DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 397 038 SP 036 758

AUTHOR Rothenberg, Julia Johnson
TITLE As Ye Sow, So Shall Ye Reap: From Consultant to Collaborator in the Development of a Teacher Preparation Program in Lesotho.
INSTITUTION Ohio State Univ., Columbus.; State Univ. of New York, Albany. Research Foundation.
SPONS AGENCY Agency for International Development (Dept. of State), Washington, D.C.; Creative Associates International, Inc., Washington, DC.; World Bank, Washington, D. C.
PUB DATE Apr 96
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New York, NY, April 8-12, 1996).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Consultation Programs; *Cultural Influences; Curriculum Development; Developing Nations; *Educational Change; Elementary Education; Faculty Development; Folk Culture; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Inservice Teacher Education; *Story Telling; Teacher Collaboration; *Teacher Education Programs; *Teacher Educator Education; Teacher Student Relationship; *Teaching Methods; Technical Assistance
IDENTIFIERS Folk Music; *Lesotho; Primary Education Project

ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the author's 4-week consultation with faculty of the Lesotho National Teachers College as part of the Primary Education Project which provided technical assistance with issues of primary age schooling in the Kingdom of Lesotho. The consultant worked with 12 faculty members of the National Teachers College in a process that evolved from a standard consultation to a rewarding collaboration. Emphasis was on developing participants own latent knowledge of teaching primary school-age children and to introduce newer principles about teaching literary and numeracy. Lesotho's previous pattern of primary education and the training of primary teachers was based on neo-colonial ideas of European educational structures. Teacher preparation had focused on knowledge of subject matter rather than on pedagogy. Language and cultural differences initially caused difficulties for participants but the value of an active learning approach became apparent as the faculty began to integrate traditional rhyming songs, storytelling, and epic/historical poetry into teacher preparation curriculum development. Other issues covered during the project were multilevel planning using the environment in teaching, coping with extremely large classes, and the impact of historical customs. Appendices include lesson plans for storytelling and teaching numerical concepts through making traditional foods; and guidelines for conducting case studies on multi-structural teaching, mixed age group teaching, and the classroom without desks or benches. (Contains 10 references.) (ND)

AS YE SOW, SO SHALL YE REAP:
From Consultant to Collaborator in the Development of a Teacher Preparation program in Lesotho

Julia Johnson Rothenberg Ph.D.

The Sage Colleges

Troy NY 12180

This paper was as a result of work accomplished for Creative Associates International, Inc.

Special thanks to R.M. Clark, I. Matooane, M. Mobe, M. Hooker, M. Mabejane, M. Moeletsi, M. Ramakatane, M. Lesoli, P. Tsephe, M. Lehloenya, M.J. Pitso, Dir. Oliphant and Asst.Dir. Sekonyela, National Teachers College, University of the Kingdom of Lesotho, and to May Rihani and Cynthia Prather of Creative Associates International

Telephone: 518-270-2498
e-mail: rothej@sage.edu

"As ye sow, so shall ye reap"

This paper begins with the song that my colleagues sang to me on the last day of a four week consultation at the Lesotho National Teachers College, of the University of the Kingdom of Lesotho. The consultation was part of the Primary Education Project, funded by USAID and The World Bank through a grant to Ohio State University and State University of New York Research Foundation. The Primary Education Project worked with many issues of primary age children's schooling in Lesotho. These ranged from assistance in financial planning in a fledgling democracy, to assessment and evaluation in the villages and city schools, to higher education financial and curricular planning. As part of the Primary Education Project, the teacher preparation program in early childhood was a national goal set by the Kingdom of Lesotho and the grant project.

My consultation was an unusual one in this project, since most of the PEP work was directed towards technical assistance rather than to direct instruction. There had been a previous project that involved substantial financial aid which had resulted in numerous products but little substantive change. Hence the current Primary Education Project has worked largely in technical assistance with administrators of educational programs.

