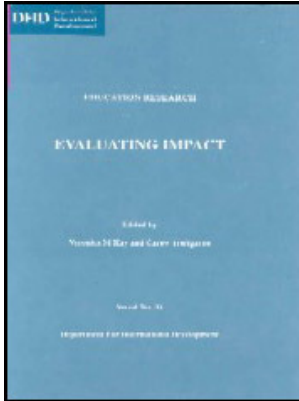


Evaluating Impact - Education Research Paper No. 35, 1999, 262 p.



[Table of Contents](#)

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Dedication In Memoriam

This collection of papers is dedicated to the memory of our dear friend and colleague,

Professor Cleaver Ota, who passed away while we were editing the final version of these papers.

Professor Cleaver was Director of the Education Policy Unit at the University of Fort Hare at the time of his passing.

Table of Contents

DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION PAPERS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Introduction

1. WHAT IS AN IMPACT STUDY AND HOW SHOULD WE DO IT?

[1.1 Participatory impact assessment](#)

[1.2 Participatory action research as an approach to impact assessment](#)

[1.3 Participatory approaches to impact studies](#)

[1.4 Evaluation vs impact studies](#)

2. THE ROLE OF BASELINE STUDIES IN IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2.1 School focused baseline assessments as a catalyst for change

2.2 A general framework for evaluating educational programmes

2.3 Issues to consider when planning a baseline study

3. STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

3.1 Identifying stakeholders

3.2 Considering the audience - an important phase in project evaluations

3.3 Impact studies and their audiences

4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATIONAL AND EXTERNAL

4.1 A note on a participatory impact study in Eritrea: exploring the relations between national and external researchers

4.2 The relationships between national researchers and external researchers

4.3 Impact studies: the role of an insider/outsider

4.4 Impact assessment in educational projects: some perspectives on the 'insider outsider' debate

5. TRAINING TEACHERS AS RESEARCHERS

[5.1 Helping teachers to develop competence criteria for evaluating their professional development](#)

[5.2 Combining the teaching of research methods with an assessment of project impact](#)

6. TOPICALITY VS SUSTAINABILITY

[6.1 A consideration of project assessment: topicality vs sustainability](#)

[6.2 Topicality vs. sustainability in the evaluation of the South African Book Aid Project](#)

7. IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

[7.1 Background to the MAPP evaluation](#)

[7.2 Sustaining Impact: the Mexican Advanced Professionalisation Project](#)

[7.3 Assessing the impact of sector wide, institutional and policy outcomes](#)

[7.4 Determining the unanticipated outcomes and using these as benchmarks for future projects](#)

8. ANTICIPATED/UNANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

[8.1 Anticipated and unanticipated project benefits](#)

[8.2 The PROSPER Impact Study: A consideration of sector wide](#)

[outcomes](#)

[8.3 Research and evaluation in DPEP: A review of current practices and future strategies in impact assessment](#)

[8.4 Concluding comments from the DFID Education Division](#)

[Participants at the forum on Impact Studies](#)

[List of sources consulted](#)

[Home](#) > [ar](#).[cn](#).[de](#).[en](#).[es](#).[fr](#).[id](#).[it](#).[ph](#).[po](#).[ru](#).[sw](#)



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This is one of a series of Education Papers issued by the Education Department of the Department For International Development. Each paper represents a study or piece of commissioned research on some aspect of education and training in developing countries. Most of the studies were undertaken in order to provide informed judgements from which policy decisions could be drawn, but in each case it has become apparent that the material produced would be of interest to a wider audience, particularly those

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16	SUPPORT FOR A TECHNOLOGICAL APPROACH TO SCIENCE EDUCATION' ISBN: 0 90250 071 6
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17	REFLECT' ISBN: 0 90250 072 4
No.	Kent, D. Mushi, P. 1996 THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF
18	ARTISANS FOR THE INFORMAL SECTOR IN TANZANIA ISBN: 0 90250 074 0
No.	Brock, C. Cammish, N. 1997 'GENDER, EDUCATION AND
19	DEVELOPMENT - A PARTIALLY ANNOTATED AND SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY' ISBN: 0 90250 076 7
No.	Taylor, P. Mulhall, A. 1997 'CONTEXTUALISING TEACHING AND
20	LEARNING IN RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS: USING AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE' Vol 1 ISBN: 1 861920 45 8 Vol 2 (Case Studies) ISBN: 1 86192 050 4
No.	Kutnick, P. Jules, V. Layne, A. 1997 'GENDER AND SCHOOL
21	ACHIEVEMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN' ISBN: 1 86192 080 6
No.	Bourne, R. Gundara, J. Dev, A. Ratsoma, N. Rukanda, M. Smith, A.

22	Birthing, U. 1997 'SCHOOL-BASED UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN FOUR COUNTRIES: A COMMONWEALTH STUDY' ISBN: 1 861920954
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29	Pant, A. 1999 'RE-DEFINING POST-LITERACY IN A CHANGING WORLD' ISBN: 1 86192 069 5
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FOR RECONSTRUCTION'

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EVALUATION OF 1994 PILOT PROJECT

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[Home](#) > [ar](#) [.cn](#) [.de](#) [.en](#) [.es](#) [.fr](#) [.id](#) [.it](#) [.ph](#) [.po](#) [.ru](#) [.sw](#)



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
APC	Additional Project Co-ordinator

APDPEP	Andhra Pradesh District Primary Education Programme
APSO	Australian Personnel Services Overseas
ASCUN	Colombian Association of Universities
BAI	Book Aid International
BC	British Council
CfBT	Centre for British Teachers
COFE	Colombian Framework for English Project
COTE	Certificate for Overseas teachers of English
DERC	District Education Resource Centre
DFID	Department for International Development
DIET	District Evaluation Teams
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme
EFA	Education for All
ELT	English Language Teaching
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESTEEM	Effective Schools through Enhanced Educational Management
EU	European Union
FIFO	Fly-in-fly-out
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank

IELE	Institute for English Language Education
INSET	In-service Teacher Training
ITEC	Institute for Education for Capacity-building
KNLS	Kenya National Library Service
LACAD	Latin America, Caribbean and Atlantic Department
LANGCEN	Language Centres
LCD	Link Community Development
LSEP	Limpopo School Empowerment Project
MAPP	Mexican Advanced Professionalisation Programme
MAPS	Mexican Advanced Professional Scheme
MED	Ministry of Education
MELLD	Molteno Primary Education Literacy and Language Development
MEO	Mandal Education Officer
MGDO	Mandal Child Development Officer
MILE	Management of Innovation in Language Education
MIS	Management Information System
MLO	Mandal Literacy Organiser
MOE	Ministry of Education
MPSI	Mpumalanga Primary Schools Initiative

MRC	Mandal Resource Centre
MRP	Mandal Resource Person
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NILE	Norwich Institute for Language Education
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
OSB	Overseas Service Bureau
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PLIS	Provincial Libraries and Information Service
PRESET	Pre-service Teacher Training
PROSPER	Project for Special Purpose English in Romania
READ	Read Education Trust
SABAP	South African Book Aid Project
SCERT	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SEC	School Education Committee
SEP	The Mexican Ministry of Education
SEP	Science Education Project
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency

UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
TASO	The Aids Support Organisation
TC	Teachers' Centre
TCO	Technical Co-operation Officer
UCA	University of Central America
UKRITT	Ukraine Initial Teacher Training Project
UNAN	Autonomous National University of Nicaragua
UNISA	University of South Africa
VEC	Village Education Committee
WHO	World Health Organisation
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development



[Home](#) > [ar](#) [.cn](#) [.de](#) [.en](#) [.es](#) [.fr](#) [.id](#) [.it](#) [.ph](#) [.po](#) [.ru](#) [.sw](#)



Introduction

This collection of conference proceedings is based on papers which were presented at the Forum on Impact Studies organised by the Education Division of the Department of International Development between 24 and 25 September 1998. The forum brought together participants from a wide range of projects in India, South Africa, Morocco, Eritrea, Columbia, Mexico and Romania, as well as a number of specialists with experience in participatory approaches to project evaluation. Participants brought to the conference a profound theoretical understanding of participatory approaches to assessing impact - as well as the richness of their personal experience gained from many years of practice. DFID also welcomed representatives from the British Council, CfBT, Link Africa and Book Aid International, who provided a useful stakeholder dimension from a management and/or professional standpoint. The majority of the participants had been associated with Project Impact Assessment, which had been supported by DFID during the 1990s.

The Forum used the following definition of impact, taken from DFID's Glossary of Aid Terms (1998), as its point of departure:

Impacts (also referred to as effects) may be planned or unplanned; positive or negative; achieved immediately or only after some time; and sustainable or unsustainable.... Impacts may be observable/measurable during implementation, at project completion, or only some time after the project has ended. Different impacts may be experienced by different stakeholders.

This definition set the theme for the conference and provided useful guidelines for focussing dialogue about impact assessment.

The original programme was slightly modified after a planning meeting which some participants attended in March. Although there was broad consensus at the Forum about the advantages of following a participatory approach for assessing project or programme impact, it was also apparent that some of the defining characteristics of this kind of evaluation strategy raised questions that needed to be explored and answered by the main stakeholders in the exercise from the very outset. The following extracts highlight the issues that emerged most prominently, and focus on those factors which the Education Division needs to take into account when applying participatory approaches to the future evaluation of the impact of education projects or programmes.

Although participatory approaches to impact assessment were becoming increasingly common during the late 1980s, John Shotton pointed out in his keynote paper that the **World Education for All Conference** at Jomtien in 1990 marked a watershed in terms of local ownership and control in basic education programmes and that it included a substantial critique of donor- and lender-directed approaches to evaluation. The subsequent decisive shift towards wider stakeholder involvement, not only in project implementation, but also in project design, monitoring and evaluation, substantially altered the imbalance implicit in the *donor/beneficiary* or *donor/recipient* relationship. The implicit context of the DFID Forum was therefore the learning process which

has impacted on all funding agencies in the nineties - an era described by Kenneth King (1991) as "the Post Jomtien curriculum" - and many contributors referred in one way or another to this transformation of the discourse.

The following themes were used to systematise the papers collected in this volume:

- What is an impact study and how should we do it?
- The role of base line studies in impact assessment
- The relationship between national and external researchers
- Training teachers as researchers
- Topicality vs. sustainability
- Impact assessment and sustainability
- Anticipated and unanticipated project benefits

The papers in this collection address these issues. The collection is divided into thematic sections, and each section deals with a particular theme. The papers, as one might expect, vary in style according to the perspective, concerns and experience of each author. The variety thus reflected emanates from a rich diversity of experience and knowledge. While some participants spoke about projects and programmes from the *insider's* point of view, others were able to complement these contributions with the point of view and concerns of those who engage projects and programmes as *outsiders*. Where possible, we have tried to cluster papers which deal with the same projects or

similar issues. While the collection touches most of the current issues that may arise in the conduct of impact studies, it does not pretend to offer a blueprint or recipe for undertaking impact assessment. Its purpose is rather to contribute to the development of a participatory framework for impact assessment through an exploration of current problems, solutions and suggestions for future policy and practice.

While the final chapter attempts to draw together the conclusions drawn by the Education Division from the Forum debate, it should not be understood as (necessarily) reflecting the views of DFID as a whole.

SECTION 1: What is an impact study and how should we do it?

1.1

The collection opens with a paper entitled *Participatory impact assessment* by **John Shotton**. His paper sets the scene by answering the question *What is an impact study?* He then elucidates what is meant by a participatory study and in so doing, he contrasts traditional approaches to the assessment of impact by way of participatory approaches - approaches that have *come of age* in the nineties. Shotton's paper describes the changes in the theory and practice that are evidenced in the field of project impact assessment since the Jomtien Conference - a period which he terms "the post-Jomtien era". Shotton refers to some of the most far-reaching methodological innovations of the decade, such as the implementation of the ideals of local ownership and the

development of local capacity through enabling participants to *learn on the job*. These changes necessitate a shift towards participatory methods, a shift which has radical *epistemological* implications for the assessment of projects.

1.2

Veronica McKay's paper elaborates on the epistemology underlying participatory approaches. She argues that participatory approaches have an educative function which cannot be replicated by traditional approaches to impact assessment. When located within an action research framework, she adds, participatory approaches offer substantial benefits to all evaluators and impact crucially on the development of local capacity. (She points out that participatory approaches are contingent on the discursive nature of knowledge -an assumption that underlies collaborative enquiry). McKay's paper, however, also draws attention to difficulties that participatory researchers may encounter when attempting participatory research in disadvantaged communities. She mentions - in particular - difficulties associated with enabling and motivating grassroot participation.

1.3

Sasidhara Rao too stresses the importance of the evaluation process being informed by a participatory philosophy. He refers to the way in which the **Andhra Pradesh District Primary Education Programme** was evaluated and argues that that methods and the instruments that were used for this assessment contributed in different ways to engaging participation at different

levels and at different stages of the research enterprise. He indicates that participatory approaches encourage participants to reflect on their own contexts - and that this informs practice. Participatory approaches, used in this way, also mediate a formative function. He indicates moreover that the nature of participatory assessments helps to ensure that data - even quantitative data - are interpreted in context.

1.4

N V Varghese considers the distinction between an impact study and an evaluation. He outlines four main features which differentiate evaluations from impact studies. The distinction, he argues, has implications for *who* conducts the assessment and *whose* interests are most likely to be served. He indicates that while communities have more interest in the assessment of impact, the interests of funders lie in the evaluation of projects. These observations resonate with the critique of the donor-lead forms of assessment presented by Shotton in the first paper. Varghese makes a strong case for the use of participatory approaches by referring to the *human condition*. He argues that human volition compels researchers to use approaches that account for human experience and that participatory approaches, by their nature, take this into account.

While the Forum agreed broadly about the *virtues* of participatory research, it was nevertheless apparent that this form of evaluation is more complex than it might appear at face value. The subsequent sections in this collection explore

these complexities.

SECTION 2: The role of baseline studies in the assessment of impact

2.1

This section opens with **Carol Moloney's** paper entitled School-focused baseline assessments as a catalyst for change. Moloney too draws on the participatory paradigm and argues that when applied to baseline assessments, the investigation fulfils an important developmental function for teachers. She refers in her paper to her experience in training South African teachers to do baseline studies and she argues that this exercise achieved benefits which go beyond the mere acquisition of data. Indeed, she indicates, teachers acquired a *modus operandi* for doing collaborative baseline studies while simultaneously coming to grips with many of the new demands that are being made on teachers.

2.2

Samir Guha Roy's paper offers a *general framework for evaluating educational programmes*. He indicates that although participatory approaches to assessment have gained ground over the past few years, he believes that there is still a need for *scientific* approaches to assessing impact. He argues that scientific approaches may be usefully employed in assessing those issues of *impact* which are difficult to assess since they may result from factors that are extraneous to programme activities. While firm baseline data and regular

post-baseline checks could offer a way of overcoming this problem, Roy argues that, in the domain of impact assessment, there is a growing interest in *scientific assessment* as a way of statistically accounting for such changes.

2.3

Tony Luxon's paper is the final paper in this section. Luxon's paper, entitled *Issues to consider when planning a baseline study*, like Moloney's, deals with the importance of the baseline investigation as a way of ensuring adequate benchmarking. Luxon refers to the evolution of the philosophy informing the methodology used for baseline studies for projects in all types of social and educational contexts. It was this paradigm shift, coupled with his own experiences in the field of impact assessment, that prompted him to compile what he considers to be the *twelve essential issues* that need to be considered each time a baseline activity is contemplated. These twelve points (which affect all baseline studies) give rise to suggestions about the design of the research approach, the selection of members for the project implementation team and the dissemination of the findings of the baseline study to various *stakeholders*.

The concern with the *stakeholders* one that all contributors to the collection emphasised. The next section is devoted entirely to exploring issues related to stakeholder perspectives.

SECTION 3: Stakeholder perspectives

Who are stakeholders? What are their roles? How do we deal with multiple stakeholders with divergent interests? These are the kinds of questions that this section on stakeholder perspectives attempts to address.

3.1

This section starts with **Dermot Murphy** and **Pauline Rea-Dickins's** consideration of *stakeholder perspectives*. In this paper, they emphasise how important it is for evaluators to identify stakeholder groupings if they want to make effective use of participatory evaluations in educational development projects. They suggest that most definitions overlook dimensions of power and power differentials, and, as such, are inadequate. This claim underlies their view that what is needed is a framework which is more *robust*- a framework that takes issues of power into consideration. Murphy and Rea-Dickins present an outline of such a framework - for which they find support in their research - and they present an elucidation of the implications their findings might have for the practice of participatory research. In their discussion of stakeholders, they inevitably mention the role of the *external* consultant. In this regard, they coin a term *FIFO consultants* to refer to those consultants who rapidly *fly-in/fly-out*. They argue, in line with the emphasis that they place on participation, that a more sustained consultancy role needs to be factored into project designs. Their view of the role of the FIFO consultant has repercussions for *insider-outsider* involvement in participatory studies - an issue which is dealt with in detail in the fourth section of this collection.

3.2

Clara Inés Rubiano and **Dermot Murphy** in their paper entitled *Considering the audience - an important phase in project evaluations*, emphasise how important it is for evaluators to give consideration to those audiences for whom the evaluation is intended. They interrogate complexities associated with notions of *audience*, and refer to the differing interests, differing statuses as well as the differing power relations that are inherent to the concept of *audience*. They argue that the identification of, and consideration for, the audience/s is central to notions of the practical utility of the recommendations of an evaluation and to the compilation of evaluation reports. The authors draw on critical incidences pertaining to the audience/s, which manifest in the evaluation of the **Colombian Framework for English Project**.

3.3

In this paper **Coco Brenes** and **Tony Luxon** consider the variety of audiences that are implied by multi-partnered projects and the implications of the varied audiences for the dissemination of the project report, and for the mode of reporting. The paper considers the complexities implied by the reporting process, and in particular addresses issues such as: *Who writes the a report? Who reads it? In what language is it produced? and How is it disseminated?* Each of these questions is addressed against the backdrop of the ODA **ELT Project** in Nicaragua.

SECTION 4: The relationships between national and external researchers

4.1

Tesfai Bariaghaber's *Note on a participatory impact study*, which is the result of his personal involvement in Eritrea, explores the relations between national and external researchers. He begins his paper by stating that the assessment study was characterised by both *highs* and *lows*. Hence, while his paper acknowledges the many advantages of participatory impact assessment, he nevertheless refers also to some of the *lows*. The *lows* as described by him might be likened to the effects of FIFO (defined earlier in paper 3.1). For him, the *lows* are primarily a result of the geographic divide between the local and external evaluation team. He contends that in the case of the Eritrean assessment, the external evaluators moved out of the project too soon to allow them to make a meaningful contribution to the development of local capacity. Their early departure had ramifications for their stake in the ownership of the assessment project. The departure of the external consultants prevented the local team from being able to contribute further ideas or recommendations to the research report. He nevertheless concludes by indicating that collaborative research is beneficial to both internal and external researchers.

4.2

Harvey Smith and **Paul Bennell** also, as their paper title indicates, draw out

the complexities associated with the *Relationships between national researchers and external researchers*. Their paper is based on their personal experience of impact studies in which they were engaged in Angola and Eritrea. As with paper 4.1, this paper describes a series of conceptual and practical project issues that impact on the relationship between internal and external researchers - in particular those that give rise to *ownership-type* problems. They argue that there is a need to achieve the "correct balance between local and external ownership". They believe that this correct balance can only be achieved by a research design that ensures that the study meets local needs, and that the external funding agencies are empowered to rate a project's achievements. In their conclusion they ponder the kinds of compromise that might be possible.

4.3

Mohammed Melouk, in his paper entitled *The role of an insider/outsider in impact assessments*, also explores complexities pertaining to the relationship between internal and external researchers. He bases his discussion on his experience of the **Moroccan ELT project**, and refers to some of the many complexities implied by the researcher's roles. He argues against the imposition of investigations or project designs without these being grounded in a solid local perspective. In highlighting the need for insiders to participate in the assessment of impact, he coins the phrase *insider/outsider*, which refers to those locals who are *outsiders* to the project - but who are *insiders* to its

situational context. He outlines several good reasons why *insiders/outside*rs should be included in impact assessment teams - not only because they are communication facilitators but also because of their ability to mediate data and thereby contribute to insightful and contextually appropriate conclusions. In this sense he echoes Rao's sentiments in paper 1.3.

4.4

Dave Allan's paper is the final paper in this section. His paper, entitled *Impact assessment in educational projects: some perspectives on the 'insider-outsider' debate*, also stresses the importance of a consideration of the roles of *insiders-outsiders* in project assessment. These roles, he argues, have implications for *who* does the evaluating and *who* decides whether the outcomes are judged as either successful or not. In order to situate his own position in this debate, he draws on four case studies of evaluations undertaken in Bangladesh, Estonia and Morocco. These evaluations reflect a variety of permutations on a continuum from, on the one hand, being a single outsider researcher to, on the other hand, working as an insider with a range of insider-stakeholders. Allan makes various recommendations for good practice on the basis of his observations and critique.

SECTION 5: Training teachers as researchers

In this section, both Peacock's and Sekgobela's papers focus on training teachers to do assessments. They claim a wide range of benefits as a result

of this training. Earlier papers also made some reference to teachers doing research: the papers of Moloney and McKay, for example, draw attention to the many benefits of this form of training.

5.1

Alan Peacock, in his paper entitled *Helping teachers to develop competence criteria for evaluating their professional development*, discusses interventions in South Africa and Sri Lanka which were intended to help teachers to develop competence criteria for evaluating their professional development. He elucidates various stages of the process which enabled teachers to evaluate their own performance by developing criteria for assessing competence in teaching. Teachers may apply the criteria, which they have generated, as part of a collective enterprise in their classroom situations. He argues that the reflection and thinking underlying this approach enabled teachers to become aware of the need to establish levels of achievement in any given skill area. In practice this meant that teachers are given the responsibility to develop their *own* competence. This obviously has a number of positive spin-offs for their teaching practice.

5.2

Elijah Sekgobela also trains teachers to do research. In his paper, entitled *Combining the teaching of research methods with the assessment of project impact*, Sekgobela describes how, while using the University of South Africa's (Unisa) training course for adult educators to teach research skills which are

needed by students for the fulfilment of curriculum requirements for trainee educators, he simultaneously uses his teaching opportunities to conduct impact assessment. In this paper, he describes the process which required students to participate in all spheres of the research process – from the initial conceptualisation of the research to the final stage of recording of data. This paper discusses the process and benefits derived from teachers' undertaking an evaluation of their own contexts.

SECTION 6: Topicality vs. sustainability

6.1

Jeff Samuelson and **Sara Harrity** consider the debate which has arisen from attempts to answer the questions *What outcomes are we looking for in terms of impact and what are the implications for the approach that we may adopt?* In answering these questions they draw on two projects with which Book Aid International is associated. These projects, they argue, focus more on *outputs* than on issues of sustainability. They argue that, by their very nature, these outputs may be described as addressing questions of *topicality* rather than *sustainability*. The necessity for maintaining an accurate focus is made more complex by the requirement that evaluators determine the extent to which a particular project's intervention (as opposed to any number of external influences) has brought about whatever changes may have been observed. If the assessment is to determine what impact has been a direct result of the intervention and what impact should be attributed to extraneous factors, it

must consider a number of other features such as, for example, the political, social and economic context in which the project has been operating.

6.2

Cleaver Ota's paper echoes the concern expressed by Samuelson and Harrity - that it is essential to address features of the *context* in our endeavours to attain a *prognosis* for project sustainability. His paper outlines the approach employed in the determining the outcomes of the South African Book Aid Project (SABAP) and certain concerns pertaining to project sustainability. While he concludes that the project had achieved the outcomes defined in the project document, he points to extraneous factors which impinge on these achievements. Accordingly, he asserts that it is not possible to assess impact, or to speculate on sustainability without locating the project within its socio-economic and political context. To do so, would be tantamount to decontextualising the possibilities for delivery. This, he argues, is because there are a number of extraneous factors which impinge on the actual implementation and which have a bearing on the potential for sustaining the project. With regard to the SABAP project, he identifies two such features: namely the role of government in financing the *post-donor* phase of the project, and the complex relations implied by collaborative multi-partnered implementation.

SECTION 7: Impact assessment and sustainability

This section focuses on the relationship between the assessment of impact and project sustainability. The papers take as their point of departure, the way in which the form of assessment could contribute to the enhancement of project goals, and to the capacitation of local players. These discussions are juxtaposed with the approach employed to assess the impact made by Mexican Advanced Professionalisation Project.

7.1

This section opens with the speech delivered by **Carew Treffgarne** on behalf of the Latin America, Caribbean and Atlantic Department (LACAD), DFID at various regional conferences on the impact of the professionalisation of the english teacher training in Mexico. Her talk outlines the rationale underlying the design of the model for assessment, and as such, provides an informative backdrop for the subsequent papers in this section. Her paper is intended to situate the collection of papers in this section - all of which are based on the evaluation of the **Mexican Advanced Professionalisation Programme**. Treffgarne indicates that the decision to use a participatory approach to evaluating project impact, was based on the understanding that it was not possible to do justice to a programme (of the scope and scale of MAPP) by utilising traditional approaches to evaluation. Her talk outlines some of the benefits of participatory assessment - in particular with regard to furthering the achievement of project outcomes, and to enhancing possibilities of sustaining project benefits. Her paper suggests that the approach employed, would be of direct benefit to participating universities, and more broadly, to the sector. Her

paper provides an informative backdrop for the subsequent discussions of Morrow, Basich and Rodriguez.

7.2

Following Treffgarne, **Keith Morrow's** paper is concerned with the extent to which projects are able to sustain their impact after the project is concluded. His paper focuses on the assessment of impact on participants in the **Mexican Advanced Professionalisation Project**, a project intended to upgrade the professional qualifications of teachers working in language departments. Morrow describes the approach used to gain a sense of the impact made on teachers - an approach to the assessment of impact which doubled up, in formative fashion, as a component in building of institutional capacity. In this sense, Morrow views participatory research approaches as being essential for sustainability because they provide participants in particular with an opportunity to undertake a qualitative and quantitative assessment of impact. He suggests that this is one way to enhance the professionalism of those involved. He also indicates that the process of evaluation, constructed along similar lines, could contribute to the aims of the project - while at the same time contributing to sustainability.

7.3

Kora BasichPeralta's paper also elucidates aspects of the Mexican Advanced Professionalisation Project's assessment of impact. She outlines the research approach employed by her university in assessing impact. She

mentions that once the assessment had begun, the research team was amazed to discover the achievement of outcomes which were not initially anticipated. In particular, she refers to the achievement of sector-wide, as well as institutional and policy outcomes. Basich, like Morrow (see the previous paper) indicates that the process of evaluation - especially the reflective component - achieved more than just the necessary required data. It also, she indicates, contributed to the enhancement of project goals in terms of qualitative improvement of English teacher training.

7.4

In this paper, **Jorge Anguilar Rodriguez** describes the method of assessment used in the **Mexican Advanced Professionalisation**

Scheme (MAPS). He indicates that although the research design utilised in this project was similar to standard research designs used elsewhere, the emphasis in this kind of assessment is different. The emphasis in the research design was directed at uncovering *inter alia* the unanticipated outcomes – and these, once discerned, played a significant role in ensuring project sustainability through their being posed as benchmarks for the continuation of the MAPS programme and for new projects which might be started.

SECTION 8: Anticipated and unanticipated project benefits

8.1

Mfanwenkosi Malaza, like Samuelson and Harrity, also suggests that if the assessment is to determine what impact has been a direct result of the intervention and what impact should be attributed to extraneous factors, it must consider a number of other features such as, for example, the political, social and economic context in which the project has been operating. He also examines the anticipated and unanticipated benefits of a project. His paper focuses on the *types* of impact made by the **Mpumalanga Primary Schools Initiative**. He argues that the determination of a project's benefits is more complex than it may appear to be at face value and that it is necessary to distinguish between *anticipated* and *unanticipated* outcomes. He argues that every project has degrees of both *intended and unintended* outcomes - whether they are positive or not - and that the impact of the unintended outcomes very often outweighs the intended ones from the local people's point of view. He elaborates on the *unanticipated* outcomes, which were not predicted at the start of the intervention but which nevertheless make a significant impact. He argues that these need also to be considered when evaluating project impact. He, like Samuelson and Harrity, contends that when identifying unanticipated benefits, it is necessary to look at the wider context of a project's operational environment. This becomes vital if one wishes to guard against attributing effects to the project that are merely incidental to it.

8.2

Mirela Bardi and Roy Cross also give consideration to the question of project

outcomes. Their paper deals with an assessment of the impact of the **Project for Special Purpose English in Romania (PROSPER)**. The paper describes how, apart from measuring the impact of the project, the evaluation specifically takes into account the sectoral impacts that led to the *ripple* effects of the project. These ripple effects mean that the project affects not only the sector, but also those institutions which were not participating in **PROSPER**. Bardi and Cross point out that it is necessary to consider the consequences of such *ripple* effects on the sector.

8.3

In her paper, **Roopa Joshi** attempts to provide a review of a critical area of project management in the **District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)**, namely that of the assumptions underlying the *practices* and *strategies* for the assessment of project impact. She illuminates three broad issues, which she argues, informed the approach:

Firstly, it was necessary to address the question of *how* the **DPEP** impact assessment model should be designed. The *how*, she suggests, refers to the design on both a conceptual and operational level.

Secondly, it was necessary to consider the content and range of existing **DPEP** practice as it manifested across the various states and at various levels of decision-making. In terms of this, it was pertinent to establish *how* this practice might influence the various stakeholders of the project.

And thirdly, it was necessary to consider *what* the possible *way forward* might be for **DPEP** in the arena of assessment research.

8.4

Finally, **Carew Treffgarne** presents reflections on the contributions which emanated from the **Forum on Impact Studies**. In this paper she offers her concluding comments. Her reflections include an acknowledgement of the value of a participatory approach to impact assessment as well as the complexities associated with the process -particularly with regard to local ownership, insider/outside and, of course, the FIFO factor. Her paper draws attention to what DFID ought to take into account as it attempts to resolve the problems and confront the issues that evaluators have delineated in their papers. She analyses the papers in this collection in terms of the same thematic categories which have been used to organise this volume.

Treffgarne recommends that DFID's Education Division pay serious attention to the recommendations about the importance of allocating adequate time for assessments, budgetary considerations, and of the actual timing of such assessments. Considerations such as these need to be factored into project documents and project budgets. Her paper makes fundamentally important statements about the assessments of baseline studies and project impact - as well as about the sustainability of projects. Carew Treffgarne concludes by indicating that the **Forum on Impact Studies** has been instrumental in helping Education Advisers in DFID to identify some of the important lessons learned

from the two-day workshop, issues which might constructively inform the future practice of the Department.

Veronica McKay & Carew Treffgarne



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1. WHAT IS AN IMPACT STUDY AND HOW SHOULD WE DO IT?

[1.1 Participatory impact assessment](#)

[1.2 Participatory action research as an approach to impact assessment](#)

[1.3 Participatory approaches to impact studies](#)

[1.4 Evaluation vs impact studies](#)

1.1 Participatory impact assessment

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In this paper, John Shotton considers the changes in the theory and practice that are evidenced in the field of project impact assessment in the post-Jomtien era. He indicates that subsequent to the Jomtien Conference in 1990, aid programmes were increasingly characterised by a shift away from being funder-driven towards being locally owned and locally driven. This paradigm shift has been possible through, *inter alia*, the development of local capacity. This shift, Shotton indicates, has radical epistemological implications for the assessment of project impact - an issue that this paper interrogates. The author presents a strong case for formative participatory impact assessments, which, he argues, contribute to the building of project capacity and local ownership. Participatory practice enables participants to learn on the job and is more likely to be responsive to local needs than are traditional approaches.

Finally, Shotton demonstrates the shift from traditional forms of assessments to participatory assessments by contrasting the assessment of projects that might be classified as traditional (pre-Jomtien) with those that demonstrate what he considers to be the essential ingredients of participatory practice.

1 Introduction

There are three important contexts to this consideration of the nature and operation of participatory impact assessment:

- The first is what King (1991) has called *The Post-Jomtien Curriculum*. This is the learning agenda for the international donor and lending agencies laid out by Third World Network at the *World Education for All Conference* (1990) at Jomtien. The agenda centres on issues of local ownership and control in basic education aid programmes and includes a substantial critique of donor- and lender-directed approaches to evaluation in the pre-Jomtien era.
- The second is the shift in approach of some of the international donor and lending agencies in some projects to the Post-Jomtien Curriculum.
- The third is a focus on a sample of basic education programme evaluations in an attempt to draw out the essential ingredients of participatory impact assessment. The evaluations considered are by no means all examples of participatory practice. On the contrary, I make comparisons of participatory and more conventional and traditional approaches.

