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Literacy For What?: A Critical Analysis of Planning For The Botswana National Literacy Program

(Under the Direction of RONALD M. CERVERO)

This study sought to understand how the planning and implementation of the Botswana National Literacy Program(BNLP) maintained or challenged the conventional view of literacy. It was guided by two research questions; (a) What was the historical background of the Botswana National Literacy Program, especially in regard to the conventional and transformative view of literacy: (b) How did the planning and implementation of the BNLP address competing choices for language, content, audience, and instructional design based on issues such as class, gender, ethnic differences, and geographical location? The study proceeded from an interpretive qualitative design and used in-depth semi-structured interviews and archival documents. The sample consisted of sixteen purposefully selected planners who have been or are still involved with planning literacy education in Botswana.

Based on the analysis above, five major findings were derived from the data: (a) Planners initiated as a functional literacy project in the 1970s, which was later transformed into a traditional literacy program from 1979 to the present. (b) The planning of a traditional literacy education program reproduced state hegemony through maintaining a tight control of certain features of the program. Planning was viewed by senior management as designed to build consensus and was a routine activity devoid of innovation. (c) Data revealed that planning reproduced the status quo by being a technical, expert-driven process that down played contextual issues such as the choice of language and removed them from the planning table. (d) Planning also reproduced the status quo by yielding outcomes that reflected the interests of the planners and not the learners. (e)

Finally, there was counter-hegemonic resistance because planners, teachers and learners challenged the literacy education policy.

Three major conclusions were: First, literacy planning evolved from a functional literacy campaign in the 1970s, to a conventional literacy project, sponsored and controlled by the state. Second, the state reproduced the status quo through tightly controlling the planning process, which was left to experts and excluded the learners. They removed debatable contextual issues such as choice of language and context from the planning table. Planning resulted in outcomes that reproduced the status quo by reflecting interests of the planners and not those of the learners. Third, there was overt and quiet resistance against state hegemony in the practice of literacy education.

INDEX WORDS: Adult Education, Adult Basic Education, Planning, Literacy Education, Functional Literacy, Freirean Education, Critical Educational Theory, Political Economy, Hegemony, Resistance

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BOTSWANA NATIONAL LITERACY PROGRAM

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother with all the love

Mrs. Ditshenyegelo Mosienyane

For planting in me the seed of loving to teach and touch other people's lives.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Literacy is an issue of international concern as testified by the World Declaration on Education for All (1990), which stated “every person, child, youth and adult shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs” (p. 88). UNESCO documents give a general overview of the utility of literacy by suggesting that it facilitates active citizen participation. It is a source of economic equity and cultural identity since it is essential for creative citizen participation in sustainable development (UNESCO, 1997). Literacy has since become imperative at home, work and the community. The Hamburg Declaration on adult education observed, “Literacy should be a gateway to a fuller participation in social, cultural, political and economic life... Literacy must be relevant to people’s socio-economic and cultural contexts” (UNESCO, 1997, p. 7). It is assumed that furnishing individuals with the ability to read, write and practical skills enables them to become active participants in social institutions thereby, suggesting that literacy is a public good (Moss, 1994).

Literacy for What?

There are competing perspectives on the conception of literacy. Two of the most common conceptions are the conventional and transformative perspectives. Conventional literacy is often provided through a program approach. According to Bhola (1999), a program approach to literacy is generally associated with reformist governments engaged in planned development change emphasizing growth with efficiency. The program is often centralized and literacy is not a priority.

The curriculum is carefully defined in terms of what is to be taught, the methods, and materials to be used are centrally developed (Weber, 1999). The program is carried out in accordance with the demands for social accountability, needs of the individuals and the nation (Hearth, 1999). For example, in Kenya the objectives of the literacy programs noted that the program was expected to increase people's participation in development programs. The program has to enable adults to read development information in agriculture, health, co-operatives, his or her party, and the government. Also this example illustrates that the conventional approach stresses the integration of development programs with literacy (Abdullah, Gachanja, & Mujidi, 1999). The state is ideologically reformist and anticipates that literacy would facilitate orderly personal and national development. Literacy in these cases, stresses elite ideologies and solidifies social hierarchies. In most cases, program development is not based on direct learner participation but depends on the will of the state and the expertise of curriculum developers (Gee, 1996).

Most studies on conventional literacy focus on how it improves people's lives as individuals, family and community members. The focus is on individual advancement in the context of personal, social and national development (Wagner, 1999). For example, Gough (1995) indicated that conventional literacy contributes to personal improvement and mobility, social progress, better health, and cognitive development. Furthermore, literacy is an indispensable component of social and economic development in society. Tight (1987) explained that in most developing countries, literacy is provided because there is poverty and concern for provision of basic human needs. Literacy is a human right, which is provided for learners to gain access to societal benefits (Coberly, 1996; Harvey, 1989).

Contrary to the conventional approach, others view literacy from a transformative perspective. They frame literacy as intended to emphasize critical reflection and problem solving, facilitated by dialogue between teachers and learners

(Freire, 1990). Participants are to reflect upon and critique 'discourse maps' of society in order to transform it (Gee, 1996; Posner, 1998). This approach assumes that literacy should empower and transform learners, raise their consciousness, and help them to take control of their lives, and challenge their oppression through engaging in transformative learning experiences (Apple, 1999; Barton & Hamilton, 1998; McLaren, 1995; Street, 1995; Wiley, 1996). Transformative literacy often adopts a campaign approach since the state appreciates the need to foster transition from a revolutionary war. Bhola (1999) suggested that a campaign is treated urgently and viewed as a priority undertaking by the state. Literacy in this context is for liberation and to enhance society's capacity for self-sufficiency. As Lind and Johnston (1996) observed, with decolonization literacy came to be seen as a tool in economic growth, an ingredient of social justice, and an instrument for empowerment. The approach uses multiple languages in the nation. For instance, in Tanzania the program was built into the cultural life of the people. The state established links with the people through such strategies as performance arts and crafts (Rassool, 1999). In Nicaragua, the state made literacy a priority and it had a mission to eradicate illiteracy as part of the revolutionary process and to relieve the society of exploitation. The focus of the locally produced materials was on dialogue and debate to involve people in the democratic process (Grigsby, 1985). The emphasis is not on the individual or the state but on the empowerment of individuals in the context of community.

These different conceptions of literacy have implications for how it is planned, organized and evaluated in different countries. While in both cases programs are sponsored and controlled by governments, the goals and purposes for a conventional literacy program and a transformative literacy campaign are different (Bhola, 1999; Torres, 1998). Conventional literacy programs serve to pursue a state mandated development agenda that reproduces class inequalities and attempts to persuade the poor to accept the values and mores of the elite and not to promote emancipation.

Literacy content is pre-packaged and provided as a gift to participants (Freire, 1990). This approach can be contrasted with the provision of a transformative literacy campaign that engages learners in social action (Apple, 1999; Beder, 1991; Freire, 1990; Giroux, 1995; Welton, 1995).

The Botswana National Literacy Program (BNLP)

Botswana has implemented a conventional literacy program with minimal changes for the past two decades. The program is sponsored and controlled by government. It is treated as part of the national development efforts intended to enable individuals to experience personal growth and to take part in national development (Townsend-Coles, 1988). The BNLP is the largest state sponsored non-formal education provision since Independence. It has never treated literacy urgently as in countries that organized separate locally operated and responsive literacy campaigns (Lind & Johnston, 1996).

In 1973, The Government rejected a proposal for a work-based literacy campaign by a UNESCO consultant under the pretext that extension staff could not participate in the campaign because they had other priorities (Gaborone, Mutanyatta & Youngman, 1987). The decision not to involve staff in a campaign demonstrated the state's desire to implement a conventional program instead of a campaign. As in other conventional programs, the choice made it easy for the government to take control of most literacy planning activities. In 1976, the first National Commission on Education was set up to look into the country's educational problems and how they could be addressed. The commission submitted its report in 1977. In spite of a request for the commission to suggest how non-formal education can be carried out in the country, the report noted its importance but did not have any specific recommendation on literacy. It only stated, "A fully literate population is an important long term objective if Botswana's other national development objectives are to be met" (Ministry of Education, 1977, p. 167).

The objectives of the current program were stipulated in the National Initiative Consultation document of 1979, Ministry of Education (1979) as follows:

To enable 250,000 presently illiterate men, women and youth to become literate in Setswana and numerate over six years 1980-85.

The teaching to be understood in the context of development issues relevant to the respective Districts and Nation.

The term "literacy" to be interpreted to imply that a person can comprehend those written communications and simple computations which are part of their daily life. (p. 1)

The Department of Non Formal Education (DNFE) could not complete the task of eradicating illiteracy in six years as envisaged in the above objectives because of a number of reasons such as limited resource allocation primarily from foreign donors. The redefined objectives of the program were stated in the National Development Plan 6 of 1985-91, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, (1985) as follows:

To help the learning needs of communities in the rural and remote areas for adults who never had a chance to go to school... and for children who are living in villages without schools.

The Department will expand its non-formal activities beyond reading, writing and numeracy. The needs of rural communities in terms of skills required for income generating activities will form the basis for expansion. (p. 158)

Over the years the Department of Non-Formal Education has taken a number of initiatives to improve its delivery system and sustain the program. For example, DNFE collaborated with the National Library Services to operate Village Reading Rooms (VRRs). They encouraged the promotion of income-generating projects by neo-literates and have started teaching English. The Department also operates a work-based literacy project in some organizations, which seems to be working well with male participants who are not easy to attract to the regular program. In 1987, the

program was evaluated and the evaluation recommended that the materials of the primers be reinvigorated to make them responsive to the needs of learners. It also recommended that efforts should be made to determine the effects of the program on graduates (Gaborone, Mutanyatta, & Youngman, 1987).

In 1993, the Government published the findings of the Revised National Commission on Education. The report had a chapter devoted to Out-of-School Education with specific recommendations for the Department of Non- Formal-Education. The Department was to provide education for out of school children in both urban and rural areas in addition to adult literacy education. It was to review the terms and conditions of service for literacy teachers. The Department was also to conduct a national evaluation of the literacy program, create a literate environment for literacy graduates and set up an adult basic education equivalency to Standard Seven in primary school (Ministry of Education, 1993). Based on the finding of this Commission, comprehensive objectives of the Program were recently articulated in the National Development Plan 8 of 1998-2001, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, (1997) as to among other things:

Sustain a 'literate environment' through the provision of post-literacy reading materials;

Strengthen inter-agency materials production and publication of stories for its neo-literate and people with low reading abilities;

Address the learning needs of disadvantaged groups with emphasis on women, girls, and remote area dwellers and;

Expand non-formal education to include training for work and self-employment. (p. 373)

The above objectives demonstrate how government strives to control what should be planned and implemented in the program, clearly, confining it to the conventional view of literacy, which emphasizes reading and writing and not

transformation. Paradoxically, contrary to the National Initiative Consultation Document that spelled out the initial program objectives and suggested that planning would be based on complementary actions of the departmental headquarters and the districts, however, decisions were restricted to the center. The document proposed the formation of committees on language, teaching materials development, and research and evaluation (Ministry of Education, 1979). It suggested that content should be based on topics relevant to the learners' social, cultural and economic issues. Program implementation however, failed to achieve most of these objectives (Reimer, 1997).

Problem and Purpose of the Study

Available literature on the literacy program has largely been intended to establish effects of the program on participants, and have consistently demonstrated limited impact (Maruatona, 1995; Meissenhelder, 1992; Reimer, 1997). Conceptually, the program was treated as part of the national priorities as ordered according to the needs of the state and not the learners (Griffin, 1983; Rassool, 1999). Empirical studies pointed to such problems as materials being outdated and in need of review and reinvigoration, limited government funding, and that the program was only limited to individual development goals such as reading and writing rather than transformation (Gaborone, Mutanyatta & Youngman, 1987; Maruatona, 1995; Meissenhelder, 1992). The program was ineffective and could not respond to cultural needs of minorities, and it neither facilitated social participation nor gender equity (Maruatona, 1998; Youngman, 1997).

The problem is that the above studies do not explicitly suggest why the government chose to implement a conventional program instead of a transformative campaign. The state seems not to have been politically inclined to engage in a campaign, probably because it would lead to transformation, which was not part of the state's national agenda. One study supports this thesis in its conclusion that the program served the interests of the ruling elite such as the use of one language to

facilitate national unity. Learners and teachers in Chobe indicated that they accommodated Setswana as the national language but resisted language imposition by using local language during class discussions (Maruatona, 1998). Youngman (1997) indicated that the program fed the dominant ideology, which explains why the state continued to sponsor it without any substantive changes over the last twenty years. He noted that the program needed to be decentralized and diversified in its decision-making in order to involve district and local staff with regard to the call for social action, cultural diversity and gender awareness. He noted that the program as “presently conceived and implemented has reached the limits of its effectiveness and needs to be reconceptualized and revitalized” (p. 13). There were no changes in spite of the evidence that the program failed to meet its objectives and the needs of minority learners (Maruatona, 1995; Reimer, 1997).

The purpose of this study was to understand how the planning and implementation of the BNLP maintained or challenged the conventional view of literacy. The following questions guided the study:

- (1) What is the historical background of the BNLP, especially in regard to the conventional and transformative view of literacy?
- (2) How did the planning and implementation of the BNLP address competing choices for language, content, audience, and instructional design based on issues such as class, gender, ethnic differences, and geographical location?

Critical Educational Theory

The study sought to use critical education theory as its framework to understand the process of literacy education planning. Espoused by Giroux, (1983,1995), critical educational theory has roots in neo-Marxist ideology. It stresses that individuals are not just acted upon but they strive to subvert oppressive aspects of their social order. It argues that learners and teachers resist the oppressive social structures. The theory encompasses a critical analysis of the activities of policy makers

and implementers through providing a critique of curriculum development, planning of programs, teaching and the selection of texts. It also seeks to hold the dominant elite responsible for their decisions. In addition to critical educational theory I employed Youngman's political economy, which emphasizes the role of class and gender and the state in education.

Giroux's critical educational theory views education as one of the social sites that frame the experiences of subordinated groups in society (Giroux, 1983, 1987). Education exposes learners to interests of the dominant ideology or cultural capital through the curricula (Bourdieu, 1993). However, the most interesting aspect of this approach is that it sees education as a dialectical process. Learners manage to develop the capacity for resistance and they articulate their own histories and struggles (Apple, 1993; Welton, 1995). Resistance emphasizes a sense of agency in that individuals are not just acted upon by social structures but they actively strive to subvert the structures of socialization (Hernández, 1997). Resistance manifests itself in two other ways:

(1) Accepting, this is where staff accept policies only because they are congruent with their beliefs, and (2) Accommodating, is where participants resist by showing support and subvert the process at the same time. They adjust their activities to suit their individual and district policies (Bennett, 1986). Welton (1995) interpreted critical theory as a history driven by a passionate commitment to understand how ideological systems and social structures impede the fullest development of humankind's "collective potential to self-reflective and self-determining historical action" (p. 14). Critical educational theory depends on social practice in which knowledge is constructed through development of the power of thought based on systematic dialogue.

The process of critical pedagogy gives experiences of the oppressed a central place (Freire, 1990). It links educational discourse with the generation of oppositional forms of knowing and gives the oppressed a distinct voice. Oppressed groups in

society are given the opportunity to re-interpret structures of oppression through acting and reflecting during literacy discussions. Liberation is thus facilitated through creating a community of learners based on making confessions about their histories (Collins, 1991; hooks, 1994; Kanpol, 1995; Newman, 1994).

Youngman's pioneering work on political economy of adult education advocates the analysis of the structure of production, which determines political and social power relations (Youngman, 1996). Proceeding from the Marxist tradition, he argues that we need to understand the nature of social domination and how it could be addressed by unpacking the process of expropriation of social surplus by one class. Class contradiction is the *raison d'être* of social change in any society. Political economy posits that different classes have varying and conflicting interests and the differences are reflected in the political, cultural and economic institutions. The economic status of individuals in society frames their participation in social and political structures.

The state secures conditions for capital accumulation and reproduction of unequal relationships between labor and capital. Scholars have analyzed society from a political economy perspective in order to address such issues as culture, identity, race, ethnicity and gender in their exploration of the possibility for transformation (Cunningham, 1996; Mbilinyi, 1996). Consequently, there is some literature in formal school and non-formal settings that has applied aspects of this perspective to educational practice (Apple, 1993; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Freire, 1990; Freire & Macedo, 1995). These authors argue that the elite in capitalist society attempts to control what is going on in schools and other educational services. In formal education, Bowles and Gintis (1976) argued that education facilitated social and economic reproduction through the hidden curriculum transmitting different messages to children of different social classes. Teachers of working class children emphasize procedure over an understanding of the "why." However, the reproductive model for

explaining social reality was criticized for overemphasizing the role of the teacher and failing to note the contestation that occurs in classrooms. The contestation challenges the hegemony of the dominant culture and articulate realities and histories of disadvantaged and minorities groups (Apple, 1993, 1999; Carpecken, 1996; McLaren, 1994).

Youngman (2000) theoretically demonstrates how in the Global South, adult education perpetuates class, ethnicity, and gender inequalities in various programs such as home economic and extension services. He notes how in each case, there has been resistance to these forms of class, gender, and race/ethnic inequality. For example, teachers ignored the policy imperative to use the national language and used local languages. They also adapted the contents and activities of literacy to local conditions in the teaching of practical skills (Maruatona, 1998; Reimer, 1997). Learners pressured the state to introduce post-literacy materials, and access to skills training for income generation (Youngman, 2000). The resistance is manifested through adult learners and teachers engaging in dialogue about political inequality and they develop counter-hegemonic strategies (McLaren, 1994). Teachers and learners jointly explore ways to facilitate consciousness-raising, transformation, and empowerment (Freire & Macedo, 1995; Hart, 1990). The political economy perspective points to how at macro level, the state secures and disseminates elitist interests. This perspective represents counter-hegemonic strategies to address social challenges such as poverty in the midst of plenty and the struggles of the minorities (Cunningham, 1998).

Some scholars have noted that the planning process perpetuates the interests of dominant groups and fosters inequality (Forester, 1989). The need for transformation suggests that planners have to negotiate on behalf of those who are disadvantaged in society in the face of unequal power relations (Cervero & Wilson, 1996; Wilson & Cervero, 1997).

Significance of the Study

Being able to explain how and why Botswana chose to promote a conventional literacy program instead of a transformative campaign will contribute to the literature on literacy curriculum development. (Youngman, 2000) recently argued that research on the curriculum of adult education including literacy remains a neglected area. There is however, a widespread acceptance that the way literacy is organized can either reproduce existing structural inequalities or breed resistance.

Available literature in Botswana is largely based on limited case studies and concentrates on defining the field, and how literacy contributes to the social, economic and national development efforts. Some studies have looked at how literacy impacts the learners as individuals, family and community members (Demetron, 1997; Kassam 1979; Maruatona, 1995; Okedara, 1999; Varavarn, 1986). However, these studies do not help us to understand how the adoption of conventional and transformative literacy challenge or support the status quo. The roles of planners are perceived as neutral, technical, objective and non-contestable (Poisne, 1998). This study is significant because it will hopefully deepen our understanding of how the adoption of conventional literacy approach encourages or challenges planners as they interpret policy, plan, implement, and evaluate literacy programs.

The study is also significant because for the first time, it provides a documentation of literacy program planning in Botswana using a qualitative approach. This will enhance our knowledge and understanding of how the state chose conventional over transformative literacy in this cultural and political context. There is a the lack of understanding of what choices literacy planners and implementers made to address competing choices of languages, content, class and ethnic differences. It is virtually impossible to appreciate how they organized the program in view of gender and geographical differences over the last two decades. For example, teaching materials emphasize women's reproductive and nurturing roles more than their public

contributions (Mafela, 1994; Maruatona, 1998; Stromquist, 1999). Hopefully, an enhanced understanding of how program planning and implementation enhance or challenge the conventional view of literacy would justify suggesting future curriculum changes and the envisaged program revitalization (Youngman, 1997). Based on the documentation of the planners' current practice, some alternative designs and strategies could be suggested for the program to be more responsive to the contexts and cultural circumstances of participants. This in turn, could lead to an enhanced capacity for the selection and training of capable literacy teachers to enhance the impact of the program on participants.

Another significance is that the study will document and analyze the patterns and strategies used to plan and implement a state operated conventional literacy program, which will enhance our understanding of how in such a context literacy competes for resources with other government priorities. An attempt to analyze literacy planning from a critical perspective will shed light on how activities of planners are organized around the dominant ideology.

Understanding how planning addresses competing choices based on class, gender, geographical location and ethnic differences, presents an opportunity to explore, articulate and implement alternative strategies of planning. Based on which we could implement literacy geared towards social action, cultural diversity and gender responsiveness (Youngman, 1997). I trust the research will generate data that could further my future discourse with planners on how to transform the program. Based on the findings, therefore educators could begin to recognize that literacy is embedded in social, cultural and political contexts and that as planners, they have enormous influence on the policy-making process, which they could use to transform literacy planning and implementation in Botswana. Planners can ethically negotiate on behalf of the learners to redirect the program and make it more responsive to the needs of participants (Cervero & Wilson, 1994; Forester, 1989). Finally, conducting an

analysis of the interests that shaped the BNLN into a conventional program from a critical perspective could generate helpful suggestions for practitioners in Botswana and other countries confronted with similar situations in southern Africa.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study drew from available literature on the various conceptions of literacy, critical educational theory, political economy and political planning perspectives. These theories situated it within the framework of current national and international discourses on literacy. The study therefore sought to contribute to the theory and practice of literacy planning and implementation from a critical perspective. The literature review commences with a discussion of various conceptualizations of literacy summarizing debate on definitions and operational issues. The next section provides a historical overview of literacy provision in Botswana during pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial era. Third, the literature review discusses critical educational theory and political economy in an attempt to understand what features shaped the program into a conventional literacy program. The fourth section discusses technical and political approaches to planning. Finally, the review focuses on such issues as language policy, development of literacy texts and teacher recruitment, and draws from critical educational theory literature to analyze features of the Botswana National Literacy Program.

Conceptualization of Literacy

Current scholarship on literacy agrees with the assumption that literacy is essential for cultural, social, economic, and political developments of every society. It is also viewed as a significant phenomenon in the advancement of individual, community and social life. Hence, in all international conferences, education, specifically literacy, is advocated as a crucial precondition for either gender equality or social development (United Nations, 1995).

Available literature on literacy tends to emphasize how its acquisition would help people to become more active citizens, through using acquired skills to transform their lives and participate in community activities. Since the 1960s both developed and developing nations assumed that literacy is pivotal in social and economic development (Harman, 1979; Wagner, 1999). It has been relatively less contested that literacy is a non-political process intended to facilitate social, cultural and economic changes on the lives of the learners (Gough, 1995; Wagner, 1999). Literacy is useful in a variety of ways in the lives of graduates as individuals, family and community members, thereby justifying why it should be promoted (Demetron, 1997; Gough, 1995; Kassam, 1979; Street, 1999; Varavarn, 1989). However, some authors argue that literacy could have an effect on the lives of the graduates and the development of their nations as long as the processes of literacy are targeted to the felt needs and aspirations of the learners and their communities (Gillette, 1999; Limage, 1993; Youngman, 1997).

The literature also views literacy education being instrumental in cultural identity and development and needs to be relevant to the context. For example, Hirsch (1987) viewed cultural literacy as mastery of materials embodied in the shared meaning of society. The contents of literacy constitute part of a “national culture,” which represents commonly held views. The shared view provides a text for literacy study, this enable learners to derive meaning from what they learn in their social context. The problem is that he envisages a common “national culture.” The truth is that society is made up of dominant and dominated groups such as social and political elite, the indigenous people, minorities, and women who are economically disadvantaged. The dominant elite subscribes to a certain ideology that is factored into the content of the literacy program, parading as “national culture” and insidiously packaged to dominated groups through literacy (Maruatona, 1994). Apple (1996) captured this point poignantly when he argued that education is deeply implicated in

the politics of culture. The curricula is never simply knowledge that somewhat appears in the nations' texts and classroom. Schools, like other literacy sites reproduces and resists the unequal power and cultural relations.

Definitions of Literacy

Because of these contradictory rhetorical promises, literacy remains complex to define. Conceptualizing it in a way that would satisfy everyone is still elusive. The concept simply defies simple definitional categorization, it depends on the context in which it is either defined or operationalized. Wagner (1999) observed,

Literacy is not simply ... a set of isolated skills associated with reading and writing, but more importantly ... the application of these skills for specific purposes in specific contexts ... there is no single measure or specific point on a single scale that separates the "literate" from the "illiterate." (p. 5)

The definition depicts literacy as a fuzzy concept that should be viewed as a continuum from zero to an upper limit depending on the measure(s) employed to define it in a given context. This study argues that since literacy is relative, it can only be defined from a particular perspective. The definition also depends on one's ideological leaning for example, one could look at it from a conventional, ideological, cultural and critical view point. Consequently, Cervero (1985) observes that while it might seem easy to arrive at a conceptual definition, a common operational definition is not feasible. He argues that at issue is not whether "there is a need for a common definition of literacy, but rather whose needs will be served?" (p. 54). The relative nature of the definition requires teachers to teach different skills for each context, which could be complex.

Literacy serves different purposes in different contexts. It can be viewed as a source of power, since it can facilitate social mobility and or maintain the legitimacy of the ruling elite. More importantly, it can also be evoked to challenge the elite's dominant position in society. In learning to understand the socially constructed

meanings that have governed their behavior, for example, literates may become empowered to change the situation that has controlled them (Beder, 1991). According to Quigley (1997), the definition of literacy has changed over time; to date there is no common definition but rather, a number of definitions reflecting different approaches and embodying different purposes to which literacy is put in each context. As the society becomes more complex, so are the social demands for literacy. Literacy is relative, and a common definition is not attainable. Hence, it is conceptualized and operationalized differently based on the state's political commitment and ideological persuasion (Bhola, 1999; Lind & Johnston, 1996).

Literacy has been defined in a variety of ways depending on the context and its intended usages. It has been viewed as the acquisition of the ability to read, write and numerate, some pointed to the provision of functional skills as an integral part of literacy (Courts 1991; Gilette, 1999; Limage, 1993). Learners are perceived as objects to be recruited, retained and taught what has been prepared for them by those who have the power or expertise. Fingeret (1989) argued that skills taught in the programs are often determined by the elite and not collaboratively designed by educators and learners. Such skills are not intended for consciousness raising, critical awareness or pursuit of political and substantive social change.

However, it has been argued that it can be empowering if literacy is embedded in people's actions as opposed to being a technical and detached process. Barton and Hamilton (1998) note, "literacy is what people do; it is an activity located in the space between thought and text. Literacy does not reside neither in people's heads nor on paper"(p. 3). Literacy is a social process and therefore offers a powerful way of conceptualizing the link between "activities of reading and writing and the social structure in which they are embedded and which they help to shape" (p. 6). Literacy can never be value free since it represents and excludes other realities, which makes it a political act. Courts (1991) extended that argument and indicated that literacy is a

meaning making process rather than simply coding or decoding given materials.

Literacy education discourses should involve a generative, active and interactive process with the learners' reality. Involving learners would engender the identified and increased need for adults to want to read critically, make inferences and reason about crucial issues rather than viewing literacy as a tool for learning reading and writing skills (Quigley, 1997).

Literacy conception and definition should be culturally determined and dependent on the adapted approach, sociopolitical, cultural, and economic issues. It depends on the need to engage learners in culturally relevant tasks if literacy is to be valuable to their lives as individuals and group members (Gee, 1996). Recently, Street (2001) contended that literacy practices are always embedded in social and cultural contexts and moreover, they are always contested and ideological. He points out that effective literacy practice should start with socially and culturally relevant uses of literacy. Hence, policy makers in Africa and other developing nations have been cautioned against the failure to interrogate the supposedly universal models promoted by powerful international organizations such as UNESCO, to ensure national relevance and not to perpetrate some form of imperialism (Youngman, 1998). Unfortunately, in the past, literacy education was perceived as a development vehicle for developing nations to catch up. Limage (1993) reported that the Experimental World Literacy Program (EWLP) was targeted at some countries in Africa to help them follow steps of industrialized nations. While providing learners with skills that would make them a more productive workforce, the process ignored the needs and aspirations of individual learners and their nations, the outcomes were disappointing.

Gillette (1999) reiterates that EWLP was born out of the excitement about decolonization, demands for basic skills, growing acceptance of out-of-school education by governments and the perception of education as a basic human right. He points out that "rather than being an end in itself, literacy should be regarded as a way

of preparing men for a social, civic and economic roles ... reading and writing should not only lead to elementary general knowledge but training for work” (p. 353). People were subjected to training or functional literacy that was strongly linked to agriculture, industry and craft training. It was intended for limited personal development without targeting cultural and political aspects. These conceptual and definitional differences are also reflected in the modes of program delivery approaches.

Modes of Program Delivery

According to Bhola (1999), literacy provision could be classified in terms of whether it is a campaign, program or project. Each has a unique set of dynamics and expectations characterized by varied levels of ideological and political commitment. He notes that a campaign is primarily motivated by a sense of urgency and combativeness on the part of the political leadership. Anorve and Graff (1987) noted that historically, campaigns have been seen as a crucial part of literacy for transformation. They demonstrate how it empowered learners in such countries as Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nicaragua and Tanzania in the transitional period after independence. Consequently, mass literacy campaigns are viewed as “constituting forms of strategic state intervention to redefine the social character in terms of specific development goals identified for [with] society as a whole at a particular moment in its development” (Rassool, 1999, p. 101). Campaigns involve people in on going dialogue and debate about choices of language and other aspects of their lives (Grigsby, 1985). These decisions and choices can be sharply contrasted to instances where the state chose a program approach such as in Botswana and Kenya.

In both contexts the state provision was very centralized and prescribed language and the content of literacy. Literacy education programs are organized as part of a political reform package, especially in countries that espouse a capitalist or market economy to development. Literacy provision becomes part of a gesture of benevolence from those in power to the disadvantaged in society. It becomes a planned and

systematic process that could be large scale and time bound just like a campaign that is intended to eradicate illiteracy. For example, in Botswana it was assumed that illiteracy could be eradicated within six years 1980-1985. Planners are governed by the principles of efficiency. In fact, countries that have adopted the program approach seemed to be afraid of the effects of campaigns (Bhola, 1995; 1999). One language is often chosen for use in such programs. Usually, the language is intended to reflect or represent the underlying nationalism that seeks cultural integration based on principles of unity and efficiency (Hornberger, 1999).

Bhola (1999) distinguished between a program and project. A project tends to be small scale, less bureaucratic, has more capacity to respond adequately and in time, is more gradualist, and has very stratified defined objectives that are restricted to a small group of people. In a given context, projects primarily depend upon the needs and motivation of the people served. The three approaches to the planning of literacy depend on the state's willingness to expend resources on literacy provision. Planning literacy education in each case is a political act, because it represents a set of beliefs, values and behaviors among policy makers and planners. Jan (1999) explained that planning shapes the aspirations, hopes and desires of people to fulfill their sociopolitical, economic and ideological goals depending on their political persuasion. Literacy planners seem to make choices about, which delivery mode they choose depending on their context and its political expediency. Hence, the literacy provided could take a conventional or transformative approach.

Conventional Literacy

This approach has been spearheaded by international organizations such as UNESCO over the past three decades. Its thrust has been on enhancing basic skills, development and literacy as a human right. Harman (1979) observed that a person is literate when s/he has acquired the essential knowledge and skills, which enables her to engage in all activities in which literacy is required in her group and community.

The learner should have acquired reading and writing skills that they can continue to use for the development of her community. The basic assumption is that literacy should lead to economic development, growth in Gross Domestic Product and would lead to modernization. Hence, Gough (1995) suggested that literacy should provide reading and writing skills and should not have anything to do with politics. It has to concentrate on imparting competency and knowledge leading to personal improvement, better nutrition and perhaps cognitive development. For Gough, politics should be left out of literacy research and instructions. Literacy is viewed as potentially neutral and value free. However, even this serene view of literacy contradicted national policies. For example, UNESCO expected states to provide literacy from a multicultural perspective, such as the use of mother tongue (UNESCO, 1997), which contradicted the national goals of using one language for nation building and national unity.

Conventional literacy is what Freire (1990) referred to as “banking education.” The basic assumption is that the teacher knows what the learners, who are presumed to be empty repositories, need to know and they fill them with “essential knowledge.” Street (1999) referred to this approach as the “autonomous model” in which literacy is viewed as independent of the social and ideological contexts. It focuses on how people should be taught to decode words and sentences and learn the essential signs and symbols. The preoccupation is with teaching and not the learner’s needs and goals. The goal of conventional literacy is for learners to learn skills they need to find a job and be productive citizens. Literacy is seen as leading to “progress,” “civilization” and “individual liberty.” The approach proceeds from a “common sense” view but avoids questions of who defines such key concepts as “progress,” and “civilization.” It leaves no room for learners to creatively adapt what they learn to their situations to empower themselves. A conventional literacy program is a developmental process without a political passion. It is seen as urgent but, there is no dash, collective push, or

impatience to provide literacy (Bhola, 1999). Literacy is viewed as one of the many development projects to be carried out in the nation. The project is budgeted for with an expectation for returns. One of the distinguishing features is that the state arbitrarily imposes one language for use as the medium of instruction in the program (Gee, 1996).

Transformative Literacy

In contrast to this approach, Freire (1990) argued for liberatory education designed for consciousness raising and empowerment. Likewise, Street (1995) called for culturally relevant ideological “literacies.” Both of these forms fall under the rubric of transformative literacy. Transformative literacy is usually organized in the form of a campaign. Literacy provision in a campaign is considered to be an important undertaking in the nation’s history. It is carried out by states in the midst of socio-structural changes, and growth with equity, especially after a revolution. Literacy provision becomes a means to sociopolitical and economic ends. Literacy becomes a means to increase society’s level of self-sufficiency and self-efficacy (Bhola (1999). This approach is transformative because it confers status on learners by encouraging their participation at different levels of program planning such as the choice of language for instruction (Rassool, 1999).

Street (1999) analyzed literacy from a cultural point of view and noted that we should advocate for “literacies” instead of one monolithic literacy, especially in culturally diverse contexts. Transformative literacy focuses on social practices of reading and writing and recognizes that these activities are ideologically and culturally embedded in the social practice in which they emerge. It is critical to look at institutions that provide literacy, especially socializing institutions, other than educational ones. Education is centered on both cultural wholes and the relations of power structures (Street, 1999). Street’s approach however, does not deny the

technical and cognitive aspects of literacy but notes that they are encapsulated in the structures of power and cultural hegemony.

Cultural literacy has been viewed as being concerned with not only ideological issues or national culture, it is also a product of social and cultural negotiations (Cairney, 1995; Gee, 1996). Gee (1996) observed that literacy practice cannot be separate from cultural practice. Literacy emerges from the very texture of the wider socio-cultural practices that involves how we talk, our beliefs, values and mores. According to this view, literacy is interwoven with culture, it reflects the cultural evolution of the learners and in turn helps to shapes it. Literacy has always been used to solidify the social hierarchy, empowers the elite, and ensures that people lower down the hierarchy accepts the values, norms and beliefs of the elite (Gee, 1996). Literacy therefore, serves a hegemonic function of facilitating a subtle form of control not based on coercion since it helps to pacify dominated groups without use of force. The dominated would begin to accept the place of the elite in the social and economic spheres without question because the lower class assumes that the upper class has what Bourdieu (1993) called cultural capital, or the *habitus*, which is what it takes to be in a leadership position.

Consequently, literacy has also been framed in terms of being a source of empowerment and liberation for enhancing the potential for the social and economic advancement of the literates (Gadotti, 1994; Freire & Shor, 1987; Freire & Macedo, 1995; Youngman, 1997). One foremost proponent of this approach to literacy was the late Paulo Freire, the Brazilian adult educator, teacher, and political activist. His classic *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, has served as a beacon for critical education. He criticized conventional education as “banking education” and proposed “problem posing education” that would result in learners being empowered. Learners partake in decision-making becoming subjects and not objects of their learning. They engage in dialogue and social action to question the causes of their deprivation in society.

Education is seen as part of political action for freedom, learners engage in critical dialogue to develop critical consciousness (Freire, 1976). The learning experience would help them to transform their lives. Teachers engage learner in dialogue to help the latter to see the need for change and contribute towards it. Learners are to be liberated from the “culture of silence” and “false consciousness” that has hitherto disabled them from taking action to transform their lives. The learners engage in action and reflection (praxis) as they confront the dominant culture. Teachers are guides of the process and they also have control over the curriculum and evaluation (Freire & Macedo, 1995).

