, with flexible learning (which encompasses all learning environments), cost-effective and accessible higher educational programmes of high quality in a learner-centred approach". However, even though universities are strong advocates of the need for reform and a shift to learner-centred teaching and learning, most

programmes are still being taught in very traditional ways (i.e., teacher-centred/instruction-centred) (Dreyer & van der Walt, 1996; Dreyer, 1998).

One of the challenges in moving a university, and in this case specifically a Faculty of Education Sciences, toward learner-centredness is to help teacher educators understand what learner-centredness means. The idea of focusing on learning rather than teaching requires that teacher educators rethink their role and the role of students in the teaching and learning process (Barr & Tagg, 1995). When focussing on learning rather than teaching, teacher educators must challenge their basic assumptions about how people learn and what the roles of a teacher educator should be. It may be necessary to unlearn previously acquired teaching habits, and rethink the role of assessment and feedback in learning. A paradigm shift may be necessary. How do teacher educators do this? To develop new conceptualisations, teacher educators must analyse their old ways of thinking and make continuous changes. If old ways of thinking are not analysed, they remain unchanged, existing patterns continue, and "structures of which we are unaware hold us prisoner" (Senge, 1990:60). Teacher educators must want to be entwined in an educational environment that is shifting from providing instruction to producing learning (Barr & Tagg, 1995).

Parallel to the calls for change are systematic analyses of factors impeding transition related to learner-centredness (cf. Montgomery & McGovern, 1997:84; Takle & Taber, 1996). The pressures on a Faculty of Education Sciences to respond to changes in teaching and learning and to overcome implementation barriers are considerable. Teacher educators may not always perceive the relevance in all these calls for change, and yet, they are supposed to be educating students to become professionals in new educational environments that they may not even know how to demonstrate themselves. It is necessary for teacher educators to practice the change that they are preaching, if they are even preaching it. Teacher educators at university need to model the teaching and learning context that they want pre-service teachers to create in their own classrooms in future (cf. Barr & Tagg, 1995).

The purpose of this article is to a) determine the nature and scope of English Second Language (ESL) teacher educators' tasks at a tertiary institution, b) determine the extent to which ESL teacher educators are implementing a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning, c) identify the factors, if any, that impede the transition to a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning, and d) provide recommendations to facilitate the implementation of a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning within a Faculty of Education Sciences.

2.2 Exploring learner-centredness

The primary learning environment for undergraduate students, the fairly passive lecture-discussion format where teacher educators talk and most students listen, is contrary to almost every principle of an optimal student learning setting (Guskin, 1997). Chickering and Gamson (1987:3) state that: "Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in class listening to teachers, memorizing prepackaged assignments, and spitting out answers". Similarly, King and Kitchener (1994:239) state that: "Classes in which students are expected to receive information passively rather than to participate actively will probably not be effective in encouraging students to think reflectively. Similarly, tests and assignments that emphasize only others' definitions of the issues or others' conclusions will not help students learn to define and conclude for themselves". This does not mean that teacher-centred methods are not effective, "but the evidence is equally clear that these conventional methods are not as effective as some other, far less frequently used methods" (Terenzini & Pascarella, 1994:29).

The current view in higher education is that teacher educators need to focus on student learning rather than on teaching (cf. Table 1). According to Engelkemeyer and Brown (1998:10), the reason is not so much that the traditional approach is "broken" and in need of "fixing", but rather that teacher educators are under performing. "We have failed to realize the synergistic effect of designing, developing, and delivering curricula, programs, and services that collaboratively and collectively deepen, enhance, and enable higher levels of learning" (Engelkemeyer & Brown, 1998:10).

Table 1: Changing the focus from teaching to learning

Teaching paradigm	Learning paradigm
Teacher educator focus	Student focus
Teacher educator as teacher	Teacher educator as synthesizer, navigator, and coordinator of learning
Talking head/sage on stage	Multiple instructional delivery systems
Teacher educator as conveyor of information	Information from many sources (e.g., Internet, electronic libraries and databases)
Information delivered	Information exchange
Input orientation (e.g., resources, library, contact sessions, and teacher educators)	Output orientation (e.g., learning and institutional effectiveness and efficiency)
Contact session/classroom based	Not limited to contact sessions/classroom-based
Group/class delivery	Individualised delivery and collaborative learning with group communications
Teaching and assessing are separate	Teaching and assessing are intertwined
Assessment is used to monitor learning	Assessment is used to promote and diagnose learning
Desired learning is assessed indirectly through the use of objectively scored tests	Desired learning is assessed directly through papers, projects, performances, and portfolios

(cf. Barr & Tagg, 1995; Kleinsasser, 1995).

Learning-centredness is more than just an approach to teaching and learning, it's a philosophy which guides teacher educators' teaching and learning practice – how they teach; how they interact with students; how they design their courses, learning activities and assessment strategies; the goals they value; and what they hope their students will achieve (McCown et al., 1996).

This paradigm shift depends upon changes in the role and work of the teacher educators who remain central to the instructional process. Rather than continuing in their role as the "sage on the stage", teacher educators are redefined as developers of curricula, planners of educational experiences and managers and facilitators of student-directed learning. Far from being eclipsed in the new paradigm, teacher educators' roles become more sophisticated (Twigg & Doucette, 1992).

In the learner-centred environment, the use of time changes. The “timetable” is less of a regimen than it once was. There are fewer scheduled “class” hours; students use the institution’s learning centres at any time of the day and any time of the week. Similarly, traditional semester dates take on less importance. A student completing a specific learning outcome can work ahead, concentrate on weaknesses, or pursue other priorities. Within the year, traditional subject sequences (first and second semester; first and second year) become less a function of programme organisation and more a function of learner needs and priorities (Plater, 1995; Guskin, 1994).

Time also changes in a second significant way. The task was once to place knowledge into subjects and to sequence it appropriately over the weeks and semesters of the programme. The challenge to the learner was to demonstrate recall of the information through a cumulative examination. In a learner-centred environment, materials and resources to assist the learner in acquiring learning outcomes are available when the learner requires them through use of a variety of media. Assessment then focuses more on the performance of tasks and less on summary examinations (Huba & Freed, 2000). Lecturers will thus spend more of their own time on managing information about student learning and individual progress in meeting course objectives (Plater, 1995).

2.3 Method of research

2.3.1 Design

A one-shot cross-sectional survey design was used in this study.

2.3.2 Participants

The participants included all the teacher educators (N=5) within the Subject Group English in the Faculty of Education Sciences at the Potchefstroom University. The researcher, who is also a teacher educator within the Subject Group English, only completed the first part of the questionnaire with regard to task analysis so that a complete picture could be determined. The biographical data of the teacher educators is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Biographical information of ESL teacher educators

Teacher Educator	Gender	Age	Years of teaching experience at school	Years of teaching experience at university
A	Female	46	16	7
B	Female	44	20	1
C	Female	31	7	1
D	Male	32	1	1
E	Female	35	9	3

2.3.3 Instrumentation

Three data collection techniques were used in this study. The purpose was to triangulate the data in order to get as complete a picture as possible of the extent to which the teacher educators' teaching and learning practices reflected a focus on learner-centredness.

(i) Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of two sections, namely Section A which focused on the task analysis of the teacher educators, and Section B which focused on questions relating to the teaching and learning practices in their ESL classes (cf. Appendix A). The questionnaire was developed in order to determine the nature and scope of teacher educators' tasks as well as their comments on the teaching and learning practices within their ESL classes. The questionnaire has content and face validity.

(ii) Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were held with each of the teacher educators in order to ask follow-up questions with regard to the teaching and learning practices within their ESL classes.

(iii) Observations

The researcher obtained permission from each of the teacher educators to observe their contact sessions with the students for a period of two weeks. The purpose of the observations was to determine whether there was a correlation between the comments made on the questionnaires, the answers during

the interviews, and what actually happens during the contact sessions. A checklist was used to record the data that was gathered during the class observations (cf. Appendix B).

2.3.4 Data collection procedure

The teacher educators were asked to complete the questionnaire at the beginning of the second semester of 2003. Individual appointments were scheduled for the interviews with each of the teacher educators. The observations were conducted during the second and third week of the second semester.

2.3.5 Data analysis

Descriptive statistics (means and percentages) were used to analyse the data. In order to express the data in terms of percentages, the total number of hours that the teacher educators spent on their tasks (i.e., teaching, preparation, assessment and feedback, administration, outside class contact, research and community service) was added to get the value of y. The total number of hours spent on each task was then added separately to get the value of x. To convert the values to percentages, the following formula was used:

$$\frac{X \text{ (Total number of hours for each task)}}{Y \text{ (Total number of hours for all tasks)}} \times 100$$

The data collected during the interviews are reported as narratives.

2.4 Results and discussion

The results of this study are presented under the following headings:

- The nature and scope of ESL teacher educators' tasks
- The extent of the implementation of a learner-centred teaching and learning approach
- Factors impeding a transition to learner-centredness

2.4.1 The nature and scope of ESL teacher educators' tasks

The data with regard to the nature and scope of the teacher educators' task analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: ESL teacher educators' task analysis for full time modules

QUESTION NO.	SEMESTER 1 MODULES							SEMESTER 2 MODULES						
	ENGL 111	ENGL 211	ENGL 311	ENGL 111	ENGL 211	ENGL 311	ENGL 411	ENGL 121	ENGL 221	ENGL 321	ENGL 121	ENGL 221	ENGL 321	ENGL 421
1	3	1	2	5	5	-	3	2	3	2	-	1	4	1
2	70	54	30	440	359	-	35	70	50	28	-	10	284	30
4	48	48	48	120	120	-	24	48	48	48	-	24	96	24
5	92	48	60	156	156	-	36	88	116	96	-	24	132	72
6	24	3	62	98	88	-	50	50	64	16	-	10	80	100
7	10	3	16	27	27	-	3	20	18	4	-	5	22	15
8+ 10	143	60	68	451	391	-	39	108	123	55	-	15	301	77
11	17	5	17	15	10	-	5	6	24	20	-	15	10	12
12	16	2	12	33	33	-	7	8	14	10	-	5	22	15
13	7	2	7	23	22	-	6	3	10	6	-	5	15	12

The results of the full time task analysis (cf. Table 3) indicated that five full time lecturers, within the subject group English within the Faculty of Education Sciences, are responsible for teaching a total of 988 full time students during the first semester and 472 full time students during the second semester (Question 2).

An analysis of the contact sessions (Question 4) indicated that the teacher educators had a total of 408 contact sessions with the full time students in the first semester and a total of 288 contact sessions in the second semester. Each contact session is 50 minutes (cf. Figure 1).

Based on the data presented in the questionnaire and follow-up questions during the interviews it was determined that each teacher educator teaches for the full twelve weeks of the first semester. The same trend occurred in the second semester. These teacher educators, therefore, do not have one week free of teaching the entire year.

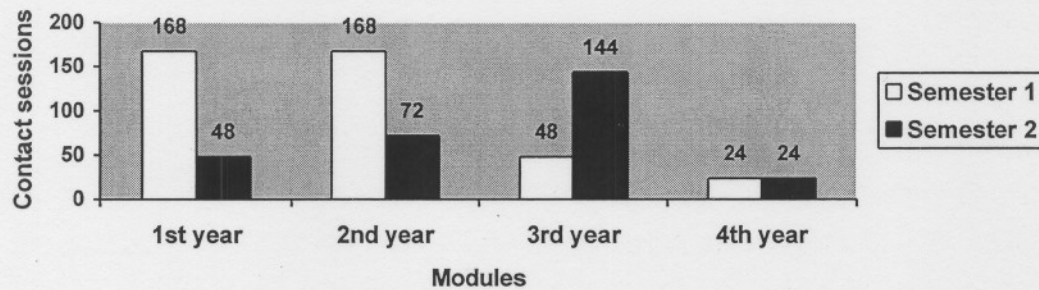


Figure 1: Contact time

The total preparation time for the first semester (questions 5-7) for the first-year modules was 407 hours, for the second-year modules 325 hours, for the third year module 138 hours and for the fourth year module 89 hours. With regard to the second semester, the total preparation time was 158 hours for the first-year module, 237 hours for the second-year modules, 349 hours for the third-year modules and 187 hours for the fourth year module (cf. Figure 2).

