

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**TEACHER EDUCATORS' PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT: PERCEPTIONS AND
PRACTICES OF THE HIGHER
DIPLOMA PROGRAM (HDP)
IN ADAMA UNIVERSITY**

**BY
ADDISU LEYEW**

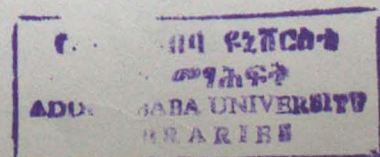


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DIPLOMA PROGRAM (HDP)
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Addis Ababa University Schools of Graduate Studies

Teacher Educators' Professional Development: Perceptions and Practices of the Higher Diploma Program (HDP) in Adama University

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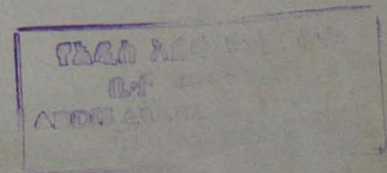
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ABSTRACT

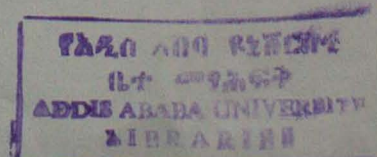
“May there never rise in me the notion that I know enough, but give me the strength and leisure and zeal to enlarge my knowledge”.

Maimonides

Professional development is experiencing a vogue in educational arena. It was the main objective of this study to understand teacher educators' perceptions and practices of HDP, a professional development program for teacher educators, in Adama University. The research participants were teacher educators of the University that attended the program. As a qualitative case study research, interview and observation were dominantly used as data collection strategies. Seventeen teacher educators were interviewed and nine classroom lessons and other nine workshop lessons were observed.

The analysis of these interviews and observations enabled me to construct several meanings regarding the program. Participants' zest was reduced by the mandatory nature of the program and their effort of trying to get the best out of the program was emasculated by several disappointing incidents such as the competence of tutors and leaders and the elongated schedule. Besides, some activities that are included in the program are found encouraging dishonesty and there appeared a disparity among participants regarding the value of school placement. In spite of the pitfalls in the process, however, participants eventually perceived the relevance of most of the facets of the program.

With regards to the translation of the facets of HDP into practice, I came to understand that the program hardly transformed the teaching/learning process in the University. Generally, it is concluded that HDP, as a professional development program, is bureaucratized, decontextualized and is considered merely as informative. Hence, I contend that there should be a critical stance of the program vis-à-vis the teachers' perception and role, the context and its influence in the teaching/ learning process.



CHAPTER ONE

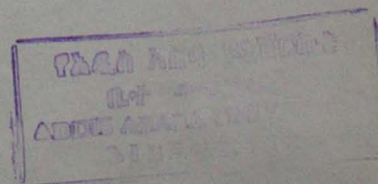
I. INTRODUCTION

Teacher education, like any other field in the 21st century, is evolving rapidly. It has become a field subject to differing perspectives. These perspectives usually arise out of the challenge as to how best beginning teachers can be guided, educated and trained in acquiring the skills necessary to provide quality educational experiences for the students in their classes. The current wave of change has focused on as to how to address the complexities, ambiguities and uncertainties of teachers' work and of learning to teach (Kane, 2002) and thereby enhance the quality of teaching in schools.

In this vein, Avalos (2002) stated that teacher education should move away from preparing teachers simply to manage a curriculum and produce specific learning results and focus on leading to an understanding of the wider social and cultural world in which teachers work. Teacher education programs, according to Long and Reigle (2002), should aim at developing teachers who have the capacity to consider evidence according to the reasoning processes and critical methods accepted by the discipline involved.

Although research findings and consequent reform efforts on the different aspects of teacher education like curriculum development and institutional structure are prevalent, little has been done on the competencies of teacher educators (Guskey, 1988) which is one of the key issues in educating quality teachers and ultimately effecting quality teaching and learning in schools.

Regarding the competencies of teacher educators, Taal (1996) stated that one aspect of pre-service teacher education which seems to elude institutions in Africa is the ability and willingness of teacher educators to go beyond traditional curricula to encompass new notions that would uplift the teaching profession to levels and standards of



equivalent professions. In a related vein, Kane (2002) contends that in order to prepare teachers who are able to think critically about their work as teachers within the current political, cultural and social contexts that seek to erode their professional autonomy, teacher educators themselves need to be prepared to examine their own underlying theories, beliefs and assumptions about teaching and teacher education, and be explicit about these with their students. This indicates that teacher educators have a responsibility to lead by example through grounding their own work in critical examination of the scholarship and practice of teaching.

When it comes to teacher educators in Ethiopia, Livingstone (2001) wrote that there is no arrangement for preparing teacher educators for their professional role, albeit there is a need for them to be of high quality, be highly competent and be educated for the specifics of their roles. He further explained that teacher educators in Ethiopia mainly come directly from secondary schools and assume their new roles with little or no preparation for what is a quite different role. Fisher and Swindless (1998) cited in Worku (2002) also indicated that most teachers in Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia were not given trainings in teaching methodologies. It has also been stated that current profiles of teacher educators do not match the profiles for teacher educators developed by Ministry of Education (MOE) especially regarding the practical competencies such as learner-centered teaching methods, and the greatest obstacle to improvement of quality in teacher education programs is the lack of professional development of teacher educators and their lack of knowledge of professional areas (TESO Handbook, 2003). Cognizant of the status quo, TESO Teacher Educators Subcommittee suggested a way of professionalizing teacher educators in 2003. As stipulated in the draft outline, a Higher Diploma Program (HDP) in professional teacher education for teacher educators is vital since they couldn't form the vanguard or spearhead of educational initiatives and

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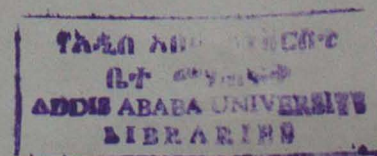
innovations (TESO Teacher Educators Subcommittee, 2003). Therefore, this study is geared towards understanding teacher educators' reactions to this action of professionalization.

1.1. The Problem and Its Theoretical Background

Professionals continually learn on the job because their work entails engagement in a succession of cases, problems and projects which they have to learn about. Although there exists a voluminous literature on the professional development of school-teachers, the professional development of teacher educators is relatively a recent issue. In fact, some argue that the professional development of teacher educators doesn't differ greatly from that of school-teachers (Villegas-Reimers, 2003) and I also share this viewpoint and a great deal of literature used in this paper relates to teachers in general. Others like Guskey (1988) argue that the professional development of teacher educators is an aspect that has been given less attention. In spite of such arguments, the importance of developing teacher educators professionally is indispensable (Pollard, 2005; Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Ho, *et al*, 2001; Diez, 1996; Eraut, 1994).

Pollard (2005) stated that professional development offers a great deal of personal fulfillment and enables teachers to build higher levels of expertise if it is undertaken in a sustained way with like-minded colleagues, when mutual support and critical friendship are easily available. Villegas-Reimers (2003) has also stated that professional development experiences have a noticeable impact on teachers' work, both in and out of the classroom, especially considering that a significant number of teachers throughout the world are under-prepared for their profession.

✓ In Ethiopia, there might have been some efforts to upgrade teachers' and teacher educators' professional competence through



workshops, seminars and short-term trainings. Nevertheless, a dedicated course of professional development, Higher Diploma Program (HDP), for teacher educators was developed in 2003. "The aim of the Higher Diploma Program (HDP) for teacher educators is to improve the quality of education through a licensing program that will develop the skills and professionalism of teacher educators" (HDP for Teacher Educators Handbook, 2004: 5). In rationalizing the need for the program, TESO Teacher Educators Subcommittee (2003: 8) unequivocally stated:

... the program is planned to include real experience (situated learning) of those key aspects of the effective teacher educators that are presently absent: it is interactive, models active learning, requires group working, promotes planning at an individual and combined level, action research, working with teachers and trying to make an effective conjunction of theory and practice.

This rationale and the handbook itself indicate that the program adopted a reflective practice approach and as such incorporates interrelated facets like active learning, action research, continuous assessment and school placement. Reflective practice is advocated by many educators (Pollard, 2005; Fish, 1995; Apel, 1993; Calderhead, 1988) for it enables self-directed growth as a professional; facilitates the linking of both theory and practice in education; and help to explicate the expertise of educators and subject it to critical evaluation. Pollard (2005) has identified seven key characteristics of reflective practice, which are summarized as follows:

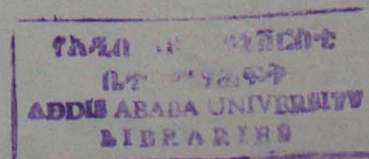
- It implies an active concern with aims and consequences as well as means and technical efficiency.
- It is applied in a cyclical or spiraling process in which teachers monitor, evaluate and revise their own practice continuously.
- It requires competence in methods of evidence-based classroom enquiry to support the progressive development of higher standards of teaching.

- It requires attitudes of open-mindedness, responsibility and whole heartedness
- It is based on teacher judgment, informed by evidence-based enquiry and insights from other research.
- Reflective teaching, professional learning and personal fulfillment are enhanced through collaboration and dialogue with colleagues.
- It enables teachers to creatively mediate externally developed frameworks for teaching and learning.

Reflective practice in general suggests a need to exercise and to continue to refine and develop not only simple skills but also one's dispositions, personality, professionalism, abilities and understandings in a world of professional practice that is fast changing (Fish, 1995).

Regardless of the rhetoric to this approach to teacher education, many teacher education programs however continue to reflect the technical rationality approach (Kane, 2002). An epistemology of technical rationality construes teachers as technicians delivering a prescribed curriculum and gives little credence to learning from and through experience (Schon, 1987). Kane (2002) also stated that the technicist construction of teaching and of learning to teach suggests that teachers should simply focus on a repertoire of basic teaching skills undergirded by a one dimensional notion of classroom pedagogy. From this point of view, professional development activities would be planned to provide teacher educators with prescribed skills and teaching recipes with the intention of improving practice.

The Higher Diploma Program, based on an epistemology of reflective practice, however, is believed to bring significant changes in teacher education in Ethiopia as it is the main part of overhauling the system. Nevertheless, the literature available questions the way such kinds of courses of professional development are offered and the perceptions of those concerned which could affect the attainment of the



objectives. Bell (1991) cited in Robinson (2002), for instance, stated that course-based models of professional development may be too theoretical, may not have practical application in the classroom, may be based on the choices of the providers, and may ignore teachers' expertise. Guskey (1988) also indicated that although many professional development programs for college instructors focused on improving practice, they nonetheless seemed to have low impact and were not regarded highly by the faculty members who had been participants. This indicates that even well-designed programs may not be welcomed by participants and may result in low impact. On the other hand, most educators (Day, 1987; Rudduck, 1988; McCulloch, et al., 2000) argue that educators may welcome professional development activities, but the way these activities are conducted is always contestable.

Day (1987), for instance, pointed out that while most educators are capable of recognizing the need for change and changing their practices, the extent to which change will be implemented will be limited by the psychological and social environment or context in which the educators work and by their perceptions. McCulloch, et al (2000) also argue that the best professional development programs should capitalize upon and consolidate intrinsic motivation, which would suggest that trainees should have some scope to choose what to learn, when and how. In their opinion, this is not usually possible in times of system-wide change where government imperatives drive professional learning. In other words, it is an argument that underscores the importance of gaining participants' sense of ownership for professional development activities which they are a part. Pertaining to this, Robinson (2002) stated that professional development must have meaning for participants and it is important that they identify with the process of development. Otherwise, the process the educator has undertaken to become licensed through professional development programs may initiate the educator into the world of bureaucracy and actually undermine the power to teach (Ayers, 1992 cited in Engvall, 1997).

Based on the grounds of such arguments on professional development, it was therefore the purpose of this study to understand

participants' (teacher educators') perceptions and practices of the Higher Diploma Program (HDP), a professional development program, in Adama University (AU). Specifically, the objectives of this study were to:

- i) understand participants' (teacher educators') perceptions of the Higher Diploma Program (HDP)
- ii) observe and then analyze the practice of participants vis-à-vis the facets of HDP.
- iii) explore the reasons of participants who quitted attending the program for doing so.