My purpose in writing this paper is to demonstrate the change from a routine, albeit adventuresome, consultation to a productive and rewarding collaboration among colleagues. The process hopefully demonstrates a nascent critical pedagogy on our parts. By this I mean that my colleagues and I developed a way of looking at our own learning ...This is a narrative of my participation and my understandings about the participation of others. It is not "political" in the sense that many have written under the aegis of critical pedagogy (e.g. Giroux, 1988). I was, however, conscious of the hierarchical positions of which we all were aware in the consultation, which I shall describe. Initially I was probably less aware than my colleagues about this hierarchy. In addition, my thinking has certainly been influenced by Freire and his colleagues' works, specifically about such hierarchies as were present in the initial consultation (Freire, 1970, Shor & Freire, 1987).

I worked with the Faculty of the National Teachers College to develop their own latent knowledge of teaching elementary school-aged children as well as some newer principles about teaching literacy and numeracy. Essentially this was a competent faculty and administration which for a number of reasons had been given a task beyond their capabilities. The reasons clustered

around the background of the faculty. Most of the faculty had been prepared, by education and experience, for teaching and teacher preparation in secondary school subjects, such as biology and literature which they had majored in during college and beyond. These backgrounds were far different from that demanded of them for preparing teachers of young children.

Background on the Kingdom of Lesotho

The year of my consultation was a continuously tumultuous one for Lesotho. Lesotho became independent of Great Britain in 1970, with a constitutional monarchy. All land in Lesotho is held in trust and distributed for the Sotho tribe by the King and no one but Sotho are permitted to own land. From 1986 to 1994, however, the consitutional monarchy was overshadowed by a strong military regime. Multiparty elections in 1994 restored the constitutional monarchy of King Moshoeshoe II. The military leaders continued to threaten, leading to various struggles between police and military with gunfight battles from the mesas on both sides of the middle of the capitol, Maseru, site of the National Teachers College. In the spring several government ministers were kidnapped by the military for a time. Immediately following my work in Lesotho, the military took over the

government again, a crisis that was resolved in favor of the constitutional monarchy with strong pressures from their neighbors, especially Nelson Mandela in South Africa as well as the governments of Zimbabwe, Botswana and Swaziland. PEP Project staff were evacuated to South Africa for the crisis period. During my stay, gunfire at night was commonplace and the U.S. compound was ringed with barbed wire and armed sentries at entrance/exit gates.

The Consultation

The beginning of my work involved analysis of Lesotho's previous patterns of primary education and the training of their primary teachers. Before leaving for Africa, I received copies of the curricula the Faculty had already written. As I studied these documents, and even more so when the Faculty described their elementary schooling, it became evident that Lesotho's primary education had been based on neo-colonial ideas of European educational structures. Classes (usually very large) in all schools were totally teacher-centered, emphasizing rote memorization, passive learning, conformity and obedience. As in many other countries, including the United States, teacher preparation focused on knowledge of the subject matter rather than on pedagogy. This approach to primary school pedagogy was

not acceptable to the grant project administrators and they asked me to help. The Faculty had failed to develop an acceptable primary teacher preparation program, a situation that was not the best basis for a successful collaboration.

My pedagogical and psychological assumptions are based on ideas of active participation and interaction among children and their environments, principles developed by Piaget (1979), Bruner (1973) and others which have been described as "active, experiential, meaningful, inquiry-oriented, and equitable" (Ukpokodu, 1990,p.32). So I knew that analysis would be required of the possibilities within the Lesotho educational community, but I had no idea of those possibilities. My only clue was some literature I found in the library at the Netherlands Institute of Advanced Study where I visited on the way to Africa, concerning an epic oral tradition in Lesotho village life. As it turns out, community life in much of Lesotho is conduscive to pedagogical techniques in elementary education such as use of literature, poetry, music, and active learning interactions with the natural world.