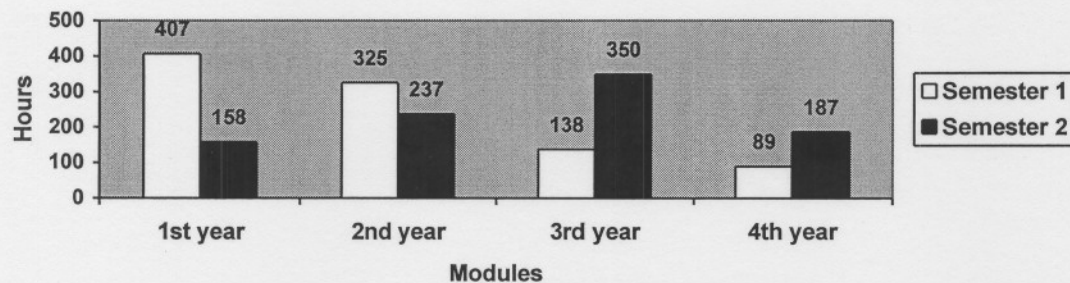


Figure 2: Preparation

An analysis of the assessment practices indicated that the teacher educators spent a total of 594 hours on assessment (questions 8 and 10) for the first-year modules in the first semester, 451 hours for the second-year modules, 68 hours for the third-year module and 39 for the fourth year module. With regard to the second semester, the total assessment time was 108 hours for the first-year module, 138 hours for the second-year modules, 356 hours for the third-year modules and 77 hours for the fourth year module (cf. Figure 3).

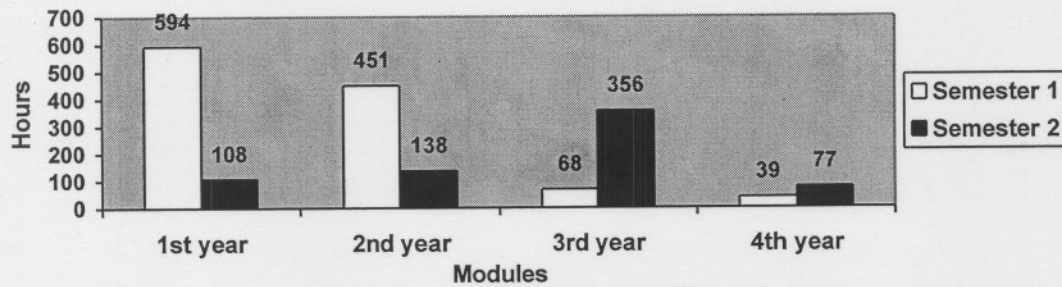


Figure 3: Assessment

The teacher educators spent 49 fixed hours on administration for the first-year modules in the first semester, 35 hours for the second-year modules, 12 hours for the third-year modules and seven hours for the fourth year module. With regard to the second semester, the total administration time was eight hours for the first-year module, 19 hours for the second-year modules, 32 hours for the third-year modules, and 15 hours for the fourth year module (cf. Figure 4).

The teacher educators spent a total of 30 hours on handling problems and assisting students with queries for the first-year modules in the first semester, 24 hours for the second-year modules, seven hours for the third-year module and six hours for the fourth year module. With regard to the second semester, the total time spent on handling of problems and assistance was three hours for the first-year module, 15 hours for the second-year modules, 21 hours for the third-year modules and 12 hours for the fourth year module (cf. Figure 4).

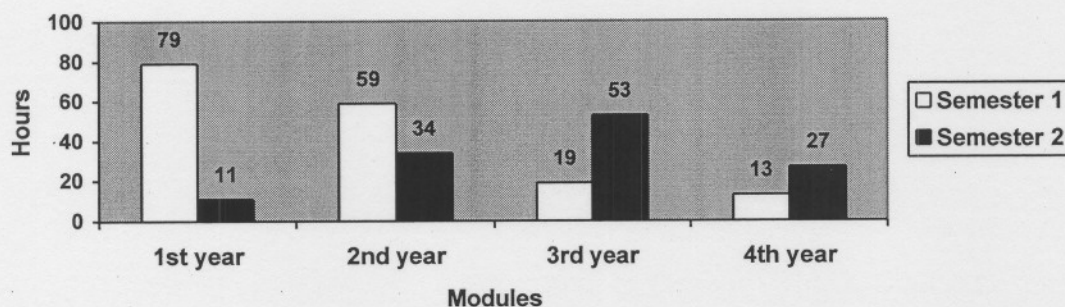


Figure 4: Administration and outside class contact

The average time spent on research per teacher educator per week was 10.6 hours, and an average of 22.4 hours was spent on community service per semester.

Overall, therefore, the results indicated that the teacher educators spent 2% of their time doing community service, 5,4% of their time doing administrative duties, 11,6% of their time was spent on

research, 12,7% of their time was spent “teaching” (i.e., contact sessions), 34% of their time was spent on assessment and 34,6% of their time was spent on preparation.

When the teacher educators’ task analyses for flexi modules (i.e., modules for off campus students) are taken into account, it becomes evident that a significant percentage of their time is spent on assessment (64%) and administrative duties associated with the assessment task (21%). Teacher educators only spent 4% of their time on “teaching” and 11% on preparation for class meetings (cf. Figure 5).

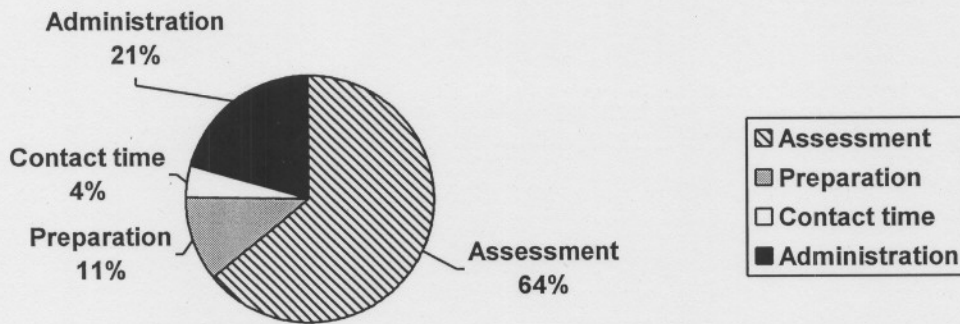


Figure 5: Time spent on flexi modules

The complete task analysis of teacher educators indicated that teacher educators spent 2% of their total time on community service, 9% of their time on research and 9% of their time on administrative duties, 11% of their time was spent on contact sessions, 30% of their time was spent on preparation for class meetings and 39% of their time was spent on assessment (cf. Figure 6).

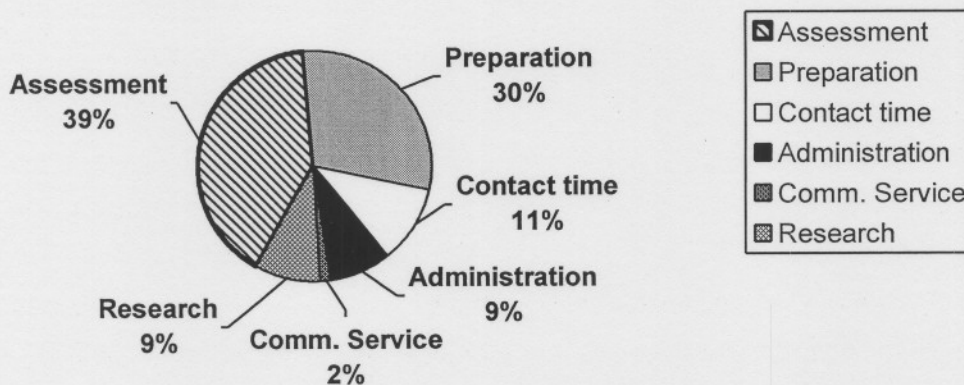


Figure 6: Complete task analysis

It is evident from the results that the teacher educators in this study spent a significant percentage of their time on assessment and preparation for class meetings. It is also clear that these teacher educators are nowhere near the envisaged 40:40:20 (i.e., 40% time spent on teaching, 40% time spent on research, and 20% time spent on administration and community service) guideline as set by the Potchefstroom University.

2.4.2 The extent of the implementation of a learner-centred teaching and learning approach

Based on an analysis of the comments made by the teacher educators on the questionnaire, their responses during the interviews and the observations made during the ESL contact sessions, the following trends are identified with regard to the extent of the implementation of a learner-centred teaching and learning approach:

Methods of instruction

The results indicate that the teacher educators assume most of the responsibility for determining the learning goals, delivering what they determine to be crucial information, providing feedback when possible, and assessing learning outcomes. They determine what ought to be taught, when, how and in what time frame. Students have no input in the decision-making process and they don't get opportunity to set their own learning goals, make connections between prior knowledge and experience, build pathways for new understanding and continuously modify their behaviour to better achieve those goals. Students and teacher educators, therefore, act independently and in isolation.

Although students are actively involved during contact sessions, answering questions, working in groups and delivering presentations, they are not actively involved in their own learning processes and have minimum experience of planning and building their own learning tasks and environments. Their main responsibility regarding the learning process is completing assignments, preparing prescribed work and coming to class prepared for discussions.

Overall, it seems that although the teacher educators embrace methods such as interactive engagement during contact sessions and collaborative instruction, the curriculum to be covered takes precedence and the emphasis remains on the lecturing of content. The teacher educators, thus, provide instruction rather than produce learning. The following comments and/or observations were written on the questionnaires and/or made during the interviews and class observations:

"Certain content asks for lecturing."

"I try to vary my strategies, but students prefer lecturing."

"The responsibility students have for the learning process is to participate in group discussions, complete assignments, prepare for classes and research certain topics."

"The assignments are mostly given in the study guide and are, therefore, quite set but I try to give them a choice sometimes."

"I don't give students as much responsibility as I would like to."

Integrating teaching and learning

The parts of the teaching and learning process are still seen as discrete entities. The teacher educators' view of academic learning time is mainly focussed on contact sessions; they are focussed on what to present in the contact sessions and then spend more time organising presentations of information rather than developing materials to facilitate learning. The teacher educators do not create environments both in- and outside the classroom that bring students to discover and construct knowledge for themselves; that encourage students to reflect and interact, and that supply opportunities for students to master and apply what they have learned in authentic contexts. The following comments and/or observations were written on the questionnaires and/or made during the interviews and class observations:

"I seldom use time in variable and flexible ways to match students' needs due to a lack of contact time."

"I try to give them enough time in class to discuss difficult concepts, but contact time is not enough to go into as much detail as I would've liked."

"Contact time is not enough for students to practice and apply new knowledge and skills, but it is usually reflected, to some extent, in the projects, practical teaching and examinations."

Focus on learning strategies

The teacher educators strive to develop the students' higher-order thinking skills by providing stimulating and guiding questions, but there is a limited incorporation or focus on learning strategies, specifically metacognitive strategies. Students are not tutored on how to process and organise knowledge, how to use source materials, or how to monitor their learning progress. The use of memory strategies still tends to dominate. The following comments and/or observations were written on the questionnaires and/or made during the interviews and class observations:

"It is in the study guide, but there is not time in contact sessions to do this in detail."

*"Students are allowed and encouraged to analyse, criticize, evaluate content, and **discuss** controversial statements."*

"I teach them to focus on main issues, to really comprehend, be analytical and respond to material."