To attain these objectives, the research questions that were raised are:

- i) How do teacher educators who attended HDP perceive the program?
- ii) How are teacher educators who attended HDP practicing the facets of the program?
- iii) Why did some teacher educators quit attending the program?

1.2. Significance of the Study

Any research activity is carried out because it is believed that its findings/outcomes would be significant for the intended readers or stakeholders. This study is no exception. The results of this study are significant to:

- i) Higher Diploma leaders, tutors, coordinators and the University community at large by communicating meaning about HDP that has been conducted since 2003. The significance of the study lies in that it communicates how the program is perceived, conducted as perceived by the participants and put into effect.
- ii) researchers, policy-makers, officials by communicating knowledge about professional development pertinent to teacher educators. As professional development is experiencing a vogue these days, knowledge about it as implied from the descriptions in this study would be quite significant for those who are interested in it.

CHAPTER TWO

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Teacher Education Today

The education of teachers has always been problematic, a matter of contention and controversy, of competing models and paradigms. A paradigm that is currently advocated by many scholars (Schon, 1987; Smyth, 1989; Loughran, 1996; Beattie, 1997; Slick, 1997; Griffin, 1999; Villeges-Reimers, 2003) is the reflective practitioner approach to teacher education. Smyth (1987), for instance, stated that practitioner-generated knowledge that is embedded in and emerges out of action is coming to be seen increasingly as the bases for a new and emerging paradigm in the education of teachers. Pertaining to this, Slick (1997) pinpointed that teacher preparation programs that are student-centered, problem-based and interactive; that are built and generated on information and skills experienced in real and/or simulated situations; that are based on authentic assessment are those that make it possible for education to survive and flourish in the future. Beattie (1997) also argues that teacher education programs should be the arching frameworks through which the past horizon is reviewed and the future unraveled world is created by prospective teachers. He argues that programs of teacher education should take account of prospective teachers' prior experience and held knowledge which is vital for reflection. Regarding the best practices in teacher education, Griffin (1999) also forwarded that teacher education is best accomplished when it is context sensitive rather than exclusively or mainly abstract and unconnected to real life teaching and learning situations; ongoing rather than sporadic and disconnected in its components; cumulative in its intentions rather than having a set of features that do not lead to and build upon one another; and reflective rather than prescriptive and promoted as a set of accepted truths.

Such arguments and viewpoints subscribe to the paradigmatic shift from the concept of teaching that suggests it as exhibiting a set of behaviors toward one that views teaching as requiring complex thought and decision-making within situations of uncertainty and diverse context. These notions of the complexity of teaching and the variability of the context work together to help justify the view of the teacher as a thinking, decision-making, reflective and autonomous professional. In this vein, Richardson (1999) stated that teacher education is a professional experience which requires preparing students in actions, intentions, habits of mind, ways of thinking about students, educational contexts and incidents, and understanding about the teaching/learning process, and therefore, the focus should be on developing ways of thinking and exposure to many different strategies.

In Ethiopia, the general objective of teacher education is to prepare teachers who will be able to attain the objectives of the Education and Training Policy (TESO Handbook, 2003). Specifically, as stated in the TESO Handbook, it aims at:

- Producing teachers who are academically qualified, professionally skilled, attitudinally and ethically committed to the profession.
- Preparing teachers who can confidently promote active learning and the development of problem-solving skills through a learner-centered approach using a curriculum where content and methods are integrated.
- Producing professionally responsible and dependable teachers aware of their constitutional rights and obligations, their social responsibilities and who are committed to the professional code of ethics and values and to equity in gender, nationalities, and urban-rural settings.

- Establishing a system and culture of continuous teacher development program from pre-service to in-service education and training using diverse mode of delivery.
- Preparing teachers who can effectively apply continuous assessment and evaluation to students' learning, and have basic knowledge and application of action research etc.

In order to achieve these objectives, TESO endorsed a multifaceted program of reform in teacher education with the view that the improvement of teacher education is the main driver to improve quality of education. As stated in the TESO Handbook (2003), the program of reform is both extensive and radical in the Ethiopian context. It reaches into all areas of pre-service teacher education, continuing professional development of teachers who are in service, the professionalization of teacher educators, selection for teacher education program and into the very system for organizing and advancing teacher education itself.

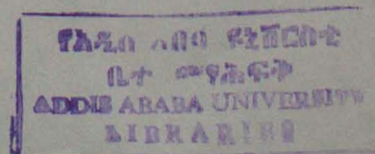
Nevertheless, the focus of this study is on one of these multifaceted programs of reform: professionalizing teacher educators.

2.2. Teacher Educators' Professional Development

Professional development refers to the development of a person in his or her professional role. More specifically, it is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching. As such, it includes formal experiences, such as attending workshops and professional meetings, mentoring etc and informal experiences such as reading professional publications, watching television documentaries etc (Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

These days, professional development, according to Villagas-Reimers (2003), is characterized by the following features:

- It is based on constructivism rather than on a transmission-oriented model.



- It is perceived as a long term process as it acknowledges the fact that teachers learn over time.
- It is perceived as a process that takes place within a particular context.
- A teacher is conceived of as a reflective practitioner
- It is perceived as a collaborative process.

Research evidence shows that professional development that is based on these features has an impact on teachers' beliefs and behavior (Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Eraut, 1994; Rudduck, 1988). However, professional development programs that specifically address teacher educators have been given less attention, albeit it is getting momentum recently. Hernandez (1988) cited in Villages- Reimers (2003), for instance, stated that teacher educators should model and illustrate a variety of teaching methods, techniques and processes as their work has a strong influence on the work of teachers, and therefore, they need to be educated in pedagogy. McCall (1988) and Chin and Russell (1998) both cited in Villegas-Reimers (2003) also underscored the importance of teacher educators' role in the improvement of effective and successful teacher professional development as there exists a relationship between the professional development of teacher educators, of teachers and of educational reforms.

In a related vein, Labaree (1992) argues that one cannot professionalize teachers without professionalizing teacher educators because it is unreasonable to think that teachers can be successfully elevated to the status of high professionals by unprofessional teacher educators. He also contends that the professionalization of teacher educators raises the status of status-raisers, and it does so by promoting a science of teaching, which both affirms the academic professionalism of teacher educators and legitimizes the professional authority of teachers. A more conclusive statement regarding the status of teacher educators

and the need for their professional growth is forwarded by Howey and Zimpher (1999). They contend that the bedrock problem in teacher education is the existence of a vicious cycle of mediocre teachers teaching teachers who are in turn mediocre. This calls for, they suggest, a way of re-culturing of teacher education faculties especially with regard to improving their teaching over time.

Research findings regarding the impact of professional development programs on teacher educators' beliefs and behavior depict a variety of results. A study on the effect of professional development program, which included pedagogical and curricular knowledge for 36 hours over 12 weeks for university faculty, resulted in a positive outcome. At the end of the course, participants' thinking and knowledge about teaching was transformed as they were able to integrate their knowledge in more efficient ways; they had learned to perceive their teaching as a form of scholarship; and thus became much more reflective of their practices (Kreber, 1999 cited in Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Another study on the effect of seminars on teacher educators in the University of Bristol depicted that subject-teacher educators perceive themselves to be playing a fundamental role in the education of new teachers. The seminar resulted in teacher educators' behavior of supporting and challenging at every opportunity, helping student-teachers define the realities encountered in schools, communicating and filtering wide variety of theoretical and conceptual ideas and encouraging reflection, deliberation and experimentation (John, 1996).

On the other hand, Fischl and Hoz's (1993) cited in Kramarski and Court (2003) study showed that while the teacher educators' ideas and conceptions were quite stable, the programs did affect the content and structure of their conceptions. In other words, their attitudes did not change greatly, but their knowledge increased. In a similar vein, a study on professional development of pre-service teacher educators through learning about research by Kramarski and Court (2003) showed that the

level and kind of changes undergone by participants depend on their own backgrounds, identification and level of development. However, the study does not show specific accounts to such differences. With respect to trainees' perceptions of professional development programs, a study on American and English teachers revealed that activities which connect with their experience while at the same time extend and enlarge this experience are highly valued. That is, teachers seek alternative perspectives which both connect with the everyday world of teaching but also move beyond it (Holly, 1989).

In Ethiopia, a professional development program for teacher educators was endorsed as their competencies needed to realize the objectives of teacher education were found low. It is stated in the TESO Handbook that present teacher educators show distinct weaknesses in effectively implementing in their own teaching the practices of student-centered learning, assessment and active and participatory teaching. It further states that a program in these areas of practical, on the-job support and assistance for all will be provided and will sit alongside the Higher Diploma (TESO Handbook, 2003).

2.3. The Higher Diploma Program for Teacher Educators

After diagnosing the weak status of teacher educators, it was suggested that the quality of teacher educators be increased by means of a multi-faceted initiative. Firstly, as stated in the TESO Handbook, a licensing scheme would be put in place for these personnel whose competence is vital to the improvement of teacher education as a whole. Then, this licensing scheme would be implemented and all existing teacher educators would have to meet its requirements. The criterion of licensing would be the attaining of the Higher Diploma in Teacher Education (TESO Handbook, 2003).



The aim of the Higher Diploma Program (HDP), as stated in the Handbook of HDP for Teacher Educators (2004: 5), is “to improve quality of education in Ethiopia through a licensing program that will develop the skills and professionalism of teacher educators”. It was developed in 2003 to meet the identified needs of teacher educators and support the implementation of TESO program. It provides teacher educators with a practical program to support their development as effective teachers and reflective practitioners with enhanced professional status, able to model active learning and continuous assessment, manage change and make a difference in the education system (Handbook of HDP for teacher educators, 2004). This program is presented in a modular approach; the reflective teacher educator, developing active learning, improving continuous assessment and action research are the topics of the four modules and school experience is also one component of the program.

2.4. Facets of the Higher Diploma Program

2.4.1. The Reflective Teacher Educator

Reflection is one of the concepts in education that are subject to differing definitions and interpretations. It is conceptualized differently by different educators. Reflection is defined as a special form of problem-solving, thinking to resolve an issue which involved active chaining, a careful ordering of ideas linking each with its predecessors (Dewey, 1933 cited in Hatton and Smith, 1994); a critical evaluation of one’s own teaching in the light of alternative models of the nature, purposes and contexts of teaching (Calderhead, 1988); an action that is bounded with persistent and careful consideration of practice in the light of knowledge and beliefs, showing attitudes of open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness (Noffke and Brennan, 1988 cited in Hatton and Smith, 1994); a willingness to engage in constant self-appraisal and development that implies flexibility, rigorous analysis and social

awareness (Pollard,2005). Such concepts imply that the process of understanding and improving one's own teaching must start from reflection upon one's own experience and that the sort of wisdom derived entirely from the experience of others is impoverished (Zeichner, 1994).

As it can be deduced from these definitions, the essential nature of reflection is thinking about action. Such reflective thinking addresses practical problems, allowing for doubt and perplexity before possible solutions are reached (Hatton and Smith, 1994). This may involve processing while a group event is taking place or debriefing after a specific experience for the purpose of developing insights, in terms of a clearer understanding of the relationships between what took place, the purposes intended and difficulties which arose viewed within broader cultural and professional perspective (Pearson and Smith, 1985 cited in Haton and Smith, 1994).

Reflective teacher education has been argued on several grounds (Calderhead, 1988; Ashcroft, 1992; Ferraro, 2000; Hatton and Smith, 1994). Ferraro (2000), for instance, argues that reflective practice provides teachers with a deeper understanding of their own teaching style and ultimately, greater effectiveness as a teacher. It also provides for the validation of a teacher's ideas, beneficial challenges to tradition, the recognition of teaching as artistry and respect for diversity in applying theory to classroom practice. Reflective teaching, according to Ashcroft (1992), aims at promoting critical enquiry and encourages teachers continuously to examine their assumptions during practice and develop the qualities that will sustain this as a life long activity. She also stated that reflective teaching enables practitioners to construct their own theories in action.

In a similar vein, Loughran (1996) argues that developing reflective practitioners in pre-service programs is a worthwhile endeavor. As he points out, it requires teacher educators to use reflection to guide and inform their own practice and, in so doing, to explicitly model this for

their students. Through this approach, he contends, the relationship between the modeling of reflective practice and its development in, and use by, student teachers can be explored.