This faculty in a small struggling African nation has a great deal to offer their students and to the people who come to

work with them. As in many group projects, the elements of knowledge and understanding were not immediately known by all, nor were the elements that needed to be learned. During the process, a great deal of all those elements - knowledge, understanding, need for knowledge - became clearer. Twelve college faculty, and an Irish consultant (a primary mathematics teacher) took part with me in the project over a one month period on a daily basis. Meetings took place within the National Teachers College classrooms in the capitol city of Maseru and environs, and in the surrounding villages and mountains. I took extensive daily notes on the ongoing process, transcribed these notes at the end of each day and analyzed the material. The process material was then directly used for decision-making.

I began the month by teaching them, initally about multi-level planning in large classes and interactive uses of literature and the natural environment. My plan was to begin each day with a teaching session which the faculty would then apply to a hopefully burgeoning pedagogical program. The college administration brought us coffee, tea and lunch catered by a Maseru restaurant, so that we stayed together all day. The college administration told me that lunch would be provided so that faculty members would not leave and take extensive lunch

breaks, going to the bank and running errands.

The project was extremely difficult work for the faculty. The Sesotho/English part of the Faculty was having an especially hard time with the literacy pedagogy program. Sesotho is taught alone through the first five years and then English is also taught to all students. Although all the faculty speak English, it is of course a second (or beyond) language and the pedagogy of teaching it is complicated at best. Most of the Sotho also speak Afrikaans since the Orange Free State is next door to the west (just over the border from Maseru), and the language has often been an economic necessity. They greeted the demise of the use of Afrikaans on South African television with glee. Their own local television station broadcasts in Sesotho and English. Many of the faculty also speak Zulu, again because of the nearness of the Zulu former homelands (QuaZulu/ Natal is on the eastern side of Lesotho).

The Irish consultant/teacher immediately became a major facilitator because she had developed a strong relationship with the math and science faculty who were already beginning to work on principles of active learning. Then, early one morning, I heard the math/science group of Faculty singing arithmetic rhymes

in Sesotho. I requested that they teach me the songs which they did with delight, and of course, merriment at my pronunciation (especially "the click"). The next day the group worked on ways to incorporate such teaching (use of traditional music in teaching subject matter) into the teacher preparation program. I then asked the Faculty to teach me important phrases in Sesotho as a way both of my own learning and also of discussing ways of teaching language. We began to collaborate on the development of our knowledge together, mine of elemental aspects of a new language, theirs and mine of ways to prepare teachers to teach children. I think that my becoming a learner, and my sense of myself as a learner with them changed the nature of our work together.

Shortly after they began to work with me on learning Sesotho, one faculty member revealed to me that she had grave concerns about the teaching methods in the Lesotho schools after she had completed her master's degree in the U.S. three years earlier, with a thesis based on making children's books out of one's own and one's students' experiences. The next day she brought in a "big book" written and illustrated by her, about her trip to the United States to come to graduate school. Her fellow faculty members had never seen this and were astounded. We began

to talk about the values of such projects and people's concerns that we were implicitly rejecting their own elementary school experiences. As with other Africans, success in the neo-colonial school system of memorization and obedience had been closely tied to their overall success (Jansen, 1990). For some faculty, these experiences were inextricably tied with religious schooling as well.

One science professor made an impassioned plea for active learning at this point. She described, in some detail, her ideas for children's interactions with the Lesotho environment, as well as the pressing need for agricultural conservation and erosion control. Another professor said he had heard about these ideas from Peace Corp volunteers who were teaching villages to raise vegetables year round using cold frames (their climate is similar to the American mountainous southwest around Santa Fe, New Mexico). The science and mathematics group began rapidly to write an interactive, inquiry-based approach to teaching their subjects to children.