2 What is impact assessment?

Before we consider participatory approaches to impact assessment, it is important to be clear about the nature of impact assessment itself. Impact assessment may be distinguished from other types of evaluation by the area of the programme on which it focuses. This logic follows the evolution of the programme as it unfolds and has been a generally useful paradigm in educational evaluation. Rossi and Freeman (1993), for example, distinguish between three programme phases which strike me as particularly useful:

- Conceptualisation and design
- Monitoring and implementation
- Assessment of effectiveness

Each of these phases is compatible with different evaluation strategies:

2.1 Conceptualisation and design

At the conceptualisation phase of the programme, a diagnostic evaluation procedure may be appropriate as research questions focus on programme features such as the programme's underlying assumptions, its logic, major stakeholders, the programme's objective, and the context in which implementation is to occur. Adequate understanding of these issues is critical before a programme is designed and started.

2.2 Monitoring and implementation

The second stage, monitoring and implementation, focuses on the programme's operations after the project has started. Here, several types of evaluations may be appropriate for a given objective. These are essentially formative evaluation approaches and are intended to improve the overall operations of the programme. Several different evaluation modes could be included in this group including, *evaluability assessment*, which attempts to answer the basic question of whether a programme can be evaluated. Perhaps best known though in the process of implementation evaluation is what focuses on delivery and assesses the programme's conformity with its basic design. *Performance monitoring* and implementation indication could be included in this group. This type of evaluation periodically reviews the short-term outcomes of the programme, along with its quality, to assess the degree to which the programme's activities affect these outcomes.

2.3 Assessment of effectiveness

It is in the phase immediately after initial implementation that we find impact assessment. Impact assessment gauges the extent to which a programme has led to desired changes in the target field and audience. It implies a set of programme objectives that can be identified and used as a basis for measuring the programme's impact. Thus the overall goal of an impact assessment is to determine if, and the extent to which, a programme has met

its objectives. In this phase of the programme, distinguishing *impact* from the programme's *outputs* and *outcomes* is often valuable. Outputs refer to the immediate consequences of the programme whereas outcomes describe the more immediate results. Both outputs and outcomes may be intended or unintended, and need to be assessed for their logical relationship to final programme objectives.

2.4 Formative or summative assessments

It has often been argued (IDRC 1972) that impact assessment can only be summative. However, given the time frame of most basic education aid programmes, it is critical that they are formative. As Phile (1994) argues, impact assessment and evaluation in general must not simply serve the need for the international donor and lending agencies to satisfy their respective governments' treasury departments and banks. On the contrary, the priority should be to serve the needs of primary users and it is here that a participatory paradigm becomes essential. Though Phile recognises the need for the agencies to benefit from evaluation, for him it is only a question of pursuing advocacy on the part of primary users as a priority.

That this is necessary is clear from the principles for the evaluation of development assistance set out by OECD (1992: 132):

The main purposes of evaluation are:

- to improve future aid policy, programmes and projects through feedback of lessons learned.
- to provide a basis for accountability, including the provision of information to the public.

To this should be added purposes that reflect the conclusions of the Jomtien Conference in relation to evaluation, namely that it should assist the process of capacity building at the local level and local ownership and control in a context of the decentralisation of programme administration.

3 What is participatory impact assessment?

By *participatory impact assessment* I am referring to what has been described as applied social research that involves trained evaluation personnel and practice-based decision makers working in partnership (Cousins & Earle 1992). Usually decision-makers are donor or lending agency personnel and recipient country administrators with programme responsibility, or people with a vital interest in the programme. Participatory impact assessment is best suited to *formative evaluation* exercises that seek to understand innovations with the expressed intention of informing and improving their implementation. As I indicate later, two projects that fit this bill are two of the largest post-Jomtien *Education for All (EFA)* programmes in the world, namely the **District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)** in India and the **Effective Schools Through Enhanced Educational Management (ESTEEM)** programme in

Bangladesh - the latter two are substantially funded by the **Department for International Development (DFID)**.

In participatory impact assessment, a crucial part of the capacity building deemed necessary for evaluation by the Jomtien Conference is to train key personnel (project administrative staff) in the technical skills crucial to the successful completion of the research exercise. Thereafter, practitioners (resource centre staff, teachers and community members, including those on school committees, parents and possibly children and other learners) can learn *on the job* with mentoring and workshop input where necessary. When this happens, both parties participate crucially in the research process. Such learning is an indispensable part of the participatory model since the intention is that key administrative personnel develop sufficient technical knowledge and research skills to take on the coordinating role in continuing and new projects, and that they need to rely on the initial trainer for consultation about technical issues and tasks such as statistical analysis, instrument modification and technical reporting. Participatory impact assessment is likely to be responsive to local needs, while maintaining enough technical rigour to satisfy probable critics - thereby enhancing use within the local context.

4 How is participatory impact assessment different?

Participatory impact assessment is conceptually distinguishable from other types of named collaborative enquiry and evaluation on two important,

although not independent, dimensions: goals and process.

4.1 The goals of participatory impact assessment

In relation to goals, the pre-Jomtien orientations designed by the northern-based academic community advocated the simultaneous improvement of local practice and the generation of valid social theory (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1993) as in, for example, the so-called state of the art evaluation of the elementary education programme in the Philippines in the 1980s. Similarly more contemporary practitioner-centred instances of collaborative evaluation have expressed as a goal the *empowerment* of individuals or groups, or the rectification of social inequities. Such a goal is expressed for example by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) evaluation of the teacher training programmes for primary and secondary education in Mozambique and Guinea Bissau in the 1980s and 1990s (Carr-Hill 1997). These interests are beyond the scope of participatory impact assessment since such interests belong firmly to programme goals and programme implementation. I would argue that it is fundamentally dishonest to believe that an evaluation process can achieve such ends. This would constitute only a reflection of tokenistic commitment to a social agenda by non-practitioners more interested in the formulation of grand social theories and rhetoric rather than reality: it would be a tantamount to a 'deodorant' that tries to sanitise the inadequacies of overall programme direction.

The approach that I would advocate is not ideologically bound, nor is it devoted to the generation of social theory. Rather participatory impact assessment has, as its central interest, an intention to enhance the use of evaluation data for practical problem solving within the contemporary organisational context – an endeavour that will support the overall programme goals. Indeed this is the essence of Phile's argument in relation to the post-Jomtien scenario, namely that the driving force for a new agenda relies on overall programme definition and orientation and that we need to make sure that individual programme components accord with that definition and orientation.

4.2 The process of participatory impact assessment

The second differing dimension, process-based, takes shape inside participatory impact assessment by having administrators and key organisational personnel working in partnership with members of the community of practice as opposed to other models, such as the benefit monitoring model that has served the **Nepal Basic Education Programme** and the **Nepal Secondary Education Project** through the 1990s, which exclude the latter. Whereas administrators, for example, do bring a set of technical skills to the evaluation act which are important, practitioners bring a thorough knowledge of context and content and the partnership is critical for effective participatory impact assessment. The former work as coordinators or facilitators of the research project, but fully share control and involvement in

all phases of the research process with practitioners. This thrust is distinguishable both from pre-Jomtien forms of evaluation where control of the research process is maintained by the expert evaluator or evaluators (Whyte 1991), and from so-called practitioner-centred approaches where such control lies completely in the hands of the key individuals in the practitioner group (Elliot 1991).

4.3 Some references to participatory assessments

Participatory impact assessment may thus be summarised against what I call the *pre-Jomtien model*, which has often masqueraded as a participatory entity:

- The pre-Jomtien model, the benefit monitoring in Nepal being a classic example, attempts to engage many potentially interested members of recipient-country administrators in order to create support but without yielding any power in the crucial areas of model focus and design. The participatory model, envisaged for **ESTEEM** in Bangladesh, will actively involve primary users at all stages of the impact assessment process, from focus and design through to dissemination of conclusions.
- The pre-Jomtien model involves programme participants in a consultative way to clarify domains and establish the questions for

the evaluation project. SIDA's work in Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau epitomises this. The participatory model engages the primary users in the 'nuts and bolts' of focusing the assessment, formulating the design, deciding on the methodology and sample, developing the instruments for data collection, collecting the data, analysing and interpreting the data and reporting the results and making recommendations. Possibly the best example of this is the impact assessment mechanism that has been developed in Andhra Pradesh, India, as part of **DPEP**.

- In the pre-Jomtien model, the expert evaluator or evaluators are the principal investigators who translate the institutional requirements into a study and conduct that study, as in the case of the Philippines evaluation already referred to above. In the participatory model, as in the case of **DPEP** Andhra Pradesh, the external consultants help only to coordinate the exercise and are responsible for advising about technical support, training and quality control. Conducting the study is the responsibility of practitioners.

5 Why participatory impact assessment?

The underlying justification for a genuinely participatory approach is problem solving in professional work, which is closely tied to Schon's (1983) terms: *reflection-in-action* and *reflection-on-action*. Through participatory impact

assessment, recipient country administrators and donor and lending agency members may be surprised by what they observe and may therefore be moved to rethink their practice. Unlike so called emancipatory forms of action research, that use Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) for example, the rationale for participatory impact assessment resides not in its ability to ensure social justice or somehow to level the societal playing field, but in the utilisation of systematically and socially constructed knowledge.

5.1 A consideration of the utility of the findings of an evaluation

I here express my orientation towards evaluation utilisation which suggests that under certain conditions, evaluation or applied research data will be used either for providing support for discrete decisions in programme constituencies (e.g. decisions about programme expansion) or for educating organisation members about programme operation and the consequences of programme practices. These uses of data are known to be dependent on two main categories of factors:

- *features of the evaluation itself*, including its timeliness, relevance, quality and intelligibility
- *features of the context* in which data are expected to be used, such as programme implementers needs for information, political climate and receptiveness toward systematic enquiry as a mode to

understanding (Cousins & Leithwood 1986).

This framework for understanding participatory impact assessment is inadequate in at least two respects.

Firstly, it links the use of data to an undifferentiated individual called the decision-maker. To assume that organisational decisions supported by data are the product of single individuals processing information and translating it into action is, at best, tenuous and probably not representative of decision making in most organisations. Rather, decisions made explicitly, or implicitly, are the product of some form of collective discourse, deliberation or exchange. As such, it is eminently preferable to envision the nature and consequences of participatory impact assessment in the context of organisational groups, units, subunits and the like.

Secondly, the evaluation framework may be described as inadequate since it fails to recognise the powerful influences of various forms of interaction between practice-based and research-based communities. Considerable evidence is accumulating to show the benefits of combining the unique sets of skills, brought to projects and tasks by both researchers and members of the community of practice, regardless of whether or not the tasks are research-based.

Cousins and Earle (1992) have provided a thorough review of a variety of lines

of research-based evidence in support of the participatory impact assessment process. Their findings underscore the importance of social interaction and exchange and the need to conceive of organisational processes in collective and social terms. They also support the integration of *research* and *practice* specialisations as a means to stimulating enduring organisational change. An appropriate theoretical framework in which to situate participatory impact assessment, then, will be one that adheres to such principles.

Participatory impact assessment, viewed from this perspective, is a strategy or intervention that will produce adaptive knowledge to the extent that it monitors and provides an opportunity for the interpretation of programme outcomes, and generative knowledge such that interpretations lead to enlightenment or the development of new insights into programme operations, or effects, or especially organisational processes and consequences.

6 Conclusion

Finally, the post-Jomtien changes in the theory and practice of project impact assessment have encouraged the shift to participatory assessment - an interventionist practice that contributes to many dimensions of the project. This is more so when participatory assessments are undertaken as formative activities. The evaluative assessment can then be regarded as a powerful learning system, designed ultimately to foster local applied research, and thereby enhance social discourse about relevant learning centre-based issues.

When applied research tasks are carried out by school and district staff, their potential for enhancing organisational learning activity will be strengthened and the sustainability of the project be enhanced.

1.2 Participatory action research as an approach to impact assessment

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In this paper Veronica McKay corroborates John Shotten's view of the post-Jomtien shift towards a participative process for researching project impact. In elaborating this point of view, she asserts that the participative approach to assessment presupposes an epistemological shift from more realist-orientated research approaches towards a non-realist approach to assessing impact. This view of knowledge, she argues, is diametrically different from the positivist belief in an objective reality and knowledge that are universally true or false - the epistemological presupposition which inspired traditional pre-Jomtien approaches. She argues that a non-realist orientation opens the way for multi-vocal discourses, and that this is a prerequisite for participation.

One of the implications of the non-realist epistemology is teachers (as active participants) are brought into our endeavours to assess project impact. It is

only by doing this, she asserts, that we can ensure that the assessment of impact will be both formative and *relevant* and *educational* for teachers at the *chalk face*. In this paper McKay discusses the advantages and problems associated with participatory action research (PAR) in general and then specifically examines how it may be applied to the assessment of impact. She illustrates her points by making reference to the application of PAR to the assessment of impact in the **Molteno Early Literacy and Language Development (MELLD)** project in Namibia.

1 Introduction

This paper is informed (in general) by my experiences of impact assessment of the various school-based projects with which I have been involved in South Africa as well as by the many opportunities I have had as a sociologist¹ to apply the PAR approach to varied development contexts. More specifically I shall illustrate my contentions by referring to my role in the Namibian **Molteno Early Literacy and Language Development** project, which is part of a broad programme of ODA/DFID-financed assistance in the education sector in Namibia.



1.1 Project outputs

The primary goal of the **MELLD** project (as is the case with most of the projects referred to in this publication) is the enhancement of teacher's capacities. The **MELLD** project document (revised in 1995²) outlines the various outcomes which the project was expected to achieve, namely, to:

- introduce a learner-centred methodology into literacy and language classrooms in the lower primary grades at pilot schools
- empower the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture with the capacity to provide and manage in-service training and monitoring for literacy and language teachers in primary schools

- establish (both within the Ministry and in the regions) a sustainable research and development cadreship who would be able to produce Namibian mother-tongue and English-language materials for lower primary grades
- increase the number of learners in basic education with appropriate mother-tongue and English oral, reading and writing skills in selected classes in selected areas of Namibia.

In order to achieve these outputs, a series of partnerships were formed with a number of interested groupings. (These are referred to in section 5.1)

2 The application of a PAR and aproach to project assessment

My previous experiences in assessing projects had required me to be involved for longer periods of time, and I had been brought into projects in much earlier stages of implementation. This earlier involvement had enabled me to assume an *ongoing* facilitator/evaluator function. Since the nature of the **MELLD** investigation resonates with other contributions in this publication, I shall here only describe the way in which I endeavoured to apply a PAR approach in the implementation of the **MELLD** project.

I use the word *endeavoured* deliberately since circumstances did not allow us fully to utilise a PAR-approach in this particular case. The main reason for this

was that the assessment exercise was undertaken within the constraints of my being a *tacked-on-outsider evaluator* who was *fifoed*³ in for a brief spell, three years into the implementation of the project. (I was an *insiders* the sense that I had had experience in using and training practitioners to use the Molteno programmes and methods.)

In spite of time and other constraints, we decided to evaluate the **MELLD** project by applying the principles of a PAR approach to the investigation as comprehensively as we could. Although we achieved what we had set out to achieve (the definition of our goals took into account the constraints of the overall situation), the exercise taught us a lot about how to incorporate a PAR component into educational development projects as a formative mode of assessment.

3 Towards a definition of PAR

There are many different definitions and applications of action research. In the educational arena, Kemmis and McTaggart suggest that, for them, action research means 'a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in order to improve... their own social or educational practices' (Kemmis & McTaggart 1988: 5).

These two authors link the concepts of *action* and *research* because researchers acquire knowledge through the *research* process while

simultaneously putting their research into practice (the *action* component of 'action research'). They draw attention to the *participatory nature* of such research by indicating that action of this kind is (by definition) collaborative since it takes place in the context of any group with a *shared* concern.

Selener (1997: 108), who suggests that collaboration brings teachers and university-based researchers or other facilitators together in the PAR exercise, corroborates this view. He indicates that the joint enterprise entails setting goals, planning the research design, collecting and analysing the results in a collaborative way. He points out that 'although teachers and researchers may play different roles based on their respective skills, members of both constituencies work as equals'. There are distinct differences between traditional approaches to assessing impact and PAR. In PAR the researcher is much more than an impartial and aloof observer: he or she is also a facilitator. In PAR participants are also thought of as researchers - rather than mere objects of research. The facilitator is an active agent in the inquiry process. He or she facilitates and provides the participants with skills and research know-how but does not give answers (Selener 1997, Udas 1998, McTaggart 1991). Understanding the role of the researcher is central to understanding the practical utility of the PAR approach.

3.1 The practical utility of PAR

While the PAR approach provides researchers (particularly if they are

outsiders) with a useful route for getting into the logic of *other people's* projects, it allows them to enable the project simultaneously. PAR is an approach which has been applied in the professional development of teachers and in projects which are designed to improve schools. Classroom teachers, as researchers, have used PAR to improve their own practices. Selener (1997: 96) indicates that the main assumption underlying this approach is that the teacher and others working in the field of education become *researchers* and *change agents* in order to improve their situation. The main objective is thus to improve the day-to-day practice of teachers in their classes - one of the significant aims of all the projects referred to in this publication.⁴

When applied to the assessment of impact, the PAR approach benefits project participants in numerous ways - and also substantially improves the prospects for a project's sustainability. Some of the most significant advantages of the PAR approach are that it:

- takes the hierarchy out of the evaluation stage by bringing in project implementers to work with the so-called experts
- enables all participants become co-researchers
- enables all participants to define the criteria used for measuring
- involves the participants in interpreting and authenticating the

findings

- engages participants in the cycle of reflection-action-reflection
- enables the (often) poor or marginalised to impact on policy
- enables bureaucracies to become more participatory
- creates a forum in which members can act as critical sounding boards
- acts as a forum for information exchange and as a resource for group/project players
- permits sharing of knowledge and resources and it promotes development expertise

4 Participatory action research and the reflective practitioner

The PAR approach is predicated on reflection. The *reflection* is introduced as part of the PAR methodology, it transforms classrooms into learning communities in which teachers become more inquiry-orientated, reflect on what they are doing, and decide on ways and means to achieve/improve on what they are doing or what is happening. In PAR-inspired assessments, practitioners *themselves* engage in the process of developing criteria for

evaluating. This enables them to identify the strengths and weaknesses in their *own* practice. This requires them to:

- notice what is happening in the classroom
- think about what is happening both during the lesson and afterwards
- work out ways of improving on what is happening
- test their improvements in practice
- find out how well the improvements might have worked, and then
- think again (i.e. begin the whole cycle again).

The following is suggested as a PAR plan for teachers:

INITIAL REFLECTION	What problem did Ms X have? Whom did she ask to help her with the problem?
ACTION PLAN	What should she try out in order to improve the situation?
OBSERVATION	How did the plan work out? What problems remained unsolved?
REFLECTION	What else could she try to do? How is this new idea an improvement on her first idea?
ACTION PLAN	What plan has she devised to improve her situation?

Romm and McKay (1999: 8)

4.1 reflection as the basis of change

The reflective component provides a scaffold for practice in that it allows project players, project monitors, evaluators and even learners, through reflection, to describe what constitutes *best practice*. This offers opportunities for ongoing *monitoring* and *formative* evaluation and confers the added benefit of ensuring sustainability. PAR usually involves groups of practitioners who come together at regular intervals to address particular problems or insights they might have encountered in their teaching situation. Practitioners are required to note anything that happens during a particular lesson that may be of interest to the other practitioners in the group.

Practitioners should also record, for example, how they dealt with tricky situations, or how a particular teaching method worked out. This is a form of situational analysis that encourages teachers (1) to think about what happens when they teach and (2) to try out different teaching ideas. This brings together the theory (through reflection) and the practice (or action) of teaching. What I have described above represents one way in which teachers may engage in situational analysis.

It is reflection and understanding - rather than random, spontaneous acts -that

create change. The process requires a reflective spiral of planning, action, observation, reflection/replanning, action, and so on. Reflection uncovers successive layers of meaning. Reflection is a means for systematically collecting and analysing data, solving problems, and evaluating and implementing.



Those working in a school setting may be actively involved in all stages of the research and action process. This constitutes a radical departure from traditional education research which was always conducted exclusively by those *outside* the implementation strategy. PAR is unique because practitioners themselves are involved in creating and applying knowledge rather than merely implementing directives and recommendations obtained from traditional 'outsider-drive' research and imposed from above. The special advantages of PAR increase the likelihood that research results will be useful to teachers in their own practice because, in PAR, theories have to be validated in practice.

4.2 Transforming teaching

Young (1983) recognises that the formulation of a curriculum, or the introduction of a teaching programme, is no less a social invention than the establishment of a political party or a new town. When referring to a social invention, Young suggests that development programmes - whether they be literacy programmes, teacher improvement programmes or new curricula - are human (and not scientific) constructs. In all human constructions, he suggests, we rely heavily on humans as the *locus* of decision making. PAR, as the name denotes, strives to ensure that the *human* emphasis of any intervention remains paramount.

4.3 PAR and its view of knowledge

The application of PAR to assessing project impact confirms the popular trend towards assessments that are participatory or collaborative. The new discourse assumed by the shift constitutes a radical break with positivist-inspired traditional approaches to impact assessment, which characterised the pre-Jomtien research agenda. Such approaches were based on what Romm (1986: 70) terms a 'comprehension-then-application' approach. By this she means that the researcher arrives at a comprehension of a situation through following the procedures of scientific protocol and thereafter proceeds to manipulate the situation in accordance with what the researcher has (unilaterally) postulated as the correct comprehension of the situation.

In contrast PAR is squarely based a non-realist epistemological paradigm.⁵ PAR also requires the incorporation of action at the precise point of conceiving knowledge. This location identifies PAR as being (generically speaking) a multivocal or discursive method for arriving at 'true' knowledge (McKay & Romm 1992: 90). It aims, as Udas (1998: 603) explains, to introduce *humanness* into *human inquiry*. For this reason, the voices of practitioners are essential to the construction of knowledge. Argyris and Schön (1991: 86) summarise this idea by stating that the purpose of action research is to generate insights by working with practitioners within particular, local practice contexts in exercises which are relevant to local contexts. This is because action research 'takes its cues - its questions, puzzles, and problems - from the perceptions of practitioners... [and it] bounds episodes of research according to the... local context".

5 Application of PAR to the assessment of the MELLD project

As indicated above, every attempt was made in the execution of the **MELLD** assessment to apply the principles of PAR (to the extent that this was possible in the light of constraints on time, timeliness and resources).

5.2 The rationalisation underlying the identification of stakeholders and selecting the 'sample'

Because this was a *partnered* project, there were a number of stakeholders

with varied interests and concerns. It was necessary at the outset to determine the stakeholders and then to select a 'sample'. It was possible to gain sensitivity to what *partners* and what *interests* were involved by means of discussions with the project management and an analysis of documentation. It was possible to request the project managers (prior to my arrival in the country) to confer with partner organisations and decide which stakeholders should be involved. This exercise enabled us to solicit the names of significant participants or organisations who were central to the programme.

It transpired that there was a large degree of commonality in the partners' lists, and this made it possible to design an approach which in some way included all identified stakeholders. The list of stakeholders included:

- officials from the Ministry
- project managers
- the implementing agents
- teachers teacher coordinators
- the British Council
- DFID the funding agency
- district supervisors
- other service providers

Since this investigation was not contingent on so-called scientific validation, the rigorous use of orthodox 'scientific' (realist) approaches was not

considered pertinent to the selection of the 'sample'. A *rational sample* was selected and it was based on leads that were obtained by means of *snowballing*. Since PAR does not concern itself with generalisability, the emphasis in this assessment was on capturing the distinctive quality and substance of the voices of the various stakeholders. In the remainder of this paper, I will refer only to what I consider to be *primary* stakeholders, i.e. the trainers and the teachers themselves.

5.2 Constructing the instruments

It was necessary to engage stakeholders in the process of constructing the various instruments that were used. Initial interviews with core stakeholders were conducted - an exercise which was crucial in enabling me to become appropriately sensitised to the relevant issues. After I had conducted a second round of in-depth interviews with the trainers (attached to the implementing agents) and the project manager,⁶ I began to get a good idea of what should be *observed* and what *criteria* should be used. Initial drafts of the instruments were compiled and were circulated among other project players. They went through a series of manipulations and refinements as different players provided input (this was a process that continued well into the research process).

5.3 The methodological approach

While many researchers generally believe that only qualitative methods are appropriate for doing participatory research, this is not so. It is here contended that as long as the researcher is aware of the contestable/discursive nature of knowledge, the methods used for obtaining data are secondary. This is because action research is distinguishable from other research methods to the extent to which it strives to induce practitioners to confront issues which they may find problematic. It is in this sense that the methods employed by PAR are different from the usual ways of administering surveys or conducting observations. The distinction is dependent on the fact that non-action research does not have as its main goal the need to open the way for new forms of action. Thus, any form of data gathering is appropriate in PAR provided that

- it does not exclude participants, and
- it retains as its goal the implementation of action which is responsive to the issues that people are concerned about and which they want to discuss with others (Romm & McKay 1999: 5).

Selener confirms this when he points out (1997: 111) that action research does not follow any specific research formula. He states that the conditions in which they exist and the action researcher's preferences and criteria will determine the appropriateness of the method that will be used. Since this kind of open-endedness left us to choose from a whole gamut of possible research

methods, it was necessary to formulate a research design according to which the **MELLD** investigation would proceed. The following four research methods were utilised:

1 Documentary study

This was necessary to address questions pertaining to the location, context, baseline measures and terms of reference of the project. It was necessary to undertake an examination of *documents* relevant to the areas under investigation. All *players* were able to suggest documents which were relevant to this stage of the research. The data obtained from the documents proved adequate to provide a *background* which was 'validated' in the second and subsequent phases of the investigation.

2 In depth interviews/Focus group discussions

This method was useful both as a source of data gathering, as well as a means of 'validating' the context as defined by the documentary study. The *in-depth interviews* opened opportunities for engaging teachers in reflection. They were required to give their views about the impact of the new programme on their learners and on their practices. In the focus groups, teachers were required to reflect on problems which they encountered and to brainstorm ways

of addressing these. The groupings also provided forums for initiating action.

3 Classroom observations

Observations were conducted at a number of project and non-project schools. These were coupled with interviews with groups of teachers who were asked to describe how they had experienced the process and to discuss how this had impacted on their teaching. In this situation it was necessary that the observation instrument be used as a 'negotiated' tool.

4 Self evaluation questionnaires

These were administered to all teachers involved in the intervention in order to obtain their perceptions with regard to the variety of interventions, their limitations, etc. The administration of these was facilitated by the Namibian regional coordinators. Teachers were required to indicate problems which they had identified and to propose suggestions for improving the situation. This method was designed to obtain data from teachers, to stimulate their own reflections about their practices, and to suggest action for addressing a number of issues.

6 The 'fit' between the approach and the principles of PAR

In spite of various constraints, it was nevertheless possible to comply with many of the requirements of the PAR approach.

• The process of self-evaluation

The self-evaluation questionnaire was administered to all teachers who were teaching on the **MELLD** programme. The survey was intended to induce reflection, tap into teachers' perceptions of project effectiveness and allow them an opportunity to identify possible problem issues. Since the self-evaluation component was conducted subsequent to the other processes, it was an additional invitation to induce reflection among teachers in their regional groups. Teachers were required to indicate:

- problems and suggested solutions
- changes in children's behaviour
- their perceptions of any changes in their confidence
- the ways in which their teaching had changed
- the kind of support they felt they needed
- their perceptions of the materials they were using and the fit between these and the national curriculum.

In compiling the questionnaire, we were sensitive to cautions by the trainers that the questionnaire should be *user friendly*, that the language level should be such that teachers (who might not have a good command of English) could understand what was being asked. Indeed some teachers had difficulty in writing. This of course impacted on their teaching and (of lesser importance) on their participation in the research enterprise.

Pupil's books	yes		It help pupils
Teacher manual	yes		I help teacher
Phonic frieze			
Write on books			
Games	yes		The pupils enjoy it.
Revising boxes	yes		It help pupils.

	courses attended	Which courses improved your teaching? Say how your teaching is different now.
BTL		
BTE 1		
BTE 2	←	Children involve more in activities.
BTE 3		

DEL		
B+1	✓	I am Enjoying all the structure -

● Focus groups

The group interview approach was intended to engage the teachers and coordinators (as well as other stakeholders) in a conversation in which the researcher encouraged them to relate, in their own terms, experiences and attitudes that were relevant to the project. This provided the opportunity to probe deeply and to explore various dimensions of the areas under investigation. The interviewer assumed the role of *facilitator* and ensured that the exchange gave individuals the opportunity to speak their minds and (also) to respond to the ideas of the other members of the group. In the course of a series of group interviews, respondents spoke about their perspectives and involvement, citing events and stages which they regarded as significant. The themes that were explored in the discussions were framed by the participants.⁷

The findings of the group interviews were of a collective/participative nature. While many researchers argue that this kind of *group-think* is one of the disadvantages of using group interviews, we regarded it as an advantage in this assessment since it offered opportunities for enriching the various nuances of the discussion. *Group-think* may be regarded as advantageous in the context of this assessment and in the context of the **MELLD** project because it concurred with the *group-based* nature of the programme and the *group-think modus operandi*. Interactions between the group members gave rise to ideas for action which may not have occurred to any single individual member reflecting alone.

The *group-think* function of also enabled a degree of validation to occur. Respondents were encouraged to debate contentious issues and the researcher was able to request the group to validate the final outcome these issues. Thus, for example, when groups were asked to identify reasons for the success or failure of various aspects of the programme, the debate enabled the group to solve many contentious problems in a 'controlled' environment and it also elicited new ideas for future project implementation.

● Reporting

It was clear that there was a need to *speak to a* number of different audiences through the report. Since we had a sense of the teachers' competence in English, we would have, preferred to publish the report in English and in one or more of the local indigenous languages. But this was not possible. What was possible, however, was to circulate draft copies of the interim reports to the regional groups of teachers through their coordinators. Each group was requested to discuss the document and to comment on it. It was possible for these discussions to take place in any languages that the groups wished to use. The comments that arose out of the initial drafts were sent to me and I was surprised by the extent to which teacher groups had responded. In my writing up, I attempted to incorporate all comments and requests - even if meant that I included conflicting opinions in footnotes.

Finally, I addressed issues pertaining to the accessibility of the document by

incorporating large *chunks* of direct quotations - thereby letting teachers speak, as it were, for themselves. I also attempted to include case studies of typical teaching scenarios because these had elicited a substantial amount of commentary from the teachers. The following is an example of an authentic case study, which includes a problem about which teachers could reflect. This particular case study (taken from the report) also gave rise to a copious amount of commentary, especially on how to introduce a remedial teaching component.

CASE STUDY: MARY'S BREAKTHROUGH TO LITERACY (BTL) LESSON

Mrs Mary S had been teaching for 38 years and was nearing retirement. When we arrived at her school (one day early) she was initially reluctant to let us in to see her Grade 1 class. When the Principal directed us to the teacher next door, Mrs S pulled me in by the arm and requested me to visit her class.

We entered her sandy but happy classroom. There were clay models of buck and birds on the window sill and on the wall there were lots of pictures that the Grade Ones had drawn.

The children were in their four ability groups and were in the second stage of the BTL programme. The teaching group moved to the front of the room and

sat on the grass mat. While Mary moved from group to group showing the learners what to do, there was a mini rumpus on the mat.

Two of the occupational groups were given sentences to write and the third group, the 'weakest' group in the class, was given a pile of words to copy. The lesson proceeded according to plan. The learners in the front of the room were deep in thought. They discussed the poster and read with great confidence. Eventually they returned to their desks to draw their pictures and write the new sentence they had learned.

Meanwhile, in the groups, a few rowdy boys and girls raced (also with confidence) through the writing of their sentences. They were trying to see who could copy the most sentences in their books. The race was on! They had already illustrated their lesson topic and were practising to write their sentences.



But, as with all the BTL classes we saw, not a lot was happening in the 'weakest' group. One or two learners had scribbled a few squiggles on the page but not much else happened.

Mary S moved around and checked on the other two groups. They were doing really well. But all was not well with the third group. They just sat and sat.

In a later discussion with Mary, she explained to us that the new approach brought about such an improvement in her teaching. She had been using it for the past two years and wished that she had learned it earlier. But she said she did not know what to do with the 'weak' group.

7 Some difficulties encountered with the approach

The PAR approach to impact assessment is of course not without its own unique problems, which, in this case, were exacerbated by the constraints of time. These are some of the problems which I experienced.