Donald Schon, the prominent figure regarding the concept of reflective practice, has identified components or levels of reflective practice. These are knowing-in-action, reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action (Schon, 1987).

- **Knowing-in-action**- this is the ordinary practical knowledge. It is tacit in the sense that it is revealed by action, but cannot be described, it is the knowing that one manifests in the doing, the knowing one builds into and revealed by one's performance of everyday routines of action (Newman, 1999). According to Schon (1987), descriptions of knowing-in-action are always constructions; they are always attempts to put it into explicit, symbolic form and knowing suggests the dynamic quality of knowing-in-action, which when one describes it, he/she converts to knowledge-in-action.
- **Reflection- in-action**- In an attempt to preserve the constancy of one's usual patterns of knowing-in-action, he/she responds to it by reflection (Newman, 1999). Thus, reflection-in-action suggests reflecting in the midst of action without interrupting it (Schon, 1987). This involves simultaneous reflecting and doing, implying that the professional has reached a stage of competence where she/he is able to think consciously about what is taking place and modify actions virtually instantaneously (Hatton and Smith, 1994). Schon's reflection-in-action, according to Altrichter and Posch (1989) cited in Hatton and Smith (1994) is characterized as part of the artistry or intuitive knowledge derived from professional experience and includes engaging in a reflective conversation with oneself, shaping the situation in terms of the reflector's frame of

reference, while consistently leaving open the possibility of reframing by employing techniques of holistic appraisal.

- **Reflection-on-action**- this is another way of reflection and suggests thinking back on what one has done in order to discover how his/her knowing-in-action may have contributed to an unexpected outcome (Schon, 1987).

Cognizant of the merits of reflective practice in the teaching profession, educators insist on promoting reflective practice in teacher education programs. Ashcroft (1992), for instance, argues that the preparation of teachers for highly skilled and complex role is a major challenge for teacher educators today. This complexity, she pinpoints, requires the development of new ways of educating teachers and therefore what is needed is the development of methods to enable teachers to experience the process of critical reflection so as to enable them to research educational problems and contexts. Beattie (1997) also argues that prospective teachers need to see and experience the process of reflective teaching and enquiry into their own teaching in their lives as students of teaching, so that they can learn to teach this way with their own students. To teach them otherwise, he argues, is to disenfranchise and disempower them, providing them only with distractions which keep them from addressing real issues, and frustrate and delay their professional development.

The teacher educator's role in promoting reflective teaching is therefore paramount. Loughran (1996) also pinpointed that the role of the teacher educator becomes important if the purpose for the implementation of reflective practice is to be fully realized. He contends that it is not enough to include structures to encourage reflection, teacher educators must embrace them in appropriate ways to ensure that they do indeed serve the function for which they are intended. Regarding this, Ferraro (2000) pinpointed that teacher educators can

most effectively coach student-teachers in reflective practice by using students' personal histories, dialogue journals, and small and large group discussions about their experiences to help students reflect upon and improve their practices. Smylie, et al., (1999) also pinpointed that teacher educators must model the forms of collaborative work expected of teachers and develop in their students capacities for inquiry, analysis and evaluation as they model these modes of thinking in their own teaching. To do so, their perceptions of and competencies in such reflective activities need to be examined. John's (1996) research on the effect of seminars on teacher educators' beliefs and practices in the University of Bristol depicted that subject-teacher educators perceive themselves to be playing a fundamental role in the education of new teachers. In their seminars, teacher educators act as role models, supporting and challenging at every opportunity; they question, clarify, comment and criticize; they help student teachers define the realities encountered in schools as well as helping them account for the discrepancies and inconsistencies.

No matter how paramount reflective practice is, it is subjected to criticism like any other concept of education. Clift et al., (1990) cited in Ferraro (2000), for instance, cautioned that reflective teaching in teacher education programs focuses on the process of reflective practice while sacrificing important content in teacher education. Fenwick (2003) also argues that reflective practice sanctions reason as a disciplinary force controlling and denigrating emotion, body, intuition, the unconscious and reactions-all the ambivalent messiness of daily practice and the knowledge embedded in it. Swada cited in Fenwick (2003) also contends that reflection as mental processing of an event reinforces a conduit understanding of learning, relying on an old input-output metaphor. Moreover, Michelson (1996) cited in Fenwick (2003) argues that emphasis on knowledge constructed through reflection depersonalizes the learners as an autonomous rational knowledge-making self, a

disembodied processing mind rising above the dynamics and contingency of experience to extract and abstract knowledge from it. This, he argues, ignores the possibility that experience and knowledge are mutually determined and that the experience itself is knowledge-driven and cannot be known outside socially available meanings.

2.4.2. Developing Active Learning

Grabinger (1996: 665) defined active learning as “learning activities that, instead of transferring knowledge to students, engage students in a continuous, collaborative process of building and reshaping understanding as a natural consequence of their experiences and interactions with the world in authentic ways”. Active learning, according to Breslow (1999), means that students are involved in some kind of guided activity in class, so that they are doing something in the classroom besides sitting and listening to the instructor giving a lecture or watching him/her work problem on board. Teachers who use active learning, he further stated, believe that knowledge can be best gained through the instruction of students, not only with them, but also with one another and with the material being taught. To be actively involved, students must engage in such higher order thinking tasks as analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Bonwell and Eison, 1991); they must be engaged mentally and motivationally in a task, and they must have a clear responsibility and an effective role (Livingstone, 2001). Within this context, strategies promoting active learning can be defined as instructional activities involving students in doing things and thinking about what they are doing (Bonwell and Eison, 1991), and encompass a range of activities, from having students discuss a problem or a concept with one another during class to having them work on semester-long design projects in teams (Breslow, 1999); cooperative learning, debates,

drama, role playing and simulation, and peer teaching (Bonwell and Eisen, 1991).

The need for active learning in the classroom comes out of a view of knowledge known as constructivism (ICDR, 1999). A constructivist epistemology assumes that knowledge is produced or made meaningful through interaction between the learner and the world around him or her (Leu, 1998 cited in ICDR, 1999). It emphasizes analysis and interpretation, not just memorization, since the world is not seen as being made up of fixed facts. Instead, all knowledge is seen as being rather unstable depending on the interpretation of the observer or learner (ICDR, 1999; Knowles, 1998). Thus, it assumes that learning is an active process of constructing rather than acquiring knowledge and instruction is a process of supporting that construction rather than communicating knowledge (Duffy and Cunningham, 1996). In this model, therefore, the learners' task is to interact with the world around him/her, to understand, think critically, make linkages, interpret, draw conclusions and communicate about what he/she is learning, not just to absorb or accurately respect information. And the teachers' task is to use classroom methods that encourage students to be as active as possible by analyzing and interpreting knowledge through the use of higher order thinking skills, active learning, problem solving and communication based methods in their teaching (ICDR, 1999; Duffy and Cunningham, 1996).

Research evidence shows that active learning that emerges out of such an epistemology plays a significant role in the teaching/learning process (Smylie, et al., 1999; Breslow, 1999; Bonwell and Eisen, 1991; Orlich, et al., 2001). Smylie et al., (1999) found out that an active learning orientation towards one's teaching helps to recognize and solve the dilemmas teachers face since the learner is at the center of thinking. Without such an orientation, he concluded, teaching becomes primarily a technical endeavor, one that is more concerned with teacher behaviors



than with student experiences and outcomes. Spring et al's study (cited in Breslow, 1999) on the effect of active learning on achievement, persistence and attitudes among undergraduates in the University of Wisconsin showed that students who learned in active learning methods demonstrated greater achievement, persisted to a greater extent through courses and expressed more favorable attitude towards their courses than who learned in other methods. An experimental study by Pellegrino et al., (1999) cited in Grabinger (1996) revealed that the attitude of students, who learned in active learning methods, towards mathematics improved and believed that maths was more fun and interesting than the control groups. Moreover, Stoiber's (1991) study cited in Grabinger (1996) found out that active learning strategies in teacher education programs are more effective in developing reflective teachers than conventional instruction.

Other studies show that strategies promoting active learning are found to be superior in promoting the development of students' skills in thinking and writing (Bonwell and Eisen, 1991) and address different learning styles as active learning requires the use of many different learning strategies (Orlich, et al., 2001).

In the Ethiopian context, Amenu (2005) found out that the magnitude of practicing active learning in the TEIs of Oromiya was found to be low although teacher educators have witnessed that they have developed positive attitudes towards active learning instructional approach.

Generally, the assumptions and importance of active learning is summarized (ICDR, 1999) as follows:

- Teaching is effective only when students are learning
- Learning is effective only when it is meaningful to students.
- Learning becomes meaningful when students can use it, connect it to their lives or actively participate in it.

- Active learning encourages students to use higher order thinking skills and move away from the extensive use of lower order thinking skills.
- It encourages students to communicate effectively about what they are doing and what they are learning.
- It prepares students to solve problems and to use information from their environment and other sources to make a better life for themselves, their families and their communities.

Although the importance of active learning is advocated by many scholars, the practice is impeded by several factors. Specifically, the impeding factors to employ active learning strategies in teacher education as identified by Bonwell and Eisen (1991) are faculty self-perceptions and self-definition of roles; the discomfort and anxiety that change creates; the limited incentives for faculty to change; limited class time; a possible increase in preparation time; the potential difficulty of using active learning in large classes; and lack of needed materials, equipment, or resources. The single greatest barrier of all, they further stated, is the fact that faculty members' efforts to employ active learning involve risk-the risks that students will not participate, use higher-order thinking, or learn sufficient content, that faculty members will feel a loss of control, lack of necessary skills, or be criticized for teaching in unorthodox ways. For such reasons, they recommended that the active learning should become both the subject matter of faculty development workshops and the instructional method used to facilitate such programs.

2.4.3. Continuous Assessment

One of the reform agendas in teacher education is assessment. The reform movement calls for continuous assessment.

Airasian (1999) cited in Alausa (online) defined continuous assessment as "an assessment approach which should depict the full range of sources and methods teachers use to gather, interpret and synthesize information about learners; information that is used to help teachers understand their learners, plan and monitor instruction and establish a viable classroom culture". Such kind of assessment, according to Puhl (1997), is aimed at bringing out a paradigm shift in educational assessment in several ways. The central characteristic of this shift, he pinpointed, is the moving of assessment from a judgmental role to a developmental role. Understood in such way, continuous assessment involves the use of a variety of assessment instruments, assessing various components of learning, not only the thinking process but including behaviors, personality traits and it takes place over a period of time (Alausa, online).

From the instructional point of view, continuous assessment acknowledges that one cannot change the instructional process unless there is a change on the assessment process (Puhl, 1997). Puhl argues that the concept of continuous assessment holds rich potential for teachers because it affirms high order, creative and critical thinking and because it embraces not only cognitive outcomes but affective and behavioral outcomes as well. He further argues that continuous assessment puts the learner more in control of his/her own learning and changes the work teachers do so that it reduces instructional drudgery and increases professional satisfaction. In a similar vein, Livingstone (2001) asserts that the teacher is able to observe, identify and take note of learning as it takes place and of behavior as it manifests itself through the implementation of continuous assessment. Above all, Puhl (1997)

contends that a continuous assessment approach can help to rectify the problem of mismatches between tests and classroom activities and when assessment is built into the instructional process, the confusion and frustration that the test takers often face is reduced.

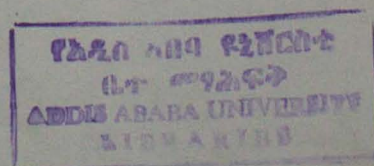
Generally, among the claims made for continuous assessment (Livingstone, 2001; Puhl, 1997) are:

- More of the intended behavior can be assessed
- Account can be taken of students' class work and can include such factors as their active participation, their critical faculties, their motivation and their relationships with others.
- Account can be taken of cognitive factors beyond memory alone and could include such as: the ability to see principles arising from experiences; the ability to apply general principles to new situation; the extent of initiative and the degree of independence in learning.
- It is guidance-oriented and yields more accurate data reaching the teachers early enough to modify instruction.
- It enables to integrate assessment and assessment results into instructional practice.

