Teacher Preparation for the World of Work: A Study of Pre-service Primary Teacher Education in Fiji

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Griffith University, School of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Faculty of Education

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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to selectively investigate pre-service primary teacher education in one of the Pacific island countries, and in particular to explore whether it provides an adequate and enriching professional preparation to beginning teachers with a view to satisfying the demands of work in the field. In doing so, the issue was examined in detail in a teacher education institution located in Fiji, namely, Lautoka Teachers College (LTC).

An integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches was employed to explore if beginning teachers from the College are provided with appropriate professional preparation as future teachers. Using LTC as a case study, basic data gathering methods utilized questionnaire surveys, interviews and documentary analyses.

Survey-based data were gathered from the beginning teachers to find out their perceptions of the pre-service program that they had completed. Data were also gathered from their Head Teachers to ascertain views on the beginning teachers’ professional preparation for the demands of work in their schools. In addition, an interview-based approach explored the perceptions of not only the College staff but also the Ministry of Education officials with regard to the preparation of teachers in meeting the demands of work and responsibilities in the field. Documentary-based research was also used to explore matters associated with teacher preparation at LTC and to integrate the findings with the data obtained in the surveys and interviews.

The study indicated that the beginning teachers were not adequately prepared for the demands of work and responsibilities expected of them as perceived by the profession and other stakeholders. A number of factors were found to be contributing to the perceived inadequacy of the professional preparation of beginning teachers. Lack of physical facilities and quality of educational resources together with an outdated curriculum contributed to this situation. At the same time, lack of support from the principal stakeholder in terms of staff professional development and funding was also cited as impacting upon the quality of pre-service teacher education provided to the beginning teachers.

An important emergent issue emanating from the study relates to colonial influence on Fiji's education in general, and teacher education at LTC in particular. Some of the problems LTC grappled with were attributable to certain features of the formalised educational system introduced during the colonial era. These aspects, such as the inheritance of the system of educational administration and centralised control, constrained the College in attempting to fulfil its professional role in an appropriate and responsive manner. The administrative system and related context, delivery and assessment elements established in
education during the colonial period have been retained and not attuned to contemporary Fiji needs despite the changing times. In overview terms, the presence of these aspects appeared to have impacted negatively on College's effective conduct of its professional role and responsibilities.

Further, this study provides specific insights into the pre-service primary teacher education in Fiji, in particular the importance of having relevant policies and programs to ensure the provision of an adequate and enriching professional preparation for teachers to meet the range of work commitments in the field. The study concluded that a number of factors influence the professional preparation of future teachers and these need to be considered with a view to ensuring that teachers are able to meet the demands of their profession.

Based on these findings, the study recommends ways and means to improve the pre-service primary teacher education at LTC, which in turn could be expected to enhance the professional preparation of teachers and their competence within the context of teaching in Fiji primary schools. Additionally, some possible areas for future research have been suggested.
Dedication

This work is dedicated to my beloved father, the Late Govinda Yangtaiya who passed away on 16th May, 2002. He was a great source of inspiration and support in my education.
### List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AusAID</td>
<td>Australian Agency for International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVA</td>
<td>Audio Visual Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEMTUP</td>
<td>Basic Education Management and Teacher Upgrading Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>BTEQ</td>
<td>Board of Teacher Education Queensland</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCTC</td>
<td>Corpus Christi Teachers College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDU</td>
<td>Curriculum Development Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEOP</td>
<td>Chief Education Officer Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>Fulton College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCAE</td>
<td>Fiji College of Advanced Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>FJCE</td>
<td>Fiji Junior Certificate Examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPSC</td>
<td>Fiji Public Service Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTU</td>
<td>Fiji Teachers Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTA</td>
<td>Fijian Teachers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSFE</td>
<td>Fiji Seventh Form Examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSLC</td>
<td>Fiji School Leaving Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOS</td>
<td>Head of School</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOE</td>
<td>Institute of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KTC</td>
<td>Kiribati Teachers College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTC</td>
<td>Lautoka Teachers College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUS</td>
<td>National University of Samoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QBTR</td>
<td>Queensland Board of Teacher Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SICHE</td>
<td>Solomon Islands College of Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTC</td>
<td>Tonga Teachers College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USP</td>
<td>University of the South Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VTC</td>
<td>Vanuatu Teachers College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCOTP</td>
<td>World Council of Teaching Profession</td>
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<tr>
<td>WSTC</td>
<td>Western Samoa Teachers College</td>
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Finally, a very special appreciation is expressed to Dupendra Nath, Tuimasi Tawake and Kiran Lata for assisting in typing the final transcript.
Statement of Originality

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any University; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Candidate’s Signature

........................................
Govinda Ishwar Lingam
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the study. It begins with an examination of the background of the present research and follows with an outline of the context, nature and scope of the study. Details are then provided of the study’s aims, the key research questions asked and the underlying questions posed. The chapter then provides an explanation of the concepts and terms used, to familiarise the reader with their usage. Next, the chapter spells out the significance of, and the limitations to, the study stemming from its context. The chapter concludes with an outline of the structure adopted for the remaining sections of the study.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Over the last three decades, there have been two major reports on education in Fiji: the Fiji Education Commission (1969) and the Fiji Islands Education Commission (2000). During this period various educational reports, conferences, seminars and observers of education have also revealed a growing concern about the quality of teachers and teaching in Fiji. These concerns have come from both the academic and political arenas, and have increased since the release of the first major report on education in 1969.

For example, in the third South Pacific Seminar on Priorities in Education in the South Pacific, which was held at the University of the South Pacific (USP) in 1972, concern was expressed about the quality of teachers (Hindson, 1988). A report by a prominent educationist in the South Pacific region, Stewart (1975), also expressed concern over teacher quality in the South Pacific region. In addition, Dr Thomas Davis, the then Premier of the Cook Islands, expressed a view about what he saw as a threat to the quality of education in the Pacific due to various factors, of which teacher quality was one. He outlined the emerging problem:

…any watering down of standards can only be to our disadvantage. Too many of the new nations of the world have allowed the very real pressures of finance, staffing, even political expediency, to reduce the quality of the education of their people… But if we drop standards it will take a generation or more to lift our heads up again (Davis, 1978:72).
Similarly, the then Prime Minister of Fiji, the Honourable Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara (1982), also noted the importance of having quality teachers because of the important work and responsibilities that teachers carry out.