- Collaborative efforts are by definition time consuming!
- It is often difficult to generate enthusiasm in collaborative situations.
- How does one stimulate people to participate in deciding criteria and outcomes if they are habituated to *not* participating?
- How do lay (local) people feel about participating in such evaluations when they are in the presence of 'experts'?
- Programmes of this kind often incorporate 'grass-roots' people who can neither read nor write. What is the best way to encourage them to participate on terms of equality with 'experts'?

7.1 Addressing the human question

In spite attempts to encourage participation I found it difficult to get teachers to participate (Moloney describes the same difficulty in her paper in this publication). Admittedly a rushed evaluation is not conducive to engaging participation, and such difficulties are compounded by the teachers' lack of basic skills. This lack is in itself a source of disempowerment. Teachers who

were trained in the previously undemocratic era also lacked the requisite skills for participation. I therefore argue that the inability of teachers to participate (because of the skills that they may lack) is a problem that needs to be addressed.

While the methods of PAR depend on the development of *human empowerment* and *the belief in one's ability* to participate, there is a direct relationship between human agency (voluntarism), participation and development. For this reason, it is important that projects regard the development of *human agency* as being of equal importance to all other preconditions.⁸ Development has to be firmly based on human well-being, an improved quality of life and significantly enhanced *self-esteem*. It has to resonate with the aspirations and needs of people as they are *defined* by the *people themselves*. It has been recognised that post-Jomtien research stresses the growing paradigm of participatory educational research. But this is contingent on the *will to act*. Informed acting or 'praxis' is brought about by *reflection* informing action.

7.2 Developing agency

While all the papers in this collection address educational needs as part of one or other development programme, it is here argued that development programmes that are considered independently of developing human *agency*

will fail to take *the people* with them. In this regard, Berger (1969) stresses the importance of what he terms a 'developmental consciousness', which, he argues, should underlie all attempts to address problems of underdevelopment. It is imperative, he argues, that we address the 'human question'. While the provision of schools, infrastructure, and the enhancement of teachers' skills, is fundamental to our primary goal of development, transformation has to recognise the importance of the development of *human agency* and awaken to the importance of this at the local level. It is this which PAR hopes to achieve.

7 Conclusion

The use of PAR as an approach is *coming of age*. The collaboration embodied in PAR implies that the evaluation is informative for all players and can consequently make an important contribution to project sustainability. This is especially so if the design of the evaluation model is introduced as early as possible in the project - as a formative tool rather than a summative one. If this were done, it would have implications for the monitoring process because then the monitoring (leading to the impact assessment) could direct the project towards the desired outcomes.

Footnote

1. I have successfully used PAR several times in school-based and

other development projects across a variety of sectors UNISA's *Institute for Adult Basic Education* has a variety of education/development projects which cross a number of sectors Our students are taught PAR and are expected apply this in their practical projects I have personally found the PAR approach to be as effective in gender and water projects as it is in education projects.

2. A mid-term evaluation was conducted in 1994, in which impact and progress levels of the objectives were assessed A revised project memorandum for phase 2, based on the recommendations of the 1994 evaluation, was compiled.

3. This is an amusing and instructive concept which was coined by Rea-Dickins and Murphy to refer to consultants who Fly-in-fly-out (fi-fo) Their paper in this publication elaborates on the concept.

4. Teachers and other educational practitioners are usually engaged in PAR as active participants The process usually addresses a *single* case or a *tricky issue*, and, if these issues are reported, their findings may have wider benefits.

5. This is based on the research presupposition that we do not have access to 'objective truth' - but that 'truth' (if it exists at all) can only be encountered through intersubjective encounters with 'other truths'.

6. Fortunately the responsible person in the ministry was able to visit South Africa on a few occasions before the formal assessment began.
7. Of course this did not preclude the interviewer from introducing topics.
8. Agency refers to the empowerment or ability of people to determine needs, to reflect on possible outcomes, and to act on them.

1.3 Participatory approaches to impact studies

Sasidhara Rao
Andhra Pradesh
District Primary Education Programme

In this paper, Sasidhara Rao outlines some of the processes and instruments used to evaluate the **Andhra Pradesh District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)**. The paper begins with a description of the aims of **DPEP** and then proceeds with a description of the various instruments used for the evaluation. The author provides a categorisation of the instruments used for the evaluation and locates them within the broad categories of

quantitative and qualitative research approaches. This is coupled with an indication of the kinds of data that the particular instrument is intended to gather. The methods and the instruments used contribute in different ways to engaging participation at different levels and at different stages of the research enterprise.

The author stresses the importance of the evaluation process being guided by a participatory philosophy. He outlines the benefits of participatory research for participants and as a means of ensuring that quantitative data, such as the statistical descriptions obtained from the surveys, are contextualised because this contributes to the interpretation of such data. The paper also argues that the participatory nature of the study which was demonstrated by, for example, the various local studies conducted for the **DPEP** evaluation, conferred the advantage of enabling project participants to reflect on the project interventions in their own contexts. This, the author suggests, is both formative and necessary for making the recommendations relevant to unique local circumstances and consequently for enabling the development of capacity among practitioners at grass-roots.

1 Introduction



Major efforts are being made to implement Article 45 of the Indian Constitution, which provides for universal free and compulsory primary education for all children until they are fourteen years old. **DPEP** was one such intervention put in place to enable this goal to be realised in selected districts of the country.

The **DPEP** initiative had the following specific objectives:

- to reduce to less than 5% differences attributable to gender and social class in enrolment, dropout and learning achievement figures
- to reduce overall dropout rates for all learners to less than 10%

- to raise average achievement levels by at least 25% over the measured baseline levels
- to provide access, according to national norms, for all children to primary education in classes I to V

When the **DPEP** framework was formulated, special attention was given to programme features which ensured the contextuality of the programme by involving local area planning and community participation.

2 Interventions made by the Andhra Pradesh DPEP

A number of changes were made to make provision for the achievement of increased enrolments and retention and to improve the quality of education. The following interventions were made by **DPEP** in Andhra Pradesh:

- the opening of schools and the provision of alternative school facilities in areas where there were no schools
- the construction of buildings, additional classrooms, toilets, and the provision of drinking water facilities
- the opening of ECE centres
- the organising of awareness campaigns

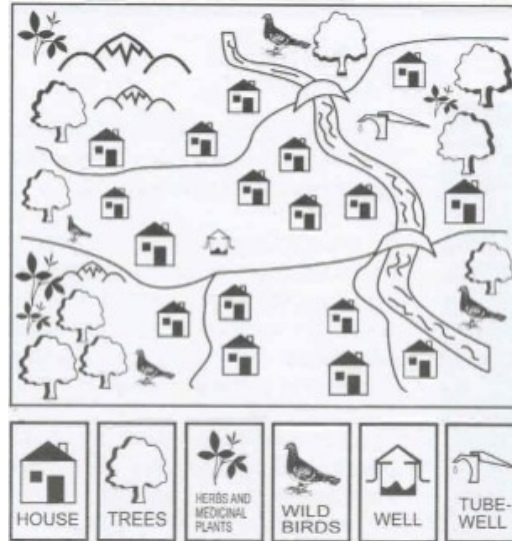
- the provision of teacher and schools grants
- the delivery of a teacher-training programme
- the implementation of bridging courses for children involved in *child labour*
- the provision of education for children with special needs
- the provision of support for school committees
- the appointment of education promoters for the *girl-child*.

3 The methodological design of the AP DPEP evaluation

In order to obtain information about the progress made by **DPEP**, a complex multi-layered research process was formulated.¹ The aim of the evaluation was to increase the use of evaluation data so that feedback would constantly flow back to the people involved in the programme. The evaluation was not intended to assess what *was done to people*. Its purpose was rather to involve all members of the community in assessing the effectiveness of **DPEP**. The study is longitudinal in the sense that the school and pupil surveys which were performed will be used in subsequent years in order to pinpoint whatever changes which may have occurred over the project's lifespan. One of the main

aims of the survey was to provide essential reference data about the provision of education (**DPEP** nd: 1). The surveys were used to obtain information from head teachers in the schools, from Village Education Committees (VEC), and, using the household surveys, from the communities themselves. The other aims of the survey were:

- to study the impact made by **DPEP** on the *educational achievement* of children throughout their school lives
- to observe how particular schools were *attracting* and *retaining* pupils
- to investigate the extent to which girls are *enrolled* and *retained*
- to obtain an estimation of how many pupils *drop out* of the system
- to quantify the degree to which pupils *successfully complete* their schooling



Adapted from DPEP *Evaluation in Primary Education. A handbook for getting started* (p111)

In order to operationalise the above intentions, a research process was conceptualised. The enterprise was designed to enable the gathering of information from different sources in different ways. The evaluation comprised the following components:

- a quantitative component – comprising a series of surveys

- a qualitative component – comprising a set of long-term and short-term studies
- a priority component – certain indicators of implementation which identified priorities
- a participatory component – using the methods of *participatory rural appraisal* so that information could be collected quickly at grass-roots level. (In this way, **DPEP** was able to involve members of the community in assessing the effectiveness of the programme.)

3.1 Quantitative component

The *quantitative* component comprised the schools' and pupils' survey (SPS) to formulate a *picture* of **DPEP** in action. For this purpose four tools were prepared:

- a school questionnaire
- a classroom observation schedule
- a Village Education Committee survey
- a household survey.

Before the school and pupil surveys were administered in the field, they were piloted and then amended. The instruments were then used for the following

purposes:

INSTRUMENT	PURPOSE
The school questionnaire	This was used for gathering information from the head teacher or other teachers, from school records and from the evaluators' direct observations.
The school classroom observation schedule	On three occasions during the year, observers visited each classroom to record which pupils were present at various times on a particular day. This exercise was necessary to obtain information about the regularity of attendance. The survey also gathered information about the gender and social groupings of the learners.
The VEC survey	This instrument was intended to give information on the potential school population. The survey is necessary to give accurate figures on the number of children aged between 6 and 11 who are live in the village.
The household survey	The household survey was administered to 10% of homes in the village. This survey was intended to enable the project to obtain information from the people living in the school catchment areas about the number of children living in the area, their social backgrounds and the economic status of the community.

The instruments were required to address the following issues:

Issue	INSTRUMENTS
The efficacy of the VEC's functioning	Interview schedule for Village Education Committee chairpersons, head teachers, additional project coordinators (APC), villagers and Village Education Committee members
The effectiveness of the mandal education offices (MEO) Supervision and inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Questionnaires to headmasters, teachers and MEO ● Documentary analysis: the perusal of books, monthly minutes and books
The utilisation of schools and teachers' grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interview schedule for Village Education Committee chairperson and committee members ● Questionnaires for headmasters and teachers ● Observation schedule

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matrix ranking
The utilisation of Class ITelugu textbook developed as part of the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire for teachers • Classroom observation • Pupil interviews
The functioning of Teachers Centres (TCs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation schedules on planning and management, time utilisation, teachers center (TC) activities • Questionnaire on activities of TC administered to teachers, and to participating MEOs, APCs, mandal resource person (MRP) secretaries, and assistant secretaries • Matrix ranking • Schedule of availability and use of equipment.

3.2 Qualitative component

The *qualitative* component includes the impact studies and an investigation into

the functioning of certain structures. The long-term qualitative studies include establishing the impact study of **DPEP** on new schools, ECE centres and on teacher training programme.

The short-term studies included investigations into the

- functioning of VECs
- effectiveness of MEO's supervision
- utilisation of Class I Telugu textbooks
- functioning of TCs
- utilisation of school and teachers grants

Focus group discussions were held to determine the

- effectiveness of the functioning of VEC/school education committees (SEC)
- ranking of schools
- needs in various areas

3.3 The participatory nature of DPEP

The evaluation was guided by a participatory philosophy which endeavours to involve all the participants in the preparation, finalisation and implementation of the evaluation programme. The design stressed the involvement of all

members of the community in assessing the effectiveness of **DPEP**. The instruments were designed to gather information from parents, teachers, children, VEC members and the local community about their impressions of both the **DPEP** project and its evaluation programme. The evaluation included a series of observations of different activities of the teachers, pupils, VEC members and the community at large. Interviews were also conducted with these participants to gather data, and the documents used in the project were carefully and critically analysed (**DPEP** n.d.: 9).

The research design was user-friendly, and made provision for those within the **DPEP** system - but who were external to the activity being assessed -to participate in the implementation of the evaluation. In this way, capacity was built across the system. The process relied, to a large extent, on primary rather than secondary data in the sense that the two of the main tools used were observation and interviews. The design also advocated the collection of data through the Mandal's resource personnel who are strategically placed at the Mandal level to support the teachers in their academic spheres. Recent legislation in Andhra Pradesh has meant that the VECs are to be replaced by SECs. Ultimately, the SEC, as a stakeholder, should monitor, guide, support and evaluate all the programmes relating to primary education at the grass-roots level. Moreover, to assess the children's learning progress, **DPEP** conducted learning achievement surveys which measured the performance of pupils' cognitive and noncognitive dimensions. The testing of learners' on the noncognitive level included testing factors such as team spirit, cooperation,

accommodation, and peer group relations. This was done by developing testing instruments appropriate for the new methodology, the teacher-training component and the **DPEP's** textbook – all interventions which were introduced by the project.

3.31 A process directed at participation



Well publicised meetings



Ensuring that all the VEC members come



Offering help to people



Being friendly and welcoming



Getting everyone involved



Being honest and open



Supervising Civil Works



Being responsible for all the children of school going age

Adapted from DPEP. *Evaluation in Primary Education: A handbook for getting started* (p151).

Because of the *participatory* emphasis of the **DPEP** evaluation, every attempt was made to ensure that:

- the needs and responses of the members were taken into account in determining the evaluation system
- local people were involved in the preparation of design
- local people received immediate feedback
- capacity building was emphasised at all levels
- people were prepared for self-evaluation
- the project involved primary users
- the design of the instruments were user-friendly
- on-the-job training was provided for evaluators
- local evaluators were employed

- applied research methods were used
- progress was measured at the local level
- local people were enabled to identify problems and work out their own solutions
- information was collected from community members by way of participatory rural appraisal methods – using activities like school mapping, Venn diagrams and seasonal maps
- social mapping was used to identify those who were left out of the programme as well as the non-starters. This social mapping attempted to explore:
 - reasons for non-enrolment and dropout
 - ways of identifying working children
- teachers, pupils, parents and community were involved
- the evaluation was done by the members internal to the system but external to the activity
- priority was given to primary rather than secondary data

- district evaluation teams (DIET) included DIET lecturers, MRPs, teachers, community members and NGOs
- the School Education Committee participated
- the MRC was used as an evaluation unit
- the tools developed for the evaluation were participatory in design
- teachers were involved in the pupils learning achievement surveys (surveys based on natural learning experiences, teacher training and textbook development).

4 DPEP interventions in Andhra Pradesh

DPEP made a number of interventions which benefited the community in Andhra Pradesh. These included:

- the opening of schools and the provision of alternative school facilities in areas where there had been no schools
- the construction of buildings and additional classrooms
- the construction of toilets and the provision of drinking water facilities the opening of ECEs

- the organisation of community mobilisation and awareness programmes
- the provision of teacher, schools, and teacher centre grants the training of teachers
- the implementation of bridging courses for children involved in *child labour*
- the provision of education for children with special needs
- the establishment of MRCs with two MRPs, one mandal child development officer (MCDO) and mandal literacy organiser (MLO) under the leadership of MEO
- the appointment of education promoters for the *girl-child*

5 Conclusion

In this paper, an attempt was made to outline some of the processes and instruments used to evaluate the **DPEP** programme. The paper describes the various instruments and attempts to locate them as being either quantitative or qualitative approaches to research. In addition, the paper gives an indication of the kinds of data that the particular instrument was intended to gather. The

paper stresses the importance of the process being guided by a participatory philosophy. In this way, the information gained by using other techniques - such as the statistical descriptions obtained from the surveys - is contextualised so as to enable the interpretation of the data.

The participation of the **DPEP** evaluation was enhanced by local studies which, in addition to being sources of essential information, were useful in enabling people to reflect on their actions in their own contexts. This meant that the recommendations that were made were relevant to the unique circumstances of local communities and that, through this process, capacity among practitioners *at grass-roots* was enhanced.

Footnote

1. This research design is described in detail in the DPEP (n.d.) *Evaluation handbook for getting started*.

1.4 Evaluation vs impact studies

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In this paper Varghese considers the distinction between an *evaluation* and an *impact study*.

He argues that an understanding of the distinction is necessary since it has implications for *who* conducts the assessment, *what* the practical utility of the findings of an assessment might be and *whose* interests are likely to be served by each type of assessment. He concludes by pointing out that the distinction will also have implications for whether or not the assessment is seen as part of the actual project and, consequently, whether or not *funding* will be allocated for it.

The author succinctly illustrates the distinction by drawing on case studies which depict different assessment strategies.

1 Introduction

It is necessary to start this paper with an attempt at defining the concepts of impact studies and project evaluation.

- Impact studies are concerned with the overall changes brought about by a project or programme. They are generally carried out after the project period is completed.
- Evaluation, on the other hand, focuses on achievement of targets of

a project and assesses the effectiveness of intervention strategies which are followed by the project. Evaluation studies can be initiated either during implementation of a project or immediately after the project period is completed, depending on the purpose. If the evaluation is undertaken during the implementation of a project, we refer to it as a formative evaluation, and if it takes place after the project is concluded, we refer to it as a summative evaluation.

2 Assessing the achievement of a project

The following table shows the distinction between an impact study and an evaluation in relation to

- the project objectives
- the short- and long-term goals of the project
- stakeholder interest in the assessment



EVALUATION	IMPACT ASSESSMENT
<p>The success or failure of a project is usually assessed on the basis of its stated objectives. Hence, both evaluation studies and impact studies cannot be independent of the project objectives.</p>	
<p>Evaluation studies usually confine themselves strictly to the boundaries stated in the project objectives and the implementation strategies.</p>	<p>Impact studies go beyond the narrowly stated objectives of the project.</p>
<p>The project matrix clearly indicates the immediate, intermediate and developmental objectives of a project.</p>	
<p>Evaluation studies generally</p>	<p>Impact studies usually attempt to assess the</p>

focus on the immediate	development of the project.
<p>objectives of a project. The funding agencies and the recipient countries may be interested in carrying out both types of assessment.</p>	
<p>Project managers in a funding agency may be more interested in assessing the cost-effectiveness of intervention strategies and efficiency of the project management structure. For this reason, funding agencies may be more interested in evaluation studies.</p>	<p>The participants in a project and the recipient country may be more interested in an impact study. They would be more interested in the impact that an intervention makes on structures on the existing systems after the project period.</p>
<p>The different forms of assessment suggest different utilities for the findings.</p>	
<p>Evaluation studies provide an insight in to the replicability of project intervention strategies and provide useful feedback for funding agencies if they wish to apply similar decision to other countries or projects.</p>	<p>Impact assessment studies address themselves to systemic and long-term changes brought about by a project or programme. The impact may transcend the sectoral boundaries drawn by a specific departmental view of the problem. This is more so in the case of projects in social sectors like education since the object and</p>

subject of the project are human beings and their interactions.

2.1 Examples which illustrate the distinction between evaluation and impact studies

It may be interesting to base the distinction between evaluation and impact studies on certain examples. Let us take the case of an in-service teacher-training project.

An evaluation of the project may indicate the effectiveness of organisational arrangements created to train teachers on a regular basis. It may also indicate whether the project could succeed in training the pre-specified number of teachers as per schedule. On the whole, the evaluation will indicate the success of the project in terms of training the teachers. Policy makers are generally not concerned only about the training of teachers. They would like to know whether such training has led to improved curriculum transaction processes in the classroom (and therefore ultimately to increased levels of learner achievement). If this has happened, the INSET teacher-training may be adopted as a major systemic intervention in later periods. The impact study may focus on these aspects of the project rather than be confined to the immediate objectives of the project as in the case of evaluation studies.

Similarly, an evaluation of adult literacy programmes may indicate the total number of persons made literate by the programme. An impact study of the

programme will focus on the social implications of the outcomes. It will attempt to discern, for example, whether the literacy programme led to the empowerment of illiterates and to their improved response to public provisions in sectors beyond education. It will also ask, for example, whether the reading habits of the community improved. These are questions more amenable to being assessed by way of an impact study, rather than by an evaluation study.



3 Methodology

The standard techniques used for measuring the impact of a programme are as follows:

3.1 The one group post-test design

The *one group post-test design* may be developed after the project period is over and it may be conducted as an afterthought. However, such designs will not be in a position to indicate the rate or the degree of change brought about by the project since the initial *measurements* or pre-test results are not available to compare with the post-test results.

3.2 One group pre-test *and* post-test design

The *one group pre-test and post-test design* is useful for assessing the extent of the project's achievement among the beneficiaries. However, this design may not be able to indicate whether the changes brought among the beneficiaries are due to project intervention or to other factors outside the remit of the project, essentially because the design does not permit the capture of changes which have taken place in locations where the project has not been implemented. For example, we may notice an increase in enrolment in districts where the **District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)** is implemented in India. But the use of this type of design would not make it apparent to us whether such an increase in enrolment is due entirely to the **DPEP** intervention or whether the *Total Literacy Campaigns*, which were also initiated in India, have also contributed an impact.

3.3 Pre-test and post test of treatment and control groups

The *pre-test and post-test of treatment and control groups* design may

facilitate impact assessment based on:

- situations before the project implementation
- the progress made in project areas
- progress made during the corresponding period in the non-project areas

The actual contribution of the project, in any case, is equal to the total changes brought about in the project areas minus the changes that have taken place in non-project areas. Baseline assessment studies are therefore necessary to provide benchmark data to make comparisons at two or more points during the project implementation. A baseline study at the beginning will identify the indicators against which the progress and achievement of the project are to be assessed.

4 Impact assessment of social sector projects

Various aspects need to be taken into consideration with regard to the assessment of impact in social sector projects. They are as follows:

- **Human volition**

Projects in social sectors like education deal directly with human beings and their unique behavioural patterns. This human volition

means that the expected response pattern of beneficiaries is an assumption that is often taken for granted. In the event that the complexities of human behaviour are glossed over, the success of a project may depend on the extent to which the project design has reliably speculated about the expected response pattern of the actors involved in implementation, on the one hand, and beneficiaries, on the other hand. In terms of this, the achievement of the project objectives depends on how effectively the project design can accommodate the varied and changing responses to various project interventions. This means that attempts to define a blueprint for project design (especially for another location) is destined to be problematic.

It is for this reason that the project design and the project implementation cannot be totally separated and divorced from the contextual features of the location and people where the project is to be implemented. Impact studies relying entirely on quantitative methodologies may have an inherent tendency to be narrow in perspective and insensitive to the developmental objectives of the project.

● **Processes vs outputs**

Most of the project interventions in education are process-oriented.

For this reason, it is important to decide whether or not the project impact has to be assessed in terms of *changes in the processes* or in terms of *outputs of the project*.

For example, a project objective of improving learner achievement by, say, 25% over and above the present levels can be achieved either by focusing on a limited number of schools and selected students or by bringing about overall changes in school processes and classroom practices in all schools. Both types of intervention may indicate achievement of the quantitative target of the project. Impact studies need to be sensitive to these types of problems.

• **Qualitative vs quantitative research approaches**

As indicated earlier, the developmental objectives of a social sector project are less amenable to easy quantification. The methodology to be adopted for impact studies therefore needs to be discussed and finalised. However, a totally non-quantitative approach may not give a clear idea of the social outcomes of the project. In assessing impact, a trade-off must be made between quantitative and qualitative techniques. The question of which form of data collection to use, needs to be discussed broadly with participants before the assessment design is finalised.

● Unintended outcomes

Any project intervention may produce unintended social outcomes. These can be either *positive* or *negative*. The implications of these consequences may not be confined to the sector in which the project has been initiated. For example, many primary education projects activate the local community and empower members to participate in development activities. Even when project targets are not fully achieved, such mobilisation may have a positive impact on the public intervention policies in other sectors. Evaluations which focus on narrowly defined project objectives and which use mainly quantitative techniques may not be in a position to make any assessment in this regard. For example, the **DPEP** interventions are pro-poor in nature. It would, however, be interesting to assess whether investment in primary education does indeed contribute to poverty reduction.

5 Who should do impact assessment studies?

Who should do an impact assessment? is a question that is often asked. The funding agencies, recipient countries or independent bodies may all do impact studies. However, as mentioned earlier, funding agencies may be more interested in evaluation studies and the recipient countries may be more interested in impact studies. It is possible that independent professional groups may be able to provide a more detached and objective view of the

long-term implications of a project and that the impact study may be facilitated by independent bodies with or without the support of local level programme implementers.

This does not preclude the possibility of project *players* participating in an impact assessment. Since impact studies are conducted after the project has been implemented, they deal less with the details of project implementation and more with changes in the field. It is for this reason that even those players who participated in the actual implementation of the project will, in all probability, be more objective.

6 Conclusion

This paper was intended to highlight a distinction between what we understand as an *impact study* and a project *evaluation*. The distinction is necessary since it has implications for *who* conducts the assessment, *what* the practical utility of the findings of an assessment might be, and *whose* interests are likely to be served by each type of assessment. Finally, the distinction will also have implications of whether or not the assessment is seen as part of the actual project and consequently, whether or not funding will be allocated for it.





2. THE ROLE OF BASELINE STUDIES IN IMPACT ASSESSMENT

[2.1 School focused baseline assessments as a catalyst for change](#)

[2.2 A general framework for evaluating educational programmes](#)

[2.3 Issues to consider when planning a baseline study](#)

2.1 School focused baseline assessments as a catalyst for change

Carol Moloney

Link Community Development Education Programme

South Africa

When **Link Community Development (LCD)** initially began to conduct baseline surveys of the inservice training programmes which they facilitated, they used the data they obtained primarily for providing benchmarks against which future change could be assessed. This was in accordance with what a

baseline is meant to be able to do: it has to enable the *measurement* of the impact of an intervention against the data obtained from the baseline.

However, with experience, **LCD** began to recognise the value of participatory baseline surveys as developmental processes in themselves. It was found that the baseline could enable teachers to gain new knowledge about their situation and about the changes needed - while at the same time empowering them to manage such change.

This paper begins by outlining how a baseline study can serve as a catalyst for change through enabling teachers to shift to new educational paradigms. Drawing on the **LCD's** experience in South Africa, the paper shows the advantages of including a developmental component into the *doing* of a baseline. The author argues that it both enhances the ownership of proposed project interventions and it also serves as *educational tool*.

Throughout the paper, Carol Moloney shows how her experience in training South African teachers to do baseline studies has achieved benefits which go beyond the mere acquisition of data. She elaborates on how the **LCD** approach provides a *modus operandi* for *doing* collaborative baseline studies and for fulfilling its expressed intention of obtaining data needed to inform the proposed intervention. The author argues in addition that the inclusive participatory activity requiring the collaboration of various stakeholders confers the added benefit of developing the participant's sense of ownership.

All of this, she argues, is necessary for ensuring the sustainability of any proposed project.

1 Introduction

In 1994, when **LCD** first began conducting baseline surveys of the inservice training programmes which they facilitated, they used the data they obtained primarily for providing benchmarks against which future change could be assessed. There was a need to assess the impact of their programmes both for the participants themselves and for funding agencies who required proof that resources were being effectively utilised. With experience, **LCD** has recognised the value of participatory baseline surveys as developmental processes in themselves. This paper begins by outlining how a baseline study can serve as a catalyst for change.¹ In these instances, baseline studies are intended to show where there may still be room for improvement. (See cartoon drawings in section 3 for a depiction of the process.)

LCD stresses the importance of undertaking a school-focused baseline assessment of the situation in schools before an intervention programme begins. The study involves both

- confidential interviews with representatives of all school stakeholders, and

- classroom and school observations which lead to the development of school profiles.

The primary function of a baseline assessment is to obtain an initial assessment mechanism against which subsequent evaluations can be measured. Although this assessment is relevant for funders and delivery agents, its greatest use is that project participants such as teachers, principals and learners themselves are able to assess the degree of improvement in their schools which has been caused by their own efforts. *People-centredness* may often remain at the level of documentary rhetoric – while programme objectives are decided far from the site of delivery. The baseline is a way of linking the aims of a project with practice.

Because the baseline process deals in depth with an analysis of needs it inadvertently also deals with an analysis of unforeseen issues and difficulties that frequently arise. To ignore these is to ignore the reality of beneficiaries' lives. Since beneficiaries, as Escobar (1995: 107) points out:

... are socially constructed prior to the agent's (planner, researcher, development expert) interaction with them..... This does not deter the agent or institution from presenting the results of the interaction as facts, that is, true discoveries of the real situation characterising the client.

(In section 5 of this paper, I present a case study which highlights some of the difficulties encountered with the implementation of a baseline study undertaken in Soshanguve in South Africa. The case study illustrates how, by ignoring the difficulties, the problems encountered in the process were compounded.)

2 Baseline surveys as a precursor to an intervention

Participatory baseline surveys endeavour to ensure that recommendations for change are based on a shared perception of the reality of the classroom. Teachers are often viewed as passive agents in the change process. Dalin (1990) suggests that such a philosophy rests on the following assumptions:

- Schools are seeking to improve and will recognise inputs as being beneficial to them.
- Technocratic issues take precedence over ideological questions.
- The teacher will mechanistically implement the changes produced for him/her by others further along the chain.

Compared to policies and procedures produced in unknown places by faceless administrators, an inclusive baseline - as an immediate, tangible process – is very powerful. Teachers find out that *they* can actively shape the form and content of the reform programme (the alternative to this is that they

are *consulted or* informed by a faceless person unconnected with their own classroom about decisions which affect their practice). It is with the dangers of this in mind that **LCD** conducts baseline studies in which team members are included from the very start of the process, i.e. from as early as the first contact with the school right through to the design of tools to be used and the interpretation of the findings. This view is supported by Bradley and Earl (1995: 171) who emphasise that direct participation is necessary in the actual 'nuts and bolts' of the process, since this 'enhances the likelihood of practitioners seriously coming to terms with the meaning of the data collected and its implications for the programme and organisational practice'.

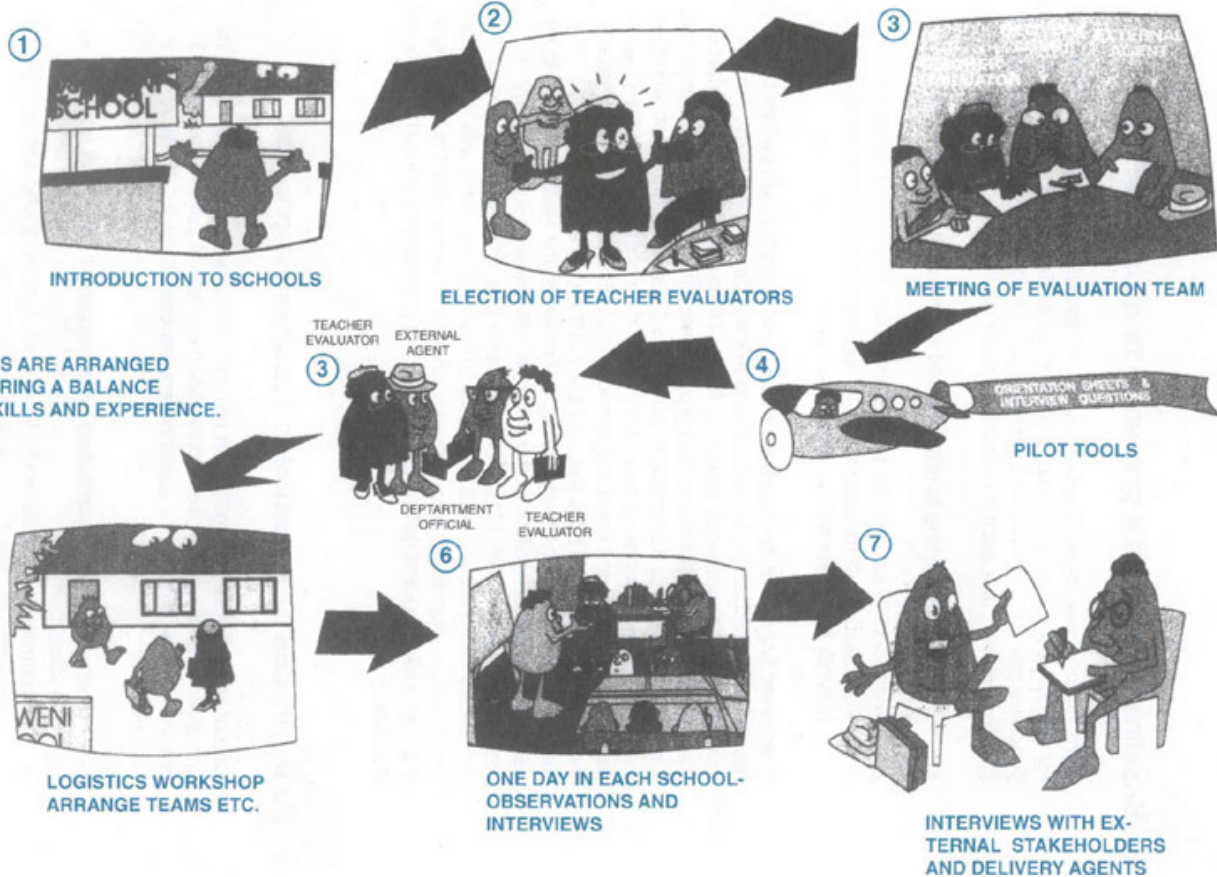
3 Collaboration as essential to the baseline process

One of the greatest strengths of a participatory baseline process is that its success is dependent on the collaboration of various parties. In the **LCD** process, a wide number of stakeholders are consulted (**LCD** 1997). Thus, for example,

- teacher unions are consulted for permission to appraise teachers in the classroom.
- departmental officials work closely with teachers who are engaged in assessing the teaching-learning environment.