Nevertheless, as the concept of continuous assessment is relatively a recent phenomenon, it has been subjected to misinterpretation and malpractice. In the Ethiopian context, it was found to be misconceived by most teacher educators and its implementation is impeded by a lot of factors (Dawit, 2005; Mulu, 2005). For instance, Mulu (2005) found out that continuous assessment is interpreted by many instructors of AAU as continuous testing.

Among the factors that are identified (Mulu, 2005, Dawit, 2005) to impede the implementation of continuous assessment are:

- large student population
- lack of commitment and motivation on the part of instructors



- misconception of the overall theoretical and practical aspects of continuous assessment
- teachers unfavorable attitude toward a continuous assessment approach
- shortage of time

2.4.4. Action Research

“Action research is a process of investigation, reflection and action which deliberately aims to improve, or make an impact on, the quality of a real situation which forms the focus of investigation” (O’Hanlon, 1996 cited in Villegas-Reimers, 2003: 108). It is a form of inquiry which involves self-evaluation, critical awareness and contributes to the existing knowledge of the educational community. Reason and Bradbury (2001:1) defined it as “a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory world view which is emerging at this historical movement”. Another definition by Price (2001: 43) states that “action research is an inquiry that is systematic, intentional, and democratic in intent and process.” The major theme of these definitions and others is that action research is aimed at improving practice and involves reflection and action. In this vein, Reason and Bradbury (2001) pinpointed that action research seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people and more generally the flourishing of individual persons. It engenders reflective practice and promotes educational change (Price, 2001) and leads to deliberate and planned action to improve conditions for teaching and learning (O’Hanlon, 1996 cited in Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

Action research and reflective practice are considered as two sides of the same coin that are directed towards similar goals. Schon (1988) cited in Kramarski and Court (2003) stated that teachers’ reflection is a

kind of research and that gaining broader knowledge of research tools and research finding enriches reflection. Carr and Kemmis (1986) cited in Schratz (1993) contend that reflection-in-action and action research are simply forms of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out. In a similar vein, Light and Cox (2001) stated that action research provides the knowledge and the conceptual frameworks for reflecting upon and critiquing one's knowledge, practice and common experience as a learner. Thus, action research is not a mere method of research but also a way of reflecting on teaching and thereby creating an inquiry culture in education.

Generally, the significance of action research for teachers in general and for teacher educators in particular, as summarized by Zeichner (2001), Light and Cox (2001), Villegas-Reimers (2003), and Kramarski and Court (2003) are:

- helps improve practice and the understanding of practice by its practitioners;
- makes them more proactive in relation to external authority;
- boosts their self-esteem and confidence levels;
- narrows the gap between their aspirations and realization;
- helps develop an attitude and skill of self-analysis which are applied to other situations;
- leads to more learner-centered classrooms;
- helps investigate professional experience which link practice and the analysis of practice into a single developing sequence;
- offers practitioners a robust and critical method of self-evaluation for ongoing development;
- sustains the capacity to contribute to the development of professionalism in education.

Although there are dozens of benefits from action research, teacher educators are not as such involved in it. Hancock (2001) cited in Villegas-Reimers (2003) and Levin and Greenwood (2001) have summarized the areas of difficulties that prevent teacher educators from getting involved in action research:

- Lack of expectation that they should research and write about their professional practice;
- the demanding nature of teaching which leaves little time and energy for research;
- the current lack of professional confidence and marginalization of teachers from government change agendas;
- the institutionalization of a Cartesian concept of knowledge that backs up the separation of the mind and body by dividing theoretical work in universities from the 'lower' activities of practical application;
- the existence of professional disciplinary associations and identities to gain control over the configuration of the internal landscape of universities by making university-wide, multi-disciplinary knowledge generation;
- emphasis on lecturing and forcing students to reproduce the contents of the lectures rather than treating teaching as the ability to engage in ongoing learning.

2.4.5. School Experience

School experience for teacher educators is another reform agenda that is introduced in the TESO document and that is being practiced as one facet of the Higher Diploma Program. As stated in the TESO document, it is important that each teacher educator be attached to a specified school and by visiting the school, talking to and working with teachers, teaching classes, they will come to understand more about the nature of schools and

school teaching (TESO Teacher Educators Subcommittee, 2003). Such experience, according to Dallmar (2004), allows teacher educators to connect theory and practice in a way that is lacking in traditional forms of teacher education. With the deeper understanding of the organization and functioning of schools and the nature of school teaching, the courses delivered in TEIs will become more relevant in the work for which the student-teachers are being prepared. Moreover, the personal relationships that build up between the individuals involved could lead to a more ready exchange of ideas and expertise, both formally and informally (TESO Teacher Educators Subcommittee, 2003).

In the same vein, Trubowitz and Longo (1997) contend that teacher educators' school experience is significant for their professional development. They argue that school experience keeps teacher educators' views of education fresh by maintaining linkages with students, teachers and schools. This, they further argue, helps to connect theory and practice more closely to make teachers and teacher educators less separate, and all of them will be reinvigorated by the chance to make a difference in schools. As Dallmar (2004) points out, school experience provides the opportunity for teacher educators to develop new ways of knowing and learning.

Teacher educators' placement in schools does not benefit only them but also practicing teachers. As Trubowitz and Longo (1997) point out, while school experience provides opportunities for teacher educators to engage in reality testing by offering them a laboratory site that would allow them to subject their views to the test of actual practice, it also provides practicing teachers with a forum for sharing both their concerns and their insights.

That is why TESO has insisted on involving teacher educators in schools and included it as one element in the Higher Diploma Program. What do teacher educators themselves witness about its relevance and benefit is one of the intentions of this research to uncover.

CHAPTER THREE

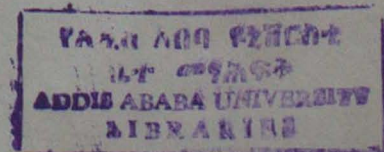
III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The objective of this research was to understand teacher educators' perceptions and practices of the Higher Diploma Program (HDP) in Adama University. To achieve this objective, a qualitative case study was preferred as it is advocated for enabling the researcher to interpret meaningful human actions and interpretations that people give of themselves or others (Sarantakos, 1998). Besides, qualitative case study is oriented towards analyzing cases in their temporal and local particularity, and starting from people's expressions and activities in their local contexts (Flick, 2002) which this study addressed.

In the process of trying to understand and interpret issues within the case, there were research procedures followed and worthy of describing. These include the setting, the participants, tools and procedures of data collection, procedures of analysis and definition of the case itself. Other issues that are deemed to be important like sampling, justifications for the case, and triangulation are embedded in and/or implied from the descriptions.

3.1. The Research Setting

The research was conducted in Adama University (AU). AU which gained a status of a university this year was first established as Nazareth Technical College (NTC) in 1993/4 (Negarit Gazette, Jan 23, 2006). As stated in the strategic plan that was designed to promote NCTTE to Nazareth University, NTC started operation in five major fields: Automotive, Construction, Surveying and Drafting, Electrical- Electronics and Manufacturing Technologies. The document further states that NTC changed its name to Nazareth College of Technical Teachers Education (NCTTE) in 1998/9 since it was preparing teachers for the technical fields and started programs in Accounting and Marketing Management in

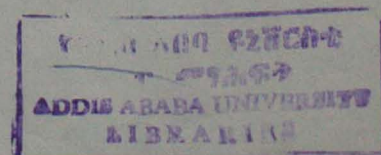


the evening program the same year. Later in 2002/3, it started programs of Computer Science, Accounting and Business Management, all teacher education fields in the regular undergraduate program (NCTTE, 2004). Now the University has three teacher education faculties. Faculty of Technical Teacher Education (FTTE) consists of departments of Automotive, Construction, Surveying, Woodwork, Drafting, Electrical/Electronics, and Manufacturing technologies. Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology (FCSIT) consists of the department of Computer Science and Information Technology. Faculty of Business Education (FBE) consists of departments of Accounting, Business Management, Marketing and Sales, Purchasing and Supplies and Banking and Insurance. All these programs are teacher education programs, and departments that offer supportive and professional courses like Language and Social Science, Applied Sciences and Education do exist.

Although the University is expanding at an unprecedented scale in infrastructure and human and material resources, it finds itself hard pressed to meet the demands of the University Community to function properly. That is why it admitted the 1998 entries in April while it should have been in September or October. The University has now a total of 288 academic and 518 administrative staff. The total population of students that are currently attending is 5200.

3.2. Defining the Case

The research was based on a specific case, a program (Higher Diploma Program for Teacher Educators). As stipulated in the Handbook of HDP, the aim of the program is to improve the quality of education in Ethiopia through a licensing program that will develop the skills and professionalism of teacher educators. It was developed to provide teacher educators with a practical program to support their development as



effective teachers and reflective practitioners with enhanced professional status, able to model active learning and continuous assessment, manage change and make a difference in the education system (Hand book of HDP for Teacher Educators, 2004).

The handbook further states that the program is a new compulsory qualification for all teacher educators and has 2 two hours timetabled sessions each week spread over a year that makes a total of 120 hours program of learning. Successful completion of the program is based on completing a list of activities:

- Fifteen reflective activities showing development of reflective thinking and its effect on practice
- Ten lesson plans showing development of active learning and continuous assessment
- Records of 4 formal lesson observations of the candidate by the Higher Diploma Leader (HDL) or Higher Diploma Tutor (HDT).
- Active learning project
- School placement report
- Action research project
- Continuous professional development plans
- All end of module self-assessments and the final self-assessment

Thus, Higher Diploma being the general case, the specific issues that are addressed within this case are:

- Perceptions of the program and its constituents that include active learning, continuous assessment, reflection, action research and school placement.
- The practice of these facets in the classrooms and workshops
- Reasons why some candidates quitted attending the program.

I was actually interested in studying such a case for the following reasons.

- i) There is usually a resistance to change among faculty in particular and teachers in general. That is, many want to teach the way they

were taught despite admonitions and recommendations for change (Griffin, 1999) and defend for the constancy of their practice. Pertaining to this, Reilly (1996) pinpointed that teacher educators in Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) and faculties of education are protective of what they have, proud of what they have accomplished, and resistant to change if such change would mean that they would have to learn new concepts and change the way they are currently operating. In the same vein, Weimer (1990) pointed out that faculty feel threatened when attention is directed toward their teaching. This is because, she explained, the need to improve implies incompetence in professional arenas where they see themselves as experts. When it comes to HDP, a national evaluation report states that faculties of education in Universities have found it more difficult to change the way they teach and has been more resistant to the introduction of HDP (Handbook of HDP for Teacher Educators, 2004). There is a tendency to fend off such kinds of trainings and I wanted to understand the case in AU.

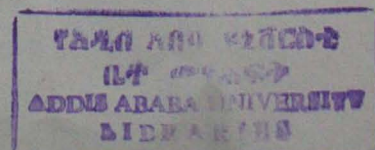
- ii) The peculiarity of the setting, the University being the only institution in the country that educates teachers for technical education, is of particular interest. As a staff member, I came to observe that most of the instructors from the fields of technology and business do not ascribe themselves as teacher educators. Instead, they ascribe themselves as educators of technologists, accountants or managers. Such personal observation is also reflected in the literature. Hobart (1987), for instance, pointed out that instructors of technical and vocational teacher education tend to be ambivalent in their professional identity. That is, he stated, they underrate the importance of pedagogical competencies and assume that the knowledge and skills relevant to their occupation (subject matter) are the principal qualifications for their teaching role. In other words, they show poor response to pedagogical training.

I was one of those who advocate a pedagogical training for the staff since most of the staff have little or no pedagogical background. Even a few of those who have the background had graduated long ago that they need to update their knowledge and skills through such kinds of courses as their personal efforts are very minimal. Regardless of such advocacies, I was puzzled by the situations of the case described above and wanted to probe and come with an in-depth understanding of the issues through this case study research.

3.3. Participants

The participants of this study were teacher educators in Adama University who attended the Higher Diploma Program (HDP). As the program was launched in 2003, those that attended the program in 2003/4 and 2004/5 academic years are included. Teacher educators who are attending the program this year are excluded as they are half-way through it and may have not developed a full-image of the program during the time of data collection. There were some teacher educators who started attending the program but didn't complete it. This group (including 2005/6 dropouts) were also research participants as their justifications for dropping it out and reflections on the program could add an interesting story in understanding the case.