Utilizing technology

As far as educational technologies are concerned, the teacher educators make use of traditional media (e.g., the blackboard, overhead projector, video- and audiotapes). These are mainly used to support teaching and learning during contact sessions and not to enhance and extend learning beyond the classroom walls. Media is used to highlight certain concepts and explain content. It does not form an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

Assessment practices

Progress of student learning is mostly monitored by means of summative assessment techniques with the focus on the grading of students. While this is usually done at the end of a period of teaching, the teacher educators and the students receive delayed feedback which means that neither of the groups can adjust their teaching or learning if it should be required.

Students have no real input and choice in the design of the assessment system. They seldom engage in self-assessment activities and have minimal opportunity to reflect on their own progress. The following comments and/or observations were written on the questionnaires and/or made during the interviews and class observations:

"I sometimes use peer assessment, but it would be good practice to let the students design their own grids for assessment."

"I do not give as much opportunity for self-assessment as I could."

"I monitor progress by means of regular assignments, class quizzes, tests and projects."

"Comments are written in portfolios, but our workload is a problem as far as feedback is concerned."

2.4.3 Factors impeding a transition to learner-centredness

Teacher educators participating in this study are fully aware that change is inevitable and that their educational approach should reflect a shift from teaching to learning. Although attempts are made to

implement a learner-centred approach, teacher educators often revert to more familiar, traditional approaches (i.e., teacher-centred).

During the interviews and when answering the questionnaires, the teacher educators emphasized the following issues as affecting the effective and efficient transition to learner-centredness:

- **Curriculum coverage and lack of time**

Courses are overloaded and teacher educators experience a sense of continuous time pressure. They feel that learner-centred methods would take too much time and they feel that they can't take the "risk" of not covering all the content in the curriculum; especially within a policy of reduced contact time. Active learning methods require much more work from a teacher educator than traditional teaching. Much more intensive preparation is needed than for traditional teaching; more planning and more preparation of learning materials (Hansen, 2000; Niemi, 2002).

The following comments and/or observations were written on the questionnaires and/or made during the interviews:

"There is no time for this."

"I find it impossible to accommodate all the different styles and needs within a contact session."

"The designing of interactive study guides and methods are time consuming."

"The workload remains a problem."

- **Lack of proper training**

In a learner-centred approach, teacher educators have to fulfil a new pedagogical role, but Boekaerts (1997:162) states that most teachers are not yet equipped to turn students into self-regulated learners. The teacher educators are still steering and guiding the learning process, a situation which does not invite students to use or develop their cognitive or motivational self-regulatory skills.

Reasons are that the teacher educators have not been exposed to other pedagogical styles and assessment strategies associated with them. Compulsory training in this regard is necessary as well as a basic knowledge and understanding of relevant, contemporary learning theories. Policies and management practices need to be established to create a climate where the continuous improvement of instructional design is the norm (Sunal et al., 2000; Schulze, 2003:11).

- **Size of student groups**

The size of student groups is too big and it is almost impossible to use active learning methods when classrooms cannot accommodate large groups or are not well-equipped. The following comments and/or observations were written on the questionnaires and/or made during the interviews and class observations:

“Although I try to actively involve students in the learning process, classes have too many students to get every single one involved.”

“If only the classroom was equipped, we could use time more effectively.”

- **Other teacher educators' cynical attitudes**

According to Cuban (1990), lecturers' beliefs and expectations about teaching and learning limit change. Some teacher educators are very cynical or experience burnout. They do not have the motivation or energy to apply new methods; they do not like to experiment with anything new or simply do not think it is necessary. This can lead to a lack of cooperation.

- **Students' attitudes towards learning**

The teacher educators complain that some students have learnt a passive learning culture in their schooling years and they continue this tradition at university. Students can be very conservative and because they are inexperienced in using active learning strategies, they prefer that teacher educators talk and they write in their notebooks. Years of passive note-taking and silent absorption of information have convinced many students that this is the appropriate way to learn. This learned helplessness can be a convenient way out for both students and teacher educators. Both sides have the illusion of success and neither wants to replace the comfort zone they are in (Hansen, 2000; Niemi, 2002). The following comments and/or observations were written on the questionnaires and/or made during the interviews and class observations:

“Students don't seem eager to change to a system in which they have more responsibility for learning.”

“Students still prefer the old spoon-feeding method where they don't need to be actively involved.”

2.5 Conclusion and recommendations

Teacher educators in the 21st century have a responsibility to provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to enhance their learning experiences, and to create an environment that will make a difference in their students' lives and the lives of others who follow their lead. The following recommendations are made in order to facilitate the implementation of learner-centred teaching and learning:

Re-examine the system

The information and knowledge age is giving educators an exciting opportunity to redesign, if not re-engineer tertiary education systems. In current education reform efforts there are countless interventions that have only served to "tweak" the education system (e.g., reducing contact time, changing assessment practices, purchasing large quantities of expensive hardware and software). However, many of these attempts are mere "Band-Aid fixes", resulting in no significant long-lasting change. We must accept that when we attempt a large-scale intervention, we are operating in a system comprised of many inter- and intra-related subsystems. A change in one will undoubtedly affect another. So we need to re-examine the system as a whole. We must challenge ourselves to "think-out-of-the-box". We must envision a learning system where learners are self-regulated, motivated, and inspired to share information and knowledge with others, and where learner achievement and satisfaction are measurable and attainable results.

Education is a complex system, and implementing or delivering a large-scale intervention must address the phases of a systematic design process (i.e., planning, analysing, designing, developing, implementing, evaluating and revising) (Moore & Kearsley, 1996). These phases are continuously revisited (an iterative process); this revisiting promotes continuous improvement and results in sustained delivery of high quality education.

Commitment of teacher educators and students

This whole process will only be possible if both teacher educators and students are willing and able to make this paradigm change. They have to understand the learning-centred philosophy and be committed to the long process of moving out of the old ways of higher education and into a new challenging approach to learning (Garmon, 1999:1).

Teacher educators, above all, must share a compelling commitment to change from the status quo to a more desirable state. Not only must they share the vision, they must buy-in, enough to motivate, inspire,

maintain, and sustain themselves and others to accomplishment. They must want to be entwined in an educational environment that is shifting from providing instruction to producing learning.

Creating/Enhancing learning environments

In an attempt to produce learning, the purpose of teacher educators is not to transfer knowledge but to create learning environments and experiences that bring students to discover and construct knowledge for themselves, to make students members of communities of learners that make discoveries and solve problems (Barr & Tagg, 1995).

There is no one “answer” to the question of how to organise such learning environments and experiences. It supports any learning method and structure that works, where “works” is defined in terms of learning outcomes, not as the degree of conformity to an ideal classroom archetype. Attaining these learning outcomes is not bound by time and calendar constraints. Achievement is supported by flexible time frames and not bound by closed, structured teaching time. Learning programmes are open-ended and creative. Learners are encouraged to form own insights and create own solutions (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Malan, 2000:27).

The chief agent in the process is thus the learner, therefore, learning environments and activities should be learner-centred and learner-controlled. They may even be teacherless. While teacher educators will have designed the learning experiences and environments that students use, they need not be present for or participate in every structured learning activity (Barr & Tagg, 1995).

The use of educational technology

The constant change in technological advances, the information explosion, and rapid knowledge acquisition is demanding a learning/learner-centred environment. No longer can teacher educators function as the sole source of knowledge. They must adopt the teaching/learning paradigm shift and embrace the use of technology to enhance the learning processes.

If implemented properly, technology has great potential for enhancing the learning environment of any course. Technology will permit instruction to be customised to the preferences, location, schedule, learning styles and other relevant characteristics of students and will enable them to master outcomes of their learning (SACS, 2000). The greatest potential of instructional technologies is making students more active, self-directed learners, capable of lifelong learning (cf. Chickering & Ehrmann, 1996:4). Hawkins (1999), as cited in SACS, shares the optimism in the possibilities of technology to make effective, scalable learning environments that can transform higher education.

Because the Internet is widespread in numerous fields and domains it also carries great potential for educational use. In addition to the communication benefits of the Internet, the Internet can also be used to retrieve and access information. The Internet offers numerous benefits to the language learner, and teacher educators in this domain should become familiar with using the Internet and its various functions. The more enthusiastic and knowledgeable language teacher educators are, the more successfully they will be able to implement technology in the language classroom. Although it can't replace the teacher educator, it offers a vast amount of information and lends itself to communication possibilities that can greatly enhance the language learning experience (Singhal, 1999:4).

As part of the transmission of knowledge can be transferred to computers, teachers gain time to work with students individually and in small groups and serve more as guides and partners in the learning process. The benefits accruing from modern technology are dependent, however, on teacher educators' mastery and skill in this domain (Ben-Peretz, 2000:2).

Creating opportunities for cooperative learning

One way to get students more actively involved in and outside the classroom is to structure cooperative interaction into classes so that students have to explain what they are learning to each other, discover each other's point of view, give and receive support from classmates, and help each other dig below the superficial level of understanding of the material they are learning. Cooperative learning may be incorporated through the use of informal learning groups, formal learning groups and base groups (Johnson et al., 1990:12; Niemi, 2002:4).

By collaborating with their peers, students move away from dependence on the teacher educator and develop their own pool of resources. By explaining to one another how they arrived at the answers, vital language skills are developed, skills that will serve students well in their future academic careers and in other aspects of their lives where they collaborate with others (Hansen, 2000:6; Nel et al., 2001:245).

Other indicators of student performance

When measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the change to a learner-centred approach, improvements on other indicators of student performance should be considered besides student academic gains (e.g., student attendance records, graduation rates, documented student involvement and participation, or attitudinal changes in learner satisfaction and confidence).

Training staff

The question is often asked: "Why do most of our significant change efforts seem to fail or be only partially successful?" According to Lick and Kaufman (2000), leaders will find that they may have implemented a strategic planning approach that is incomplete and inadequate for the massive, holistic, systemic change that is required. They may have failed to prepare their organisation for the important transformations that major change requires. For instance, before people will seriously commit to being an important part of major change, they must understand the essence of the change, appreciate why it is so important to the organisation as well as internal and external stakeholders, and accept, both intellectually and emotionally, the implications of the change personally. They may not have provided and implemented a detailed, structured, disciplined transition plan for identifying and then completing the major change. That is, a plan that would transition people, processes, and, most importantly, the culture from the old paradigm to the new one.

In order to produce the conceptual, procedural, curricular and other structural changes needed to transform faculties into learning-centred institutions, all staff should, therefore, undergo in-service training or faculty development. Teacher educators, in addition to their subject expertise, need to be trained in identifying learning styles, modular curriculum development, and instructional technology and methodology, in order to become effective assessors of a student's abilities and potential, designers of learning environments and systems, as well as trainers in how to access information and data (Flynn, 1999).

Professional development of staff consists of workshops and courses, written descriptions of effective practice, the use of peer consultation and funded course development and action research. Research (e.g., Sunal et al., 2000; McCombs & Whisler, 1997) indicates that faculty with greater knowledge of effective teaching strategies and clearer ideas about planning and carrying out change in their courses are significantly more likely to implement change.

To summarise, a great deal of research indicates that teacher educators should change the way they instruct in order to enhance student learning. They should work together with students to formulate outcomes that are both challenging and attainable, they should create environments that enable students to work together collaboratively, they should create opportunities for reflection and interaction, they should supply opportunities for students to apply what they have learned in new contexts and they should provide sufficient feedback to students on their learning. Overall, teacher educators should stimulate students' motivation to learn by engaging them fully in the learning process.

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APPENDIX A

SECTION A

TEACHER EDUCATOR TASK ANALYSIS

Instructions:

- Indicate your answers next to the appropriate number on the grids provided.

FULL TIME MODULES

A TEACHING

A1 Statistics

- 1 Indicate the modules you teach.
- 2 Indicate the number of students in each module.
- 3 Indicate the number of weeks you teach each module per 12 week semester.
- 4 Indicate the number of contact sessions you teach each module per 12 week semester.