Freire and Macedo (1995) contended that literacy reflects one’s ideology and as a result, arbitrarily advantages some sections of society while disadvantaging others. The problem is that literacy organizers fail to understand how literacy is embedded in socio-cultural and political structures. The outcome is that the cultures of minorities and their histories are ignored in society. Transformative literacy unpacks these issues because it proceeds from the assumption that learning should enhance the capacity for the oppressed to liberate themselves through social action. These adult educators advance an agenda that includes democracy, social justice and equity in their drive to establish a more just society (Welton, 1995). Transformative literacy provides public spaces where groups in the community can work together to dialogue and clarify their differences and establish common understanding on what equity, justice, freedom means as democratic constructs from a common standpoint (Kanpol, 1995).

The process of transformation deepens our sense of exploring potentials of the self in the context of community (Apple, 1999; Carlson & Apple, 1998; Giroux, 1983). Transformative literacy proceeds from a perspective that literacy could address present social inequalities and explain their causes to those who are disadvantaged. The challenge is to question the formal curricula and decide on content and instructional strategies that would enable learners to move back and forth between what happens in

their lives and the collective structures embedded in structural inequalities (Apple, 1996). Literacy can be empowering if it enables learners to analyze power relations in both structural and structured inequalities (Rassool, 1999).

In developing countries, literacy is provided by national government that often focuses on narrow class interests. This manifests itself in the developments between rural/urban sectors, men/women, and minority /majority cultures. Hence, Weiler (1988) proceeding from gender perspective demonstrated how women were disadvantaged in literacy programs. The literature points to the domesticating nature of literacy among women and suggests ways to make it more culturally sensitive (Rassool, 1999; Stromquist, 1999). According to Stromquist (1997; 1999), literacy projects made noble claims but their practices are bound with examples of how these claims are often in contrast to the grounded realities that reveals how women are excluded in many aspects of literacy programming. Studying women literacy projects in Sao Paulo, Brazil, she noted that the content centers on reinforcing the conventional roles of women, thereby condemning them to the domestic sphere. Literacy often gives women less access to power, in which case the message literacy transmits is that of the dominant ideology (Mafela, 1994; Ntseane, 1999).

In summary, literacy has been conceptualized as context specific and difficult to define categorically. There are different modes of literacy delivery such as campaign, program and projects, each of which is chosen by the leadership for its political expediency. Literacy can be conceptualized from different perspectives ranging from conventional to critical literacy. Conventional literacy is intended to further personal, family, community and national development and is often organized in the form of a program. Organized from a transformative perspective, literacy has to be responsive to the context in which it is organized and should reflect the cultural and historical identity of participants in their context and emancipate them from false consciousness and the culture of silence (Freire, 1990). It urges them to challenge

ideological hegemony. However, in spite of these valuable insights on various and contradictory ways of conceptualizing literacy, the literature falls short of explaining how literacy planning is carried out regarding such key elements as choice of language, content, audience, and instructional design. Studies point to possible influences that either enable it to perpetuate oppression or challenge hegemony but do not demonstrate how educators and planners make decisions in these myriad of complex and conflicting policy and learner concerns in planning literacy education.

Provision of Literacy in Botswana

This section describes policy pronouncements and the planning of literacy education activities in Botswana from pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. It demonstrates an apparent marginalization of literacy within the broad field of education. It also discusses the activities of stakeholders who made decisions about what constituted literacy. Overall, it has been demonstrated that literacy provision remained an exclusive domain of the political leadership during the pre-colonial colonial and the post-colonial era. There is still a lack of documentation of how these sociopolitical contexts and historical periods influenced the planning and implementation of the literacy curriculum in the country.

Literacy During the Pre-Colonial Period

Prior to the advent of colonization, Botswana society was not divided into sharply defined socio-economic classes. The period has been described as classless and communal (Ntseane, 1999). One finds this to be partially correct because at the helm of each group, was a Chief and below him were individuals who commanded social respect because of their ownership of either cattle or land. Cattle were and are still a major symbol of wealth and social effectiveness. However, cattle owners loaned out some to families who did not have them in order for the latter to use them to plough and as a source of milk (Youngman, 1995). This sign of benevolence cannot be misconstrued for suggesting classlessness because those who looked after cattle were

not paid for their labor. The paternalistic patron-client relationships were essentially exploitative because cattle increased, while those who looked after them as underpaid labor remained in poverty. However, sections of the population, especially men, enjoy a form of consultative democracy rooted in a traditional institution called the *Kgotla* or community meeting place. The *Kgotla* is headed by a Chief, who was the custodian of the community, in a sense, he or she was both the legislature and the judiciary. It is at the *Kgotla* that all issues pertaining to development of the village are collectively discussed. There is a saying that “*mafoko a kgotla mantle otlhe*” which means all that is said at the *kgotla* is acceptable. This provided people with an outlet for self-expression that also laid a foundation for modern multiparty democratic system in Botswana

Pre-colonial society had a gender-based division of labor, men hunted and looked after cattle while women did domestic and general chores in and outside the household. For example, men ploughed the fields and retreated to cattle posts and women remained taking care of the produce from weeding to packaging the harvest. The women’s role was critical because the main economic activities centered on producing essential food, clothing and housing materials (Parson, 1985).

At the turn of the 18th century, eight main communities (tribes) who spoke a mutually intelligible *lingua franca* called Setswana populated the present Botswana. They found and displaced the Basarwa/San (the original inhabitants of Botswana) through occupying the land the Basarwa used during certain periods of the year because they led a nomadic life. The occupying groups were mainly sedentarized communities such as the Balete, Bangwato, Batawana, Barolong, Batlokwa, Bangwaketsi, Bakgatla and Bakwena. Each group had its own demarcated territory with a Chief who was commander-in-chief in their political system. Other communities who arrived later were subjugated by the more powerful sedentarized

groups and some insidiously assimilated, in most cases, the settlers retained their culture and language as they co-existed with their hosts.

The political arrangement was reinforced by the traditional form of education provided by the initiation school called *Bogwere* for men and *Bojale* for women. At school, individuals who belonged to a community were taught about its laws, mores and values by old men and women. Participants were grouped together for a session depending on their age, in each case, there was a son or daughter or relative of the Chief who was the commander of the group or regiment. They were taught about their responsibilities in the community. The hierarchical nature of the society was emphasized. Each school regiment, had to respect the group that went through the school before them and performed duties on their behalf. The teachings at the traditional school took place in the context of economic, cultural and social rituals as people were exposed to relevant knowledge of public and private affairs. The communal spirit of cooperation prevailed over individualistic/ capitalistic competition. The groups were made to conduct some services for the community, especially the Chief during and after the training. The Chief was the only one who could call the regiments to serve him or for the protection of the community.

The unequal relationships between the Chief and his subjects were perpetuated through the education system. These unequal relationships laid a foundation for collaboration between the Chiefs and the colonizers who also used education to select a few people, mainly children of Chiefs to be part of the colonial administrative machinery (Deng, 1998). The chieftainship was a nascent form of a pre-capitalist class that later collaborated with the colonizers and facilitated their infiltration during the scramble for Africa (Ake, 1995; Deng, 1998; Thomas & Wilkin, 1999). The loyalty to the chieftainship was maintained through traditional forms of education and this was continued albeit for a different purpose in the colonial period.

Literacy During the Colonial Period

Prior to Independence, the colonial administration did very little to improve the socio-economic structure in the country. Churches provided education because the colonial administration was bent towards reducing costs. In Botswana, it was anticipated that the country would be incorporated into the Republic of South Africa. Also it has served as a reserve of cheap unorganized migrant contract labor force (Commeyras & Montsi, 2000; Ntseane, 1999; Richard, 1997). During this period, education was viewed as a means to select a few Africans who could provide human power for the colonial structure such as collecting taxes and also for processing raw materials to be exported to the European metropolis (Youngman, 1986). The role of education during the colonial period was succinctly articulated by a French Governor General in these words:

Education is politics. It is an effective way of making our politics acceptable to the Africans, its aim is producing the type of Africans who will always be our allies in all our spheres of colonial policies...Education is aimed at producing producers of raw materials we need in Europe. (Cited in Youngman, 1986, p. 20)

This illustrates how education in the colonial context was used as a divisive and exploitative weapon. The overriding factor for colonial education was the perpetration of hegemonic relations of domination and subordination. Hegemony was maintained through allowing the use of vernacular where possible, but access to higher forms of education required rigorous command of the English language. This served to select a few to gain access to educational opportunity (Ngugi-wa-Thiong'o, 1993). It emphasized a model of education that maintained a subservient, under-educated population in the colonies to provide semi-skilled labor force. Naz Rassool (1999) correctly observed, "Colonial education policies grounded linguistic imperialism, and combined with differential levels of access to education, eventually contributed to uneven development within these societies" (p. 64). It created the impression on the

selected few that they worked hard and were also better than other members of their community, paradoxically, they were exploited by the colonialists. The colonial economy was diverted from serving needs of the community to serve insatiable appetites for exotic commodities at a cheaper price by the metropolis, a trend that still continues today (Ake, 1995). The colonies provided cheap labor and raw materials to European capitalist markets and the process of capital accumulation contradicted the communal system of the pre-colonial period that preceded it (Iheduru, 1999).

In the move to incorporate citizens of Botswana and other colonies into the capitalist economy, the colonial system introduced *hut* and *head* taxes that were payable in money. The British did not want to incur any expenses and they delegated Chiefs to collect taxes from their subjects for the crown. This strained the relationships between the chiefs and their people, especially those who were not members of the main tribes. The missionary schools and some commercial stores were operated, which enticed people into European goods such as tea and liquor. These threw the community into the thick of money economy (Ntseane, 1999). The society was experiencing forced transition to money (Iheduru, 1999). They also had to generate money to pay taxes. Money economy led to increased migration to the South Africa mines for able-bodied young men. This had a devastating effect on agricultural production. Migration left only women and the very old men in the rural areas. The status of being a pool of cheap labor for the South Africa mines meant the mines contracted men for an average of nine months in a year. The mines were not responsible for their long-term life goals such as education and health. They could not organize into effective unions in South Africa because of their short-term contractual status (Richard, 1997). The arrangement guaranteed South Africa mining magnets with controllable, cheap and reliable labor force living in hostels.

The colonial system made minimal investments in services such as education and health in the colonies. However, it is reported that education provision during the

colonial period was a joint venture between the missionaries, colonial government and the Chiefs. The education was primarily aimed at teaching about the Bible and Christianity (Mafela, 1994). Some missionary women taught local women domestic skills and “etiquette.” The program was influenced by educational experiments conducted on Black rural counties in Southern United States from the end of the 19th century. The International Missionary Council and the Phelps-Stokes funded African Education Commissions. The Program taught women to care, nurture, and maintain male partners while women were given limited opportunity for progression and self-empowerment (Mafela, 1994). The argument is that the educational provision went a long way to subjugate women through providing education that did not allow for effective learner participation. However, the scale of provision was so limited that at Independence, most people were illiterate and could not participate in development discourse, and this necessitated provision of literacy for adults.

Literacy in Independent Botswana

Botswana became independent from Britain in 1966. About 72% of the population of 1.6 million people speak Setswana, the national Language, though there are some linguistic minorities such as the Basarwa, Bakalanga, Baherero, Babirwa, Bayei, Hambukushu, and Basubiya. All these communities are scattered throughout the country. Politically, the country is a democracy, holding elections every five years.

However, the state has been described as an authoritarian democracy because the power is concentrated in the office of the Presidency with minimal devolution, which negates the principle of popular participation (Good, 1996). Since Independence, the ruling Botswana Democratic Party has won all the elections and created a ruling bloc made up of mainly people from the dominant Tswana culture and cattle owning aristocrats. The ruling bloc has concentrated on improving its status during mid 1970s, resulting in the expansion of its economic base thereby advancing

its economic interests, private enterprise system and foreign investment (Youngman, 1996; 2000).

Botswana's economy was one of the weakest in the 1960's but it boomed at unprecedented rate in the 1970s. The growth has been attributed to the discovery and exploitation of mineral wealth, especially diamonds. The Gross Domestic Product grew four fold in real terms between 1966 and 1991. This growth has been accompanied by disturbingly high rates of income inequalities and persistent poverty in rural areas. The latest Household Income and Expenditure Survey of 1993/94 showed that, the distribution of disposable income among persons was such that the poorest 40% earned 11.6% of the total national income. The next 40% and the top 20% earned 29.1% and 59.3% of the national income respectively (Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, 1994). A recent study on Poverty and Poverty Alleviation conducted by the Botswana Institute of Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA) concluded that 47% of the population lived below poverty datum line. Poverty was more prevalent in rural areas where 60% of the poor and 70% of the very poor who are mostly female households live (Jefferis, 1997).

One of the legacies of this uneven development path has been that women were relegated to subordinated position in the division of labor and this was buttressed by the overarching nature of patriarchy in the society. For example, women in urban and rural areas continue to occupy the lowest paid traditionally "female jobs" such as nursing, teaching and domestic service (Mafela, 1994; Ntseane, 1999). This reduced effective participation of women in the decision-making processes in a system that embodies and perpetuates male superiority (Mannathoko, 1992). The rural economy has a gender-based division of labor, men till the land and retreat to the cattle posts to look after cattle. Women do the weeding up to harvesting. They later return to the village during the winter season. Women face disadvantages in this arrangement since men have patriarchal or so called marital power, which empowers them to dispose of

the property without consulting the women. Cattle in this context are the major status symbols and are mostly controlled by men. The outcome has been that the population faces economic inequality, poverty and unemployment that are the pathological symptoms of capitalist development (Youngman, 1995).

However, a recent study, Ntseane (1999) demonstrated that in spite of male domination, women were resilient enough to transform themselves from being rural women to successful small businesswomen in various towns in Botswana. They managed to negotiate patriarchy by either collaborating or confronting it and establishing themselves through competitive networks to sustain small business enterprises. Youngman (1996) noted that adult education in Botswana has had a reproductive character and serves to sustain and legitimate the capitalist socio-economic formation. The legitimacy was maintained through both the structural development path and structured processes such as education. For example, the state opted for a program rather than a campaign to provide literacy in order to avoid people being transformed and empowered to challenge the status quo.

After independence, Botswana like other African states recognized the need for the provision of education if its other development objectives were to be achieved. In 1975 the Government appointed a Commission to assess the state of education in the country and to suggest what could be done to improve it. The National Commission on Education (1977) indicated, "A fully literate population is an important long term objective if Botswana's other national objectives are to be met... literacy should not be pursued in isolation from other development programs" (p. 67). The contention that literacy was crucial for national development has not been substantiated, hence, it has just remained part of the political rhetoric. This was borne out by the fact that the Report on the National Commission on Education (1977) did not have a single recommendation on literacy. It was only in the accompanying White Paper that the Government suggested that a separate paper will be developed, in which

“consideration will be given to literacy programs” (Ministry of Education, 1977, p. 12). Unfortunately, such a paper never materialized. This left the program without comprehensive policy guidelines. The state opted for the program approach that situated literacy in the broad development framework and did not make it a priority undertaking. Hence, this could suggest Government lacks of political will to take literacy as a serious undertaking in the 1970s (Maruatona, 1995).

In 1977-78, Government charged the department of Community Development at the Botswana Extension College with the task of generating literacy materials. Researchers at the College believed that literacy should not be provided for its own sake. Literacy should enlighten people through raising their consciousness and challenging their creative abilities. The researchers at the college worked closely with people in different districts. They chose some “generative words and themes” to build words for future discussions in literacy classes (Ministry of Education, 1978). However, this seemingly promising approach intended to involve local people in developing program materials was ignored when the Ministry of Education established the Department of Non-Formal-Education. The newly established department became responsible for the current literacy program. In 1979 Government accepted a working document entitled the National Initiative Consultation Document, which laid the foundation for the current literacy program. It is not clear how the two Departments worked together, but the newly established Department of Non-Formal-Education seemed to have “ignored” the initial material development work of the Botswana Extension College. Hence, this study sought to determine the historical background of the BNLP with regard to conventional and transformative view of literacy.

For administrative purposes, the BNLP falls under the Deputy Director responsible for this and other programs in the department. Below that office, is a Senior Adult Basic Education Officer charged with supervising Regional Officers. The country is divided into five regions headed by Regional Adult Basic Education

Officers. They supervise District Adult Basic Education Officers who are responsible for managing activities of the department at district level. District Adult Basic Education Officers supervise junior Adult Basic Education officers and their assistants in their respective districts. Planning activities such as developing reading materials is carried out at the center. The regions and districts are responsible for such activities as teacher recruitment and training and general administration of the program. The headquarters at the capital interprets and plans the program according to the policy framework and the regions carry out the implementation. At the bottom of the hierarchy are Literacy Group Leaders (LGLs) who are responsible for teaching in the program. Like in other countries, they are “volunteers” and are not full-time employees of the department (Bhola, 1999). They are paid a *honorarium* every month depending on the number of hours taught.

In Botswana it has been reported that 85 to 90% of school going age children were in school and an ambitious adult literacy program has been operated since the early 1980s. The overall literacy rate is 68.9%, with 66.9% for men and 70.3% for women (Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, 1998). It has been argued that the state should formulate and implement an adult education policy to guarantee learning opportunities for all. However, the rhetoric has so far exceeded the actual provision of education services (Youngman, 1998). Consequently, only 12% of the above literacy rates have been attributed to efforts of the Botswana National Literacy Program (Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, 1998). This paints a gloomy picture for a program that has been in operation for the past twenty years. This performance justifies the need to investigate its activities in terms of how it was planned and implemented.

Government has also been criticized for failing to integrate the literacy program in the national development efforts, contrary to the stated objectives of 1979 that laid the foundation for the program (Ministry of Education, 1979). Literacy has

mostly been sponsored by foreign agencies and it is not intended to transform the lives of participants. Hence, there is no political will and commitment to use it to alleviate poverty in the rural areas (Lind & Johnston, 1996; Meissenhelder, 1992). In addition, the program faced problems such as dropping out. Participants lacked time because they were occupied with other social activities at home and work. They also found the content to be irrelevant to their needs (Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, 1998). Some of the problems have been found to be rooted in how the program is taught and policy considerations such as the choice of one language at the expense of others and the program does not respond to the needs of learners thereby, perpetuating social inequalities (Maruatona, 1998).

Major theoretical analysis of the literacy program has been carried out by Youngman (1995, 1998), who highlighted that the program reproduces social and economic inequalities in society. This further underscored the relationship between the state, literacy policy and general economic inequality in Botswana. He analyzed the program to demonstrate how ethnicity, social class, and gender and patriarchal relations influenced the provision of adult education. Youngman concluded that adult education served to propagate the hegemony of the dominant culture and legitimated the state rather than being a means to facilitate change in the perspectives and worldviews of the learners. The program does not pursue an emancipatory or transformative agenda (Youngman, 2000).

An empirical study by Reimer (1997) looked at the impact of the literacy program on learners from an ethnographic perspective. While noting the explanatory power of the reproductive model, the study questions whether the reproductive model sufficiently documents the teachers' efforts to empower learners? She concluded that some teachers had an agenda to empower learners but were constrained by their own marginalization in the Department of Non-Formal-Education. She noted how there were acts of empowerment and disempowerment that shaped the

program. Reimer (1997) observed that learners and teachers were dependent on the primers as the only written materials in some rural contexts. The limited access to independent reading materials led to the provision being a “social good.” Learners were expected to create time to go to class, and read pre-packaged materials. The learning process did not make learners socially and economically mobile, raise their consciousness or enable them to access resources. The motivation to learn was only limited to what the program could offer.

Reimer (1997) documented literacy experiences of the Botswana Christian Council, a Non-Governmental Organization, in Etsha, a remote settlement in the northern Botswana. The NGO taught adults using their mother tongue. However, the organization translated the state-prescribed primers used everywhere in the country. This testifies to government’s tight control on the curriculum. Another case study by Maruatona (1998) carried out among the Subiya, a minority community in North Western Botswana, indicated that learners were taught in Setswana (the national language) and had problems in engaging in serious discussion in a “foreign language.” Participants and their teachers exhibited some resistance to the hegemonic control of the state by using their own language to explain issues in class. Most of the materials taught were reported to have limited bearing on their daily lives and context. It has been observed that there was an urgent need to review the program to enable it to recognize multiple realities, especially with regard to the need to use local languages in literacy (Youngman, 1998).

The above discussion on the historical evolution of literacy provision in Botswana demonstrates how literacy has been offered for the purposes of perpetuating the subordination of the population throughout history. After Independence, the ruling elite used the literacy program as part of the strategy to consolidate its power. Available evidence suggests that learning opportunities have not changed people’s lives as anticipated in the objectives of the program. They have not acquired sufficient

skills to actively participate in their local communities (Maruatona, 1998). The program uses one national language and fails to respond to the needs and cultural contexts of those who do not use that language on a daily basis. Consequently, there is a need to explain and understand how to take issues of language and context into account in the planning of the program.

Available literature does not demonstrate how planners made choices and designs in the face of the differences between learners with regard to their language, culture, gender and class. It does not address how these social and political concerns were factored into the planning and implementation processes. Hence, this study sought to describe, analyze and interpret the activities of planners from a critical educational theory and political economy perspective. The analysis would help to refine our understanding of how the planning and implementation addressed competing choices based on class, gender, ethnic and geographical differences.

Critical Educational Theory

While the task of planners and supervisors is to interpret national policies and implement them to provide social services such as health and education in both developed and developing nations, there is very little in the adult education literature that describes these complex tasks and challenges for planners. To date, most studies in critical educational theory and political economy have largely been theoretical in indicating how policy makers have used education to reproduce the dominant culture in society. Evaluations of literacy education programs have concentrated on what was happening to the personal and social conditions of the learners through administering examinations to establish how much learning has occurred ignoring how much teaching was planned in the first place. Questions at the heart of critical educational theory and political economy are, who was responsible for making decisions and who was excluded? How does planning account for literacy's lack of its effectiveness in enhancing the lives of graduates? What role does a country's ideological position play

in the planning of effective literacy programs? Is the program intended for the transformation and social action? They both question the way the program is hegemonizing by pre-packaging the dominant ideals for the less powerful but also emphasize contradictions, human agency and resistance displayed by the dominated (Apple, 2000; Giroux, 1983; Hart, 1990; Rassool, 1999 Youngman, 2000).

Critical educational theory draws from the work of Henry Giroux, which combines critique with possibility leading to the empowerment of participants to become agents of social transformation as they reformulate their histories and experiences. It does not view power as always negative but, it can create potential for social change to create a new social order. Critical educational theory also focuses on how education could ignite learners into being liberated and active participants in their contexts even in a society that is divided along gender, class, race-ethnicity lines. As a result, it provides an opportunity for human agency and action (Giroux, 1983; 1995; Hernández, 1997). According to Giroux (1995) in a class society, such as in Botswana, schools and other forms of education reproduce and legitimate the dominant culture, knowledge, values and language and renders other realities non-existent. In view of these conflicts, there should be emancipatory education that emphasizes conflict, struggle and resistance. The reproductive aspects of education should be subjected to challenge and opposition in teaching and learning contexts (Apple, 1996).

One attribute of critical educational theory is that it recognizes and deliberately challenges the existence of hegemonic control by the state. Hegemony is when the state attempts to universalize certain ruling class ideas while simultaneously shaping and limiting oppositional discourses and practices. The state assumes both a coercive and consensual form (McLaren, 1994). Hegemony cannot just be implanted there, it has to be nurtured and maintained, it represents power as used in positive and negative ways in society. It can be positive when used by the civil organizations to mobilize and negative when used by the state to dominate alternative worldviews (Apple,

1996). Therefore resistance can either create a basis for new power relations or it could involve a struggle to escape from power, this makes it less overt and not in direct conflict with power (Crowther, 2000). Hernández, (1997) argued the current hegemonic discourse limits resistance to overt forms and ignore the less visible forms of resistance that could be misconstrued for compliance.

Consequently, students and teachers are to engage in collective counter-hegemonic struggles in both schools and non-formal education settings (Quigley, 1997). It would help us to understand the process of effective planning and implementation of literacy through fostering contributions of learners in the formulation of their programs and engaging in dialogue in classrooms. The assumption is that in order to counter cultural hegemony and ideological dominance of the ruling elite, literacy planners and implementers should recognize the plethora of literacies in different contexts and that literacy experiences are embedded in social cultural contexts (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Cairney, 1995; hooks, 1994; Street, 1995, 1999). These authors argue that literacy should raise consciousness in specific contexts. Critical educational theory has also been demonstrated to work best where teachers attempt to create a learning community among students by encouraging cooperation. The creation of a learning community entails being able to get learners to critically assess their life world and carry out concrete projects for social change (Collins, 1991). The creation of a community of learners enables them to develop capacity to act on the oppressive world and develop strategies to change it. This would enable both students and teachers to become subjects of their own destinies. Schools in this respect, facilitate personal and social transformation over and above epistemological, technical, and social skill provision.

Educators should strive for seeing classrooms as sites of free communication that is not distorted by uneven power relations if we are to achieve the ideal of using literacy as a source of liberation for ourselves as teachers and students (hooks, 1994).

Learners should feel safe to challenge the ideological privilege accorded schools in the political and cultural spheres, where certain groups are selected and privileged on the basis of their gender, race, and class (McLaren, 1995). Educators should strive for seeing classrooms as site of free communication that is not distorted by uneven power relations if we are to achieve the ideal of using literacy as a source of liberation. Gee (1996) suggested that literacy learners should develop self-construct knowledge in relation to others because both the self and other are situated in a social context. Tisdell (1998) indicated that the most important things are the context, audience and positionality of both the teacher and learners. They all should be willing to appreciate their capability to foster empowerment and social transformation through engaging in social action to empower each other in adult education settings.

Critical educational theory argues that education should not be viewed as just a provided service but as part of the politics of knowledge production, dissemination and resistance by both the powerful and the dominated in society (Apple, 1999; Beyer & Apple, 1998; Cervero & Wilson, 2001; McLaren, 1994). Apple (1999) contends that educators needed to constantly make recourse to the neo-Marxist view to hold “dominant perspectives and practices-in curriculum, in teaching, in evaluation, in policy... up to the spotlight of honest, intense, and searching social and cultural criticism” (p. 19). The theory calls upon educators to conduct their work in ways that represents the broad aspirations and concerns of the learners in their multiple contexts, through encouraging learner participation in order to enhance an opportunity to achieve social change because of literacy provision. It provides sensitizing tools to engage in a sustained inquiry into the largely unexplored fabric of how literacy program planning and implementation is done. How does planning address competing choices based on class, gender, ethnic and sociopolitical differences and whose interests are represented at the planning table (Cervero & Wilson, 1994)? Proceeding from a critical educational theory perspective, there is need to conduct research into

how planning takes into account the conflicts in views, policy and interests of learners, and what informs decisions and strategies planners use or make. In order to understand the manifestation of this tension in literacy, this study sought to articulate how literacy planning and implementation in Botswana address conflicting issues such as choices of language, content, and instructional design in view of such factors as class, gender and geographical disparities.

However, this approach has been accused of ‘disempowering’ both teachers and students, the promised dialogue facilitated oppression on gender and racial lines. Ellsworth (1989) indicates, “critical pedagogy failed because it did not directly resolve issues of trust, risk, and the operation of fear and desire around such issues as identity and politics in the classroom” (p. 313).

There has also been some critique of the approach centered on who are involved or excluded and the fact that there could be an alliance between those who plan the program and the policymakers, which is often ignored in the critical perspective discourses. For example, some academics only discuss the value of the theory but do little to demonstrate how it can be implemented in real classrooms (Newman, 1994; Weiler, 1988). They just seduce learners into a heightened state of recognizing their problems but seek to protect their privilege as teachers in high institutions. Newman (1994) criticizes it for failing to merge theory to practice. Critical educational theory is not described and analyzed by those who purport to support it. “Theory floats from any closely observed practice” (p. 215). He felt that this results in over-theorizing, which does not help literacy educators to empower their learners and make literacy education a genuinely transformative process.

Another limit is that often there is a strong ideological alliance between the teachers and curriculum makers and the dominant interpretation of reality. This would influence the discourse in the educational system in favor of the dominant group and would fail the operationalization of any critical pedagogy. In this respect, critical

literacy is threatened because official knowledge views such literacy as intending to destabilize the social order (Mayo, 1993). Gore (1993) noted another contextual limit for critical pedagogy where the program is state-sponsored and there is an excessive bureaucracy. This builds tension between the progressive teachers and the dominant ideology and could undermine the freedoms to be enjoyed in critical literacy-based classes and heighten the risk of interference by the state. Critical educational theory acknowledges how the planning and carrying out of the program is unevenly influenced by factors such as class, gender, race, ethnicity and cultural identities of both planners, supervisors, teachers and learners in a given context. In spite of that, it provides a unique opportunity for a closer micro-analysis of the activities of adult educators, which have been so rarified that in some cases they have become mythical (Cunningham, 1998).

This study therefore draws from both critical educational theory and political-economy perspectives. Political economy gives a broad or macro view of class and structural analysis while critical perspective provides a critique of planning projects, processes and programs. A combination of these perspectives illuminates how class, structural and cultural inequalities interlock with gender, ethnicity and contextual factors to exclude some voices at the planning table (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1996; Sessions & Cervero, 1999). Class is so permeating in all these theories that it embodies psychological and cultural practices, social domination on the one hand, prospects for contestation, emancipation and transformation on the other. Hence, it has been noted that class struggle is pivotal in the history of human society (Giroux, 1983; Youngman, 1986). A combination of these approaches provided essential concepts for articulating the complexity of planning in the face of power (Forester, 1989). Political economy would illuminate sociopolitical and cultural issues driving the planning of the Botswana National Literacy Program (BNLP).

The Theory of Political Economy

Marxist political economy articulates class, and other forms of social and economic inequalities and their consequences in society. The approach is built on established Marxist concepts of class domination and exploitation. Marxism takes a critical stance against capitalism and proposes an alternative social order in view of the capitalist limits and failure to facilitate social justice for all and realization of the ideals of the life world (Welton, 1995). Political economy represents a complex social reality that captures Marxist insights of the relationships between the economic organization of society and its political and cultural practices (Youngman, 1995). The approach is centered on how economic factors shape the nature of political and social structures, stressing economic exploitation and class relations as a basis for social inequality. In this relationship, the capitalists appropriate the surplus of workers, which in turn lay the basis for their social power and capacity for domination. The contradictions between the classes form a basis for social change (Youngman, 1996).

The Marxist approach has been criticized for over-determinism because it employs principles of natural science and ignores the capacity for human symbolic interactionism that enable human beings to effectively interact with the natural world and control their destinies. This is because people have capacity for effective communication, and can act and reflect on the natural world (Habermas, 1997). Youngman (1996) notes that the critical issue for the transformative political economy of adult education is how to adequately conceptualize “the interconnections between the four main systems of domination in society namely, those deriving from imperialism, class, gender and race-ethnicity.” (p. 7). Understanding issues from a political economy perspective should be geared towards how people experience exploitation, inequality, and how to deal with the pathologies of capitalism. It helps us understand how knowledge gets generated in the North and pre-packed to the Global South and how we can articulate the nature of the exploitation of weak nations by powerful ones.

One feature of the rubric of political economy is the articulation of gender and its exploitative relationship between men and women. Those who evoke a gender perspective, argue that the present discourse does not recognize how patriarchy facilitates the subordination and exploitation of women by men in the capitalist system. The exploitation of women is largely based on their reproductive and sexual dimensions of the divisions of labor in the home (Malhotra & Mather 1996; Walters, 1995; Weiler, 1988). Malhotra & Mather (1996) questioned whether schools actually empower women in developing nations. They contend that education is part of the exploitative socialization process that fails to empower women to make group decisions as women. Cross-cultural studies also demonstrate how the educational process emphasizes women's reproductive rather than productive roles (Rockhill, 1987; Stromquist, 1999). Activities of women in the Third World are therefore, implicated in these social relations. The women's place in society does not arise from what they do, but the meaning acquired by their activities during social interaction and the value attached to the exchange between them and men in a patriarchal society (Ntseane, 1999). Over and above these, political economy articulates the way in which literacy education epitomizes inequalities based on race and interlocking factors like gender, sexual preferences and class (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1996).

In view of these and other forms of inequality, educators should strive to establish dominance-free caring relationships with learners in educational settings (hooks, 1994). Education should be part of a larger process of dominance-free communication and other forms of freedoms if we are to realize the ideals of political economy perspective. Adult educators working from a political economy perspective should make planning decisions that facilitate democracy. We must admit the fact that education is not only about providing knowledge but it is also about the politics of knowledge and the exploration of the democratization of relations in society (Cunningham, 1996;1998). Adult educators should be transformative through

increasing participation in the learning process to make society more democratic, we must work with civil society organizations to enhance their participation in decision making, these would reduce the current marginalization of those we think we are empowering. In any society, there is the fact of power, which manifests itself in the dominant culture leading to asymmetrical relations in the society. Adult educators assuming a political economy perspective should make planning decisions that will facilitate democratic change in society (Cunningham, 1992).

The above discussion highlights class, gender and other macro issues of structural inequality but does not satisfactorily articulate how structural inequality is planned for at the micro level in society. The task of micro-analysis is done by critical educational theorists who highlight the need to use education to empower and transform the lives of participants in adult education programs. The succeeding paragraphs discuss the nuances of planning literacy education from different perspectives.

Planning Literacy Education Programs

The thrust of current discourse on planning and implementation of programs centers around assessing what planners can or ought to do to be more inclusive, what their problems are and what could be the solutions to the limits of how programs are conceived and carried out. Social scientists and educators alike, stress the need to improve the planning and implementation policies in order to make them participatory rather than technical. According to Lane (1999) there are two approaches to public policy making processes, namely; top-down perspective which assigns a crucial role to government planning machinery and as a result, it have come to be called development administration model. This is an approach where planning is technically left to politicians and bureaucrats. The other one is the bottom-up approach, this perspective is based on a participatory mechanism. People at local and national levels have input in policy-making.

The problem however, is that seductive as this bottom-up approach may be, it can not work for as long as resources are not allocated for the self-initiated grassroots participatory patterns. Jain (1999) focuses on the policy-making process in India and observed that program planning involves administrators and political components. Therefore, administrators are not just powerless pawns in this political chess board. They are supposed to use their expertise and bring about outcomes that are beneficial to the public. As he puts it, “practically speaking in most countries the bureaucracy is one of the most important actors in the making of governmental decision making. In fact, in most contemporary situations, its power has been increasing” (Jain, 1999, p. 26). Also Jain (1999) questioned the assumption that once the program has been planned, it will be implemented since at times, plans are so lofty and there is lack of capacity to implement them in order for the plans to be translated into concrete action.

However, there are those in the policy making discourse who admit that while policy needs to be planned and carried out, the process varies from context to context. Lazin (1999) observes that policy making and implementation should be perceived as a single, interactive and interdependent process. Activities of policy planning influence its implementation. As a result, there is need for increased stakeholder participation at local, regional, and national levels in order to effectively shape public policy through planning. He notes, “they need to combine, both top-down and bottom-up approaches in an effort to understand the implementation of the enacted policies” (Lazin, 1999, p. 157). The notion of viewing planning as a political act has also been stressed by scholars who emphasize the need for collective and deliberative *face to face* decision making (Fishkin, 1995).

Lindbloom and Woodhouse (1993) in their book *The policy making process* contended that planners should not accept the existing sociopolitical and economic status quo without questioning its inherent inequalities and how planning could reproduce these inequalities. They should instead accept that improved thinking

involving people in policy-making is probably one of humanity's best hopes for the future, since the involvement of people strengthen the competition of ideas. Planning has been articulated from two contradictory perspectives. Some view it as an objective, rational and technical process while others view it as a critical and political process that can be accomplished effectively if planners are astute in their drive to represent the disadvantaged in society through their work (Forester, 1989). They should also be willing to negotiate with stakeholders who have differentiated power in society. Below, I summarize and critique the key arguments of the two perspectives.

Planning as a Technical Process

This section reviews the genre of planning that proceeds from a classical viewpoint. Essentially planning in this regard is viewed as a technical process. The classical viewpoint postulates that any curriculum and instruction process should seek to address four sequential questions that would help to clarify an educational endeavor's purpose and determine how it will be evaluated for its effectiveness or lack thereof. The four questions propounded by Tyler (1949) are:

- 1)What educational purpose does the school seek to attain?
- 2)What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
- 3)How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
- 4)How can we determine whether these purposes are attained?