- principals are requested to allow teacher evaluators who are elected by their peers to assess the situation in their schools.
- teachers themselves assess their peers and ratify their perceptions in collaboration with the external agents and the rest of the teaching staff.

Table of Contents

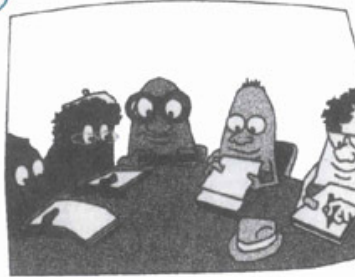


8



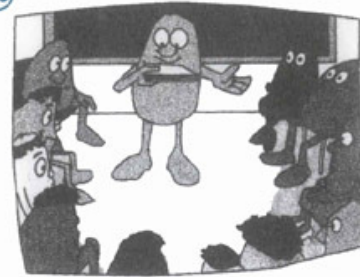
COLLATE DRAFT PROFILES

9



WORKSHOP DRAFT PROFILES WITH EVALUATION TEAM.

10



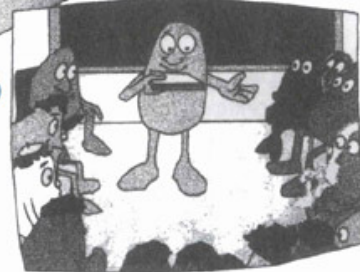
WORKSHOP DRAFT PROFILES WITH WHOLE STAFF IN SCHOOL

12



DRAW OUT RECOMMENDATIONS COLLABORATIVELY.

13



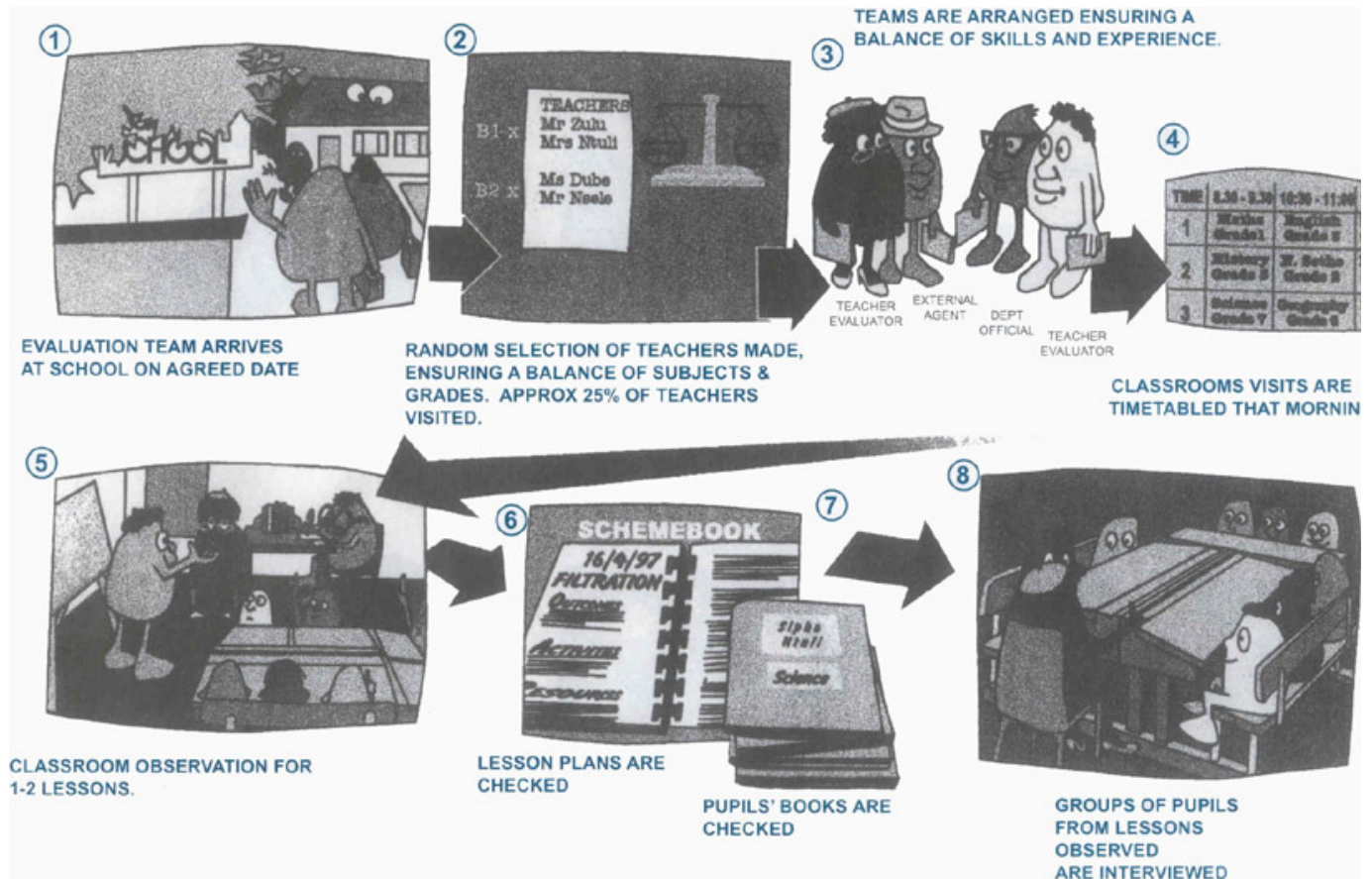
WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

14

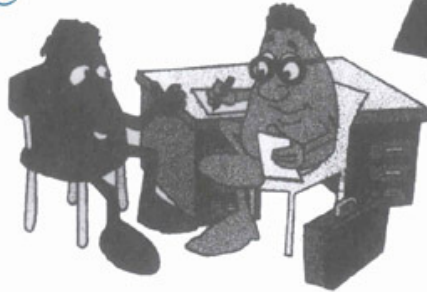


INTEGRATE LEARNING INTO PROJECT DOCUMENTS AND STRATEGY

STAGES OF A BASELINE

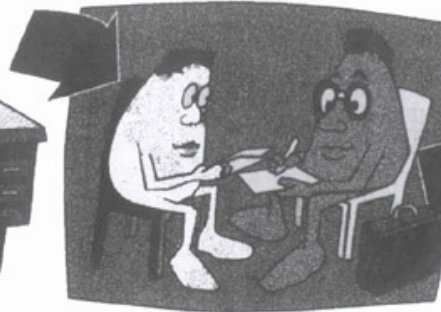


9

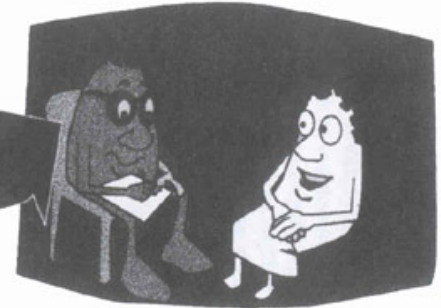


PRINCIPAL IS INTERVIEWED

10

TEACHER OBSERVED IS
INTERVIEWED & LEFT WITH
CARBON COPY OF CLASSROOM
OBSERVATION NOTES.

11

PTA REPRESENTATIVE
IS INTERVIEWED.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A BASELINE

This degree of intense collaboration in which various parties not only actively but are respected for their contributions, is an extremely valuable practice in itself, especially in the South African context. Sectors such as teacher unions, the education department and teachers in South Africa, have historically viewed each other with suspicion. The **LCD** baseline survey facilitates their working together on a joint venture. This shared process allows each party greater insight into the viewpoint and reality of the other and is important for establishing the trust needed for effective collaboration. According to Fullan (1991: 79), after such a process,

teachers and others know enough now not to take change seriously unless central administrators demonstrate through actions that they should... the policy maker on the one hand and the local practitioner on the other hand...to the extent that each side is ignorant of the subjective world of the other, reform will fail.

At its best the baseline provides this opportunity to demonstrate commitment to changes advocated and, more importantly, commitment to a collaborative development and understanding of those changes. The practical nature of its application provides a *reality check* for those involved in educational reform. **LCD** works from a belief that growth in the education sector depends on the inclusion, commitment and energy of its constituent members; obviously no one group can develop in isolation from another, all are mutually dependent. The baseline is an opportunity to bring these parties together to share skills and experiences and to develop a shared vision. One of the factors which guides **LCD's** decision to choose an inclusive, participatory approach to the evaluations they facilitate, is their belief that their recommendations will have a greater chance of being put into practice if those who are to implement the changes trust the process which led to the resultant findings. There is a need for shared experience if one hopes to develop the kind of trust which underpins collaboration (Shula & Wilson 1995: 138). The type of collaboration required to successfully conduct a participatory evaluation ensures that token gestures of involvement will be avoided.

4 An application of Vygotsky to baseline studies

Vygotsky's (1934) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) can be drawn on to explain LCD's approach to evaluation. Vygotsky recommends that teachers work in the learner's Zone of Proximal Development. Vygotsky postulates that, through structured interactions known as scaffolding the teacher is able to facilitate the development of the learner's understanding and ability to perform a task which s/he would not have been able to do alone but will be able to perform independently after the interventions take place. It is believed that the learner's performance is, in part, a result of the setting and type of support offered.

The ZPD is not an attribute of an individual... but rather the attribute of an event... Actual and potential levels of achievement are never just a reflection of an individual's cognitive potential and learning strategies, but are always also a measure of the strength of the cultural frameworks that supports that learning (Mercer 1994: 103).

Just as Vygotsky's theory of ZPD will underpin the approach to be adopted when assessing learners involved in the programme, it is also the guiding vision of teacher participation. As members of the evaluation team undertake the baseline assessment of their schools, teacher evaluators are being asked to work within their own zone of proximal development. Framed within a child-centred philosophy, elements such as the formative assessment of learners,

focusing on learning outcomes, and incorporating divergent elements into this process encompass a process which will take teachers beyond their pedagogical and, for many, their philosophical comfort zone. This is a move consistent with *outcomes-based education* (OBE) which is required of South African teachers - but to which little thought appears to have been given.

5 Using the baseline study to introduce changed practices

One of the important policy changes of the education department under the democratically elected government in South Africa is that it has addressed the problem of poor teacher practice. Several policy innovations have been introduced to enable this. The policy requires that teaching shifts, from being content-driven and teacher-centred, to being outcomes-based and learner-centred. How this paradigm shift will be successfully implemented on a large scale remains an enigma.

Enabling teachers to shift from their current content focus towards an outcomes orientation within the broader system of a country's education presents an enormous challenge. If the reconceptualisation of philosophy and the practical changes required are to be sustained – and if they are not going to be superficially adopted as token elements of the 'new order', then teachers have to be given opportunities which allow them to internalise what this shift might mean. They will also have to be given opportunities to try out new approaches in a safe environment. The focus on specified learner-outcomes

and on the achievement of *critical outcomes*² in accordance with South Africa's OBE curriculum is central to **LCD**'s conception of the baseline assessment.

The inclusion of this alternative philosophy in **LCD**'s baseline studies enables those involved in the evaluation to reflect on their understanding of the curriculum shift and to test out the skills required to implement changed practice. Consequently, as well as enhancing ownership of proposed project interventions, participatory evaluations can also serve as an *educational tool*. **LCD** thus works on the premise that through including teachers in the baseline, the new skills attained and the reflections induced go some way to facilitating the paradigm shift that teachers are required to make within the new dispensation. Hence **LCD** argues that participatory baseline evaluation procedures have potential long-term benefits. In more immediate terms, a baseline evaluation provides the space for educators to reflect, expand their repertoire cognitively and practically, and be supported during this process.

Collaboration is not the panacea of educational reform. To undertake such a process leads educationists along a sharp incline of learning, along a path filled with potholes. One cannot simply sail to the end of the road and hope to encounter sustained success. One of the reasons for this is that people are not accustomed to collaborating. Participation is a skill that disadvantaged South African teachers need to learn. They need to learn to be transparent

with colleagues and with themselves, to share, and to listen. These are stepping stones which should be acknowledged and planned into the process. Failure to do so can create frustration and resentment on all sides. Having personally erred by not having built in these skills, I have become very aware of the pitfalls of participatory ventures. I will draw on the following account of the Soshanguve³ baseline to illustrate lessons to be heeded for future ventures.

5.1 CASE STUDY of a baseline study undertaken in Soshanguve

Perhaps it is because I come from a teaching background myself that, in this project, I had far greater empathy with the teachers involved than with the Department officials who were to participate. Consequently, when undertaking this project, I took far more care to ensure that the participating teachers were encouraged to contribute to the process and that their contributions were valued. I also took care to ensure that that they understood what was required of them, and saw to it that they felt sufficiently confident of the support system we provided.

In retrospect, I realise that this same consideration was not offered to the seven departmental subject advisors who were included in the evaluation team. If participation is to work effectively, all participants should feel comfortable with the approach. We at **LCD** recognised that, for the team

which was brought together for this assessment process, this level of inclusivity constituted quite a radical change in methodology: teachers were accustomed to *receiving knowledge* from the Department and the latter was used to transmitting this. Such an arrangement ensured that no one really had to deal with the situation on the ground. This in turn meant that neither the Department officials (espousing reforms) nor the teachers on the receiving end felt confident about implementing new innovations in the classroom.

The practical nature of the preparatory baseline workshops where, for example, indicators of effective teaching were being developed, expected all participants to demonstrate their understanding of the reality in the classroom. Naturally on 'home ground', the teacher-evaluators felt quite confident with the task and made relevant and creative contributions. It was notable, however, that despite encouragement, the majority of the Department officials declined to take part. This marked the start of a pattern which was to re-emerge on different occasions during the two-week workshop. For example, the District subject advisors would constantly retreat to working and talking amongst themselves - even though they were paired with teachers for various activities.

Another shortfall of the Soshanguve baseline was that the intensity and pace of the assessment process, once underway, did not really allow for reflection-in-action (Schon 1983). Hence their energies were devoted to

reflecting on the *product*, the findings in schools and on creating accurate pictures of typical scenarios. They were not concerned about the *process* of going about change. Fullan (1991) points out that change agents who fail to reflect critically on how they go about change, *lose out* on improving their situations and on a lot of learning.



Having had the opportunity to reflect, I realised retrospectively that **LCD** had erroneously moved too quickly from the process of preparing the evaluation team to undertake the school-based baseline assessment to the formation of a joint forum (of teachers and department officials) once an agreement and initial contacts had been signed. This rapidity did not allow the Department officials to work through their understanding in the relative comfort zone of the Department. It is possible that, because teachers felt less was expected of them, we noted only minimal hesitation on their part to express reservation or confusion. Some of the officials, on the other hand, felt a great reluctance

to expose gaps in their knowledge or skills and contributed with excessive caution. It was quite evident at that time how disempowered the process left the subject advisors with regard to the new curriculum reforms with which they themselves were grappling while they were, at the same time, being expected to train teachers. What we were indeed failing to do, in terms of Fullan's theory, was to allow the subject advisors the time, space and support required to develop their own meaning about the changes that the participatory baseline assessment would imply for their own practice.

The difficulties encountered by the participants could be explained by the following quotation taken from Fullan's (1991: 31) citing of Marris (1975):

When those who have the power to manipulate changes act as if they only have to explain, and when their explanations are not at once accepted, shrug off opposition as ignorance or prejudice, they express a profound contempt for the meaning of lives other than their own. For the reformers have already assimilated these changes to their purpose, and worked out a reformulation which makes sense to them, perhaps through months and years of analysis and debate. If they deny others the chance to do the same, they treat them as puppets dangling by the threads of their own conceptions.

I make no apologies for citing this quotation at length as I feel it holds the key

to much of the success or failure of development progress. Any change process needs to budget adequately for the time and support such a shift in philosophy and practice requires. In reality **LCD** is working within the ZPD of both the subject advisors and the teachers. It is the responsibility of the **LCD** to ensure that the learning of all those involved is scaffolded during the evaluations they lead.

The failure to do just this became evident when, as with Vygotsky's theory of ZPD, the *learner* – in this case the Department officials – attempted to enact the baseline process independently. Although the Department coordinator thought that she was replicating a participatory evaluation approach, the lack of internalisation of the concept of *participatory* was evidenced by the authoritarian mode that she proposed. Principals and teacher unions from the District rejected the process and requests were made for the **LCD** approach to be followed. This highlights how a participatory baseline survey cannot be viewed as an isolated event, but rather as one step in an on-going developmental process. Fullan (1991: 92) cogently sums this up by indicating that 'ownership in the sense of clarity, skill and commitment is a progressive process. True ownership is not something that occurs magically at the beginning but rather is something that comes out the other end of a successful change process.'

6 Conclusion

In conclusion, it must be restated that the approach used by **LCD** in undertaking baseline studies is predicated on the premise that reflection has to be grounded in a philosophy which prioritises collaboration and learner-centredness and which is procedural. Although this approach provides a *modus operandi* for doing baseline studies, it still fulfils its expressed intention of informing the proposed intervention. The inclusive, participatory activity requiring the collaboration of various stakeholders is crucial to developing a sense of ownership among all stakeholders. It also helps to encourage a collaborative mode which is engendered by the participants having to work through the various stages of the baseline assessment. It is here argued that the baseline, both as a *modus operandi* for doing baseline and as well as a research approach for informing proposed interventions, is a process which is necessary for ensuring the sustainability the proposed project. Collaboration and sharing cannot be underestimated in the South African context. Should they be underestimated anywhere at all?

Footnote

1. It is important to note at this point, that since LCD would like to see itself as a learning organisation it has built in a component dealing with baseline studies as part of its teacher development programmes.
2. The critical outcomes are internalised via the teaching-learning

process: they deal with learners being able to solve problems, work in a team, collect, evaluate and communicate information etc.

3. Soshanguve is a township north of Pretoria in South Africa. It was a township developed during the apartheid era as a black urban settlement area. The township is disadvantaged and a large portion of the population live in squatter and informal settlements. The name of the township is an acronym formed by taking the first letters of the different ethnic groups living in the area (The Sotho - So; the Shangaans - Shang and the Venda - Ve.) This was characteristic of the 'creative names' used by the apartheid regime.

2.2 A general framework for evaluating educational programmes

Samir Guha Roy
Indian Statistical Institute

In this paper, Roy points out that programmes that engage the *community* in actual intervention to improve education delivery are relatively new. He argues that while the participatory nature of the **DPEP** programme has gained ground through this kind of intervention, there are nevertheless a number of limitations on *non-scientific* approaches when attempts are made to assess impact.

The author begins by drawing attention to the *hierarchy of objectives* of intervention programmes. He suggests that evaluators usually steer away from addressing the difficult issue of *impact* (that may be caused by many factors apart from the programme activities), and he points to the difficulties inherent in distinguishing between possible activities which might be responsible for influencing changes. Roy suggests various ways of controlling an investigation so that the impact of project activities can be evaluated, and he argues that, in the domain of project assessment, there is a growing interest in the *scientific evaluation* of such programmes. The paper concludes with a proposal of how impact can indeed be assessed by using *scientific methods*.

1 Introduction

Efforts which engage the community in intervention programmes intended to improve the delivery of education are relatively new, but since the introduction of the **District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)**, there has been a growing interest in the scientific evaluation of such programmes. To develop a systematic and sustainable framework for evaluation, a wide range of people at different levels needs to be involved in the creation of an *evaluation culture*. Because of this, certain activities relevant to human resources development need to be initiated with a view to evaluating the mid-term and end-of-project impact. Because of the community focus of **DPEP**, training needs to be

undertaken at the most local level (i.e. teacher and village level). If this is done, then qualitatively upgraded human resources can become effective partners in sustainable programmes.

The general principles of programme evaluation apply in the field of education (as they do in other fields). These include:

- defining the objectives of the programme
- selecting the criteria by which performance can be judged and defining the methods of measuring them
- deciding on the logic or design of evaluation
- collecting and analysing data (such as test scores and socio-economic background information)
- providing interpretations of the findings to the programme administrators

2 Evaluating project objectives

As in other fields, an intervention programme may be evaluated in terms of a *hierarchy of objectives*. A programme is usually conceived as having an ultimate objective. From this objective, a series of subsidiary objectives is

derived. Each of the sub-objectives (or programme execution objectives) is a means of achieving the objectives at the next higher level, and these objectives may be termed *programme impact objectives*. This type of conceptualisation makes the programme evaluation process more orderly and sensitive.

Evaluations seldom address the difficult issue of impact because many factors in addition to programme activities may be responsible for influencing change. This problem may be overcome by using:

- **Control groups**

One possible approach to overcoming this problem is through the use of classically designed *action* and *control* groups. If the vagaries of social and economic changes unrelated to the programme are to be properly accounted for, it is necessary to introduce replication and use several control and experimental areas.

- **Baseline data**

Another way of overcoming this problem is by concentrating on obtaining firm baseline data before the programme is initiated and periodically thereafter so as to detect any trends.

- **Factorial concept of experimentation**

A more effective approach is the factorial concept of experimentation in which all possible combination of factors are investigated. Assessment of students' academic achievements is an important component of impact study. The concepts of *item bank* and *test equating* may be utilised to locate the learners on the same scale tested by different sets of tests in different regions over time.

3 Taxonomy of evaluation designs

What follows now outlines the various ways of classifying designs for evaluation.

31 Distinguishing forms of assessment

- **Formative – summative**

The distinction between formative and summative forms of assessment is aptly illustrated by an example by Robert Stake (1976) who indicates that 'When the cook tastes the soup it is formative evaluation, and when the guest tastes the soup it is summative'. Which form should be used? The evaluation team for the Indian state of **Andhra Pradesh District Primary Education Programme (APDPEP)** recommended both types of evaluation. Other distinctions need to be considered. They are:

- **Formal – Informal**

Formal evaluation is more operationalised and less personal. It must pass the tests of reliability, validity, credibility and utility.

- **Case Particular – Generalisation**

Evaluation research may be done either to find the worth of the particular programme or the worth of the general approach.

- **Product – Process**

A study of the *product* is expected to indicate the pay-off value while a study of the *process* is expected to indicate the intrinsic values of the programme. Both are needed, however, to find the worth of the programme.¹

- **Classical Design for Impact Study**

Measurements

Classical Design for Impact Study

Measurements		
Time	Project area	"Control" area
0	X_0	Y_0

	Programme treatment	No Programme treatment
1	X_1	Y_1
2	X_2	Y_2
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•

$(X_0 @ Y_0)$

In the above scheme, x's and y's are any educational measurements. A valid estimate of programme impact at the end of time², say, will be

$$\text{Impact} = |x_2 - y_2 - |x_1 - y_1|$$

provided the two areas are exposed to the same exogenous factors.

4 Issues identified for assessment in the Andhra Pradesh District Primary Education Programme (APDPEP)

The key issues identified for assessing the impact of the **APDPEP** are:

- the state of capacity building for programme implementation
- levels of community participation
- the nature of equity focus
- the development of classroom processes
- the effectiveness of teacher training

If we want to investigate the effects of all these issues or factors simultaneously, a factorial design may be appropriate. To illustrate the simplest case, consider only two factors, namely, programme package and community participation on students' performance. Both factors are assumed to occur at two levels in the form of a presence or absence of the factor concerned. The four treatment combinations are shown below:

Students' mean score

	No programme package	Programme package implemented	Mean	Response to programme
Community participation (CP)	X	Z	$(X+Z)/2$	Z-X
No or little CP	Y	W	$(Y+W)/2$	W-Y
Mean	$(X+Y)/2$	$(Z+ W)/2$		

Effect of CP	X-Y	Z-W		
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4.1 Evaluating the accomplishment of a programme

Answers to the following questions provide the background against which the *accomplishments of a programme* may be evaluated.

- What are the specific changes being sought? What are the conditions in the programme area to which a programme must be adjusted if it is to attract the active support of the people?
- What are the channels of communication for the effective flow of education from project administrators to the people and for a flow of the attitudes and responses of the people to those responsible for the project?
- What are the barriers that must be overcome if the project is to achieve its objectives?

In effect, seeking answers to the questions raised indicates the potential research character of programme evaluation.

4.2 The development of an item bank for pupil assessment

- To start with, a number of tests may be constructed following anchor test design applicable to a particular level or class. Collected data will be analysed and items will be calibrated on a common scale. These items will be the initial deposit to the item bank.
- Similar item banks may be established for different classes or grades with common items between them. As a result, common scales may be framed for the entire target group (vertical equating).
- Any number of parallel tests may be constructed without further cost or delay. Moreover, *post facto* analysis of the test data and removal of poor items can avoid pretesting on every occasion.
- Maintenance of test security will also not be vitiated even if all the items are made known. This is because mastery of the items and mastery in the subject concerned are almost synonymous.

5 Conclusion

In this paper, Roy points out that programmes that engage the community in the actual intervention to improve education delivery are relatively new. While the participatory nature of **DPEP** has gained ground through the areas of intervention, this paper argues that there are nevertheless a number of limitations on *non-scientific* approaches when attempts are made to assess

impact.

The author begins by drawing attention to the *hierarchy of objectives* of intervention programmes. He suggests that evaluators usually steer away from addressing the difficult issue of *impact* which may be caused by many factors which are quite distinct from programme activities, and he points to the difficulties of distinguishing between possible activities which could be responsible for influencing changes. The paper suggests various ways of controlling the investigation to enable the impact of project activities to be evaluated. It argues that there is a growing interest in the domain of project assessment in the *scientific evaluation* of such programmes. The paper concludes with a proposal of how impact can indeed be assessed.

Footnote

1. The other common dimensions that Stake (1976) mentions with regard to the classification of evaluation designs are: Descriptive – Judgmental; Preordinate – Responsive; Holistic – Analytic; Internal – External.

2.3 Issues to consider when planning a baseline study

Tony Luxon
Institute for English Language Education

This paper draws on the experiences of the Institute for English Language Education (IELE) at Lancaster University, which has been involved in the production of baseline studies for a variety of project types in a number of regions all over the world. The author, Tony Luxon, indicates that, throughout this time, the methodology and the philosophy of baseline research for projects in all types of social and educational contexts has evolved a great deal. The experiences of baseline studies involves a variety of ESP, including those with a focus on curriculum development, teacher and trainer training. The experiences have contributed to what the author considers to be essential issues which need to be considered each time a baseline activity is contemplated and regardless of where it is carried out.

The paper then begins with a consideration of issues pertaining to the project implementation team and their needs. What follows thereafter is a discussion of issues pertaining to the methodology of the research, with specific reference to the kinds of instrumentation needed and the types of data required. Finally, the author makes suggestions concerning the dissemination of the findings and recommendations of the research to various stakeholders.

1 Introduction

Over the past decade, the methodology and the philosophy of baseline research for projects in all types of social and educational contexts has evolved a great deal - although not to the point where there is an agreed model for baseline studies. The principle reason for there not being a single agreed-upon model is that because projects are context dependent, they are all different. They vary not only in their objectives and activities, according to scale of resources available and area of focus, but also in the social, cultural and educational environment in which they are carried out. Thus, what is appropriate for projects in countries of the former Soviet sphere of influence, might be inappropriate in, for example, the African continent, where there is a different educational tradition, and a different socio-economic organisation.

It would nevertheless be wrong to assume that nothing that is achieved in one context cannot allow us to learn lessons for other situations, or that the methodology for carrying out baseline studies in different contexts is completely different. Although there are differences, there are also inevitable commonalities. Baseline studies invariably give some form of 'snapshot' of the project environment before its activities are under way -and they usually have an evaluative and developmental function. Also, there is usually some form of survey of stakeholders and potential beneficiaries of the project.

A survey of baseline studies in which the IELE at Lancaster University has been involved shows this clearly, and, while a totally *reusable template* does not exist, there may well be issues which need to be considered each time an

activity of this kind is undertaken. In the sections which follow, I suggest what some of these issues are and why they might be important for someone contemplating baseline research regardless of where it is carried out. How some of these issues are dealt with is still a matter for debate, but they at least need to be considered.

2 Issues pertaining to the needs of the project implementation team

Most of the baseline studies in which the IELE has been involved have been carried out by the project implementers. Whether this happens or not depends on the capacity of the project team. The issue here is whether the exercise will be one of capacity *identification* or capacity *building*. The following three issues deal with suggestions pertaining to the team carrying out the project.

2.1 Where possible, the project team should carry out the baseline study

In many of the projects in which IELE was involved in Eastern and central Europe, for example, the capacity in the area of ELT and linguistics was already very strong, as was the research tradition. Therefore, the main task was to find a combination of the most suitable people to constitute a project team. In these cases then, technically, there was no reason why the project implementers could not carry out the baseline study for their own project. The question of *insiders' disinterestedness* and *objectivity* towards the project environment is one which is regularly discussed in the literature of projects and

project evaluation.

Even if we could agree on the parameters of *objectivity*, it cannot be automatically assumed that an outsider to the project is by definition more *objective* than an insider. As Alderson (1993) points out, outside evaluators bring their own agenda to the exercise, their own beliefs about evaluation, education and about the project environment. Outsiders may have to spend much of their time trying to understand the environment, and it is possible that their understanding will at best be partial and at worst wrong. Because of their outsider status, they may be less prone to influence from the variety of players connected with the project (although this cannot be assumed). At any stage of the exercise, when they do not have first hand knowledge of the project or the project environment, they may have to make decisions on whose judgement is reliable. They may well therefore be influenced precisely *because* of their 'outsiderness'.

Time is also an issue that impinges on decisions about whether the baseline study should be an insider- or outsider-led exercise. It might be difficult for an outsider, precisely because of time and money constraints, to stay within the project environment for two or three months. This needs to be borne in mind if it is agreed that the minimum time that it generally takes to carry out a baseline study for a large-scale three year project is approximately three months. If this were to be the case, then the cost of maintaining an outside consultant in the project environment could well be prohibitive.

In the case of projects in St Petersburg and Ukraine, for example, the baseline studies were very extensive reports with a wealth of data that could only have been carried out by a team of people with access to information about testing, classroom performance and interested stakeholders. It simply would not have been feasible for one or even two outside evaluators to have carried out this exercise in anything like this kind of breadth and depth.

- **Insider-led baseline studies**

In the case of these insider-led baseline studies, Lancaster played a consultative and training role, as and when needed. As mentioned above, the capacity was already more than sufficient in these contexts, but there was a perceived need on the part of the implementers themselves for consultancy in this particular kind of 'real-world, research. Although many of the team members had been involved in research prior to the project, they usually came to the project with no experience of working in a project or of the type of research experience such as, for example, classroom observation, instrument development or data analysis. Where it was possible to call on people in the host institutions for consultancy or training in any particular area, this was done¹.

- **Outsider-led baseline studies**

At this point it is worth considering the few examples of baseline studies which were not carried out by project implementers (or, at least, not entirely so). In the case of the Philippines, where the total management of the project, including policy, administration and budget was managed by Filipinos, a consultant from Lancaster carried out a very small-scale qualitative baseline study with the aim of determining needs and not for use as an evaluative instrument. It was felt that a 'new pair of eyes' introduced into the situation might reveal things which had not clearly been hitherto seen.

In Nicaragua, the baseline research was carried out by the British TCOs for the ODA funded **ELT Project** because it was not clear at the outset what type of project was needed (no research had as yet been undertaken). This also meant that there was no Nicaraguan implementation team. With no team, the only identified project implementers, the British TCOs, were required to do the research.²

- **Joint insider-outsider baseline studies**

In the case of a baseline study carried out in Cambodia, there were actually two reports. One was produced by the project team and was based on a qualitative exercise which focused on the activities in the schools, and the other, which concentrated on the project framework indicators of achievement, was produced by the outside

consultant. Because the baseline study was seen as an important step in establishing ownership, it was important that it was not simply a case of the outsider consultant taking over the writing of the report with the assistance of the implementers. Furthermore, whereas the implementers neither regarded the project framework as very important nor felt that it would be particularly useful to them to base their report on the indicators, the project managers felt that the indicators might be important to the project sponsors. For this reason, the two reports were produced: one to do with evaluation and one to do with development and capacity-building.