The views expressed in the 1972 seminar titled *Priorities in Education in the South Pacific*, and by many observers of education elsewhere, are that improvement in education is best achieved through improving the quality of teachers, which in turn depends to a large extent on their professional preparation. Teachers might also serve as an important catalyst in the development of a sustainable quality of education. Furthermore, such views have been subsequently revisited in differing ways by debate at a range of international conferences. In the main, the themes of these conferences have centred around teacher quality being a significant input into the education system. Teachers operating at the primary level provide the foundation for educational success, and teacher quality determines such success.

The 1990 Jometien Declaration of the World Conference on *Education for All* called for improvement in the quality of education and student achievement, in addition to increased participation, in developing countries (Haddad, 1990). The Commonwealth Ministers of Education meeting, held in Barbados in 1990, also identified improving the quality of basic education as a priority area for any education program (Mukherjee, 1992). The more recent Melbourne Conference on the theme *Education for the 21st Century in the Asia-Pacific Region* (1998) also recognized the importance of the work of teachers in improving education in the region. This conference raised concerns about areas such as the selection of teachers, and of candidates for teaching, as well as the education and training of teachers (Delors, 1996). These conferences illustrate the evolution of series of higher expectations for education internationally, and these equally apply to most South Pacific countries, including Fiji (Chandra, 1994).

To achieve this expanded vision of education, well-prepared teachers are needed in our education systems, particularly those who are chosen to be part of the teaching profession at the primary school level. This is because primary education forms a building block for education at subsequent levels. Teachers at this primary level are charged with the responsibility of contributing to essential aspects of children’s educational development, including numeracy and literacy, as well as character development (Cairns, 1998; Whitaker, 1997; Woods, 1995).

Teachers remain the most important resource in schools, and this is especially the case in the primary schools of many developing countries, where other types of resources are often limited (Hargreaves & Lo, 2000). Similarly, in developing countries schools usually represent the major or only means of enhancing formal educational knowledge, such as literacy and numeracy, to equip students for future life and work. This is the case in Fiji.
Teachers are primarily responsible for the transmission of knowledge, attitudes and skills through curriculum implementation (Sharma, 1999; Muralidhar, 1989; Whitehead, 1986). It has also been suggested that teachers should extend their role beyond the implementation of a given curriculum to that of elaborating and further developing the curriculum at the school and classroom levels in individual cultural and community contexts (Velayutham, 1987). In this respect, teachers are the “essential link between the curriculum and learners in the educational process” (Stenhouse, 1975:25).

Any investment made in the improvement of the quality of education at the primary level lays the foundation for education at higher levels, as well as serving as a preparation for later life and work (Webster, 1995; Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991). If educational authorities are aiming to provide quality education, then the first area that they might logically look at is teacher education, particularly pre-service primary teacher education. This is regarded as a fundamental stage in teacher preparation, and in turn, contributes to educational development (Haddad, 1990; Logan, Dempster, Chant & Warry, 1990). It is through well-prepared primary teachers that the standard of education could be improved considerably at the primary school level, and in turn at subsequent levels of formal education (Griffith, 1995). According to a former senior academic of USP, Professor Andrew Horn (1994), a poorly trained primary teacher who teaches reading or mathematics ineffectively can produce generations of people who cannot properly read or adequately calculate, no matter how much remedial attention they may later receive. In addition, an ineffective teacher may fail to perform effectively even with the best curricula and textbooks, whereas a well qualified teacher can use appropriate methods to suit the children’s level of intellectual development even when curricula and materials are not up to a desired standard (Blanc, 1986). With limited opportunities for in-service education and school-based training available for practicing teachers, the area of pre-service teacher preparation becomes even more crucial to the development of a well-prepared teaching force (Fiji Times, 9 October 1997).

If a real impact is to be made on the lives of future generations in Fiji as a whole, well-educated and professionally prepared teachers are vital. In short, this reflects the contribution pre-service teacher education can make, as envisioned by Delors (1996:141): “teachers have a crucial role to play in preparing young people not only to face the future with confidence but also to build it with purpose and responsibility”.

In developed countries, pre-service teacher educational institutions are responsible for the professional preparation of teachers to meet the expectations and demands involved in the work they are called upon to do. This has been highlighted in the following terms by R. R. Singh (1986: 166-167):

Whatever the degree of complexity achieved by an education system, its quality and efficiency will continue to depend on teachers… No
education system can be better than the teachers who man it. Their preparation and training must be given very high priority in education policies and plans.

Since teachers are recognised as a critical factor in the provision of quality education, it is helpful to examine their professional preparation at the pre-service level. This is the initial point at which future teachers begin to shape their professional competencies. The key roles they will come to play in the school system are stressed by Haggstrom, Darling-Hammond and Grissmer (1988: 62):

School teachers constitute an invaluable natural resource. As the persons who are entrusted with a mission of vital importance – the education of our children – they play key roles in society. Who they are, how they are trained, what experiences and talents they bring into their classrooms, how they perform their tasks, how they fare as professional workers are questions of great importance.

In view of this, a detailed investigation into pre-service primary teacher education in the local context of Fiji is warranted, and will be undertaken in this study. A particular focus of this investigation has been to examine whether beginning teachers are being prepared for the future activities and responsibilities they will encounter in their work environment. This study will analyze the preparation of teachers through an intrinsic case study along the lines suggested by Stake (2000), focussing on the judgements of major stakeholders associated with pre-service education at the Lautoka Teachers College (LTC), one of the three primary teacher education institutions in Fiji. This case study will examine the adequacy of the preparation of these teachers for the world of work, and for meeting the responsibilities which confront them in the field. A brief overview of the context of this study is provided below, with a more extended discussion of the context being presented in Chapter Three.