Tyler's argument was that a school curriculum is effective if it starts with a purpose, establish objectives, and determine how the experiences are organized and evaluated. Consequently, the *Tyler Rationale* has dominated the educational process and curriculum discourse for the past 40 years with limited efforts to modify its central intents and purpose. The sources of objectives are the learners, the environment outside the school and the curriculum or subject specialists. Each has to contribute to the substance of the curriculum. In recognition of the potential contradictions between

the value systems of and power positions between the three sources he proposed “psychological and philosophical screens” to help filter in the more appropriate educational objectives.

The rationale has been criticized for proceeding from a delusion that there could be an ideal state, which justifies the action in educational programming. The objectives are based on an arbitrary philosophical determination. It also has been criticized for not being a “practical theory” because it does not provide practical solutions to practical issues (Kliebard, 1995). However, Hlebowitsh (1995) successfully contended that it is a practical theory because it has guided practice for years and also when it is followed it leads to better curricula than when it is ignored. Quite clearly, the *Tyler Rationale* was meant for schools, however, its principles have been imported into adult and literacy education.

Adult education program planners such as Caffarella (1994) endorsed the key aspects of the rationale but made some modifications based on the key principles of adult education and her practical experience as an adult educator. Caffarella’s approach is similar to the classical viewpoint because she admits to evoking the systems theory in the process of developing her model. The model proceeds from the premise that a program should start with a purpose, objectives and basically be subject to evaluation based on the stated objectives. She argues that there has to be a conception and analysis of needs, which clearly resonate with Tyler’s suggestion of studying the learners needs, environment outside the program and the input of the experts. Her model would require a screening process to filter in the required objectives. The screening will be based on the philosophy of the providing organization and the expressed needs of adult participants. The model in principle endorses the questions posed by Tyler from purpose stipulation to evaluation of the program.

However, in her model, Caffarella (1994) evoked two other templates that help to make her model less susceptible to the criticism labeled at the classical viewpoint. Caffarella's approach evokes the principles of adult learning. She noted that adult learners want and can learn, they have experience that is a rich resource for learning and that in learning contexts, they should be provided with psychological and physical comfort. The model is based on a practical analysis of how adults develop and change. Caffarella (1994) indicated that her model was also informed by her practical experience as an adult educator and those of other adult educators. This made her formulate clear tasks and decisions based on needs assessment she conducted among adults. This gave her model the chance to incorporate learner characteristics and learning outcomes articulated by the learners themselves.

At the level of implementation, Caffarella's model allowed learner participation and creates an opportunity for learners to apply aspects of the information and skills acquired to determine change in attitude that could be attributed to their experiences. Her model though grounded in the systems theory, differs from it because she attempts to operationalize what the classical viewpoint leaves at a very abstract level. This perspective to planning does not give sufficient information on the views of curriculum developers and how their work is influenced by the sociocultural context. The approach is technical since it assumes that educational decision-making is an objective process and views politics as noises that should be kept out of planning (Caffarella, 1994). From this perspective, learning outcomes are based on a means-ends formula and do not perceive program planning to be political (Poisner, 1998). However, planning is a political process that involves negotiating interests of stakeholders to command different power relations in society (Cervero & Wilson, 1996; Forester, 1989).

Political Planning Theories

The following paragraphs outline features of political approaches to planning from Forester's critical theory of planning, Freire's problem posing strategy and Cervero and Wilson's negotiation model that postulate that planning is as much as it is a political technical process. The basic assumption is that planners can mostly work to serve those in need and can work effectively if they work within the limit of recognizing that they work in the face of power but are guided by the desire to create an equity-based development process. Krumholtz and Forester (1990) argued that planners should represent the interests of the disadvantaged through addressing issues of poverty, inequality and marginalization in society.

Consequently, Forester (1989) pointed out that planning is not a value free process, even in the most liberal democracy, not all voices are given equal weight in decision-making. Planners have to employ both their technical and political astuteness to defend the interests of those who are disadvantaged in order to achieve social well-being and social justice (Forester, 1993). He argues "planners can anticipate problems and respond practically and effectively in ways that... nurture than neglect the democratic process" (Forester, 1989, p. 5). Planners according to this theory are expected to remember that in the course of their work, they down play certain decisions and uphold others. Forester (1989) advised planners to "speak, and listen, ask and answer, act practically and communicatively within a multi layered structure" (pp. 20-21).

Forester (1989) also notes that planners should opt for *satisficing* rather than optimal position in the process of selecting alternatives. The planner's task in this case, is to "empower people to get them to work in the structure of power, and read the contexts in which planning is taking place" (p. 61). The issue is that planners should explain away distortions that might cloud issues in the eyes of the disadvantaged participants. The problem with this viewpoint is that they are so few planners who

would display such attributes. As a result, pinning so much hope on the planners' willingness to relinquish their privilege is questionable. Most planners are likely to protect their privileges in a capitalist political economy.

Based on the lessons of a city planning process, Krumholtz and Forester (1990) indicated that planners have generally been timid beyond the powers delegated to them by the nature of their work. There is always a wide range of possibilities to work with other agencies for common good. They are somewhat independent enough to be critical of policies. Planners should use their work to negotiate for the welfare of the poor, build trust, and provide technical assistance and develop strong ties with the public including even leaking out information to politically active oppositional agencies without sacrificing their professional integrity. In the process, they should not bow to political pressure from the status quo they should strive to be politically astute, articulate and effective in equitable planning practice.

Forester (1993) demonstrated that planning should be part of the sociological formulation of communicative action that would enable planners to explore the political implications of their practice. Planning must be empirically fitting and practically appropriate to the setting in which planners work. It should help planners and citizens to understand ethical and political consequences of various possibilities of action and interventions. This will require more than technique, but also political and organizational tact on the part of the planners.

However, plausible these suggestions are, they fall short of explicitly demonstrating the role of participants as stakeholders in the planning of the programs in addition to making a questionable assumption that planners could actually be willing to risk the comfort of their jobs to act on behalf of the poor. It still does not give us the voices of those who actually do the planning, nor does it demonstrate the potential for planners to work systematically with and not just for the people. In that respect, there is still a possibility that the powerful few can continue to prescribe for

less informed but more affected majority in this approach (Deleon, 1997). This approach to critical planning ignores the fact that people would enhance their self-image in democratic settings only if they are permitted to practice democracy leading to their substantive involvement in governance (Fishkin, 1995). It would be better to employ a democratic approach, which combines *face to face* discussion with a critical approach to planning, which would yield a more democratic discourse with multiple perspectives based on facts and values being represented by the affected parties in their contexts (Fishkin, 1995). Critical planning that involves learners is the cornerstone of Paulo Freire's (1990) concept of liberatory education.

Central to Freire's argument is the contention that planners should appreciate that people know what they need to learn, invariably, their reality and culture has to be incorporated into the planning process. He makes a critique of banking education where teachers regulate the way the world is going to enter into the learners. Teachers organize a process by which to fit learners by depositing essential knowledge into their heads with the former acting as repositories. He proposes critical or a political approach to learning that is based on engaging learner in a liberatory dialogue about issues in their contexts. The outcome is for teachers and learners to generate themes that serve as a basis for further dialogue, action and reflection in class (Poisner, 1998). The process of problem posing leads to political transformation of the learners' worldview. The teacher and learners are co-investigators in search of a politically viable option to liberate the learners from oppression. Freire (1990) viewed critical consciousness as the most defensible purpose for which literacy experiences can be organized or planned. A model that provides an analysis of the planning process and tries to understand how contextual dynamics influence it is the Cervero and Wilson (1994)'s theoretical model, which I discuss below to show how this study proceeded from that political planning perspective to understand planning of literacy education in Botswana.

Key to Cervero and Wilson (1994) model based on three adult education case studies revolves around activities, decisions and choices planners make in their contexts. A central tenet of this orientation to planning is that it is viewed as both a political and practical process. Cervero and Wilson (1994) note, "Planners know that they are not free agents able to translate their own interests directly into purpose, content and format of a program. Rather their planning is always conducted within complex set of personal, organizational and social relationships of power" (p. 4). Planning is not static, and planners always negotiate between interests and unequal power relationships that overtly or covertly structure the planning process. The unequal power relationships are handled through negotiation. Negotiation affects interests and power relations through maintaining, strengthening or transforming them. Planning must be understood in social contexts since it is experienced in making practical judgments in educational planning (Cervero & Wilson, 1994). Cervero and Wilson (1996) observed that one of the most important issues to be taken into account in the planning process is the place of stakeholders because planning is done by and for people.

The key issue being that people represent a variety of interests but possess asymmetrical power relationships in terms of influencing outcomes at the planning table. Hence, Cervero and Wilson (1998) suggested that people's interests produce programs. A question could be posed as to whether those who are called to be at the planning table are legitimate? And are they the best planners? Given that in most cases, those with the most power in the context will construct the plan according to their interests at the expense of others (Wilson & Cervero, 1996). However, identifying stakeholders is not sufficient to guarantee that all interests will be represented, it is important to analyze the impact of these unequal power relationships. The major limitation of the Cervero and Wilson approach is that though political, it does not clearly articulate the place of participants in planning. They are concerned

with the need to ask who is at the planning table. They do not clearly suggest how participants partake in the planning process. Participants are made to be over dependent on the benevolence of planners that could lead to *Othering* as planners might mute people's real voices (Fine, 1988).

In spite of this limitation, the approach has been used in various case studies on communities educational projects to determine how planners negotiate between power and interest in educational and social settings and explored ways to understand and engage in the planning practice (Carter, 1996; McDonald, 1996; Mills, 1993; Scott & Schmitt-Boshnick, 1996; Sessions & Cervero, 1999). All these studies demonstrated that planning in the communities can be risky, ethically challenging, and can empower participants for as long as it is negotiated within a social and political context in which it takes place. Planning involves compromises, exercising or failing to exercise power by planners, and empowerment of participants. A dissertation by Mills (1993) documented the activities, perspectives, and process of cooperate extension/agents' activities in one state. His research question was to identify power relations, interests, socio-cultural and economic factors in the county and how those influenced the actions of agents.

McDonald (1996) used the model to determine whether community-based planning for environmental education can be accomplished in a setting characterized by unequal power relationships between stakeholders. Using a qualitative approach, the study established that traditionally silenced women need a lot of support to realize their voices. Planners worked with other significant players to get them to play a prominent role in politically charged contexts. The study gives a substantial detail about the roles of different stakeholders on the planning process.

An ethnographic study on a health promotion program by Carter (1996) also sought to establish how power and interest of planners affected the activities and outcomes of an empowerment planning process. The study involved interviewing,

observing and participating in the coalition empowerment activities. The study found that planners exercised their power to advance their interests, they took position on issues, wielded whatever power they had and negotiated among various interests (Carter, 1996). The interesting thing was that she found that the empowerment mission can get lost in the interplay of power relationships, interests, and sociocultural and economic factors present in the environment. She concluded that extension workers intending to empower participants must work with them and direct their attention to strategies that would ensure that their interests are represented as a community.

Scott and Schmitt-Boshnick (1996) focused on understanding collective planning strategies for a community-based project for women. This qualitative study suggests that planners in educational programs are responsible for carrying out various steps of planning. They found that working with the intent to foster involvement of participants in planning resulted in an ethical dilemma for the planners in the negotiation process. They found that women had an element of self-doubt and that planners always brought the women to the planning table.

Another study that proved helpful to this project was by Sessions and Cervero (1999). It provided an interpretation of history of failure of an HIV prevention education project in an urban gay community. They discovered that the project continued to offer a generic prevention education even after establishing who was or was not HIV infected. The study found that the providers of HIV education did not want to isolate infected gay men. Their major finding of the study was that the process was counter-productive to HIV negative gay men. It privileged HIV positive gay men in ways that proved detrimental to HIV negative gay men in that there was no incentive to remain uninfected.

All these studies were very significant to the research project because of the similarity of issues raised and their documentation of what actually happens in the planning process. They each contributed valuable lessons for the study. The study

sought to understand the history of the literacy program, how in the BNLP decisions were made regarding such key elements as choice of language, content and instructional design in the BNLP? How did planning address competing choices based on class, gender, ecological and ideological differences between the policy and concerns of the learners? The research was similar to these cases in that it also analyzed the planning process in order to determine who was involved at the planning table and what was their stake. Some planners are reported to negotiate their interests with an eye on the social and political context in which they work (Carter, 1996; Cervero & Wilson, 1994). It is hoped that the study would help to articulate how issues of power and interest were infused in planning and implementing literacy in Botswana, especially to help me understand how the planning maintained or challenged the conventional view of literacy.

The succeeding section analyses the available literature on the operations of the Botswana National Literacy Program from a critical educational theory and political planning perspectives. A significant amount of knowledge could be acquired relative to the practice of literacy provision in Botswana and how planning was done with a focus on how planning and implementation of literacy address competing choices based on class, gender, ethnic and sociopolitical differences. The description and critical analysis of what actually happens in planning literacy education could enhance understand of how it reproduced social inequalities or transformed the lives of participants. The following analysis focused on how available studies documented how decisions in the BNLP were made based on the dynamics of culture, language and instructional design.

Analysis of Literacy Practice in Botswana

The planning approaches discussed above illuminated the operations of the Botswana National Literacy Program because they provided powerful explanatory mechanism on how some projects were planned, organized and evaluated and the way

that planning is influenced by class domination and contestation by the marginalized. For example, Youngman (1995) made a class analysis of the Botswana society revealing that it is divided into classes based on the ownership of cattle and other means of production. He notes that local bourgeoisie is a result of imported capital injected into the mining, industrial and commercial sectors during and after the colonial period.

The pre-colonial class was based on agriculture, ownership of cattle, useful in crop production as draft power that gave them prominence in pre-colonial period. People who owned cattle tied other people to their allegiance by a *Mafisa* system where a big farmer gave cattle to someone to look after to use as draft power and source of milk for no regular payment. Besides this, there are the petty Bourgeoisie who are in managerial position in private and public service. At independence, there were very few workers, and most men migrated to South African mines (Ntseane, 1999). Due to industrial growth, mining and other commercial sectors the class has increased, especially in urban areas. At the bottom of the heap are the poor who lived in rural areas, and mostly own no cattle at all. There is also a gender divide, because male-headed household make two and half times more that female headed households (Jefferies, 1997).

In addition, society is polarized according to cultural and ethnic affiliation, and minority languages are marginalized in schools and literacy programs. The dominant culture is infused into the curriculum through the use of one language. It has been noted that Government has not been spending much on literacy, and has depended on the foreign donors (Meissenhelder, 1992). Political economy helped the researcher to appreciate the dynamics of class and how it influences the process of planning literacy education. It underscores the fact that Botswana society is not homogeneous and the rich and politically and culturally powerful are the ones who make decisions about the

program while the poor and minorities are excluded, although they are the primary participants.

The point is that this analysis provides a springboard to better understand the decisions made in planning literacy education in this context. It also suggests who is likely to participate and their social profile. Program participants for example, are mostly women who are poor and live in the rural areas (Meissenhelder, 1992). Unfortunately, like in other places, they do not actively participate in the design of the program, which often reinforce their domestic roles (Rockhill, 1987). Political economy therefore, opens a window for understanding aspects of what went on in the planning of the program based on their socio-economic status. It points to counter-hegemonic measures like people using their languages in defiance of the so-called national language to challenge the status quo. This forms a sufficient basis for planners to know that they are planning in the face of power and should try to represent those who are disadvantaged in society in a political and ethical manner (Forester, 1993). Planners in Botswana have to appreciate the need to negotiate effectively on behalf of literacy learners. Freire (1990) cautioned that planners should take a political stance to planning by engaging in dialogue with literacy participants to generate themes that reflect their realities and would raise their consciousness, contributing to their emancipation and social action.

In Botswana, there is no evidence that learners were consulted in developing the materials for the literacy program. Planners used the technical approach that assumed experts knew what learners needed and their responsibility is to get them to learn. Critical educational theory to the contrary, calls for engaging learners in dialogue to generate materials and continue the discourse in class for learners to act and reflect (praxis) on the content. This enhances opportunities for emancipation from what Freire (1990) referred to as false consciousness and to engage in their personal and social emancipation. Literacy planning from a political standpoint would become

a means with which planners in Botswana would mediate between the needs of their institutions and be astute enough to cater for the needs of those who are disadvantaged. For example, poor women in rural Botswana need a program that would help them to challenge the conditions that have kept them in poverty. Planners would have to work with learners rather than planning for them in implementing an effective literacy program that could facilitate emancipation and lead to self-identity, democracy, and social justice (Carlson & Apple, 1998; McDonald, 1996).

Implementation of Literacy

Rockhill (1987) noted that internationally, women are in the majority in literacy programs, which are operated in ways that women's needs are unnoticed. The contents in a majority of these projects centers around conventional and reproductive roles of women and are hardly transformative (Stromquist, 1999).

In Botswana the materials were developed based on what experts thought the participants needed to learn not through collecting generative words and themes from the community but by experts writing primer materials (Freire, 1976). The content in this case was just based on the perceptions of "experts" since there is no substantive evidence that themes were generated from participants' perspectives. Teaching in the BNLP is conducted by Literacy Group Leaders (LGLs) who are volunteers and are paid *honorarium* to teach for seventy-five minutes a session. The lessons are based on a series of five pre-packaged sequential primers. Teachers have minimum qualification of Standard Seven to Junior Certificate (Maruatona, 1995).

The contents have ossified by lack of review and reinvigoration over the years. The teaching and learning approach used in the program involves learners interacting with pictures in the primer booklets. The learners are expected to engage in a short discussion concerning what they can see in the pictures. They then would concentrate on decoding words that follow the picture. The scope of discussion of the picture is often very narrowly focused to introducing key concepts, it does not expose

them to broader issues in their lives and society. The process is intended to facilitate *rote* learning through decoding syllables, words and sentences. The program does not help learners to effectively redress their local, regional and national challenges.

Women largely participate in program, but the instructional materials do not reflect their needs effectively (Maruatona, 1995; Reimer, 1997). In addition to the problem of ineffective materials, the program was faced with imposition of ‘national and official’ languages.

Literacy and Language

In recognition of the problems of imposed ‘national language’, the Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning, UNESCO (1997) concluded, “Adult learning should reflect notion of cultural diversity and respect traditional and indigenous people’s knowledge and symbols of learning. The right to learn in mother tongue should be respected and implemented” (p. 5). Consequently, Tollefson (1991) observed that those who speak the national language have access to institutions of power. Resisting national language is seen as opposition to national unity. Gunn (1997) argued that language is a maker of self-identification and dominant groups use it as a political resource to dominate others as part of the process of social and cultural control. This argument suggests the need to use people’s languages as a way of restoring their self-identity as a community in addition to its social, educational and cultural advantages.

Literacy providers should work with people in different parts of the country to generate written texts in their own languages that would be responsive to local needs. In addition to the use of local languages, the teachers should work with local communities to collect and document local art, music, dance, and other forms of local facets of self-expression such as poetry to use as part of the classroom discourse to enliven debate (Gee, 1996). Based on this view, there is a discourse on multiculturalism and liberation which calls for democratic culture as opposed to conventional/general education which desires to impose a “common culture” on all

literacy learners to facilitate control (Giroux & McLaren, 1994; Sleeter & Grant, 1999). Its proponents argue that adult educators should have to strive for the principle of emancipatory/multicultural education that could expose learners to democratic values essential for their personal and community development.

A substantial part of the culture of a people resides in the language of each speech community regardless of its size (Gunn, 1997). However, in developing countries such as Botswana, the development trend embodies striving for cultural homogeneity and not to assert cultural diversity. Post-colonial nations view cultural homogeneity as a central construct to nation building. One language would be imposed among diverse communities. For example, in Botswana, Setswana was imposed as the national language and English was taken as the natural official language. The process intensified the marginalization of minority languages. Schooling and literacy are conducted in these two languages and every other language is prohibited in national institutions (Maruatona, 1994). The choice and use of Setswana language, has given its speakers higher economic and political status in society.

While initial organizers of the present Department of Non-formal Education would have liked to use a variety of languages, the policy restricted that by imposing Setswana as the sole medium of instruction in the program. Non-Setswana speaking communities experience problems with learning in a foreign language. However, individuals in subordinate positions can never be completely powerless, to assume that is vulgar and mystifying (Giroux, 1997). Maruatona (1998) found that learners were taught in Setswana but used their own language to conduct class discussions. Consequently, Youngman (1997) made a case for social and educational benefits for the use of mother tongue at the Third National Adult literacy Forum. The forum resolved that curriculum design should be developed to accommodate cultural and language diversity in the implementation of literacy in Botswana. But to date, the Government literacy program has not made any changes in the use of one language.

Facilitating literacy effectively would require their use of mother tongue languages. Government is adamant on the use of the national language. However, NGO enjoys the privileges of using other languages when working among minority groups (Reimer, 1997). NGO have initiated the use of mother tongue, for example, there is a group in Da'Kar that teaches Basarwa/San using *Naro* one of the many languages of the Basarwa. In the North West, the Botswana Christian Council organized literacy for people in Thimbukushu their mother tongue (Chebane, Nyati-Ramahobo & Youngman, 2000; Reimer, 1997). This testifies to the possibility of using mother tongue in different contexts, what matters is the political will to allow the use of diverse languages and providing financial resources to make that possible. Paradoxically, in spite of the need for the use of local languages it has been reported that learners among minorities would like to learn national and official languages for a number of reasons including being able to communicate with tourists (Maruatona, 1998). This poses a challenge for literacy planners and implementers and points to the need for planners to make explicit their decision and strategies on language choices and study materials.

Teachers and Texts

Kanpol (1995) observed that teachers must use the learners' experiences that allow a mutual connection with the history and experience of the learners. They must create empathy and care for others among learners and allow students to engage in collective interpretation of their realities in a non-threatening and non-competitive atmosphere. Teachers should adopt the Freirean approach to learning based on their working with learners to engage in open and collaborative discourses regarding their problems. The result would be generative words and themes, which they would codify to develop curricula for the literacy program. The dialogue should facilitate growth and learning of both teachers and learners (Freire & Macedo, 1987). The teachers should work with learners to interrogate issues they have hitherto taken for granted

about their lives, this might raise their consciousness. Literacy teachers should also be 'cultural workers' because that will help them to be more sympathetic to the course of those who are disadvantaged in society (Simon, 1992). Critical teaching points to what teachers are to do to fight for the course of the disadvantaged and how to plan with vigilance, empathy, and care in the face of hegemonic resistance.

Lake (1999) cautioned that in literacy the selection of textbooks are part of the selective tradition which privilege certain cultural constructs at the expense of others. Texts in a literacy program will have to be scrutinized based on how they reflect both local and national issues and realities. They should enable learners to access alternative ways of interpreting issues. Textbooks should be used to help learners critically choose from the different alternative views. The teachers' task is to help learners dialogue about issues and make choices independent of what the teachers think. They should not impose solutions on learners. Textbooks are part of the efforts to facilitate hegemonic control by the dominant group in society (Apple, 1996).

Literacy instructions in Botswana would have to be designed to maximize the potential for learners to empower themselves. Proceeding from the premise that education is not a neutral enterprise, books and other reading materials for literacy will have to be decided upon after a careful look at what the text has to offer and why it should be used. What value will it add to further the culture of independence and self-worth among literacy learners. The process of building the curriculum will have to be collective, democratic and organized in ways that are critically reflective. Educators should appreciate the power of the participants, their capacity to resist domination and their resilience (Ntseane, 1999).

The culture of democratic participation prevails in Botswana, based on the tradition of free and open discussion at the *Kgotla* or community meeting place. People in the country have always worked together in collaborative ventures like ploughing together or helping each other in times of needs. The collaborative approach

would rekindle this spirit in the literacy program if it adopts participatory approaches. Teachers would have to organize village literacy committees that would comprise of technical or extension staff and village leaders to help in the recruitment and generation of literacy materials. These committees will have to include those who cannot read and write so that they should help to perform member-check on reading materials before they are tried out and finalized for use as texts. The Department of Non-formal Education would have to recruit and effectively train adult teachers from different ethnic and language communities in the country. While it might be inevitable that they must be “volunteers,” paid a *honorarium*, because of the limited resources, teachers must be sufficiently trained in participatory approaches to teaching adults. These approaches will ensure that the teachers increase the potential for learner participation in class dialogue to enhance the status of their culture and their self-identity (Reimer, 1997).

The study also sought to understand what interests shaped the BNLP into a conventional program and how its planning and implementation maintained or challenged the conventional view of literacy in Botswana. This is because there are different and conflicting power and interests between the provider/state, and the participants who face different social challenges and life circumstances (Cervero & Wilson, 1994). Hence, the researcher employed critical educational and political planning theories to understand how literacy educators negotiated competing interests in planning a conventional literacy program.

Chapter Summary

The literature review demonstrated what is known about different literacy conceptions such as conventional and critical literacy. It was perceived to be essential for sociopolitical, cultural and even economic advancement of learners. In developing nations literacy is provided by governments and contrary to the declared rhetoric, serves to reinforce the cultural values of the elite and perpetuate the

subordination of groups that are marginalized based on class, ethnicity, gender and geographical differences. Since the colonial, pre-colonial period to date in Botswana, there is very limited empirical data on contextual facets that influence planning and implementation of literacy. Available empirical studies show that the literacy program has had a limited impact on participants in the last twenty years (Maruatona, 1998; Reimer, 1997).

Critical educational theory and political economy literature were reviewed to facilitate an understanding of the broad theoretical conception and planning of literacy in different contexts and how features such class, gender, and the environment are taken into account in the organization of literacy planning. By failing to critically examine these social inequalities planning served to reinforce the marginalization of the oppressed. While the theory has been criticized for being lofty and failing to recognize the problems educators face, it provided a useful framework to analyze the planning of a conventional literacy program.

Finally, the chapter reviewed both technical and political planning approaches based on which the planning of literacy in Botswana was analyzed to demonstrate that it has been largely technical. The program has been controlled by government and represented the dominant elite in the choice of language, content, and the planning process does not involve the learners. Consequently, this study sought to enhanced our understanding of how planning maintained or challenged the conventional view of literacy. The succeeding chapters undertook this endeavor.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the design of the study and the procedures used in the selection of the study sample. It describes how data were collected and analyzed. The Chapter details how issues of validity and reliability were addressed. Finally, it discusses the limitations of the study.

Design of the Study

The study examined how the planning and implementation of the literacy education program in Botswana maintained or challenged the conventional view of literacy. I used an interpretive qualitative research approach to drive the study in order to establish a holistic understanding of how the BNLP was planned and implemented. Central to qualitative research is its emphasis on eliciting understanding and documenting meaning from the participants' perspective (Patton, 1990). Krathwohl (1998) argued that it is intends to understand perceived reality underlying the individual's social behavior. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) have identified five characteristics of qualitative research: (a) Data is in natural settings and the researcher is the key instrument of data collection (b) It is a descriptive and interpretive process (c) It is primarily concerned with process rather than outcomes (d) It requires that data be inductively analyzed for best results and (e) It is concerned with meaning making from the participants (emic perspectives). The authors observe that qualitative research involves how individuals make meaning and understanding of issues from their perspective. Firestone (1987) demonstrated that qualitative research uses different means to persuade readers about the trustworthiness of the study, such as the portrayal of the process in active mode and centering the perspectives of participants.

Qualitative design seeks to rediscover and understand a phenomenon, or the *emic* perspectives and worldviews of participants (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). Krathwohl (1998) explained that participants are selected for their justified knowledge and insight into the situation, willingness to participate and to help the researcher gain access to their life world. Qualitative research centers on establishing truths from multiple perspectives about the phenomena not the “Truth” and primarily depends on whether the truth rings true to the reader (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). The purpose is not to establish objectified truth but an understanding and meaning of the phenomena from the participants’ perspective (Kvale, 1996). As Glesne (1999) observes “qualitative research looks at the specific to understand it in the particular and to understand something of it in the general” (p. 153). Critical to the qualitative approach is the desire for the research process to be rigorous enough to be believable and trusted so that it can be applied by those who seek to improve practice (Merriam, 1995).

Patton (1990) asserted that the point of using a qualitative method is to understand naturally occurring phenomenon in its natural state. The purpose is to make sense of the existing situation without imposing preconceived expectations on the setting. The approach emphasized getting close to the people and their situations to understand their realities and minutiae of their lives. Woods (1999) notes, “qualitative researchers are interested in how meanings are framed, negotiated...how curriculum works out, how policy is formulated and implemented...these are processual matters not just products” (p. 4).

A characteristic feature of qualitative research is its flexibility in the documentation of the life world of participants, an *emic* perspective. For example, questions one uses can be developed as the patterns emerge and changes as the researcher enters the lived realities of participants and gain a deepened understanding of their worldview. One formulates hypotheses as their understanding is enlarged by

field experience (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Patton 1990). The researcher in this process is the primary instrument of data collection and experiences of participants are mediated through them. This adds to the need for an empathetic and humanistic perspective in documenting the lives of participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). The process is dependent on how the researcher interacts with participants in their contexts and attempts to document their worldview without being obtrusive (Woods, 1999).

The benchmark for qualitative research is for the researcher to be empathetic and natural. Researchers should care about people whose lives they are documenting and should not be judgmental about what people say they do, in the data collection phase. They should allow multiple realities and contradictions to unfold as the fieldwork unfolds. As Patton (1990) puts it, “the design is particularly emergent as the study occurs” (p. 61). The process of writing qualitative research findings should empathetically take readers to the setting of the narrative and the observed realities through the depth of detail of the account presented in rich thick description (Geertz, 1988). These characteristics of qualitative approach made it suitable for this study.

Qualitative research was suited for this study because it enabled me to understand how the planning and implementation of the BNLP maintained or challenged the conventional view of literacy. It also enabled those involved with the program to reflect on their experiences without my imposing a judgment on their perspectives. One of the most critical issues in qualitative research is that the process has to be done in an ethical manner with sensitivity to the complex interpersonal and political situations (Hammersley, 2000). This is more so for those of us who come from developing nations with a nascent democratic culture. The ethical nature of qualitative research helped me to candidly describe how planning and implementation address competing choices based on class, gender, ethnic and geographical differences among learners in Botswana. The descriptions were based on the participants’ data in the absence of other empirical sources. I documented their

experiences and social structures that organized their world as planners and supervisors from their own words (Hutchinson, 1990). Being ethical and the disclosure of personal subjectivities and assumptions in qualitative research is crucial in that the researcher is the sole instrument of data collection. A self-reflective statement would help to monitor one's subjectivities in analyzing and interpreting the findings (Peshkin, 1988;1992). Researchers selectively decide on what constitute the final narrative of the research process based on one's assumptions and interpretations of the participants' realities (Kvale 1996; Wolcott, 1994). This section elucidates my assumptions and perspectives that might have impacted the study.

My first subjectivity stems from my historical ties with literacy work in Botswana. I have worked on analyzing the *Impact of the National Literacy Program* on the participants in urban and rural areas, especially among the minorities. I come into this literacy research with an agenda of establishing how a different vision of literacy program could empower learners because I believe the current program maintains the status quo and keeps poor people in poverty. I believe education can unlock the potentialities of the learners and establish how much they can do for themselves. The current program secures the elite's nationalistic drive for a united country under one language. These views might cloud my vision and I might see more than what is actually there but I believe I have enough research experience to value and effectively record other people's points of view on whether planning maintained or challenged the conventional view of literacy.

Being a male researcher and a university teacher, in a patriarchal society researching a program operated largely by women might have posed some problems of power dynamics associated with my maleness and privileges associated with being from the university. Practitioners view us as essentially "unrealistic" in our perceptions of reality because we lack experience. As Moss puts it, " I think sometimes intellectuals never give themselves time to be closer to reality before they

come up with these preconceived ideas.” I found this observation to be instructional and I tried to avoid the trap. I tried not to find myself pushed to ask questions on why they said what they said. I listened and was taught about the planning of the program without the temptation to ask ‘why’ questions. I needed to ensure that I leveled the field by not talking a lot so participants would know that I was there to learn from them. My task was therefore to remain very conscious of all these subjectivities and to control and manage their potential negative effects on my quest to understand how planning and implementation maintained or challenged the conventional view of literacy in the Botswana National Literacy Program.

Consequently, qualitative research methods presented the best way to gain inside perspectives and meanings people attach to events in their lives and work. It remains the single most crucial way to get records about lived experiences, purposes and meanings people attach to activities they do in a given context (Punch, 1998). The approach was appropriate for this study because it allowed me to generate rich and thick descriptions of the experiences participants attached to what was happening to their work as planners (Geertz, 1988; Merriam, 1998). I was able to better understand the meanings participants attached to their behavior and their reactions as they conducted the planning of the program. Kvale (1996) argued that the researcher depends on thick descriptions of events and activities selected and contextualized to enable readers to appreciate the setting and interactions of participants as they went about developing the program, specifically how the conventional view of literacy education drove their decisions and actions. This necessitated that I carefully choose participants who helped me to generate thick descriptions of their life world.

Sample Selection

A sample in research is the unit of analysis to be studied, it could be a person, or group and it is determined by the research design (Patton, 1990). The qualitative research process usually employs a small and purposeful sample. A

purposeful or criterion sampling approach was used for the selection of participants in this study. This approach proceeded from an assumption that I wanted to discover, understand and gain insight. Therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn most (Merriam, 1998). In order to select a representative sample I had to have a pre-specified criteria for sampling individuals who qualified as participants in the study (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). One of the principal criteria to be interviewed was for those individuals to have served the Department of Non-Formal-Education in administrative positions namely, either as a Literacy Coordinator, Regional Adult Basic Education Officers or District Adult Basic Education Officers. The Department has five administrative regions, each headed by a Regional Adult Education Officer. There are five regions, namely; Central, Northern, South Central, the Southern and the Western region. Each of the regions have districts that range in number from six in the central to one in Southern region (Legwaila & Manowe, 1996).

A sample of sixteen participants was identified and interviewed, thirteen of whom are still with the program as planners or field supervisors. I interviewed them because I was interested in understanding meanings connected to their experiences and their knowledge of how decisions were made in planning the program. I did not restrict the selection only to current employees of the department. I also interviewed individuals who have held key positions in the department and those who were involved with earlier efforts to provide literacy and are now retired or transferred to other sectors. As Thomas (1993) indicates, the researcher should be alert to additional sources of data that could reveal details and nuances of the experience. These individuals had sufficient experience in the planning and implementation of the BNLFP. They were also included because they were willing to talk to me about it, and I gained repeated access to them (Kratwohl, 1998). I considered it a minimum size to enable me to generate an understanding of how planning and implementation were done regarding such key issues as choice of language, content, audience, and

instructional design in the BNLP. The number was small enough for me to know the participants well to have a better understanding of how they addressed competing choices for language, content, audience, and instructional design based on issues such as class, gender, ethnic differences. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) noted that the size of the group is dependent upon the number required to generate and refine concepts and postulates. The bottom line was that I felt confident that I interviewed enough people to have reached saturation, and no new instances emerged to modify the constructs (Hutchinson, 1990). I began the collection process by conducting a pre-interview discussion with the individual in order to establish whether indeed they met the specified criteria and more importantly, if they were willing to participate in the study and would be available for a follow up interview in future, as I embarked on a more elaborate analysis and sought clarifications.

Another criterion was that individuals should have served continuously in an administrative capacity in the Botswana National Literacy Program for a minimum of ten years. The criterion enabled me to select and interview people who had experience because they played a key role in the planning and implementation of literacy education. I believed that ten years was long enough for participants to have gained sufficient experience and insights into what choices were made in the selection of language, content, and instructional design. In addition, I used the networking sampling procedure, where I asked the person just interviewed to recommend others who held an administrative position in the program for a period of ten years or longer. I assumed that they knew other people who had similar experiences. The other fact was that I did not want the Headquarters staff in Gaborone (the capital city) to direct me to people who were known to have certain views about the development of the program. The study then documented and described their worldviews on how they handled gender and ecological differences in society in their daily work as literacy planners and implementers.