A2 Preparation

- 5 Indicate total hours spent on class meeting preparation per module.
- 6 Indicate total hours spent on designing and compiling of study material (i.e., study guides, manuals, class hand-outs, etc.) per module.
- 7 Indicate total hours spent on the creation and development of new technology for instructional use per module.

A3 Assessment and Feedback

- 8 Indicate total hours spent on assessment of student outcomes per module.
This includes planning and preparation of assessment strategies, planning of assignments and projects, setting up of exam papers and memoranda, marking of assignments, projects and exam papers, etc.
- 9 Indicate total hours spent on supervision and evaluation of student work outside of the classroom context per module.
This includes speech competitions, theatrical plays, exhibitions, etc.
- 10 Indicate total hours spent on supervision of student teaching per module.
This includes assessment of practical teaching and micro teaching sessions.
- 11 Indicate total number of assignments per module.

A4 Administration

12 Indicate total hours spent on administrative duties per module

This includes training of facilitators and markers, moderating of assignments and exam papers, recording of marks, distributing study material, assignments and exam papers to facilitators and markers, etc.

A5 Follow-up

13 Indicate total hours spent on outside class contact with registered students per module.

This includes contact during office hours, e-mail and telephone regarding problems and queries.

B RESEARCH

14 Indicate total hours spent on research per week.

C COMMUNITY SERVICE

15 Indicate total hours spent on community service per semester.

This includes workshops, instructional activities for persons in the community, involvement on examination boards, work on instructional committees, contact with school practice, etc.

TASK ANALYSIS GRID: FULL TIME MODULES

QUESTION	ACADEMIC ENGLISH MODULES						CLASSROOM ENGLISH MODULES						ENGLISH DIDACTICS MODULES		TOTAL
	ENGH 111	ENGH 121	ENGH 211	ENGH 221	ENGH 311	ENGH 321	ENGC 111	ENGC 121	ENGC 211	ENGC 221	ENGC 311	ENGC 321	ENGD 411	ENGD 421	
1															
2															
3															
4															
5															
6															
7															
8															
9															
10															
11															
12															
13															
14															
15															

DISTANCE EDUCATION MODULES (Flexi, NPDE and OLG students)

A TEACHING

A1 Statistics

- 1 Indicate the modules you teach.
- 2 Indicate total hours you teach each module per 12 week semester.

A2 Preparation

- 3 Indicate total hours spent on class meeting preparation per module.
- 4 Indicate total hours spent on designing and compiling of study material (i.e., study guides, manuals, class hand-outs, etc.) per module.
- 5 Indicate total hours spent on the creation and development of new technology for instructional use per module.

A3 Assessment and Feedback

- 6 Indicate total hours spent on assessment of student outcomes per module.
This includes planning of assignments, setting up of exam papers and memoranda, marking of assignments and exam papers of Flexi students and specialised modules.
- 7 Indicate total number of assignments per module.

A4 Administration

- 8 Indicate total hours spent on administrative duties per module.
This includes training of facilitators and markers, moderating of assignments and exam papers, recording of marks, distributing assignments and exam papers to markers, etc.

A5 Follow-up

- 9 Indicate total hours spent on outside class contact with registered students per module. This includes contact during office hours, e-mail and telephone regarding problems and queries.

TASK ANALYSIS GRID: NPDE

QUESTION	ACADEMIC ENGLISH MODULES						CLASSROOM ENGLISH MODULES						ENGLISH DIDACTICS MODULES		TOTAL
	EGPN 119	EGPN 129	EGPN 219	EGPN 229	EGPN 319	EGPN 329	ESPN 119	ESPN 129	ESPN 219	ESPN 229	ESPN 319	ESPN 329	EDSN 229	EDSN 329	
1															
2															
3															
4															
5															
6															
7															
8															
9															

TASK ANALYSIS GRID: ACE and PGCE

QUESTION NUMBER	ACE MODULES						PGCE MODULES		TOTAL
	A TEK 521	C DEK 521	S DEK 521	A SDK 521	F ROO 571	F ROP 571	EN GD 411	EN GD 421	
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									

SECTION B

EXTENT OF LEARNER-CENTRED IMPLEMENTATION BY TEACHER EDUCATORS

Instructions:

- Answer the following questions by indicating YES or NO in the space provided.
- If the answer is YES, indicate **how** you do it or give an example(s) of **what** you do and with **which groups**.
- If the answer is NO to any of the questions, please provide a reason if possible.

(Instructional methods and strategies.)

1 Do you utilise time in variable and flexible ways to match student needs?

YES	
NO	

2 Do you give students increasing responsibility for the learning process?

YES	
NO	

3 Do you help students refine their strategies for constructing meaning and organising content?

YES	
NO	

4 Do you include strategies in your teaching that enhance the development of higher-order thinking and use of metacognitive strategies?

YES	
NO	

5 Do you make use of a variety of instructional strategies?

YES	
NO	

6 Do you encourage student choice in areas such as topics of learning, types of projects on which to work and whether to learn independently or in groups?

YES	
NO	

7 Do you give students sufficient opportunities to practice and apply new knowledge and skills to developmentally appropriate levels of mastery?

YES	
NO	

8 Do you provide a warm, comfortable and supportive environment that promotes a sense of belonging?

YES	
NO	

9 Do you provide students with opportunities to interact with their peers and the teacher educator to reflect on experiences, negotiate, share and construct meaning?

YES	
NO	

10 Do you make use of technology in your instruction? Which of the following do you use?

	Blackboard	OHP	Powerpoint	Varsité	CD-Rom	Video	Audio tape
YES							
NO							

(Classroom activities and learning materials.)

11 Do you actively involve students in the learning process?

YES	
NO	

12 Do you include authentic tasks and assessment techniques that help students integrate information across subject matter disciplines?

YES	
NO	

13 Do you address different learning styles by implementing a wide variety of student activities?

YES	
NO	

14 Do you include activities and materials that are challenging and provide opportunities for students at different levels?

YES	
NO	

(Assessment procedures)

15 Do you include student input in the design of the assessment system?

YES	
NO	

16 Do you monitor progress continually?

YES	
NO	

17 Do you give constructive and informative feedback to students regarding their products?

YES	
NO	

18 Do you integrate assessment with instruction?

YES	
NO	

19 Do you provide opportunities for self-assessment?

YES	
NO	

20 Do you allow a diversity of competencies to be demonstrated in a variety of ways?

YES	
NO	

21 Do you provide appropriate opportunities for student choice of types of products for demonstrating achievement of educational standards?

YES	
NO	

APPENDIX B

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

EXTENT OF LEARNER-CENTRED IMPLEMENTATION BY TEACHER EDUCATORS

	The teacher educator:	Observation 1			Observation 2			Observation 3			Observation 4		
		Never	Some-times	Almost Always	Never	Some-times	Almost Always	Never	Some-times	Almost Always	Never	Some-times	Almost Always
1	Utilises time in variable and flexible ways to match student needs.												
2	Gives students increasingly responsibility for the learning process.												
3	Helps students refine their strategies for constructing meaning and organising content.												
4	Includes strategies that enhance the development of higher-order thinking and use of metacognitive strategies.												
5	Makes use of a variety of instructional strategies.												
6	Encourages student choice in topics of learning, types of projects etc.												
7	Gives students sufficient opportunities to practise and apply new knowledge and skills to appropriate levels of mastery.												
8	Provides a warm, comfortable and supportive environment.												
9	Provides students with opportunities to interact with peers and the educator to reflect, share, debate etc.												

	The teacher educator:	Observation 1			Observation 2			Observation 3			Observation 4		
		Never	Some-times	Almost Always	Never	Some-times	Almost Always	Never	Some-times	Almost Always	Never	Some-times	Almost Always
10	Uses technology.												
11	Actively involves students in the learning process.												
12	Includes authentic tasks and assessment techniques that help students integrate across subject matter disciplines.												
13	Implements a wide variety of student activities.												
14	Includes activities and materials that provide challenging opportunities at different levels.												
15	Includes student input in the design of the assessment system.												
16	Monitors progress continually.												
17	Gives constructive and informative feedback regarding achievement of outcomes.												
18	Integrates assessment with instruction.												
19	Provides opportunities for self-assessment.												
20	Allows a diversity of competencies to be demonstrated in different ways.												
21	Provides appropriate opportunities for student choice of types of products.												

CHAPTER 3

A framework for implementing assessment within a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning

Abstract

The current view in teacher education is that teacher educators should create learner-centred and learner-controlled environments where student learning and success determine the boundary. Research indicates that meaningful, formative assessment can play a key role in shifting to a learner-centred approach because it provides important information to both students and teacher educators at all stages of the learning process. To achieve this, it is essential that teacher educators do not simply add assessment as an extra to an existing, non-interactive scheme of work, but that they integrate assessment effectively and efficiently with their instruction. This requires a major shift in how assessment is planned and integrated and a working framework for integrating assessment with instruction can be most valuable to teacher educators. The purpose of this article is to a) investigate current assessment practices of English Second Language teacher educators at a tertiary institution, b) identify possible shortcomings of the existing assessment system, and c) provide a framework for implementing assessment within a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning.

3.1 Introduction

The current view in higher education is that the focus should be on student learning rather than teaching in order to improve students' learning experience at university (Cross, 1998:4). Traditional approaches such as passive lectures, rote learning, rigid content-based syllabi, teacher-centredness and summative assessment techniques are contrary to almost every principle of optimal settings for student learning (cf. Guskin, 1997; Venter, 2001), and teacher educators should, therefore, attempt to create learner-centred and learner-controlled environments where student learning and success determine the boundaries (Barr & Tagg, 1995).

According to Shepard (2000), assessment can play a key role in shifting to a learner-centred approach because it provides important information to both students and teacher educators at all stages of the learning process. Truly useful assessment will help both students and teacher educators to identify students' purposes for learning, to gain a clear and ongoing perspective on how students are progressing towards their purposes for learning and to evaluate how well learning activities used in and

outside the classroom are assisting in this process (cf. Cotten, 1998). It will give teacher educators the opportunity not only to give students feedback on their learning but also to seek feedback from students about how to improve the learning environment (Huba & Freed, 2000:31).

What is important though, is that although assessment can play a key role in creating powerful learning environments, it shouldn't be the traditional mode of assessment, where the student's ability to demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge is targeted in a once-off examination. It should be assessment used in the right way; meaningful, formative assessment that puts the student and his/her learning at the centre of the assessment process (Elwood & Klenowski, 2002). ✎

Since teacher educators are the people who are responsible for planning and integrating these new assessments "on the ground", that it is important to ensure that they have the skills they need to conduct these high quality assessments (Brindley,1997). According to Boud (1995) and Phye (1997), teacher educators should become designers of multifaceted assessment strategies, managers of assessment processes and consultants assisting students in the interpretation of rich information about their learning. In order to meet these expectations, assessment can no longer be marginalized or ignored, and careful consideration should be given to assessment at the planning stage of a learning experience (Biggs, 1996; Brooks, 2002).

Black (1998) supports this by stating that assessment cannot simply be added as an extra to an existing, non-interactive, scheme of work. The feedback procedures, and more particularly their use in varying the teaching and learning programme, have to be built into the teaching plans, which thereby will become both more flexible and more complex. Thus, the practice of learner-centred assessment has to be informed by a model that provides some guidance about the ways in which students might progress in learning, linked to a clear conception of the curriculum and its learning goals.

To include and promote such learner-centred assessment practices in classrooms requires a major shift in how assessment is planned and integrated into teaching practices and it requires teacher educators who are willing to change their standard teaching methods (Elwood & Klenowski, 2002). If curriculum, instruction and assessment are integrated, the assessment itself becomes a valuable learning experience.