In terms of qualifications, academic majors, pedagogical background and experience, the participants are comprised of varieties. There are BA and MA holders; novices and experienced ones; graduates of teaching and non--teaching fields; and from more than ten departments. This was achieved by purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a preferred technique in qualitative research since social processes have a logic and coherence that other sampling techniques, especially random ones can reduce to un-interpretable sawdust (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In the same vein, Stake (1995) recommended that



a case study researcher should have a connoisseur's appetite for the best persons, places and occasions that best help him in understanding the case. For this reason, I purposefully accessed individuals whom I believed would give me the needed data and made an utmost effort to include from different departments so that the logic and coherence of the context would be understood.

3.4. Data Collection Strategies

The process of data collection was made mainly through interviewing and observation. But, documents also served as substantiating evidences for the main data collection strategies. The documents include publications by Research and Publications Office (RPO) of AU and teachers' mark lists. The publications were referred to analyzing the practice of action research and mark-lists to continuous assessment.

Before conducting the interview and observation, participants were informed about the objectives of the research and the procedures to be followed, and it proceeded with their consent. Anonymity throughout the report of the study was deemed important and for that matter all the names used in the report are pseudonyms.

3.4.1. Interviewing

The focus of the interview was to understand teacher educators' perceptions of HDP. It was also used to explore their personal accounts of their practice. That is, they are probed about their practices of the facets of HDP. The interview accounts of participants about their practice helped me to build a system of interconnected data (with the observation), and enabled me to triangulate between different aspects of the same thing.

The interview was conducted on person-to-person basis and was guided by an interview guide which was prepared ahead of the interview. However, a dozen of probing questions were asked subsequent to and based on the responses to each guiding question. The guiding questions served only as sparkling lights and most of the interviews became free conversations rather than a simple question-and-answer type.

I interviewed seventeen teacher educators and I really enjoyed the interviews as most of the interviewees were interacting with an apparent candor. I used a small tape-recorder with an in-built microphone to record the interview. The recorded interviews were transcribed and were given back to the participants to be reviewed.

3.4.2. Observation

The focus of the observation was on teacher educators' practices of the facets of HDP and mainly active learning, assessment techniques, and reflection. The features of active learning, continuous assessment and reflection were critically studied ahead of the observation. Three classes (marketing management, electrical and instructional media) three times each and three workshops (electrical, manufacturing and media) three-times each were observed. During observations, notes were taken on important incidents of each observed classroom and workshop. The notes were rewritten after each observation with descriptive style. The descriptions were discussed with each observed participant and after their confirmations, the descriptive data was laced with and followed by interpretation.

3.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is the process of making sense of, sifting, cataloguing and selecting themes (Holliday, 2002; Yin, 1989). This process was undertaken at a number of different levels.

The first involved creating individual case studies for each participant which provided an in-depth portrait of each. At this level, giving meaning to the raw data obtained through interviewing and observation and others was the main task.

The second stage involved organizing the data into patterns. There were some patterns that were considered in advance based on research questions, albeit it was open for an emerging pattern during analysis. As Stake (1995) pointed out, patterns can be known in advance, drawn from research questions, serving as a template for the analysis. Thus, the corpus data was organized by patterns: perceptions of HDP, practices of the facets of HDP, and reasons for withdrawal.

The third stage harnessed a detailed analysis to generate themes under each pattern and across the data. This involved a detailed comparative analysis and interpretation where by confirming and disconfirming evidences were sorted and sifted. Such a deliberate search for confirming and disconfirming evidence from the corpus data is a method of triangulation (Stake, 1995). At this level, an utmost effort was made to tie different pieces together in a cluster and to show how a particular piece of datum became an instance of a general theme.

CHAPTER FOUR

IV. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The analysis and interpretation of data is presented under four main headings: perceptions of the program; practice of the facets; reasons for withdrawal; and the synergy of perceptions, practices and reasons for withdrawal. These headings came out from the basic questions that were sought to be answered. Each major heading consists of a number of themes which describe the case that was studied.

4.1. Perceptions of the Program

In this part, I presented participants' (teacher educators') perceptions of HDP. Specifically, it describes existing perceptions of what it meant and how it worked.

4.1.1. *Zest Reduced by Must*

The fact that HDP was introduced as a government directive has been a problem. Most participants joined the program because it is system-wide and compulsory. This has adversely affected their participation and learning. For instance, Wagaw, said:

When HDP was introduced, we had no awareness about it. It was said that it was a government policy and we joined it unwillingly.

They comply merely to stay on the track as they conceive it as a "must". Such conception of the program has affected their zest and enthusiasm during the sessions. Getachew noted this:

I was made to attend HDP without my willingness and I was disinterested in some sessions. It was after I perceive some relevance of the contents that I began to participate actively.

Almost all interviewees including Getachew contend that their interest in the course improved towards the end. Initially, however, they regard HDP as something that is imposed on them and their zest for the sessions was very minimal. In fact, there is a great tendency for participants to lose appetite in a course or training if they don't gain sense of ownership for it. Knowles (1998) indicated that adult learners' intellectual aspirations are least likely to be aroused by rigid, uncompromising requirements of authoritative, conventionalized programs of learning. Symlie, *et.al.*, (1999) also stated that professional development activities have been considered woefully inadequate and have been portrayed in many disparaging ways, including a waste of time, a joke and a slum of education. This is because, they explained, they have been imposed rather than owned and treated as a special add-on event rather than a part of a natural process. Defaru's view also reflected:

HDP was not based on our interest and willingness. No one consulted us. It is the directive of the Ministry of Education. They simply design and offer what ever they want to. So why should I bother about HDP?

You can understand how the participant perceives the program. HDP in this sense is perceived as something that is imposed on them. If participants do not identify with the program, that is, if they do not have sense of ownership for it, then few could expect their enthusiasm and enjoyment to be high. I contend that this resulted from lack of awareness, i.e., participants were not sufficiently oriented to the relevance of HDP, and they tended to push it away. The professional view of teaching highlights the uncertainty of teaching and demands high enthusiasm and zest on practitioners. But, the top-down imposition of change is counter to professionalism and has reduced teacher educators' zest.

4.1.2. Effort Emasculated by Disappointment

Despite participants were made to attend the program without their consent, they reported that they tried to make the best out of it. However, their effort was minimized by disappointing incidents in the process. That is, the process of learning and sharing of experiences has been disturbed by incidents that are not cognizant of adult learning. Cranton (1994) noted that faculty are adult learners and working within their discipline, they tend to be self-directed and collaborative learners. Murphy (online) also stated that adults learn most when they feel valued by themselves, those they are learning alongside and by whoever is facilitating their learning. But the climate of learning in HDP was the other way.

Going through the disappointing incidents, the first one that was pointed out by most interviewees is the personality and competence of tutors and leaders. They were found impersonal, unfriendly and incompetent. Zele, for instance, illustrated:

I think she (the leader) forgot that I am a teacher and have my own students. She considered me as if I were her child. She had been insulting us and showing a gloomy face. What I could say in general is that she didn't deserve to be a leader of such kinds of programs.

The objective of HDP seems to have been forgotten. The leader should have been a model for the participants so that they could apply in the classroom. For professional development activities to be effective, then the methods used to help participants to change should reflect the imperatives of the program (Ramsden, 1992). HDP is about reflective teaching, active learning etc which by its philosophical bases requires addressing learners' needs and respecting each learner. What is amazing is that while participants are expected to demonstrate such behaviors, leaders and tutors who should model didn't do it. Another interviewee, Goytom, said:

... I believe that there are important points in the modules, but the way we took the course was really bad. It ran badly by an unfriendly leader who showed disrespect every time. ይህችን ሴትየ የማላይቦት ጊዜ መቼ ነው ነበር የሞለው i.e. I was longing for a time when I couldn't see her.

Participants had developed hatred for the leaders and their effort to get the best out of HDP was some how hampered by their feeling of helplessness. In addition to the leaders' unfriendly treatment, their knowledge and competence was questioned by the participants. Zele, regarding the incompetence of his leader said:

... she didn't prepare well, she didn't know the contents well and every one was correct whatever different ideas may be reflected by the participants.

This indicates the absence of feedback during the learning process. This absence of feedback from the leader has adversely affected the participation of the learners in the activities. Though there are a lot of issues that can be answered in different ways, there are issues that need to be understood clearly and hence require feedback. But the interviewees reported that everyone is correct for everything and this brought a negative impact on the program. As Zeru noted:

... the participants reflect extremely contradictory ideas. The ideas which I believe it to be wrong might be forwarded by another person, being right. I sometimes ask questions about issues that I don't understand, and every person forwards what ever he feels but not the leader. Then I gradually retreated from asking questions because it was wastage of time.

The leader didn't play her role well and she didn't handle the classroom well. Because the participants felt helpless, their interest and participation decreased.

The second cause for the disappointment is the time allotted for HDP. HDP is scheduled for 2 two- hour sessions each week for a year (120 hours). The participants strongly contend that this is too much

time. They contend that it should have been scheduled for two or three months. Wagaw, for instance, argued:

... the program shouldn't have been given as such very long period of time. It is possible to condense the important points so that within two or three months it could be covered and wouldn't be boring.

Daydreaming and tediousness were major problems for participants as they proceeded to more and more sessions. This was due to the elongated time for the program and the repetitive nature of the contents. Ibssa commented:

... the program was not well-organized. For the one hand, there was no orientation prior to the start of the program which would have raised our awareness. On the other hand, we were fed up with the sessions especially towards the end because we were practicing similar kinds of activities through out the year. Therefore, I believe that the time should be shortened.

The participants couldn't help attending longer sessions with repetitive contents. Most of the interviewees reflected that HDP should have been offered in shorter periods of time. A one year schedule had made it difficult for them to attend it enthusiastically. Moreover, redundant and routine activities didn't satisfy their curiosity. Such instances, in one way or another, had weakened their efforts of trying to get the best of the program.

Thirdly, participants were disappointed by the partiality of leaders and tutors. Discussions during learning were highly dominated by a few participants. Tolossa reported:

... the tutors and leaders usually ask and give chances to those who came from the Department of Education. They have pedagogical backgrounds and because of that they took the lion's share in the discussions. And because of the domination, we usually surrender to them and our participation was minimal.

This feeling of being dominated was difficult for them to overcome, and together with boredom, worsened their participation. As Belete pointed out:

Because tutors lack confidence, they ask instructors of pedagogy for every issue raised. This has created partiality. Therefore, I believe that tutors should be trained well and should preferably come from Education Department.

The lack of confidence and frequent reference to a few participants 'who had background knowledge' is related with their incompetence which is previously reported by the interviewees. The combination of such weaknesses of the tutors made participants mistrust them. Tutors might have considered those participants as resource persons, but giving more chances to them has created a feeling of inferiority on others, and this has adversely affected the conduct of the program.

4.1.3. Activities Encouraging Dishonesty

Participants reported that the nature of activities and tutors' imposition to execute whatever they were told to do made them act dishonestly. Lesson planning, reflection and module assessment sections that are presented at the end of each section are redundant and sometimes irrelevant that participants were forced to respond even when they didn't want to do so. Ibssa described:

... reflective activities ጥሩ ውሸታሞችን ያፈራል (reflective activities produce liars). We were forced to write when we had nothing to reflect in those wide boxes. Because it is a must, we were trying something which was not related with our practice and thought.

The program states that it needs to be flexible based on the contexts in which it is offered (Handbook of HDP for Teacher Educators, 2004). However, the tutors and leaders were so inflexible that participants' responses were dishonest. This means that tutors and

leaders demanded quantity of reflection, not quality and the content. Most of the time, participants were writing because they had to write. Tolossa attested to the inflexibility as:

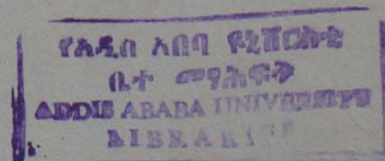
In reflective activities and module assessment parts, there are wide boxes. We were forced to fill the boxes. If we write what we feel but the box is not full, we are considered as if we did nothing. Therefore, we were writing what we didn't feel, merely to fulfill our duties.