I suggested that the professor with her book present the way that she would use the book in teaching. When she did so, I wondered aloud (based on my scrap of knowledge) if this approach

did not have something in common with Lesotho's oral poetry tradition. The group was astounded, delighted and galvanized into action. A decision was made by the faculty to incorporate the development of storytelling and epic/historical poetry into teacher preparation. We had one of the first in a series of discussions about how to teach people to tell stories and then to connect the stories to other teaching events. Appendix 1 gives an example of our work in this area.

A good deal of our continuing work focussed on helping teachers to use their environment. For example, a series of lessons was developed around making corn meal mush or *papa* in Sesotho (see Appendix 2). During this period, we sang a lot. I arrived at the campus early each morning, and I often sang to myself without realizing it. The faculty would begin to arrive, and from down the hall I would hear people joining me in song (and then I would realize I was singing to myself). I began to do this more consciously and we shared many new songs with each other, including a number of mathematics rhyming songs. It was very cold in the mornings without heat in the buildings, so one morning I sang and acted out "Heads, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes..." and discovered from my colleagues that the song is also a popular children's song in Sesotho.

In the process of working on these curricula for pedagogy, the faculty brought up new issues, in particular the conditions under which schooling takes place in the villages. We decided to develop case studies based on the problems presented, for example, very large (75 children) classes in one room. Another problem is the historic custom of children leaving the village to go to the mountains with the sheep and goat herds at a point in the year when the grass is better in the mountains. Children may be as young as nine when they do this, and they simply leave the school. One professor talked about taking his school books with him to the mountain *rondavel* or small house, but this is a rare occurrence for most young shepherds. I felt that multilevel planning was an obvious route here for teacher development and we worked on ways that teachers could learn these planning techniques. Eventually we wrote a series of case studies, designed to be used in teachers' classes, with several suggested solutions to be discussed after teachers tried to work them out (Appendix 3).

This narrative is not meant to disguise difficulties, which were real enough. For one, at least two of the group were attending under duress and were involved in a lot of political

unrest at the university. Second, about a third of the faculty also taught courses during our sessions. Teachers come to the campus from the villages each winter (July-August) in groups to take coursework in pedagogy. In some ways this was convenient, because the faculty tried out new methods as we wrote them. But it was an added work burden also for these professors.

At the end of the sessions, the faculty took me on a long bus trip, high into the mountains to an inn. On our way home, we sang again, and finally, they sang the gospel song, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap."

Discussion

> *Reality happens to be like a landscape possessed of an infinite number of perspectives, all equally veracious and authentic. The sole false perspective is that which claims to be the only one there is.*
>
> Jose Ortego Y Gasset
> (cited in Conrad, 1989, p. 215)

This is my narrative, my perspective on a process, a series of events during my stay in Lesotho. It behooves me to search my consciousness as a researcher since the basics to narrative study such as triangulation and verification are not possible at the moment of my writing. Although I shared many of these reflections with my Sotho colleagues, there is still much more here that is my story. Of course I wanted to feel satisfied and

successful with the tasks, and my initial fright and concern at the size of it certainly added to the intensity of the experience. So too did the general feeling of fear in Lesotho at the time, among us all. Sartre has said that we are always putting the best face on things, even when we think we are being the most devastatingly realistic about ourselves (1979). My feeling is that the "best face" for my point of view here reflects more the quantity than the quality of our mutual learning. In substance, the work we produced may not be as good as it seemed at the time.

M. Grumet, in her eloquent discussion of autobiography as research, talks about the "authenticity" of first person narrative (1987, p. 321). At the same time she relates Sartre's philosophical position that we should not confuse familiarity with knowledge (1979). These are important points about narrative, and I take them seriously in regard to understanding whether we all developed as learners together. Memory may not be the real thing, no matter how careful the notes and the analysis that I have done. However, in trying to become a better teacher and to develop better communities of learners around the world, my narrative of experience is inextricably bound with whatever is

real.