1.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Fiji is a small South Pacific country. Because of its location, it experiences a tropical climate. It is politically independent. Economically, Fiji relies heavily on agriculture, especially sugar production, but in recent decades, tourism has become another major source of revenue. The population of Fiji is of diverse ethnic background, with Fijians and Indians the two major ethnic groups. The population is estimated at 775,000. Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians make up approximately 95 percent of the population, the remaining 5 percent comprising Europeans, part Europeans, Chinese and other Pacific Islanders. In the late 1980s, Fiji’s international image was tarnished by a military coup. As a result, from 1987 to 1997, Fiji experienced a disruptive period. This adversely affected the country’s economy and also led to a ‘brain drain’ of skilled labour, especially through the emigration of professional
people, such as teachers. The country returned to parliamentary democracy in 1997, but again on the 19 May 2000 a civilian coup led by George Speight overthrew the democratically elected, multi-ethnic Government. This event further destabilized the country and, also led to a backlash from overseas countries, such as two powerful Pacific neighbours, Australia and New Zealand. The impact on the teaching profession has been enormous. The General Secretary of the Fiji Teachers Union (FTU), Mr A. D. Singh (2001), indicated that 300 teachers had resigned in order to emigrate since the mid-2000 crisis. To make matters even worse, the majorities of these teachers were well-qualified professionally and academically, and had many years of teaching experience.

Since political independence in 1970, and despite the brief periods of political instability, there has been considerable expansion in the provision of education in Fiji. Improvement in access to primary education, in particular, is commendable, as about 98 percent of primary age children attend school (Fiji Islands Education Commission, 2000). The great majority of schools are run by non-government organizations, with support from the Government such as through the supply of trained teachers graduating from the three teacher education institutions. Fiji continues to strive to provide quality education for all its citizens, but there are factors which may constrain the achievement of this goal. One such factor, examined in this study, is teacher preparation.

1.3  NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on pre-service primary teacher education in Fiji. In particular, it examines the perceived adequacy of teacher preparation to meet the broad range of professional commitments within the school and the wider community. A review of the literature relating to pre-service teacher education in Fiji and other selected neighbouring and overseas countries has been undertaken. Following this, an examination has been made of initial teacher preparation, through a case study of a primary teacher education institution in Fiji — Lautoka Teachers College (LTC), with data derived from a range of participants and sources. Official policies of primary teacher education in Fiji have been analysed in order to determine how they relate to current national and international trends and developments in teacher education. The study of the current program of pre-service teacher education has helped explicate the policies in action. Also, in order to consider the impact of pre-service teacher education on teachers’ professional commitments in schools, beginning teachers have been invited to respond to a questionnaire based on their experiences of the program they completed whilst attending LTC. They have been asked to reflect on their study program and comment on the extent to which its content and outcomes have actually been able to be applied in schools. They have also been asked to indicate their perceptions of the strengths
and weaknesses of their preparation in the light of their work experiences. Feedback from the College staff was also considered vital, as they are key players responsible for the professional preparation of primary teachers.

Additionally, to ascertain beginning teachers’ preparation for work in schools, their Head Teachers were invited to respond to a questionnaire. Their additional comments have been important, as they are the ones who not only represent the community served by the school, but who also oversee, evaluate and influence teachers’ work. Alongside these participants, officials of the principle stakeholder, the Ministry of Education, have also been interviewed to ascertain their perceptions of the pre-service teacher preparation at LTC.

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The study examines the professional preparation of beginning primary teachers in Fiji, and the perceived adequacy of that preparation in helping them meet the demands and responsibilities of teaching. The study seeks to contribute to knowledge by increasing or understanding of whether the pre-service education at LTC is providing an adequate and enriching preparation for prospective teachers, in terms of their abilities to meet the various demands and responsibilities they encounter in the field. To this end, the study has attempted to ascertain areas of particular strength and weakness in the way pre-service teacher education at the College prepares teachers. The reasons for selecting LTC for this study are provided in the next section.

1.5 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE SELECTION OF LTC

The study of pre-service primary teacher education at LTC is informative, as this institution has a significant impact on the teaching profession of Fiji in general, and the preparation of teachers for the demands of work in particular. LTC is responsible for the initial preparation of the majority of teachers for primary schools in Fiji. Recent statistics show that LTC prepares about eighty percent of Fiji’s primary teachers (Fiji Ministry of Education, 1997) and the College has provided over 3,000 teachers since its establishment in 1977 (A. Prasad, 2000b). The other two non-government teachers colleges — Corpus Christi Teachers College (CCTC) and Fulton College (FC) — are quite small and together they supply about twenty percent of teachers, mainly to schools which are affiliated with the Roman Catholic and Seventh Day Adventist churches respectively. In contrast, LTC supplies teachers to both Government and non-government primary schools, a total of 715 in 2000 (Fiji Islands Education Commission, 2000). The Government is also responsible for sponsoring the bulk of the students in pre-service teacher education programs, and so priority for appointment to teaching positions in primary schools is given to graduates from LTC.
Because of these factors, the researcher considered it appropriate to focus this study on the pre-service teacher education program offered at LTC.

1.6 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The issue that this study addresses is whether pre-service primary teacher education in Fiji is perceived by the profession and other stakeholders to provide adequate, relevant and enriching professional preparation for the teachers’ world of work. Earlier research into pre-service primary teacher education in Fiji has suggested that, in the past, pre-service teacher education has not met these requirements (Fiji Education Commission, 1969; Mayhew, 1936). The current study will seek to examine whether teacher preparation is still considered inadequate, and whether this is the case in particular with the present pre-service primary teacher education program at LTC.

The following key research questions will guide the study.

(i) Does LTC’s pre-service teacher education program meet the socio-cultural expectations of Fiji’s primary schools?

(ii) Is LTC’s pre-service teacher education program compatible with the demands of work expected of beginning teachers?