The participants were adjusting themselves to the characteristics of the tutors and activities rather than being engaged in authentic learning. This was caused by the rigidity of the tutors and leaders and the inflexibility of the program in general. Besides, there appeared to be lack of follow-up and continuous monitoring of learning on the part of leaders and tutors which also contributed to dishonesty. A typical example of this is the report of school placement Zele, for instance, commented:

... We were attached to schools to have experience in the school. I didn't see any value in it because I had been there for many years. So I went there for two days only and my report about the school experience was created at my home than based on observation.

The school placement is included in HDP so that teacher educators could have an experience in the school for which they are preparing teachers. Nevertheless, lack of well-organized placement and follow-up made it difficult for achieving the objectives, but instead encouraged dishonesty.

All these indicate that the learning experiences selected, the guidance of leaders, and the inflexibility of the program encouraged dishonesty because it was the only way out for the participants.



4.1.4. Disparity in Valuing School Placement

There is a disparity among participants regarding the value of school placement mainly as a function of differences in prior experience. While participants who had taught for many years in secondary and vocational schools disregard the relevance of school placement, those who hadn't have the experience before attest to its relevance. The former group looked askance at school placement and considers it merely as wastage of time and energy. They contend that they knew what schools look like and how they function and the placement didn't take this into account. Zele, who taught in secondary schools for six years, commented:

... I have adequate experience and exposure in the school practices. So it is waste of time to observe school practices for a month. Concerning myself, I gained nothing from school placement.

Tolossa also noted:

...I knew the schools before and I wondered why I was sent to the school. I went only two days and I wrote the report sitting at my home. I didn't see any value that it adds to the improvement of the way I am handling the lessons.

These two excerpts imply that participants believe that school placement could do little for them simply because they knew the school practices some years before. Nevertheless, the objective of school placement is to enable school teachers and teacher educators share experiences and develop school-university partnership for continuous professional development of both parties. The notion that school practices are dynamic and school-teachers also benefit from the placement has been underestimated. Such cases were not sufficiently oriented and this indicates the poor organization of school placement.

The latter group, however, attested to the value of school placement. They contend that they gained a lot from their experience in the school. As Mamo noted:

... the school placement helped me to thoroughly observe the environment for which I am producing my products. The knowledge of the school environment that prospective graduates join in the future helps to pre-inform the challenges that will face the students. It also helped me to share experiences from senior staff of the school.

Goytom also pointed out:

In spite of some problems regarding the way it was conducted, it made me question myself about how schools function. I wondered whether the high school that I attended had been like that. I was surprised that high schools are forgotten and I observed a great mess in their functioning.

Although Goytom believed that it was helpful to do school placement so that he could understand the context of teaching in those places, he was annoyed by the lack of cooperation by school-teachers and the kind of report he was expected to prepare. Rather than encouraging them to report on aspects of the teaching and learning process, they were made to report on 'less important' ones like the physical environment of the school.

I understand from these participants' response that they appreciated the objectives of the school placement in that it helps them to prepare teachers for the kind of schools that they are going to teach in and share experiences with school-teachers. Nevertheless, the means to achieve the objectives was improper since there was poor coordination and follow-up.

Thus, one can interpret the disparity as participants holding drastically different outlooks about school placement. Prior experiences influenced the extent to which they value it. Whereas participants who

had taught in schools before looked askance at it, those that had no experience attested to its relevance.

4.1.5. Dramatic Eventuality: Perceiving the Relevance

In spite of the problems that surround the program, participants' conceptions of teaching and knowledge appear to have been dramatically affected in a positive way. Participants eventually appreciate the relevance of the facets of HDP, especially active learning, continuous assessment and action research. It is not only appreciation but they also began to conceptualize the teaching and learning process in a different way. They believe that they have acquired alternative methods of teaching and assessment. What they disregarded is the way the program ran. For instance, Wagaw, said:

... I think it has changed the way I had been thinking about teaching a lot. The fundamental realization for me was that teaching should only be considered in relation to learning. When you are teaching, unless you are constantly monitoring that learning, and trying to address what you understand from that in practice of your teaching, then it really becomes sort of teaching that you really don't care.

I understand this as that the participant believes in starting off with what students think and finding out what students understand. This again implies that participants begin to conceive teaching as making learning possible rather than transmission of knowledge. As they themselves reported that there is a change in conceptions of the teaching/learning process, I found it a very dramatic outcome of the program. The learning process was full of pitfalls, but it eventually ended up with affecting the participants' minds. Another participant, Zeru, noted:

HDP enabled me to know the different active learning methods and refreshed my mind to apply the theoretical knowledge to practice in classroom teaching whenever possible.

You can understand how doubtful the participant is regarding practicing the methods that he learnt, albeit he ascertains that his knowledge of the methods increased. In other words, participants' knowledge increased and their conceptions altered, but the door to practice doesn't seem to be opened. Goytom expressed his hesitation regarding the practice:

... It is really an attempt to breakdown the traditional teaching approach with which we are accustomed to. It initiates instructors to be involved in many activity-oriented preparations for students' learning and evaluation of their work. So instructors are forced to go under much pressure because there are a lot of constraints to do so.

I could therefore say that the participants realized the relevance of HDP although they were let down by the pitfalls in the process and are still adamant about the practice. Why they are adamant about practicing the facets while they perceive the significance of the facets will be discussed in the next section. But, at this juncture, what I could say is the final outcome is dramatic and amazing because a program that is highly bureaucratized and proceeded with lots of problems has at least affected participants' prior conceptions.

4.2. The Practice of the Facets of HDP

In this part, I presented participants' practices of the facets of HDP that include active learning, continuous assessment, reflection and action research. The description of this unit of the case is based on my personal observation of the practice, participants' self-reports of their own practice, and analysis of documents such as proceedings of the University's research seminar and participants' assessment record sheets (mark-lists).

4.2.1. 'Talk and Chalk' Prevailing in the Classroom

In the previous discussions, I have shown how participants' conceptions are affected and their knowledge increased despite the pitfalls in the process. However, the change in conceptions and increase in knowledge doesn't necessarily guarantee change in practice. Ho, *et al.* (2001) indicated that there exists a fundamental doubt about the causal relationship between changes in conception and changes in practice. They noted that there is conflicting views regarding the relationship. On the one hand, there are research findings which suggest that discrepancies between espoused ideals and actual practices are common (Cranton, 1994). On the other hand, there are arguments that are grounded in theoretical predictions that if teachers' conceptions of teaching are developed to a higher level, their practices should improve accordingly (Ho, *et al.*, 2001).

What has been observed in this study conforms to the first proposition: a change in conception has been observed while the practice remains unchanged. Teaching in almost all observed classrooms is characterized as 'talk and chalk. That is, a great deal of what occurred in the observed classrooms is found boring, unengaging and vapid. There is no alternation of teaching methods. The pace of the classroom goes almost the same with the teachers lecturing invariably. Participants' accounts of their practice during the interview also reflected the prevalence of such kind of method in the classroom. Zeru, for example, explained:

... I realize the significance of active learning and continuous assessment. But the fact that some ideas are smart doesn't necessarily lead to application because there are preconditions for them to be practiced.

Goytom also noted:

... Regarding my teaching, I am doing it in the same way that I was teaching before because there is not the necessary infrastructure to do it.

I understand that the participants believe that the change in practice should accompany the change in the contexts of teaching. Though they espouse the theories of active learning and continuous assessment, they are not practicing the facets because of uninviting context. The participants elucidated preconditions that are important for 'better' practice that are discussed in the next section. But, at this juncture, a brief description of two transcribed lessons could be cases in point to show how direct instruction that takes a 'talk and chalk' form prevails in the classroom.

One and Half Hours in Ibssa's class: Market segmentation

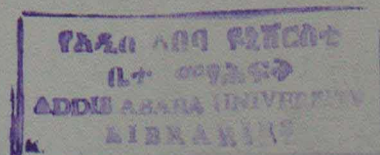
I arrived ten minutes before the class time so that I could miss nothing in my observation. There was an awful crush as students coming out met students trying to get in. It took ten minutes for the class to settle down. I sat on the left back and began to take notes on what was going in the classroom. The teacher introduced the topic of the lesson: Market segmentation. He dictated the definition of market segmentation and orally explained the concept. Then he continued describing the criteria for successful market segmentation: substantiality, measurability, accessibility, and responsiveness. Having explained these criteria, he moved to the bases commonly used to segment markets such as geographic, demographic, psychographic, socioeconomic etc.

The teacher sometimes dictates and other times write on the board. The major activities that were performed by the instructor are explaining and writing on the board. The students seemed a little flippant because they were only engaged in listening and note-taking. Throughout a 1 and ½ hours lesson, three questions were asked by the teacher and none of them elicited response, and were left aside.

Two hours in Zele's class: Principles of Microwave

I also arrived earlier to observe the teaching/learning process of this classroom. Students come in one by one and sit spread out in the classroom. There was no crush like that of the previous observation because there was no other class in this room prior to the one I went to observe. When the teacher arrived, no one said anything and it was so quiet that every move could be noticed. Having cleaned the blackboard, the teacher wrote "principles of micro wave" on the board. He himself defined what a micro-wave is and elaborated it. He then started talking about 'wave guide' and explained that there are 'active and passive devices' in the wave guide. After he explained this, he wrote "passive micro-wave devices and circuits". For the rest of the class time, he continued explaining the different types (directional coupler, resonators, attenuators, Klystron tube) of micro wave devices and drawing diagrams and circuits for them. He was leaping from topic to topic with mere verbal exposition and drawing. The students were listening and sometimes copying diagrams and circuits from the board.

The intent here is not to provide comprehensive descriptions of the lessons observed; illustrations of the main activities would suffice to underline the point being made. These summaries of transcribed lessons indicate that the talk and chalk method prevails in the classroom which is not in accord with the objectives of HDP. The teachers talk and write and the students listen and take notes. What could you call such an instructional process rather than "talk and chalk"? From this vantage point, therefore, HDP doesn't seem to have brought changes in practice and this is confirmed by the participants' accounts of their own teaching. Though they contend that they have to teach in a different way than the way they are doing currently, they attribute their failure to the contexts of teaching. Their attributions are consonant with the literature in that ways of going about teaching are the outcomes of a teacher's perceptions of the conditions defined by the context of teaching (Ramsden, 1992) and there is a tendency to point towards students or instructional constraints for the consequences of different teaching behaviors (Cranton, 1994).



The practice of reflection and continuous assessment goes together with the type of instructional practice. Even without noticing the transcribed interview or observation, one can understand the absence of reflection and continuous assessment. This is because teachers who employ direct instructional methods are unlikely to reflect and use continuous assessment as they are philosophically interwoven and require or are practiced in similar environments. Of course, participants appear to be hesitating in talking about reflection and they reported that they do not have a clear understanding of the concept. This is not surprising because more than any concept of education, the definition of reflection and how it might be fostered in student-teachers are problematic issues (Hatton and Smith, 1994). Even within the underlying understanding, reflection as keeping record of and discussing one's own teaching, the practice is nonexistent. Getachew asked about reflection responded:

... It is hard to discuss and reflect on teaching. I don't think I and my colleagues would want to present our teaching drawbacks to anyone.

There appears a lack of desire for reflection, but also an attempt to defend one's own teaching. In other words, it is just externalizing the cause for the kind of the prevailing practice and this is consonant with the very reason that is elucidated by the participants; the context of practice. In the same vein, other participants revealed that they hadn't prepared any lesson plan after they completed HDP. Lesson planning, as stipulated in the Handbook of HDP, is a form of reflection. Stating clear objectives for a lesson, checking their attainment together with the students and regular review of those plans are parts and parcels of reflection. Nevertheless, participants are not practicing that which they attribute it to nothing but to uninviting context of practice.

By the same token, participants are not using continuous assessment except in courses that are provided in workshops. That is,

continuous assessment is to some extent employed in workshops, where as in the classroom where direct instruction prevails, assessment is based on mid and final exams. In fact, assessment should be based on the actual condition, time, place and other factors of the class such as the nature of instruction (ICDR, 2004).

4.2.2. Attributions for Persistence on 'Traditional' Practice

In the previous section, I explained that participants are not practicing the facets of the program because the context is not enabling. Let's therefore look into the details of these situations.

Class Size

Participants elucidated that it is impossible to put HDP into effect in a class size of 60 to 90. I presented some excerpts regarding class size.