As Grumet says, "the space and time of our lives are not merely a priori categories but are conditions that we share with other people" (1987, p.321). A narrative experience is one that attempts to describe that space and time in a meaningful way for an episode in the course of one's life. For this narrative, this story of a particular time and place, helps me to change my work as an educator and researcher -- to clearer examination, deeper and more analytical reflection, further and more constant looking at the hierarchical structures of teaching and learning.

References

Bruner, J. (1973). Beyond the information given. NY: Norton.

Conrad, C.F. (1989). Meditations on the ideology of inquiry in higher education: Exposition, critique and conjecture. The Review of Higher Education, 12, 199-220.

Durham, F.(1992). Cultural history of a curriculum: The search for salience. Journalism Educator, Winter, 14-20.

Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogy of the oppressed. NY Seabury.

Grumet, M.R. (1987). The politics of personal knowledge. Curriculum Inquiry, 17, 3, 319-329.

Jansen, J. (1990). In search of liberation pedagogy in South Africa, J. of Education, 172, 2, 62-71.

Piaget, J. (1979). Science of education and the psychology of the child. NY: Penguin.

Sartre, J-P. (1972). The transcendence of the ego, trans. F. Williams and R. Kirkpatrick. NY: Octogon.

Shor, I. & Freire, P. (1987). A pedagogy for liberationL Dialogues on transforming education.

Westport CT: Bergin-Garvey.

Ukpokodu, N. (1994). Critical Pedagogy, Social Studies and the Young Child, September/October, 30-33.

Appendix 1

Story Telling

Goals: To increase vocabulary

To become skilled in observation in both numerical concepts and verbal concepts

Objectives for children: At the end of this series of lessons the child will be able to:

1. label and describe objects used in the stories
2. model the characters using puppetry
3. role play the characters and improvise on the story, perhaps wearing costumes
4. mime characters and actions
5. draw scenes from the stories
6. listen to stories, told by the teacher, other students and from the tape recorder and/or resource people
7. Tell stories themselves to other students and the teacher
8. verbally respond to questions from the teacher and the other students about the stories

Teachers Activities	**Pupil Activities**
Teacher tells stories to students	pupils listen attentively
Resource person tells story	
Instructs students to tell the stories to each other	retell the story to other pupils
Instructs students to develop new stories based on the original story	role-playing all activities in the story
highlights points s/he wants to talk about to the whole class	
Dramatization	
organizes pupils to make costumes	
trains pupils in reciting some parts of the story	
	make relevant costumes with materials at hand
observe students dramatizing the story and give feed back	
	memories about the story -- repeat parts correctly
helps students to add to dramatizing other possible roles in the stories	dramatize the stories

Appendix 2

MAKING TRADITIONAL FOODS: Teaching numerical concepts

Goal : Student Teachers will use the child's experiences to extract mathematical concepts and experiences. For example, in the following lesson plan, the Mosotho child's home experience is used to extract and reinforce the mathematical concepts of ordinal/cardinal number and temperature.

Objective 1: The teacher will cook papa with the children raising relevant questions that will extract the concepts.
Objective 2: The teacher will use appropriate methods of grouping, charting, and evaluating to develop and determine the children's knowledge of ordinal/cardinal number concepts and temperature concepts

Method 1. Lecture-demonstration and Using Questions

NOTE: This process may be a realistic making of papa with a stove or done with a teacher -made chart or "big book" in front of the class.

Step 1. Pour water into a pot.
-How much water will we need for our papa?
-how many people are in your family?
-how many people will you have at the meal?
(Allow for a good deal of discussion of this)

Step 2. Boil the water.
- why do we boil water?
-how long will it take to boil the water? (answers are not expected or required to be correct)

Step 3. Mealie Meal - put in a cup at a time: let's count
Step 4. Mix mealie meal into the boiling water by stirring
-Is it too thick? Is it too thin?
-(student teachers should expect much discussion of this and encourage much verbal participation)
Step 5. Wait until well cooked
- how long is that? (approximation answers are

encouraged)

Step 6. Discuss the taste, smell, texture with many descriptive words expected from the students

-how do you like your papa? Thick or thin? Fluffy or sticky?