Another criterion was that I deliberately included participants from different cultural backgrounds. These individuals may be from the dominant culture (Setswana speaking) but had worked in a district where the majority of literacy participants were members of minority groups. I wanted to understand how sociopolitical and cultural differences based on language, ecology, location, and gender affected decision in the implementation of the program. This is because though there are several languages, the use of languages other than Setswana and English in official transactions such as in education and the media are prohibited. Fortunately, in the last decade, members of the minority communities have begun to engage in counter-hegemonic measures to question why their languages are not being used in education and other spheres of public life, causing them suffer losses of self-dignity and identity (Chebane et al. 2000; Ntseane, 1999). They have had some modest achievements, including persuading the Government to allow the use of the mother tongue for the first four years of schooling as recommended by the Revised National Commission in Education and are now considering introducing the third language in the literacy program (Ministry of Education, 1993).

While Wolcott (1994) cautioned against the use of multiple cases during field work, arguing that it really does not add anything much but sacrifices depth of detail and contextualization, in this case, it was justifiable to have more than one case in different sites to get perspectives of people working for the same program in different geographical and linguistic areas. Patton (1990) asserted that verification is important in documenting unique features as well as common patterns across different participants. The point is that, in spite of variability based on language, gender and locations, the state operates the literacy program countrywide. While the fact that it is a national program makes it all encompassing, there were some variations in terms of how it was planned and implemented among communities who did not speak Setswana.

Based on the criteria above, the sixteen participants were selected as follows; I interviewed three former planners who have been involved in the initial planning and implementation of the program to give me historical information about it. Two of them were heavily involved in the experimental literacy projects of the 1970s conducted by the Botswana Extension College. One was among the pioneers of the current program who has since transferred to another department. I also had a conversation with three Regional Adult Basic Education Officer in the Northern, Southern and Western regions and three District Adult Basic Education Officers in Southern and Northern regions. I was able to interview only two District Adult Basic Education Officers in the Western region because most of the other officers were new to their positions and did not meet the criteria at our pre-interview session because they had served for fewer than ten years.

These three regions were purposefully selected out of the five because they represented cultural, linguistic and geographical diversity in the country. I therefore conducted interviews in the predominantly Setswana speaking village of Kanye which is the headquarters of the Southern region. The Northern regional offices are in the city of Francistown, which is the headquarters of districts such as Kasane, Masunga and Maun, which have communities who do not speak Setswana as their mother tongue. The Western region was also chosen because it had linguistic, ethnic and environmental diversity compared to the other two regions. It encompasses districts such as Gantsi, Hukunsi and Tsabong and Kang, its headquarters. The western region is also where most of the indigenous Basarwa/San people live. Finally, I interviewed two senior management officers at the headquarters because of the persistent references made to their key role in the planning and implementation of literacy both at district and regional levels. Interviewing these individuals helped me to determine how a centrally planned literacy program responded or failed to respond to cultural and linguistic variability among the regions. Identifying individual officers who met

these criteria therefore enabled me to conduct data collection, which is the hallmark of the research process (Wolcott, 1999).

Data Collection

Data collection is the main activity of an interpretive qualitative research process since it provides a unique opportunity for the researcher to be among the participants. It gives the researcher a chance to learn from participants in order to be able to describe people, events, settings and situations based on the interactions, discussions and observations of behavior (Patton, 1990). In this study, the data were obtained through interviews, and archival documents obtained from former and current literacy education planners. Interviews were essential because in qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection (Merriam, 1998). The point is that I dealt with multiple meanings and interpretations of their worldviews that were mediated through me as the researcher. In this capacity, human beings are able to understand and interpret meanings and interactions with multiple realities in the natural setting. This called for use of varied sources such as interviews, field notes, and reflective journals and extensive review of documents (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Krathwohl, 1998).

Prior to any of the interviews, I had a discussion with each participant about the purpose of my study in order for them to be well placed to decide whether to participate or not, especially if they met the criteria for inclusion in the study. I ensured that the participants were ethically treated by giving each person a verbal assurance that I will conceal their real identity and the setting at which the interview took place. I informed them that they could stop and withdraw from the interview at any time if they did not feel comfortable. I also asked for their consent to record or audio-tape our discussion and I only did that after securing their consent. I also reminded them that they were free to ask me to switch off the tape anytime they would like part of the information not recorded for personal or political reasons.

Participants were assured that their information will be handled confidentially and they will not be victimized in any way based on the interview. I asked them to suggest pseudonyms they preferred to conceal their identity and protect their privacy, otherwise, I made up the pseudonyms. I also changed the names of locations of interviews in order to minimize the chances for readers to determine who they were. Proceeding from that, I conducted data collection, which was the central piece of this puzzle. I used interviews, and documents as the primary sources of data for the study.

Interviews

Interview is the art of establishing what is on the mind of the participant through inquiry (Patton, 1990). For this study interviews and documents were the primary sources of data. The central tendency is for the researcher to elicit and receive information and to give very little other than guiding the process through carefully thought out sets of questions. I therefore used an in depth semi-structured interview schedules. This type of interview schedule, with open-ended questions enabled me to ask and talk at length with the participants without being restricted. The process was intended to facilitate conversation with participants about how their planning and implementation of literacy accounted for competing choices of based on language, ethnicity and geographical locations. The use of a semi-structured interview enabled me to glean common information from participants at the same time being able to probe them with additional questions based on what they said in order for them to elaborate their thoughts. This enabled me to seek clarification on unclear issues during the interview (see the attached interview guide in the appendix). Patton (1990) observed, “it enables the researcher to maintain a flexibility in pursuing information in whatever direction that it appears to be appropriate, depending on the information that emerges” (p. 289). The semi-structured interview guide serves to enable the researcher to keep track of the purpose of the conversation in the initial stages of the research process. The semi-structured interview afforded me the opportunity to move

back and forth flexibly as I probed. I was able to take notes in the course of the interview, rephrased issues and asked for clarification and even verification as the interview unfolded, thereby developing more questions based on issues that emerged from the field.

LeCompte and Preissle (1993) noted that interviewing helps to further the process of generating an on going hypothesis. After interviewing, I took a careful look at the data to see what possible hypothesis was emerging and needed to be probed as I talked to other participants in successive interviews. The probing essentially helped me focus on some issues that emerged from what participants said, which helped me to verify some implied issues or even exhibited behavior. The process of interviewing also enabled public servants who ideally are not supposed to be openly critical of government policy to voice their concerns about the planning of the literacy education program in Botswana. Interviewing therefore helped me to clarify, verify, and alter what they reported to have happened in order to achieve a full understanding of events and their interpretations through empathetic discussion without imposing one's views (Hutchinson, 1990). Consequently, Wolcott (1994) argued cautiously that the researcher should try to learn and understand how participants make sense of their world. What these people know and how they came to know it, is what matters. I tried to frame questions in ways that got them to talk without asking too many questions. I made sure not to ask them "why" things happened the way they did but to get them to describe how the planning took into account for example, issues of class, gender and geographical locations. Kvale (1996) notes that the purpose is to understand the lived world of participants from their own perspective. The intent is to determine both factual and meaning levels. "It is necessary to listen to what is explicit descriptions and meanings as well as what is said between the lines" (p. 32). The primary task of establishing why they experience what they did should be established and evaluated

by the researcher. The interview can only shed light on the description of issues but not to establish their opinion about the themes (Kvale, 1996).

I commenced interviewing by explaining the process and procedures to each of the participants. After securing their willingness to participate they were assured of maximum protection of their rights and confidentiality. I warned them that it might be long and sought their consent to be available for the interview for at least 60 minutes per session. I also informed each of the interviewees that they might be interviewed more than once. I communicated that beforehand to elicit their consent to be available for multiple interviews sessions. Except for two interviews conducted at their homes, most of the interviews were conducted at their offices during working hours since I acquired the permission of the Director of the Department of Non-Formal-Education to interview them at work. During each interview, I resorted to nodding my head and other facial expression and eye contact to demonstrate that I was listening attentively, and what they said was important. I took down notes and asked them to elaborate without interrupting their thought processes. At the end of each interview session, I set some time aside to reflect on the experience and elaborated on some notes I made during the interview. In a sense, this helped me to make my subjectivities explicit as I spelled out what went on in my mind during the interview. I endeavored to listen more and talk less, in the process noting critical aspects of the setting that gave a context for each interview. I made a rough general lay out of the setting before the actual interviews started in each case and later elaborated the physical sketches in my note book. The detailing of the notes helped me to ensure that I did not forget some key moments and events that transpired in the course of the interview (Kratwohl, 1998).

I conducted follow-up only after carefully listening to the tapes of the previous interview. Listening to the tapes helped me to keep track of emergent issues and what needed to be filled up or emphasized in the next interview. This enabled me

to probe systematically and generate a story that justified making some tentative assertions and backing them with data and drove towards a saturation point where there was no new information emerging (Creswell, 1998; Thomas, 1993). The notes formed part of my memos and reflections on the research experience (Miles & Huberman, 1994). My rough notes focused on activities that were viewed as demonstrating how planning maintained or challenged the conventional view of literacy in Botswana.

Participants were senior government officers. Consequently, though I gave them the choice to use English or Setswana, they used English. I made this choice because I am fluent in both languages. More importantly, I thought some could better express themselves in either of the two languages. I did not want to hinder their communication by imposing one language. However, only one officer used Setswana, the national language. I later translated her interview into English before transcribing it like others. I had to employ the services of a professional translator to translate a portion of that tape. I first translated the Setswana interview into English and then had a professional court translator back-translate a selected section of the interview to Setswana. I then compared the two passages to determine the level of agreement between our translations. This enhanced the validity of the process. The back-translation was necessitated by the fact that the interview experience and a transcribed text are two different entities and I needed to be reassured that I had kept the transcript as close to the actual interview as possible (Kvale, 1996). Finally, each of the interviews was tape recorded and later transcribed and read several times to facilitate immersion into the data (Kvale, 1996; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Wolcott, 1994).

Document Analysis

Central to the examination of the documents or archives is to demonstrate that they represent a written record of the actions of participants

embedded in the institutional framework in which they work (Hill, 1993). Documents were used as a second major source of data in the study. I asked those who talked about the historical and current aspects of planning and implementing literacy to give me some documents prior to our interviews. Exposure to the source enabled me to look out for consistencies or inconsistencies between our discussion and what I read in the documents. I also used the documents to refine some of the questions in my interview schedule to focus on some events. For the historical aspects, I deliberately asked them about issues that pertained to the planning and implementation of literacy in the early and late 1970s. According to Hill (1993), archives have some “perpetual surprises, intrigues, and apprehensions. Archival research holds the power to confirm as well as to disturb collective legitimation” (p. 6). Consulting archival documents allowed me to be able to generate thick descriptions of the activities of planners (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). In addition to the interview data they are by and large the most reliable source of data to recreate a road map on what decisions were made in the planning of the literacy program over the past twenty years.

Documents in a sense, helped me to better understand and verify some inconsistencies between what participants said and what I observed. In some cases I checked the annual plans, teacher’s guides and the teaching materials to be able to establish how the teaching materials were generated and asked who played a major role in that. I looked at the annual reports submitted to the headquarters from the regions, and the archival materials generated over the past two decades that have a bearing on issues of planning and implementation of the program (see the list of documents below). Overall, the line of divide between data collection and analysis was blurred and I did both simultaneously. I did some preliminary analysis as soon as I started data collection, which helped me to focus the study on its purpose (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Wolcott, 1994). A combination of data from interviews and documents enabled me to gain more depth and insight. It formed the basis for going

back later to cross-check some issues with participants after transcribing their interview as I prepared to launch into a full scale in depth data analysis. Below are the documents, which I used.

Historical documents: These are documents from individuals and the archives of the department of non-formal Education.

Gobala ke Tswelelopele (undated) The Botswana Adult Education Newsletter 1(4). (40 p).

Kidd, R. (1976). Non-formal education in Botswana: A historical review. Paper presented at the first national conference on non-formal education, Gaborone, Botswana. (15 p).

Kidd, R. (1977). Go bala ke tswelelopele: Botswana case study of a Freirean literacy pilot project. Gaborone, Botswana. (38 p.).

Kidd, R. (1977). Gobala ke Tswelelopele. The Botswana Adult Education Newsletter 2 (1), 35-38.

Kidd, R. (1978). Case study on Botswana experimental literacy project using the Freirean method. Paper presented at the SWAPO seminar to study strategies, techniques and methods and content towards the establishment of a national literacy program in Namibia. (17p).

Kidd, R. (1979). Liberation or domestication: Popular theatre and non-formal education in Africa. Educational Broadcasting International, 12(1), 3-9.

Kidd, R. (1983). From outside in and from inside out: The Benue workshop on theatre for development. Media in Education and Development, 16 (1), 33-42.

Ministry of Education (March, 1976) Report of the first national conference on non-formal education. Gaborone, Botswana. (20 p).

Non-Formal Education Sub-Committee for Rural Extension Coordination Committee (1976). Non-formal education in Botswana. Gaborone, Botswana. (13 Pages).

UBLS-Division of Extra-Mural Services (1972). Six-month progress report of literacy experimentation June-November, 1972. Gaborone, Botswana. (19 p.).

UBLS-Division of Extra-Mural Studies, Francistown (1971). Progress report of literacy experimentation from June-November, 1971. Gaborone, Botswana. (5 p.).

*Copies of the samples of literacy Primers from the 1970s.

Current Documents: These are reports from officers at district, the regions and headquarter of the department of Non-Formal Education.

Gwaba, C. (1999). Annual report Southern District. (6 p.).

Kgopana, M & Ncaagae, P. (1998). Report on the new literacy approach. Department of Non-Formal Education, Gaborone , Botswana. (15 p.).

Letebele, K. (1999). Mabutsane sub-district report (4 p.).

Ministry of Education (1997) Second progress report on the implementation of the revised national policy on education, government paper no. 2 of 1994. (24 p.).

Moganani, B. (1999). Ngamiland district annual plan 2001-2001 (6 p.).

Moganani, B. (1999). Ngamiland district annual report. (3 p.).

Nage-Mokaeya, B. & Matsheng, L. (2001). Report of the fifth Botswana annual national adult literacy forum, Gaborone, Botswana. (43 p.).

As I indicated earlier, I could not obtain some documents from some of the districts officers in spite of the fact that they promised to send them to me. It could have been because of postal delays. Overall, it was relatively easy to gain access to

both government and private materials. They were helpful in corroborating what they talked about during the interview.

Data Analysis

Conducting data analysis entailed analyzing data concurrently as it was being collected. As a result, I made necessary adjustments to the data collection process in order to accommodate simultaneous data analysis. The analysis was done throughout the study rather than being relegated to a later period after data collection has been completed (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Lecompte & Preissle, 1993). Data analysis enabled me to establish how literacy was planned and implemented and addressed competing choices for language, content, audience, and instructional design based on issues such as class, gender, ethnicity and geographical location in Botswana. In a way, it helped me to constantly reduce the data to manageable proportions without losing its essence (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). I employed inductive analysis, which involved constantly coding, categorizing the data and laying out the key similarities and differences between issues. I generated themes based on revealed regularities, which further set the stage for data representation and the drawing of conclusions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) I therefore combined inductive categories, coding and simultaneous comparison of all social incidents observed and coded in order to create accounts of literacy education planning in Botswana.

Coding

Inductive analysis consisted of constantly comparing the emergent data to the one previously collected in order to gain insights into the emerging issues, trends, categories and possible meanings (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). It entailed generating and suggesting meaningful categories, properties and hypotheses about issues being studied. The rule of thumb for me was to keep the purpose of the study in mind as I

went through the interview transcripts, field notes, and documents until I reached saturation point in the analysis (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). I therefore constantly shifted through the data to establish what was important, based on the coding process. As Miles and Huberman (1994) asserted “coding constitutes the stuff of data analysis” (p. 56). I carefully studied each transcript in order to map out key issues that emerged. I wrote each key issue against the transcript and made a tentative list of similar, different, and contradictory issues they discussed. The process helped in the determination of new questions to be asked in later interviews, which deepened my comprehension of the emerging issues until there was saturation or redundancy on all the key questions (Cresswell, 1998). Coding enabled me to compare data across districts and regions and this gave me an excellent basis for the conversation I had with senior management officers towards the end. The data was sorted, coded and arranged according to emergent words, themes, and categories based on key questions and the overall purpose of the study (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

Based on some aspects of constant comparative analysis, I was able to refine and reformulate research questions as the study proceeded (Charmaz, 2000). The issue is that in the process, I compared data within and across sections and subsections in order to generate conceptual categories (Lecompe & Preissle, 1993). The authors argue that the purpose of the analysis is to vividly reconstruct the culture that was studied. Below is a sample of how I conducted coding. I captured the most important concept in each line to generate codes.

Table 1. Sample Text of Codes

Codes

Table 1. Sample Text of Codes	Codes
<p>T: Tell me who participated in the development of primers? MmaL: When primer writing started we involved different people such as District Adult Education Officers, and the headquarters staff. They all participated serving different roles. I</p>	<p>Different people</p>

<p>think the research done in the 1970s the BEC came up with most of the keywords adapted by the BNLP. The research that was done was not of a magnitude that would justify the establishment of a national literacy program. This was because not all communities were involved in the experimental project. They did a small-scale literacy project that they piloted and the outcomes were used in developing the primers.</p>	<p>Research done in the 1970s</p> <p>Study of a small magnitude</p> <p>Not all communities were involved</p> <p>Small-scale project</p> <p>Developing the primers</p>
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Categorization

After coding, I concentrated on establishing categories and their properties. Hutchinson (1990) noted that in coding and analyzing data, I should be looking for categories, comparing incidents with categories, category with category and construct with other constructs in the process keeping a watchful eye for similarities and differences among incidents. Categorization enabled me to determine some emergent structures, contexts and consequences in relation to other categories already established. The process of data analysis started during the earliest phase of data collection. Each of the transcripts was given a preliminary analysis as soon as it was completed. I made sure that the data from each of the regions and their districts were analyzed as they were gathered. I reviewed the tapes, notes and documents from each of the regions before I moved on to another region in order to determine whether there were any issues specific to that region. Based on that I also decided on what aspects to emphasize as I noticed gaps in the categories. Within the regions, I also reexamined each set of data before moving on to a new interview and compared the two to determine the gaps to be filled and issues to be followed up in the next conversation. As a result, I was able to refine and reformulate my subsequent questions (Merriam, 1998). The process of staying closer to the data enabled me to see emerging

categories and clusters of data as I examined how the planning process addressed competing choices and differences based on class, gender, ethnicity in Botswana. According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993) after categorizing the researcher shall “pull apart the field notes, matching, comparing and contrasting which constitutes the heart of analysis” (p. 237). I stepped deep into the data to generate most of these categories. As Thomas (1993) observed, effective analysis illustrates rather than assert, because, as he puts it, “the cogency of an arguments lies in the data”(p. 65). In the process, I reduced the long statements of text into few chunks of data based on the purpose and research questions. I employed locally appropriate metaphors, similes proverbs and idiomatic expressions derived from the participants to illustrate how planning and implementation were done in view of such key elements as choice of language, content, audience and the geographical contexts in which planners worked.

The following illustrates how I generated categories from the data.

Table 2. Sample of Categorizing

Categories

<p>T: Tell me who participated in the development of primers? MmaL: When primer writing started we involved different people such as District Adult Education Officers, and the headquarters staff. They all participated serving different roles. I think the research done in the 1970s the BEC came up with most of the keywords adapted by the BNLP. The research that was done was not of a magnitude that would justify the establishment of a national literacy program. This was because not all communities were involved in the experimental project. They did a small-scale literacy project that they piloted and the outcomes were used in developing the primers.</p>	<p>Different roles for planners in districts and headquarters</p> <p>The 1970s project came up with most words for the primers</p> <p>Study of a small magnitude not enough for a national program</p> <p>Not all communities were involved in the initial project</p>
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Thematization

Another level of data analysis was thematization. After I had categorized the data I reviewed the purpose and research questions and delineated themes based on the compelling evidence that emerged from the categories. Each of the themes was substantiated by a combination of sources such as interviews, field notes and documents. Paying attention to categories was a critical step towards identifying themes because they reflected the views of the participants. The process of thematization was a culmination of the inductive analysis process, which started with coding and categorization. Now I could display the data in such a way that I established interrelationships between issues that complimented or contradicted each other in explaining the planning process (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Thematization depended primarily on working simultaneously on coding and categorization to establish and display the views of participants. Lecompte and Preissle (1993) maintained that thematization entails figuring out what the content means according to recurrent patterns of relationships. The process was enhanced by organizing and rewording the categories in order to generate themes that are as close to the participants' own words as possible. Patton (1990) asserts that "concepts are never a substitute for direct experiences with the descriptive data (p. 392). The ending of the data collection and intensification of data analysis depended on my intuition and insight to decide when to stop data collection. It was also guided by reaching a point at which I could not establish any more new categories from the interviews at all levels from district staff to senior officers. I was not able to generate any more new information from the participants based on their transcripts. I knew I had reached a point of saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The processes of data collection and

analysis had to be done in a valid and reliable way if the outcomes were to be beneficial to future users of the study.

In summary, I coded by writing an idea from each line on the margins in the form of a word or phrase. Such as “different people” “some communities not involved,” and “small-scale experiment.” “adapted by the BNLP,” “developing primers.” I then proceeded to generate categories such as “not enough to establish a national program” and “not all communities were involved.” Based on the categories, I searched all the transcripts for regularity in terms of expressing similar or contrary views. If the view is articulated in different ways, I brought all of those together and chose the most representative view to capture the theme of those categories. The theme here could be that the literacy program was based on a small-scale research project, which did not include all communities in Botswana. Establishing themes depended on the availability of evidence from all the transcripts and documents. I allowed some categories to lay silent in spite of their initial promise to possible themes because they I did not have sufficient evidence to support them.

Validity and Reliability

This section highlights the place of validity and reliability in the study. It discusses measures I undertook to ensure quality in the study for the findings to be taken seriously by those who could use them to improve literacy education planning in Botswana. Validity, according to Eisner and Peshkin (1990) denote “congruence of the researchers’ claims to the reality his/her claims seeks to represent” (p. 97). Valid interpretation of the research process serves as an intermediary between the situation being studied and readers who would not have experienced it. Merriam (1995) discussed ways to ensure internal validity, which she describes as how

congruent the findings are with reality. Reality is what is perceived to be the truth and can only be determined relative to the participants and their contexts. The central argument is that in qualitative research, reality is multidimensional, and ever changing, What we get is the researcher's interpretation of the interpretations of the participants (Punch, 1998).

Internal and External Validity

In order to secure validity, I used the following techniques: triangulation, member-check and investigator disclosure. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple sites, sources of data and methods of data collection in studying the same topic in order to strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings (Hall & Hall, 1996; Mathison, 1988; Merriam 1998). I triangulated in two major ways: Firstly, I worked on the data from interviews and the documents to check whether there was congruence between these sources so as to strengthen the trustworthiness of the study. Secondly, I did methodological triangulation by employing both interviewing and archival document collections to maximize the validity of the data collection and analysis. The interview was semi-structured with open-ended questions, which were followed up with probes to enable participants to clarify their thoughts and give more details on issues. This enabled me to be close to the thought process of each participant and to get their reflections on the planning and implementation of literacy education given interlocking factors such as gender, ethnicity, language and geographical location. The use of multiple sources therefore increased the congruence between my claims and the reality I purported to represent (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990).

Another method employed to ensure internal validity was member-check in which the initial draft of the analysis and interpretations is taken to participants for their feedback before the final report is written (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 1999). My discussion with some of the participants after transcribing and doing a preliminary analysis enabled me to remove or change some things. Participants also added points

and clarified things they had talked about. The outcome was that I represented their reality and worldview as closely as I possibly could. According to Glesne (1999), participants may verify whether the report reflects their perspective and, note potential problematic sections for personal or political reasons. I found this particularly helpful in that I dealt with bosses and their juniors and some of the junior officers rephrased what they said earlier, to sound less critical. I needed to protect subordinates by carefully concealing their identities and reporting their accounts as accurately as possible by verifying findings with them before writing the final report.

Finally, I did some researcher stance, disclosure through letting them know about my initial involvement with the program as a researcher. I was able to briefly share with them how I thought the program could be planned differently at the end of the interview session if I felt comfortable. I thought by so doing, I was enabling them to understand how my interpretation of their responses would somewhat be influenced by my stance on the planning and implementation of the literacy program. The disclosure of my personal assumptions was crucial in that I was the sole instrument of data collection. I had to be *reflexive* by analyzing my own interpretation of what I was studying (Gall, Gall & Borg, 1999).

External validity on the other hand, refers to the extent to which the findings could be applied beyond the sample (Merriam, 1995). I concentrated on generating in depth description of how they planned the literacy program and how that took into account such factors as language, gender, instructional design and geographical location of the learners. In order to ensure that the findings are applicable beyond the context of the three regions, I provided *rich thick descriptions* to enhance user generalizability of findings across settings and contexts (Geertz, 1988). It depends on the potential user's understanding of their situation or context to determine how they can use the findings, but that largely depends to the preponderance of evidence I provided in the study (Kvale, 1996).

Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which findings can be found again if the study is replicated, for instance, if the study is done again would the findings be the same? (Merriam, 1995). However, replication does not seem to be a very central because we study human behavior that can never be static or held constant. The world of humans can only be understood by those involved from their perspective. In order to achieve reliability, I conducted an *audit trail*. This is a detailed description of how the data were collected, categories derived, and decisions on interpretation made based on the data (Merriam, 1995). In order to make a trail, I kept a daily journal and a field-note book. I recoded each aspect of how each of their interviews went and my reflections on the experience. I made detailed descriptions of the settings and recorded events that could influence participant such as if they are preparing for or had just come from another meeting. In two cases, I rescheduled for later in the day because they sounded tired. I also wrote some key issues that I did as I coded, categorized and brought the categories together to generate themes. Gall, Gall and Borg (1999) observe that “the trail should be a complete documentation of the research process used, how data were recorded, its sources, process of note taking, data analysis and synthesis” (p. 304). In spite of the efforts to ensure validity and reliability the study had some limitations, some of which are discussed below.

Limitations of the Study

As would be expected with a project of this scale, this study had some limitations. One of its limitations is that as in other qualitative studies, I was the primary instrument of data collection, doing interviewing, and document analysis. The whole process was filtered through my lens and perspectives of reality. The task of selection and contextualization of data lied with me, which made it subject to my interpretation of reality (Kvale, 1996). The limit was that it was very difficult to effectively control for my subjectivities in spite of the assurance that I could disclose,

bracket or manage it (Peshkin, 1992). Another limitation was that the documents from government officers were not as forthcoming as promised. In some cases, participants promised to send me materials but in spite of repeated calls I made and follow ups, they did not send the materials, especially in the remote parts of the country. I however, stayed as close to the data I had as possible in interpreting their assertions in order to reflect their worldview (Thomas, 1993).

Another limitation was lack of statistical generalizability from the sample to the population. In spite of that, I hope I made a convincing case for user generalizability (Merriam, 1995). The problem is that a statistically robust study would be more likely to convince policy makers, who prefer to be presented with concrete figures than a study that involved only a few people. I faced the dilemma of research versus political decision-making. The study focused on understanding how planning and implementation of the BNLP maintained or challenged the conventional view of literacy education in Botswana, which might not be generalizable to other literacy programs. Closely related to this limitation was the problem of a semi-structured interview guide that needed a lot of time for conversations with participants to yield fruitful outcomes about how literacy planning and implementation were carried out in Botswana. This again presupposed, extensive interviewing skills, which I considerably lacked as a novice researcher (Patton, 1990).

The final limitation was that this study was what some people in the Botswana context might consider “political” in its attempt to understand the activities of planners and how they handle competing interests. Some people might have decided to tell me what they thought was politically appropriate. I noted also that participants who narrated historical aspects had forgotten some fine comb details about what happened in the planning of the program during that time (Krathwohl, 1998; Kvale, 1996). However, in spite of these limitations, I am confident that I generated findings that could be adapted by users to make some changes in their literacy education

practices. The study will certainly serve as a basis for future inquiry into issues of literacy and adult basic education curriculum development in Botswana and hopefully the Southern African region.

Chapter Summary

This chapter illustrates the methodological process I undertook to conduct the study. Proceeding from a qualitative approach, the chapter charts the road map I followed in documenting and understanding how planning was carried out in view of such key elements as choice of language, content, audience, and instructional design in the Botswana National Literacy Program. A qualitative approach was chosen for this study because it enabled me to engage in conversation with participants, and work on documents to understand and explain the life world and worldviews of participants in a flexible way that quantitative approach would not permit. I kept very close to the data in my coding, categorization, thematization and discussion of the data in order to ensure that I did not over-generalize the experiences of participants. I triangulated, used member checks, made personal disclosure and generated rich thick descriptions of participants' experiences. Consequently, I made an account of my personal assumptions and biases in order to ensure validity and reliability of the study as I strove to understand how planning maintained or challenged the conventional view of literacy in Botswana. I am moving on to the presentation of study findings, but will transition by first of all describing study participants within the context of their involvement in planning and implementation of literacy in Botswana.

CHAPTER 4

PARTICIPANTS

This chapter presents the profiles of participants I interviewed on the planning and implementation of literacy education in Botswana. The discussions enabled me to understand how they have addressed interlocking issues of language, content and geographical locations in view of such factors as gender, class and ethnicity in the past and present. I tried to capture each person's essential personal data as I attempt to recast each individual's portrait. I provide a basic description of what happened as seen from the participants' points of view. The participants at the districts were not at the center of the sphere of influence in terms of decision-making. The decisions were often based on the views of senior officers. The participants were broadly categorized on whether they provided historical or current information. I also sub-divided the current officers according to whether they belonged to Senior Management or not. Below them, I had Senior District Adult Education Officers (SDAEOs) and District Adult Education Officers (DAEOs). I used pseudonyms in order to conceal their identities and conform to the principles of trust and confidentiality. I asked them to suggest their favorite pseudonyms or else I manufactured some, which would not reveal their identities to the readers in order to avert possible victimization as Selgado cautioned, "You know as civil servants, we do not have much freedom for self-expression, we always have fear of being labeled rebels." In each case, I indicate whether they belong to majority/mainstream or minority community. Setswana is however, spoken by the majority of the population because it is used in schools and other national institutions.

I deliberately avoided identifying their ethnic affiliation for fear of revealing their identities. This is because in Botswana in addition to Setswana, there are about 28 other languages spoken in different regions. In describing each participant, I used their own words as well as my field notes to place them in their contexts (see table 3).

Historical Interviews

These interviews included individuals who have been in the initial efforts to provide literacy in Botswana. They were charged with the responsibility to conduct a literacy experimental project under the auspices of the Botswana Extension College and the Department of Extra Mural Studies at the University of Botswana in the 1970s. This was before the establishment of the Department of Non-Formal Education in 1979. Earlier efforts have attempted to use various approaches including the Freirean method that was very popular then in non-formal education discourse, as Mabee indicated, “the method was in vogue that time.”

Table. 3. Participant profiles

Historical	Age	Sex	Years served	Qualifications	Locations	Regions
Mabee (Ext.College)	58	M	10	BSc.	Gaborone	N/A
Rossy (Ext.College)	62	M	12	MEd.	Gaborone	N/A
Mossy (Coodinator)	49	M	11	MEd.	Gaborone	N/A
Senior Management Team						
MmaD	56	F	24	MEd.	Gabane	N/A
MmaL	49	F	21	MEd.	Gabane	N/A
Tana	52	M	18	MEd.	Kontsweng	South
Mpho	50	M	19	MEd.	Karakubi	West
Selgado	57	M	19	Diploma	Nyangabwe	North

Senior District Adult Education Officers						
Dede	42	F	21	BEd.	Goodhope	South
Christinah	41	F	18	BEd.	Kontsweng	South
Johnson	36	M	13	BEd.	Hanahai	West
Mothibedi	39	M	20	BEd.	Moreomaoto	North
District Adult Education Officers						
Grace	38	F	20	Certificate	Marang	South
Nono	37	F	18	Diploma	Dryhoek	West
Moipolai	48	F	21	Diploma	Nyangabwe	North
Victoria	45	F	17	Diploma	Zwenshambe	North

The planners put together learning materials based on the expressed needs of learners and other social groups. Two of these people were white expatriate male adult educators from Canada, who both had a background in adult education. They viewed literacy as intended to change people's lives.

The efforts of literacy education in the early and mid 1970's, in Botswana was geared toward implementing a functional literacy campaign as Rossy observed, "We basically developed materials around functional skills such as cattle raising, growing of crops... I guess at the time we started, we tried to combine all these activities into one literacy course." There was a very strong belief then that transformative literacy could be implemented in Botswana. The process of developing materials involved shooting videos and staging drama activities to capture the experiences of people and use them as a basis for literacy and other forms of non-formal education.

The general view was that the transition to the current program in the late 1970's was turbulent and lacked vision and breath compared to what was done in the

earlier experimental literacy efforts. As Rossy summed it, “The current program marginalized a project that had a little bit more of a tick and potential to it that was experimented upon earlier.” Those who participated in literacy education around this time are scarce because most of them left the country and I could not reach them. However, I interviewed Mabee, Rossy and also talked to Mossy who played a key role in the establishment of the current program.

Mabee

Mabee is a 58 year old white male from Canada who is currently a private consultant in Gaborone, the capital of Botswana. He was involved in literacy work in the early 1970s, during some of the early efforts to provide literacy. Mabee also worked as an adult educator in two community colleges in Northern and Western Botswana. In this capacity, he was involved in the effort to provide literacy to the communities served by the colleges. As he puts it, “I think community development historically tried to do some literacy work. There were some literacy activities scattered throughout the country, ...some churches were doing literacy work.” He was also involved in literacy in Ghana and Sudan prior to coming to Botswana.

Mabee was also involved in a historic national campaign called the Tribal Grazing Land Policy (TGLP), which laid the foundation for land distribution in Botswana. As he described, “It was a national campaign involving land, which made it a national issue that affected everybody directly.” The campaign therefore, had a lot of political support and had an extensive resource allocation. He recalled, “Directives came from the office of the President all the way down to the district and extension staff.” All districts were instructed to allocate resources for the campaign. Mabee noted that he could not think of any other educational campaign that attracted that level of support including literacy. He then talked about the troubled transition to the current program that involved personality and philosophical clashes between the first Chief Education Officer of the new Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE)

and those who did the experimental project between 1976 to 1978, at the Botswana Extension College (BEC). “Townsend-Coles came in with a traditional view of literacy and absorbed the BEC into the DNFE sometimes in 1979.”

Rossy

Currently working as a consultant with a certain research firm in Gaborone, Rossy is a 62 year old white man, originally from North America. He is married to a local woman and has a daughter. He has lived and worked in Botswana and other Southern African countries. The interview was conducted at his house. As soon as I came in, we exchanged greetings and he went and brought some archival documents from the 1970s. I was so delighted because at the back of my mind I was wondering if they would recall things from such a long time. I sat down and skimmed the materials within a short while we started the interview and in a short while we were chatting like old acquaintances. When welcoming me to the house, he said that he was so delighted that “somebody has at last decided to want to write about this interesting period in the history of literacy education in Botswana.”

He was very centrally involved in planning literacy because he worked for the Department of Extra-Mural Services at the University of Botswana and headed its Northern Office and was to initiate literacy efforts in the north as early as 1972. He also played a significant role in the experimental project of 1976 to 78 as he puts it, “I came to be involved with literacy work where I had to play a role in the non-formal section of the Botswana Extension College which had both formal and non-formal courses.” Rossy has worked in Swaziland where he tried a Freirean literacy project and it led to problems and he left the kingdom and came to Botswana. Rossy’s work in Botswana was also influenced by a UNESCO functional literacy project at Mwanja, Tanzania. There, the project developed primers based on people’s daily lives and concerns. Rossy was also involved in the 1976, TGLP campaign, he puts it, “It gave us some ideas on what works in mass education. Basically, on how to instill a

level of facilitation skills... [and] a certain level of discussion going on at a local level.”

After the TGLP, he drifted into the experimental literacy project based on the Freirean approach which was the predecessor of the current program, as he recalled, “My boss, a man called Solomon Inqaiy, (*Laughs about it*) ...was supportive for a much bigger kind of piloting of the Freirean approach.” They conducted needs assessments in the community to determine people’s concerns and based on that, they drafted primer materials. His reflections on this period were both impressive and critical as he noted, “Some issues were radical while others were culturally mainstream.” After the experimental project the current project came into being and he was not involved in its establishment.

Mossy

Mossy is a 48 year old middle class Motswana man, currently working as a Director of a state institution in Gaborone. He is married with two children. He belongs to one of the mainstream Tswana Communities. Unlike the other two adult education veterans, he did not have formal training in adult education when he resumed his duties, as he observed:

First of all, let me say I stumbled into literacy because at the time I joined the department... Well of course, I had a background in education from my junior degree.... I had a degree in humanities, I thought there was a natural fit (*laughs*).