- ... the number of students per class do not enable to use active learning (Tolossa)*
- ... it would be difficult to assess 70 students in a class continuously and each student (Getachew)*
- ... I am trying to use peer assessment in shop activities because they are only 30 (Zelee)*

All these illustrate that class size is a determining factor in employing active learning methods and continuous assessment. It is, of course, reasonable that it would be cumbersome to employ group learning methods and follow-up the performance of each student in classes of seventy or eighty. Pate-Bain, et al (2002) also found out that class size is a contributing factor to the success of the most effective teachers in that small class size allowed in-depth teaching of basic content, and frequent opportunities for students to engage in first-hand learning activities.

Time and Workload

The participants contend that another extraneous factor that is an impediment to practicing the facets of HDP is that they are overloaded and do not have time. They expounded that all the facets of HDP require time and less load but they are working over twenty hours per week excluding the extension classes and other personal schedules. Michael and Modell (2003) stated that the great time and mental effort required to teaching in a reflective and active learning approach are the challenges that are among the most prevalent perceived by faculty. Regarding this, Ramsden (1992) also stated that attempts to innovate in teaching when workloads are heavy are likely to result in superficial outcomes. Facets like reflection could be implemented when there is ample time. But technical teacher educators are left with little time to do it. As Burnes and Schaefer (2002) pointed out, the development of reflection in technical and vocational teacher education is especially challenging since time constraints make the time available for reflection lean

Students' Predispositions

Students' prior experience and knowledge is one of the potent factors for preserving 'traditional' practice. That is, the implementation of most of the facets of HDP requires students to be acquainted with the type of activities that would be performed and their background knowledge needs to be adequate. The following excerpts illustrate this:

- ... the culture of students which is totally fixed to the traditional method of teaching is a barrier (Goytom)*
- ... lack of cooperation on the part of students in trying to apply active learning is difficult to overcome (Wagaw)*
- ... poor background knowledge of students makes group discussions trivial (Ibssa)*

The excerpts indicate that students' experience and knowledge is a problem by itself. Students who are accustomed to the lecture method

would show resistance to the teachers' effort of trying to employ active learning methods. Participants contend that the implementation of the facets of HDP would be most effective when one has hard-working and devoted students. But, with students who joined universities by mass, it is unthinkable since they got them weak and not able to be self-directed. Participants believe that when students are not hard-working and self-motivated, student-centered methods would end up in vain. I personally share this problem because while I was teaching 'General Methods of Teaching (Educ 211) two years ago, I was really challenged by students' reluctance to participate in group discussions. Active learning environments will not flourish if students do not accept responsibility for their own learning and participate in the learning environment (Michael and Modell, 2003).

Materials and Facilities

In addition to the above impediments, the difficulty in implementing the facets of HDP that is frequently expounded is the absence of adequate materials and facilities. Scarce resources enforced them to preserve the traditional practice as the following mouths speak out:

- ... there is lack of well-developed teaching material to be distributed to students in advance so that they can prepare in their off class time (Tolossa).*
- ... the classrooms were purposefully built for lecturing, even the name lecture hall itself implies that, and the chairs are fixed, welded against the floor (Belete)*
- ... I have no specified table and chair after two and half years of service let alone a separate office (Ibssa)*

Participants elucidated these problems not simply for the sake of pronouncing problems, but they contend that they have a direct relationship with practicing the facets. For instance, an instructor who wanders from office to office in trying to get a place where he/she puts his bags and teaching materials is unlikely to prepare for a lesson which

involves active learning. He is not also able to prepare materials and hand-outs that are relevant for student-centered classrooms. He would simply lift up his lecture notes that were prepared some years before and go to class.

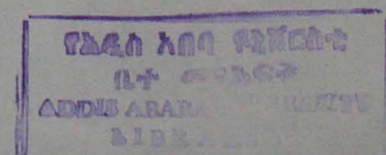
4.2.3. Workshops Ameliorating Practice

Unlike the classrooms, workshops are found to be ameliorating the practice of active learning and continuous assessment. It is to mean that some forms of active learning methods and continuous assessment techniques are being practiced in the observed workshops. Participants' accounts of their practice also confirmed the prevalence of variety of teaching methods in the workshops. The amelioration of practice in these places is mainly attributable to the context and objectives. Such kinds of practices can be discussed from different angles. That is, the prevalence of better practice can be seen from different perspectives.

Enabling Setting

Unlike the classrooms which were purposefully built for lectures, workshops do not look like teaching and learning settings. Instead, they look like factories or industries. They are really work places. Imagine what a student who goes to a room where a lot of machines and materials are placed around the different corners would expect to do. He would unlikely anticipate a teacher with his lecture notes and duster who is going to take a lion's share in the sessions like that of the classrooms. In other words, the workshops are enabling settings for students' engagement in hand-on experiences. Although this is a statement of the obvious, Zele's account of his practice in the workshop would confirm it:

... I have been employing some forms of active learning methods before I attended HDP. This is because the workshop by itself is a place where one should do that. If students' don't



engage in activities, what is the need for them to come to workshops?

This excerpt indicates that there is a well-established belief in the kind of activities that should be carried out in the workshops. This in turn indicates that the setting (the workshops) enabled teachers to view the teaching/learning process in a different way as compared to the classrooms. Thus, it could be argued that it is the enabling setting (workshops) that ameliorated the practice of active learning and continuous assessment.

Engaging in Authentic Learning

One facet of better practice that is related to the enabling setting is students' engagement in authentic learning. That is, students are engaged in direct and purposeful experiences in the teaching/ learning process. They are engaged in concrete experiences and most of the time they are responsible for the outcomes. They also learn from each other in groups and evaluate their group activities. Giving students increased responsibility for the learning process and including peer learning and evaluation are features of learner-centered classrooms (McCombs and Whisler, 1997). Let's consider a moment (from my observation) in an Electronics Workshop to understand how engaging and authentic learning is.

... an incomplete lay-out diagram of two lamps controlled independently by SPST switches were distributed to each of the students. Then the students were made to draw the wiring diagram individually. Then the sketch was discussed in groups and the better one (evaluated by the group members) was selected. Each group constructed the SPST on a board.

This depicts that students are engaged in authentic learning by experiencing the construction of switches. They were also discussing within their groups the best ways of doing it. Teachers also expressed

that most of the time learning occurs by doing in the workshops. Regarding such kind of practice, Wagaw commented:

... In the workshops, students are engaged in activities that they will face in the world of work. They are practicing in actual and real situation. We have been doing such kinds of practice all the time, but HDP might have helped us doing this in a variety of ways, such as forming groups.

Here the participant's explanation implies that HDP has also helped to improve his practice by providing alternative mechanisms of engaging students in active learning, albeit he had been practicing some of them before.

Teachers Playing Several Roles

One of the fascinating things in the workshops is that teachers and their technical assistants play a variety of roles. Unlike the classroom where the teacher is solely an information dispenser, teachers in the workshops play roles of supervisors, guiders, coordinators, facilitators and demonstrators.

As guiders they take a fraction of minutes to instruct students what to do usually at the beginning of the sessions. This is what I observed in almost all workshops during the first five minutes of each session. As demonstrators, teachers show how to perform activities so that students can do similar activities. For instance, I observed a welding teacher (in the Manufacturing Workshop) demonstrating by welding. The lesson was welding T-Joint. For the students to weld T-joints, he himself first welded a T-joint just as an example. In addition to such roles, teachers and technical assistants supervise students' activities, sometimes giving hands to facilitate their learning. As coordinators, they also form groups of different kinds at different times.

Assessing Periodically

Another feature of workshops is the way students' activities are assessed. Again contrary to the classrooms where the teacher dispenses information and evacuates the room when time is up, teachers assess students' activities each period in the workshops. For instance, after students have constructed switches in the Electric Workshop, their performance was evaluated in terms of appearance, functionality and splicing (connection) and feedback was given to each group. The assessment here was not carried out only on the functionality of the switches. That is, the appearance of the switch and the splicing components indicate the process of the activities. Similarly, the teacher in the Manufacturing Workshop was observed assessing and assigning marks for the welded materials. Generally, every time students go to the workshops and perform activities, it is followed by assessment. Regarding this, Zele, said:

... I have been evaluating students based on their performance sometimes group performances are assessed and sometimes individual performances. I also try to use peer assessment which I learnt from HDP. Anyway, I evaluate my students each session.

This indicates that assessment techniques vary from situations to situations but are carried out periodically. He is also trying to apply the facet of HDP: peer assessment.

It can, therefore, generally be said that active learning methods and continuous assessment had been used in workshops even before the introduction of HDP. However, HDP is considered to be helpful in enriching the kinds of methods and assessment techniques that they have been using. However the practice is not only facilitated by HDP, but mainly by the context of teaching: enabling setting, small number of students (maximum 30), and nature of activities.

4.2.4. Action Research: the Most Welcomed, the Least Effectual

Among the facets of HDP, action research is the most applauded in terms of its significance for the participants. It has helped participants to view research from a different angle. Most participants reflected that they had been conceiving research as requiring sophisticated skills and as a task left for a few who possess those skills. The inclusion of action research in HDP, however, has introduced them into a kind of research that can be conducted by any teacher who is engaged in the profession.

Action research is welcomed most by the participants as it simplified a matter (research) that they had been considering as complex and difficult. During the interview, most of the participants were talking about action research pleasantly. As Wagaw noted:

... more than anything else, I was interested in action research. I was considering myself as one who couldn't do research because I believed that it is a task of people of high academic positions and knowledge. But now I understand that every teacher educator can do it.

This participant, who is a novice, had been thinking of a kind of research that requires a very high expertise and of large-scale. Most other participants are highly attracted by this facet of the program for it offered them an alternative way of conducting research that boosts their caliber and self-esteem. They are made aware that the day-to-day classroom life is researchable and this solved the very problem of identifying research topics. Goytom, for instance, noted:

... I think action research is the best. It gave us insight about doing research. As an instructor of a university, you should be engaged in research. It is one of our duties. Now there are lots of topics to be researched just in our locality. I hope I will do in the future.

Although action research is the most welcomed and applauded of the facets of the program, I argue that it is the least effectual. At the core of action research is improvement of practice, not conducting research for the sake of fulfilling duties, or showing one's expertise. Participants showed a considerable interest in action research because they can now conduct research and publish articles. But a participant asked how often he conducted action research and to what extent it helped him improve his practice answered:

... Well, of course, I didn't do research after HDP [He did one as a requirement for HDP]. For my own practice, action research could do less because the problems are more or less obvious, but the solution should come from the government (Ibssa).

Thus, the problem-solving orientations of action research are given less attention where as research for publication and prestige are given due attention. Unlike traditional forms of research where researchers do research on other people, in action research, researchers do research on themselves. Action research is an enquiry by the self into the self (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002). But participants welcomed action research because it gave them insights about conducting research so that they would be ascribed as researchers, not because they can improve their practice by research. The publications of the University's research seminars also showed that most of the articles except the ones that were done as a requirement for HDP are large scale and are not directed to improving practice. Some titles of articles could be cases in point:

- ... Improving the Design Development and Implementation of the Technical Teacher Education Curriculum.*
- ... Gender Gap on Study Habit, Self-concept and GPA of male and female students.*
- ... Earthquake Resistant Houses in Rift Valley Regions of Ethiopia: An architectural perspective.*

It is based on these observations and participants' responses that I argue that action research is the least effectual in that the participants' understanding and practice of research doesn't go in line with the

purpose of action research. That is, researching one's practice and there by improving it is not well disposed. Instead, action research is valued because it brought research topics and concepts down-to-earth.

4.3. Reasons for Withdrawal

A total of nine candidates quitted attending HDP (including this year). Why these educators quitted attending HDP is another issue addressed in this study. The reflections of four of them whom I accessed are presented as follows.

4.3.1. 'Either Attend HDP or Leave the University':

The Slogan

HDP was introduced as obligatory and compulsory. The management of the University insisted candidates to attend the course while refusing to listen any claims from the candidates. This rigidity finally resulted in wastage of time and resource as some of the candidates quitted it some way in the course. Guade witnessed the rigidity:

... I am a beginner in the University. I have to prepare a lot so as to secure my survival as a teacher [to be considered as good teacher by his students]. By the time I started teaching, I was forced to attend HDP which was requiring more time. So the only choice I had was to quit HDP.