This first consideration, that of who carries out the baseline study, is one of the most fundamental questions about which a decision needs to be made. Once it is made, other issues then become significant.

2.2 Ensure adequate time and resources for the exercise

The baseline study, if considered necessary, needs to be written into the project and have resources allotted to it. If this is not the case, then the team carrying out the exercise might run out of time, money and the stakeholders' patience. Research is often seen as *about* something rather than being an integral *part* of that something.

2.3 Consider what the project team might need in order to carry out the

baseline study

It is necessary to give consideration to the type of training that might be necessary for participants involved in conducting a baseline study. At this stage, the kind of communication system necessary to link members of the team is also an important consideration, especially if they do not belong to the same institution. For example, it may be necessary, as was the case with the project in Ukraine, to facilitate communication between cities in different parts of the country by e-mail. Assistance from the British Council was sought to facilitate the introduction of this mode of communication. It was also necessary to meet periodically (it is crucial to make sure that such meetings are arranged and funded at the outset of the research).

3 Methodological considerations

The following seven suggestions pertain to the way in which baseline research is approached. They refer to methodological issues such as the development of instruments and the types of data that baseline studies should seek to capture.

3.1 Be aware of both evaluation and development issues. Take advantage of the capacity-building/identification and communications opportunities which arise through the process.

If the project implementers themselves are to carry out the baseline study, then this is an extremely valuable opportunity to develop capacity for the ensuing project. Indeed, it is here argued that the baseline research process should be seen as the first activity in the implementation of the project rather than as a pre-project exercise.

It might be the case that project members do not know each other well. Training seminars and workshops, cooperative working on research and the writing of the report are all opportunities for team building. Training sessions give the first opportunities to see how well, or badly, teams work together.

If the baseline study is treated as a mini-project in itself, then there are valuable project or innovation skills to be learned from carrying it out. Team members may well be professional academics in ELT and Applied Linguistics, but it cannot be assumed that they have the necessary skills to deal with other agendas. Buchanan and Boddy (1992: 28), refer to three agendas in an innovation context: the *content*, *control* and *process* agendas. These can be described as follows:

- **The content agenda:**

The project manager is expected to be technically competent and experienced with respect to the substance of the changes being implemented. Thus, for example, he is expected to be competent

with the hardware and software of a networked management information system.

- **The control agenda:**

The project manager is expected to be familiar and competent with a range of planning, scheduling, budgeting, resourcing and monitoring techniques, with setting and meeting deadlines and targets - the staple fare of project management courses.

- **The process agenda:**

The project manager is expected to be competent in communications and consultation, in team building, in influencing and negotiating skills and in the management of enthusiasm and resistance.

If project team members have not had to deal with these different agendas before, they almost certainly will have to during the research process. Whatever they gain from this process may then be transferable to the rest of their work in the project.

In the Cambodia baseline study referred to above, the team which carried out the research was the actual inspection team for ELT. Their duties during and after the project were to visit schools, talk to teachers, students and school

principals, observe classes and look at test results. All these activities were included in the baseline research, and so, as well as being a valuable piece of research, the team also went through a process from which they could learn a great deal about their future responsibilities.

Similarly, in the report produced after the Ukraine **INSETT** baseline study, the team members referred to what they had gained through the process:

The challenge to the team

For the majority of team members this was the first experience of research work of this nature, involving the close study of situations and attitudes in the real world. While the team acknowledges mistakes were made due to lack of experience, we can identify several gains made as a result of work on this study:

- All members of the team have gained experience in a mode of research which is very new to Ukraine, namely research which is centred around professional practices and carried out by practitioners.
- Team members have a clearer grasp of the issues surrounding approaches to ELT.

- Team members have become familiar with a method of observing lessons which allows the observer to assess all aspects of a lesson in much more detail than traditional observation techniques allow.
- The groups of secondary stakeholders who are rarely, if ever, consulted have been given the opportunity to consider some of the issues surrounding ELT and to express their own views on the current state of ELT in Ukrainian schools.
- Secondary stakeholders have been made aware of the possibility of change.

Source: Baseline Study Report, Ukraine INSETT Project- 1998

The baseline study, both through the process and its product, can be an important means of establishing credibility with the project beneficiaries and the stakeholders. As mentioned previously, the **Nicaraguan ELT project** baseline study was carried out by the British project coordinators, principally because there was not, at the time, a locally-based project team. The research process enabled the coordinators to meet teachers throughout the country and to familiarise themselves with the ELT situation in schools throughout the regions. They also met most of the stakeholders of the project during this process. They found that this provided an invaluable opportunity for

making themselves known to all involved. In fact, the research was valuable because it uncovered many relevant issues pertaining to ELT in Nicaragua. This happened because the project was the first national ELT research investigation undertaken in the country after a period in which English had been, in the words of the Director of Education, 'abandoned'. This made it possible to say things about ELT which were not mere assertions and also to provide the rationale for project activities from then on. It is fair to say that, without the baseline study, it would have been much more difficult to carry out the activities of the project.

In all these instances, the opportunities for establishing communication, for team building, capacity identification/building and the opportunity to establish the credibility of the project implementers would have been lost had the baseline study been carried out by an evaluator who had not been part of the project. As Weir and Roberts (1994: 218) point out:

While we know that the collection and analysis of data should meet the standards of feasibility and accuracy, we have also learnt that positive interpersonal and institutional relationships must underpin technical adequacy, and are at the heart of effective evaluation: this is because relationships of commitment and trust enable the involvement of players in the evaluation process, and the utilisation of findings. We have learnt that the importance of these relationships must be taken into account from the very outset.

3.2 The scale and scope of the baseline study should be appropriate for the scale and scope of the project

Although it is difficult to estimate, three months may be considered to be the average length of time during which a large-scale project is likely to spend on a baseline study. If we are considering the implementation of a project with a lifespan of three years, this will account for less than ten percent of the project time. In view of the developmental value of the process and its influence on the future activities of the project, this is not excessive.³

3.3 If possible, collect both qualitative and quantitative data

Often stakeholders prefer quantitative data because of its potential to account for things in a *countable* way. However, not everything is quantifiable. Nor is it possible to gain an in-depth understanding of a situation without also using qualitative methods of data collection. If both qualitative and quantitative methods are employed, a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of a situation is possible.

There are nevertheless aspects that can be counted, as, for example, the number of teachers trained through a teacher training project, or the number of books distributed through a textbook/materials writing project. And such methods are useful for calculating differences in examination results.

Changes in teachers' attitudes and behaviours are more difficult to quantify as are predicated on the types of interaction in a classroom. It is possible to quantify the quality of experience in some ways if one uses custom-made instruments. This means that the quantifying classroom behaviour can tell a story as vividly as a prose description. There are many benefits to processing qualitative data in a way that permits it to become *countable*. The IELE attempted this in the Nicaraguan baseline study. Instruments were developed specifically for the project. This enabled data from classroom observations to be quantified in terms of, for example, teacher talking time, the amount of Spanish used in relation to the amount of English used in class, the kinds of interactions which took place between teachers and students, and between students and students.

These results were then compared with the data of teacher interviews which were more qualitative in nature and were concerned with *why* they taught the way they did rather than *what* they did when they taught. It may be argued that qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis do not *look* at the same kind of thing and so 'true' triangulation is not possible. This may be so. Nevertheless, the sheer accumulation of complementary qualitative and quantitative data makes for a comprehensive and, for many, a convincing picture of what is happening.

3.4 Collect data from a variety of sources so as to allow for a variety of perspectives

The issue of triangulation of data has been given much attention in the literature on project evaluation. Triangulation helps to counteract the Rashomon effect, as Fanselow (1987) calls it: which is the effect of a variety of perceptions. There are clear epistemological implications in research of this nature, but data collection from a variety of sources seems, to me, to be the most logical way to deal with the issues regardless of one's perspective. It is possible to take a non-realist, relativist point of view, and yet accept that as long as perceptions are recognised as such, what is reported may be considered to be valid. Likewise, a critical realist might believe that the truth is out there, and regard a multi-faceted approach as one of the best ways of gaining access to it. However, as there are so many stakeholders with varying views of the project environment, it is necessary to report their perceptions as a matter of record.

3.5 Consider which data already exist in documented form and which data need to be collected by using instruments

The kind of data which need to be collected may already be available in one form or another. It is therefore unwise to attempt to re-invent the wheel. A useful beginning would be to try to survey relevant reports carried out by international organisations, such as UNICEF and UNESCO, or local government organisations and NGOs. Certainly statistical information, which might be obtained through the ministry of education and triangulated with other sources, can be used as valuable contextual data. If the information has been

collected through a reputable agency, this has the added advantage of increasing the credibility of the report.

Documentation which relates to the curriculum, or to teaching and learning philosophies, for example, may already exist. Even if the documentation is not as accurate or as comprehensive as it might be, this is in itself useful to know.

Data on what happens in classrooms will probably need to be collected by visits and observations, and instrumentation may be developed to collect this data. It is possible that other research may have already collected relevant classroom data and, if this is so, it may be usefully incorporated into the study. However, there is no real substitute for the team going out and investigating the situation themselves!

3.6 Whatever the type of project, always visit the classroom

This suggestion may seem to recommend what is blindingly obvious, but it is an issue that is often overlooked. Very often baseline data consist of quantitative data on book distribution, for example, but they might not give any idea as to how the book is used in class by teachers and students, something which it is vital to know if the supply of books is to prove effective in the classroom. Similarly, while it is important to know about desertion rates, it is also useful to know *how* students react to what they are learning in the class as this may be a factor which contributes to desertion rates.

Whether the project implementers be *insiders* to the target situation or *outsiders*, only visits to the classroom will enable them to gain an understanding about what happens in the teaching-learning situation. It may well be the case that project members are or have been teachers themselves, but it is surprising what they may discover about how much they *do not* know.

3.7 Consider the possible uses and audiences there might be for the baseline study, and allow for new uses discovered through the process.

It is important to realise that the results of the baseline study may be read in a variety of forms by different audiences and may also be used in ways that were not envisaged at the outset. The Nicaragua baseline report was used in the following ways:

- It was used as reference material for the Ministry of Education and the universities which, until that time, had done no formal research into ELT. It was also used as a reference for anybody else, Nicaraguan or foreign, who wished to carry out research into ELT in the future. A number of researchers from North America used the baseline study for their own research, as did four Nicaraguan project members, who wrote dissertations on ELT in Nicaragua. The baseline was therefore a major stimulus to much needed further research.

- It was used as a briefing document for consultancy and ODA monitoring visits. Having this kind of information available made these visits more effective in a shorter time. Other aid organisations working in ELT and in the secondary and tertiary systems in general also used the baseline study to inform their own work.
- It was used as an aid to the overseas training institution in order to provide appropriate training for project trainers. Overseas training is not always appropriate to the local situation. The baseline study, along with visits from the UK training institution, helped to make the training relevant and appropriate.
- As mentioned earlier, the baseline report was used as the basis for the diffusion process. It enabled the dissemination information about the project to as many teachers, directors and officials as possible. It also contributed to the establishment of an ELT communication network.

4 Dissemination of the findings and recommendations

The baseline report offers benefits to many of the stakeholders. For this reason, the findings of the study should be transmitted to its many audiences in appropriate ways. The following are suggestions of ways to enable this:

4.1 Allow for a variety of channels through which the findings of the baseline study might be transmitted to its audiences.

It may be argued that all stakeholders and beneficiaries should have equal access to the report and that decisions taken by the producers of the report or any other concerned stakeholder could disempower those who cannot take those decisions. I would hold this as a valid theoretical position, but would want to say that reality must intervene at some point. Depending on how wide a target grouping of beneficiaries is, it is not likely that so many would actively want to read such a report. Furthermore, the distribution of such a report among, for example, 5000 teachers, would be prohibitive in terms of cost and logistics.

Copies could be made available in resource centres (if they exist) or at regional ministry offices, if they are ever visited by teachers. The report should be made available as widely as possible but I would suggest that it is not realistic to expect that many people will actually want to read a lengthy report, which is unlikely to reflect the kind of information that automatically grips one's attention on every single page.

Who should receive a copy is not necessarily a question of power, but rather of real accessibility. It may have more to do with the preference for quicker and more striking ways of reading the results. Although it may be necessary for a certain type of audience (academics for example) to see the whole

report, this is not necessarily the case with all audiences. In Nicaragua, a shorter, more graphic report was produced for people who did not want to, or have the time to, read the report in full. However, had anyone wished to read the complete report, it could easily have been made available. The shorter report was more easily accessible and, because of its graphic nature, the results were more clearly shown. Policy makers and other beneficiaries who were concerned with the central findings, but not with the details of the main report, seemed to prefer this report.

4.2 Keep stakeholders and target groups as Informed as possible throughout the process so that they know what kind of report to expect

If, as indicated above, it takes on average three months for the research on a national scale to be carried out, and then another relatively lengthy period while drafts are written and findings are discussed. In the duration, it is important for stakeholders and beneficiaries to know what kind of report is being produced and what will be covered in it. Our experience suggests that there should not be any great surprises in the report, and that people need to be given a chance to add their contributions to the report before it is finally produced. An interim report can be of immense value in encouraging input from stakeholders.

5 Conclusion

Finally, it must be stated that all of the above issues have been addressed by others in one form or another in baseline study exercises in various parts of the world, and in studies undertaken in diverse social and educational conditions. It is certainly not the contention here that this paper presents a universal set of measures for dealing with these issues in any conditions. Projects are of necessity context-sensitive - as should be the research on which projects are based. It is suggested rather that these issues will need to be addressed by those who carry out project baseline research. What needs to be considered afresh in each baseline study is *Who should be involved?* and *What is the most appropriate approach for proceeding in this context?* I would argue that if this initial process can be successfully dealt with, then the possibilities for the success of the ensuing project are increased enormously. It is well worth putting effort into the baseline study. It is, after all, the first step on the journey of a thousand miles.

Footnote

1. In the case of data analysis, for example, although none of the team had used SPSS, they were able to contract somebody in their institution to enter the data into the package and assist them with the analysis.
2. The situation was different at the end of the project when the impact assessment involved a team of 22 project implementers who

had worked together throughout the project.

3. It is recognised that projects differ in scale and this rightly should affect how much time and effort is spent on baseline research.



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3. STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

[3.1 Identifying stakeholders](#)

[3.2 Considering the audience - an important phase in project evaluations](#)

[3.3 Impact studies and their audiences](#)

3.1 Identifying stakeholders

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This paper focuses on how important it is for evaluators to identify stakeholder groupings if they want to make effective use of participatory evaluations in educational development projects. It argues that it is necessary to pay detailed attention both to *identification* of stakeholder groupings and to *understanding* their relationships to projects in question.

The authors provide a detailed exposition of the variety of ways in which the concept *stakeholder* may be defined. Moreover, they argue that these definitions generally pertain either to individuals/groups who are involved in or who are affected by a project or its evaluation, or to the differing interests of these individuals/groups. The authors argue that stakeholder interests are not usually rigorously defined. They indicate that stakeholder interests do not seem to offer the kind of insights that might guide the planning and management of participatory or stakeholder evaluation. This lacunae, they argue, suggests the need to identify more robust parameters for exploring stakeholder perspectives on evaluation.

Accordingly, the paper begins with the authors' undertaking an interrogation

of the multiplicity of definitions of *stakeholder*. This is followed by their examination of the inherent power relations and power differences which, they indicate, provides a framework for exploring the nature of the roles and relationship of stakeholders in an evaluation. The authors then suggest three propositions about stakeholder perspectives, which they support by using data they have obtained from their research into the stakeholder problem. Their paper concludes by suggesting some of the implications that their findings might have for practice.

1 Introduction

It is essential for those who wish to make effective use of participatory evaluation in educational development projects to identify stakeholder groups and to understand their relationships with one another and to the project. There are various ways of defining the concept *stakeholder* and many of these refer to individuals or members of groups involved in or affected by a project or evaluation. These definitions usually centre on the differing interests which distinguish groups - an approach which, we argue, does not offer the information needed for guiding the planning and management of participatory or stakeholder evaluations.

Our experience of conducting evaluations, both as external evaluators and consultants in participatory evaluations, suggests the need to identify more robust parameters for exploring stakeholder perspectives on evaluation. In the

next section we shall examine definitions of *stakeholder* before we look at power relations and before suggesting three propositions about stakeholder perspectives. In section 4 we shall explore stakeholder perspectives by looking at data from questionnaires, interviews and field notes and we shall try to establish the extent to which there is support for the proposed framework. In section 5 we will attempt to show the implications of our findings for practice.

2 Definitions of stakeholder

The notion of participatory evaluation in education is not a new one. Morris (1990: 131) indicates that in his original conception of evaluation, Tyler regarded evaluations as a tool to help the teacher in planning the curriculum and making instructional decisions. In the same place Norris adds that Tyler and Waples advocated the study of classroom problems by teachers and supervisors as early as 1930 - thus showing that both these authors believed in the usefulness of participatory evaluations nearly seventy years ago.

More recent discussions of *stakeholder evaluation* tend also to talk about the need to respond to the interests of *real people* and the irrelevance or even failure of other approaches to evaluation (Weiss 1986). The aim of a stakeholder evaluation is to make evaluations fairer and more useful, usually by getting primary stakeholders - the *real people* who may benefit from and/or implement the project - involved in conducting the evaluation of the project, in

line with the proposal just cited.

These proposals are often criticised because some advocates of stakeholder evaluation blur distinctions between, for example, *accountability* and *knowledge evaluation*, and a few make the disputable claim that stakeholder evaluation is a sufficient approach to evaluation -with the implication that no other is needed (Chelimsky 1997: 22). It is unclear whether these proposals reduce privilege or pass it to different stakeholders in a participatory evaluation. In any case, this usage of the concept of *stakeholder evaluation* is misleading since all evaluations are conducted by or for stakeholders. The question is rather *Which particular groups of stakeholders commission, use or do evaluation?* It is recognised that no one seems to propose that all possible categories of stakeholders should participate.

2.1 Ways of identifying stakeholders

Stakeholders are frequently identified by their working role within a programme, or by their contribution to the programme. In such a case, the term *stakeholder* may refer to either individuals or groups. When stakeholders are defined by their working role within a programme, the definition is usually unclear about whether the definition is specifically to do with their place in the project or whether this classification refers only to their association with the evaluation.

For example, Rossi and Freeman (1993: 408; Weiss 1986: 151) refer to the following in their list of stakeholders:

*Policy-makers and decision-makers... Program sponsors...
Evaluation sponsors... Target participants... Program
management... Program staff...
Evaluators... Program
competitors... Contextual
stakeholders... Evaluation
community....*



This list is not exhaustive and identifies groups which, while they may not

always be involved in carrying out the evaluation, are *potential audiences* for the findings. A similar categorisation by Aspinwall et al (1992: 84-85) tries to simplify the matter of classifying stakeholders by proposing four broad groupings:

Clients or customers	Those who are intended to benefit from the project
Suppliers	Those who implement or provide resources for the project
Competitors or collaborators	Usually other organisations
Regulators	Any agency which directly or indirectly regulates the project

The categorisation of Aspinwall *et al* has the advantage of not being an open-ended list, as is the one previously referred to. One could easily add to their list. We wish, however, to argue that the four categories of Aspinwall et al are not sufficiently distinct and consequently of little use. For example, some participants, such as teachers in an educational development project, fall into the categories of both *client* and *supplier*. There is, moreover little discussion about how the categorisation is arrived at, and it is not evident from such a list why and how each group will take a particular attitude or set of attitudes to an evaluation.

Rossi and Freeman (1993: 409) also focus on the multiplicity of stakeholder groupings. They point out that as a consequence of the multiplicity of stakeholder groups, evaluators may be unsure whose perspective they should take in designing an evaluation. This dilemma is interpreted by Hopkins (1989) as pointing to different groupings within the group of evaluators. He draws attention to the divided loyalties of evaluators who have to take the concerns of multiple stakeholders into account. They may (variously) be loyal to the:

Profession	Rossi and Freeman's evaluation community
Sponsor	Rossi and Freeman's sponsors
Community	Rossi and Freeman's target participants (The evaluator acts as advocate and these stakeholders are not actively involved.)

If one looks closely at each of the above classifications, it is immediately apparent that one could go on subdividing each of the groupings - since even stakeholders may also have divided loyalties.

The following classification, elucidated by Guba and Lincoln (1989: 40-41), takes the relationship between any stakeholder and the evaluation as the defining parameter. They then identify the following three broad groupings:

Agents	those who conduct and use the evaluation
Beneficiaries	those who gain from use of the evaluation

Victims	those who are negatively affected by the evaluation
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As with each of the aforementioned classifications, various subcategories within each of the three main classes may also be identified. This clearly locates each member's or group's stake as being part of the evaluation whereas the other categorisations were potentially indeterminate between their stake in the *project* and their stake in the *evaluation*. Again, however, when we apply the categories to familiar cases, some members seem to fall into two categories. There is a further difficulty that Guba and Lincoln (1989: 202) acknowledge, the difficulty of identifying victims. We suggest that it would also be difficult to predict which of the second and third categories stakeholders would fall into: our goal for a more comprehensive framework requires some predictive power.

It is common, then, to acknowledge that there are different categories of stakeholder, and that each category has its own interests and spheres of action. This notion, however, remains on the level of generality and is a taxonomy. We suggest that, just as Linnaean taxonomies are revealed by plant genetics to misclassify species, a study of underlying factors in groups may reveal more about their workings. At this juncture, we feel that the most useful pointer is to recognise that the defining interest is the *stake* in the evaluation. Categorisation as a defining procedure is more or less observable, but this has little or no explanatory value when one tries to account for

different stakeholder perspectives. We suggest that a more effective explanatory procedure is still needed.

3 Defining stakeholder perspectives

As we have shown in the previous sections, stakeholders may be classified as belonging to different groups, a small, select number of which, in the field of evaluation, have traditionally been involved in conducting evaluations. In order to extend involvement in evaluation (and thereby incidentally expanding the kinds of evaluation that may be undertaken), it might be useful to expand on the stakeholders' understanding of the evaluation process. The following is a comment by a stakeholder (practitioner) who is not traditionally involved in project evaluation (except as a more or less willing subject)¹. His perception is that 'evaluations are done for the funding body by ex-patriate visitors'.

This view resonates what Rossi and Freeman (1993: 252) term a *connoisseur evaluation*, i.e. an evaluation done by an outsider who is a subject specialist not trained in evaluation - what they call 'among the shakiest of all impact assessment techniques'. In this case, a practitioner would be looking for power, the power to do and be involved in evaluation of his/her project.

3.1 Power as a variable in defining stakeholders

Power as an element of evaluation and the activity surrounding evaluation

seems to have aroused curiously little attention if one accepts that evaluation and its utilisation are about the exercise of power: evaluations decide about the continuation or curtailment of a project and about the future direction of a project. We draw on the following definition of *power*.

Power is the ability of individuals, or the members of a group, to achieve aims or further the interests they hold... How much power an individual or group is able to achieve governs how far they are able to put their wishes into practice at the expense of those of others (Giddens 1989: 729).

Following Giddens, power (a basic sociological concept) refers to relations within and between groups, between individuals. We would add that, when applied to the process of evaluation, power is structurally created and allocated.

3.2 Knowledge as a variable in Defining stakeholder

It is pertinent at this point to draw attention to the relationship between knowledge and power. Power is dependent on knowledge. In some views, the level of this dependence, for certain modalities of power, is currently greater than ever before (Fairclough 1989). Evaluation, on the other hand, is about generating knowledge, whether general or specific, and, as such, has its own power. This power is greatest where the findings or knowledge derived from

evaluation offer clear guidance to specific stakeholders about future action or where *information for prediction is information for control*-not forgetting, however, that some information/knowledge is not useful or is rejected by those in power (Patton 1997: 348-350). The relationship between knowledge and power suggests why those who hold power may tend to resist the process of evaluation activities: change in the conduct of the evaluation may lead to the restructuring of power within or between organisations.

If the exercise of power is about furthering group or individual interests, and stakeholder groups can be defined by interest, then it appears to be worthwhile to explore interest and power relations as parameters if one wishes to understand stakeholder relations and perspectives. This definition of power makes it clear that power may be relative and may depend on the ability of stakeholders to control the actions of others - regardless of whether the ability to control is ascribed or achieved. It is this experience of power that may also underlie the sense of disempowerment evident in the rejection of outsider evaluation cited above.

3.3 Knowledge, power and interest as variables in defining stakeholders

The exploratory nature of this work will become evident in the discussion that follows, particularly as it becomes increasingly evident that both *interest* and *power* are perhaps more complex than might *prima facie* appear to be the case. In an early stage of our empirical investigation into the notion that an

understanding of power relations might illuminate stakeholder perspectives in evaluation, we considered a number of potential areas where relative power and different interests might come into play. These are:

Knowledge	About the project and about project evaluation
Expertise	Relevant to the project and to evaluation
Control	Power to initiate or stop action and participation
Budget control	Power to take decisions about spending
Responsibility	Recognition of the individual's/group's power and potential to affect others
Benefits	As symbols of individual power and as potential to advance (an increase in one's own knowledge and skills, for example)
Loyalty	Individuals may have more than one loyalty, but the direction of loyalty may change (as when, for example, one becomes integrated into a team). Loyalty in groups also has the potential to influence outcomes.
Status	Position within a hierarchy, or origin of a group or individual
Distance	Degree of acceptance of another's right to take decisions or benefit personally

We also arrived at three propositions about stakeholder perspectives which we proposed to *testas* we examined data:

1. Stakeholder perspectives defined by power relations offer more insights into evaluations than definitions based on job or position.
2. Stakeholder perspectives defined by power relations will have greater explanatory potential than considerations of cross-cultural differences when examining and understanding reactions to evaluation or an evaluation.
3. Understanding stakeholder perspectives will enable us to plan and organise evaluations more effectively, and to promote a greater and better use of their findings.

The first proposition should be self-evident in the light of the preceding discussion. The second proposition is relevant in development, and derives from an earlier study suggesting that the existence of an evaluation culture reveals more about the utilisation of evaluation than attempts to explain utilisation through cross-cultural difference (Murphy 1997). The third proposition follows from the first two and would therefore be true for any approach.

4 Stakeholder perspectives

Our data come from an as yet small number of interviews and questionnaire responses from representatives of different stakeholder groups, which include funding agencies, evaluators, project managers and teachers. Other data used come from project reports and field notes of our own, and these were used in deriving the above list of areas. For reasons of space we will not give any more details about the design of the survey. Also, the categories considered here do not include all those which have been previously listed because we do not have adequate data to justify those which have been omitted.

4.1 Knowledge about the project or the evaluation is expressed in a number of ways.

You need workshops to get people involved and so they can understand.

This quote from an evaluation contractor identifies professional knowledge as a precondition for getting stakeholders involved, that is, being able to exercise power. It is an interest of the contractor to get this to happen and the contractor's belief is that it will promote ownership and favour project sustainability. The simultaneous passing on of control and responsibility is not perceived as a threat, a point which seems to support Guba and Lincoln's (1989: 267) idea that power is not to be shared out in a restructuring that aims to empower, but grown (new power is created).

The consultative nature of the partnership made acceptance of evaluation by local stakeholders easier.

This remark by a project stakeholder after an evaluation suggests that open communication about knowledge where the stakeholders are information users (cf. Patton 1997) means that the latter are more likely to use their power to utilise the evaluation. Their power, in addition, has been acknowledged. The following remark from the contractor supports this line of procedure, presumably because the expectation is that it responds to the interests of more stakeholders and encourages them to use their power:

I'd like all parties to understand the nature of evaluation, to have seen the TORs, to have had a hand in drawing them up, know who its for, what's to be done, what the implications are. It should be an open relationship.

Such comments beg the further question as to the nature of the consultation, involvement and partnership. To what extent is this realised through mere information exchange? To what extent are the participants in an evaluation actually enfranchised or empowered by the process? To what extent are they in a position to influence events at the various stages of an evaluation process? This in turn raises questions about the nature of *expertise*.

4.2 Expertise includes dimensions of learning and understanding, and

these issues were raised by several respondents.

PE [Partnership Evaluation] is meant to be a positive experience for both sides, and a learning experience

Everyone involved should be learning, because there is shared ownership...

There is a trade off between learning to evaluate and quality of conclusions.

Each group learned from the other.

How about building in some kind of attachment that will allow the Fifo [fly-in fly-out evaluator] to work with/train personnel?

These observations from three stakeholder groups – contractor, evaluation manager, evaluation participant – reinforce the perception that *learning to evaluate* is important and that it empowers those who learn (Kiely *et al* 1995, Murphy 1996). Comment (3) – from an evaluator contractually engaged in carrying out an evaluation – introduces the inevitable tension between the *learning* process on the one hand and the dimension of *accountability* on the other.

At this point, we may ask, *At the end of the day, which is more important: the learning or the integrity and quality of the evaluation findings and report?*

These are not easy questions to answer and clearly concern different stakeholder interests. Nonetheless, if we find ourselves working in a climate of partnership evaluations, then greater clarity about our own accountability relationships (as evaluators) with a funding agency and/or with the project community is required. This clarity is crucial for all stakeholders involved, since different interests need to be identified and satisfied.

4.3 Consideration of issues of control

Consideration of control raises questions about the conditions that would need to be in place in order for some balance of control to operate amongst the participants in an evaluation.

The period of serious work by locals should be included in their annual work targets.

Time is a constraint. School time is strictly for teaching and little is spent on evaluation of projects.

The points raised here are expressed as concern with time and they link with issues about levels of responsibility, extent of involvement and, presumably, ownership. In our terms, the issue here is about power - the power to act -

because, at present, someone else's power to oblige these people to do other things apparently precludes their involvement in evaluation.

4.4 Consideration of status

Status is defined here in terms of an individual's position in a hierarchy - project, ministry or institution. The comments we gathered were very much to do with evaluators' status and mode of operating, in other words, how they exercise their power:

At one end of the scale there were evaluators who were a bit dictatorial while at the other end there were those who were empathetic.

This, of course, suggests the need to consider power style because this respondent is referring to experience in one project with different evaluators.

With reference to *experienced* and *more senior teachers* the following was mentioned:

Lots can be improved, tapped from focused discussions.

The evaluator should, in fact, get these teachers to reflect on what they have been doing and to evaluate themselves.

There is a strain created so it becomes a one-way discussion thereafter.

I would recommend that evaluation findings be effected in a way that will be beneficial to the project...

What emerges from these data is that, unsurprisingly, there are differences of interest between the stakeholder groups and, again, a perception of those with higher status using their power in ways which are not accepted. These respondents, in other words, do not accept the implied power distance.

In terms of project management and promoting dialogue within an evaluation framework, it would appear there are indications here that insights can be gained from gathering information about the different prevailing interests and power relations in order to understand the stakeholders' various perspectives. Alongside the differences there are themes of concern to more than one target group. These are tentative conclusions as much more work needs to be done to develop critical examination of the three propositions. Interestingly, however, the majority of issues raised in our data so far do have implications for the ways in which evaluations, in particular partnership evaluations, are managed. We now conclude with some of these implications.

5 Implications for managing evaluation

The ideas we list here are not new, and have appeared before in discussions of the principles of educational management and of managing evaluation (e.g. Aspinwall *et al* 1992, Everard & Morris 1996). The only value we would claim for revisiting them afresh while doing participatory evaluations is just that they come with new empirical support. We suggest that evaluators planning to do participatory research should:

- plan for open communication.
- define what partnership evaluation is to mean in the context.
- put power/responsibility at the level where decisions will be most effectively taken.
- resource time to learn to evaluate and to participate in evaluations.

To this list we propose tentatively to add that evaluators should:

- identify stakeholder interests.
- identify power relations between stakeholder groups.

Footnote

1. This perception of the situation appears to be limited since there is a lot of evidence to counter such a rosy interpretation of the scene – through talking to senior figures rather than practitioners (Mthembu 1996).

3.2 Considering the audience - an important phase in project evaluations

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This paper refers to an aspect of evaluations that often tends to be glossed over in the evaluation process – the *audience* of the evaluation. The paper emphasises how important it is for evaluators to give consideration to the audience or audiences for whom the evaluation is intended. The authors interrogate the complexities associated with notions of the *audience* and argue that differing interests and differing statuses as well as differing power relations are inherent to the conception of *audience*. For this reason, the paper argues that the identification of, and consideration for, the audience/s is central to notions of practical utility of an evaluation and to the compilation of evaluation reports.