I immediately asked him how they developed the literacy primers. He acknowledged that they used some of the materials from an earlier experimental project that was done in 1976-78. The project then was based on providing functional literacy. Mossy maintained,

This was the time when the idea of functional literacy was coming into the picture.... that whilst people are learning literacy skills, it also transfer

development messages. However, his boss came from the more traditional view of literacy, and there was a conflict. Townsend-Coles argued that the Botswana context would not accommodate radical ideas and I agreed with him. Besides for me, the difference was tenuous ... it was very thin and blurred.

As planners then, we pulled from each side because as a developing nation, “we could not afford the esoterism of providing literacy for its own sake.” Mossy told me that he was the one who wrote the materials, as he indicated, “First of all, let me say I was the engine behind the whole materials development process.” He elaborated on how he consulted with district education officers and the Literacy Assistants but they developed the materials largely based on their experience as Botswana elite not the learners. He felt that as development agents, they should help to fashion the needs of the learners and find solutions to their problems.

Senior Management Team

In addition to former officers who furnished me with historical information, I interviewed two key women at the Department headquarters, whose responsibility is to oversee different programs in the department including literacy. I also talked to Regional Adult Education Officers (RAEOs) who are members of the Senior Management Team. RAEOs coordinate the activities of the literacy program in the regions. All of them are males over 50 years of age and have been with the department since the early 1980s. Senior District Adult Education Officers (SDAEOs) on the other hand, oversee the work of District Adult Education Officers and Adult Education Assistants who work at cluster and village levels respectively. SDAEOs ensure that for each village or cluster, there is a plan and its carried out each year. They work with District Adult Education Officers to organize annual plans. SAEOs report to the Regional Adult Education Officers about the progress and challenges of the program.

MmaD

The 56 year old MmaD is responsible for overseeing the planning and implementation of different programs in the department including literacy. She came into the program in the late 1970s, but she was not directly involved with the literacy program. MmaD belongs to one of the minority ethnic groups in the country. She speaks English fluently. She attributes the current crisis of the program to its history, namely that it was believed the program would eradicate illiteracy in six years and that it was not based on extensive consultation. The UNESCO consultant who started the program did not “give us a very forward looking advice.” She indicated that they recently introduced regional offices to coordinate the reporting system. The regional officers do the “dirty work” of tidying up the reports so that when they come to the headquarters they are a synthesis of regional issues.

District reports used to be sent to headquarters in a very “uncoordinated fashion.” There was no uniform way of planning and reporting the progress of the department. When I asked how districts and regions are currently working together, she noted, “They hold consultation meetings on a regular basis and when they plan for the year, they come together to discuss the plan.” The process of planning according to her, starts at the cluster level right up to the national headquarters. It is done in such a way that “nobody would claim that I was not part of the planning.” Finally, MmaD revealed to me that as management, “We realize that we need specialists in some areas such as curriculum, we will continue to train people in order to enhance the capacity of the department to plan and implement literacy effectively.”

MmaL

MmaL is a 49 year old woman who is also a member of the Senior Management Team at the DNFE. MmaL was very articulate about the operations of the program, especially how government should proceed cautiously in addressing the language question. She has been in the program since 1981. I conducted a joint

interview between MmaL and MmaD in order to get the perspective of senior management on how the program is planned and implemented. MmaL is a member of the mainstream Setswana ethnic communities and has worked for years at the district level and quite clearly understands how the program is planned at that level. She found me having started the interview with MmaD, and I invited her to comment on any issue she wished to talk about. She intervened when I asked about the relations between the district staff and regional officers. MmaL noted that there were problems because of the changes to the new structure with regional officers. District staff “will adapt to the change in the structure... they should work with the regional officers and whatever comes should be the common voice from their region.” Also I asked her about the fact that the primers have not been revised since 1980. MmaL admitted that they are aware of the problem but in her personal view, it is because the department has trained “generalists” and not curriculum specialists. She summed it thus, “As a result, we lack skills to review the program effectively.”

One thing that she commented on was that in her experience, district officers are often critical of management but they do not understand that management is open to new ideas. The problem however, is that often district staff members do not clearly articulate the framework for their innovations. They also neglect that all projects depend on the funds available for the department each year. She decried the fact that on the whole, the department gets less compared to other sectors of education who also “unfortunately, do not get enough for their plans too.”

Tana

Tana is a 55 year old man who belongs to one of the main ethnic groups. He is a Regional Adult Education Officer at Kontsweng, a village in the Southern region. The region covers quite a vast area of several districts supervised by Adult Education Officers. He is married and has a daughter. Tana said that he was drawn into literacy by working with non-governmental organizations providing literacy to women in

1975. He observed, “Ever since that time my interest in literacy continued to grow because I wanted to see my fellow citizens progressing in life through education.” He described that regional planning was based on plans from clusters, sub-districts and districts. They each brought their plans and discussed them to formulate the regional plan to be forwarded to the department headquarters. Tana was quick to note that in spite of all things we do to encourage bottom–up planning, the program does not meet the needs of the learners.

His view was that the program should provide “different literacies throughout the country.” The provision of different “literacies” would encourage us as planners to involve learners in the planning process, which is not happening now in this program. The other thing is that management at headquarters does not seem to want to change the primers, they are treated as “sacred cows.” He felt strongly that as senior management, they could experiment with certain thing to improve the program and they would not be challenged. He felt that they were not doing enough to reshape the program. He lamented, “We are not doing much to challenge the status quo.” When I asked him about the possibility that there could be political pressure not to change the program, he recalled only one incident. He had organized a seminar for local leaders and used an example, and was confronted by the ruling party councilors for being pro-opposition because of the illustration he used. However, in spite of that incident, Tana felt that the program is not empowering to the learners and unfortunately, Literacy Group Leaders who teach in it are “not empowered themselves... and therefore cannot empower anybody.”

Mpho

Mpho is a 51 year old male from one of the mainstream communities who works as a Regional Adult Education Officer at Karakubis in Kgalagadi. As he indicated, “In this capacity, I cover a vast area... the region is quite spacious and its difficult to travel to some of the very remote areas.” I supervise Senior Adult

Education Officer, Adult Education Officers, Adult Education Assistants and Literacy Group Leaders, who actually teach in the program.” He transferred to the department from another Ministry in 1983, and has been with the department since working in various capacities before he became the regional officer. One of the things he talked passionately about was the fact that the materials in the program are based on the life of the Batswana (citizens of Botswana) who were part of the writing process, and not based on the needs of the poor who attend the program. When I asked him about the use of Setswana as the only language in the program, he smiled and noted that it was part of ensuring the “national principle of unity.” He quickly observed that in his view, there was no problem because there was no resistance to its use among the minorities. Mpho also felt that the program to some extent benefited the learners because they now can communicate with their relatives. However, he acknowledged that there were problems because the same program was offered to learners all over the country and that the literacy teachers in their teaching are not innovative enough to take the needs of the learners into account. The learners can read but “their economic needs are not met by the program.”

Selgado

I interviewed 57 year old Selgado at his regional offices at Nyangabgwe in Northern Botswana. The offices are on the second floor of a newly constructed office building in the middle of the city. Selgado is a member of one of the minority ethnic communities in the country. He sat on an executive chair covered with white towels on the armrest positions situated behind a huge brown wooden table. Selgado moved to this department from another ministry. He quickly informed me that he moved to this department because he has always been interested in teaching. “I moved here because it would fulfill my interest in teaching... I realized that their activities were the same as those of extension education.” He went on to inform me that, “I am one of those people who never had a formal training in adult education but this is my 18th

year working for the Department of Non-Formal Education.” Selgado felt that his greatest contribution to the department has been that he brought a wealth of mobilizing and recruitment strategies from extension. His strategy was to encourage his juniors to interact with village leaders to share the need for literacy with them.

As he described the program and the activities of his office, his eyes narrowed and he told me softly that one of the greatest problems they faced in his area is that of language. The majority of people including the literacy teachers cannot speak the official language fluently. The most problematic thing is that the powers that be are aware of the problem but chose to ignore it. He observed candidly:

The point is that Setswana is the national language and it’s policy, if you were to deviate from that and say there could be other alternatives, it would be viewed as challenging government. Sometimes our authorities do not want to hear such things from us as their juniors.

Senior District Adult Education Officers

These are officers who could be described district level executives of the program in that they each have several districts to supervise. They ensure that what has been planned, is implemented in different districts. They supervise District Adult Education Officers.

Christina

Christina is a 41 year old woman who belongs to a minority ethnic group. She is a Senior District Adult Education Officer at Kontsweng. Her position involves planning literacy activities pertaining to literacy in the district and satellite clusters. She is a single independent woman who speaks slowly but emphatically. Christina remarked that in the BNLP they planned for providing learning opportunities for groups of people who never had a chance or had only a limited opportunity of formal schooling. Christina described a broad sweep of her activities, which included working with different junior officers in the other districts to ensure

that literacy is provided in her districts. As she pointed out, “I also monitor the activities of literacy groups in the district to oversee the smooth running of learning groups.” Part of these is to make sure that participants attended classes on a regular basis. Fortunately for her, she was not new to the program. She had been assigned to teach literacy earlier on in her life as part of national service (national service was a Government scheme, which involved placing individuals who complete Form Five (equivalent to high school) to work in rural communities before going for further studies). Upon completion of the service she was posted to the department in 1983.

I asked her to describe how the program responds to the contexts of learners, she noted that most aspects of the reading and writing do not involve learners and are not based on their needs. The whole process depends on a “dogmatic following of primers.” However, she was convinced that when it came to the provision of practical skills, or income generating projects, the learners are the ones who decide what they need and we provide that where we could as a department, or ask for assistance. On the “other aspects of the program, we are chained to the primers.” The literacy teachers are too dependent on the primers and they cannot make learners think critically to “take action against those who keep them in poverty.”

Dede

Dede is a 41 year old woman of average build with a permanent smile on her face. After driving to her village of Goodhope, I felt a bit tired. I also had a prior appointment later that afternoon in another village. I had to sit down and do the interview with her as soon as I arrived. Her office was part of the sub-district and by comparison not as big as others I had visited elsewhere, but still better than some baking hot caravans used by other officers in some districts. The village is about 89 kilometers from Gaborone. It’s a medium-sized village with a mixture of mud built houses and those of bricks and tiles. Dede is a member of one of the mainstream groups in Botswana. She started by telling me about planning activities she has been

involved with since 1980, when she joined the program. Like her other colleagues, Dede joined the department as a Literacy Assistant. In her work since the 1980s, she has been involved with the supervision of Literacy Group Leaders who are the people who actually teach in the program. She said, "I have worked at several places and districts in Botswana both in minority and majority culture places." When Dede started the program, it was only a project and was focused almost exclusively on the provision of reading, writing and arithmetic skills. In 1983, a concern was raised based on an internal evaluation that the learners would like to learn practical skills and the "*Ditiro Tsa Dithabololo*" program was started. It provides people with such skills as sewing, knitting and cooking.

Since Dede was one of the pioneer Literacy Assistants of the program, I asked her to describe to me what their role was in developing the primers at that time. She noted, "I guess we were called upon to review the materials that were developed [in Gaborone] because as an Literacy Assistants, we had experience in working in different villages and districts...we could only cover some communities others were ignored." We tried to get some feedback from the literacy teachers and learners but some ethnic communities were not involved. She hoped that "the introduction of the proposed policy on the third language would help to ratify the situation." Overall, Dede felt that the program failed to meet the needs of the learners, especially in remote areas.

Johnson

Johnson aged 36, is the youngest of all the officers I interviewed. He is a Senior District Adult Education officer in Hanahai, Western Botswana. He has bright brown eyes with a sharp look. Johnson has a fascinating background in literacy work that started soon after completing his high school. He has worked as a literacy teacher in a non-governmental literacy project. When he ventured into literacy work then, he had no idea what literacy was all about. He said, "Initially like most people, I had not

decided what I was going to do. I was going to accept any nearest employment opportunity I could get.” He belongs to one of the minority groups in Botswana. I directed our conversation by asking him to compare literacy at the Church and the BNLP. He saw them as being the same in terms of being conservative as he puts it,

In terms of the general operations, I would say the two were the same. They both used a not very deep Freirean approach ... The breaking down of concepts based on the picture and some shallow discussion.... The Church program got primers from the Namibian National Literacy Program, it was just as conservative as the state.

When I asked him about the guiding principles in the program, he believed that the state does not take it seriously because historically, literacy was foreign-driven in this country. It was based on funds from the Germans and when they pulled out, Government came in as a way of “political posturing... it is treated as a third-hand program and not a priority.”

Mothibedi

Mothibedi, aged 39, is a member of a mainstream community. He is a Senior Adult Education Officer at Moreomaoto in North Western Botswana. Coming into the program in 1980 makes him one of the longest serving officers. During our discussion he felt that the literacy program as presently planned and implemented does not empower the learners, it only serves to maintain the status quo. The program attracts a lot of learners at the beginning of each year but they drop out towards the end, which indicates that, “It lacks the capacity to empower the learners.” It’s a silent way in which learners are showing that they are not satisfied in the program. When I asked him what motivated him to work in the literacy program, he candidly told me that it was coincidental. He recalled,

It was just by stroke of luck that I came to the program. When I completed school I was going to be a primary school teacher.... I was promised a place

when schools resume next term. When I went back to check I noticed that they had taken people with Junior Certificate while I had Cambridge.... two weeks later that year, when the literacy program had just started, I learnt that non-formal education was looking for officers.... I later realized that they don't have a fixed curriculum.... at least I thought I would be addressing current challenges.

The program in his view, has not met the expectations of women who are in the majority. He noted that the program failed to take gender issues into account. It is not specific to the needs of women. The other issue for him was that it does not take the needs of the people in Moreomaoto and its satellite areas into account, and there is a need to talk to local leaders about this. He said, "I will also raise it at the local leadership... I have realized that programs that seem to work are those that politicians and local leaders have taken on board and made 'noises' about."

District Adult Education Officers

These are officers who could be described as the foot soldiers of the program in that they each have a district to supervise. They are really the front line supervisors who ensure that what has been planned, is implemented in their districts. They deal with recruitment, training and supervision of Literacy Group Leaders (LGLs) and Adult Education Assistants (AEA) who are the immediate supervisors of LGLs in the field. My impression about them was that in some cases, they were more knowledgeable about the actual operations of the program than senior officers who are removed from its daily activities.

Grace

At age 38, Grace is a member of the mainstream culture whose responsibilities include overseeing the activities of the literacy program at a village called Marang. When I was at Marang, office for both local and central government were under construction and they worked from very hot porter camps. She recalled how she used

to work from her house in one village. She said, “One time I spent two years working from my house, always wondering what people thought I was all about when they saw me busy cooking while other officers are at work.” The experience according to Grace, portrayed a negative picture about the department in the eyes of the villagers. In her modest Marang officer there was a table, two chairs, and some yellow files on trays marked “in”, “out” and “pending.” When I asked whether to use Setswana or English she preferred to discuss her experiences in Setswana. She is soft-spoken but very emphatic about the strengths and challenges of the program. When I asked to talk about her planning activities, she started with how she came to be involved with the program. “I have been working in this program for the past 20 years. I started working for DNFE in 1981 as a Literacy Assistant. I joined because I could not continue with my education.... after dropping out of school, I found a job in this Department.” She saw her work as largely constituting of recruiting LGLs and ensuring that they in turn recruited and taught learners. Grace said, “I have to see to it that the activities of the literacy program are carried out effectively in my area as the supervisor.... I inform LGLs about the nature of adults as learners and how they should handle them in the program.”

Her passion was talking about her involvement with the income generating projects for the learners. She explained:

The Department has some officers responsible for training learners on a number of practical skills. We realized that some of our learners might have joined the program not only to learn to read and write but primarily to learn some practical skills. So we have to provide them with skills such as being able to start and successfully operate a business.

Grace’s challenge has been that she works in a community that is largely made up of the minorities who do not speak the national language and are skeptical about the intent of the state. She told me that the Basarwa/ San/ Bushmen felt that government

officers imposed things on them. “They told me that they could continue to live their lives without these conditional assistance from government.”

Nono

Nono started working for the department 18 years ago, She is a 37 years old woman from one of the mainstream communities. Like most people, she started as a Literacy Assistant, and has been involved with working with LGLs and literacy participants from different ethnic groups. In the course of her work, she has lived in a number of districts in the country and has addressed *kgotla* (community meeting place) to talk to the community about the value of literacy in their lives. During such meetings she “emphasized the importance of literacy and the dangers of illiteracy.” Nono felt that addressing meetings has also been a source of personal growth for her. She laughed, “I have developed valuable skills of addressing people in a public forum, something I never thought I could do till I had to do it in the department.” Nono did not join the program out of her choice, she dropped out of school and had to find a job. She recalled with a smile on her face that:

After delivery, I decided that I should not go back to school but look for a job. I completed employment forms at the Personnel Department in Gaborone and was posted to DNFE. I was afraid initially because I thought I was actually going to be teaching adults but I was desperately looking for a job.... I recall I did not opt for non-formal education because I did not know what it was all about.

Nono has since been working for the department. She told me that her survival strategy has always been to work with local authorities such as Chiefs and Village Development Committees (VDC), who were knowledgeable about the community to help her organize program in each village or district. Like other colleagues who have worked in the Western area, she faced a dilemma of ethnically divided people. There were the Afrikaner speaking people, the Bakgalagadi, and Basarwa. Each of these

groups looked down upon the other, especially the Coloreds community. They thought because of their Afrikaner parentage they were more superior than members of the other groups. The conflict led to the collapse of income generating projects because they could not work as a group. Worse still, they felt that government employees working in their villages were “foreigners.” Nono recalled a meeting where one of the villagers stood up and said, “They could not work well with foreigners.”

Moipolai

Moipolai is a 43 year old woman who is a District Adult Education Officer at Nyangabwe. She is a member of the minority ethnic community in eastern Botswana. She is slim and appears rather young for her age. She was posted to the department after she applied for work from the Department of Public Service Management. As far as she could recall, she was interested in immigration and was posted to this department in 1980. However, she now felt that it was a good decision. She said, “When I started working in the department, I did not know what literacy was all about.... After starting the job, I began to like it because I believe educating adults is a noble goal.” Moipolai further indicated, “As teachers, we learn a lot of things from our learners.” She also believed in the learners potential to take control of their lives. As a result, she organized successful projects with women in different villages. She recalled, “Increasingly, we have movements that bring to light the fact that women are the backbone of the nation. We want to talk about things that are immediately relevant to the lives of the learners.”

However, she argued that the program has had problems from the beginning. One of the major problems was that it was intended to eradicate illiteracy, which led to a situation where they, as Literacy Assistants, were hired only on a temporary basis from 1980 to 1995. In addition to that challenge, she saw her job as a District Adult Education Officer as being largely routine and not innovative. She noted,

“Part of the so called plan are just routine parts of the itinerary that one prepares from one year to another.” The problem being that Regional Officers can remove our proposed items for some unexplained reasons and there is nothing we can do.

Victoria

After traveling for ninety kilometers North-East of Francistown, a northern city of Botswana, I arrived at Zwenshambe. I was immediately directed to the office of the Department of Non-Formal Education, which was part of the other local government offices. 45 year old Victoria is a medium built woman, who radiated with energy and spoke with such passion about this program where she ‘grew up.’ She comes from a mainstream community. Her office like those of other planning officers was equipped with a dell computer and printer. After exchanging greetings, I briefly told her the purpose of my visit again and drew her attention to issues of confidentiality and what I will do to conceal her identity. She started off by describing her job thus:

My main job is to supervise district staff of the Department of Non- Formal Education. My staff constitutes of Adult Education Assistants, Literacy Group Leaders and the general support staff. I have AEOs based in villages and have clusters where they supervise LGLs at that level.

While she appreciated the efforts being made to help disadvantaged learners through the program, she lamented about the way the whole process was planned. She talked about learners who did not see the immediate benefits of being able to read and write in their social and economic lives. She explained, “When I talked to the learners, they told me that they have always lived well without being able to read and write and therefore these skills alone do not help them much.” As a result for her, the answer might lie with planning more effective practical skills to help learners start income generating projects to supplement their income. According to Victoria, the skills have to be sufficiently advanced to enable them to produce goods that could

compete in the market. She noted for example that, “in my area they do sewing, the competition with chain stores has reached cut throat threshold...what can they make that would compete with multinational products from China and South Africa?” Victoria strongly felt that the skills offered are of a lower quality and the period of training literacy teachers was too short, they end up not acquiring sufficiently sophisticated skills to be able to compete in the open market, even in their own village.

Chapter Summary

Participants involved in the planning and implementation of literacy in Botswana have been categorized into three major divisions. First, there were the historical participants who planned a campaign-based literacy education in the 1970s, and have since retired or moved to other sectors. Secondly, there was the Senior Management Team (SMT) comprised of individuals at the department headquarters and the Regional Adult Education Officers who played a key role in making planning decisions and coordinated literacy education efforts. At district level, there are Senior District Adult Education Officers and District Adult Education Officers who are primarily responsible for the planning process at local level and supervised literacy program personnel.

Overall, these officers are in consensus that the program involved local officers and not learners. They also agreed that it has problems such as the use of one language, lack of response to the needs of learners and outdated primer materials. Problems differ significantly depending on the region where one is working. For example, the prevalence of ‘tribalism’ even against officers seems to occur in the northern and western regions. As Nono puts it, “The people noted that they are looked down upon by officers ... I think the problem is that they are the ones who belittle themselves.”

District officers blamed management for lack of innovation and vision.

However, senior management was of the opinion that they could accommodate of new ideas from districts provided officers have a clear action framework. They felt that the program has problems such as lack of curriculum specialists and limited funding from the state. The participants also differ in terms of the level of education, gender, and power to make decisions. District officers feel that regional officers can override them for unexplained reasons in spite of the fact that planning is supposed to be “consultative.” However, in spite of all these differences, they worked together to plan and implement literacy education in Botswana. The succeeding chapter presents findings on how literacy was planned and implemented in Botswana over the last three decades.

CHAPTER 5
HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE BOTSWANA NATIONAL LITERACY
PROGRAM

This chapter presents major historical events that marked the trail of planning literacy education from the 1970s to the present. It highlights issues and events in the planning of the literacy campaign in the 1970s and captures significant occasions that necessitated planning in the BNLP over the last twenty years since its inception in 1980.

Historically, the planning of literacy education in Botswana was guided by the drive to set up a functional literacy program. Planners then engaged in successive campaign projects but their efforts were later incorporated into a traditional literacy program under the Department of Non-Formal Education. This chapter provides a description of the process of planning a functional literacy program from 1972 to 1979.

It then focuses on institutionalization of a traditional Botswana National Literacy Program, which has been in operation from 1980 to the present, highlights significant planning developments over the last twenty years that have sustained the program.

Planning a Functional Literacy Campaign, 1972-1978

Attempts to provide formal literacy education in Botswana as in other developing nations followed the footprints of pre-Independence efforts to provide literacy among different communities. In Botswana, the provision of literacy was carried out through the use of such institutions as the Kgotla (*community meeting place*). The Kgotla through the initiation schools transmitted acceptable skills and knowledge to introduce the youth of each community to acceptable adulthood practices. The Kgotla was a critical source of participation in a community based decision-making process. It was important because in a non-literate society “the spoken word was the most efficient means of communication” (Kidd, 1976, p. 11).

During the colonial period missionaries provided literacy education. They focused on providing skills to construct churches, read the Bible, and lead the church communities. For example, participants recalled that the earliest traces of non-formal literacy training in the north were associated with the efforts of the Botswana Christian Council, which set up an Urban Industrial Mission at Selibe-pikwe. Their mission was to provide both non-formal education and community services to a township that has just mushroomed. They relied on primers from South Africa, which were not appropriate for Botswana (Kidd, 1976). As Tana recalled:

My involvement with literacy dates back to the 1970s. In 1975, when I was still with the Institute of Adult Education at the University, I was involved with a literacy project in the North...it involved working with Botswana Christian Council on a project they have been operating in Selibe-phikwe for sometime.... They were teaching a group of women some basic literacy skills of reading and writing.

Provision of Functional Literacy in Francistown

The turning points in the history of literacy education in Botswana started in 1972, in Francistown, the second largest city in Botswana. It was launched by the University based Department of Extra-Mural Services (DEMS), which carried out an experimental literacy project using the UNESCO work-oriented approach and the psycho-social approach experimented on in Thailand. The literacy experiment followed a meeting held in April 1972, to explore the possibility of implementing literacy education in Botswana. DEMS was charged with the responsibility of initiating experimental literacy work and to develop some methods and materials for literacy provision (Kidd, 1977). Rossy outlined the objectives of the literacy provision as follows,

To eliminate illiteracy in Botswana over the next ten years; improve the quality of life of the participants in the rural areas and make course participants more aware of local and national problems and more committed to doing something positive to change the situation.

The process was intended to make participants not only literate but also skilled in some occupation, be aware of their situation, and wanting to do something about it. The DEMS office took upon itself the task of experimenting with what Rossy called a mixture of the Freirean and other methods. He elaborated,

I was running the division of the Department of Extra Mural Studies in Swaziland where I did a lot of literacy work. Basically, assisting the Sebenta National Institute, which was the major literacy organization in that country.... I was obviously inspired by Paulo Freire's writings.... We did a sort of adaptive work of what Freire was talking about in Brazil. At that time, it was hard to be as revolutionary as Freire was in Brazil. In fact, in the end that program ran into problems in Swaziland.

He went on to explain that, when he came to Botswana he continued the same approach to literacy work:

I came to Botswana with a lot of that kind of interest and what I did here was a sort of similar task, I was running the Northern office of the University, DEMS program. I was also assigned the task of trying to experiment with that kind of methodology in Northern Botswana. We did some experimental work in Francistown, Maun and Selibe-phikwe, which were actually part of my own area of operation.

Mabee also reflected, "I do recall it was kind of guided by the Freirean approach it was in vogue at that time. The idea of literacy group discussing issues related to identified issues.... that kind of approach was what the DEMS was trying to develop."

When I asked how he actually planned the experimental literacy project in Botswana, given that the situation was not as revolutionary as in Brazil. Rossy explained how they used a combination of a UNESCO work-oriented approach and the psycho-social approach, which linked literacy to provision of skills and commitment to development. He noted that the focus was not only on becoming literate, but also the need to take into account, “issues of local and national development.” The learners assessed their situation and made a commitment to change their conditions. When I asked how they planned to ensure such change, Rossy said:

I must note that we were influenced to a certain extent by some work that was going on out of Mwanza, in Tanzania at the time. This was a UNESCO-sponsored program, it was probably the biggest literacy program at the time... It basically developed primers around functional skills such as cattle raising, growing of certain crops, it had a whole primer around nutrition and food resources.... As a planning exercise around literacy work, essentially, we did some work, which amounts to focus group interviews in Francistown, Selibe-Pikwe and Maun to identify concerns we could use as a basis for the codes.

In 1973, another significant development was that the government launched a very extensive campaign to teach the population about the process of national development planning. Consequently, the National Development Plan IV, 1973-78, cited in Kidd (1978, p. 4) stated,

The Ministry of Education will, in consultation with other ministries, investigate the role of literacy programs in the development strategy, and where possible, sponsor functional literacy programs on a local and national scale...The successful promotion of development, especially in rural contexts, rests heavily on the ability of people to communicate. The high illiteracy rate in Botswana makes it difficult to disseminate information and general educational materials.

The ministry seemed to appreciate the role that could be played by literacy in local and national development. The statement posits the need for people to be able to communicate about their development needs and what they received from the state.

During the same year, the government had a visit from a UNESCO literacy consultant, who conducted a feasibility study on a national work-oriented literacy project and suggested a national plan of action for eradicating illiteracy in ten years. He proposed that the plan should involve extension staff, but the state declined the program as being too ambitious and that extension staff already had other priorities. Rossy narrated, “He held national meetings at the Ministry of Education and came up with some recommendations and nothing immediately came out of it rather than the fact that what we were doing was on the right track.” Rossy also noted that in spite of such statements from Government, and the visit of the UNESCO consultant, “nothing much came out of those national events.”

Tribal Grazing Land Policy and National Commission on Education

In 1976, two significant national events occurred that participants believe to have influenced the development of literacy. These were the launching of the Tribal Grazing Land Policy (TGLP) campaign and the appointment of the first National Commission on Education (NCE). The events were crucial because they influenced the course of literacy provision at both conceptual and practical levels. According to Selgado, the aim of the TGLP was to:

Educate people on how to effectively manage their farms using new approaches and how to work as a group in a farm shared by farmers with different number of cattle.... The idea behind TGLP was to enable poor farmers to have access to fenced ranches. There was some connection with the literacy program in that people were taught some skills in raising poultry, and growing vegetables...I believe that was the link with the literacy program.

The process of galvanizing the population around the ideals of the TGLP had some methodological implications. Firstly, it was the biggest campaign ever organized in Botswana and it involved large groups of people learning through radio learning groups and an extensive use of audio-visuals. Mabee described this process in these words:

Well, at the time, TGLP was probably the biggest education campaign that had taken place in Botswana using non-formal education methods ... Botswana Extension College (BEC) was involved, their mandate was to develop printed materials. The audio-visual aspects of the TGLP were carried out by (DEMS) and Radio Botswana.... We had a large number of study groups and learning meetings... It was actually based on the Radio Learning Group campaign method from Tanzania.

He noted also that it was the most well resourced effort he had seen in the 1970s. When I asked Mabee to compare it to the Department of Non-Formal Education he noted:

It had a vast amount of support, directives came from the Office of the President all the way down to the districts, extension staff from agriculture, animal health, community development and the district commissioners' office were involved. They were all instructed to support and allocate resources for the campaign.... If you then look at the current literacy program, and kind of scratch below the surface, you would find that the implication is that the literacy program really rests squarely with the district staff of the department and it does not have a national drive.

I asked him to talk about the role of TGLP in the general effort to provide literacy, Rossy thought that it had positive methodological implications, he intimated, "The experience also kind of gave us some ideas on what works in mass education. ... so that

we kept a certain level of discussion going on at a local level rather than a one way provision of information.”

Another development was the setting up of the NCE whose overarching purpose was to, “identifying major problems affecting education in Botswana and the issue of principal concern to the Government of Botswana” (Republic of Botswana, 1977, p. 2). The departments involved in the practice of non-formal education and literacy like those of other sectors, submitted a request to be helped to set up a literacy program as Rossy recalled, “To ask the commission to make recommendations on the role of literacy education in Botswana.” However, a government White Paper, which carried the recommendations of the commission only acknowledged the role of non-formal education in development but did not have any recommendation on literacy. It indicated that there would be provision of out-of-school education to meet the needs of women, out of school youth and the unemployed (Republic of Botswana, 1977). The commission did not provide a fully fleshed policy for out-of-school education. Consequently, it was suggested that a separate White Paper on non-formal education would be developed but such a paper never materialized. According to Kidd (1978) the Botswana Extension College was asked to develop literacy education materials in spite of the lack of policy on non-formal education.

The Botswana Extension College and the Experimental Literacy Project

Government established the Botswana Extension College (BEC) in 1973. Its basic responsibility was to provide both formal and non-formal educational opportunities by the distance mode. It was the non-formal component that also moved into experimenting with providing literacy, Mabee illustrated:

I think it started on distance education and later literacy. The other major division involved in non-formal education was the Department of Extra Mural Services at the University of Botswana. So, these two departments were really

the main organizations that were involved in promoting non-formal education and literacy.

From the beginning the BEC used the Freirean approach as its primary method in the provision of literacy projects. It was later given the task of carrying out the first ever large-scale experimental literacy project in South-Eastern Botswana. This covered an area bigger than all the previous attempts at providing literacy. Rossy by then, had moved from DEMS and was working for the BEC. He recalled:

My boss, a man called Solomon Inquai, (*Laughs about it*), he was a man of great vision, and had real interest in literacy. He was very supportive of literacy ideas and we kind of got together around these ideas. Solomon was supportive for a much bigger kind of piloting of the Freirean approach.

They experimented on literacy work from 1977-78, which laid a basis for the current Botswana National Literacy Program.

Planning the experimental literacy program was assigned the Botswana Extension College towards the end of 1976. However, carrying out the experiment for a functional literacy project was carried out between July and September, 1977. According to Mpotokwane (1977) because of lack of recommendations from the National Commission on Education, the project was operated without a policy framework, which led to confusion and, at times, a waste of limited resources. Rossy noted that the BEC carried out the project in a number of “villages not far from Gaborone such as Otse, Naledi, Kweneng and other nearby villages in the South East District.” He acknowledged:

We did quite a bit more at BEC. The aim was to test out on a large scale a more systematically developed kind of literacy materials. The experiment had the same elements as the earlier work we did in Francistown although the codes were different. We did listening surveys around the people’s concerns and they came back with wonderful stories about their situation.

The experimental project was also intended primarily to develop materials that could be used in future if government were to consider implementing a national functional literacy program. It became the first sustained effort to develop materials on a larger scale covering a wider range of issues. It was also here that literacy planners began to explore working with other district extension staff members in providing literacy. Literacy became truly functional in that it was linked with development issues within the village. Rossy, commented:

We looked at the experiment in terms of everything such as fieldwork, aspects such as knowing how to work with the District Extension Team (DET) and the extension teams members at the village level.... The materials gave us the basis for developing the primers and guides for trainers and some texts based on the most frequent syllables. We also tried to import the Freirean method on how to write primer materials.

He noted that the group discussed a variety of issues, which included access to land, water, sanitation, nutrition and family planning. They also discussed such economic issues as unemployment, wages and prices and social matters such as child maintenance, marriage and women's work generally.

One significant feature of the experimental program was that it was functional and built in practical skills, there was an action component to the program. Rossy said, "people wouldn't just have these nice discussions but got some vegetable gardens going and other practical activities that they could do as individuals and collectively." Mabee also confirmed the use of the Freirean method as they carried out the campaign on the pilot project: "Their work was based on the Freirean method. The idea that literacy groups discuss issues and learning materials related to identified issues as they related to people's daily lives." He further observed that the BEC involved other extension staff because they were planning a "very concerted effort, focused you know,

where there was a lot of support either nationally or district level depending on the scale one is talking about.”

The experimental program was rallied under the slogan “*go bala ke tswelelopepe*,” which means “to read is progress.” The thrust of the program was to increase popular participation through linking literacy to development. The people were encouraged to understand the implications of the changes that were taking place in the country at that time. They were gathered to discuss their problems as they relate to the changes generally and decided on a course of action to dissolve them (Kidd, 1977). Mabee recalled that most people who were working at the BEC came out of the experience with the TGLP and it probably influenced their “choice of approaches in favor of a campaign instead of a program.” When I asked what was the difference between the campaign and the current program, he submitted, “A campaign to me would say, well, we are going to have a concerted effort to do something, just like political parties do during the run up to a national election.” The campaign was based on a Freirean method to facilitate learner involvement.

Literacy Method

The methods that were used in the program were not only based on international innovations but the process also involved some local initiatives. The planners were quick to recognize that the use of pictures to start the discussion as recommended by Freire did not yield the best results. The other medium they employed to spark off discussion was story-telling, which was based on the popular theatre activities that were organized by DEMS in Northern Botswana. They used such strategies as drama, dance, puppets and singing as Rossy emphasized, “People were not used to the kind of question-discussion sessions, all education traditions are teacher-based and depends on information transmission by teachers.” As a result of the limits of picture discussion, the use of videos to facilitate local leaders’ workshops, they started a drama group in Bokalanga called “Laedza Batanani.” Rossy explained how in one conference “a

participant asked why we used video, we want to see it as a live performance.... that was where the idea of Laedza Batanani came from. I guess part of the thinking was to find an alternative to printed materials.” The most critical thing in literacy provision was that it had to be functional, as Mossy puts it, this was the time when the idea of functional literacy was coming into the picture, especially how one can “package information in such a manner that whilst people are learning literacy skills, the skills can also transfer development messages.” Hence, the process targeted different learning groups depending on their needs.

Literacy Participants

In order to understand planning a campaign, I asked them who their target participants were. Mabee responded:

First of all, I think we were targeting out-of-school people youth and adults.

Literacy was targeting people who had no literacy skills. What I understood was that the majority of learners were usually older females, but I think the intention was not just to attract females but males too.