This article, therefore, focuses on a critical issue confronting teacher educators implementing a learner-centred teaching and learning approach, namely learner-centred assessment. The aim of this article is to a) investigate current assessment practices of English Second Language teacher educators at a tertiary institution, b) identify possible shortcomings of the existing assessment system and, c) provide a framework for implementing assessment within a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning.

3.2 Assessment and learner-centredness

Effective learning environments are learner-centred. This implies that students should be actively engaged in the process of knowledge construction and that their learning should become the focus and ultimate goal of the learning environment (cf. Barr & Tagg, 1995:8). Assessment lies at the heart of this process as it holds the key to better learning. When students' learning is assessed the following questions are usually asked: "What have our students learned and how well have they learned it?" and "How successful have we been at what we are trying to accomplish?" In a learner-centred approach, assessment is used as a tool to gather information from a variety of sources to cultivate a rich and meaningful understanding of student learning (Huba & Freed, 2000).

Assessment promotes learning through intervening during the learning process to gather feedback which is used to guide subsequent teaching and learning (Brooks, 2002). Huba and Freed (2000:56) emphasize that such feedback must be for both faculty (teacher educators) and students; just as students need feedback to improve their learning, so do faculty who provide the direction and guidance. Huba and Freed (2000:56) state that: "We need to know what students understand and don't understand so that we can modify our own performance as teachers, if necessary. We also need to identify barriers to learning that students may be experiencing – even barriers that we may have inadvertently created".

Constructive feedback enables students to fully understand their own learning and helps them to rethink old understandings, draw new connections, and create new applications (Shepard, 2000). Cotten (1998) similarly states that feedback helps students become more cognizant of the fact that they are learning, if indeed they are, and to be aware of how they are moving closer, through the steps of interrelated learning activities, to fulfilling their own intrinsically-motivating purposes for learning. This promotes student autonomy and independent learning skills and helps individuals to become more self-directed in their learning plans and activities (Coombe & Kinney, 1998:2; Muirhead, 2002:2).

Feedback is part and parcel of learner-centred assessment, whether students are giving feedback to teacher educators or whether teacher educators are giving feedback to students. In order to get as much feedback as possible, teacher educators need to assess student learning routinely and continuously (Barr & Tagg, 1995). Angelo and Cross (1993) state that too often there are gaps between what is taught and what is learned and that teacher educators need a continuous flow of accurate information on student learning to avoid such unhappy surprises. If feedback is not acted upon promptly, the assessment serves no purpose. Students benefit most from rapid feedback; the longer the time lag between performance and feedback, the less efficacious the feedback is likely to be in correcting errors and enhancing future performance (Brooks, 2002). According to Angelo and Cross (1993:7), "it is very difficult to 'de-program' students who are used to thinking that anything they have been tested and graded on as being 'over and done' with."

Assessment thus changes from a process of occasionally monitoring student knowledge to one of providing continuous, meaningful feedback on important, valued characteristics. In a learner-centred environment teaching and assessing are not separate, episodic events, but rather they are ongoing, interrelated activities focused on providing guidance for improvement (Huba & Freed, 2000). Rather than being an event that describes students' typical performance at the end of a course or period of learning, it is a fundamental process that describes students' best performance across time and uses a range of methods to capture evidence of best performance (Gipps, 1994). These methods range from conventional tests to performance tasks, portfolios, student self-assessment surveys and probes, peer assessments, journals, logs, products, projects and other performance-based activities that may be a part of the classroom (cf. McCombs & Whisler, 1997; Janse van Rensburg & Twala, 1998).

Teacher educators can thus develop a number of measurement instruments so that students may select the assessment that emphasises their strengths (Reynolds, 2000). According to McCombs and Whisler (1997), learner-centred assessment enables students to make various choices, including the types of products for demonstrating achievement of educational standards. It also redefines success; standards should be based not on competition, but on self-selected or collaborative learning goals that promote self-generated solutions. Students should, therefore, have a voice in the entire planning process of assessment. They should be full partners in deciding the goals of ongoing assessment. They should be involved in deciding how and when progress will be measured. They should know what it tells them about their learning and what the teacher educator will use it for. The criteria for evaluation need to be explicit to students, so that they can begin learning how to do it for themselves (Gosselin, 1998; Maxwell & Meiser, 2001; McCombs & Whisler, 1997).

Using learner-centred assessment may be more time-consuming than previous approaches (cf. Dreyer & van der Walt, 1998:110; Muirhead, 2002:8). It takes time and effort to implement a new approach; teacher educators not only need to create new learning environments and develop new teaching strategies, but they also have to guide students to understand new ways of learning. In order to do this, teacher educators spend more time discussing students' work with them and evaluating it at various stages of development. Some out-of-class teacher educator time is thus required to plan the assessment, analyse feedback, prepare a response and make adjustments that will enhance the learning environment (Angelo & Cross, 1993). The payoff of better prepared students, however, justifies the time it takes to make the transformation from teacher-centred to learner-centred practices (Huba & Freed, 2000:26).

3.3 Method of research

3.3.1 Design

A one-shot cross-sectional survey design was used in this study.

3.3.2 Participants

The participants included all the teacher educators (N=5) within the subject group English in the Faculty of Education Sciences at the Potchefstroom University. The researcher, who is also a teacher educator within the Subject Group English, only completed the first part of the questionnaire so that a complete picture of the educators' assessment task analysis could be determined. The teacher educators' teaching experience at school level ranged from one to twenty years, while their teaching experience at university level ranged from one to seven years.

3.3.3 Instrumentation

Three data collection techniques were used in this study, namely a questionnaire, classroom observations and interviews. The purpose was to triangulate the data in order to get as complete a picture as possible of the current assessment practices of teacher educators.

(i) Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of two sections, namely Section A which focused on the assessment task analysis of the teacher educators, and Section B which focused on questions relating to the assessment practices in their ESL classes (cf. Appendix A). The questionnaire was developed by the researcher in order to determine the nature and scope of teacher educators' assessment tasks as well as their comments on the assessment practices employed within their ESL classes. The questionnaire has content and face validity.

(ii) Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were held with each of the teacher educators in order to ask follow-up questions with regard to the assessment practices employed within their ESL classes.

(iii) Observations

The researcher obtained permission from each of the teacher educators to observe their contact sessions with the students for a period of two weeks. The purpose of the observations was to determine

whether there was a correlation between the comments made on the questionnaires, the answers during the interviews and what actually happened during the contact sessions with regard to assessment. A checklist was used to record the data that was gathered during the class observations (cf. Appendix B).

3.3.4 Data collection procedure

The teacher educators were asked to complete the questionnaire at the beginning of the second semester of 2003. Individual appointments were scheduled for the interviews with each of the teacher educators. The observations were conducted during the second and third week of the second semester.

3.3.5 Data analysis

Descriptive statistics (means and percentages) were used to analyse the data. The data collected during the interviews are reported as narratives.

3.4 Results and discussion

The results of this study are presented under the following headings:

- Current assessment practices and possible shortcomings.
- A framework for implementing assessment within a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning.

3.4.1 Current assessment practices and possible shortcomings

An analysis of the current assessment practices of teacher educators, within the subject group English within the Faculty of Education Sciences, indicated that the teacher educators spent 594 hours on assessment (questions 8 and 10) for the first-year modules in the first semester, 451 hours for the second-year modules, 68 hours for the third-year modules and 39 for the fourth year module. With regard to the second semester, the total assessment time was 108 hours for the first-year modules, 138 hours for the second-year modules, 356 hours for the third-year modules and 77 hours for the fourth year module. Figure 1 presents the total hours spent on assessment per year-level.

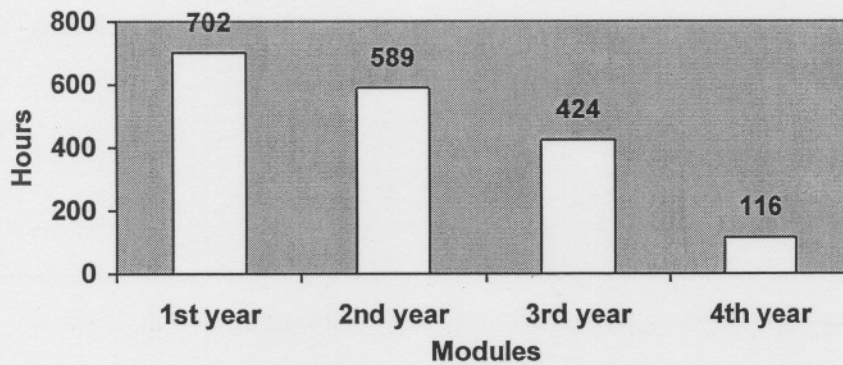


Figure 1: Hours spent on assessment

An analysis of the number of assignments given to students in the various modules indicated that during the first semester, first-year students majoring in English had to complete 17 assignments in the first year, five in the second year and 17 in the third year. With regard to the second semester, the total number of assignments for the first-year module was six, four for the second-year module, and 20 for the third-year module. During the first semester, first-year English Communication students received 15 assignments to complete and the second-year students 10. During the second semester, the second-year students received 15 assignments to complete and the third-year students 30. The English Subject Didactics students received 10 assignments in the first semester and 12 in the second semester.

When a complete task analysis is made of the teacher educators' full time workload, it becomes clear that their assessment task takes up a significant portion of their professional time. Teacher educators devote 34% of their time to assessment of student learning. This includes planning and preparation of assessment strategies, marking of assignments, projects and exam papers, and time spent on assessment during student teaching. In relation to the teacher educators' other tasks, assessment takes as much time as time spent on preparation for contact sessions and significantly more time than that spent in class (10%), research (9%), administrative duties (4%), and community service (2%).

If the assessment task of ESL teacher educators takes up 34% of their professional time, it is necessary to determine what exactly their assessment practices consist of. Table 1 provides an overview of the current assessment practices of the teacher educators. It indicates the various assessment instruments used by the teacher educators, how often students were assessed using each instrument, when, during the course of a semester, assessment took place, and by whom the assessment was conducted.

Table 1: An overview of current assessment practices of ESL teacher educators

Classroom assessment techniques	How often and when	By whom
Portfolio assessment	Students submit portfolios twice a semester. This is usually just before mid-term tests and the semester exams.	Teacher educators or facilitators (i.e., markers appointed to assist with assessment and accredited by subject group.)
Group projects	Students work on a group project and submit this project just before the semester exams.	Teacher educators or facilitators
Formal and informal feedback from group discussions	Every contact session, two to three times a week.	Teacher educators
Paper- and pen assessment	Once or twice a semester. A mid-term test is written in some modules and a formal exam at the end of the semester for all modules.	Teacher educators
Journals	Students submit a journal once a semester just before the semester exams.	Teacher educators or facilitators
Peer-assessment	Once or twice a semester, after certain tasks performed in class.	Group members
Oral assessment (recorded on audio tape during contact session).	Students do oral work on audio tapes approximately once a fortnight . These audio tapes are marked once or twice a semester, usually just before mid-term tests and semester exams.	Teacher educators or facilitators

Based on an analysis of the comments made by the teacher educators on the questionnaire, their responses during the interviews and the observations made during the ESL contact sessions, the following trends with regard to their current assessment practices, and the possible shortcomings are identified:

Assessment conducted by the teacher educators seems to be more teacher-centred than learner-centred. The teacher educators and/or facilitators are mainly responsible for the assessments and there is no evidence of student input as far as the assessment design is concerned. Students have no say or choice in the formulation of intended learning outcomes, assessment criteria and types of products for demonstrating achievement of these learning outcomes. Assessment criteria are seldom communicated explicitly to students from the onset and, therefore, students have little direction when studying and completing assignments. They also have limited opportunities for self-and peer-assessment and in the few cases that it did occur, students received minimal training regarding this issue. The following comments and/or observations were written on the questionnaires and/or made during the interviews and class observations:

"Students are part of the assessment process, but not of the design."