The authors argue that the evaluation of any project involves people with differing roles and people who make different contributions. These

differences imply differences in status, interests and in the power to act on or control what is done in the project, what is done in the evaluation, what is contained in the evaluation report and what recommendations are implemented.

By way of contextualising their argument, the authors draw on critical incidences pertaining to the audience/s which are manifested in the evaluation of the **Colombian Framework for English (COFE) project**, an INSET programme involving twenty-six universities and implying numerous inherent audiences.

Finally, the paper concludes with suggestions on how to approach an evaluation by taking the reality of *audience/s* into account.

1 The complex nature of the audience/s

Project impact evaluations take place in a variety of specific settings such as an organisation or community. In an organisation, the evaluation may be as small as a single class of students or it may be significantly larger and involve a grouping of universities at a national level. Similarly, in communities, evaluations may measure the impact of a project on, for example, a small group of women. Or, on a more complex level, evaluations may involve an investigation which resembles a national census in all its complexity and with all its accompanying participants. What is common to evaluations is that all

involve people who have different roles in the project or programme in question.

The broad-ranging differences among participants may raise questions like: *For whom is the evaluation?* and *Who wants it?* There is presumably someone who is commissioning or requesting the evaluation. This furthermore begs the question: *Whose interests are furthered by the evaluation?*

- Funders will want to know if project goals have been achieved and to what extent the project represented *value for money*.
- Project planners may want to know how well their ideas translated into action, and what adjustments should be made.
- Teachers, who have developed teaching material, will want to know how appropriate the project materials really are.
- Students will want to know how well they performed prior to a project, and to what extent their performance improved as a result of the intervention.

What are accepted ways of identifying and serving these different groups?

In order to attempt to answer this, we shall briefly describe specific project evaluations which highlighted questions pertaining to the audience/s and their

attendant methodologies. An attempt will be made to explore ways of dealing with different groups or audiences in evaluating projects, and then to indicate how the notion of audience was dealt with (or could have been dealt with) at different stages of the evaluation.

2 The context of this paper

The **Colombian Framework for English (COFE)** project ran for five years as a bilateral project which aimed to update the English language teaching programmes for teachers. The project focused on both initial and in-service training for teachers of English in Colombia, South America. It involved twenty-six universities, and built in a component of training in Britain for almost all members of staff from the participating institutions. In addition, **COFE** conducted several seminars and training workshops and arranged teacher exchanges within Colombia. Seventeen resource centres were set up across the country to support the project and the teaching of English in general.

The **COFE** project was subjected to three evaluations in the course of the project's lifespan. The first evaluation of the project was undertaken by the Ministry of Education in 1994. The second, in 1995, was undertaken by the then

ODA, and the third, by the Ministry of Education in 1996. Generally, the participants in the institutions tended to equate evaluations with *supervision* or

inspection. Ministries, as was the case in the **COFE** project, tended to conceptualise evaluation narrowly as measurement of outputs against stated goals and tended not to give much consideration to the qualitative spin-offs of the project.

After an introductory training course which was designed to teach project players why and how to carry out an evaluation, this perception seemed to change. All the UK-trained lecturers received some basic training in carrying out evaluations, and one group, in 1994, initiated a small-scale evaluation in five universities (see Murphy 1994). Thereafter, in 1996, the final year of the project, an *insider* evaluation was undertaken by project participants. This evaluation was intended to assess the impact of the **COFE** on participating universities.

The group completed its work in 1997 and prepared various audience-specific reports for DFID, the Colombian Association of Universities (ASCUN), the Ministry of Education and also for the participating universities. This meant that, in its first, large-scale evaluation, the evaluation team had to deal with a variety of different audiences.

3 The notion of audience

When we consider how little attention the concept of *audience* receives, it would appear that the idea of *audience* in project evaluations is either taken

for granted or (for most of the time) is relegated to the realm of the insignificant.

Audiences, it seems, are often identified with stakeholders (see Murphy & Rea-Dickins in this volume). In such cases, the range may include students in a class, their teachers, project planners, funders, university authorities, ministries (in two countries in an international project), employers, and even the taxpayers whose taxes pay for the project. One or more grouping from this list may be identified as the audience/s, and as *the people* who should receive the findings of the evaluation in the report prepared by the evaluators (Lynch 1996: 3). In spite of such an assumption, there does not appear to be any grounded categories for what constitutes an audience or who should be assigned the status of an audience grouping. In fact, as Freeman and Rossi (1993: 408) point out, very little is known about how evaluation audiences are formed, identified or activated.

A very general and fairly frequently used form of categorisation distinguishes between *primary* and *secondary* audiences (Sanders 1997: 398).

Although the *primary audience* includes teachers and other project staff, as well as students. Sanders (1997: 398) points out that there are few examples of students actually receiving evaluation reports.

The *secondary audience* includes administrative staff, other teachers who are

not involved in the project, and, in Sanders's view, at least the sponsors or funding body. The sponsors or funding body are in fact the audience most likely to commission evaluation, while teachers may constitute the audience who are most likely to be affected by the project.

Once an audience has been identified, or has identified itself by commissioning the evaluation, consultation with the audience should determine the goals of the evaluation (Lynch 1996: 3). Obviously, different audiences are likely to have different goals and interests and these will have consequences for how the evaluation is to be conducted. The number of audiences may make it impossible for all identified audiences to be considered as either recipients or shapers of the evaluation. This consideration underlies the necessity to recognise that there are practical limitations on how far an evaluator may go in identifying and in taking account of the range of interests of different audiences. Guba and Lincoln (1989: 202) suggest that a more precise way of identifying primary and secondary audiences may be to select audiences according to their relative stake in the project. The danger inherent in this view is that *audience* may be perceived as comprising amorphous groups which are assembled in predetermined categories. Patton (1997: 43) cautions against this. He suggests rather that evaluators will need to build up trust and rapport with the *individual* members of an audience grouping as people - and not simply as an organisation or group.

Patton (1997: 43) proposes that *audience* must be seen as *potential users* of

the evaluation. This emphasises the need for the evaluator to understand the politics and values underlying the project. He/she should encourage potential users to speak for themselves, especially where the evaluator is an inappropriate advocate (Patton 1997: 365). If we accept Patton's suggestion that *potential users* of a report constitute the *audience*, it makes sense to distinguish between audiences identified as users of the evaluation and audiences to whom the evaluation report will be disseminated.

Since audiences identified as users of the evaluation are the primary audience, they may be considered primary users. As such, they should receive the primary attention of the evaluator. On the other hand, the audiences to whom the evaluation report will be disseminated, the *recipients* of the report, are unlikely to *use* the report and should, in terms of this dichotomy, receive less consideration from the evaluators.

It follows from this that a proper appreciation of the notion of *audience* in evaluations could minimise the high number of un-used, dust-gathering reports that abound. There are too many examples of groups who receive reports, but who do not use the results or who do not pay attention to recommendations. The reasons for this may be attributed to the inappropriacy of the evaluation for its audience.

4 The audience/s in the COFE evaluation

Because the **COFE**¹ project was so huge, there were many different groups of stakeholders who expressed an interest in the evaluation. As was suggested earlier in this document, stakeholder interests may have been attributable to their different interests in project outcomes, their different involvements, the different timing of their involvement, their varying commitment to the project or, even, to some or other hidden political agenda. Indeed, all the different interest groupings mentioned in this list could not be treated as one homogenous audience. While each group represents a stakeholder grouping with an involvement in the project, it is possible that each group represents a different *audience* which has different interests. This certainly creates difficulties for evaluators. Firstly, as indicated above, evaluators are cautioned against simply conflating stakeholders with audience. Patton's (1997) distinction might be usefully applied here - to distinguish between *users* and *recipients* of evaluation reports.

The following section will illustrate how, in the process of the **COFE** evaluation, an assortment of interest groupings were dealt with (or in some cases overlooked) by the group of insider evaluators. The discussion explores the extent to which the evaluators gave consideration to the notion of audience and it will examine the extent to which their sense of audience affected their decisions and actions.

5 Planning the COFE evaluation

Having made the decision to undertake a **COFE** evaluation *with a difference*, the *insider* evaluators encountered a number of difficulties which they retrospectively attributed to the following reasons. Firstly, they indicated that this was the first exercise in which the participants had been required to work together as an evaluation group. This meant that the evaluators had to learn to work together as an evaluation team (as opposed merely to being project participants). Secondly, the evaluators came from different cities and from different universities. This fact brought with it all the problems that are associated with proximity. Thirdly, since several of the evaluators had had no previous experience of carrying out evaluations, they experienced certain difficulties with the process.

What follows is a discussion of a series of problems that the group encountered as they tried to identify the audience/s. The group's problems arose out of the fact that they failed to recognise the significance inherent in the variety of the various audiences whose interests the evaluation was designed to address. Initially, the evaluation team considered the universities to be their only audience. The team had been unaware from the outset that it would have to also report to the Ministry, DFID and ASCUN. The *For whom?* question had not been considered in sufficient detail! When the sense of audience eventually began to impact on their decision-making, they began to believe that the report could be *slanted in* various ways to suit the needs of the different audiences.

Even before they began to focus on the audience, the evaluation team had omitted to consult the *primary* audiences to ascertain their expectations of the investigation. The group of evaluators considered that their task was simply to investigate and report on the impact of the project in the universities. They underestimated the complexity of the task and so were unready for the many problems with which they were faced.

As with all academics, they were restricted by the usual constraints of time. In addition to the evaluation, each member had his/her regular work to contend with - a matter compounded by the difficulties of attempting to communicate across continents and across the country. Even the local academics were scattered over a large geographical area. The problem of proximity was compounded by one of the criterion for selecting members of the evaluation team, namely that they had to be collectively representative of the different regions of the country. This, it was believed, would forestall the problem of having a report from the capital city being imposed on the rest of the country. While this was an important consideration for ensuring that the report would be credible in the eyes of its (acknowledged) university audience, it nevertheless created additional difficulties. In addition, after ensuring representativeness, the group were under immense pressure to get on and report.

The evaluation began in the absence of adequate consideration of who the audience/s might be. In the midst of these difficulties, there was another

problem: the evaluation did not allow or create the opportunity to clarify the expectations of the different audiences. Nor indeed did the evaluators take into account the kind of report which potential audiences might have expected. The group pointed out that they also had no clarity about any particular aspects of content that potential audiences might have wanted to see emphasised. One such example of this kind of limitation was the subsequent discovery (after the report had been disseminated in the Ministry) that the Ministry had actually wanted more information about the impact pertaining to INSET. By the time this request was received, it was already too late to gather the required information - information that would have had serious implications for the sustainability of the project².

In the process of the investigation³, other audiences came to the fore. It was found, for example, that the various universities had identified themselves as constituting an important *audience*, and that they all wanted reports on their performance. When the universities requests were considered, a wide variety of trends were discerned. Because their requests were so divergent, it was impossible to categorise the universities as one homogeneous audience. In fact, what the evaluators had initially perceived as a homogenous group was revealed to be a category with a large number of different needs and concerns.

For example, one similarity among universities was that they all wanted to

receive a report on their performance. On closer consideration, it was found that some wanted the information *immediately*. Others were genuinely interested in the impact the programme would make on all universities. Yet other universities wanted to know where *they* stood in relation to their fellow universities: they wanted a comparative league table. In such cases, these institutions saw themselves as competitors rather than as participants in the **COFE** project.

It was retrospectively felt that the evaluation team could *not* have gathered the information needed or reported on the wide range of information wanted by the diverse audiences - simply because the needs and expectations of the different audiences were so great. This led the evaluation team to wonder whether it was indeed *possible* to work simultaneously for so many audiences.

6 Reporting the evaluation

The final stage of the process was the reporting stage. During this stage, the evaluation group was forcibly made conscious of the differences between its audiences. What was it to say to each of them? How would the group of evaluators say what they needed to say? How much could the group claim on the basis of its findings? It proved necessary and useful to have guidance from a consultant at this stage.

The dissemination once again meant that the evaluation team was confronted

by a number of complexities pertaining to the different audiences. This problem may have been partly attributable to the fact that the evaluation group was made up of academics who were required to report to civil servants in the Ministry, and to foreign civil servants in DFID. The evaluators' backgrounds were very different from those of its audience. This was an obstacle which the evaluation team could have overcome had they not ignored an initial suggestion to include someone from the Ministry in the evaluation team. The academics had initially felt that this would not be necessary - a consideration informed by the traditional rivalry between officials and academics (apart from being an attempt, on the part of the team members, to maintain the general equilibrium of the team by not bringing in outsiders).

It was in this stage of the project that the Ministry made it clear that while it was gratified to hear that the project had achieved effected various changes and improvements in pre-service education, this was not actually the outcome about which they wanted to hear. They were more interested in the impact of the project on INSET.

were not addressed in the final document.

7 Lessons learned: Some recommendations for taking audience into account

If one looks back on the experience, hindsight makes it easy to make a number of recommendations about how one might take the audience of an evaluation into an account.

The following suggestions might help evaluators to do just that.

- Identify the audience or audiences during the *conceptualisation* stage of the evaluation.
- Limit the number of audiences for the evaluation to a number which can actually be managed. Do not attempt to focus on too many audiences. You cannot please all audiences at once.
- Identify *primary* audiences because they are potential end-users of the evaluation.
- Wherever possible or appropriate, include representatives of the audience in the evaluation team.
- Consult the audience at an early stage so as to gain an

understanding of its expectations and requirements. Negotiate your intentions with them so as to broaden their concept of what an evaluation is.

- Get the audience to identify criteria for the evaluation (you may add to these or modify them with the audience). This may also help you determine more specific goals for the evaluation than you have or were given initially.
- A stronger sense of audience will help you to develop more appropriate instruments and questions.
- Disseminate interim reports to the audiences.
- Ask for comments on draft reports and use these to check the acceptability and usefulness of the report. Do not, however, be bullied into falsifying or *toning down* what you understand to be the truth.
- Remember that your audience may not see itself as one grouping. It is up to you to give it a sense of self.

6 Conclusion

When one examines the concept of audience, and the experience of a group

of novice evaluators with regard to audience, it becomes evident that evaluators cannot afford to take audiences for granted. Consideration of who comprises the audience, and what these people want, is important for the utility of the evaluation on which you will expend a huge amount of energy.

Footnote:

1. As far as we know, there is no history of evaluation being conducted in the field of education in Colombia as is described in this article.
2. Sustainability was a concept which seemed to interest most members of the groups.
3. This was the stage during which the evaluation group met the subjects from one of its audiences during the process of piloting its survey questions. It was in this stage that the evaluation team got its first sense of audience.

3.3 Impact studies and their audiences

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This paper considers the variety of audiences that are implied by multi-partnered projects and explores reasons why they are thought of as recipients for the project report. The paper considers various issues pertaining to the dissemination of the report, such as: Who writes such a report? Who reads it? In what language is it produced? How is it disseminated? Each of these questions is addressed in relation to the **ODA ELT Project: Nicaragua**, which was implemented between March 1993 and July 1996.

The project was collaborative and involved a wide range of potential audiences, including the ODA and three Nicaraguan institutions: the Ministry of Education, The National Autonomous University of Nicaragua and the University of Central America. The project was intended to upgrade the teaching of English in secondary schools and to assist with the development of INSET and PRESET in the universities and the Ministry of Education. The paper describes how contentious it may be to compile and disseminate impact reports.

1 Introduction

When impact studies and evaluation reports are produced, their reception gives rise to a number of problems. Who writes such reports? Who reads them? In what language has it been produced? How is it being disseminated?

The purpose of this paper is not to address all of these issues in detail, but merely to indicate the kind of complexities inherent in dissemination by indicating the varied audiences that are implicit when Impact Study reports are produced. The basis for the discussion will be the dissemination of the Impact Study report for the **ODA ELT Project: Nicaragua**. In this paper, we shall look at the audiences for the report, the way in which these audiences received the report, and the form in which they received its message.

2. Issues pertaining to reporting to a variety of audiences

There are a number of general issues which recur throughout this discussion. We do not intend to give the impression that we have any definitive answers to these issues - nor indeed that they might ever require answers of that kind. But we have realised just how important issues such as these may be. We also believe that precisely such issues need to be considered when reports on impact assessment are drawn up. The issues that we will consider in this paper are:

- the authorship of the report
- the language in which the report is produced

- access to the report
- the delivery of the report
- the form in which it is delivered.

We will begin by addressing the issues of the authorship of the report and the language in which it was produced (in this particular case).

2.1 The authorship of reports

It is usually assumed that project coordinators will write the report (if they are British native speakers of English). This often happens merely because the authorship is described in those terms in the project memorandum. This, however, may not necessarily happen. Thus, for example, in a recent Impact Study undertaken in Romania, the report was written by the Romanian team in two languages - English and Romanian.

In the case of the Nicaraguan project, the outsiders were able to facilitate the writing of the report and the smooth running of the project. Several members of the project team felt that the introduction of people from outside the context had provided a catalyst for cooperative work among the main stakeholders.

For a number of years mutual mistrust had existed among the principal players, namely the universities and the Ministry of Education. At the same time, however, all the stakeholders realised that there would be mutual

benefits if all concerned could work together, and so they had searched for ways to bring this about (despite a discouraging previous history of non-cooperation).

To achieve their aims, the stakeholders made it a deliberate strategy to bring in people from the outside who might have the skills to facilitate this process. The **ODA ELT Project** represented neutral ground, and the presence of *Cheles* (the Nicaraguan name for foreigners - literally meaning *blondies*) helped the process to get off the ground. At the beginning of the project, the foreigners often acted as go-betweens. This also meant that the *Cheles* had degrees of access, both for the general purposes of the project and for the collection of impact data, that local people sometimes did not have, and this facilitated the production of the Impact Study report.

2.2 The language of the reports

The language used to write such a report is an important issue, especially if no common language is shared by all participants, sponsors and stakeholders. Language affects both the production of the report and the way in which it reaches its audiences.

The **ODA ELT Project: Nicaragua** report was produced in English. Two British project coordinators wrote the report. Although were able to speak Spanish, they could not write sufficiently well in Spanish to produce a report

that was acceptable to Spanish first-language speakers. This was a potential obstacle to some members of the audience since Spanish was the first language of all the Nicaraguan participants, with the exception of one or two who had been born, or had lived at some stage on the Atlantic coast (in an English-speaking area). But even such people often possessed a far greater proficiency in reading and writing Spanish than English.

The fact that the coordinators were English-speakers was one of the major reasons why the report was produced in English, but it was not the only one. The structure of the project was such that there were no full-time Nicaraguan members; trainers were incorporated at particular times (as, for example, for training workshops and for intensive courses). Thus, although some twenty people were involved in the assessment, they all worked full-time for their institution and consequently did not have the necessary time to dedicate to analysing data and writing up findings. Although some capacity for producing such a report had been developed (five team members were writing dissertations based on topics that were related to the project), none of these members could afford the time required to write the impact assessment report. As a result, the only full-time members of the team who were available and able to write the report were the project coordinators.

A second issue was that it was necessary to build up the capacity to produce research in English in the country. There was a dearth of ELT research in Nicaragua, and what existed had been produced in Spanish.

The shortage of local research into ELT was enhanced by the baseline study of the project which had been produced by the British project coordinators and by a number of other shorter research papers. At last there existed an English-language body of research into ELT in Nicaragua.¹

Thirdly, the use of English in English classes as the main language of instruction in secondary schools (rather than only Spanish) was one of the main goals of the project. Hence producing the report in English was seen as part of the promotion of English throughout the English teaching and learning community.

Fourthly, the main project sponsor was the ODA (as it was then known), and it was unclear as to whether the ODA would have accepted a report in Spanish. For the reasons outlined above, the report was produced in English.²

2.3 The audiences for the Impact Study

It was intended from the outset that the Impact Study report would not be an internal ODA document but rather that it would be public and open to all involved in the project and beyond. We shall now consider the main audiences for the Impact Study, and how they were reached.

2.3.1 The host institutions

Two major universities, the University of Central America (UCA), the Autonomous National University of Nicaragua (UNAN), and the Ministry of Education (MED) were the main Nicaraguan sponsors of the project. There were representatives of these institutions on the steering committee of the project, which had been established six months after its initiation. The committee was kept informed during regular project steering committee meetings of the progress of the research, both collectively in committee meetings, and individually, on an *ad hoc* basis. Of the steering committee, a sizeable number could speak and read English although several others had little or no ability to speak English. For this reason, all steering committee meetings were always conducted in Spanish. Since the British counterparts were all fluent in Spanish, conducting all meetings in Spanish was not a problem. However, when it came to the stage of writing the reports, the intention to write in English gave rise to several problems.

As the main report took some time to write (especially since project activities were continuing), it was necessary to produce some form of interim report for committee members. It was neither logistically possible nor financially feasible to produce a report in Spanish, as translation is very expensive in Nicaragua, and, in addition, it takes a great deal of time. The solution decided upon by the project coordinators was to produce a *digest* of the main findings.

A summary of the findings comprising about 20 pages, mostly in graphic form, was produced. Some of the members could read English, but for those who could not and indeed for those who had neither the time nor the desire to read the report in full, this seemed the best solution. Although this report contained minimal text, it included lots of charts and graphs which graphically depicted the findings, and there were, in addition, glossaries with explanations in Spanish. The report was then discussed in committee, and any questions concerning the results were addressed.

Each institution subsequently received a copy of the main report, but the short graphic report was most effective for many people - mainly because it could be read in a short time, was not too dependent on language, and could easily be discussed in a meeting.

This summary report (rather than the full report) was used as the basis for discussions about future plans for sustainable activity after support from the ODA had ceased, even though the main report was available if necessary.

2.3.2 Trainers

The direct beneficiaries of the project were intended to be, *firstly*, the teacher trainers at the two main universities, and, *secondly*, the

majority of teachers in secondary schools. A team of 20 Nicaraguan trainers was involved in the research process, and they were constantly consulted about the general progress of the research. These trainers all spoke and read English, and so language did not pose a problem. Although it was made available to all, most of the trainers did not have the time to read the report in its entirety, and they therefore also found that the shorter document was extremely convenient.

After the main Impact Study report had been finished, a copy was distributed to the institutions and was then discussed in meetings. It was read by trainers in both its abridged and full-length forms. Although those who intended to do further research into ELT read the full report, most of the others found the abridged report far more convenient. Every trainer received a copy of the short report and a number of copies of the main report were made available to the departments. This meant that if most people preferred to read the abridged version, they could do so - since each institution had a copy of the full report.

2.4 Teachers

In terms of ownership, it seems reasonable to suppose that the secondary school teachers, who were the intended beneficiaries of the project, should

receive a copy of the final Impact Study. It would, however, simply have been too difficult and too costly for this to occur, and other means were used to communicate the findings to these teachers. It was not intended that the research team should take decisions about access on behalf of these primary stakeholders. The decision was based on making the report as accessible as possible to those people who might be involved in activities contributing to the sustainability of the project. Although there was no bar on who might read the report in theory (since it was a public document), real access was often prohibited by circumstances. For example, it was unrealistic to expect that a teacher living in a small village in Nueva Segovia near to the Honduran border, and who could only be reached after quite a hazardous journey, would have easy or unlimited access to the report. It seemed reasonable, given the context, to find alternative ways to reach teachers.

Considering that more than 600 teachers in all parts of the country had in some way been reached by the project, it was not feasible, from a logistical or financial point of view, to distribute copies of the reports to all of them. Teachers who had received training through the project were often reached through the newsletter of the national association of English teachers (ANPI). Even the Ministry of Education found it difficult to reach many of the teachers in out-lying regions, and as much as the ministry attempted to facilitate communications with the teachers, this channel was never entirely satisfactory. A summary of the main findings was therefore included in the relevant edition of the ANPI newsletter. This seems to be one of the most

efficient channels of communication. There were also regular meetings with individual teachers to discuss the report.

2.5 ODA

ODA were the British sponsors of the project, and as such were the sponsors of the Impact Study. The main report was seen both in its draft form and in its completed form by the ODA. The results and observations it contained formed the basis for a review of the project. This was a participatory exercise involving the ODA education adviser and two members of the project team from two of the key institutions involved in the project.

Of possible importance to the ODA were issues of accountability, value for money, and sustainability. There were also indications at various times of a hope that the Impact Study might contribute to developing methodology for educational impact assessment in general. The education adviser used the Impact Study as a reference point for the project, and subjected it to a process of scrutiny by covering the same areas herself through discussions with stakeholders and target groups.

2.6 The British Embassy

The ODA project in Nicaragua was unusual for an ELT project because the in-country management was conducted through the British Embassy (there being

no British Council or any other similar organisation in Nicaragua). The British Ambassador was the line manager of the British project coordinators in-country. He himself had also been very active in the project as a member of the steering committee. Furthermore, in the year after the project had ended, he was placed in control of the British aid budget for Nicaragua and so wanted to see what kind of investment he might need to make in order to ensure sustainability. His interest, therefore, came from a number of angles: he was sponsor, manager, and project participant. It may also be possible that he felt the necessity to 'fly the flag' (diplomatically speaking) by showing what Britain had been doing in Nicaragua.

As with the ODA, the ambassador was shown the report at the draft stage and made comments, where relevant. He also received both forms of the report.

2.7 Lancaster University

Lancaster University had provided consultancy for the project in its initial planning stages and for the Impact Study itself. They were also the principal overseas training providers. They therefore had professional concerns about their effectiveness in these roles and also felt that the Impact Study would contribute to the development of a methodology for assessing impact.

Professor Charles Alderson provided consultancy which directly related to the

procedures and the production of the Impact Study, while John McGovern had provided some consultancy on the baseline study. Both consultants were kept informed of the process when the Impact Study was being carried out, and they both received a copy of the draft and the final report, as well as a copy of the short interim report. This they shared with the trainers and developers at the Institute for English Language Education (IELE).

2.8 Overseas Service Bureau and the Australian Personnel Services Overseas

Two NGO organisations, the Overseas Service Bureau (OSB) from Australia and the Personnel Services Overseas (APSO) of the Republic of Ireland had contributed teachers and trainers to the project, two of whom participated in the Impact Study research. The research was discussed with these representatives and with the personnel who had participated. A copy of the report was distributed to representatives.

The European Union (EU) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), who were prospective donors, were also informed of the activities and results of the project. It was hoped thereby that they might be persuaded to support an expansion of the project. They were considered to be recipients since the project team had hoped that it would expand to cover all the areas of the curriculum. For this reason, a summary of the results was distributed to them. This process eventually led to their funding a sector-wide education

programme, which was recently initiated. The coordinators of the programme are currently using the Impact Study to inform the structure of the EU programme.

2.9 ELT Professionals

Many different research groups, in particular the Management of Innovation in Language Education (MILE) research group at Lancaster University, have contributed to the process of bringing research of this kind into the public domain. The British Council also used the Impact Study report to compile a report on ELT in Central America.

Since there are many potential audiences for a study of this kind, it is important to consider how such audiences may be reached, the form in which the results of such of research can be disseminated, and how the messages contained in such reports are received by their various audiences.

3 Conclusion

This paper considers the variety of audiences that are implicit in the ODA Nicaragua ELT project. It argues that issues pertaining to the authorship, the language in which the report is written and the accessibility of the report are more complex than they may initially seem. What was hoped in this paper was to alert the reader to some of the pitfalls that may be encountered if the actual

reporting stage of an assessment fails to take potential audiences into consideration.

Footnote:

1. The impact study is also now being used as material for analysis in the Methodology courses in the new TEFL programme at UCA Also about five master's dissertations pertaining to the project have been carried out.
2. The line management of the project was the British Ambassador who could read Spanish.



[Home](#) > [ar](#).[cn](#).[de](#).[en](#).[es](#).[fr](#).[id](#).[it](#).[ph](#).[po](#).[ru](#).[sw](#)



4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATIONAL AND EXTERNAL

[4.1 A note on a participatory impact study in Eritrea: exploring the relations between national and external researchers](#)

[4.2 The relationships between national researchers and external researchers](#)

[4.3 Impact studies: the role of an insider/outsider](#)

[4.4 Impact assessment in educational projects: some perspectives on the 'insider outsider' debate](#)

4.1 A note on a participatory impact study in Eritrea: exploring the relations between national and external researchers

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In this note on a participatory impact assessment undertaken in Eritrea, Tefsai Bariaghaber describes some of the *highs* and *lows* of the experience. He begins his paper by outlining how the *scene was set* for the impact assessment to proceed. He points out that the mutual sharing of ideas and the collaborative planning of the research process confers many benefits on local and external researchers. He then also describes examples of problems that arise when the external research team departs.

The problems he describes are mostly attributable to the geographic separation of the two teams - a factor that causes frustration in local players who feel that they have lost their stake in the ownership of the assessment project. As a result of the separation, local players are not able to contribute ideas or recommendations that they might have arrived at through their post-research discussions and reflection.

Bariaghaber suggests that local researchers would benefit from a more sustained stay by external researchers in the local country. This undoubtedly would answer to some extent the questions about ownership. He also indicates that a more lengthy stay would contribute to the development of the data processing capacity of local researchers - a need which, he indicates, ought to be addressed.

The paper concludes with Bariaghaber's contention that collaborative research benefits both internal and external researchers. Thus, for example, he suggests that the external researchers would not have had the easy access they enjoyed had they attempted to proceed independently of local players.

1 Introduction

My experience of the Eritrean project impact assessment and other local field research leads me to believe that a participatory research approach is the

most effective way of assessing impact. The **Eritrean Impact Study** clearly demonstrated that the participation of local researchers and their consequential interaction with external researchers created benefits and learning opportunities for both local and external teams.

The two teams participated in the planning stages and jointly produced an appropriate research design. This activity was squarely based on our agreement about our central purpose, which was to ascertain whether or not the project had accomplished its aims. Although collaboration was one of the main factors that influenced the relations between the local/national researchers and their external counterparts, different perceptions and expectations of the project on the part of the two groups of researchers created different expectations about the ultimate aims of the project.

Because local and external researchers were somewhat at variance about what might constitute an optimal research design and adequate goals, and because both parties were motivated by differing perceptions and motivations, this variance of opinion and purposes inevitably influenced both the design of the instruments and the research agenda. This, however, in no way detracted from the benefits of collaboration. In contrast, one might argue that the differences actually enriched the ultimate research design as well as the final report.

2 Setting the scene

The arrival of external researchers for the assessment study conducted in Eritrea was met with enthusiasm and was welcomed by Eritrea's Ministry of Education. For the duration of the research exercise, the relationship between the national research team and the external researchers was harmonious, understanding and cooperative. This positive relationship between the two teams was evident from the moment the external team arrived. In their initial interactions, the external team orientated the local team about what they were hoping to achieve during their stay in the country by describing the technical details of the process. The local team responded to these briefings by outlining their hopes, expectations and plans for the project. After much discussion and a fruitful exchange of ideas, both teams were able to reach agreement about a framework for the project.

This initial orientation was crucial since it formed the cornerstone of a positive relationship between the two sides. The researcher considers such mutual interaction to be an the essential part of any process of this kind because it affords both sides the opportunities to exchange ideas about *what* and *how* things will be done. Although initial bonding between the two teams was strong, their harmonious relationship was unfortunately complicated in the latter stages of the process and this caused several difficulties. The difficulties that arose were the following:

2.1 Geographical separation



After our initial orientation, the local research team moved back to the sites of the research (i.e. back to the schools) while the external researchers returned to their home country. This geographical separation unfortunately created a break in continuity between the two teams of researchers. What the local team had hoped for was continuous cooperation and immediate feedback. Instead, feedback was delayed and the separation resulted in a number of associated problems.

2.2 Lack of communication

Another factor which is associated with geographical separation and which influenced the relationship between local and external researchers was that the two teams of researchers were not able to interact and hence were unable to exchange ideas about emerging problems and other factors that influenced the work of the project as it progressed. Thus, for example, when local researchers thought of new categories or ideas that they felt might enhance the research, they were unable to test such ideas with the external

researchers. Certainly, the communications in Eritrea were such that it was not easy to incorporate any new components into the research process after the external researchers had departed.

2.3 Lack of capacity building

Local researchers in developing countries often tend to rely on external partners to assist with the development of local capacity. This was one of the expectations that the local team had entertained – but because of the separation, was not achieved. The local team, for example, felt unable to cope as well as they would have liked during the data processing stage of the project. By the time the project entered this phase, the external consultants had already left for home. The local researchers had recognised their need to develop the capacity for data processing – especially with regard to the tabulation of information and the categorisation of items during the data collecting process.

When problems began to emerge at this stage, the local researchers realised that the external researchers could have made a decisive contribution by helping to enlarge the skills base of the locals, and that this contribution might radically have affected the quality of the intended results. Because the national research team was limited in their understanding of the theoretical basis of data analysis, it would have made all the difference in the world if the British team had been able to stay longer in Eritrea. If they had been able to stay,

they could have helped local researchers to gain competence and confidence in the theory and practice of data analysis at this crucial stage This would have yielded better results and more meaningful recommendations in the final report, and the impact assessment might also have contributed to sustainability.