While Rossy agreed, on the composition, he also felt that the program was for different groups in the community ranging from cattle herdmen to local leaders.

Literacy for Herdmen

Rossy recalled how in one cattle post settlement an expatriate woman provided a radical literacy program to cattle herd men, which made the farmers very uncomfortable. He recounted:

She worked among cattle herders at Kgomodiatshaba cattle posts in Kgatleng.

She actually was one of the expatriate Remote Area Development Officers at the time they were all over the country. She was working with cattle herders in that area, the herders had a lot of interest in literacy. She got herders to identify their critical issues as a basis for literacy discussion materials. It was a very

controversial issue at the time, cattle owners were very unhappy as you know
(*laughing*).

Asked to say a little bit more about what caused the farmers to be uncomfortable with the literacy work, Rossy narrated that their arguments were that the herd men did not need literacy. He further explained:

Basically she was providing an opportunity for cattle herders to speak out about some of the things that were really upsetting them. They were upset by the fact that they did not have any independent land of their own, to grow their own food... They did not have to accept inhumane treatment from the cattle owners.... She was providing an opportunity for them to send their children to school. Cattle owners thought this was against their power and control over these people.

While the literacy for herd men was controversial, the bulk of what they did was not. Rossy confessed, "So, some issues were radical while some were culturally mainstream. You can see that there was a much obvious gap between cattle owners and cattle workers... The efforts of cattle workers challenged the status quo." Otherwise, part of what we did as a government program was mainstream we could only do things to a certain acceptable level. He pointed to two projects one for women and the other for local leaders that he provided in the mid-1970s. The most important thing was that functional literacy campaigns catered to different groups depending on their needs.

Women and Literacy

The program focused on the fact that women were being made to work too much. It was about inequitable division of labor in the household. (*He showed me a list of codes and pictures depicting women's life activities in the household*). Most of the mainstream issues were around access to clean water, water reticulation in the villages, at the time it was still very centralized. There was either one standpipe in the village or a borehole. Rossy stressed, "we did not discuss these things as a way of a revolution, we

looked at other forms of water provisions, food, venereal diseases (VD), which was an issue with migration, men moving to the South African mines.” It became an issue, especially from women’s perspective, because it meant at times, money that was earned by men was not spent in the household for food and school fees. Land was another issue, which we did not deal with in radical terms, it was essentially explaining the procedures for the land board (*the board responsible for land allocation*). It was not challenging the status quo in a big way as such, “I have to be honest, about that, the program was supported by government. There was a built in limit to what we could do in a government program.”

Training for Local Leaders

Another activity that Rossy and his colleagues did was to provide training for local leadership in districts and villages. They were expected to organize local training courses for everybody from the Village Development Committee (VDC) to Town Councilors, and small shop owners. Rossy and his team produced about 15 video films, which were built around the needs of different groups of learners. The videos were mainly “aimed at what we called village development conferences.” Essentially, the videos contained stories about issues such as how VDC operated to alleviate “tensions between the VDC and the Chief or between the Chief and the land board over the control of land allocation.”

The local leaders’ program was based on problems encountered by the VDCs and other organs of local administration. The Department of Extra-Mural Services and the Botswana Extension College therefore, provided non-formal education and literacy programs to different groups in the society and attempted to focus the teachings to accommodate the needs of each category of learners. These efforts went on until Government hired a consultant to determine the effectiveness of the experimental literacy project and was to advise government on what to do for literacy provision. Townsend–Coles recommended the establishment of the Department of Non-Formal

Education. Rossy noted, “It was this experimental effort that gave birth to the dramatic transition to the Botswana National literacy Program.”

Turbulent Transition: From a Literacy Campaign to Traditional Program-1979-1980

The newly established department absorbed the literacy project that was being experimented upon from 1977-78. As MmaD recollected, it was hurriedly organized and lacked futuristic vision, “the BNLP was done in a hastened fashion. The man who came to evaluate the experimental literacy project, ...which turned out to be his job description. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Education top brass then, could not see through that.” She still feels that the problems bedeviling the program were a result of the way it was originally planned. She indicated, “This UNESCO consultant gave us the kind of advice that was not forward looking.... We as a department earned a lot of problems from this erroneous decision on his part.” Consequently, there is a consensus among the participants who were present during the transition period that it was turbulent and had personalities and methodological problems.

The transition from the experimental literacy project of 1977-78 to the establishment of the Department of Non-Formal Education was not only a hastened decision, some viewed it as political manipulation, while others thought it was based on ideological and personality differences between the main players in the two institutions. What seems to have happened was that the DNFE forcefully absorbed the Botswana Extension College and made it one of its units through the Chief Education Officer’s political manipulation of senior officials at the Ministry of Education. The establishment of DNFE was viewed as political manipulation, as Rossy described:

The first Chief Education Officer in the Department of Non-Formal Education got himself into the Ministry of Education, and I guess was then able to lobby and developed an independent policy right here in the Ministry and a lot of it conflicting with the ideas and proposals that were already there at BEC...

Townsend-Coles focused mainly in his interests when he set up the DNFE, he

then grabbed the Botswana Extension College kicking and screaming into the department.

In addition, there were some fights over the choice of transformative versus conventional literacy methods and Townsend-Coles adapted the Freirean methods to his conventional program.

The fight was over the fact the new Chief Education Officer had a very conventional perspective to literacy and basically, used his influence over the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education to co-opt the Botswana Extension College. As Rossy argued:

During the transition to the BNLP there was a big fight over methodology, basically this British guy, who came to set up the Department of Non-Formal Education had the back up of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education at the time. The Botswana Extension College lost, Townsend-Coles basically threw out almost all the Freirean elements and even the work-oriented elements and turned the functional literacy project into a reading program (*laughs*) and succeeded in setting up a mass literacy program.

Mabee also recalled how the program lost all the flavor from the earlier literacy education work and was going to be a program planned for each year with new participants and continuous yearly enrolments.

In spite of this strongly felt view, there are those who felt that while the controversy was there, these problems were largely personal and conceptual. It had to do with the fact that Coles was establishing a long-term program, as Mabee cautioned, He was setting up a department not a short-term campaign, I honestly do not know what his vision was, but he saw literacy as the bedrock of the department ... he wouldn't organize a one-off literacy campaign. He should have to keep it going and produce an on going opportunity for learners to get in and sometimes out of the program... I think those were some of the reasons for his choice of a

program approach. It was a different situation with different personalities and (*pauses*) I think it was also part of the state mandate to have a program and not a campaign.

The argument about the possibility that the program was state mandated was also indirectly alluded to by Mossy who worked closely with the Chief Education Officer. Mossy noted, “I came in when the decision to implement a traditional program was already made.” He further elaborated,

I recall very clearly that at the time, there were two camps that were at loggerheads on these issues. There were chaps from the Institute, from a more academic side and were excited about functionality... the then Director, Mr. Townsend-Coles, came from a different school of thought, the radicalism of Paulo Freire, was more of an academic exercise than reality.... We must look at the context where some of these ideas were happening. Now, if you look at the culture of Botswana, where the issue of liberation has never been a question, and think you can transfer radical ideas in this environment, may be, (*laughing*) you would be pushing a plug into a small hole.

Interestingly, Mossy was not convinced that these two approaches were different. He observed how they used materials that were developed by the BEC materials and produced some of their own. He summarized this situation thus:

The dividing line between functional and traditional literacy was tenuous, it is very thin and blurred. So, I think what we did was to pull ideas from the two sides. We appreciated that reading and writing *per se* would not be meaningful. I think that luxury cannot be afforded by a developing country, you really have to be thinking of functionalism. How you can also make sure that participants acquired skills, which could be applied immediately in their environment.

Consequently, based on this viewpoint, to date the Botswana National Literacy Program continued to offer traditional literacy education.

Continuation of the Traditional Literacy Education Program from 1980-2000

Following the reluctant absorption of the experimental literacy project into the newly established Department of Non-Formal Education in 1979, the planning of the program was perceived as successful based on the traditional view of literacy. The end of methodological debates over functional and traditional approaches left Mossy convinced that “ a practitioner is different from a theoretician, because as a practitioner, you do not have a choice, you get into situations and turn adversary into advantage, like I am saying, some of the problems are perceived than actual.”

There is a consensus among participants who were actively involved with the program from its earliest stages that it was intended only for providing reading and writing skills without a focus on functionality. This view was also indirectly confirmed by Mossy, one of the most senior local staff members when he stated,

I still believe that functional literacy should be provided as part of post-literacy. Learners cannot engage in complicated activities. They can only use the skills on projects when you come to them and say, here is a possible project and they can read about it.

He went on to cast doubt whether illiterate people can be taught any skills before they have acquired some basic literacy competencies. He asked rhetorically, “How can such an idea be communicated to an illiterate person? These [projects] involve cognitive issues. The participants needed to think about such complex possibilities after mastering the basic skills of reading and writing.” Dede confirmed this when she recounted, “When we started, the program was only a project and was focused almost exclusively on the provision of reading, writing and arithmetic skills.” The program largely provided basic reading and writing without functional skills.

The succeeding discussion demonstrates how literacy was planned in the BNLP from 1979 to the present. It relies on major marker events that occurred in the program over the years that brought significant changes on the conception and

planning of the program. It highlights such activities as the introduction of practical skills, the first major external evaluation of 1987, the 1991 feasibility study on post-literacy, which led to the introduction of reading materials for learners outside class. The discussion also focuses on the 1993 Revised National Commission on Education, and its implications for planning in the program.

Eradicating Illiteracy in Botswana

Established in 1979, the Department of Non-Formal Education had a literacy project whose intention was to eradicate illiteracy in six years from 1980-1985. The literacy project was a short, time-bound project with the mission of eradicating illiteracy in Botswana. However, the aim was not achieved and the project turned into a program that continues to the present. Mabee noted that he has always been convinced that this is a program because as he puts it, “a program is an on going activity, I think the DNFE was setup to continue year after year, new learners could register and learners progress from one level to another, that is the way I understand a program to be working.”

The dominant view was that the project was going to end after eradicating illiteracy leading some participants to wonder if the Chief Education Officer had a vision or not as MmaD retorted, “His main preoccupation was eradicating illiteracy in six years and did not see the project as a long-term undertaking, which was why it did not have a post-literacy component. This UNESCO consultant gave us advice that was not forward looking.” MmaL agreed and added, “The other thing was that most people have been employed on a temporary basis from 1980-1995. It was only in 1995 that government was convinced that this is a long-term program.” Some of the earlier planning activities in the program involved establishing district offices and providing skeletal staff to start the program and try out some literacy instructional materials in villages nearest to the city of Gaborone. Later there was an internal evaluation, which led to the introduction of practical skills.

Internal Evaluation 1983

The program was first internally evaluated in 1983 to determine its impact on the learners and also to establish their views towards teaching the materials. The learners' response convinced the leadership of the program that learners needed practical skills to be able to earn a living. It was against that background that practical skill training was introduced. They also established the practical skills division called "*Ditiro Tsa Dthabololo*" (Development work). Dede explained, "A concern was raised based on an internal evaluation that the learners would like to learn some practical skills and the "*Ditiro Tsa Dithabololo*" program was started. It provides people with such skills as sewing, knitting and cookery." Moipolai was however, skeptical about the impact of the practical skills, she felt it did not improve their lives. She noted, "Participants indicated that they would need some skills in order to earn a living. The department started providing income-generating projects, which did not substantially change their lives."

The provision of practical skills was intended to enable learners to collectively choose the type of skills they needed and officers from the division of "*Ditiro Tsa Dithabololo*" would be called to provide them with training. The consensus among all the participants was that income-generating projects gave learners the opportunity to decide on what they wanted and were assisted to achieve their own goal. According to Nono, "This is intended for them to own the projects." The learners have to form a group with the help of the literacy teacher, have a constitution and do fund raising in order to qualify for assistance from the department or be helped to acquire grants from government or non-governmental agencies such as the American Ambassador's Fund. Moipolai elaborated:

The learners are advised to form a group, have a constitution, and we gave them some ideas in terms of what products would sell better in their context. I advised them on the prospects and problems of whatever project ideas they had. The

idea of advising is to lead them into a project that would enable them to generate income. The project was intended to make sure that they do not learn only to read and write but also helped them to be able to have money for use in their households in order to improve their lives.

Nono described the benefits of the projects thus, “The learners find the program beneficial in that they would have learnt such skills as bakery or sewing and they also benefit through earning some money, this in a way, encourages them to attend classes.”

In spite of these positive aspects, income-generating projects were reported to face problems related to management and failure to function as a group. Selgado described that the projects are managed with the help of Literacy Group Leaders but at times, the size of the project got to be too big for their skills, as he puts it, “The other problem is that LGLs are themselves not sufficiently trained to manage projects of that magnitude, some of the projects have a lot of money, which requires a fairly sophisticated level of management.” Another frequently mentioned problem was that participants felt that the groups lacked group dynamics. The assumption that people should be grouped together contradicted their individualistic nature, as Johnson observed, “People have very individualistic tendencies, they prefer to work for their own personal gains rather than as members of a group. You get personal conflicts erupting all over and they disperse and the projects collapse.” Selgado felt that group decisions were based on “the views of a few vocal individuals in the group.”

In one district, the major problem for the groups was that the different ethnic communities would not work together because people of one group looked down upon others. Nono described, “The problem in this area is that the people fail to work as a group, especially if participants are Bakgalagadi and the Coloreds... one group [Coloreds) looks down upon the other. Project fail because of poor group dynamics.” In the final analysis the program was externally evaluated in 1987, and the evaluation presented a number of planning related challenges for the Department.

External Evaluation of the Program

The 1987 evaluation was among other things to determine the impact of the literacy program on learners and suggest how it could be improved. This study was somewhat interested in determining how findings and recommendations of the evaluation were attended to in the planning of the program. It also had to determine how the planning based on the finding of evaluations maintained or challenged the conventional view of literacy. Johnson described that the evaluation recommended the following things: The project be turned into a national literacy program and this led to its continuation. It also recommended the introduction of English as a second language in the program, which was done with relative success. He expressed, “They also recommended that the primers were outdated and needed to be reviewed. Unfortunately, even to date, most of these things are not done.” Victoria asserted, “It was suggested that some changes be made to the curriculum but since then, the department has not taken any initiative to change the program, especially the primers.” The external evaluation also recommended that there should be a feasibility study to explore the possibility to provide post-literacy activities.

The 1987 evaluation also pointed to the need to provide post-literacy in order for learners not to forget or lose the literacy skills. The suggestion was for the department to create a literate environment for their neo-literates. In 1991, the department took the initiative to appoint a consultancy to assess the feasibility of providing post-literacy activities in the country. One of the terms of reference for the consultancy was to examine the adequacy of the existing media and to produce a comprehensive situation analysis of the need for post-literacy (Mutava, Mutanyatta, & Gaborone, 1991).

The researchers recommended among other things that the department should produce materials for neo-literates. In pursuit of that recommendation, the department has brought together a team of inter-ministerial instructional writers and produced

booklets called the “Ipalele Series” (read for yourself). As MmaD indicated, “We worked with the committee to produce books for learners to read at their own time for personal satisfaction.” The writing of the materials was based on the expertise of the extension officers not the needs of the learners. They invited officers from agriculture, community development, health and veterinary service. Officers in the department stressed the need to work with other departments because they have a common client. Grace asserted, “the problem is that DNFE take non-formal education as their business alone...but it goes beyond us, it’s a matter of involving other government departments because we share clients.” Moipolai agreed with her and added, “We also involve other extension officers to teach on their areas of expertise in order to give learners the full benefit of deep knowledge of issues they want to learn about.”

Selgado noted that he was involved in writing the materials but decried the fact that people do not have a culture of reading. He remarked, “I do not think the books are put to effective use.... In writing the materials the assumption was that we understood the contexts in which the materials were going to be used it was not backed by good research.” In spite of the good working relationships, other participants complained about some extension staff members who were not cooperative in the villages. Some officers looked down upon the officers of the department because they did not have offices and were not permanent employees of the government. Victoria candidly illustrated, “As for district staff... in meetings they noted how we could work together but in practice.... people at this level just focus on their departments.” As Johnson puts it “My general experience in extension has been that people do not understand how extension works, and we don’t work as a team. Extension teams are not there in villages where they are supposed to work together.” It was in view of these uncertainties in the planning of the national literacy program and other educational sectors that government realized the need to review educational

programs and they appointed the second national commission on education in 1992, which submitted its findings and recommendations in 1993.

Revised National Commission on Education, 1993

In 1992, the Government of Botswana constituted the Second National Commission on Education because the first one, which was in 1977, had run its course. The previous commission had guided the educational system for over a decade, and the system was beginning to show visible signs of crisis. The Revised National Commission on Education of 1993 provided a comprehensive review of the first commission and made recommendations on how to improve the education system in Botswana. The commission articulated the place of literacy under adult basic education within the framework of lifelong education. Unlike its predecessor, the report came up with a number of recommendations on adult basic education/literacy. It recommended that the National Literacy Program be evaluated (Ministry of Education, 1993). The inclusion of literacy under the rubric of adult basic education helped to widen its scope and coverage. Johnson pointed out, “The program also featured in the recommendation of the Revised National Policy on Education, most of the recommendations made by the new policy are not yet carried out.” He explained,

The BNLP is to be part of the first of three levels of the Adult Basic Education Course (ABEC). It is to constitute ABEC I that is equivalent to Standard Four in formal school. There will be ABEC II and III that would be equivalent to Standards Five to Six and Standard Seven respectively.

He went further to explain that ABEC has come to be the life blood for the department in that now, learners can strive for a Standard Seven Certificate through non-formal education. He said, “I believe our hope to survive is through the introduction of the ABEC course, to us, ... it come to be viewed as a life line of our department.” Hence, to date the BNLP is still working on a mechanism to establish a

non-formal education program, which will be equivalent to Standard Seven in formal school.

Chapter Summary

Understanding how planning and implementation of literacy education in Botswana maintained or challenged the conventional view of literacy, and attempting to trace the historical background of the BNLP necessitated that the study should describe the history of the program from the 1970s to the present. Data indicated that in the 1970s the Department of Extra Mural Services and the Botswana Extension College experimented on functional literacy projects in Botswana. They used three principal approaches, namely, the work-based literacy approach, the Freirean approach and the psycho-social approach. Planners also made local initiatives such as use of drama and video to further the course of literacy education. They also learnt from major national events such as the 1976 Tribal Grazing Land Policy campaign, which persuaded them to choose the campaign approach when mandated to conduct the experimental literacy project from 1977-78. Planning in the 1970s addressed specific audiences such as the cattle herders, women and local leaders in their planning. There was a consensus that the transition to the present traditional literacy program was turbulent because of ideological, methodological and personality differences among key players.

The Botswana National Literacy Program under DNFE on the other hand was primarily intended to be a traditional literacy program focusing on basic reading and writing skills. It did not focus on functional skills until that was demanded by the learners after the 1983 internal evaluation. Planners observed that the program as originally planned lacked vision because it was based on a questionable assumption that it would eradicate illiteracy in six years. The study also chronicles how literacy education was planned in the BNLP from 1980 to present relying on major marker events that occurred in the program over the years. The events brought significant changes on the conception and planning of the program. It highlights such activities as

the first internal evaluation. The first major external evaluation of 1987, the 1991 post-literacy feasibility study, which led to the introduction of reading materials for learners outside class. The discussion also focused on the 1993 Revised National Commission on Education, and its implications for the future of literacy education in Botswana.

CHAPTER 6
REPRODUCTION AND RESISTANCE IN PLANNING THE BOTSWANA
NATIONAL LITERACY PROGRAM

The chapter has two major sections organized around issues of reproduction and resistance. Reproduction occurs when the state attempts to universalize certain ruling class ideas while simultaneously shaping and limiting oppositional discourses and practices. It often leads to resistances or counter-hegemonic activities. Resistance is where the policy of the state is challenged and this can create a basis for a new power relations or it could involve a quiet resistance to the powerful elite. The chapter demonstrates that the state reproduced its power through providing a conventional literacy program. First, it controlled the planning process and defined it as an expert-driven process intended to create a sense of belonging and it was largely a routine exercise. Second, planning was defined as a technical process based on common concerns. It treated learners as passive consumers, developed universal materials, and in the process ignored gender and minority concerns. Third, the state reproduced its power by maintaining a tight control over such features of planning as the production of primers, post-literacy materials, literacy at workplace materials, and the importation of adult basic education materials. Planners ignored the concerns of literacy participants, and used ineffective methods. Finally, state hegemony was resisted in three ways: Participants and other audiences demanded the introduction of a third language. Literacy teachers and planners engaged in both open resistance and quiet dissent.

Reproduction and Planning a Traditional Literacy Program

I established that there are two ways in which the planning of the program was used to reproduce the status quo. First, the basic literacy education materials were based on the expertise of the planners from local to national levels and the learners were

excluded. Second, planning was used to subdue any different views, senior officers used it to build consensus, therefore the district officers engaged in routine activities, which were not innovative. I asked planners two overlaying questions namely: How do they describe the district planning process and what do they view as the value of district level planning in the overall departmental plan. These questions allowed them to describe how they planned the literacy education in Botswana and how that responds to contextual and gender issues. Those in senior management positions viewed planning as facilitating a sense of belonging, while most district staff felt that it was a routine process, which did not accommodate innovative ideas.

Most of the participants described planning as starting at the cluster level, through the village, district, regional and senior management levels. At each stage, according to Selgado, the planners had to “defend and justify their choices of projects they propose for inclusion.” Nono summed up the process: “As a district, we make our plans based on input from the clusters and we meet at the regional office to discuss the district plans in order to formulate out regional plan, which is going to be our contribution to the departmental plan.” She further explained, “When we plan at regional level, we assess what we have done during the previous plan to determine what we did and what could not be accomplished and begin from there to start a new plan.”

The process of planning involved local staff, as Christina indicated, “People at sub-district and village levels are expected to develop their own plans and their input is built into both the district wide and the regional plans, which are made part of the national plan.” Johnson agreed and emphasized, “In each case, there should be an input from the cluster into the district plan before it is forwarded for inclusion in the regional plan.” planning from this perspective was articulated By MmaD when she reported, “Regions hold consultation meetings on a regular basis. When they plan for a year, they sit down together to do the plan..... You will find that in that approach, there is a feeling of belonging.” She went on to describe how planning inculcated

trust; “They organize meetings on a regular basis... this results in an enhanced trust among colleagues at both district and regional levels.” Ideally, the planning should be done in such a way that all are involved and nobody should say I was not involved. MmaL explained, “We take it that whatever is agreed upon is the common voice from that region.” Planning in this respect facilitate hegemonic control through creating a mechanism for consensus under the pretext that it was for building a sense of belonging. The control of planning helped to reproduce the dominant culture and knowledge. However, most district officers did not think the process was that democratic, they viewed it as routine and excluded innovative ideas. The essence is that their views clearly demonstrated how the state reproduced its hegemony.

Contrary to the argument that planning fosters a sense of belonging, it has been described as just a routine exercise confined to the prescription of the state and senior management. Victoria aptly captured this view in these words:

We do plan for our activities, especially training and other things we do on a yearly basis. One has to establish how many literacy teachers I will train for that year. Most of the time the plan is pretty much what I would call routine. ... As a result of them being routine, the plans are very standard throughout the country... in this district for the past two years, we have done the same things. The thing is that funding is available mainly for routine plans otherwise we are told that there is no money for extra things that we propose.

This situation perpetuated state hegemony because management was prepared to sponsor what they viewed as common but not innovative ideas. As Moipolai reiterated: “We only seem to get involved in the planning only if we propose something on training not anything new, the so-called plans are just routine parts of the itinerary that one prepares for each year.” Victoria added, “When we think of doing something innovative, its like opening a can of worms, we get told endless stories about lack of funds. When we plan new things ... other than routine activities, management turns a

deaf ear.” She further explained how she went on a course and could not implement the new ideas because she was labeled a politician when requesting to try new ideas. She recalled, “We were dismissed as having become politicians, when we suggested what we could try out.” Given these divergent views to planning, participants were asked how district level planning added value to the national literacy program. Again, management felt that it added value while district offices held a contrary view. Mpho contended, “They do not only just implement the primers. They organize local leaders workshops and hold meetings on different issues such as health, that are pertinent to their districts.” Selgado aptly noted, “Districts add value to planning because each year they propose new projects and activities for their districts.”

The state reproduced its hegemonic control because district staff mostly felt that they did not add any value to the process of planning literacy education in Botswana because their work depended on regular itineraries. They accused management of not being receptive to new and innovative ideas and also for failing to carry out recommendations from workshops and evaluation reports. Mothibedi echoed their position thus,

To be quite honest, I don't think the district plans add value to the planning process. It is just a formality that we are required to produce annual plans. I guess management cares less whether it adds value or not. I guess even one could leave out some key literacy related activities in your plan, nobody would say anything or even notice that anything is missing. What matters is that you have done something or have submitted some kind of plan.

In view of the routine way of planning, Moipolai felt that the whole planning process needed to be rethought. She warned, “Unless we change the way we have always conceptualized, planned and implemented the programs, we are going to fold as a department. ... We should be a lot more vigorous in our efforts to involve the learners.” In addition, the state reproduced its position by downplaying contextual and

instructional issues, which constrained the program. For example, they assumed that realities are the same and using universal materials in different contexts, treated learners as passive consumers, and used one language in a multicultural society in spite of pedagogical hurdles faced by minorities. Finally, I discuss some counter-hegemonic strides taken by individual planners and teachers in their contexts to overcome the limits imposed by the way the program has been planned and implemented over years.

Reproduction and the Failure to Address Contextual Issues

One of the critical points to understanding the BNLP is to establish how its planning responds to the contextual needs of the learners. Planning was viewed as a technical process intended to address what the elite viewed as common concerns. The second research question sought to determine how planning addressed competing choices based on language, context, and instructional design in view of class, gender, ethnicity and geographical location of literacy education participants. Planning literacy education has been made a technical process where planners used their expertise to decide what the learners would need to learn without consultation with them. The process enabled the state to take controversial issues such gender, language and minority issues off the planning table. They were treated as common issues, which were not subject for discussion. Hence, the program reproduced the perspectives of the elite through imposing content, which stressed domestic roles of women and it imposed one language in a multilingual society.

Consequently, the study had to establish how planning took into account the contexts of the learners and how the content and instruction were designed to respond to the situation of the learners based on gender, class and their geographical location. I asked them to describe how planning responded to the needs of learners in different contexts. They pointed to some inconsistencies and contradictions between the program content and the needs of the learners. They criticized the program for having been

planned by experts who used their own work experiences as referents and not the concerns of the learners.

When I asked them to describe what guided their planning of their program, participants noted the following: planning reproduced the status quo because it was based on what was perceived to be common concerns. Learners were treated as passive consumers, planners assumed the learners were the same and developed universal materials. There was a lack of response to minority and gender issues. It also focused on the use of a single language, Setswana (national language) in a multicultural society. I questioned them on how Setswana came to be the medium of instruction. They argued that it was the natural choice because we are in Botswana and also there was no resistance on its use from the minorities. Even the strongest advocates of the use of Setswana, appreciated the pedagogical hurdles faced by the minorities.

Planning for Common Concerns

One of the most critical contextual constraints that perpetuated the reproduction of the status quo was that the program was planned as a technical process based on the experts' experiences with the learners and not the learners' experiences *per se*. Planners as an elite group projected what they thought were common concerns of the illiterate people. Christina captured this situation thus, "We did not make any effort to involve the learners... officers identified common problems in their area and included those in training LGLs hoping that they would include them in teaching learners." She further explained, "I think those who wrote the primers looked at the social context of communities in the South and Eastern Botswana. Prospective learners were not sufficiently consulted. I would guess that they only looked at what they viewed as common concerns."

Mothibedi recalled that their supervisor used to consult with learners but now the department has radically departed from that approach. It tells learners what they want to learn. As he puts it, "We have decided to use the same materials without

continually checking the changing needs of our clients... we are supposed to have needs of people but that does not happen, we don't take the needs of learners into consideration." This was confirmed by Grace who emphasized, "The primers teach them things that do not readily apply to their context." Also she noted, "I have noticed over time that the Basarwa/San have a unique way of life, we should work among them to establish what they want or don't want in their lives." Grace observed, "In their case, primer materials should include such issues as wildlife and community based conservation strategies." The use of common materials among different groups make some people wonder why they are taught certain topics that do not apply to them, as Nono observed, "Colored people were concerned about the topic on traditional healers, they felt it should also have included alternative and modern medicine." Mpho also stressed, "I do not think the program has in any way addressed the needs of the learners, especially in those who are minorities." Overall, planning reproduced the interests of the elite because it was based on the needs of certain sections of society and projected into a national program as if people faced similar situations everywhere in the country.

Learners as Passive Consumers

A number of participants argue that the program reproduced the interests of the powerful because there was no needs assessment, which would have enabled learners to provide an input on what they would like to learn. Planning BNLP and its implementation demonstrated that the state took it as a technical process and did not solicit the views of the learners. The participants indicated that they did not recall ever involving learners in the planning of the literacy program other than when they chose to engage in an income-generating project. Moipolai demonstrated how the program failed to meet the needs of the learners in these words; "I believe it's the way we have presently organized the program that has excluded them in decision-making about what literacy they would want." The literacy is therefore planned for and not with the learners. She further noted, "We do not teach them what they need but what we assume

they need as officers... It depends on what original planners thought learners needed as enshrined in the age-old primers.”

Lack of learner involvement in planning led to problems such as learner dropouts, and high turnover rates each year. Tana reported, “I wouldn’t say the planning took the needs of the learners into account ... what we are giving them is not what they want... if they were consulted, maybe, we could be having different ‘literacies’ throughout the country.” The only way learners were involved, especially in eastern Botswana, was when they tried the newly developed materials. They were not necessarily consulted on what was to be included in the primers. Tana further complained that the program loses learners among the minorities in Western Botswana. Therefore, “One of the greatest challenges is to bring our learners back to the program. ... We need to plan a program that would be relevant to all sections of society.” The problem of lack of learner involvement in planning was succinctly articulated by Nono thus, “Overall, learners are not involved in the planning and implementation of the program, they are just passive consumers.” Lack of learner involvement in planning the literacy program helped the state to assert its hegemonic control.

Same Realities and Universal Materials

The program does not provide learners with skills they could apply immediately in their contexts. The planning process and the subsequent materials were not context specific, the skills provided are of a general nature driven by the technical expertise of the planners, as Moipolai maintained, “Even when the projects are up and running, in my view, they do not make any changes to their lives. We do not provide learners with the skills they need.” Consequently, as presently planned, the program leaves the minorities in the cold. Grace said that planners do not understand how the Basarwa/San feel about what they learn. She indicated, “They told me that they were never actually given a chance to share with us what would best work for them.” Johnson added that

these universal materials do not respond to the needs of the learners in some contexts and learners drop out, as he emphasized,

We blame the minorities for not coming to the literacy program. Primers do not include issues related to their specific life situation. One would never know how other communities in Botswana live from the primers, such as fishing in the north and digging tubers and roots among the Basarwa people. Literacy becomes a luxury for these people because it does not relate to their bread and butter issues.

In view of these problems, Tana suggested, “We could have developed quite a number of other primers that could have been much more relevant to the learners in different contexts than using universal primers.” The magnitude of this problem was well articulated by Johnson when he elucidated the greatest challenge of the program thus:

We don’t appreciate the strength of the experiences and lives of people who come to our program. I feel we are prejudiced against them.... These are a unique group with a unique life style, very intelligent, but we always look down upon them.

In addition to the use of same material in different realities, participants reported that the program maintained the status quo by not responding to minority and gender issues. At best, it reinforced both cultural and gender stereotypes.

Gender and Minorities Issues

One of the ways to establish how the planning and implementation of literacy education negotiated language, content and instructional design in view of gender, ethnicity and geography is to determine how the program responded to cultural and gender issues. Overall, participants argued the program was organized as a technical process and did not respond to cultural and gender concerns of the learners. When I asked how the program responded to the needs of women as the majority in the program, Moipolai remarked that although women are the backbone of the nation, their

needs are not taken into account and the program reinforced their subordination. She commented, “We do not talk about things that are immediately relevant to the lives of women in the program.” Furthermore, “We make some theoretical suggestions about being responsive to contexts but, when it comes to practice, it’s difficult. The general adult education principle is that we should involve people we are planning for.” Some were very categorical that judging from the contents of the primers, one could not tell that there are many ethnic groups in Botswana, as Johnson explained, “Primers do not include issues related to specific life situation of other groups... It looks like their topics are built around the life conditions of Setswana speaking groups.”

Christina argued that the minorities and women’s issues were not made prominent in the program in spite of the fact that they are the majority. She observed, “I do not think it responds well to the needs of the majority of learners who are either women or members of the minority groups.” The situation of women who come to the program was clarified by Nono who said that women were not given a chance to go to school or were likely to be withdrawn to be married away to older men. As she puts it, “You see, in the past, most people who could not gain access to educational opportunities were women. Some of them were withdrawn from school to be married away to men who came from South African mines.” Mothibedi also captured their demise thus,

Women are in the majority in the program but gender issues were not taken into account. It is just a generic program intended to hit or miss whoever it gets into contact with. Even the so called practical skills are generally not targeted to women as such.

He further explained how the content and the teaching process reinforce women’s domestic roles because it approaches their assigned cultural roles unquestioningly. He illustrated:

The [topics] on women are about fetching firewood, cooking and giving children medication, nothing outside the house. Everything about women is oriented to their domestic roles but does not help them to critique any aspect of their work...what worries me sick, is that in the discussions, these issues are not raised to challenge our gender beliefs and values. I think they talk unquestioningly about cultural practices that are potentially oppressive to women.

Christina summed up the situation of women in the program when she noted that teaching does not reflect the concerns, and the topics taught were potentially isolating for women. She retorted, "For example, marriage is viewed as if it should happen to every woman, and not getting married is not taken as a choice one can make as a woman." In spite of the fact that the majority of the learners are women, Tana observed, "The program does not specifically respond to their needs. Maybe, that is why the enrollments keep dropping year after year."

When I asked them to describe what could be done about this situation, Mothibedi saw the provision of "multiple literacies" as the solution to this and other problems bedeviling the program. He suggested, "I think what we should be having are "multiple literacies" not just one literacy for all categories of people in our program. We should expose learners to skills they will apply in their life contexts." Johnson observed that they needed to plan materials in such a way the cultures of the minorities such as the Basarwa/San are represented than "attempting to integrate them into the mainstream society." The planning process was expert-driven and this was also manifested in the choice of one language in a multicultural society. The planner and policy makers maintained their control by arguing that the use of Setswana is a natural choice, there is no resistance to its use and that in spite of some hurdles, minorities could learn in the national language.

Language and Instructional Issues

Another issue closely related to context was that of language, which was very critical for state hegemonic control, such as facilitating national unity. The use of Setswana, however, inhibited the teaching-learning interaction among the minorities in the program. I asked them to describe how Setswana was chosen as the medium of instruction for the literacy program. Three issues emerged to explain the choice and use of Setswana in a multilingual society. Some of the planners viewed Setswana as a natural choice since we are one nation, they also argued that there was no resistance to its use. The sub-text is the subtle justification of control over other communities whose languages are excluded. However, other participants pointed to pedagogical hurdles stemming from its use among the minorities.

For a variety of reasons participants argued that the use of Setswana was a natural choice in the program even as early as the 1970s as Rossy recollected, "I guess because we were looking at a national program, we just focused on Setswana." However, they also used a local language in the drama performance and to the best of his recollection, "politically, there was no problem with the public performance, no one criticized us for running a whole performance in a minority language." Also Mabee noted, that Setswana was used in the program but there was no effort to include other languages as he pointed out, "I think it was in Setswana... I could be wrong, certainly, in printed materials, I do not recall any attempt to cater for different cultural or environmental situations." Over and above, it was a natural choice for the program because it was used in other institutions. MmaL illuminated, "I guess we just followed because that was what schools were doing and as a department in the Ministry of Education, we just had to abide with what was the practice." Agreeing, Selgado also noted, "I believe they looked at other institutions such as primary education, which used Setswana, this was the basis for it to be the ideal language." It was also viewed as instrumental in the achievement of the principle of national unity.

Senior staff members emphasized that the program had a responsibility to further the course of nation building. Mossy illustrated this point in these words; “You should also understand that in this country, one of the leading principles is (*popagano ya sechaba*) national unity, how can we make literacy contribute to that process ... we should understand that our role is to teach the national language.” He further expressed, “If people in the whole country, can read and write Setswana, it is going to promote the whole political dimension to try to use literacy to build a nation.” In compliance Mpho noted, “The basic argument was probably that the use of one language in the whole country would encourage unity in the nation.”