Step 7. Serving: large, medium, small plates

- this integrates the mathematical concept of "relations" "belongs to"

-this plate belongs 'Ntate, this to "me, this one to ausi, ths one to abuti

-Why does 'Ntate get the biggest plate?

Step 8. Temperatures: who will want it hot, warm, cool?

FOLLOW UP

Method 2. Using the grouping method

Student teachers will make decisions about grouping method in order to practice this module with their pupils

-questions to be discussed are which methods are most appropriate for very large classes and for smaller classes

-groups may be formed for various activities using charts that the teacher and pupils have made

Group Suggestions

a. cooking station with utensils and corn meal, sand, etc. to determine how much papa is to be made for various numbers of people

b. groups to role play the making of the meal for example using an oven made from a large cardboard box, old pots, etc. and a dress-up box

c. story telling - children tell each other in groups or pairs a story about making papa, with illustrations or using the charts previously made. One or two students will tell the story and the other children will ask questions.

d. Finally, the large group can practise a song in Sesotho and/or English about the making of papa- children and the student teacher can make up the words and put them to a well known jingle.

CASE STUDY 1: Multi-standard teaching

Objectives: In completion of this case study, the student teacher will be able to

-create a classroom situation that encourages active participation

-adapt experiences and activities to group and/or individual needs

-choose appropriate instructional strategies, approaches and materials

-utilize materials in a manner that they contribute to a disciplined class

-use a variety of means to evaluate students' progress and to build this information into instructional planning

YOU HAVE JUST GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE. WHEN YOU GET EMPLOYED YOU ARE ASSIGNED TO TEACH STANDARDS 1-3. EACH CLASS HAS APPROXIMATELY 30 STUDENTS AND YOU HAVE ONE LARGE HALL IN WHICH TO TEACH. Explain and show by means of drawings how you would enhance the above objectives. Begin with a layout of the room, try out various arrangements, and then move to the other points about teaching each class and managing the whole group at the same time.

Guidelines on how to do this case study:
1. Visit schools of this type and others
2. Visit the library and look up books on classroom design
3. Interview experienced teachers
4. analyse and develop your own input, conclusions, and recommendations

What you should hand in: a compiled group of your work and findings

Case Study 2: Mixed-Age Group Teaching

Objectives: At the end of this case study student teachers will be able to:

-set the pace for learning

-group students according to level, regardless of age
-provide a climate for thinking, reasoning, and social participation
-keep both the developmental and individual needs of learners in mind
-design a classroom layout that utilizes children learning in groups

YOU ARE FACED WITH A LARGE GROUP OF STANDARD ONE CHILDREN WHO ARE COMPOSED OF THE FOLLOWING VARIABLES:

A. MIXED AGE, 6-10 YEARS
B. MIXED EXPOSURES e.g. RURAL AND URBAN, ELITE AND OTHERS
C. SOME STUDENTS HAVE PRE-SCHOOL EXPERIENCE AND OTHERS HAVE NONE, FIRST TIME IN SCHOOL

Guidelines:

As in the previous case, students should visit schools, interview teachers, and discuss the case with fellow student teachers.

Hand in all your compiled work and recommendations.

Case Study 3: The classroom without desks or benches (possibly outside)

Objectives: At the end of this case study the student teacher will be able to:
-improvise materials for students to sit on
-create an atmosphere that will not hinder students' physical development
-choose instructional strategies that will need a limited time for students to sit down

ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL YOU DISCOVER THAT YOUR CLASSROOM IS WITHOUT DESKS. EXPLAIN HOW YOU WOULD ENHANCE THE ABOVE OBJECTIVES. BE SURE TO USE DRAWINGS OF POSSIBLE CLASSROOM LAYOUTS.

Guidelines: Same as above