The story that my friend told me would better explain the rigidity. He was HDP candidate before he left the University. While he was working in the University, he got another job in Addis. Though he liked the job, he had no way of getting release so that he would be employed in Addis. He took advantage of the rigidity of the management as he narrated:

I went to one of the University's management and told him that I was going to quit HDP. I told him that I like it but couldn't attend this year. I told him I would take it next year. His response was that I should either attend HDP or leave the

university. Feeling happy with the second alternative, I told him I had better leave, and I was given the release.

What was applied to my friend indicates the extent to which the slogan is pronounced. Knowing exactly what was going to be taken on him, he deceived them and met his objectives.

Another participant, Zele, who successfully completed HDP raised the issue of the rigidity of the University's management as:

... our department employed two instructors who have MScs and were working in other offices before. As most of us are BSC holders, they were given senior courses because of their qualifications. At the same time they were told to attend HDP. They applied to the university management that they couldn't attend HDP that year because they were new to the courses that they were teaching since they had been divorced from academic positions for a long time.

The reply from the management was so rigid that they left the University. Zele continued:

... the choice that was made by these individuals was surprising. They disappeared from the University from that time onwards and some weeks later they faxed to the university that they left the job.

This shows that the management was too rigid regarding HDP and this resulted in a loss of instructors even. It was uncompromising and there hadn't been considerations for attending or not attending the course which would have been an important input for undertaking the course smoothly. The slogan was simply 'either attend HDP or leave the University'.

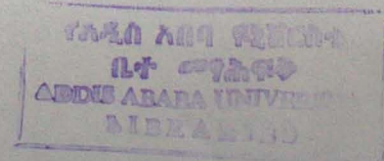
The slogan was pronounced so high and put into effect for some candidates. But it resulted in wrongly releasing the staff. Rather than trying to orient its staff on the relevance of HDP and arranging conducive time and situation for candidates, the management presented HDP as a 'must' which made some teacher educators to quit attending and some others to leave the University.

4.3.2. Obstinate Refusal to Pedagogical Training

Although very few and insignificant as compared to several participants who positively perceived the program in terms of its ideals, participants quitted attending HDP because of their hatred or philosophical stance regarding pedagogy. Even though I couldn't access these individuals because they left the University, their friends reported that they left because they were obliged to attend HDP which they don't really like to. I was unable to confirm this because even one of the responsible persons for the management, although he is not a research participant, reported that he didn't know why they left because he only came to know that they left after they had already left. But one participant who quitted attending the program and didn't leave the University believes that he doesn't want pedagogical courses because it couldn't change his practice. He believes that teaching is an inborn quality and trainings on methodology would do little. He said:

... Basically I don't need pedagogical training because I don't believe in making a teacher. I believe a teacher is inborn. About 90% is you and the rest could be others. Often I try to see the difference between those who took and who didn't; a little (Gebru)

Beliefs in teaching played a role in refusing pedagogical training. Gebru started attending HDP because he was obliged to attend but some way in the middle he quitted because he was careless and was not attending it properly. His carelessness is a result of his belief that the program would have a little significance.

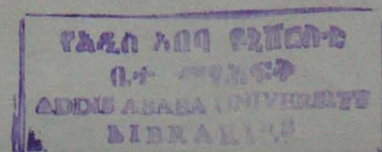


4.4. The Synergy: Putting It All Together

In the previous three sections of the analysis, different units of the case are discussed separately. These are perceptions, practices and reasons for withdrawal. In this section, an attempt is made to connect the meanings of the units and to draw a collective understanding of the case.

The analysis of the case across the units indicates that the general context of attending HDP and thereby putting it into effect was not conducive. There is a similarity between the perceptions of participants who completed and who quitted the program. The vast majority of participants from the two sides expressed their dissatisfaction with the way the program ran. They give due attention to the inflexibility of the program. The context of learning was not positive and respectful. As Murphy (online) pointed out, one of the most challenging tasks for those preparing adult learning opportunities is to establish a positive and respectful context within which that learning can occur. In this case, the University appeared to be failing. A reduced zest, disappointment, quitting to attend, and leaving the University are all outcomes of this failure of eliciting the motivation of participants during the process. In professional development activities, motivation to learn could be elicited in safe, trusting and supportive environments characterized by quality relationships with caring persons and instructional supports tailored to participants' unique potential (McCombs and Whisler, 1997).

Moreover, the assumptions, beliefs and conceptions of the participants about teaching and teacher education were challenged by the program. This was reflected both in the analysis of their perceptions and practices. In the analysis of perceptions, it has been discussed that participants gained a lot about active learning, continuous assessment and action research and their previous assumptions and conceptions are challenged. This was also confirmed in the analysis of their practices.



Although they are not actually practicing the facets in the classroom, their justifications for not practicing imply that they value the facets. In other words, the absence of practice is not due to disregarding the facets of HDP, but due to the context of practice. As Wallace and Louden (2003) put it, change in practice is a result of an appropriate mix of sound professional development, explicit teaching materials, opportunities to tinker with ideas and supportive environment.

It is therefore possible to say that most of the participants were positive in that they have been struggling to benefit from the program, and this is understood from their regard for the facets and trying to implement them where they think it is possible, like the workshop. On the other hand, developers (leaders, tutors, and the management) and the developing environment were not as such positive and have overshadowed the outcome.

CHAPTER FIVE

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, the following concluding themes are constructed.

5.1. Bureaucratizing Professional Development

Learning to teach is an ongoing personal journey guided by the individual teacher's beliefs and conceptions about teaching and learning, and building on the varied experiences that the teacher brings to his role. The role of professional development programs, therefore, is to establish a context where teachers could make explicit their hitherto tacit conceptions of teaching and critically examine these conceptions. But when such programs are handed down through officials or "blue ribbon" committees set by a central government or institution, according to Lowenthal (1981), practitioners usually feel coerced into participating in the programs.

What is understood in this study is that the process that teacher educators has undertaken to become licensed through HDP initiated them to the world of bureaucracy and actually undermined, if not completely, their professional development. Professionalism and individual conscience dictate that individuals keep current in their fields of practice in order to render best service, but they are usually self-directed and don't want to deal with bureaucratic red tape and government agencies enforcing them how to function (Lowenthal, 1981).

HDP, as a professional development program, is highly bureaucratized. That is, it is enacted by officials at the center, MOE, and doesn't involve teacher educators of the institution. It is a system-wide, compulsory program for teacher educators that reflect the bureaucracy of professional development. But, for professional development activities to

be effective, participants should have some scope to choose what to learn, when and how (McCulloch, *et al*, 2000). This is because teacher educators, as adult learners, learn best when they have the greatest degree of self-direction over the nature, pace and approach of their learning (Knowles, 1989 cited in Bell and Gilbert, 1996). When professional development activities are mandatory, like HDP, and overlook the interest of practitioners, it could lead to dishonesty in attendance. Because participants perceive HDP as something done to them rather than with them and for them, they seemed to be alienated, if not completely, from the process and some boycotted from the program. An emphasis on centralized, dominated, and "generator" model of professional development (Morales and McGinn (1982), which characterizes HDP, may increase control, but it suffocates initiative and creativity. The mandatory and bureaucratic nature of HDP generally resulted in difficulties of eliciting active participation and sustaining honesty in attendance. Hence, there ought to be a balance between institutional and individual needs during planning and implementing such kinds of professional development programs.

5.2. Decontextualizing Professional Development and Practice

The contexts wherein teachers teach and professional development occurs are usually varied, and have a series impact on teachers, their work and their professional development (Villegas- Reimers, 2003). Teaching and learning to teach are both influenced by a multitude of institutional contextual variables. This implies that there should be an appropriate balance between the fidelity of professional development programs and adaptation considerations.

However, HDP is a standardized professional development program for all Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) in Ethiopia, be it teacher

education for primary education, secondary education or technical and vocational education. The assumption behind standardized programs, according to Morales and McGinn (1982), is either that all educators are the same or that the variety of differences is uniform between institutions and doesn't affect the impact of programs. But, they contend that the context for the teaching/learning process could be expected to vary among institutions, nor is any attention paid to widely varying differences among faculty members in terms of their experiences, abilities and interests.

HDP is not found to be context-sensitive. Adama University is a different context from other Teacher Education Institutions (TEIS) as it educates teachers for Technical and Vocational Education. That is, the context of practice is different, so does for professional development. For instance, teaching in workshops is different from teaching in classrooms of other TEIs. Besides, there are varieties of professionals who were not educated as teachers: engineers, accountants, managers, economists etc. The professional development program should have been customized to this distinctive context.

Moreover, a reflective model of professional development, which HDP is epistemologically based, is curious about, or intrigued by aspects of the practice setting and frames those aspects in terms of the particular of the setting (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Nevertheless, HDP is decontextualized and due to that participants are disenchanted with the absence of immediacy of application. Besides, this model assumes that teaching requires complex thought and decision-making within situations of uncertainty and diverse contexts. But, HDP is presented as a cure for all ills of instruction in teacher education institutions across the country, regardless of the context. When a professional development program is prescriptive and doesn't consider the context of practice, then development and change will largely be cosmetic, and this is reflected in

HDP. That is, it is divorced from the context of practice and the program became merely theoretical.

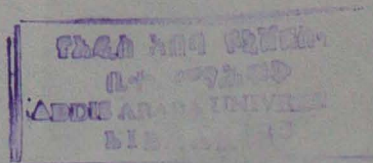
5.3. Should it be Informative or Transformative?

Another theme that is related to the above theme is the informative feature of HDP. The importance of developing teacher educators professionally is indispensable. But experience has proven that most programs provided superficial experiences (Cranton, 1994). HDP does have a similar outcome. The program informs teacher educators about specific techniques in a prescriptive format without consideration of the context of their teaching. It doesn't trigger and sustain transformative learning. The practice of teaching is hardly transformed. Although participants eventually perceive the relevance of the facets of HDP like active learning, continuous assessment and action research, it remains solely to inform them.

Teachers are themselves and their circumstances. Helping them to transform their practice requires not only helping them to examine their beliefs and assumptions, or prescribe techniques but also changing their circumstances. Prescribing HDP to transform their practice didn't serve its purpose because it is a disconnected experience from the context. During the time they are urged to put HDP into effect, they are antagonistically experiencing a large boom in student enrollment. But, professional development activities should be the types that provide support for experimenting new behaviors. In the current situation, however, it is to be too ambitious to expect transformation of practice as a result of HDP. Therefore, there should be a critical stance of the program vis-à-vis the teachers' perception and role, the context and its influence in the teaching/learning process.

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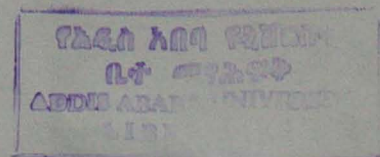
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide (1)

1. Is HDP relevant for your professional practice? How? If no, why not?
2. Do you think that HDP has made you rethink about the nature of teaching and learning and changed the way you teach? If yes, how? If no, why?
3. Was HDP sufficiently challenging you? How?
4. How do you conceive the value of reflective teaching in teacher education? To what extent do you enjoy reflective practice in your classrooms?
5. From HDP, which part did you get most important to you? Why?
6. From HDP, which part did you get least important? Why?
7. Was it helpful to do school placement? What have you gained from it?
8. What do you say about the significance of active learning, continuous assessment and action research in the education of teachers? To what extent do you yourself employ these methods?
9. How do you express you motivation and involvement in the sessions of HDP throughout the year?
10. What is your feeling or general outlook regarding HDP?

Appendix B: Interview Guide (2)

1. Do you think that HDP is a relevant course for you? Why?
2. How do you conceive teaching in teacher education? What should teaching in teacher education look like?
3. Are you happy with your current practices as a teacher educator? Why?
4. How do you conceive reflective teaching, active learning, continuous assessment and action research? Do you think that they are relevant in teacher education? Why?
5. Why did you discontinue attending HDP?
6. Do you think that school placement is important? Why?
7. Do you think that you require pedagogical training? If yes, what kinds of trainings? If no, why?
8. What is your feeling or general outlook regarding HDP?