Other participants had a contrary view, and argued that in pursuit of unity, Setswana was arbitrarily chosen without any research to justify its choice. As Mothibedi observed, “I think it is part of the fact that politicians were concerned with issues of unity in the country. It was hoped that if we could all speak Setswana, we would be united.” Grace also indicated that the choice of Setswana was not only arbitrary, it demonstrated “A lack of consultation with other communities in making such a key decision in the nation.” Some participants argued that those who started the use of Setswana had a hidden agenda in that there was a proposal to use other languages. As Johnson described, “The major argument for the use of Setswana was that it was a uniting factor and bringing other languages would create room for chaos that might lead to social turmoil and secessionism.” The argument about Setswana being a natural choice serves to exclude other points of view in the choice of the languages of instruction and suggested that everybody was consulted and agreed to use Setswana. Hence, proponents of this argument asserted that there was no resistance to the use of Setswana among the minorities.

The argument raised by the proponents of Setswana to justify its imposition was that there was no resistance to its use and those who opposed it were just engaging in an academic exercise. As Mossy remarked, “No, this was an intellectual exercise from

academia, those who were going through the process [teaching–learning] actually never showed any kind of resistance.” MmaD agreed and narrated, “They would not have wanted to learn in their mother tongue. They wanted to learn the national language so that they could be able to communicate with other people.” Some questioned the assumption that all can speak and learn in Setswana and dismissed such an argument as an illusion.

The argument they raise was that in order for it to be used nationwide, all should be taught to speak Setswana to level the playing ground if the goal of using it country wide is to be achieved. As Dede explained, “The thinking seems to be that everybody knows Setswana. Hence, they wanted everybody to read and write in that language... In other places, learning in Setswana was extremely difficult because even the teacher did not know it very well.” Victoria also bore testimony to the complexity of using a language which people are not familiar with or even interested in learning. She explained, “The powers that be assume that all of us are willing to read and write in Setswana. In some district, it is a problem because people would tell you that they do not want to learn in that language.” Johnson also pointed out, “The first thing is that Setswana is not well understood in every part of this country. If someone thinks that non-Setswana speakers can adjust to it or even teach it as Literacy Group Leaders without any problems, it is an illusion.”

Pedagogical Hurdles for the Minorities

Setswana creates a pedagogical hurdle to non-Setswana minorities, which is appreciated even by its strongest proponents. This shows that the motive was to reproduce the culture of the elite rather than accommodating the cultural contexts of minority learners. When I asked how the writing of the literacy materials such as primers took into account the needs of the minorities, Mossy noted that the minority learners might have some problems/hurdles because of language. They might take a little longer but they will learn the content just as well as the Setswana-speakers. He

pointed out, “I recall that issue cropped up, when we discussed the issue of language to be used in the program.” He further recollected, “Yes, from a pedagogical point of view, let us agree that there could be hurdles for the minorities, this is not to say that learning cannot take place.”

Setswana Limits Discussions in Class

The majority of the participants agreed that the use of a single language limited the capacity of minority language learners to engage in fruitful discussions in class because, in some contexts, neither the literacy teachers nor the learners are familiar with the language. They noted that there is a built in assumption in the Freirean method that learners are to discuss the picture in their books. I asked how discussion occurred in non-Setswana speaking community, Mpho acknowledged, “It’s a pity that we as officers assume that the learners are to engage in a discussion because there is not much for them to discuss in a language that is foreign to them.” He further pointed out, “the learners are just taught how to write some words in Setswana.... The discussion among the minorities is conspicuous by its absence in the teaching and learning interactions.”

The gravity of the situation was expressed by Johnson who argued, “Teachers just introduce the picture and talk a bit about it and go into the mechanical process of decoding words. The Freirean type of discussion that was envisaged would never be experienced among the minorities.” Agreeing with him, Selgado noted that teachers do not understand some concepts such as Setswana idioms and proverbs, He retorted, “They do not know what the concepts are... They cannot engage in a comprehensive discussion of such concepts or issues.” He noted that unfortunately, “The most problematic thing is that even the powers that be are aware of the problem but have chosen to ignore it.” Literacy teachers engage in what others described as rote learning.

Rote Learning

Participants argued that in some extreme cases of language difficulty, literacy teachers end up teaching only what they can and leave out what is complicated for

them. Mothibedi suggested, “Their major problem is that they teach concepts they are not familiar with in a language they are not conversant in, which makes it a case of double jeopardy.” He further elucidated, “Learners don’t benefit a lot because the language is a stumbling block ... As a result in these areas, all we have is rote learning, the teachers follow the steps of the method in a dogmatic way.” Rote learning is a symptom that teachers do not know what they are doing and learners only memorize what they are taught. Unfortunately, according to Selgado “Most literacy teachers are shy to disclose their limitation with the use of Setswana in their work.” In a similar vein, Nono reported,

It is very difficult to learn or teach Setswana materials to the colored community. Teachers try to do their best but we end up losing some LGLs because it is very difficult for them to teach in that language. I have noticed that in their classes, they use both Setswana and Afrikaans. When they teach Setswana concepts they discuss them first in Afrikaans.

This demonstrated a very frustrating situation, which teachers and supervisors faced on a daily basis because of the use of a language imposed on them. Underlying all these forms of control was the fear that civil servants had for being seen to be acting against the general regulations, which controls their actions in the civil service. There was a consensus among participants that they feared to be seen as going against the grain. They felt nervous about the notion of doing things against the policy of the department or the Ministry of Education. Some would constantly refer to how they shall wait for management to take the lead or those in management saying we will not do anything about the language problem before the Ministry of Education has made a decision about the choice of third language. Some officers were conspicuously nervous about challenging the language policy as civil servants. Selgado intimated, “The point is that Setswana is the national language and its policy, if you were to

deviate from that and say there could be other alternatives, it would be viewed as challenging government.”

In view of these and other challenges, I describe the outcomes of program planning activities carried out from 1980-2000, which helped the state to maintain a tight control over the features of the program. These include developing primers, post-literacy materials, literacy at the work place, and planning for the adult basic education course. I also describe the learners, literacy teachers and the method used to demonstrate how the state controlled literacy education in Botswana.

Reproduction and the Outcomes of Planning Literacy Education

Determining how the planning and implementation of literacy maintained or challenged conventional view of literacy necessitated that I should closely examine how literacy activities were planned over the years. Therefore I sought to find out how the department planned basic curriculum and supplementary materials such as primers and post-literacy texts. I asked them to describe how the recently recommended adult basic education course was being planned in order to determine how the process maintained the conventional view of literacy. The conventional view of literacy was maintained through a tight control on the development of primers, post-literacy material, and importation of adult basic education course materials from South Africa by the headquarters staff without consulting neither the district staff or the learners.

Developing Primers

The initial effort to develop literacy materials was carried out by senior officials at DNFE headquarters, which gave them a recipe to assert their perspectives in developing literacy materials. They simultaneously set up offices for district staff across the country. Mossy stated how he was there first: “We had to start looking for people to start work at districts level, we gave them two weeks orientation and they each had to go to the districts to open and head an office.” One of the most critical

events that they reported to have been doing was developing the primers (reading materials) for the program. According to the participants, materials from the 1977-78 experimental literacy project were incorporated into the primers. MmaL recollected, “The style or approach that was used was based on the initial pilot project ... done by the Botswana Extension College (BEC). I think the BEC came up with most of the key words ... that became part of the discussion and method that was adopted by the BNLP.” Mossy acknowledged the use of materials from the BEC but noted:

I was the engine behind the whole materials development process.... I was then able to draft some of the materials. What we did was after developing the materials, based on what we thought affected Batswana as an elite... We got these offices together to discuss these materials. They reflected and suggested where we could make some changes in the materials before they were finalized. We met on a regular basis, and when we had what we thought was the prototype booklets, we then used nearby districts to test materials.... We pre-tested and we fine-tuned the materials.

Mothibedi also remembered how his district boss was one of the people who were involved in discussing the materials. He said,

Our then DAEO called people who did not know how to read and write and asked them what they wanted to learn about. I guess that led to the materials for the initial primers but instead of continuing with that idea over time we have decided to use the same materials without continually checking the changing needs of our clients.

When I asked her to describe the nature of district involvement Dede explained, “They involved us as people who worked in the field, representatives from most districts were involved. I guess we were called upon to review the materials because we had experience working in different villages and districts.” Moipolai was, however, cautious about the level of their involvement because as she described, “They called us to several

meetings and we advised on how the drafts could be improved now and then. I felt that our advice was not rejected because we were confined to the wording not introducing new things to the content.”

The major concern that was raised by most participants was that the materials were only based on life in the eastern part of Botswana and other communities were not included. Mpho captured this sentiment well when he observed, “I understand they worked with district extension staff, especially in the mainstream Setswana speaking villages... I doubt if the district staff’s involvement was that substantial.” MmaL agreed and said, “The research done was not of a magnitude that would justify the establishment of a national literacy program... This was because not every community was involved in the experimental project.” The limitation was that the officer who participated in developing materials used their working experiences without formal research in their areas. MmaL further noted, “Literacy Assistants who piloted materials largely used their experiences as Batswana (citizens of Botswana) to determine what could be taught in the primers.” Mpho more emphatically stressed, “Most of the concepts were based on the experiences of the Batswana who were part of the writing process not necessarily what the learners needed or wanted to learn.” Consequently, the 1987 evaluation report recommended that the primers be reviewed and up dated but to date no much has been done in response to those recommendations.

When I asked them to describe the reason for not reviewing the primers in the past twenty years, participants agreed that the materials were not reviewed because of a combination of factors such as, that senior management did not seem to be ready for change. As Tana indicated, “They have not seen the need to change the primers... they probably just see the primers, which have been developed before some of us came on board as revered “sacred cows.” Christina added, “The whole department is imprisoned to the primers and they are treated as if they were “cast in stone.” According to Victoria, primers are so old but have not been changed because management lacks

initiative and, “what explains this lack of initiative in the department could be that we do not have skilled people to actually do what was suggested by the evaluation.” She explained further that it could be because nobody cared for this department to the extent that, “there is no political pressure from any quarter to ensure that we do what we are supposed to do. We would have done something with pressure from some political circles.” As a result, participants felt that there is lack of political support at both local and national level, which was signified by lack of offices and never being mentioned by the leaders at any national forum. Dede recalled how she asked one Minister to talk about the program at a meeting and he “kept referring to the program as drought relief, which served to create confusion than help advertising the program.”

The gist of this problem was captured by Moipolai when she observed, “The issues of primers has been discussed... the problem is that we always come out of meeting and seminars with lots of recommendations, but nothing ever gets done.” Christina was of the view that even though the materials are clearly old, the problem is that they are also very shallow and there is no effective discussion going on in class. She noted, “When they teach about marriage, they describe what happens in a marriage ceremony, and ignore crucial things such as marriage laws.” Those outside management felt that management was reluctant or lacked skills. The response of senior management was that there are problems with the primers because the department does not have curriculum specialists. MmaL indicated that in her view, the problem is that department has generalists if there were specialists, “they would have known from the onset that something was wrong with the primers and did something about it.” She further confessed, “We know where the problems are with the primers, but the skills to start an effective review is lacking, maybe, that is where we could work with the interagency materials development committee.” MmaD agreed and suggested, “It is my personal view that materials for a program of this magnitude should have been developed by curriculum specialists.” However, the department does not have specialists. The

development of primers allowed minimal participation by the district planners. They relied on material from the 1970s based on a small-scale experimental project which excluded the minority communities.

Post-Literacy Materials

The 1987 evaluation also pointed to the need to provide post-literacy in order for learners not to forget or lose the literacy skills. The state also used this opportunity to assert its control through excluding the learners in deciding the content of post-literacy materials. The suggestion was for the department to create a literate environment for their neo-literates. In 1991, the department took initiative and hired a research team to assess the feasibility of providing post-literacy activities in the country. One of the terms of reference for the research was to examine the adequacy of the existing media and to produce a comprehensive situation analysis of the need for post-literacy (Mutava, Mutanyatta, & Gaborone, 1991).

The researchers recommended among other things that the department produce materials for neo-literates. In pursuit of that recommendation, the department has brought together a team of inter-ministerial and instructional writers and produced booklets called the "Ipalele Series" (read for yourself). As MmaD indicated, "We worked with the committee to produce books for learners to read at their own time for personal satisfaction." The writing of the materials was based on the expertise of the extension officers not the needs of the learners. They invited officers from agriculture, community development, health and veterinary service. Selgado noted, "While we invited other officers, learners were not consulted on what types of books they needed." Officers in the department stressed the need to work with other departments because they have a common client. Grace asserted, "The problem is that DNFE take non-formal education as their business alone...it goes beyond us, it's a matter of involving other government departments because we share clients." Moipolai agreed with her and added, "We also involve other extension officers to teach on their areas of expertise in

order to give learners the full benefit of deep knowledge of issues they want to learn about.” Selgado noted that he was involved in writing the materials but decried the fact that people do not have a culture of reading. He remarked, “In writing the materials the assumption was that we understood the contexts in which the materials were going to be used but it was not backed by research on the learners’ needs.”

In spite of the good working relationships at management level, other participants complained about some extension staff members who were not cooperative in villages. Some officers looked down upon the officers of the department because, they did not have offices and were not permanent employees of the government. Victoria candidly illustrated, “As for district staff... in meetings they note how we could work together but in practice.... people at this level, just focus on their departments.” As Johnson puts it, “My general experience in extension has been that people do not understand how extension works and we don’t work as a team. Extension teams are not there in villages where they are supposed to work together.” The program also planned the provision of literacy at the workplace but as Mothibedi indicated, “We used the same primer materials for different categories of learners.” The development of these materials also demonstrated hegemonic control by the state in that extension staff used their expertise in writing the materials without consulting the learners.

Literacy at the Workplace

Another constantly mentioned activity that was planned based on the recommendations of the 1987 evaluation was the introduction of literacy at the workplace. The program was jointly developed by the DNFE and some organization such as Water Utilities, Botswana Power Corporation and the Department of Water Affairs to help their manual workers with basic reading and writing skills. The companies were prepared to pay the literacy teachers for the time spent on their premises teaching. They set aside time for learners to attend class during working hours. However, in spite of the cooperation from these organizations, the department

management was blamed for lacking innovative skills that would make the content respond to the needs of the learners in these organizations. Selgado noted, “We are to blame for poor attendance of literacy sessions in companies because we do not teach them skills needed in their places of work.”

Mothibedi explained that in the past, the program tried to respond to the needs of learners but noted that one of the factors that explains our current demise is the lack of innovativeness on the part of management. “If we had people who were innovative, they would have wanted to do different contents for workers... and not to teach workers the same content for someone who sells oranges at the railway station.” He further suggested, “I think what we should be having are ‘multiple literacies’ not just one literacy for all categories of people in our program.” Johnson also had the same concerns but recalled that as a government department, there is a limit to which they could go. He observed, “You see, in workplace literacy, we would not want them to begin questioning their low salaries. We have to avoid problematic issues by walking the thin line carefully.” Workplace literacy provision is a very conventional process that emphasize the basic rudimentary skills of reading and writing. Johnson retorted, “not addressing the question of literacy for what.” The failure of the program to respond to the context of the workers demonstrated the way the program is not intended for empowerment or consciousness-raising. It was to provide knowledge that could be used within the framework of the structures of the state without challenging its hegemony.

Provision of Adult Basic Education Courses

Following the recommendation of the 1993 Revised National Commission on Education, the department initiated some planning activities to realize the recommendations. For example, ABEC is divided into ABEC One, Two, and Three and each has a taskforce looking into how to plan for it. ABEC One is equivalent to the current literacy program and it continues to be based on it. Dede described, “ABEC One was to be equivalent to the first four years of school ... there is a task

force that addresses this recommendation. They carried out needs assessment from the learners to determine what learners needed.” I asked them to describe the planning activities they have been doing to actualize the recommendation on ABEC. They agreed that while something was being done, a lot still had to be carried out to realize this particular recommendation.

Participants varied in terms of levels of satisfaction with the current efforts. Christina observed that they have started ABEC, which was still at a pilot stage. She indicated that once it has come to full operation it will be higher than the current literacy program and their learners will have certificates equivalent to Standards Seven, which they would produce when looking for a job. She represented the majority of participants when she reported: “ABEC will be different from what is going on now in that now we are imprisoned to the prescribed primers ... we hope ABEC will be different in that planners could plan something and implement it in their context.” This optimistic view was also echoed by Tana who said, “We have the needs of the learners, what we should do is to sit down with them and come up with relevant teaching materials to be used in ABEC.” While these participants had so much hope for ABEC, others were less optimistic with its prospects, given the way it is being planned.

Johnson criticized the planners for ignoring ABEC One and moving to ABEC Two. He lamented, “The process of piloting ABEC materials is already problematic in that they are trying materials for ABEC II, which would not be useful unless if we could deal effectively with reforming the BNLP, which is ABEC One.” The other limitation that participants articulated was that those who are involved in the ABEC task force have decided to ignore the findings of their needs assessment. MmaD commented that the task force did needs assessment came back with the results but, “unfortunately, they went for a South African course and endorsed its materials for use by our learners.... My view is simply that one has to pilot the materials that are going to be used in the actual course.” This sentiment was expressed by almost all the participants but clearly

articulated by Johnson who submitted, “The process still has so many questions even about what they are piloting, it is not up to the level because we are using materials from South Africa that are not based on our contexts.”

When I asked what could be done about developing the materials, Moipolai indicated, “I would think that as a department, we should have developed our own materials that would have included ideas that were expressed by the learners during the needs assessment rather depending on materials from South Africa.” The most critical issue they expressed was that the materials from South Africa were not conducive to the context of Botswana learners. Victoria appraised this concern in these words, “We have to pilot the ABEC course with materials from South Africa. The problem is that the materials are not ours, and so, they are not in tune with our learners’ situations.” When I asked about what explains the use of South African materials, Victoria observed, “there are no skilled people in the department to implement the needs expressed by the learners.” Some participants compared the South African approach to planning with that of Botswana and Grace noted, “In South Africa, they built in practical skills components into their academic program..... While in Botswana we have been telling learners what we thought they wanted to learn and not what learners wanted to learn.” The power to decide on what was included or excluded in the writing of primers, post-literacy materials, literacy at work place content and the importation of materials from South Africa disregarding the learners gave the state the opportunity to reproduce its power. Another critical issue in understanding the planning and implementation of literacy is to critically inquire about the motives of participants and the method used in the teaching-learning process.

Literacy Learner, Literacy Group Leaders, and Methods

In order to better understand if the planning maintained or challenged the conventional view of literacy in the BNLP, I asked participants to describe their learners in terms of their demographics, their motives for participation and whether the program managed to help them experience changes in their lives or not. Their responses helped to determine how planning literacy education in Botswana maintained a conventional view of literacy. This was based on the fact that if it were transformative, learners would be empowered to experience substantive changes in their lives and would for example, be co-investigators in their learning (Freire & Macedo, 1987). I describes the literacy learners, their socio-economic status and motives for participating in the program, and Literacy Group Leaders (LGLs), their recruitment, training and limitations in order to demonstrate their status *vis-a-vis* other actors in the program. The program facilitated the state hegemony by ensuring that it did not consult with the learners in the planning process. The program offered only minimal skills that did not challenge the status quo. The teachers were also powerless in that they were not employed, they were “volunteers” whose voices could afford not to be heard in the planning of the program. Hence, the planners just did everything without being challenged.

Literacy learners and their motives

When I asked them to describe an average literacy participant, most of the participants portrayed the learners as being poor, women, men and youth. Participants agreed that most learners were on average poor and had limited formal education. The program has also been reaching every category of society including the youth, men and both community and church leaders. Mossy summed it succinctly that, “In so far as economic status was concerned, illiteracy and poverty are twins, learners generally came from humble backgrounds.” Dede explained that participants are disadvantaged people who for several reasons were not able to attend school or have dropped quite

early from school. “They are destitute who do not have enough to live a decent life... are older females. In the urban areas, most of the learners are industrial class workers.” While earlier on they were the poor, it does seem as if gradually participants represent a cross section of society. According to Nono, the program is used by all sections of society. “I know in some places, even Chiefs are our clients... I recall there was one very rich person who could not read or write.... The majority of them however, are minorities, women, and are mostly poor.”

Given the differences in the clientele, I asked participants about the motives of their clients to come to the program. They explained that learners came for a variety of reasons but the bottom line was to learn to read and write. There usually are other factors such as having to read the Bible or assuming social responsibilities, which required literacy skills. Moipolai attributed their attendance to having assumed a higher position in society such as being Chiefs and Priests. “I recall we fought hard with some priests to encourage them to attend literacy classes, they were shy, but could not read the Bible at public places such as churches, marriages and funerals.” Selgado was more poignant when he reported, that he recalled a Chief who was only elected to the position after attending literacy classes. He surmised, “Prior to that, people were saying he could not lead them if he could not read or write.” Some were motivated by the possibility to find employment or to gain promotion at work. Moipolai pointed out, “Some of them became foremen and women in drought relief projects.... They also could get jobs that requires minimal reading skills, such as being a cleaner in offices.” This was also confirmed by Nono when she said, “Most cleaners we have in these offices were hired based on the certificate from the program.” I then asked them about the literacy teachers specifically, their recruitment and training as the key people in implementing the literacy education program.

Literacy Group Leaders (LGLs) and their Recruitment, Training and Limitations

My understanding of the planning of the literacy program would not be complete without any knowledge of the “foot soldiers” responsible for executing the plans. LGLs are temporary teachers who are referred to as volunteers because they work for only a honoraria, which depends on the number of hours worked. The state does not recognize them as employees but as people who are volunteering to teach and their payment is a gesture of appreciation for their contribution in fighting illiteracy. I asked participants about the LGLs and they were generally agreed that they are the core of the program both in terms of the teaching of basic literacy and the organizing of income generating projects. Johnson viewed them as “the engines behind the program. They are organizers of most projects for the groups.... They are the core members of the groups and serves to unite them.” As Christina puts it, “I mean they are the ones who motivate the learners and encourage them to keep the project going and if they decide to leave the project, it’s like a plug has been pulled off from the project.” She further explained, “These volunteers work for 1hour 20 minutes a day and recruit learners for their groups. They do house-to-house recruitment to find illiterate people in their communities and encourage them to enroll for literacy classes.” Planners described LGLs as mostly female, with a minimal qualification that ranged from Standard Seven to General Certificate in Education.

However, in places further away from towns even some with Cambridge Overseas Certificate qualification taught in the program because, as Mothibedi explained, “The place is far from the main towns and cities of this country where they could find alternative employment opportunities.” He spoke positively about their potential as teachers in that they turned to be more confident and taught more effectively because they grasped things better than those with lower qualification but noted, “unfortunately, they leave when they find green pastures elsewhere.”

The recruitment of literacy teachers seemed to be the same throughout the country in that supervisors organized Kgotla (*community meeting place*) meetings and tell community leaders about the need to hire teachers. Planners mostly worked with community leaders such as Village Development Committees (VDC) who knew the people, as Christina described, “Literacy teachers are employed through the VDC. We came into the village and told the VDC of our intent to employ people who could teach adult.” These people were required to be trustworthy and known for community involvement. Those who are selected are then trained to serve as Literacy Group Leaders. The first training according to Grace is called, “Initial training and they are taught about the adult learners and the method used in the department. We also informed them about their employment status of being volunteers, paid only a small remuneration.” Planners also organized refresher courses to address problems teachers faced in the field. In spite of their central role, LGLs have problems in their implementation of the literacy program.

Some of these men and women have shown a remarkable commitment to the program. They have “worked” or volunteered to teach in the program since its inception in 1980. The major problems literacy teachers faced were that they do not have sufficient capacity to engage learners in a sophisticated discussion because of their relatively low levels of qualifications. Mossy noted that LGLs are not well trained, “It is a question of one-eyed person with a blurred vision leading a blind one ... and there is a constraint in that situation.” One of the commonly mentioned problems was that they dropped in and out of the program very easily because they are underpaid. As Victoria recalled, “One lady told us that selling tomatoes under a tree was far much more profitable than coming here to try to recruit illiterate people.”

Another challenge was that in some places, the Village Development Committee recommended people who were not qualified or had other prior commitment. We struggle with the fact that VDC recommends their relatives and friends who were not

qualified but, we could not dismiss them in order to maintain good public relations with the local leadership. In one case, it was learners in the community who refused to be taught by a person from outside their village. Nono submitted, “Now, we emphasized that the person should not come from outside the community. The reason being that people of different tribes would not want to be taught by someone from a different community or even from the other side of the village.” The communities are comfortable being taught by someone from their ward or village who understands their culture and would empathize with them. Finally, I describe the method used in the program to demonstrate how it contributed to the conventional view of literacy.

Teaching Approaches

One of the issues I inquired about was the method used in the program. This was to understand the dynamics of literacy planning and determine how the program in Botswana maintains the conventional view of literacy. Understanding the method used assist to establish the degree to which it has maintained a traditional view of literacy. I asked participants to describe the method used in the program. Their responses were divided along those who viewed it as Freirean versus those who argued that it was a traditional or conventional approach. There was no discernable trend that separated them because people in management sided with district staff on this issue. However, most male participants felt the method was not Freirean.

Some participants viewed it as Freirean because as Nono described, “Learners are supposed to identify the picture and engage in a discussions to identify the topic of the day. They would then write the syllables, vowels, words and sentences.” She further described how literacy teachers should be able to engage in elaborate discussion of issues but often that does not happen. She elucidated, “We wanted them to engage learners in a detailed discussion of the picture. For example, on farming, “they should talk about all aspects of the farming process and its social and economic implications in rural areas.” Others highlighted that when they train literacy teachers,

they teach them about the teaching method used in the department. The training is intended to alert them to the fact that they will be dealing with adults who are different from children. Grace explained, “Unfortunately, LGLs focus only on the steps of the method. They have three questions in their teacher’ guide to ask about the picture, that is what the discussion is supposed to be all about.” They argued that the method that is used in the program is strikingly similar to the Freirean method with these steps starting from identifying the picture to writing of concepts. However, other participants view it as not being Freirean because it does not follow the Freirean procedures such as working with learners in their contexts to develop materials.

The other participants viewed it as a conventional method that uses pictures to start the discussions. Mpho observed:

I know some people call this method Freirean but I think its just a traditional teaching approach, ... The use of the picture is very important in that for example, when you teach about vegetable gardening, there would be picture of different types of vegetables. The process though deceptively similar to the Freirean approach, is not because in this case, the process is not for consciousness raising or to enable them to engage in social action.

In agreeing with this line of argument, Mothibedi contended, “The method is said to be Freirean but some people who train the LGLs cannot claim any expertise in the use of the Freirean method...the use of discussion is the one that gives people the impression that it is a Freirean method.” He went on to explain, “A genuine Freirean method starts with establishing problems in the local scene and they code them into words and themes.” He described how planners have to talk to learners about their local concerns, “The method here is pre-packaged. The discussion is just superficial ... this method is not Freirean but a conventional method that happen to start with simple questions based on the picture.”

Johnson was of the view that the method could be close to the Freirean approach but conditions are not the same as those in Brazil. He noted how in Brazil, the intent was to use the picture to get the illiterate to articulate their problems and it was to raise their consciousness and get them to engage in social action. He observed, “[Here] we cannot go deeper into the issues because as you know, the Freirean approach is very much political but, in a government program... we are cautious not to overstep our boundaries.” Given that most literacy learners are poor, women, literacy teachers are poorly trained there was no dialogue on social issues, which gave the state an opportunity to reproduce its hegemonic control. However, some people are beginning to question why other languages cannot be used in the program, they have called for changes in the language policy, and some engage in open and quiet acts of resistance.

Resistance to the Official Literacy Education Policy

Different challenges to policy have been made, including calls for policy change, the introduction of the third language and overt and quiet dissents from practitioners. Underlying the drive for change was an insidious fear of challenging policy by civil servants. Overt challenge is where individuals openly do what is considered to be against the policy of the department because they felt that they could defend their decisions. Quiet dissent, on the other hand, is where officers allowed something, which “violated policy” to go on as if they were not aware of it, as long as they did not sanction or authorize the activity.

Policy Change and the Third Language

There are individuals and some cultural groups who are beginning to make ‘some noises’ to wage resistance against the language policy. As Moipolai observed, “Learners are arguing that they would learn better and much easily if they used their mother tongue. The argument they raise is that when a different language is used, it seem as if they are slow learners.” LGLs in some cases ended up teaching wrong things, “I found that LGLs taught some concepts incorrectly, it was the best they could do since

they also do not know Setswana very well.” Consequently, some officers are welcoming the recommendation of the National Commission on Education of 1993. As Victoria revealed she has noticed that the Botswana Christian Council teaches literacy in local languages. The learners start with their languages and once they are literate, they can learn Setswana. She explained, “Learning in their languages first would make it easier for them to learn in Setswana later. They would avoid the hardship of learning the concepts and language at the same time.” Johnson agreed with her and suggested that in his view Basarwa/San should be given a chance to learn in their language if they so choose. He explained,

Basarwa feel like learning Setswana is a way of integrating them into the society as a whole. If they used their language, and later learnt Setswana they would not feel pushed but it would be at their own volition, which makes assimilating Setswana materials much easier than if they are not able to write any other language.

Consequently, some members of senior management also admitted that language is a real problem and that the state should conduct research into the orthographies and lexicons of different languages. This would make it easier for the state not to repeat the same mistake. MmaL intimated, “What is currently happening is that there is a project to study languages to determine the number of languages, which of them have lexicons and orthographies to qualify them to be used as third languages.” She further elaborated, “All these will have to be resolved before government can say these are the third languages that can be used in the literacy program.” While she acknowledged the efforts being undertaken by NGOs, she cautioned that they will not do anything as a government department before the state decided on the languages to be used. She noted, “We are a government department, and so we have to wait for the government to decide, we will be instructed by the Ministry of Education on how to

proceed.” In spite of these problems, some civil servants openly challenged the policy in the planning and implementation of literacy.

Open Dissent

Notwithstanding the fact that people are fearful of government possible reprisal, some of the participants explained how they bite the hand that fed them by doing what their seniors could consider to be resistance to the literacy education policy. For example, some had to authorize some activities in order for the program to continue in their districts. Dede recalled,

I allowed the LGLs to use different languages from Setswana in their class. I had to leave them to use Sesarwa (*Basarwa language*) because I felt that even if I was to be asked what was going on, I would say that if we insist on these people using a language they do not understand, then, we might as well consider closing down the program.... I thought it was better to leave them to use a language they knew than closing down the program.

The other incident involved the decision by an officer to transfer junior officers in the district, it was considered taboo because the headquarters does all transfers. Johnson felt that it was the right thing to do for his district at that point. The transfer was intended to make maximum use of the officers’ talents as Johnson narrated, “The problem is that as a field or district officer in charge, you cannot make a decision whether to move someone or not depending on the exigencies of the service in your area. The movement of staff is centralized.” He further elucidated, “You see, one cannot move people around based on the needs of the district. As district officers, we have the posts, but not the power to deploy our staff according to our needs as a district.”

Grace also described how she allowed LGLs to use the “Ipalele Series” books, which are for post-literacy in the class. Teaching done only through primers was monotonous and she wanted to add variety to class activities. This was against the policy as she recalled, “We noticed that learners got tired of coming to class to be

taught from the primers. So we look at some “Ipalele Series” books, which are read for leisure and used them to break the monotony of primers.” In the income-generating projects, some officers reported deviating from the policy, which demands a group of people in order for the project to be operated. Victoria described how after one group deserted the project she organized another one, and it too failed. She decided, “The woman who remained will have at least one assistant and they will continue with the project without any interference from any quarter.” The point was that the activities of these participants were openly against the policy of the department. They had to address issues they confronted in their contexts. Others also made some subtle and quiet dissenting moves against the policy.

Quiet Dissent

This involved participants being aware that what their junior officers were engaged in activities that resisted the official policy, such as discussing in their local languages in class. They felt it was the right thing to do and decided to let them continue. Selgado recalled incidents where he as the supervisor, knew that literacy teachers taught in the language that is not officially sanctioned, but did not stop them. His argument was that he felt safe for as long as he knew he did not authorize them to do that. As he puts it, “I have seen teachers use other language not authorized but since it was not me who authorized it, I did not stop them... Otherwise, they tried shallow Setswana discussions without substance and were not authentic.” One of the participants also indicated that he would rather quietly dissent than putting his neck on the block to authorize anything against the policy of the state, Johnson intimated,

The people here speak complex languages such as Sesarwa, (*Basarwa language*) I cannot imagine how they grapple with Setswana. I personally do not have a problem with people using their languages because I think it helps to facilitate an enhanced understanding of the content... but I cannot authorize the use of a

different language because its against the policy of the department, which would put my head on the block.

The succeeding paragraphs have demonstrated how participants resisted dictates of the official policy in spite of the fear to challenge government. They called for the introduction of the third language, engaged in open and sometimes quiet dissent, against the language policy and other practices, which did not take the learners' language, context, class, gender and geographical contexts into consideration.

Chapter Summary

An analysis of the data revealed that planning perpetuated the reproduction of state hegemony by instituting a conventional literacy program. The state achieved reproduction through a tight control of the planning process, downplaying essential contextual issues, which led to outcomes that did not affect its hegemonic power. Planning was conceived as a technical process based on what experts thought were common concerns affecting potential learners. The hegemonic control over planning enabled the state to push certain issues such as language, gender and the concerns of minorities out of the planning table. Planning was viewed as a technical process, not based on the needs of the learners, and their cultural and gender concerns. The outcome was that they asserted the power of the state by generating materials without involving the learners.

In spite of the hegemonic control, there were some acts of resistance to state control, learners called for changing the language policy. The planners engaged in activities that openly defied policy. Others engaged in quiet dissent, knowing that teachers challenged the policy but quietly ignored that as long as they did not authorize the practice as supervisors. For example, they approved of the use of local languages by learners and teachers, which was against the policy of the Botswana National Literacy Program.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to understand how the planning and implementation of the BNLP maintained or challenged the conventional view of literacy. Of particular concern was answering the following questions: (a) What was the historical background of the BNLP, especially in regard to the conventional and transformative view of literacy; (b) How did the planning and implementation of the BNLP address competing choices for language, content, audience, and instructional design based on issues such as class, gender, ethnic differences, and geographical location?

The theoretical framework was based on Giroux's critical educational theory and Youngman's political economy. Giroux (1983) postulated that critical educational theory centers on the link between the politics of the dominant class in society and the political character of classroom social encounters. The dominant social order attempts to foster and legitimate "acceptable" knowledge systems in classrooms and that is resisted by teachers and learners. Giroux (1997) argued that knowledge should be viewed as social constructs linked to human intentionality and behavior, therefore classroom knowledge should be used for emancipation of the learners. Youngman (2000) articulated the place of political economy in adult education. He highlighted the issue of class and its place in the tensions and conflicts between paid labor and income distribution. His analysis integrates issues of gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation in order to advocate for diversity and inclusivity in planning adult education programs. Both theories played key roles in the study in that critical education theory focused on the micro level issues while political economy demonstrated how broader socio-political and class issues framed the practice of education.

The study used a qualitative design to answer these questions, and data were analyzed using inductive analysis. The analysis involved a close examination of the data in order to reveal some regularities and contradictions in the planning and implementation of literacy education in Botswana. The method enabled me to approximate the lived experiences of planners without using pre-formulated categories and themes. The categories and themes emerged from the data as opposed to being imposed, after which data were further analyzed to generate themes (Charmaz, 2000).

A total of sixteen people, eight men and eight women involved in the planning of the literacy education at district, regional and senior management levels were interviewed. I purposely selected other individuals who were responsible for planning literacy and are now in private practice or have moved to other departments. I also interviewed senior staff members at headquarters of the Department of Non-Formal Education because respondents at the regions and districts pointed to their crucial roles in the planning processes and decision-making. Finally, I selected planning officers from three out of five different regions because they represented the country's geographical, cultural and linguistic diversity. Such individuals were selected and interviewed because they have served for more than ten years on the program and held planning positions, came from diverse cultural backgrounds, and have mostly served in both mainstream and minority communities over the years. I used both purposeful and networking procedures to identify the participants. Our conversations were based on a semi-structured interview schedule and the interviews lasted from one to two hours and were the primary sources of data. I also relied on archival materials and field notes made during the data collection phase. Some extra data were generated through re-interviewing some of the participants and their comments were incorporated into their transcribed texts. The ages of the sixteen participants ranged from 36 to 62. Two participants held planning positions in the experimental projects

in the 1970s, and are now in private practice. One held a key position in the department since the inception of this program and is now with another department. The rest were with the program since the 1980s.