"Due to the nature of classes and set study guides, it is impossible to give students a choice."

"Self-assessment is limited, because students tend to be unrealistic and unfair."

"Since there is no time to assess whether the self-assessment was on target students do not really benefit from this."

Although teacher educators give students ample opportunity to demonstrate competencies in a variety of ways, assessment of these competencies is usually only done at the end of a period of teaching such as mid-term tests and formal exams. During this period, students' portfolios, journals, group projects, audio tapes and tests are marked by teacher educators and/or facilitators for grading purposes and students are passed or failed according to how they have mastered the knowledge or the skill. Little attention is paid to processes of learning or student development due to large numbers of assignments and subsequent time constraints. It seems as if the quantity of assignments impedes the frequency and quality of the assessments conducted. The following comments and/or observations were written on the questionnaires and/or made during the interviews and class observations:

"Progress is monitored through class tests, semester tests, exams, assignments, and oral speeches."

"Portfolios are marked twice in a six week cycle."

"Tape recordings are made for assessment, but usually time runs out to mark it."

"When time allows, worksheets are used apart from assignments."

Due to the fact that assessment is done at the end of a period of teaching, there is limited opportunity for constructive feedback to students. Although they receive traditional methods of feedback such as grades, marks and scores, they seldom know how assessment results were interpreted, why they scored poorly, how to intervene in their own learning and what teacher educators intend to do in response. Some of the teacher educators write comments in portfolios, but due to large classes and time constraints these comments are not as elaborate and informative as they want them to be. Where facilitators are used to do the marking, there is no system in place to obtain feedback from them in order to revise teaching and learning plans where necessary. The following comments and/or observations were written on the questionnaires and/or made during the interviews and class observations:

"Although assessment grids are provided, it is not complete enough as students come back to find out what they did wrong and why they scored poorly."

"I try to generalize errors and comment on them."

"Workload and time remains a problem."

All the teacher educators stated that their assessment was not integrated with their instructional design and was usually added as an extra to the existing scheme of work. The following comments and/or observations were written on the questionnaires and/or made during the interviews and class observations:

"I would like to, but can spend very little time on it."

"I often leave this aspect until I have received assignments."

"The assessment aspect is usually only covered much later in the instruction process."

This analysis of the current assessment practices of the ESL teacher educators indicates that the teacher educators are aware of multiple, alternative assessment techniques, but they want to do too much, too fast without an effective conceptual framework as basis for an assessment plan. They are not systematic enough in stating learning outcomes, in auditing the means of implementing the outcomes, and in collecting evidence that can be used to affirm or to suggest the need for modification of the original outcomes. Overall, there is not a clear link between data collecting multiple assessment measures and educational goals. What starts out, for example, as continuous assessment, turns into a cumulative process where work submitted is scored and the scores are added towards the end of the course.

It seems as if teacher educators and students need better ways to monitor learning throughout the semester. Implementing a learner-centred assessment system will assist teacher educators in integrating assessment with instruction, in obtaining useful feedback on what, how much, and how well

their students are learning and in using this information to refocus their teaching in order to help students make their learning more efficient and effective. A framework for implementing such a learner-centred approach to assessment is outlined in the next section.

3.4.2 A framework for implementing assessment within a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning

When teaching and assessing within the traditional model, teacher educators may be comfortable being the primary information givers and primary evaluators. However, shifting to a learner-centred approach challenges teacher educators to take risks and try new approaches that are unfamiliar to them; it means becoming novices again and returning to a period of learning by trial and error (Huba & Freed, 2000). This, together with the additional time and effort new approaches require, can be very unsettling to teacher educators, and if not managed well, can cause teacher educators to revert to old ways.

A working framework for integrating assessment with instruction can be most valuable to teacher educators. Not only will it reduce their uncertainty, but it will also assist them in their assessment decision-making process and enable them to work smarter and not harder. Implementation of assessment does not necessarily require a teacher to complete all steps in the cycle. What is included or emphasized, depends on the purpose of assessment. According to Gipps (1994:3), "assessments come not only in a range of forms but with different purposes and underlying philosophies. We must first ask the question 'assessment for what?' and then design the assessment programme to fit."

Figure 2 outlines a developmental model of teacher assessment in which teacher educators progress through clearly defined stages in their planning for and implementation of assessment. The framework is adapted from the work of Angelo and Cross (1993), Huba and Freed (2000) and Rea-Dickens (2001).

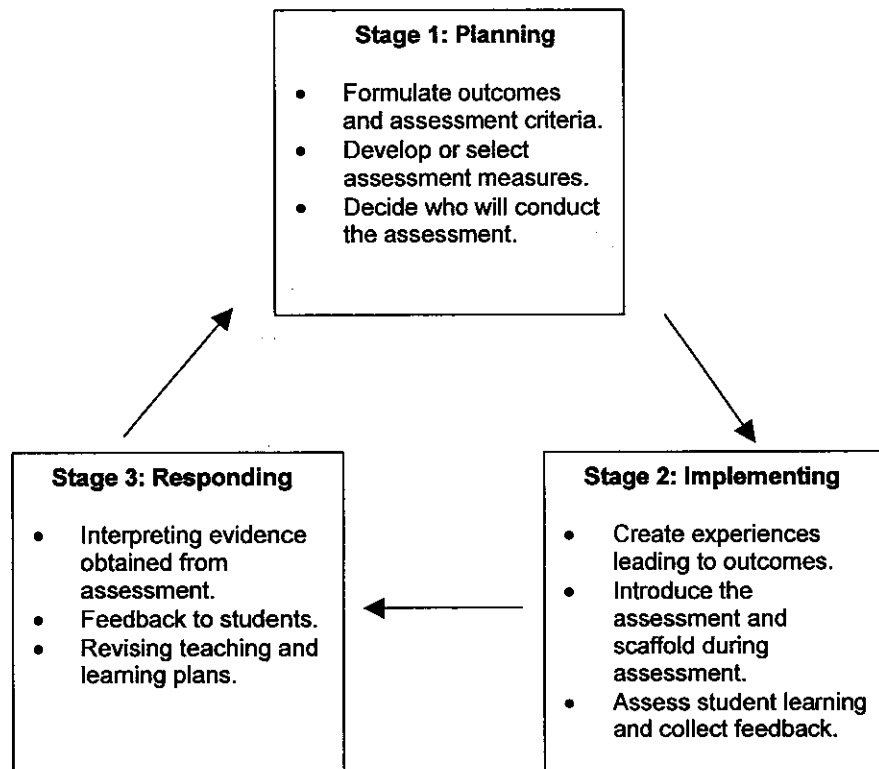


Figure 2: A framework for implementing learner-centred assessment

Each stage in the framework is briefly explained.

3.4.2.1 Stage 1: Planning assessment

- ***Formulate learning outcomes and assessment criteria***

A cardinal rule of assessment is first to describe the desired outcomes (Taylor & Marienau, 1997:233). Before teacher educators can assess how well their students are learning, they must identify and clarify what they are trying to teach, what students should know, understand, and be able to do with their knowledge when they graduate. Starting with teaching goals allows teacher educators to take a serious look at what they believe is most important to teach, and what they really want students to learn (Angelo & Cross, 1993; Huba & Freed, 2000).

There are several advantages of starting with goals. The first advantage of beginning with goals is that it encourages teacher educators to engage in a deep level of self-assessment about their teaching aims. Second, it enhances motivation and teacher ownership of the process by tying assessment directly to the instructional goals that individual classroom teachers value most. Third, it promotes good instructional practice by ensuring that teacher educators are assessing what they are teaching and teaching what they are assessing (Angelo & Cross, 1993:39).

Perhaps the most important role of intended outcomes is to reveal to students the intentions of teacher educators. The Education Commission of the States (1996:5) states, "students learn more effectively when expectations for learning are communicated clearly from the onset." Sharing outcomes helps students develop a sense of direction as they participate in class, study, and complete assignments. Learning outcomes can also serve as a basis for ongoing self-assessment – students can review the outcomes, asking themselves whether or not they have achieved them (Huba & Freed, 2000:98).

- ***Develop or select assessment measures/tools***

The second step is the designing or selecting of data gathering measures to assess whether or not intended learning outcomes have been achieved. According to Baker (1994), teacher educators must determine which forms of alternative assessment are most useful for which educational purposes, distinguish among assessment instruments of differing quality and appropriateness, and learn to design assessment methods. The process of designing assessment measures forces teacher educators to come to a thorough understanding of what is really meant by intended learning outcomes. In this step teacher educators thus map out the path by which they will seek an answer to the assessable question and choose the tools that will help them get that answer (Angelo & Cross, 1993; Huba & Freed, 2000).

"There are a wide range of methods available for assessment; the choice has to be matched to the purposes and to constraints on time and cost" (Black, 1998:100). Effective teacher educators use a variety of methods, some formative and others summative, to determine how much and how well their students are learning. Formative assessment techniques are not meant for assigning grades and shouldn't take the place of more traditional forms of classroom evaluation. Rather, these formative assessment tools are meant to give teacher educators and students information on learning before and between tests and examinations, therefore, they supplement and complement summative evaluations of learning (Angelo & Cross, 1993).

Teacher educators can develop a number of measurement instruments so that students may select the assessment that emphasises their strengths (Reynolds, 2000). What is important though, is that all assessments should be made as authentic as possible in order for students to identify future learning needs and develop goals and strategies for attaining them (McCombs & Whisler, 1997; O'Malley, 2000). Assessment should help students to discover connections between what they learn at university and the ways in which they will use their knowledge in society or the professions after graduation (Huba & Freed, 2000:22).

- ***Decide who will conduct the assessment***

Students taking up positions in modern organisations need to be able to analyse information to improve their problem-solving skills and communication and to reflect on their own role in the learning process.

People increasingly have to be able to acquire knowledge independently and use this body of organised knowledge in order to solve unforeseen problems (Dochy & Segers, 1999).

One way for higher education institutions to contribute to the education of students as independent, lifelong learners is to change their assessment approach to one of learner-centredness (cf. Beckwith, 1991; Huba & Freed, 2000). Although teacher educators act mainly as the designers, managers and interpreters of assessments (Calfee & Masuda, 1997), they are not the only, or even perhaps the most important, evaluators any more (Huba & Freed, 2000). According to Shepard (2000:4), teacher educators' own assessments of students' understanding now sit alongside peer- and self-assessment as central parts of the social processes "that mediate the development of intellectual abilities, construction of knowledge and formation of students' identities."

Research reports positive findings concerning the use of self-assessment in educational practice. Students who engage in self-assessment tend to score most highly on tests. Self-assessment, used in most cases to promote the learning of skills and abilities, lead to more reflection of one's own work, a higher standard of outcomes, responsibility for one's own learning and increasing understanding of problem-solving (Dochy & Segers, 1999; Shepard, 2000).

Peer assessment can also be very useful and can be seen as part of the self-assessment process and as informing self-assessment. Somervell (1993) indicates that at one end of the spectrum, peer assessment may involve feedback of a qualitative nature or, at the other end, may involve students in marking. The assessment may thus be formative or summative.

For formative assessment strategies like these to be productive, students should, however, be trained in peer- and self-assessment so that they can understand the main purposes of their learning and thereby grasp what they need to achieve (Black & William, 1998). Directed practice in self-assessment also gives students the opportunity to develop metacognitive skills (Angelo & Cross, 1993).

Another advantage of self- and peer assessment is that it can be cheaper and less time-intrusive than traditional ways of assessing students. Teacher educators need only to spot-check student performance rather than spend time rating every single product from each student (Dochy & Segers, 1999; O'Malley, 2000).