Does LTC’s pre-service teacher education program reflect the emerging trends and developments in teacher education as expressed in contemporary international principles and practices?

In addition, three further underlying questions will be addressed as an underpinning to the examination of the research questions. It is necessary to explore these questions in order to provide an informed framework to answer the research questions themselves. These questions are:

What are the policies and programs of LTC?
What is the allocation of resources and facilities for the pre-service program?

What is the value of LTC students’ preparation for their subsequent world of work as perceived by recent LTC graduates, LTC staff, Head Teachers of primary schools and Ministry of Education officials?
The key research questions, together with the three underlying questions, will guide the study and help to determine the perceived practical adequacy of pre-service teacher preparation. In this study, some key concepts and terms such as *teachers’ world of work, field, quality education, program, policy, pre-service education, associate teacher, practice teaching file, and student teachers* are used frequently. Explanations of the specific usage of these concepts and terms are provided in the following section.

### 1.7 KEY CONCEPTS AND TERMS

The key concepts and terms that are used in the present study are discussed in relation to the contributions that the study is expected to make towards teacher preparation. Preparation of primary teachers in Fiji is undertaken through a pre-service education program at LTC, supposedly with partnership between the College and the schools. In the schools, Associate teachers play a critical role in socialisation and inducting the student teachers to the 'real world' of the school. The progress made in this regard is recorded in the practice teaching file. Through such a process student teachers are prepared to provide quality education in their schools. Each of these concepts and terms are discussed below to show their relationships to the problem being studied.

**Teachers’ World of Work**

The teachers’ world of work is not limited to the four walls of the classroom. It extends beyond the classroom to include the whole school and the community as well. Teacher’s world of work and the discussion on the 'field' provide a basis for the key research questions:

- Does LTC's pre-service teacher education program meet the socio-cultural expectations of Fiji primary schools?
- Is LTC's pre-service teacher education program compatible with the demands of work expected of beginning teachers?

Part of the socio-cultural expectation about teacher education is that the community has a 'say' and a stake in what is taught and how it is taught in their schools (Fiji Islands Education Commission, 2000). This stake extends to the classroom work as well. Therefore, the community would be interested in knowing how teachers are trained. But there is very little scope for the community to contribute to the educational decisions such as about how
teachers are trained although the community is expected to work closely with schools. In this respect, cultural the diversity that exists in the community needs to be recognized.

According to Turney, Eltis, Towler and Wright (1986), teachers carry out work in three main domains: the classroom, the school and the community. The work of a teacher is complex and demanding and therefore beginning teachers need to be provided with an adequate professional preparation to carry out their work effectively in each domain.

Primary teachers in Fiji perform several different types of work. Primary teachers are ‘generalists’, that is, they are responsible for teaching all of the subjects in the official primary school curriculum to any class assigned to them.

Officially, they are required to:

- Provide instructions for full-time pupils for a period exclusive of luncheon recess of not less than 4.5 hours a day during the first two years of formal education and of not less than five hours a day in subsequent years (Fiji Law, Cap 262 of Education Act 1978:8).

With regard to this legislative requirement, primary teachers are required to teach a class as assigned and be responsible for the necessary preparation, including teaching aids, resource materials and records. They are also required by the Ministry of Education to keep attendance and examination registers; keep records of assessment of children’s progress; keep medical cards up to date; conduct health inspections daily; take extra-curricular activities; take charge of road safety and general duties; communicate to parents regarding children’s progress and behavior and also act as associate teachers for student teachers (Fiji Ministry of Education, 1994).

The work of teachers extends beyond teaching in the classroom. As pointed out by a former Vice-Chancellor of the USP, Dr James Maraj (1981:17):

> Nearly every one acknowledges the manifold roles which teachers, especially those in rural parts, continue to play not as classroom practitioners but as community developers and community leaders. Through such service, they have earned increasing status and an honored place in our society — one which must be preserved and enhanced.

The work of teachers, therefore, involves not only the classroom and school domain, but also the community. This community domain is especially important in the Fiji context because of the communities’ control of the schools - from a total of 715 primary schools in Fiji, some 713 are community controlled. Teachers are expected, for example, to help in fund-raising which may be considered beyond the call of duty in other societies. Beyond this one-sided relationship of community control of schools, teachers are expected to learn about and interact with the community and develop a close and positive working relationship with the community that includes the parents of the students as well. It is then that the teacher education program could be aligned to the "field" in which teachers work and be related to...
the teachers work demand. Therefore this research has sought to use the term ‘teachers’ world of work’ to refer to the various areas of work actually undertaken by teachers in Fiji.

Field

Teachers’ work is not limited to teaching or classroom work. Within the school, it also includes pastoral care, counseling, and liaising with the families of the children. Teachers therefore find themselves in this larger context, which extends beyond the classroom and includes the whole school organization, parents and other stakeholders and the community. The term ‘field’ is used here to refer to this larger context.

Quality Education

One of the current international trends in education is the emphasis not only on quantitative expansion but also in the provision of quality education (Webster, 1995). This trend is discernible in the educational reforms and changes in Fiji’s educational system. Several factors influence the quality of education and this study considers teachers as the most critical influence (Hawes & Stephens, 1990). Those responsible for providing basic education, in particular, need to be well prepared professionally to ensure delivery of education of a high standard. Rightly, pre-service education of teachers ought to ensure well-prepared teachers are supplied to primary schools. Infusing ideas related to recent developments into pre-service teacher education would enable production of professionally well-prepared teachers. Admittedly, policies governing teacher preparation in Fiji need to be updated with the aim of achieving qualitative improvement in education. Consequently, quality education and the discussion on ‘pre-service education’ and ‘policy’ provide the foundation for the other central research question:

Does LTC’s pre-service teacher education program reflect the emerging trends and developments in teacher education as expressed in contemporary international principles and practices?

This research question addresses the above qualitative developments in Fiji’s educational system and how it reflects in the teacher education program in Fiji.