3 Conclusion

Although this paper outlines some of the problems inherent in the relationship between internal and external researchers, it is nevertheless clear that we, as local researchers, were able to experience many of the benefits that arise out of the process of participatory research - in spite of the difficulties engendered by the problems (the chief of which was the premature – in our view – separation of the two teams of researchers).

The participatory approach is extremely beneficial to national researchers because it gives them the chance to refine their knowledge of research methods and techniques Because it does this, it contributes to the development of local human resources On the other hand, the process surely also benefits visiting researchers because it enables them to gain easy access to the local context Indeed, it is my contention that this *process of immersion* in local culture (a consequence of participatory research and collaboration with the local team) benefits external researchers long after they have left the original site of research activities.

4.2 The relationships between national researchers and external researchers

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Senior Education Adviser
Centre for British Teachers

In this paper, Harvey Smith and Paul Bennel consider some of the issues pertaining to the relationships of collaboration between local researchers and external consultants. The paper draws on the experience of the DFID-funded **English Language Teaching (ELT) Impact Studies** undertaken in Angola and Eritrea. Both projects endeavoured to assess the impact of ELT projects funded by DFID, and involved teams of local researchers who were trained and supported by three external consultants. Smith proceeds with a discussion of a series of conceptual and practical project issues that impact on the relationship between internal and external researchers.

Against the background of these issues, they grapple with ownership-type problems that researchers may encounter. The first relates to the difficulty of finding the right balance between local ownership and achieving the externally imposed terms of reference. They argue that if an impact study **is to be** locally owned, the study must meet local needs and should be undertaken in a manner that is locally acceptable.

This view is contrasted with a consideration of research activities which are external to the project and which are intended to enable external funding agencies to rate achievements. In such cases, they argue, some way must be found of making externally imposed criteria and expectations acceptable to those who are locally involved. Smith and Bennell's conclusion leads them to ask the vital question, *What sort of compromise might be possible under the circumstances?*

1 Introduction

Although an impact study of an aid-funded project may, in theory, be undertaken entirely by external consultants or entirely by researchers of the country where the project is taking place, such studies in practice are most likely to be undertaken by a mixed team. This paper considers some of the issues that arise as a result of collaborative relationships between local researchers and the external consultants.¹

The paper draws on the experience of the DFID-funded **English Language Teaching (ELT) Impact Study** in Angola and Eritrea. This study, undertaken in 1997 and 1998, looked at the impact of ELT projects funded by ODA/DFID in the two countries and involved teams of local researchers trained and supported by three external consultants. When the studies in each of the countries have been completed, a comparative analysis will be undertaken. In

a briefing to the consultants, DFID staff emphasised that the study should not be a conventional evaluation based on project logical frameworks, and that local perceptions should be gathered from stakeholder meetings and research activities undertaken by the local teams.

Both Angola and Eritrea are countries which are deeply involved in violent conflict and they therefore experience special difficulties that may not be *typical* of the countries where impact studies are usually undertaken. Many of the educated nationals of both countries live abroad and there is a limited capacity within the countries - especially within the institutions and departments of the ministries of education - to undertake research.

Undertaking such studies has enabled the consultants to reflect on the nature and practice of impact studies, and a number of issues have been identified for discussion here. These have been divided into ones that may be labelled *conceptual*.

2 Conceptual issues

Conceptual questions raise questions about the nature of an impact study as an undertaking. They of necessity raise questions that relate to the practice or processes of undertaking such a study. The kinds of questions that were raised in the assessments of the aforementioned projects were as follows:

2.1 Ownership

Just as the success of externally initiated projects depends in part on the extent to which local ownership and commitment can be established, the same is true of an impact study (although there is often less time available to achieve this). The ELT impact studies in Angola and Eritrea were initiated by the agency (ODA/DFID) which had established and funded the ELT projects in the two countries and not by stakeholders in the countries. The success of the studies therefore depends in part on the extent to which local motivation can be established and ownership achieved. This, in turn, depends in part on the ability and willingness (of the personnel of the projects whose impact is being studied) to raise the awareness of the ministry of education or other institutions² about the need for such a study and about the lessons which might be learnt from the results. If one considers the experience of the Angolan and Eritrean studies, one sees that the response of local institutions varied according to the extent to which they are able to identify ways in which the study might resonate with their own agendas.

2.2 Perceptions of the role of consultants

The role of the external consultants may be perceived differently by different stakeholders. Such perceptions may depend on many factors, such as:

- the nature of the involvement expected of the consultants in each of

the main stages of the impact study³

- the extent to which the national researchers perceive themselves or are perceived as being able to act independently of the consultants
- the nature of the relations established between the consultants and the expatriate project personnel (if a project is an ongoing one)

In the **ELT Impact Study**, the aim was to establish the consultants' role as that of *external advisers* who have a facilitating and guiding function -rather than as directors of the local teams. Even so, the consultants are inevitably seen as in some way representing DFID and may therefore have a disproportionate influence.

2.3 Using a multidisciplinary team

A strength of the **ELT Impact Study** is undoubtedly attributable to the fact that it comprises a multidisciplinary team of consultants whose fields of expertise cover ELT, economic and social development (including gender issues). This has encouraged a broadening of the field in which the country studies look for evidence of impact. Although the external consultants perceive themselves as a team, and in spite of the fact that they have made individual visits to each country, they may not be perceived locally in the same way. Moreover, it was not possible for the local players to replicate our notion of a

multidisciplinary team since they were unable to field people with experience in investigating socio-economic issues.

2.4 Baseline data

It is difficult for local researchers to assess impact where little or no baseline data are available. Baseline studies would have contributed to the *measuring* of the post-project situation by enabling comparisons to be made against pre-project data. In both studies, the external consultants had access to documents compiled by DFID, which describe the pre-project situation in *outsider terms*. (Local researchers would not normally have access to such documents.) Equivalent descriptions in insider terms are unlikely to exist. Local researchers may not have been around before the project started or they may themselves have been involved in a very specific part of the project and so be unaware of the wider picture.

2.5 Levels of impact

This issue refers to the balance between looking narrowly (in the case of an ELT impact study) for impact on ELT activity and looking for wider socio-economic impact. This is especially problematic when local researchers are drawn from a narrow group in the ELT field or from a ministry of education. In such cases there may be a desire to focus largely or entirely on looking for evidence of impact in the ELT classroom and even a reluctance to go beyond

the direct outputs of the project. This can cause tensions between local and external researchers.

2.6 Training researchers while simultaneously undertaking research

The role of the external consultants includes training the local researchers and assisting them with the design of the research, the development of the instruments, the analysis and interpretation of the data and the presentation of the findings. How does one balance these roles? Although the training role is essential to building on local capacity, this may cause the external consultants to perceive this *training* as being more important than their roles as facilitators and managers of the research. They may therefore not consequently fulfil their terms of reference.

2.7 Remuneration and responsibility

The relationship between external and local researchers is also influenced by whether or how the local researchers are remunerated. Ownership of the study by a local institution would imply that the institution remunerates the researchers (even where an external agency assists with the budget for this), and the external researchers are not seen as *buying* the research. In one of the countries where an ELT Impact Study was undertaken, local institutions were unable to compensate local researchers. In this case, they were paid a fee by the external consultants. The perception created by this was that

individual researchers were employed by the outside consultant agency and that institutional (and hence also local ownership of the study) were therefore limited.

3 Practical issues

While conceptual questions raise questions that relate to difficulties arising from the research process, there are several logistical or practical issues that impact on both the research enterprise and the relationship between the local and external researchers.

3.1 Location

A problem that we experienced while managing the **ELT Impact Studies** for Eritrea and Angola was that, in both instances, the management and coordination was located outside the countries concerned. The management was therefore perceived as driven by the client (DFID) - at a time when engendering a sense of local ownership was seen as critical to the success of the studies.

3.2 Number of institutions involved

In both studies we experienced difficulties with coordinating research and ensuring cooperation because in both cases more than one institution was

involved in assessing the impact of the respective projects. This was particularly noticeable in those cases where there was a mixture of government and autonomous or semi-autonomous institutions, such as a ministry of education and a university. If there is no institutional hierarchy, the person who is appointed as team leader or as research coordinator may find it difficult to secure the necessary collaboration. In such cases, requirements such as obtaining agreement about deadlines (to name but one issue) may prove to be extremely difficult. When this happens, external consultants might find themselves assuming a coordinating role by default.

3.3 Selection of researchers

There are a number of practical issues which are relevant to the way in which a local team is selected and managed, and to what the role of external consultants might be in this process. These include the extent to which external consultants can influence the size and composition of the research team, their gender balance, the level or mix of research skills, the identification and inclusion of disinterested parties, and the commitment or level of involvement of the team members. Also relevant are issues such as whether or not researchers are released from other duties for the period of the study and whether or not remuneration is necessary. In the Eritrean and Angolan studies, there was reluctance on the part of participating institutions to have people from outside those institutions in the research teams. The result of this was that the teams did not have the insider/outsider balance which the

external consultants would have wished to see. Such differences can lead to tension between external consultants and institutions.

3.4 Timing

The timing of assessments is also a significant issue which needs to be considered. In Angola and Eritrea, the funding agency (and not the local players) decided when the impact assessment should take place. In both cases, the process started while the projects were still being implemented and while expatriate project staff were still in their postings. This posed difficulties for both the internal and external researchers. For the former, the timing of the investigation increased the difficulties that local researchers experienced in assuming a detached attitude to the actual project - and this meant that they were less able to look for impact beyond the current project activities. The consequences for the external consultant were that they experienced difficulties (in the limited time available) in setting up the research programme and convening stakeholder meetings immediately after they had arrived in the country.

3.5 Local realities and external deadlines

Progress in the research depends on the extent to which local researchers are able to undertake the work without disruption from unforeseen events (the **ELT Impact Study** in Angola and Eritrea had to compete with wars and

strikes) or are able to work at their tasks without being asked to undertake other activities. Since impact studies generally have to be completed in a very short time-scale, any delays resulting from unforeseen local events (such as in war-torn countries) will have a greater effect, as there is less capacity to absorb them.

4 Conclusion

In essence, the issues above relate to the difficulty of finding the right sort of balance between local ownership and achieving the externally imposed terms of reference. If an impact study is to be locally owned and is to provide a ministry of education, or another local institution with information about the effect that a project has had, then the study must meet local needs and must be undertaken in a manner that is locally acceptable.

If the investigation is to be an external activity that enable an external funding agency to find out how effectively its projects have contributed to development (assuming that it is possible to attribute evidence of impact to the external funding), then some way must be found of making externally imposed criteria and expectations acceptable to those who are locally involved. The key question then becomes, *What sort of compromise is possible under the circumstances?*

Footnote

1. Following the brief given to the writers, the paper will deal solely with the perspective of the external consultants.
2. This would need to be done well before the actual study is started.
3. This includes consultation with stakeholders, design, data collection, data analysis and report writing.

4.3 Impact studies: the role of an insider/outsider

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In this paper, Mohammed Melouk discusses the complexities inherent in the roles played by *insiders* and *outsiders* in project impact research. He argues that educational projects are far too frequently designed by outsiders who fail to involve the supposed beneficiaries of their projects in any phase of the project's design. This oversight more often than not gives rise to a situation in which those for whom the project is intended receive the project with indifference - or reject it outright. He examines the possibility that external consultants might assume the role of project *insiders*, but notes that this would require them to grapple with situational issues - a process that can

easily become lengthy, expensive and self-defeating. He proceeds to coin the phrase *insider/outsider* to refer to those locals who are outsiders to the project but insiders to its situational context. He then proposes several good reasons for including such players in the impact assessment team.

He points out that the insider/outsider adds (among other things) a necessary *human* dimension to such assessments. The insider/outsider is uniquely positioned to mediate the various stages of the research by facilitating communication between the target population and the evaluation team and by orientating the interpretation of data in such way that insightful and contextually appropriate conclusions are obtained.

Melouk situates his arguments against the backdrop of the **Moroccan ELT project**.

1 Introduction

Assessing the impact of an educational project is not an easy matter, especially when the aim of the exercise is to determine exactly, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, the exact nature and extent of change which is being sought by the project. This complexity may present an insurmountable hurdle - whether the evaluative enterprise is carried out by people directly involved in the project (the project designers and implementers) or by outsiders or external experts (or a combination of both).

I contend that the sometimes baffling complexities of impact assessment are caused by the fact that education and educational change are situated in a complex matrix of causes and effects that include cultural, socio-economic, psychological, material and administrative processes. Impact assessments, by their very nature, require a diverse number of role players, including, among others, decision-makers, funding organisations, project designers, administrators, inspectors, teachers, students and pupils.

Quite apart from this, the unique geographical, social, economic, political and educational conditions that gave rise to the project in the first place cause project evaluators to become enmeshed (whether they like it or not) in a complex of feelings and attitudes that invariably impact strongly on the assessment process. Educational projects which are designed for developing countries are far too often designed without any input (and in the absence of) those for whom the project is intended. This inevitably gives rise to a variety of attitudes on the part of the local population to the project. Attitudes may range from enthusiastic adherence (the rarest!) to qualified but sullen acceptance, indifference, or simple outright a rejection -at least at the psychological level.

Although the emergence of such attitudes among the target population may be attributed more to negative emotional reactions rather than reasoned intellectual objections, the effect on the project itself is nearly always emasculating or debilitating. This, sadly, is inevitably the case when the local target population have not been involved in the initial stages of the project and

do not fully understand its methods, aims and objectives - and hence, of course, cannot appreciate its potential benefits. In such cases, an accurate assessment of the impact of the project cannot be obtained without considering the potential effect of such attitudes on the outcome of the project. The assumption here is that the contribution of insiders, who are outsiders to the project but insiders to its situational context (hence the term *insider/outsider*), may be able to contribute insights of crucial importance.



2 The rationale for an insider/outsider in an impact study

In the light of these considerations, it is necessary to discuss the insider/outsider dimensions of impact studies. The discussion is based on conclusions drawn from personal experience in a collaborative impact study entitled **The Moroccan Item Banking Project.**¹ In this paper I have attempted to highlight the importance of local human abilities in any endeavour to assess the impact of an educational project, without, of course, completely

ignoring the legitimate concerns of objective educational evaluation or of funding bodies.

Given the nature of the educational enterprise, the implementation of any educational project is bound to generate a dynamic of its own, which is often not anticipated in the original design or sufficiently catered for or monitored during the implementation stages. In addition, any project involving many people will engender varying *levels* and *degrees* of involvement. The people directly concerned or those for whom the project has been designed may take a route (in terms of objectives and priorities) slightly different from the one originally intended. They may also have a hidden agenda which may not correspond to the actual aims of the project, but which can decisively affect the desired impact. The presence of these *side effects* are generally linked more to attitudes than to technical aspects of the project (knowledge, skills, etc).² They raise the question of how to deal with these phenomena and what place they should have in the study. In other words, what relationship should hold between predicted and unpredicted outcomes in the light of the type of attitudes generated by the project?

A number of strategies and techniques, borrowed from educational research and testing, management education, sociology of education and econometrics are used to investigate the impact of an educational project. Care is taken to collect relevant information and also to triangulate data. Depending on whether the objective of the evaluation exercise is to assess the degree of

achievement in terms of value for money (quantifiable indicators) or simply to measure the nature and degree of change in qualitative terms, qualitative data is generally used to supplement or reinforce quantitative data or the reverse. Furthermore, the evaluator may adopt the project designer's perspective, or a monetarist one (value for money), or even an educational or academic perspective (the requirements and constraints of research itself).

However, although it is possible to gather a rich database, *reading* or interpreting data to assess the real impact of the project, if not carried out from various perspectives, may lead to conclusions which only partly reflect the true state of affairs. This is not to suggest that the above-mentioned perspectives are not important, but simply that they need to be gauged in terms of local features and characteristics. In fact, the local perspective - in terms of population, local conditions and so on - is rarely taken into account. Hence the need in any impact study to incorporate the *local culture*- in its widest sense - through the association of an insider/outsider. In terms of this approach, the triangulation of data can be paralleled with some form of *triangulation of interpreting data, drawing conclusions, and making recommendations*.

3 The role of an insider/outsider in an impact study

Educational impact may be investigated in either qualitative or quantitative terms (or both), and its scope and extent may be assessed in terms of change

in the following areas:

- *Knowledge*: complete, incomplete, partial, new information building on old information, updating old information
- *Skills*: new skills, transfer of skills, building on old skills
- *Attitudes*: positive, negative, neutral, indifferent

While it is relatively easy to measure the nature and scope of change in the first two areas in quantitative and qualitative terms, searching for the effects of the last area on an educational project may be a daunting enterprise, especially for an outsider. Even the assessment of the first two (knowledge and skills), may yield different interpretations when looked at in terms of attitudes and the local culture. Obviously, certain attitudinal judgements made by the target population may be indicative of the success or failure of a project. But these judgements will not have significant value if they are not considered in the context of local features or characteristics, in other words, understood within the context of the local culture and mentality. How can an insider contribute to identifying those features which may be crucial for determining the degree of success or otherwise of the project?

3.1 Some benefits associated with the inclusion of an insider outsider

An insider/outsider, if well prepared and trained, can contribute from a vantage point (whether the evaluation is summative or formative) in the following ways:

- **Facilitate communication**

If the insider/outsider is able to facilitate a consideration of local habits and customs as well as what is unique about the local mentality and socio-cultural values, he or she may enhance and enliven communication with people directly or indirectly involved in the project. Interaction between an external expert and the target population can be facilitated through the collaboration of an *insider* who can help to establish on firm ground a *common language* (concepts, values, assumptions) between the evaluators and all those concerned in the project. In this way, it is possible not only to identify the exact nature of the impact, both present and future, but also to give meaning to the impact, especially from the perspective of the target population.

- **Solve field-related problems**

The insider/outsider may help to resolve apparent or real ambiguities, contradictions and misunderstandings in all matters relating to the project, not only between the target team and the evaluator, but also between the target team and other people involved.

- **Contribute to the development of research instruments**

The insider/outsider can help in the adaptation of instruments used to gather data and relevant information as he or she takes into account local features and the target population.

- **Contextualise findings**

The insider/outsider can play a role in the reading and interpretation of data in the light of the context of the project and the singularity of local conditions.

- **Contribute to recommendations**

The insider/outsider can assist in drawing appropriate conclusions and recommendations if he or she bears in mind the local context of the impact study in terms of both objectives and implications.

3.2 Skills necessary for the insider/outsider

It goes without saying that none of these things can be done if the insider/outsider does not have the appropriate skills or is not appropriately equipped to deal with the various problems that may arise. In addition to the mastery of theoretical and practical skills required in the design, implementation and evaluation of educational projects, he or she should first

and foremost have a good understanding, not only of the project itself (objectives, stages of implementation, requirements), but especially of its implications in terms of the desired change and the potential impact that such change might have. It is obvious from the above that the insider/outsider needs to fully understand local culture and the way it might affect the impact of the project at different levels - as well as in terms of degrees of involvement. But, most importantly, and in order to maximise objectivity, he or she should not have a stake in the project. If the insider/outsider were to have a stake in the project, it would be inevitable that his or her point of view and whole approach to the evaluation would be, to some extent, biased.

In addition to mastering the communication skills required by the evaluation, an insider/outsider needs quickly to develop a good and productive working relationship with the target population and the external experts. This is all the more important as the quality of evaluation in its different stages depends on it. Not only does he or she need to fulfil the role of an informant and a communication facilitator; he or she also needs to be a full participant evaluator. The combination of insiders and external evaluators can help to uncover aspects of the impact which would not necessarily be highlighted in the type of evaluation generally carried out solely by external experts or by experts who have a homogenous point of view. This is all the more important because certain crucial decisions are made on the basis of the study.

3. Conclusion

In the light of the foregoing and given the nature of the evaluation enterprise, which seeks to determine the nature and scope of an impact, the role of an insider/outsider can be crucial. In addition to adding a human dimension to the study, he/she may play the role of moderator throughout the various stages of the study, not only as a communication facilitator between the target population and the evaluator/s or researchers, but as an active participant researcher - with no objective other than to enrich the database of the project, to facilitate the correct interpretation of data, and to contribute to drawing insightful and appropriate conclusions.

It may be argued that an external researcher or expert can easily develop the kind of skill and expertise generally brought in by the insider/outsider. Although this may hold true for the few, it is rarely the case for the many. In addition, the exercise may require time and effort (and hence money) which might more profitably be spent on the study itself. In fact, the time and energy which can be saved if one factors in an outsider/insider's contribution may contribute to more productive and meaningful evaluations and swifter completions of impact studies.

Footnote

1. Originally, the project aimed at modernising the Moroccan ELT curriculum and assessment, but during a new project phase, the focus shifted to assessment with the entire project concentrating on

technical aspects of item banking.

2. Throughout the various stages of the evaluation process, it became clear that most teachers and testers do not fully understand the ultimate aims of the project though the latter can identify immediate objectives. Moreover, some negative attitudes are in sharp contrast with what has successfully been achieved in the area of testing.

4.4 Impact assessment in educational projects: some perspectives on the 'insider outsider' debate

Dave Allan

Norwich Institute for Language Education

Dave Allan focuses in his paper on the *insider-outsider debate*. He considers questions like: *Who does the evaluating?* and *Who decides whether the outcomes are to be judged as successful or not?*

His answers to these questions are illuminated by his varied experience in some forty or so countries over a period of twenty years - experiences which have profoundly influenced his views on the debate.

In order to locate his own position in the debate, he draws on four case studies of evaluations which capture a variety of permutations from, on the one hand, being a single outsider researcher to, on the other hand, working with a range of insider-stakeholders.

He illustrates his views by elaborating on his experiences in Bangladesh and in Estonia, where he was required to undertake the evaluation as a single *outside expert*. He uses his experiences in Estonia to show how, in spite of having to work as a single outsider, sustained contact with the project enabled him to become a *de facto* insider.

In the fourth case study he refers to an evaluation undertaken in Morocco where he worked with insiders on a formative evaluation over a sustained period.

Finally, he contrasts the respective advantages and disadvantages of working as a single outsider evaluator and as an evaluator with a team of local experts.

1 Introduction

In this paper prepared for the **DFID Forum on Impact Studies¹**, I wish to draw on my experiences in project evaluation to address the question of *Who does the evaluating?* and then to explore the benefits and disbenefits of

participatory approaches to impact studies. The paper is seen as yet another contribution to the *insider-outsider* debate in so far as it elaborates on the relationship between what are sometimes called *national* researchers and *external* researchers.

The terminology we use is, in fact, quite important. Keith Morrow has pointed out, in his paper entitled, *Sustaining Impact: the Mexican Advanced Professionalisation Project*, that our understanding of what *researcher* means will take us a long way towards clarifying a particular view about evaluation and how it may best be carried out in the context of educational projects and programmes. Such a view might immediately predispose us to a belief that specific expertise in the field of research methodology is a prerequisite for effective evaluation. However, my own experience, time and again, has been that some of the most insightful verdicts on the impact of educational projects have come from those who have little or no formal training in evaluation but who do have the ability to reach common-sense conclusions about what they see and hear. Such people are teachers, parents, and, above all, the learners themselves - the students and pupils.

The validity of impact assessment is frequently neither an issue of 'objective truth', nor a consequence of the degree of correspondence with a project framework. It is more likely to depend on whose agenda is being used as a cue in evaluations.

2 Insiders vs. outsiders

One of the more obvious problems that arises when evaluation is carried out solely by an outside expert is the problem of the *culture gap*. Outsiders, for all that they may be experts in the methodology of evaluation and have wide-ranging experience, may quite simply not see and not hear the reality of the outcomes in a field as difficult to measure as education.

The other major problem for the outside expert is quite simply a question of the timescale. Much worthwhile educational change is not measurable over the timescales typical of many recent language education projects, with their cost-conscious focus on short-term measurable outcomes and *sustainability*, let alone by evaluators who are working to deadlines defined in terms of weeks and who have tight budgets. My own experience in Bangladesh was of being asked to come to crucial decisions about a multi-million pound language education project on the basis of a two-week visit tacked on at the end, with an evaluation budget which was a tiny fraction of a percentage of the total sums involved before and after the evaluation.

The use of *national and external* to label apparently opposed (and certainly often juxtaposed) personnel and perspectives can also be misleading, as Keith Morrow (see paper 7.2) and I both well know from our separate and our shared experience of educational project evaluation. Do non-nationals have to be regarded as outsiders? From my experience in Tunisia I wish to argue that

non-nationals can be very much *insiders* as far as a particular project is concerned. During my sustained period of work in Tunisia, I was often described as *an honorary Tunisian*. On the other hand, nationals may be perceived as *outsiders* to particular projects or programmes, but fully-fledged *insiders* in terms of language, cultural awareness, access to longer-term perspectives and their ability to interpret tiny clues. These advantages give them the skills to *read between the lines* of the bare statistics. Such was the role played by Mohammed Melouk in Morocco (see paper 4.3), where he was one of a team of three charged with carrying out a major formative evaluation of a long-term curriculum development project which was funded by DFID, with the British Council playing a major management role.

3. Revisiting the *insider outsider* debate

My own views in the *insider-outsider debate* have been shaped by a number of significantly different experiences over a period of twenty years -a time during which I worked as a teacher-trainer and as a language consultant in some 40 countries. In recent years four of these experiences have stood out. In the sections which follow, I shall elaborate on these experiences to illustrate the differing positions that may be located on an *insider-outsider* continuum.

3.1 Case study: The single outside expert

In both Bangladesh and in Estonia, I was asked to go in as a single outside

expert to evaluate and make recommendations with regard to national language policy. Before starting in Bangladesh, I was given the opportunity to visit Bangladesh for two weeks since it was a country I had not visited before. My task was to provide an informative report on how successful a Bangladeshi project had been in providing structures and systems to facilitate through the school curriculum the re-introduction of English (a language which, for the previous generation, had been part of their everyday life).

It was necessary for me to focus all my skills and experience, to read every available report and document, and to interview stakeholders as varied as the Education Minister, the heads of examining boards and training colleges, and kids in rural schools. Because I wanted to get it right, I worked long days and I eventually produced a long and detailed report. I really cared about the outcomes and agonised over the recommendations I made, but I never knew if they were the right ones. There were no insiders working with me (apart from those who were my informants) to tell me what they thought, and I have not heard a word from anyone in Bangladesh since I submitted the report.

I have since heard this kind of evaluation described as a FIFO² or FIO – Fly In, Fly Out and... well, you can guess the rest!

3.2 Case study: The single outside expert - but with a sustained role

While what I had experienced in Estonia was similar in some ways to what I had experienced in Bangladesh, it was also very different. Although I was once again chosen to work as a single outside expert in Estonia, I was also asked to act as a consultant on behalf of the Council of Europe in order to review how effectively the National Language Board was developing national language policy. The board's aim was to enshrine and support Estonian as the national language while making effective allowances for the needs and problems of a large Russian-speaking minority.

The problem of citizenship and the requirement for competence in Estonian had generated enormous internal friction and dissent, and were, in addition, viewed as a possible source of destabilisation in Eastern Europe. In fact, as I got off the 'plane, I had Russian and Estonian television interviewers shoving microphones in my face, and asking me for my 'expert verdict' about whether the language level being required for citizenship was too high or too low. I was only too aware at that moment of the limits of my expertise. But I did not have that FIFO feeling in Estonia because my experience in the country was sustained over a longer timescale.

I was able to return regularly to Estonia and to evaluate progress over a period of nearly two and a half years. During that time relationships were built; trust was developed where there had only been suspicion, and even hostility had dissipated. Those who had initially been the objects of the evaluation became in effect collaborative members of a team. We had

established a sufficient number of important agreed-upon objectives and our shared concerns helped to bridge the insider-outsider gap. I found that my theoretical expertise, my professional knowledge and my change-management skills proved their value in practice as I worked *with* insiders over a period of time. I had been able to give many of the insiders an *outside* perspective, and this had helped them to assess more accurately, systematically and humanely the impact of the work that they were doing. They in turn enabled me to become *in part an* insider. This really enhanced my ability to evaluate what was happening. The insights gleaned enabled me to understand the complexities of the project rather than to think of it in terms of the simplified images with which I had been initially presented. There are some organisations that worry about their personnel 'going native'.

I now find it difficult, after my experience in Estonia, to imagine how *any* educational project can be properly evaluated, without a proper 'native' perspective.

3.3 Case study: An insider outsider evaluation

In Morocco I was asked to lead a team of three people - myself and two Moroccans - who were required to make a *formative evaluation* of a major **ELT Curriculum Development Project**. This project had become generally

known as *The Item Banking Project* because of the central role played by item-banking in the assessment side of the project. This, in fact, had become the main focus of activity for those involved. Although the evaluation took place over a period of one year and involved three visits by myself (the *outside expert*), it also required continuing work (between my visits) by the two Moroccan members of the team.

The **Item Banking Project** had developed over a period of eight years and had latterly acquired potential significance for the ways in which other subjects might also be assessed in Morocco.

The team chosen to do the formative evaluation³ was designed to reflect the maximum advantage obtainable from using three individuals with different backgrounds but appropriately complementary expertise. The team included:

- a *full outsider*, the UK expert (myself),
- an *insider/outsider* in the sense of being a Moroccan national with awareness of the project and the professional issues involved, but an outsider to the project, and
- one *insider*, a member of the project, an inspector who was the leader of a regional test writing team.



Though there were problems with funding and communication, the team worked well and produced a series of reports which, in my view, represented a much more accurate and balanced assessment of the project's impact than anything that had been produced before. No single agenda could be given precedence because of the make-up of the evaluation team. This meant that difficult issues were addressed in a positive way. The evidence soon made it very clear that a number of benefits had accrued from the way in which the evaluation team had been set up. In the next section I will elaborate on the

benefits, along with some caveats.

3.4 Case study: An outsider who had become an insider

Recently, in Tunisia, I was able to see it all from the other side. **The Secondary ELT Project**, in which I had been involved as the project leader, was evaluated by a team which deliberately included senior members of the inspectorate who were a part of the project working alongside the *outside expert*. This was a project I knew as an *outsider who had become an insider*. It was a situation about which I was passionately concerned, and I wanted those who were evaluating to have the necessary professional awareness to assess the project's impact across a wide range of outcomes (some of these outcomes were accounted for in the project framework while other outcomes - some of them, very important indeed - were entirely unanticipated). What was clear, and gratifying, was that the presence of the *insiders* allowed issues to be raised which might otherwise have been missed. This consolidated the continuation of a crucial sense of ownership on the part of those who would soon be solely responsible for future success or failure of the project. One cannot speak of sustainability if the long-term stakeholders do not have a major say in the assessment of impact.

4 Contrasting insiders and outsiders

So what generalisable conclusions may one draw from these different experiences? (Whether or not what follows has a wider application is something you will have to decide for yourself on the basis of your own experience and your awareness of the experience of others.) What can *outsiders* and *insiders* respectively bring to the evaluation of educational projects and programmes?

5 Conclusion

It will be clear from what I have said that most of my experience leads me to favour a team or collaborative approach to impact assessment in language education projects and programmes. What, then, is the distinctive contribution that a team may make - if one compares it to the contribution that may be made by an individual (whether insider or outsider)? The following advantages (in no order of significance) seem to characterise the use of teams rather than individuals in educational project evaluation:

- Teams collectively gather more and more varied expertise and experience.
- Teams have the ability to multi-task.
- Teams can cope with unavailability caused, for example, by illness.
- Teams have the potential to reduce the effects of prejudice.
- Teams can offer a wider range of evaluation perspectives.

- Members of teams can be mutually supportive.
- Teams offer opportunities for regular interactive reflection and analysis.
- Teams can engage in cross-checking and ongoing articulated critical analysis.

INSIDERS VS. OUTSIDERS

Strengths	Weaknesses
The outsider in an evaluation	
<p>If well chosen, an outside expert will bring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specific, relevant professional expertise and experience • a wide range of perspectives (not just <i>local</i> ones) • the ability to see the <i>big picture</i> • the potential to be an open-minded, unbiased listener and observer • the potential to be committed but dispassionate 	<p>But s/he will inevitably tack:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all the <i>plus</i> factors of a team (and a team may • an in-depth awareness of the <i>local</i> culture • local contacts who could be sources of • language proficiency at the required/ideal level

- the potential to arrive at non-partisan judgements
- the ability to ask difficult but important questions
- the power and authority of an outside expert
- a clear focal point for communication
- only one set of potentially conflicting workloads

- the ability to really understand what is going on

The insider in an evaluation

An *insider* can potentially bring:

- a high level access to the *local* languages
- national/regional/local cultural awareness
- an extensive awareness of the environment
- a sense of history, and when it matters

But there are significant disadvantages and dangers:

- The *insider is* always vulnerable to local pressures.
- The *insider* may be a part of the *vested interest*.
- The *insider* may have

- a knowledge of which doors to knock on
- the influence/authority to open doors
- the ability to detect/identify smokescreens
- a knowledge of *local vested* interest
- a sensitive 'bullshit' detector
- an ability to see project goals as a *recipient*
- a long-term perspective – outsiders go away!