In order to gain time to implement formative assessment strategies, teacher educators increasingly make use of facilitators to mark students' assignments and tests for grading purposes. To fulfil accountability requirements and to ensure that teacher educators receive optimal feedback, teacher educators and facilitators should jointly be required to submit an assessment report similar to the one proposed in Table 2. This report is adapted from the work of Huba and Freed (2000).

In column 1 of the proposed report, teacher educators list each of the intended outcomes of the assessment. The relevant experiences that the teacher educators provide to help reach each learning goal are listed in column 2. Column 3 specifies the measures teacher educators have identified or developed to assess each learning goal. In column 4, the results obtained from administering the measures are summarised by the facilitators and in column 5, teacher educators use the results to list changes that have been made to teaching strategies or the curriculum.

Table 2: Assessment report

Intended outcomes	Relevant experiences	Assessment measures	Results: Shortcomings/strong points	Changes based on results

3.4.2.2 Stage 2: Implementing assessment

- ***Create experiences leading to outcomes***

If teacher educators expect students to achieve their intended outcomes, they must provide them with opportunities to learn what they need to learn. In this step, teacher educators need to examine what they actually do to teach to the goal they set and what the students are required to do to reach that goal (Angelo & Cross, 1993). They then should direct time and energy away from content presentations toward the development of activities that focus students on their learning and how they will articulate or demonstrate that learning (McCombs & Whisler, 1997).

These tasks should not only actively engage students in creating their own knowledge, but should also respect the diverse talents and learning styles of students. Tasks should be designed in such a way that students can complete them effectively in different ways. There is not just one right answer, but rather students have the opportunity to do excellent work that reflects their own unique way of implementing their abilities and skills (Huba & Freed, 2000; McCombs & Whisler, 1997).

Teacher educators should also provide opportunities for students to work together. According to the Education Commission of the States (1996:8), “students learn better when engaged in a team effort rather than working on their own.” As students share with peers what they know and what they are learning, their knowledge and understanding deepen and they progress towards desired learning goals.

According to Huba and Freed (2000), these learning opportunities often extend beyond classroom walls. While teacher educators will have designed the learning experiences and environments that students use, they need *not be present for or participate in* every structured learning activity (Barr & Tagg, 1995).

- ***Introduce the assessment and scaffolding during assessment activity***

Introducing the assessment to students is an important step in the process. According to Elwood and Klenowski (2002), it is essential to promote a community of shared understanding of assessment practice. To achieve this, teacher educators should make assessment criteria explicit to students at the onset of the assessment activity. They should take time to go through these criteria with the students, unpacking both the teacher educators' and their understanding of what is meant by the different statements included in grade descriptions.

Criteria in the form of rubrics can be developed by teacher educators or teacher educators and students jointly. Rubrics are like road signs: they allow students to know where they are with respect to where they need to be and how to get there. They allow students to self-assess, self-correct and be more self-reliant (Huba & Freed, 2000; McCombs & Whisler, 1997).

Black and William (1998) state that students should not only be informed on what will be assessed, but also on why they are being assessed. Students are usually pleased that teacher educators might want to evaluate their learning for some other reason than to assign a grade. By announcing to a class that teacher educators want to assess how much and how well they are learning in order to help them learn better, they lower barriers to effective learning set up by the grading system and power structure of the classroom (Angelo & Cross, 1993: 51).

To assist students on how to do the assessment, Alleman and Brophy (1997:322) suggest that scaffolding during the assessment should be done. Structuring and scaffolding of the activity must be sufficient to enable students to accomplish the primary goal if they invest reasonable effort in attempting to do so, yet not be so extensive as to nullify the activity's value as a means of accomplishing that goal.

- ***Assess student learning and collect feedback data***

In this step, teacher educators use the assessment technique and assessment criteria previously decided upon to conduct assessment and get specific, comprehensible feedback on the extent to which students are achieving the learning goals and objectives (Angelo & Cross, 1993; Huba & Freed, 2000). For teacher educators to get as much feedback as possible and be able to maximise student learning, the gathering of data should not be limited to a single event, but should rather be an ongoing process (Dreyer & van der Walt, 1998).

3.4.2.3 Stage 3: Responding to assessment

- ***Analyse and interpret evidence obtained from assessment***

When evidence is obtained from an assessment, the next step is to analyse the data. Angelo and Cross (1993) suggest that teacher educators first need to clarify why they are analysing data before deciding how to analyse the data. The original purpose for assessing learning should determine how teacher educators analyse the data. When analysing the data, teacher educators must look at the whole range of student responses, whether it be positive or negative, and then carry out only as much analysis as is useful and reasonable, given the time and energy available.

According to Phye (1997:37), interpreting the results of assessments may be the most difficult skill to acquire. It is not simply a matter of reporting results but rather explaining what the results mean. Calfee and Masuda (1997:91) state that interpretation is the task of giving meanings to observations and shaping generalisations for decision making. It must be embedded in the questions that guide data collection and the evaluation of the evidence. It must connect with the questions that motivated the assessments. Interpretation demands of teacher educators both reflection and expression, both time and occasion to ponder the evidence.

Teacher educators should thus be skilled in administering, scoring and interpreting the results of both summative and formative assessments. If a well-developed assessment is incorrectly administered, poorly scored, or misinterpreted, teacher educators have lost any benefit from the time and effort spent in the development of a valid assessment tool (Phye, 1997:37).

- ***Feedback to students***

Traditional methods of offering feedback to learners have largely involved grades, marks and scores, often made meaningful only by comparing one student's performance with another (Sutton, 1994). In a learner-centred approach, the feedback students receive from assessments deal directly with the learning to be acquired, whether it be knowledge or skills. They receive valuable feedback regarding what the assessment results were, how they were interpreted and what teacher educators intend to do in response. In this way, assessment results in feedback that students can use, not only to know how well they are doing, but also to improve their performance (Huba & Freed, 2000; Angelo & Cross, 1993).

Feedback can, however, only enhance student learning when it is acted upon promptly. To the extent possible, teacher educators should provide immediate feedback as they circulate to monitor performance while students are actively engaged in the activity, not just delayed feedback in the form of grades or comments provided at some future time (Alleman & Brophy, 1997).

- ***Revising teaching and learning plans***

Assessment serves little purpose unless it leads to actions and decisions. Through discussions of assessment results, teacher educators gain insights into the type of learning occurring in the programme, and are better able to make informed decisions about needed programme changes. Teacher educators understand what students can do well and in what areas they have not succeeded. They raise questions about the design of the curriculum or about the teaching strategies they use. They also develop a better understanding of how to assess learning in a useful manner (Walvoord, Bardes & Denton, 1998:10; Calfee & Masuda, 1997). At this point the cycle becomes full circle.

3.5 Conclusion and recommendations

New assessment methods alone cannot bring about the changes in student learning that teacher educators require, but the evidence is equally clear that traditional methods are not as effective in enhancing student learning (Gipps, 1994). New assessment methods individualise assessment and involve teacher educators and students more deeply in the assessment process. It strengthens the students' cognitive and metacognitive awareness of the learning process and it increases their ability to control their own learning. Teacher educators receive valuable information on what students already know and what they nearly know in order to feed this information back into the teaching process (Gipps, 1994; Moya & O' Malley, 1994).

The purpose of this article was to investigate the current assessment practices of teacher educators in order to determine the extent to which they have implemented a learner-centred approach to assessment. The results indicated that, although the teacher educators made use of a variety of new assessment methods, these methods still did not serve their purpose of creating powerful learning environments with student learning as its main focus. The time and energy that it would take the teacher educators to implement learner-centred assessments and the lack of a manageable assessment plan were identified as the major factors impeding the change to learner-centred assessment.

As teacher educators start to plan formative assessment, they need development time and when conducting classroom assessment, they need maintenance time. Development time will be a high priority to begin with, but the need for it will decrease as workable plans are established. Maintenance time will also be needed, but that time may also decrease over a period as teacher educators become more familiar with the criteria, streamline the procedures and gain confidence. As students become more involved with understanding objectives, with reflection and target-setting, they can also become more involved in providing feedback for each other and themselves. This done, the feedback that students receive from each other, which is specific, constructive and based on evidence, can be as valuable as that which they receive from teacher educators, and the teacher educators can put more energy into checking the quality of the feedback rather than providing it themselves (Sutton, 1994).

Teacher educators should, however, find a balance between 'marking' and 'planning' time. According to Robinson (1995), it is wise to create a plan that alleviates the grading of student work by limiting the number and size of projects. Sutton (1994:37) agrees: "Do not assess too much. Quantity of assessment is no real substitute for quality, and quality assessment already takes time to plan and to do." In order to offer more helpful feedback, many teacher educators choose to 'focus' their marking, checking a particular item in the work set rather than everything.

According to Sutton (1994), inadequate planning will increase maintenance time of assessment and it is, therefore, essential that teacher educators develop a manageable assessment model based on an effective conceptual framework. Teacher educators should first review all present assessment routines to ensure that all current assessment time is really well spent and time-effective. They should then plan schemes of work and make the necessary choices about assessment priorities. By planning over a semester, teacher educators will be able to stretch the assessment workload more thinly (Sutton, 1994).

Assessment methods must be convenient to implement by being manageable, easily incorporated into usual classroom activities and capable of providing information that justifies the time and money required. Effective and informative assessment practice is time-efficient and supports teaching and learning by providing constructive feedback to the teacher and learner that will guide further learning. Teacher educators need to carefully plan the timing, frequency and nature of assessment strategies. Good planning ensures that assessment is manageable and maximizes the usefulness of the strategies selected (Janse van Rensburg & Twala, 1998:90).

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APPENDIX A

SECTION A

TEACHER EDUCATOR TASK ANALYSIS

Instructions:

- Indicate your answers next to the appropriate number on the grids provided.

FULL TIME MODULES

A TEACHING

A1 Statistics

- 1 Indicate the modules you teach.
- 2 Indicate the number of students in each module.
- 3 Indicate the number of weeks you teach each module per 12 week semester.
- 4 Indicate the number of contact sessions you teach each module per 12 week semester.

A2 Preparation

- 5 Indicate total hours spent on class meeting preparation per module.
- 6 Indicate total hours spent on designing and compiling of study material (i.e., study guides, manuals, class hand-outs, etc.) per module.
- 7 Indicate total hours spent on the creation and development of new technology for instructional use per module.

A3 Assessment and Feedback

- 8 Indicate total hours spent on assessment of student outcomes per module.
This includes planning and preparation of assessment strategies, planning of assignments and projects, setting up of exam papers and memoranda, marking of assignments, projects and exam papers, etc.
- 9 Indicate total hours spent on supervision and evaluation of student work outside of the classroom context per module.
This includes speech competitions, theatrical plays, exhibitions, etc.
- 10 Indicate total hours spent on supervision of student teaching per module.
This includes assessment of practical teaching and micro teaching sessions.
- 11 Indicate total number of assignments per module.

A4 Administration

12 Indicate total hours spent on administrative duties per module

This includes training of facilitators and markers, moderating of assignments and exam papers, recording of marks, distributing study material, assignments and exam papers to facilitators and markers, etc.

A5 Follow-up

13 Indicate total hours spent on outside class contact with registered students per module.

This includes contact during office hours, e-mail and telephone regarding problems and queries.

B RESEARCH

14 Indicate total hours spent on research per week.

C COMMUNITY SERVICE

15 Indicate total hours spent on community service per semester.

This includes workshops, instructional activities for persons in the community, involvement on examination boards, work on instructional committees, contact with school practice, etc.

TASK ANALYSIS GRID: FULL TIME MODULES

QUESTION	ACADEMIC ENGLISH MODULES						CLASSROOM ENGLISH MODULES						ENGLISH DIDACTICS MODULES		TOTAL
	ENGH111	ENGH121	ENGH211	ENGH221	ENGH311	ENGH321	ENGC111	ENGC121	ENGC211	ENGC221	ENGC311	ENGC321	ENGD411	ENGD421	
1															
2															
3															
4															
5															
6															
7															
8															
9															
10															
11															
12															
13															
14															
15															

DISTANCE EDUCATION MODULES (Flexi, NPDE and OLG students)

A TEACHING

A1 Statistics

- 1 Indicate the modules you teach.
- 2 Indicate total hours you teach each module per 12 week semester.