Based on the analysis above, five major themes regarding the way the literacy education was planned were derived from the data: (a) Planners initiated the BNLP as a functional literacy project in the 1970s, which included the use of Freirean methods to some extent, planning for different categories of people, and was later transformed into a traditional literacy program from 1979 to the present. (b) The planning of a traditional literacy education program reproduced state hegemony through maintaining a tight control of certain features of the program. Planning was viewed by senior management as designed to build consensus and junior officers saw it as a routine activity devoid of innovation. (c) Data revealed that planning reproduced the status quo by being a technical, expert-driven process that downplayed contextual issues such as the choice of language and removed them from the planning table. (d) Planning also reproduced the status quo by producing outcomes that reflected the interests of the planners and not the learners. (e) Finally, there were some pockets of counter-hegemonic resistance by planners, teachers and learners who challenged the literacy education policy in both overt and quiet ways.

Conclusions and Discussions

Three broad conclusions were drawn based on these findings:

First, in Botswana planning literacy evolved from a progressive functional literacy campaign in the 1970s, to a conventional literacy project, sponsored and controlled by the state. Second, the state reproduced the status quo through tightly controlling the planning process, which they left to experts and excluded the learners. They removed debatable contextual issues such as choice of language and content from the planning table. Planning resulted in outcomes that reproduced the status quo and

reflected the interests of the planners and not those of the learners. Third, there was overt and quiet resistance against the literacy education policy.

Turbulent Transition From a Campaign to a Traditional Literacy Program

This study found that prior to the establishment of the current literacy program all efforts on literacy education planning were geared towards providing functional literacy campaigns. The campaign was driven by the need to combine basic literacy skills with information intended to transfer development messages and work-based skills. The approach used work-based literacy approach, psychosocial approach and the Freirean method. The planners worked with participants to generate primer materials in order to make the content relevant to the needs of different categories of learners. They attempted to address both local and national issues through literacy. Literacy was perceived as going beyond reading and writing, learners also had to acquire functional skills needed for their survival, such as nutrition, health information and the functions of the local and national administrative machinery.

This study confirms the use of a campaign approach, which combined literacy with functionality (Arnorve & Graff, 1987; Beder, 1991; Gillette, 1999; Limage, 1997; Weber, 1999). These writers argue that a functional literacy program reflects the context of the learners, their functional needs, and it involves them in developing study materials. Weber (1999) observed that decisions about the sources of the curriculum have to be based on the objectified needs of roles learners play in life. The notion of functionality of literacy was based on preparing people in developing nations for their civic and economic roles. Literacy was to train people for work and greater participation in civic life (Gillette, 1999). It has also been contended that these government programs were to help people in developing nations to catch up with the developed world and it did not always work to the learners' advantage (Limage, 1997). Rossy, admitted, "Most of what we did as a government agency was mainly

mainstream, we could do things in a certain acceptable way.” As a result, they focused on training local leaders for their civic responsibilities.

However, the institutionalization of the current BNLP terminated those initial efforts, when the campaign was made part of a traditional literacy program focused primarily on providing reading and writing skills. The Chief Education Officer thought that the radicalism of the Freirean approach was not appropriate for the Botswana context. For him planning was expert –driven and it focused on generating consensus and a sense of belonging. He set up a traditional literacy program without an inbuilt functional literacy component. The literature on conventional literacy confirms the intent of this approach (Barton, 1994; Gough, 1995; Harvey, 1989; Wagner, 1999).

The basic argument is that literacy should facilitate personal and national development. Gough (1995) observed that it should serve to generate useful knowledge, and competencies and should not be politicized. Barton (1994) warned that this perception of literacy is problematic in that it ignores local concerns of the learners because they are carried out as national programs by government. The other significant issue is that the planning of the BNLP in the 1980s coincided with a general resurgence of right wing politics in Europe and North America during the recession of the 1980s (Apple, 1996). In that respect, the conclusion adds to the knowledge-base on the role of government in planning traditional literacy education in developing nations. It also bears testimony to the fact that even a functional literacy program cannot be progressive if it is sponsored by the state. In both cases, literacy provision was not a priority undertaking (Lind & Johnston, 1996). As Mabee puts it “Literacy under the Department of Non-Formal education does not have a national drive.” The study in that respect adds a caveat to the literature on the role of the state in literacy education program. According to Quigley (1997) planning such a literacy education is not driven by popular political agency but the dictates and priorities of

the state. For example, Mabee recalled that the state, “gave a luke-warm support to the literacy program.”

However, while available literature describes the dichotomies between literacy practices as being either conventional or transformative, the study found that the earlier efforts to provide literacy did not fit this usual dichotomy: It was not transformative but a state sponsored functional literacy campaign. Though the campaign used the Freirean method, state sponsorship restricted it from being radical, empowering or transformative. Functional literacy did not have a clear intent to facilitate consciousness raising, social action or change (Giroux, 1997; Freire, 1990). It only provided functional or survival and development skills within the national framework. This study therefore pointed to functional literacy as a midpoint between these two conceptions of literacy, which is often ignored in the literature.

The final issue that characterized the turbulence of the transition was that the BNLP adapted the Freirean method into a traditional program. Participants are divided over whether the method used in the program is conventional or Freirean. Some argued that since teaching involves the use of pictures to start the discussion, and learners are expected to discuss the topic of the day before engaging in reading and writing or decoding, the method is Freirean. Other participants thought it is a conventional program since it does not follow Freirean procedures in generating materials and even its outcomes are not for social change (Freire, 1990). As Mothibedi contended, “It’s a conventional program because its materials are prepackaged.” The study confirms the critique labeled at the Freirean method for being too eclectic that it could be adopted even for very conservative ends (Youngman, 1986). The discussion in a Freirean approach addresses social and cultural environment of learners and create linkages between their experiences and what they learn (Rockhill, 1987). In Botswana, as Johnson noted, “The Freirean approach is too political, this is a government program, and we are cautious.” This

adds to the literature because it demonstrates not only that the Freirean approach can be used for conservative ends, but it also exposes the limits of this approach in a state sponsored campaign.

State Hegemony and the Practice of Planning

The second major conclusion of the study is that the state reproduced its hegemonic power by tightly controlling what was planned it down played some contextual issues and removed them from the planning table. The planning outcomes did not challenge the hegemony of the state but reflected the interests of its functionaries and not the learners. Finally, the planning process reproduced the status quo, it enabled the state to plan an expert-driven program, which maintained a tight control over such key features of planning such as the development of primers and other essential materials.

Senior management, who are key state functionaries, viewed planning as facilitating a sense of belonging while district staff felt that it was a routine exercise they undertook each year as part of their work. Those who thought that planning created a sense of belonging argued that it involved everybody's input across all the levels of the organization from cluster, village, district, regional and senior management levels contributing to the planning process. From their perspective, the planning process involved local structures because everybody was involved, the arrangement enables district and regional officers to hold regular planning meetings with their junior officers at all levels. The intent was to build consensus and maintain control over the planning process and its outcomes. According to MmaD, it reinforced that sense of belonging because no officer would say, "they were not part of the planning process." MmaL added, "Whatever is agreed upon is the common voice from the region." This finding confirms the literature on the classical viewpoint to planning in adult education in that they view planning as an objectified technical process. It is also geared towards creating a consensus (Caffarella, 1994; Hlebowitsh,

1995; Pratt, 1994). The planners gathered the views of the learners in their environment to determine the purpose and objectives and how the process is to be evaluated at the end. Planning in this approach, intends to transmit the intellectual culture, which is viewed as beneficial in many areas, and knowledge is structured almost exclusively to cognitive competencies (Pratt, 1994). The outcome of planning as they have framed it is to reproduce and legitimate the dominant culture, knowledge, values and language without the use of force (Youngman, 2000).

Consequently, what is included or excluded depends on decisions made by the planners and curriculum experts using knowledge generated from the learners and other stakeholders (Caffarella, 1994). The other contribution of this study is that it problematizes the assumption that learners in adult education will be involved in planning. Participants were in consensus that they did not make any effort to involve learners in the planning process. Moipolai said, “We planned for and not with the learner.” Mothibedi added, “We always assume we knew what learners needed.” Based on this approach, literacy planning is marginally affected by the social context of the learners and it is largely about developing information processing, which individuals can acquire and apply in different contexts (Blackledge, 2000).

Another way in which the state reproduced its hegemony was that planners in the BNLP consulted with other extension officers to write primers, post-literacy materials and recently planned literacy at the workplace without involving the learners. Contrary to the classical planning models as used in adult education, they used their expertise as planners to write materials as Selgado noted, “It was assumed we know what the learners needed even without conducting any research.” In a similar vein, Giroux (1997) stated that in general state-produced primer materials impede critical thinking, human agency, and the texts are stripped of any critical edge. The study also confirms the argument that in some countries materials such as primers are determined by the providing agency (Weber, 1999). Stromquist (1997) concluded

that such noble claims as planning being to creating a sense of belonging are often not critically examined in the context of the grounded realities of program implementation.

Some of the participants argued that the planning process reproduced the status quo because it was reduced to a routine exercise. They observed that though the process seemed to involve local staff, there are many obstacles to realize the ideals because plans failed to match up with the contexts of the learners and their needs. The planning was centered around routine activities such as training of literacy teachers each year, not innovative ideas and projects. As Victoria puts it “Asking for funds to do innovative projects is like opening a can of worms... we are told endless stories about lack of funds.” This finding is supported by the literature that views planning as a political process, which needs to be negotiated. Planners have to struggle to represent the interests of the disadvantaged as they plan in the face of power (Forester, 1993).

Planners have to negotiate interests of their constituents in view of the unequal power relations at the planning table (Cervero & Wilson, 1994; McDonald, 1996; Sessions & Cervero, 1999). All these authors argue that planning is a political process that requires a high degree of astuteness in negotiating interests because planning is not value free. It is conducted within a complex set of personal, organizational and social relations of power (Cervero & Wilson, 1994). Planners have to deal with these unequal power relations in order to strengthen the capacity of their plan to transform the conditions of the learners (Freire, 1990). The contribution of this study is that it shows the problematic nature of dealing with the state in planning. The literature does not sufficiently problematize the role that state bureaucrats play in deciding what is included or excluded in the annual plans. This current study focuses on this issue.

This study extends the debate on planning beyond the role of mid-range planners to demonstrate the power of senior officers as representatives of the state. As

Johnson puts it “We in the districts, have the posts but do not have the power to make decisions depending on the exigencies of our situation.” Contrary to Cervero and Wilson (1994)’s assertion that people’s interests plan programs, this study suggests that in nascent democracies, it is bureaucrats’ views that take precedence in planning. As Mothibedi puts it, “We plan programs for the people.” Delon (1997) observed that the powerful few prescribe for the less informed but affected majority.

Another contribution of this study is that in developing nations such as Botswana, planning perpetrated state hegemony because it fell short of basic expectations such as involving adult learners in planning and also demonstrated that centralized planning is being done under the façade of being a bottom–up planning strategy. For example, district planners in this study indicated that the needs of the learners do not matter because planning is based on routine activities that did not challenge the state. The study also found that planning secured state hegemony through being a technical process that took contextual issues off the planning table.

The planning and implementation of literacy in Botswana has been crafted as an expert–driven, and a technical process that managed to take issues that are not in the mainstream culture off the planning table. As a result, the program failed to respond to the socio-cultural context of the learners. Participants of the study described different categories of learners such as the poor, women, men, workers, minorities, and community leaders. The program uses the same primer materials developed in the 1980s for all these categories. They observed that the initial officers of the program did not have any training in adult education or literacy. As Mpho observed, “Most of the initial planners who produced these materials were secondary school teachers.” However, in spite of that, over the years the planning of the program proceeded from the assumption that there were common concerns, and they developed universal materials that would address different needs of the learners who were treated as passive consumers. Christina noted, “We do not make any effort to involve

the learners; officers identify what that they thought were common problems.” The exclusion of the learners enabled the state to engage in some hegemonic activities, such as limiting oppositional discourses (Giroux, 1997).

This finding contradicts some adult education assumptions about adults as learners, in that it does not view them as problem-based nor does it view their experience as a valuable learning resource (Knowles, 1984). However, it confirms the available literature on the need to involve learners in the planning of educational programs. They demonstrate the limitations of not involving them (Barton, 1994; Carney, 1995; Quigley, 1997; Street, 2001; Weil, 1998). Weil (1998) argued that in order to develop effective and responsive materials for literacy both teachers and learners should be involved or else we would develop inadequate materials. The materials should reflect the repertoire of experiences of learners in the social contexts (Street, 2001). It has been observed that in a context of such control of the planning process, the program then regulates rather than liberates learners and the outcome is that literacy sustains and reproduces the economic practices of the dominant elite and do not benefit the learners (Quigley, 1997). This position was testified to by the fact that in Botswana, literacy participants were treated as passive consumers and were excluded in the expert-driven planning process.

The contribution made by this study is that it questions the notion that adult educators involve learners in their planning of programs but indicates that even in adult education the state reproduces its power through using an expert-driven curriculum content in order to meet broader political goals such as assimilation of minorities (Blackledge, 2000). The compelling aspect of this finding is the lack of learner involvement in planning and the use of regular materials for workplace literacy project. Mothibedi said, “We teach workers at national utilities corporations the same contents as someone who sells oranges at the railway station.”

This contradicts the adult education assumption that literacy cannot be separated from the context and purpose in which it is going to be used nor the people who use it; otherwise, it is used to distribute the values and norms of the planners (Carney, 1995; Gee, 1996). Johnson, noted, “Primers do not include issues related to the specific needs of the minorities... literacy becomes a luxury for these people because it does not relate to their bread and butter issues.” Literacy planning therefore does not allow learners to engage in the interpretation of their realities and histories. The learners are taught content that is incompatible with their realities and experiences (Kanpol, 1995). In addition, the program has been planned in such a way that it does not respond to gendered concerns of the learners and it reinforces women’s stereotypes.

The study also concludes that while women are in the majority in the program, its planning has consistently failed to meet their needs. There was a consensus among the participants that the program failed to meet the needs of women learners. This confirms the literature on how women participate in literacy education program but their aspirations do not drive the program (Barton, 1994; Limage, 1993; Mafela, 1994; Mannathoko, 1992; Torres, 1998). These scholars conclude that literacy has a tendency to essentialize women and teach them about reproductive and not productive aspects of their lives. They teach them about the private and home-based activities as opposed to the public sphere, rendering them powerless in society. However, the marginality of women varies from context to context (Stromquist, 1997). In Botswana, Mafela (1994) documented how a Home Economics program planned by White middle class women, served to reinforce the servitude of Batswana women and emphasized how to carry out their domestic chores better.

This finding of this study confirms the literature on subordination of women because the literacy program did not responded to their needs. Moipolai noted, “We do not talk to issues that are immediately applicable to the needs of women.” Also she

explained that this is in spite of the talk that they are the backbone of the nation. Women who come to the program usually have problems and challenges such as looking after the family when men have gone to the South African mines (Ntseane, 1999). Most of them according to Nono, have very minimal education because they are “removed from school to be married to older men from South African mines.” The literature confirms this because as Sleeter (1999) indicated, the poverty and inequality of women is a result of insufficient opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills, and the content must be related to their needs and experiences to help them challenge rather than affirm oppressive values. Another caveat of the study confirmed by the literature is that as planned, literacy reinforces women’s domestic roles. Mothibedi intimated, “We provide general skills not targeted to the needs of women. The topics covered include, cooking, giving children medication, ... nothing outside the home.” This was confirmed by some of the writers for example, Stromquist (1999) concluded that few literacy education programs address women’s particular concerns but centers on conventional roles such as nutrition, health, childcare and family planning.

Writing from a Third World perspective, Torres (1998) argued that women in developing countries should be helped to engage in literacy of possibility and help them to engage in a critique of their everyday life to provoke a discussion of why things are as they are for them. The study makes a contribution in this respect because planners confessed that they exclude women in their planning even though the latter are the majority. The program reinforces their domestic chores rather than empowering them. Hence, it is argued that planning took out controversial issues from the planning table in order to facilitate state hegemony and control.

In addition to its failure to address gender issues, the program maintained the status quo by using a single language in a multilingual society, which leaves other groups underrepresented and at the risk of losing their self-identity through being integrated into the mainstream culture (Blackledge, 2000). Planning of national

literacy education programs often entails the use of one language, which excludes other languages and threatens the cultural and self-identity of other communities. The participants of this study described conflicting views regarding the use of one language. Most of those in senior management stressed that it was essential to use the Setswana language because it was a natural choice for it to be the medium of instruction in the program. MmaL indicated that they used it because as a government department, they followed other departments in the Ministry of Education who also used the national language. Mossy viewed its use as serving a political purpose of ensuring that the literacy education serves the national principle of unity.

Proponents of the use of the national language argued that nobody objected to its use as MmaD puts it, “They would not like to learn in their languages... they needed Setswana to be able to communicate with other communities.” This perspective has been confirmed in the literature but writers question the intentions of the use of one language. The idea of using a single language is not unique to developing nations but it is used in developed nation to assimilate minority groups. Blackledge (2000) observed, “in some cases reading and writing are of secondary importance but rather it is to create a shared socio-cultural world view” (p. 13). Language is a crucial maker of self-identity but it is often used as a political resource by dominant socio-cultural groups to bring cohesion in the nation states (Gunn, 1997).

Participants were in consensus that the state chose to use one language to foster national unity. The state reproduced its hegemony through ensuring that controversial issues such as choice of language and content were left out of the planning debate and were rendered irrelevant. However, beyond that, it has been noted that the choice of its language helps the majority culture to prevail over minority cultures and it regulates subordinate groups more than what the elite and policy makers would lead the people to believe (Quigley, 1997; Sleeter, 1999). A major contribution of this study therefore, is that it has made chief policy

implementers confess explicitly that the use of the language is primarily for political rather than pedagogical purposes. This helps to identify key issues and contradictions, especially their contention that minority groups did not object to the use of the language but also confessed that the minorities had serious problems using the national language.

The participants agreed that the use of Setswana was a hurdle for the minority language speakers in spite of the attempt to create a common culture. Johnson noted, "Other languages were not used because it was assumed there would be disunity and chaos...yet Setswana was not taught to everybody from the beginning." This was confirmed in the literature on language in that people speak different languages, identify with different cultures and have distinct learning histories (Barton, 1994). The difference in learning history made it complex for minority learners to learn in a language they did not understand. Moipolai observed, "The minority learners complain that the use of a foreign language makes them appear as if they are slow learners." They are made to adopt the values, norms and mores of the elite groups (Carney, 1995). As Rassool (1999) puts it, "National language provides a means by which control is exercised over the topics and form of literacy that are legitimated in that social context" (p. 12). The use of a single language demonstrated how the state controlled the planning, which enabled it to assert its hegemony without using force.

Some participants noted the need for minorities to use their mother tongue in order not to be forcefully integrated. The minority learners could choose to learn the national language when they know how to write their mother tongue. The use of mother tongue would preserve their culture and group identity but more importantly, they could cope with learning the national language if they know their own language (Durgunöglü & Verhoeven, 1998). The findings of this study therefore expand our understanding of the state control over literacy planning and problems the minorities faced. The tendency is that planners blame minorities for not coming to the program

but as Johnson surmised, “We ignored that the program ignored their bread and butter issues.” Learners from the minority groups felt a lack of power because the contents are based on the histories of the dominant groups in society. In spite of state control of the planning process, the last conclusion was that there were some acts of resistance to its hegemony.

Overt and Quiet Resistance Against the Literacy Education Policy

The final conclusion drawn from this study was that participants engaged in different forms of resistance against the established policies governing the operations of literacy education in Botswana. They have been engaged in accepting, accommodating and resisting the dominant culture (Bennett, 1986). The participants indicated that learners in the program and some sections of the community were beginning to voice their concerns against the use of a single language and called for the use of their mother tongues. Grace indicated, “Basarwa in her area were very concerned that they were never actually given a chance to share with us what could work best for them as a community.” They just decided to leave the program since it did not reflect their worldview. Another way in which people demonstrated their displeasure with the program was that teachers left the program in large numbers. Nono recalled, “They found it difficult to teach in a language they did not understand.”

This conclusion confirms the literature on resistance and critical educational theory. It also resonates with the multicultural perspective, which advocates for the program to respond to the socio-cultural context of learners (Apple, 2000; Giroux, 1983, 1997; Hernández, 1997; Posner, 1998; Rassool, 1999; Sleeter, 1999). These authors argue that literacy education could further both political and cultural inequality but it could also be a source of resistance against hegemonic control. For example, when other groups are not given a chance to use their languages, it perpetrated inequality. Rassool (1999) explained, “in the modern hegemonic control,

those who control the language also determine the content of the hegemonizing message” (p. x). Literacy then, seduces the powerless into thinking that it would give them a voice, yet it allows their economic, social and cultural exploitation to continue.

However, the reaction of the oppressed to hegemonic control has been articulated by critical educators. Giroux (1997) explained that hegemony is a dialectical relationship between economic production and the social and cultural reproduction. Economic production, however, does not process passive human beings, such an over-deterministic view is vulgar and mystifying. Hence, in this study the subordinated minority groups questioned why their languages are not being used. This finding is a contribution to the literature on critical education theory in that it empirically demonstrated how learners and literacy teachers took action to remedy a situation they deemed unfair. Often the available literature focus on what teachers could do for the learners, but here the learners and teachers took initiative to remedy their situation in the face of tight state control.

Another level of resistance, which participants in this study articulated was the overt resistance to policy that excludes the contextual needs of their learners. They knew what they did was against the policy but they were convinced that they would allow it to happen and would justify it to their superiors. Dede allowed Basarwa teachers to use their languages because it was a matter of whether to close down the class or keep it going in their languages and she opted for the latter. This and other acts such as Johnson transferring his staff were indications of their willingness to do something for the good of the organization as planners, planning in the face of power (Forester, 1989). The finding on overt challenges to policy adds to the literature on accommodation, acceptance and resistance against state hegemony (Bennett, 1986; Bhola, 1994; Carney, 1995; Giroux, 1997; Kanpol, 1995; Quigley, 1997). Kanpol (1995) observed, “Teachers should attempt to free themselves of state control or rediscover themselves as agents rather than passive subjects” (p. 11). They must attempt

to identify and negotiate against cultural policies restrictive to other people's experiences and histories. In agreeing, Giroux (1997) noted, "The act of creating a national literacy curriculum is both cruel and mean spirited because it does not address the question of whose experience, whose interests and whose history is served" (p. 115). The elite needs to be shown that the world is not a zero sum game, a rational policy guarantees human rights for all (Rassool, 1999).

The study contributes to the available literature on critical educational theory in that it provides empirical possibilities of what planners can actually do in order to resist hegemonic control by the state. What is lacking in the current discourse is sufficient theorizing of the role of the state and its senior functionaries and how their decisions affected the work of critical educators and planners under their supervision. Also it demonstrated that it is possible to plan in the face of power and negotiate on behalf of those who are not at the planning table. More importantly, it shows the challenges of the state and how to overcome them by being overt and quiet in challenging the state. Some district planners in the BNLP seemed to have crossed those busy intersections with their eyes wide open (Forester, 1993).

On the other hand quiet dissent as articulated by the participants of this study meant they were aware of certain activities carried out by literacy teachers, which were against the policy but they chose not to stop the teachers from doing that. Selgado noted, "I did not stop them from using their mother tongue.... They tried to use Setswana without any substance and were not authentic." Johnson recalled that he allowed them to use their language because he did not find anything wrong with that, "I could not authorize the use of a different language because it is against the policy of the department." Fortunately, the teachers in the program are volunteers and not government employees, and are not governed by the regulations of the civil service, and are not afraid of reprisal from the state.

The findings are also confirmed by the available literature, especially that of multicultural education and critical education, which calls for locally relevant programs (Apple, 2000; Hernández, 1997; Kanpol, 1995; Quigley, 1997; Sleeter & Grant, 1999). All these authors discuss ways to engage in critical discourses and in some cases, engage in less overt resistance in order to articulate the histories and realities of their learners. Teachers and learners in the program engaged in the pedagogy of agency and possibility as they reacted against the policy that imposed Setswana language in them. Hernández (1997) captured a critical aspect of the finding on quiet dissent when she observed that the literature focuses on the overt aspects of resistance and in her work, she explored invisible forms of resistance which could be construed to be compliance. Quigley (1997) observed that planners should know that educators in the field, tutors, teachers, and policy makers do not perceive reality in the same way. There are multiple literacies each occurring in its context and cannot be separated from the people who are going to use it (Carney, 1995; Street, 2001). Teachers have to question the authority of experts in the field in implementing the literacy without being restricted by the curriculum demands (Posner, 1998). Another contribution of this study therefore is to illustrate the place of quiet dissent, which is often overlooked in the current literature on critical education and resistance.

Implications For Theory and Practice

Previous studies on literacy in Botswana focused on the effectiveness of the literacy program on participants (Maruatona, 1995, 1998; Meissenhelder, 1992; Reimer, 1997). Some focused on the need to revise and reinvigorate the literacy materials and reorganize the program to reach other audiences (Gaborone, Mutanyatta, & Youngman, 1988). The studies also focused on gender and the use of other languages in the program and the negative impact of using a single language in a multicultural society (Chebane, Nyathi –Ramahobo & Youngman, 2000; Mafela, 1994, Ntseane, 1999; Reimer, 1997). This study was therefore the first to focus on a historical analysis of the

program, and more importantly, understanding how planning maintained or challenged the conventional view of literacy in the BNLN.

First, the study demonstrated that program planning involved local staff members since it started from the cluster level to the senior management team. Some participants viewed that as creating a sense of belonging with all involved from the lowest to the highest officers. Based on this consultation process, planners should be able to plan viable projects. The participants of this study were involved in this expert-driven approach to planning in that their plans originated from districts to regional offices and would be part of the national plan. At each stage the plans were discussed and each officer had to defend and justify their proposals. However, as some planners demonstrated, the BNLN relied too much on the expertise of planners and ignored the experiences and contributions of the learners. The implication therefore, is that the program could only be responsive to the needs of learners if they are involved in the planning process.

Also, the study found that some planners in the districts felt that planning as a routine exercise did not have an impact on the lives of the learners. They felt that planning should reflect the context and needs of the learners through planning with and not for them. They felt involving learners would lead to the introduction of innovative ideas in the program. These planners seemed to uphold the view that planning is political, critical and negotiated (Cervero & Wilson, 1994; Forester, 1989,1993; Sessions & Cervero, 1999). Forester (1989) argued that planners have to plan in such a way that they respond to the needs of the disadvantaged. They should ensure that the interests of their institutions and those of the learners are taken into account in the planning process. The study found that some planners in the district attempted to plan astutely in the face of power but were overturned by their supervisors under the pretext that there was no funding, yet they continued to fund regular aspects of the programs. The planners in a way, attempted to negotiate the interests of their learners at the

planning table (Cervero & Wilson, 1994). It could be contended that even though at times they failed, district planners negotiated for the needs of their learners to be included in the national plan for the department. This approach to planning could be embedded in the current approach which works with local staff but also include the learners used to substantially improve planning of literacy education in Botswana.

Another theory that is informed by the findings of this study is the critical educational theory. Participants demonstrated how they used their positions as planners to overtly and quietly challenge the policies governing the program in order to represent the interests of their learners (Carney, 1995; Giroux, 1997; McLaren, 1994; Street, 2001). These scholars argue for a morally democratic and inclusive approach to planning literacy education. They propose an approach that appreciates that planning is contested and its not value free. Giroux (1997) contended that critical educational theory should stress critical thinking and human agency. Knowledge is not a matter of private achievement but a social construct. Teachers should be aware of the hidden assumptions underlying the nature of knowledge that is perpetuated in the programs they plan. The findings of this study also emphasized how planners questioned the assumptions that the program included local staff in its planning and called it a routine exercise. More so, they allowed teachers and learners in the program to use their languages contrary to the policy.

Some district level planners transferred their staff in line with the demands of the district contrary to the policy, which was based on a very centralized transfer system. These were attempts that complied with some the critical aspects of this theoretical approach to education. Participants also used some subtle strategies such as allowing teachers to use their languages contrary to the policy. It would seem they complied with the policy but these planners did not comply since they did not stop the teachers from using unofficial languages. Their activities were intended to further the course of making the program context responsive. Street (2001) observed that most

literacy studies are concerned with impact or effectiveness but good literacy practice, which proceeds from a critical educational perspective should focus on what learners bring to class; planners need to listen to local needs and not just to deliver knowledge to the learners. In addition to theoretical implications, there were some practical implications.

The major practical implication of this study is that planners demonstrated that in Botswana learners are not involved in planning literacy education. The major concern has been planning for and not with them. Consequently, the practice of planning and implementing literacy in Botswana failed to respond to contextual, gender and minority issues. Some of the participants argued very strongly for the program to respond to the learners' needs, especially women who are in the majority. They also pointed to the need to allow members on the minority communities to use their own languages because they had problems using Setswana. The conclusion supports the ideological perspective to literacy, which emphasizes the place of cultural and social context of literacy. Street (2001) indicated that the people's perspective to literacy may be different from those of the planners in the department. The implication of this for practice is that planners should work with the learners in their contexts to infuse the experiences of the learners in the planning process.

Finally, the challenges to policy by the planners have a practical implication for the process of planning literacy in that the efforts they made have demonstrated that there were problems in the "normal way" they have always planned the program. The policy needs to respond to the challenge by being more tolerant and infuse local and district level issues in the planning. The willingness of the planners to allow teachers to use their language and include content relevant to their own situation would help to improve the impact of the program. The program could decentralize the transfer of officers from the headquarters to the regions in order to transfer people according to the exigencies of their districts, which would help to improve the practice of planning

literacy education in Botswana. The participants have also argued that allowing teachers to use their languages in the program helped to retain some of the best teachers. As Nono puts it “Teachers in these parts try their best, but we end up losing our best teachers because it is very difficult for them to teach in Setswana.” Such a move would not only attract the best teachers but also learners would see the connection between what they learn and their immediate social and cultural contexts. The planners should be allowed to organize localized programs and be funded just as well as other regular items in the plan, such as training teachers, which that are always included in the annual plans of the Botswana National Literacy Program as long as they do not challenge the state.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are recommendations for future research activities, which would be needed to follow up some of the key issues raised in the findings and conclusions of the study. One of the major findings of this study was that there was an official commitment to involving officers from the lowest to the highest level in planning. In spite of that, district planners felt that they took part but did not participate in the planning process because for them it was just part of a routine exercise, which was not inclusive and left no room for innovative ideas. The district participants were particularly critical of the fact that the process did not involve the learners. Proceeding from this finding, it is recommended that a study based on participatory action research be conducted to document details about district level planning and its innovative potentials. Such a study would establish how they could involve their learners in planning, which would enhance the capacity for the department to carry out a genuine bottom-up plan involving all stakeholders. The study would partly justify the devolution of curriculum planning decision-making in the department to link it to the needs of different categories of learners.

Another conclusion points to the failure by the program to respond to the contexts of different categories of learners, especially women and minorities. The finding of the study indicated that minorities faced the challenges of using a foreign language and materials that were not responsive to their contexts. Those who questioned the validity of the content indicated that it reflected life in eastern Botswana where mainstream Batswana lived and should not have been used as a basis for a nation wide program. Based on this finding, it is recommended that an ethnographic study be undertaken to describe the nuances of teaching and learning experiences of the minorities. Such a study would help to document how they navigate the complexities of language and content do not reflect their contexts. The study would also be crucial in that the available literature only documents the effects of the program on minorities but not how the learning process actually occurs. The recommended study would also have to follow up learners who left the program to determine their experiences in the program in order to improve its effectiveness in responding to the needs of the learners.

One of the findings of the study was that the program used a single language in a multilingual society and this has had a profoundly negative impact on the pedagogical performance of the minorities. The study participants showed that literacy learners and teachers were not comfortable with the use of Setswana and ended up using local languages contrary to the literacy policy. Participants were concerned that learners could not engage in effective discussions, which resulted in rote learning. It is recommended that since some Non-Governmental Organizations are already using some of the languages, a study be conducted jointly with NGO language experts to document the lexicons and orthographies of other languages. This would help in carrying out the recommendation of the Revised National Commission on Education, which called for the introduction of the third language in the program. District staff could work with researchers to develop the orthographies and later on develop appropriate materials among communities.

Another finding of the study was that the current program abandoned the zeal of the previous experimental literacy campaign and adopted aspects of it that were less empowering to the learners. It lacked the targeting of particular groups and functionality in terms of enabling the learners to combine what they learn with some development messages. Some participants attributed this to the fact that the program does not provide “literacies” for varied needs of its clients. Based on this finding it is recommended that a study be undertaken to determine how the department could devolve the power of decision making from the center to the districts. The devolution would allow district staff to make key decisions on how the funds allocated to their district are utilized in that context for as long as they would account for projects they jointly plan with their learners. While senior management pointed to lack of curriculum development skills, district officers felt that they could work on curriculum changes. Their more daunting problem was that the funding was too restrictive. As Victoria puts it, “Asking for funds to do innovative projects is like opening a can of worms... you get told endless stories about the fact that there is no money.” Such a study would determine their capacity to generate materials based on which, if the planners are deficient, a course could be organized to enable them to plan effectively. The training of planners would hopefully make the program more responsive to the needs of learners.

A Concluding Note

I took a retrospective look at the planning of literacy education to deliberately determine what we could learn from the past in order to explore how we could inform the future of literacy work in Botswana. I believe that the history of the human race is intricately bounded with the need for literacy and adult basic education. Hence, I posed the question “literacy for what?” Literacy education for those of us coming from the developing nations is an essential ingredient in defining our place in the global community. Being at the trajectory of colonialism, imperialism and globalization demands that we redefine the course of our future. Literacy in that respect should be

planned in a politically astute way to help us address the tragic consequences of the past. In other words, we should use literacy discourses to provide a diagnosis of entrenched maladies such as poverty, war, disease, gender inequalities and the exclusion of minorities. It is an opportunity for literacy planners, researchers and policy makers to work together to chart new paths that would make a difference in the lives of the learners in literacy and adult basic education programs. Planning literacy should involve all the people who have hitherto been disadvantaged by being excluded from making decisions on issues that affect them so profoundly.

I believe that all who care for the betterment of the disadvantaged should challenge the “taken for granted” norms such as use of a national language, and planning for and not with the learners. As researchers, we should strive to work hand in glove with practitioners to ensure that all members of the nation gain access to the magic of the written word. This would enhance their capacity for self and group expression and collective action. This is the course for which I am relentlessly prepared to fight in the future. The challenges I documented in this study would serve as a basis for engaging policymakers in a sustained dialogue on such issues as the exploring the possibility to use of participatory approaches to plan responsive literacy education in Botswana.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Guide

The purpose of this study is to examine and understand the influence of sociopolitical, cultural, and economic issues in the planning and implementation of the Botswana National Literacy Program.

Demographic data

What is your current age? What is your highest level of education? What is your position? current marital status?

Participants' personal and professional interests in literacy

1. What motivated you to serve in the literacy program?
2. Think about the early years of planning the literacy program and tell me about them?
3. Describe what guided you in the planning of literacy education?
4. Describe in as much detail as possible how Setswana came to be the medium of instruction in the literacy program?
5. How is the program responding to the needs of women as the majority in the program?

Sociocultural and political issues in planning the program

6. How would you describe an average literacy participant?
7. What leads these people to participate in literacy program?
8. Describe how planning literacy education takes the needs of the learners into consideration?
9. Who participates in the writing of materials in the literacy program?

10: Describe in detail how the program has or has not responded to the needs of the learners?

11. How are the learners involved in planning the program?

Implementation of the literacy education program

12. Think about how the program is implemented and tell me about it?

11. Tell me about in as much detail as possible about district strategic plans?

2. Describe how initiatives taken at districts add value to planning of literacy in Botswana?

13. How would you describe Literacy Group Leaders as their supervisor?

14. Describe in detail how Literacy Group Leaders are recruited and trained?

15. Think of a time when you did challenged the policy of the program and tell me about it?

16. What would you describe as the major challenges for the planning and implementation of literacy education in Botswana?