The term ‘quality’ is not often clearly defined, particularly in relation to education, and is defined variously by a range of writers (for example, Sallis, 1997; Sifuna, 1997; Smith, 1997; Green, 1994; Hawes & Stephens, 1990; Hindson, 1988). With reference to pre-service teacher preparation as considered in this study, quality refers to the combination of broad experiences provided to trainees who have met appropriate entry standards, an up-to-date curriculum, appropriately trained and suitably qualified staff, provision of relevant physical facilities and effective management of the program and other resources to support
teaching/learning, such as educational software. It is envisaged that all these contribute towards effective preparation and, in turn, enable beginning teachers to effectively carry out the complex set of interrelated tasks and responsibilities that are part of their professional role. For example, the provision of competent and effective teaching and learning practices through which children demonstrably attain knowledge, learn skills and develop literacy, numeracy and problem solving abilities, falls under the category of quality education (Sallis, 1997). In addition, quality education in a Fijian context would require an education appropriate to a small developing nation with a multicultural population making its transition to democracy.

These relate to the ‘process’ aspects of teacher education. But these processes are also related to the inputs to and outputs of the teacher education at the College. The inputs such as the students admitted to the College, the lecturers working in the College, library resources, teaching/learning resource materials and physical facilities made available, are some of the aspects that determine the pre-service activities, i.e. teacher training in the College. Some of these acts as constraints and others facilitate the process of the pre-service activities. As a result of this process, the main output would be the teachers trained in the College and ready to take up appointment as teachers.

Program

Different definitions of the term ‘program’ abound in the literature. According to the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration (QBTR, 1999:2), the designation ‘program’ is preferred to ‘course’ since the latter is used by different institutions in different ways, one of which entails many courses constituting the overall pre-service teacher education program.

For this reason, the term ‘program’ is used in this study to refer to all the courses and any other requirements laid down by the institution which, when fulfilled, lead to a particular award, for example, a Certificate in Primary Teaching. The program, therefore, should be such that beginning teachers emerge well prepared for the complex and diverse work they will perform inside and outside the classroom.

Policy

The term ‘policy’ attracts a diversity of definitions in the literature. Cunningham (cited in Prunty, 1984:4) says: “It is rather like an elephant - you recognize it when you see it but cannot easily define it”. The words ‘policy’ and ‘police’ are derived from the same Latin root, and the word ‘policy’ is concerned more with preserving than changing (Beavis, 1992). According to Gideonse (1995:557), the term ‘policy’ embraces decisions about rules, criteria, incentives, priorities, and resources. These are important aspects of any policy. A more
A comprehensive definition of policy in relation to teacher education is provided by Hawley (1990:136–137):

The term policy describes those rules, statements of intent, and specified strategies that are formally adopted by legitimate individuals or agencies to guide collective action. Teacher education policy seeks to influence who shall teach, what prospective teachers know, are able to do, and value and how the learning of teacher candidates is structured. The instruments through which policymakers seek to affect these outcomes include financial aid and other recruitment tools, various screening tests and procedures, curriculum requirements and mandated learning experiences.

The points raised by Hawley capture some of the issues succinctly and powerfully, and these issues have been addressed within the present study.

Pre-Service Education

This is the first phase of teacher education (DeLandsheere, 1987). Anderson (1995:571) defines it as “the education that teachers receive before being licensed to teach”. This education commonly takes place in post-secondary institutions such as universities or teacher training colleges. It is also sometimes referred to as ‘initial teacher education’. Blair (1980:327) states that “pre-service starts the engine” for teacher education. It should be noted that in this study the terms ‘initial teacher education’ and ‘pre-service teacher education’ are used synonymously.

Associate Teacher

This term refers to an experienced and qualified primary school teacher who is responsible for providing professional support and guidance to a student teacher, particularly during periods of teaching practicum. The Associate Teacher oversees the work carried out by the student teacher and also monitors his/her performance.

Practice Teaching File

This is a folder containing all the work student teachers have completed while on practice teaching, for example, written accounts of all lesson plans, information collected about the school and other work assigned by the LTC tutors. This file acts as a daily record of the student teacher’s teaching practice experience. The information contained in the file is also used in deciding the student teacher’s grade for the practicum.
Student Teachers

These are the students enrolled in a pre-service teacher education program. A variety of other terms such as ‘trainee teachers’ and ‘prospective teachers’ are used interchangeably throughout this work to refer to those pursuing professional studies to become teachers.

The concepts considered so far have significance for this study. From a conceptual point of view the study would address the 'world of work' on the one hand and the preparation of primary teachers to function in that work context, on the other.

Such an approach to the study requires a recording function in which the perceptions of participants are to be recorded and collated. This initial work requires the perceptions of stakeholders associated with teacher education to be examined and their contributions to the answering of the research questions to be addressed. It is also understood that the data derived remains problematic in that it pertains to views about education - specifically teacher education held by members of the community in Fiji who have a professional interest in the area. This view is challenged by perceptions of teacher education that pertain in different contexts. Quality assumes different meanings in different countries as the term indicates levels of achievement within particular spheres of activity. As an example, in the determining of teacher performance, different levels of performance connoting quality are, in part, derived from different levels of achievement in different fields. In some countries the performance of a teacher in the primary school is measured against end results on standardised tests - for instance examinations, whereas in other countries the inclusiveness of the teacher is rated highly.