A2 Preparation

- 3 Indicate total hours spent on class meeting preparation per module.
- 4 Indicate total hours spent on designing and compiling of study material (i.e., study guides, manuals, class hand-outs, etc.) per module.
- 5 Indicate total hours spent on the creation and development of new technology for instructional use per module.

A3 Assessment and Feedback

- 6 Indicate total hours spent on assessment of student outcomes per module.
This includes planning of assignments, setting up of exam papers and memoranda, marking of assignments and exam papers of Flexi students and specialised modules.
- 7 Indicate total number of assignments per module.

A4 Administration

- 8 Indicate total hours spent on administrative duties per module.
This includes training of facilitators and markers, moderating of assignments and exam papers, recording of marks, distributing assignments and exam papers to markers, etc.

A5 Follow-up

- 9 Indicate total hours spent on outside class contact with registered students per module. This includes contact during office hours, e-mail and telephone regarding problems and queries.

TASK ANALYSIS GRID: NPDE

QUESTION	ACADEMIC ENGLISH MODULES						CLASSROOM ENGLISH MODULES						ENGLISH DIDACTICS MODULES		TOTAL
	EGPN 119	EGPN 129	EGPN 219	EGPN 229	EGPN 319	EGPN 329	ESPN 119	ESPN 129	ESPN 219	ESPN 229	ESPN 319	ESPN 329	EDSN 229	EDSN 329	
1															
2															
3															
4															
5															
6															
7															
8															
9															

TASK ANALYSIS GRID: ACE and PGCE

QUESTION NUMBER	ACE MODULES						PGCE MODULES		TOTAL
	ATEK 521	CDEK 521	SDEK 521	ASDK 521	FROO 571	FROP 571	ENGD 411	ENGD 421	
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									

SECTION B

EXTENT OF LEARNER-CENTRED ASSESSMENT PRACTICES OF TEACHER EDUCATORS

Instructions:

- Answer the following questions by indicating YES or NO in the space provided.
- If the answer is YES, indicate **how** you do it or give an example(s) of **what** you do and with **which groups**.
- If the answer is NO to any of the questions, please provide a reason if possible.

Assessment procedures

1 Do you include student input in the design of the assessment system?

YES	
NO	

2 Do you monitor progress continually?

YES	
NO	

3 Do you give constructive and informative feedback to students regarding their products?

YES	
NO	

4 Do you integrate assessment with instruction?

YES	
NO	

5 Do you provide opportunities for self-assessment?

YES	
NO	

6 Do you allow a diversity of competencies to be demonstrated in a variety of ways?

YES	
NO	

7 Do you provide appropriate opportunities for student choice of types of products for demonstrating achievement of educational standards?

YES	
NO	

APPENDIX B

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

EXTENT OF LEARNER-CENTRED ASSESSMENT PRACTICES OF TEACHER EDUCATORS

	The teacher educator:	Observation 1			Observation 2			Observation 3			Observation 4		
		Never	Some-times	Almost Always	Never	Some-times	Almost Always	Never	Some-times	Almost Always	Never	Some-times	Almost Always
1	Includes authentic tasks and assessment techniques that help students integrate across subject matter disciplines.												
2	Includes student input in the design of the assessment system.												
3	Monitors progress continually.												
4	Gives constructive and informative feedback regarding achievement of outcomes.												
5	Integrates assessment with instruction.												
6	Provides opportunities for self-assessment.												
7	Allows a diversity of competencies to be demonstrated in different ways.												
8	Provides appropriate opportunities for student choice of types of products.												

CHAPTER 4

Conclusion and recommendations for future research

4.1 Conclusion

The focus on learner-centredness has made it essential for teacher educators to create and model learner-centred learning environments that promote student learning and motivation. To implement such a change is not easy, and research has indicated that teacher educators have not been overly successful in making the change to a learner-centred approach.

The purpose of this study was, therefore, to explore learner-centred teaching and assessment practices and to determine whether teacher educators were coping with and implementing the change to learner-centred education.

The results are briefly discussed by referring to the research questions formulated in chapter 1.

What is the nature and scope of ESL teacher educators' tasks at a tertiary institution?

The results indicated that the ESL teacher educators' tasks consisted mainly of training pre-service (full time) and in-service (flexi, off campus) students. A complete task analysis was made to determine the nature as well as the scope of their tasks. The results of the teacher educators' full time task analysis revealed that the teacher educators spent 2% of their total time on community service, 9% of their time on research, 9% of their time on administrative duties, 11% of their time on contact sessions, 30% of their time on preparation for class meetings, and 39% of their time on assessment.

It is evident from the results that the teacher educators in this study spent a significant percentage of their time on preparation for class meetings and assessment. Each teacher educator also taught for the full twelve weeks of each semester and, therefore, did not have one week free of teaching the entire year.

To what extent are ESL teacher educators implementing a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning?

The results indicated that the teacher educators assumed most of the responsibility for the learning processes and classroom behaviour of the students. Students had no role in designing or influencing content, materials, or approaches and, therefore, had no experience of planning and building their own

learning tasks and environments. Their main responsibility was completing assignments, preparing prescribed work and coming to class prepared for discussions.

Although the teacher educators embraced some learner-centred methods such as group work and interactive class discussions, the emphasis remained on the lecturing of content and the parts of the teaching and learning process were still seen as discrete entities. The teacher educators mainly focused on what to present in the contact sessions and spent time organizing presentations of information rather than developing materials to facilitate learning. There was also a limited focus on the development of learning strategies and memory strategies tended to dominate.

Traditional technology was used in the classrooms and only to support teaching and not to enhance learning. Students did not get enough opportunity to become skilled at accessing, managing, organizing and evaluating information sources.

Progress was monitored by summative assessment techniques and no constructive feedback was given that could enhance the development of metacognitive strategies. Little attention was paid to processes of learning or development and students had little choice in how or on what they would be assessed. They had limited understanding of assessment criteria.

What factors impede the transition to a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning?

Although attempts were made to implement a learner-centred approach, the teacher educators often reverted to more familiar, traditional approaches due to factors such as: curriculum coverage and lack of time, lack of proper training, size of student groups, other teacher educators' cynical attitudes and students' attitudes towards learning.

The teacher educators experienced a sense of continuous time pressure, because courses were overloaded in terms of content and class size and the number of contact sessions available to cover the curriculum was reduced. Learner-centred methods also required much more work and were time-consuming. Teacher educators also felt that they had to fulfil a new pedagogical role, but were not yet equipped to turn students into self-regulated learners. A climate where the continuous improvement of instructional design is the norm should be established.

It was almost impossible to use active learning methods when students groups were too big and classrooms couldn't accommodate large groups of students or were not well equipped.

Other teacher educators' cynical attitudes towards change or their lack of motivation or energy to apply new methods, could lead to negativity amongst all. Teacher educators also complained that some

students had learnt a passive learning culture in their school years and they continued this tradition in their university studies. They were also not ready to take the responsibility for their own learning.

What are the current assessment practices and possible shortcomings thereof of ESL teacher educators?

The teacher educators made use of a variety of assessment methods and assessed students continuously, but these assessments were not used for promoting student learning, but rather for grading purposes. Students received traditional feedback such as grades, marks and scores, but they seldom received feedback on what they did wrong and how they could rectify it. Overall, it was assessment of learning and not assessment for learning.

The teacher educators assumed all the responsibility for the assessment process and they didn't give students ample opportunity to have a say in the design of learning outcomes, assessment criteria and products for evaluation. They also had limited opportunities for self- and peer assessment which could develop their metacognitive strategies.

A major factor impeding the implementation of a learner-centred assessment approach was the demand formative assessment methods placed on the professional time of the teacher educators. To address this demand, teacher educators need an assessment plan to assist them in integrating assessment effectively with their instructional design.

Recommendations

Recommendations were made to facilitate the implementation of learner-centred teaching and learning. Education is a complex system, and implementing a large-scale intervention must address all the phases of a systematic design process. Teacher educators and students should, however, be willing to make this paradigm shift and should share a compelling vision to change from the status quo to a more desirable state.

Teacher educators should demonstrate their expertise not by what they know, but in how well they facilitate learning and establish a learning environment. They must extend the learning environment beyond the classroom and contact sessions, and recognise and value the learning that takes place in non-formal contexts. If implemented properly, technology has great potential for enhancing the learning environment, as students are required to become more skilled at accessing, managing, organising, and evaluating information sources. Another way of enhancing the learning environment and getting students more actively involved in and outside the classroom is to incorporate cooperative learning into classes.

When it comes to the assessment of student learning, teacher educators must realise that assessment cannot simply be added as an extra to an existing, non-interactive, scheme of work. To include and promote learner-centred assessment practices in classrooms requires a major shift in how assessment is planned and integrated into teaching practices and it requires teacher educators who are willing to change their “comfort zone”. It is, thus, essential that the practice of learner-centred assessment should be informed by a model that provides some guidance about the ways in which students might progress in learning, linked to a clear conception of the curriculum and its learning goals. A framework for such a model was discussed in chapter 3.

In order to produce the conceptual, procedural, curricular and other structural changes needed to transform faculties into learning-centred institutions, all teacher educators should undergo in-service training or faculty development. Teacher educators with greater knowledge about strategies and ideas about planning and carrying out change are more likely to implement change.

4.2 Recommendations for future research

The following recommendations for future research can be made:

- Many educational reform initiatives to establish a learning paradigm at tertiary level have failed because rather than undertaking the fundamental transformations needed to create a new system, universities have merely made modifications to the existing system (e.g., reducing contact time, changing assessment policies, introducing expensive technology, promoting collaborative instruction). The literature provides direction on creating a learning community, but more research is needed to provide a framework that contributes to current educational reform and institution redesign efforts.
- The role of teacher educators in learning- and learner-centred institutions becomes more fluid. As new educational practices are introduced in teacher education, more attention should be given to the competences of teacher educators. One way to do it is the introduction of professional standards for teacher educators. Research should be conducted on standards of practice for teacher educators that should represent agreements about what teacher educators should think about, know, and be able to do. These agreements will give teacher educators the opportunity to review and adopt a knowledge base that can be tested, modified, and revised when appropriate.
- An overview of the literature makes it clear that teacher educators should undergo in-service training or faculty development to be able to establish a learner-centred learning paradigm. Research supports a professional development programme centred on the belief that interactions as well as intervention play important roles in the process of change. The literature provides some direction, yet

more research is needed to identify the effectiveness of various types of professional development in different contexts, of varying duration, and with various target populations.

- Research makes it clear that there are numerous ways technology can be of use to expand opportunities and to improve teacher educator productivity and student learning. Teacher educators, however, need to achieve a level of understanding of the technology and related issues to integrate technology effectively and strategically into the curriculum to meet the university's missions, goals and outcomes. The use of educational technology in teacher education to enhance student learning thus needs to be researched. Such research should address issues such as how teacher educators can create more learning experiences for students with the use of technology and how the tools of technology can be utilised to enrich the learning experience.
- The development of assessment practices is a never-ending process that involves ongoing review and refinement. This idea of assessing assessment activities is noted throughout the review, but there is, however, a lack of detailed information and conceptual models that provide data related specifically to this area of assessment. A model should be proposed that could be used as a guide for assessing institutional and departmental assessment activities.
- The role of students in a learner-centred environment needs to be refined. A well-designed orientation programme for first-year students will greatly facilitate the learning process by helping students to learn how to take responsibility for their own education and to learn how to take advantage of the variety of options available to them in the learning-centred institution

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