- a personal axe to grind.
- The *insider* may be unable to see the big picture.
 - The *insider* may tack the authority of an *outsider*.

- Teams may have the ability to cope better with unexpected events.
- Teams cost more but often provide better value for money.
- Teams create more potential for communication problems.
- Teams are more likely to be become embroiled in time-wasting internal disputes.
- Teams need to allocate time for communication and liaison.
- Teams need to be managed and so require leadership.
- There are more likely to be workload and prioritisation problems in

teams.

All of the above factors will affect teams in varying degrees. Teams are also affected by differences in national and institutional contexts, individuals and composition. But if there are any messages which stand out as having very wide applicability, they are the following:

- Teams are more effective than individuals.
- The best teams are characterised by carefully selected complementary expertise and awareness.
- Insider/outsider combinations can be very effective.
- Impact assessment needs to be planned in from the very start - and not 'tacked on'.
- Effective impact assessment requires adequate time and funding.

I hope that this sharing of parts of my experience and my reflection will provide some food for thought.

Footnote

1. My involvement in the **DFID Forum on Impact Studies** came

about not because I have a particular theoretical perspective to support, nor a strong academic background in development issues, but because of my long-term interest in evaluation in relation to language teaching.

2. A term coined by Dermot Murphy and Pauline Rea-Dickins (see paper 3.1).

3. This had been costed into this funding period of the project as a significant phase and with a reasonably realistic budget.



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5. TRAINING TEACHERS AS RESEARCHERS

[5.1 Helping teachers to develop competence criteria for evaluating their professional development](#)

[5.2 Combining the teaching of research methods with an assessment of project impact](#)

5.1 Helping teachers to develop competence criteria for evaluating their professional development

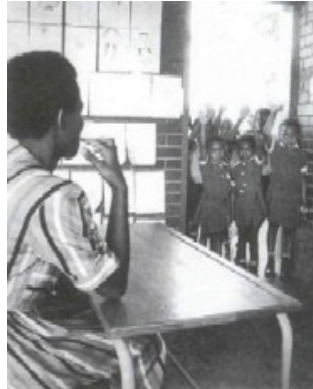
Alan Peacock
School of Education
University of Exeter

Alan Peacock's paper discusses ways of helping teachers to develop competence criteria for evaluating their professional development. He discusses interventions in South Africa and Sri Lanka in which teachers collaboratively developed competence criteria for evaluating their professional development and improving their performance. He elucidates various stages of the process through which detailed sets of criteria are developed. In the final stage outlined in this paper, he shows how the training is put to practice in their classroom situation. He argues that the reflection underlying this process enabled teachers to become aware of the need to establish levels of achievement in any given skill area. In practice this means that teachers are given the responsibility to develop their own competence, and this has a number of positive spin-offs for teaching practice. The paper

includes details about teaching and skills indicators which have been developed by teachers, as well as an observation schedule which is used for monitoring the progress of teaching.

1 Introduction

The paper draws from our experience in three current projects which are supported by the University of Exeter School of Education. These are:



- **The Primary Science Programme** in Madadeni District, Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa¹
- **The Sri Pada College of Education Project**, in Sri Lanka²

● **The Limpopo School Empowerment Project**, in the Tshakuma District, Northern Province, South Africa³

In each of the above projects, the primary aim was to enhance the capacity of teachers (or teacher trainers) to evaluate their performance through the development of criteria of effectiveness or competence. The underlying rationale for participation in each of the three projects relates to notions of transfer of responsibility, empowerment, collaboration, relevance and communicative effectiveness (Fullan 1989; Dalin 1994; Shaeffer 1994; Good & Brophy 1995; Showers & Joyce 1996). Over the past seven years, Exeter in partnership with local teachers, developed sets of criteria of teaching competence.

The criteria which we developed collaboratively reflect teachers' competencies in the following areas:

- Planning
- Communicating
- Managing
- Evaluating

Detailed criteria, calibrated into four levels of competencies, were generated for each of the above-mentioned areas. The four levels of competence coincide with the four stages of the initial training of teachers. The following is

a summary of *The Dimensions of Teaching* from the University of Exeter (1997).

The Dimensions of Teaching				
Dimension	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Planning				
	<p>Plans episodes for a group showing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aims for learning • organisation • relevant subject knowledge • teacher's role • resources. 	<p>Plan lessons for a class, showing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear appropriate aims and expectations for learning • appropriate subject matter knowledge, related to the National Curriculum (N C) 	<p>Plan a short programme of work for a class, showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear objectives and content which is appropriate to the subject and the pupils • interesting and challenging tasks, including homework 	<p>Plan schemes of work for a class, showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a balanced development of children's knowledge, understanding and skills • assessment strategies • imaginative activities and

programmes of study	where appropriate	resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • means of differentiation • practical organisation for teaching and learning • deployment of resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear targets, building on prior attainment (by using assessment data) • clear differentiation, with identification of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) • attention to cross-curricular skills, and pupils' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a clear relation to developing class ethos • attention to own developing practice.

			broader development	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an appropriate use of the whole class groups and individual teaching • detailed attention to own progress as a teacher. 	
Communicating				
(a) Demonstration and instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract children's interest and attention. • Give clear, audible instructions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain children's attention. • Demonstrate skills and processes clearly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure engagement and participation with good pacing of lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose concepts and examples strategically (with a deep knowledge of subject matter

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform, describe and explain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform, describe & explain with clarity and coherence. • Ask question to focus attention. • Convey interest and enthusiasm. • Adapt instruction to pupils' understanding and engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate with clear commentary. • Show good awareness of audience. Summarise clearly and concisely, emphasising key ideas. • Use effective questioning to ensure participation. • Use appropriate vocabulary. 	<p>and children's interests and understanding in mind).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication so as to inspire pupils' interest in subject.
(b) Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in interaction. 	Interact and question so as to:	Mediate learning through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster democratic procedures

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen and respond sympathetically. • Check understanding via questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listen carefully to pupils • focus pupils' ideas • sustain their thinking • prompt them to check errors • respond to individual differences 	<p>discussion so as to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help to remedy pupils' misconceptions • stimulate intellectual curiosity • explore ideas, giving attention to pupils' boarder development • prompt reasoning and argument • relate learning to authentic and 	<p>and rational discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair discussions effectively whilst remaining neutral. • Show sensitivity and judgement about contentious issues. • Defend individuals from unfair peer pressures.
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			work related examples.	
(c) Facilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor practice tasks, checking accuracy and providing help. 	<p>Initiate some independent practice and problem-solving.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide feedback to support independent learning. • Exploit opportunities to improve basic skills and study skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage some autonomy in pupil choices of the means of ends of learning. • Facilitate knowledge use in pupil-led investigation. • Facilitate pupils' individual and collaborative study skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote authentic activities and the development of autonomous learning. • Facilitates pupils' independent attempts at research.
Managing				
(a) Managing order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage and sustain a flow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and improve order

<p>procedures for order with a group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to sustain purposeful work. • Deal with minor misbehaviours. 	<p>assertively to gain attention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining a good working atmosphere. • Operate a framework of rules consistently. • Give due attention to issues of safety and pupil welfare. • Signal and manage transitions effectively. 	<p>of work and activities effectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detect problems of order early meet them with firmness. • Set and maintain agreed rules and values. • Set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. • Attempt to assimilate difficult children. 	<p>by purposeful work and shared values.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve children appropriately in taking responsibility. • Work systematically with difficult children to improve their learning and adjustment to life in school.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw on support where appropriate. 		
(b) Managing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide and manage materials for a group. • Display work (after advice). • Organise tidying of the classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide appropriate resources for lessons. • Managing the distribution and collection of materials effectively. • Display pupils' work effectively. • Ensure care of resources and safe environment. • Arrange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select and make good use of textbooks, IT and other learning resources. • Work on improving the learning environment. • Use displays to stimulate learning. • Manage own and pupils use of time effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and experiment with new resources. • Design, produce and use novel curriculum materials. • Sustain long-term resourcing for class, or subject. • Encourage pupils to manage resources

		<p>appropriate seating.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make use of visual aids. • Make effective use of time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use adult assistants effectively. 	<p>independently.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the effectiveness of adult assistants.
Evaluating				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show awareness of children's engagement work. • Mark children's work (with advice). • Write summary evaluations of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess work in relation to objectives and NC (with help). • Use observations and questioning to assess understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a variety of formal and informal assessment techniques. • Mark and monitor pupils' class and homework. • Provide constructive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider alternative analyses of teaching and learning. • Assess pupils' progress critically and effectively. • Take part in

episodes of teaching.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagnose problems and provide feedback. • Relate assessment to future planning and teaching. • Keep records of pupils' work. • Write evaluation using, for example, agendas, conferences and university based-work. | <p>feedback and set targets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and record each pupil's progress systematically, using NC levels, school records and comparative data to inform planning and teaching. • Be familiar with statutory assessment and reporting requirements. • Know how to prepare and | <p>staff development programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake research in to own professional practice. • Develop own theoretical and practical ideas. |
|--|--|--|

			present reports to parents.	
			• Identify and assess SEN in line with relevant codes of practice.	
			• Demonstrate awareness of own development as a teacher.	

2 Stages in developing competence criteria

The process through which the *The Dimensions of Teaching* went was a lengthy one and it took several years and numerous trial versions before a *pro forma* which satisfied all partners in the process was agreed upon.⁴ In each case, teachers participated in the generation of the criteria. They engaged in a process which was characterised by the following four stages:

1. Identification

Participants identified their perceived needs or the competencies which related to their required roles. The participants in this stage included teachers, teacher trainers, and leader teachers.

2. Categorisation

Participants categorised or classified identified criteria for evaluation under specific category headings.

3. Revision

Participants refined criteria in order to ensure that they would be utilisable when incorporated into the instrument or working tool. This is done by

- making statements *operationalisable*
- identifying *relevant evidence*
- categorising and *establishing levels* of competence.

4. Utilisation

Participants evaluated tools within an ongoing programme of classroom support.

The first three stages of this process of development are conducted in the early stages of a project, usually during workshop sessions in which all teachers, trainers and leader teachers participate. We realised that it would be far more cost effective for us merely to present the Exeter *Dimensions of teaching* as a model or template. If we had done that we could have (by eliminating the first three stages) shortened the time which teachers need to generate their own criteria. While this would certainly have allowed Exeter to capitalise on the effort and expense which went into their original development, it would not have permitted teachers to generate (and therefore 'own') those competencies which are relevant to their own distinctive cultural/pedagogical contexts. The 'handing down' of externally developed criteria would deny teachers the opportunity to participate in the stages which are necessary for their own professional development. In fact, we believe that the process of defining notions of effective teaching (stage 1) and the consequential collaborative development of the competence criteria (stages 2 and 3) are crucial stages for enabling teachers' professional development. The only role that project leaders or consultants should play in these initial phases is one involving the facilitation and scaffolding of workshop processes (Tharp 1993;

Good & Brophy 1995).

2.1 Stage 1: Initiation of the process of identifying competencies

The following list describes four ways of initiating the process of identification of competencies in stage 1:

- Teachers can initially be asked questions like *What is literacy? What is science? How can you build onto pupils experiences? What makes a good teacher of mathematics?*
- Facilitators can provide examples of good classroom practice by using, for example, a video recording of lessons drawn from a range of specific teaching subjects and then requesting the group to analyse what they see and then discuss issues like *What is the teacher doing that is effective?*
- Teachers can share and analyse their school policy documents in an attempt to identify where there may be consensus about characteristics of effective teaching. They could be asked to think about questions like (for example) *What is important about monitoring pupils work?*
- In subsequent sessions, teachers can be asked to identify changes

in their practice which have been inspired by input from earlier workshops and support. They can be asked to expand their understanding of good practice by extending their newly acquired understanding to their own subject areas and classroom contexts. Thus, for example, they might be asked *How can group discussions be used in the teaching of science?*

2.1.1 Participants' responses to the question *What do student teachers in Year 1 need when they first go into school?*

WHAT?	WHY?
1. professional commitment	knowledge, attitudes, skills depend on this
2. how to know pupils needs	always necessary for teachers (relevance and motivation)
3. subject knowledge	teachers have to know the requirements of the syllabus
4. communication skills	to give guidelines to pupils for presentation, description, summarising
5. how to choose learning and teaching materials suitable for pupils	so they have pupils' attention
5. punctuality	for organisation

6. punctuality	for organisation
7. flexibility	to be adaptable
8. learning to learn	for innovation
9. cooperative working skills	to learn from each other
10. self-awareness and confidence	important for the teaching process
11. how to work modern technology	to protect those technologies
12. knowledge, skills and attitude	to perform teacher's tasks well, to understand learners
13. how to make a lesson plan	better teaching and learning
14. make resources for teaching and learning	according to methods and techniques (process)
15. about intervention, communication and management	to get pupil attention, motivation and reinforcement
16. summarising	to bring out main points
17. knowledge about assessment and evaluation	to motivate pupils and give feedback
18. planning abilities (management)	to prepare a proper plan for teaching and learning
19. ability to identify the pupils' needs	to improve their hidden talent
20. techniques of effective learning	to achieve effectiveness and efficiency

21. ability to create teaching and learning aids	to get interest of children, to get attention, to motivate, etc.
22. ability to assess and evaluate successfully	to identify the levels of competence of pupils
23. questioning ability	to implement learning
24. ability to build good interactions	to implement pleasant atmosphere
25. communication skills	to explain, inform, persuade, etc.
26. counselling and guiding abilities	to help pupils with difficulties and to develop their personalities

Source: Sri Pada College of Education Report

The following tables emerged from the second and third stages respectively. They were stages in the in the development of criteria by staff of the Sri Pada College, Sri Lanka.

2.2 Stage 2: Participants categorisation of needs into suggested Professional Skill Indicators

Communication	Evidence
Ability to build good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic classroom situation

interaction Indicator

1. Climate of the classroom
2. Two-way communication
3. Active learning process

- Interaction between teacher-pupil (t/p) and pupil-pupil (p/p)
- Cooperative learning process
- Good responses of pupils and teachers
- Looking at the activities in the lesson plan

Assessment

Ability to assess and evaluate successfully
Indicator

1. Achievement level of the pupil
2. Difficulties which pupils have in reaching main objectives
3. Various patterns of

Evidence

- Through classroom activities, the student teacher can see different levels of pupils' achievements.
- Most of students could not reach aspiration levels according to the student teacher's teaching processes.
- There are suitable patterns to assess for each lesson.

assessment**Management**

Ability to use techniques of effective learning

Indicator

- 1 Careful timing
2. Good use of space
3. Good use of resources

Evidence

- Seeing whether the student teacher comes and return to class on time
- Seeing whether the student teacher completes work on time
- Seeing whether the student teacher uses space in a proper way
- Seeing whether the student teacher uses sufficient resources
- Seeing whether the student teacher uses resources that are suitable for the pupils
- Seeing whether the student teacher has ideas about conversation of resources

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeing whether the student teacher uses all the resources that have been collected
<p>Planning</p> <p>Ability to write a lesson plan</p> <p>Indicator</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Selecting objectives 2. Activities relevant to the objectives 	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main points can be pulled out from the summary. • Can observe from the questions through the lesson and at the end of the lesson • Observe the process going on through the lesson.

2.3 Stage 5; Revision of the working document on Professional Skill Indicators: levels for Year 1 and Year 2

<p>Communication: Year 1</p> <p>Ability to build good interaction</p>	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interaction
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Indicators

1. Climate of the classroom
2. Two-way communication
3. Active learning process
4. Democratic classroom situation

between teacher and pupil

- Cooperative learning processes
- Good responses of pupils and teacher that cater for individual differences
- Look at the activities in the lesson plan

Communication: Year 2 Cooperative Working Skills**Indicators**

1. Good interaction between pupils and student teacher

Evidence

- Pupils are working in a happy mood.
- Pupils have

2. Two-way communication

enough opportunity to ask questions.

- Student teacher responds to the pupils adequately.
- Pupils help each other and work in a friendly manner.
- They listen to each other attentively.
- Summarise the lesson by discussion.

Resources: Year 2

Ability to make teaching and learning aids.

Indicators

Evidence

- Look at the lesson plan

1. The student teacher selects appropriate resources for the lesson.
2. The student teacher makes relevant resources with minimum cost.
3. The student teacher makes resources creatively.
4. The teaching aids are used at the appropriate time in the lesson.

objectives.

- Have the visual aids been prepared according to the objectives?
- Observe whether the resources help to motivate pupils to be active,
- Check whether these resources are made with available materials at low cost.
- Talk to the student teacher to find out how they were made.

- Check whether resources are traditional or of original design.
- Observe whether the resources help to develop the pupils' creativity.
- Check whether the student teacher uses resources at appropriate times.

Resources: Year 2**Ability to choose teaching materials****Indicators**

1. Ability to use teaching and learning

Evidence

- During and at the end of the lesson, teacher uses the resources to support

<p>materials in an appropriate way in order to develop understanding of the concepts</p> <p>2. Opportunities for pupils to handle teaching and learning materials</p>	<p>achievement of the objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pupils actively involved
<p>Personal Qualities: Year 1</p> <p>Ability to manage time</p> <p>Indicators</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whether the student teacher prepares the lesson plan in advance 2. Whether the student teacher arrives and departs on time 3, Whether the student teacher conducts the lesson as planned 4. Whether the student teacher allocates appropriate time to the different sections of the lesson, e.g. setting scene, presentation of the subject matter, summary, evaluation, 	<p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observe lesson plan at start of lesson. ● Lecturers" observation of student punctuality ● Ask student's opinion. <i>What do you think? Could you organise this in another way?</i> ● Observation throughout the

feedback to pupils
 5. Student teacher communicates well
 6. Student teacher should have good physical appearance.

lesson

- Knows pupil's names. The pupils can interact with the teacher and other pupils.
- Do the pupils respect the student teacher?

Personal Qualities: Year 2

Professional Commitment

Indicators

1. Subject matter gathered from various sources
2. Time management
3. Awareness of the class
4. Remedial teaching

Evidence

- Library reference
- Consulting tutors
- Preparing appropriate teaching and learning aids
- Using the above
- Arriving and leaving punctually

- | | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Management of the learning strategies• Pupils' actions and thinking• Ways of addressing pupils• Varying responses to individuals• Attention to the potential of pupils (assignments, questioning, etc.) |
|--|---|

Source: Sri Pada College of education Project (pp. 1 and 2)

As was indicated earlier, the value of teacher participation in generating performance criteria such as those emerging from the first three stages of the intervention is immense and cannot be replicated by the handing over of criteria by those who are external to the programme. On the contrary, it is contended that the handing over of criteria would further deskill teachers and induce them

to become dependent on external consultants. This, we believe, would lead to loss of motivation among teachers and to the ascription of *celebrity status* to external consultants.

2.4 Stage 4: The utilisation of competencies in the classroom

The key aspect of this process is the commitment to the criteria generated in the above stages. It is at this stage, that teachers are expected to apply the criteria to their own teaching contexts. This emphasis on class-based practice is crucial to reinforcing understandings of the criteria and to ensuring that teachers are able to make the link between theory and practice. Various studies have provided evidence that workshops (i.e. stages 1 to 3) alone do not have an impact on professional development (see, for example, Harvey 1997) and that supported application in the classroom is required (Beeby 1986). It is thus essential that both the teachers and those providing classroom support be committed to the criteria on which their professional development is being based and evaluated.

Providing effective and ongoing classroom support requires that those who will carry out the support function are themselves competent. Managing support on a large scale and over a sustained period of time can be labour-intensive and therefore expensive. Too frequently, cohorts of mentors/advisory teachers/leader teachers are trained a high cost but then become lost to the system through inadequate support (Peacock & Morakaladi 1995). The

following two strategies for dealing with this were developed within the **Limpopo School Empowerment Project (LSEP)**.

- **Locating support teams within the training centre**

The first is to train the Professional Development Team (a group of former initial training tutors based within the Ramaano Bulaheni Training Centre where the project is based) simultaneously with the Leader Teacher training programme. This means that both classroom practitioners and the Professional Development Team are trained as leader teachers for their school/cluster. They were all initially trained together on the same workshop programme, and were all collaboratively engaged in the process of developing criteria. In practice this means that, as collaborators, they now all share a commitment to a common way of supporting and evaluating performance.

- **Providing cost-effective classroom support**

The second way of approaching the need for sustained support is to use trainee teachers from the University of Exeter School of Education in a dual role of supplying *cover teaching* and classroom support for the leader teachers. A pilot programme in KwaZulu Natal (Link Community Development 1996) demonstrated that second-year

primary trainees with two extended periods of school experience were adequately prepared to *cover* for teachers and to provide effective classroom support. Hence in the first year of the Limpopo School Empowerment Project, 10 students spent eight weeks in Northern Province *cover teaching* in the leader teachers' classes in 10 primary schools whilst the leader teachers themselves attended workshops. Subsequently, students modelled such activities as conferencing (observing each other teacher and undergoing a structured critique of the lesson afterwards) and alternative strategies for behaviour management - all of which proved to be a powerful tool for teacher development.

3 The outcomes of the teacher development process

We wish to emphasise some of the most important outcomes of this process in all three projects.

- The evidence from this programme provisionally indicates that teachers needed time and support to discuss and question their underlying pedagogical and epistemological assumptions about the process - but that this process was essential.
- The competence statements underwent various stages of revision. After initial reluctance, leader teachers became committed to this

process. Thus, for example, when specific professional skills were highlighted, teachers practised evaluating these in their lessons according to the chosen indicators.

- Teachers also became aware in practice of the need to establish levels of achievement in any given skill area in order to evaluate progress and set targets (Hatton & Smith 1995). It was apparent that professional development programmes need to be phased and explicitly matched to the varying levels of development of participants.
- The **LSEP** will be developed over three years, and progression will be built into the workshop programme in each of the successive years.
- Giving teachers responsibility for developing their own competence criteria generates trust and confidence, and this gradually leads to supportive critical analysis in the school rather than conventional complementarity.
- A crucial element in this equation was the high esteem with which teachers regarded the Exeter students, who demonstrated that the criteria (relating to, for example, group work and to the use of materials) were achievable even within very large classes and under

inauspicious circumstances (Link Community Development 1998).

- The simultaneous process of work-shopping and classroom support also prepares teachers for their roles as mentors (or leader teachers) in schools. This provided the added benefit of providing cost-effective classroom support in the medium and long term.

4 Conclusion

Our experience in the Exeter programme, as outlined in this paper, lends support to our assumption that teachers respond well to such interventions. We recognise, however, that the process for the development of teachers as effective evaluators of teaching competence takes time and relies on the development of their confidence. This requires funding which will sustain the progress until such programmes are institutionalised. The need to train mentors or leader teachers is an ongoing one. There is constant attrition and hence the constant need to replace those who have moved on or who have progressed to other areas. There is also a constant need to refine and improve teacher performance. We do not believe that short-term programmes which focus on a few schools are likely to reach the critical stage beyond which the institutionalisation of such a development process becomes established.

Footnote

1. Implementation Primary School Programme
2. Implementation: GTZ
3. Implementation: Link Community Development
4. As a result of the lengthy time period it was necessary that certain adaptations were to be made when we attempted to *build in* teachers' thinking about competences to the much shorter programmes of professional development that characterised the three projects.

5.2 Combining the teaching of research methods with an assessment of project impact

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The University of South Africa (Unisa) is a distance teaching institution in Pretoria, South Africa, which offers hundreds of courses each year to more than a hundred thousand students. In 1995, Unisa initiated a training course for educators who would work in the areas of adult base education and

training (ABET) and more especially in the areas of literacy, English Second language teaching and skills training. The newly developed programme endeavours to train adult educators with a *developmental consciousness* and, as such, includes a large component on community development and research methods. But, as with all distance education programmes, the ABET Institute has had to devise ways of teaching research methods by getting students practically involved in research design, planning, field work and analysis.

In 1997, ABET decided to teach students in one of the DFID-funded provinces to do research and to get them to undertake part of the evaluation of the project in that province. Elijah Sekgobela of Unisa's Institute for Adult Basic Education and Training undertook to carry out this activity. In this paper, he outlines the implementation of a process of *participatory assessment of impact*, in which students were expected to participate in all spheres of the research process – from the initial conceptualisation to the final recording of data. This paper discusses the process and the benefits derived therefrom.

1 Introduction

In 1997, the Unisa ABET Institute undertook an internal impact assessment as part of its teaching programme. The purpose of the assessment was two-fold:

- The first purpose of the assessment was to teach Unisa ABET students to do research by using a *hands on* approach. The experience thus gained would enable the students involved to become competent in the formulation of a research design, the selection of appropriate methods, the necessary fieldwork, the analyses of data and the compilation of a report - thus fulfilling certain curriculum requirements of the ABET course.

- The second purpose of the study was to assess the impact of Unisa **ABET's** educator training programme in the Northern Province in South Africa. This particular province was chosen to pilot the *hands on* training for the following reasons:
 - It one of the poorest provinces in South Africa and is earmarked for *intensive care* programmes of all kinds.

 - The **ABET Institute** is DFID-funded – and the Northern Province is one of its three priority provinces.

 - Because the **ABET Institute** has already done a substantial amount of work in this province, it had become necessary

(formatively) to gain some sense of the impact which the institute's work had made.

- Because the **ABET Institute** works closely with the Provincial Education Department in this province, it was felt that the information gathered would be useful to government and also that it would also enhance the capacity of those government officials participating in the assessment exercise.

2. Methodology



Since it was necessary to formulate a design for the programme that would be both educative and participatory, a decidedly participatory approach was adopted.

2.1 Research design

The research investigation was designed to explore the ABET students' understanding of what ABET is in terms of their own practice. This question *What is ABET?* was intended to capture their ideas of how this particular Unisa programme impacts (and ought to impact) on the province. The students were also expected to answer the question *How can ABET delivery in the Northern Province be improved?* - and it was expected that the data from this question would allow ABET to deduce a significant number of formative recommendations.

The investigation/training utilised a mix of workshops and self-completion questionnaires which were designed to elicit what the students themselves really thought about the issues involved. The questionnaires which were drawn up were based on the themes and issues which had been raised in the exploratory workshops. The students were then able to see how the issues they identified became operationalisable *before their very eyes* - so to speak. After the data has been collected, ABET arranged a second round of research/capacity building workshops. In these workshops the participating students interpreted the data and (lastly) wrote up of the findings in a report.

Thus they were able to see at first hand how the data they had obtained were integrated into the report.

2.2 Workshops as a qualitative research approach as well as a teaching approach

Two rounds of six workshops were held in the Northern Province (two in each of the six provincial regions based at centres the Thohoyandou, Giyani, Nebo, Tzaneen, Pietersburg and Potgietersrus ABET centres). These areas are predominantly rural and very poor and have minimal capacity. They are also government regions for education delivery.

In the first round, the trainers/evaluators ran an intensive two-day research exercise which was divided into two sessions. These sessions were designed to elicit information from the practitioners in the workshop and to build research capacity by training ABET students and practitioners in the fundamentals of research. The workshop sessions generated both in-depth information for the research analysis and interpretation and themes and issues which were later made operationalisable in the questionnaires. The ABET students/practitioners were thus involved in questionnaire construction from the very beginning.

2.3 Fieldwork as a learning experience

After being trained in research protocol, the students were expected to do the fieldwork by using the instrument which they had collaboratively designed. This period of fieldwork was followed some weeks later by a second round of workshops. In the second round the workshops focused on building capacity in research interpretation and report writing. The research findings were presented and discussed¹ with the ABET students/practitioners. They were expected to analyse the data under the supervision of the workshop coordinators.

2.3 Questionnaires

The students/practitioners were helped to design questionnaires which could be used to obtain information from a variety of interest groups in the field of ABET training. Generally, the interest groups are:

- practitioners or educators
- officials from the education department
- learners who attend classes
- broader community.

It was decided to construct a different questionnaire for each interest group. The questionnaires comprised a balance between closed and open-ended questions, which allowed for the volunteering of information by the interviewees. The training in question construction fulfilled a major part of the

Research Methods course curriculum in which our students are required to demonstrate competence.

2.4 Sample

The sample selected to attend the workshop was drawn from the Unisa **ABET Institute's** database of ABET students enrolled for the course by the provincial department of education. (Because we felt it necessary to build capacity around this issue in the Northern Province, we also selected those practitioners who had previously completed the ABET course.) We were aware even at the time of selection that our method of selecting the sample was neither scientifically rigorous nor yielding of a representative sample, but since our aim was primarily to build capacity and then to assess impact, we were more or less satisfied (with certain reservations) with the *ad hoc* sample which we assembled. Our crude *sampling* approach gave rise to a very large sample of respondents. But it also enabled us to gather data from an even larger constituency because each student/researcher, as part of his/her fieldwork training exercise, was required to complete up to 10 questionnaires in two of the designated areas of investigation.

3 Doing research: a step-by-step programme

3.1 Participatory research

The outline of the workshop programme was as follows:

- Introduction: Building research capacity by doing research
- Plenary: *What is ABET?*
- Breakaway discussion groups: Explore topics in detail.
- Plenary: *How can we improve ABET?*
- Breakaway discussion groups: Explore topics in detail.
- Individual session: *What I like/dislike most about ABET?*
- Conclusion

In the first round of regional workshops, each workshop commenced with a plenary session which posed the questions: *What is ABET?* (morning session) and *How to improve ABET?* (afternoon session). These sessions took the form of a plenary group discussion facilitated by the Unisa ABET co-ordinators² who are locals from the province. Each focus group interrogated the two topics and their comments were written down in the order in which they arose, on a flip chart. The initial plenary was intended to enable the participants to brainstorm and to reflect on their situations. Once the plenary group had exhausted its initial response to the questions posed, the workshop broke-up into smaller breakaway groups to discuss a different selection of the responses. These groups were run by the students/practitioners themselves who were tasked with making an in-depth analysis of the ideas from the brainstorm session. By way of teaching qualitative methods, the

students/researchers' attention was drawn to the experience of a focus group activity and to other qualitative approaches. They were required to reflect on their own experience of the focus groups and also to think about the advantages and disadvantages of using this as a research approach.

The breakaway focus group discussions reflected on and contextualised the points from the plenary sessions. The numbered order of points raised in the plenary sessions were kept so that the additional comments of these ideas, by the breakaway focus groups, could be observed. Their interrogation of the points identified in the brainstorm activity demonstrated the depth and range of opinions of the ABET practitioners on ABET and how ABET is expected to be a vehicle in the new South Africa.

3.1.1 Formulating a questionnaire

The breakaway groups, by thinking through plenary workshops, created a detailed theoretical framework of the issues so that an investigation into ABET by utilising a questionnaire. The issues which emerged and were to form the basis of questionnaire construction where the group was required to formulate questions pertaining to the broad themes as indicated below.

What is ABET?	How to improve ABET?
● Teaching methodology	● Government inputs
● Literacy and Numeracy	● Teaching methodology

• Second language skills	• Training methodology
• Life skills	• Business skills
• Business skills	• Problem of time
• Parenting	• Capacity building
• Community building	
• New South Africa	

3.2 Doing research

From the discussions, the students had gained a sense of the following:

- How to compile a questionnaire
- How to do field work
- What is data capturing?³
- How to analyse data
- Report writing
- Report-rewrite (by the co-ordinators)
- Presentation of report

The ABET students/researchers were fully involved in each of the above steps, with explanations given by the co-ordinators why things were done in a

particular way. In addition, the students/researchers were provided with notes which they could use during the fieldwork and later as a source of reference.

4 Conclusion

The programme achieved its aims. It gathered evidence about the impact of the **ABET programme** in the Northern Province and it also achieved its aims insofar as the development of local capacity. However, as with all research exercises included in this publication, the research project also had its downside - but this is the substance of another paper.

Footnote

1. The academics involved in the training had already undertaken statistical analysis of the questionnaires and this data was presented to the students for them to interpret the findings and to suggest recommendations.
2. These co-ordinators are employed on a contract basis for the Unisa ABET Institute In this province, most co-ordinators are employed in a full time capacity as government officials in the Provincial education department The evaluation exercise targeted them specifically in an endeavour to build provincial capacity but also to enable interventions to be made via the recommendations of the

research exercise.

3 Although the data processing was done by the University, the students nevertheless needed to gain a sense of this process.