While the researcher has knowledge of the differing contexts and perceptions, an additional factor raised by Smith (1999) introduces a methodological issue that renders the analysis of the data more problematic. Smith discusses the difficulties confronting non-western researchers in their local communities. These researchers would be required to accommodate western understandings of research with concepts of research associated with the culture of their own communities. The difficulties implicit with this task are manifold and unique to the individual indigenous researcher. The role-swapping articulation of the researcher as member, recorder and analyst of the research undertaken provides opportunities for the most able to provide an understanding of the multi-layered complexity existing in the data. Such a stance provides a unique vision of the phenomenon to be studied.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A review of literature pertaining to pre-service primary teacher education in Fiji shows that only some small-scale research studies have so far been conducted. Rogovakalali, A. Prasad and R. Prasad (1993) conducted a survey to determine the extent to which beginning teachers were applying what they learnt at LTC in their workplace. Nabobo
(1996), in a more extensive study, examined teacher education (both primary and secondary) as a part of the evolution of higher and post-secondary education in Fiji. In addition, Taylor (1997) studied LTC’s pre-service primary teachers’ understanding as well as their responses to learning experiences, based on a constructivist approach related to ‘matter’ as an important aspect of the physical science curriculum. Lingam, Singh and Booth (1999) have also undertaken a small-scale study relating to LTC lecturers’ perceptions of influences that have impacted on their role. That study has some bearing on the professional preparation of future teachers.

These studies have investigated certain issues related to teacher education but are not sufficiently comprehensive to be helpful in describing and transforming, primary teacher education in Fiji. These studies also did not attempt to examine important aspects of the preparation of teachers for all the duties and responsibilities they would face professionally. This study seeks to fill this gap, that is, to contribute an in-depth study of the preparation of teachers at the pre-service level and to identify and address problems which new teachers face upon entering the primary education sector in Fiji. The outcomes of this study, therefore, might be of considerable value to all concerned with pre-service primary teacher education in Fiji.

The findings of this study may be useful in developing future policies governing primary teacher education in Fiji, and hence could be of interest to the teaching profession, the Government and in particular the Ministry of Education. The work could contribute, therefore, to future teacher education planning in Fiji. The findings of this study would be of value to those who are engaged in the preparation of teachers in pre-service teacher education programs. The study may also throw light on the in-service education of practicing teachers in Fiji, given that the majority of teachers undertook their initial teacher education program at LTC and, consequently, may share any deficiencies in knowledge found in the LTC program.

Teacher organizations; the FTU and the Fijian Teachers Association (FTA), may be able to use the outcomes of this study to help monitor the professional qualities of teachers by helping to ensure that only suitably qualified candidates for pre-service teacher education programs are enrolled; candidates who would subsequently be better prepared to take up teaching positions in the primary schools. Moreover, through this research, the teacher unions may have access to information that would enable informed decision-making on priorities relating to policies and practices of pre-service primary teacher education in Fiji.

In addition, there are potential linkages between this study and the Bachelor of Education degree for primary teachers offered at USP, and the study could assist in a review of plans for the further development of this degree program. The study could also provide a basis for comparison of the LTC program with the pre-service teacher education at other
teacher training institutions. On the basis of this comparison, these institutions could further improve their own teacher preparation.

This researcher was previously a staff member at LTC and continues to work in the area of teacher education. The researcher’s duties at the College between 1991 and 2000 involved developing and teaching education courses and conducting seminars and workshops pertaining to practice teaching for Associate Teachers and Head Teachers. At present the researcher is a staff member in the School of Humanities at the USP and is engaged in primary teacher education, with a focus on improving the professional development of teachers through the in-service Bachelor of Education (Primary) degree program. The researcher anticipates that the research findings will inform his leadership in these areas. Further, through this study the researcher has gained a better understanding and knowledge of recent trends in pre-service teacher education, particularly in the field of primary teacher education.

This research is also significant and timely because we have come to the end of the 20th Century and have just entered the early years of the 21st Century. Either by foresight or by necessity, all organizations, and in particular educational organizations, need to take stock of past developments and plan for the future. Thus, before we advance any further in this century, it is appropriate that we examine all aspects of education, and in particular pre-service teacher education. In line with this, the Government of Fiji instituted a review process, the Fiji Islands Education Commission 2000, to re-examine its entire education system. In regard to teacher education, the Commission was required to examine and make appropriate recommendations on the provision of pre-service and in-service education and training for teachers and exposure to professional issues for education workers. The report has been recently released and it is currently awaiting consideration. It is worth mentioning that the Fiji Islands Education Commission 2000 has made an attempt to review educational developments and to propose reforms. The Commission’s task, however, did not involve looking at any particular aspect of education, and its breadth of coverage might preclude an examination of any one aspect in depth. The present study would seem complementary to that of the Fiji Islands Education Commission (2000) report in which it specifically focuses on teacher education with particular reference to the teacher education institution that trains the majority of primary school teachers.

Continuing evaluations need to be undertaken to ensure appropriateness especially in the area of teacher preparation. These evaluations would help to determine whether quality pre-service teacher education is being provided to the trainees by assessing its relevance to the performance expected of them in the field. This study could therefore, contribute towards the task of strengthening pre-service primary teacher education in Fiji to meet the challenges
of the new millennium. Furthermore, the study could also add to the knowledge that exists on pre-service primary teacher education in Fiji, as well as in other Pacific Island states.

1.9 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

Some difficulties were encountered in conducting this study, especially in terms of data gathering. In particular, information on why and how certain policies relating to pre-service education were formulated is kept confidential. Some of the documents in the Ministry of Education and the College containing information on discussions of policy matters are restricted. These documents are only made available to very senior civil servants and Members of Parliament. This is one of the major constraints on this study, and is an unavoidable one. Despite this limitation, it is important to point out that the researcher nonetheless gathered information on policies from Development Plans, significant individuals, as well as from the existing programs and practices of pre-service primary teacher education.

In addition, the political upheavals of 19 May 2000, and resultant civil and economic disruptions, caused considerable hindrance to data collection, especially that by means of a questionnaire survey-based inquiry. The closure of schools for several weeks and a curfew affected the distribution of the questionnaires to the beginning teachers posted to schools throughout the administrative divisions of Fiji. Some of the divisions have schools situated in remote and isolated locations. During the extended period of the political crisis members of the community, including the teaching profession, were preoccupied with concerns related to issues of personal safety, survival and protection of their families. Further, members of the teaching profession tended to be reluctant to discuss matters concerning government policies openly and candidly. These difficulties stemmed predominantly from the uncertainties and confusion of the time. Because of the political crisis the country experienced, the number of completed questionnaires received was fewer than had been anticipated. Similar difficulties were experienced with the questionnaire administered to the Head Teachers of primary schools. Nevertheless, sufficient worthy responses were received from participants, and consequently this study should enable the reader to have an understanding of, and valuable insight into, the pre-service teacher education at LTC.

1.10 ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The thesis is organized into nine chapters. This first chapter has provided the background of the context and aims of the study, and its significance. The rest of the study will be presented as follows:
Chapter Two includes a review of literature pertinent to the topic under study. It examines different theoretical and background research materials published and unpublished, of both developed and developing countries, related to the study. On the basis of literature reviewed, a conceptual framework for pre-service teacher education has been developed. This has been summarized in Figure 1, and will be explored further in Chapter Five.

Chapter Three provides details of the context within which the study was conducted. It includes relevant information on the social, cultural and educational background that provides the broader context of the study.

Chapter Four details the research methodology, involving both the quantitative and qualitative methods employed in conducting this research.

Chapter Five presents the results of the research. These are presented under appropriate headings derived from the conceptual framework presented in Chapter Two (see Figure 1).

Chapter Six involves a discussion of the research findings. These are presented under suitable headings derived from the adapted conceptual framework (see Figure 3).

Chapter Seven takes up broader issues that have been inherent in the case study. These highlight historical and now continuing colonial influences and tensions (see Figure 4).

Chapter Eight draws conclusions based on the findings of the research. These are used, in turn, to make a number of recommendations for improving pre-service primary teacher education at LTC.

The final chapter, Chapter Nine, summarises the research and draws relevant conclusions from the study, along with suggestions for further research.

1.11 SUMMARY

The study focuses on pre-service primary teacher education. Specifically, it examines the adequacy of teacher preparation at LTC, Fiji, in assisting its graduates to meet the demands expected of them as primary teachers. In this chapter, the study has been introduced by outlining its nature and identifying its scope, aims and significance. This chapter sets the stage for the next chapter, where a range of literature concerned with pre-service teacher education is reviewed.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.0  INTRODUCTION

As noted in Chapter One, this study focuses on the pre-service teacher education program and its delivery at LTC in Fiji. In particular, it examines the adequacy of this teacher preparation in meeting the demands of work practices expected of beginning teachers in the field. This chapter sets out to review the available literature in relation to two matters considered fundamental to this task.

First, it is useful to review literature pertaining to the key factors central to the improvement in quality of primary education.

Second, a review is made of literature associated with aspects related to teacher preparation. This includes trainees’ conceptions of teachers’ work; teachers’ work itself; perceptions of teachers’ effectiveness; entry into pre-service teacher education; professional preparation with respect to duration and initial qualifications; teacher education curriculum; practice teaching and teacher educators’ perceptions of their work. It is worth noting that the interactions and integration of all these aspects contribute to the initial education of teachers.

Much of the literature reviewed is from outside the South Pacific region, as there is a paucity of research into teacher education in the South Pacific. Based on this review of literature, pre-service teacher education at LTC will be evaluated in the light of what is considered to be appropriate current practice in teacher education, particularly as it pertains to the Republic of Fiji. The final section of the chapter outlines the conceptual framework constructed on the basis of this literature review.

The section that follows examines the factors associated with quality in primary education and literature related to it, and places it within the context of Fiji.

2.1  KEY FACTORS IN QUALITY PRIMARY EDUCATION

A range of factors determines the quality of education. In the local context, the Fiji Education Commission (1969) identified three major factors: the classroom teachers; the curriculum; and resources and instructional materials. Of these three factors, the professional
preparation of the classroom teacher has been considered as the most important variable in improving the quality of education (Hawes & Stephens, 1990; World Bank, 1990). More recently, the Fiji Islands Education Commission (2000) also highlighted teachers’ professional competence in all areas of work as the key factor in improving the quality of education.

Importance of Well-prepared Teachers

Since primary education is the first level of formal education in Fiji, it is argued that Fiji needs a well-prepared teaching force to ensure quality education. With reference to the quality of primary education, the Chief of Mission of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the South Pacific Region, Griffith (1995:2), emphasized that:

If we do not have good quality education, we can not expect secondary education to do remedial work and pick up the slack, so the idea is to build quality primary education which will lead to a better secondary education, which will lead to more capable people to take up the thrust of national development at the end of the scale.

Although education at all levels is important, education at the primary level might be considered as deserving the most attention. It is at this level that “children develop their basic attitudes and approaches to learning” (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991:18). It is vital that resources such as well-prepared teachers are provided, because the development of high quality primary education followed by quality secondary and tertiary education is more cost effective than high quality secondary and tertiary education imposed on a low quality primary education (Fiji Islands Education Commission, 2000; Colclough & Lewin, 1993). In addition, primary education caters for the largest section of the student population, whereas secondary and tertiary educations are for a relatively privileged few. This is particularly so in Fiji (Vakatale, 1993). Thus, it is widely recognized that quality primary education ultimately lays the foundation on which all subsequent formal learning will be built. It forms the basis for further education, future employment and improved quality of life. On the other hand, poor quality primary education could have negative effects both on individuals and on society (Hawes & Stephens, 1990; World Bank, 1990).

In view of this, well-prepared teachers are needed at the primary level of formal education. This is consistent with Fiji’s Sixth Development Plan (1970:202), which stated that:

...if the quality of education is to be improved there is a need for higher academic and professional qualifications among teachers.

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Thus, teachers with good professional preparation are a catalyst for quality education (UNESCO, 1995; Chandra, 1994; Hallack, 1990). The issue of quality education is problematic with quality determined by the context in which the education system resides. For instance, perceptions of quality differ considerably from one country to another. This notion based on the needs and perceptions of different communities is in accord with the arguments mounted by Habermas (1971) in which the validity of the argument is based on the shared understandings of the participants – their shared “life-worlds” (1990:135).

Since primary school children are in the formative stage of development, it is desirable that they are taught by well-prepared teachers, teachers who can effectively deal with young children and bring about desired cognitive and behavioural development. While the emphasis on cognitive development is a core of most educational programs at the primary school level, this focus is modified by social factors related to the needs and aspirations of the people of Fiji.

Brock (1993:22) referred to this early stage as “a crucial formative stage”. However, when the “child’s first teacher is poorly trained and poorly motivated, the very foundations on which all subsequent learning will be built will be unsound” (Delors, 1996:146). This primary level of education therefore deserves detailed attention, and special recognition needs to be given to the need to improve any deficiencies in the preparation of primary teachers. This theme was taken up by the Fiji Public Service Commission (FPSC), which proposed that:

The qualification of teachers, especially those responsible for primary ... education programs should be upgraded to enable them to provide students with a sound educational foundation for a life long process of human resources development (FPSC, 1989:22).

While this statement was written in 1989, this proposal clearly spells out the importance the FPSC gave to well-prepared primary teachers in human resource development. The statement indicating the need for additional training for teachers reflects a widely held view in the Fiji community. The rationality of the argument about improving the quality of teachers at the primary school level reflects the type of argument endorsed by Habermas (1971) in which the unquestioned assumptions about education and its purposes were widely held in the community. However, it appears that the authorities concerned do not have the political will or the necessary resources to implement such proposals. As pointed out by Haddad (1990:49-50), in the report of the World Conference on Education for All:

…given the critical cognitive period covered by primary schooling, the fact that it has the most equitable access and the indicated social returns to investment in primary education, it is ironic, if not indefensible, that greater emphasis is not placed on the quality of instructional personnel at this level.
The views expressed in these reports and by other observers of education clearly indicate the importance of teachers in improving the quality of education, which may in turn impact on development in all sectors of the economy. Such points of view warrant attention from all stakeholders in education. This is because, in order to achieve a sound economy and a healthy society, quality primary education is vital in view of its status as a foundation for future education. For instance, well-prepared teachers are needed, that is, teachers whose training prepares them to effectively carry out the work and meet the responsibilities expected of them in the field. To ensure that primary schools are supplied with teachers who hold high academic and professional qualifications, the government should accord a high priority to education in general, and pre-service primary teacher education in particular. These statements reflect the theory of logical argument provided by Habermas (1971) in which widely accepted understandings are not challenged within particular communities in which they hold currency. Underlying these statements then are beliefs about the power of education to contribute to society and to the well-being of individuals by increasing the productivity, providing more opportunities for employment and increasing the quality of life in the community.

Administrative System

Certain organizational structures put in place by government could enhance or impede the attainment of the stated aims of teacher preparation, and ultimately the quality of primary education. For example, highly centralized control may limit the ability of the institutions to respond effectively to local needs and even hinder the necessary flow of resources (Strivers, 1994; Velayutham, 1994; Winkler, 1989 and Hanson, 1986 cited in World Bank, 1990). Also, “when decision-making is concentrated at the top, central-level staff spend large amounts of their time on tasks that could be more efficiently carried out by intermediate and school-level managers” (World Bank, 1990:38). It is important that the focus of management be on its stated function, rather than on its own administrative process. According to Throsby and Ganicott (1990), decentralized management structures could lead to improvements in the performance of educational institutions. In developing countries, however, there is an over-control of teacher education programs and resources by the central offices (Nagel & Snyder, 1989; Weick, 1976). There are suggestions that decentralization could take the form of relatively more autonomous educational organizations, characterised as ‘self-managing schools’ (Caldwell, 2002). With reference to the small island states of the South Pacific it has been suggested that giving greater independence could enhance all aspects of an educational institution’s operations (Crocombe & Crocombe, 1994). Thus, the type of administrative system adopted could facilitate or impede the professional preparation of teachers, and in turn the quality of basic education. The decentredness of the research has provided opportunities and the knowledge of Habermas’ (1971) method for analysing the
unquestioned assumptions held by participants (their system-world) in a decision-making process.

Next to be considered in the review of literature is trainees’ conceptions of teachers’ work.

2.2 TRAINEES’ CONCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS’ WORK

Prospective teachers enter pre-service teacher education institutions such as the LTC with different experiences, opinions, beliefs and conceptions about teaching and teachers (Kelly, 1993; Sarason, 1982; Lortie, 1975). It has been reported that some pre-service teachers hold disparaging views of professional preparation, such as believing that the work is easy and that it is of minimal academic value (Carter & Doyle, 1995; Wittrock, 1986). Prospective teachers entering pre-service teacher education with such views could attempt to avoid doing serious intellectual work during their professional preparation.

For teacher educators, understanding and having some knowledge of prospective teachers’ experiences could help them bring about desired changes in their trainees’ conceptions of pre-service education and teaching in general. It follows that, as Wax and Wax (1971:10-11) stated:

Just as we need to know more about how children are transformed into pupils so must we know more about how young persons [student teachers] are transformed into teachers.

In the process of such transformation, one could assume that prospective teachers’ conceptions of teaching continue to develop, consolidate and improve. However, this may be impeded by their past inappropriate experiences and/or their unfavourable attitudes. In either case, a well-planned and coherent teacher education program will attempt to remedy these undesirable attitudes.

Prospective teachers’ conceptions of teaching are acquired from different sources. Initially they can be attributed to their parents’ influence at home and, later, to their observations of their own teachers when attending school. Whilst in school young people spend hours observing teachers at work, and by the time they enter a pre-service teacher education program they have already acquired considerable information about life in the classroom (Lanier & Henderson, 1973). This, in a sense, serves as what Lortie (1975:61) referred to as “apprenticeship of observation”. Through this initial contact with teachers, prospective teachers sometimes come to believe that there is little to learn, and even little needed “to obtain a knowledge base in pedagogy in order to become effective teachers” (Brock, 1993:11).

Student teachers tend to practise strategies and routines that they acquired as students during school days, rather than those they may have learnt during the pre-service program.
(Kelly, 1993; Sarason, 1982; Lortie, 1975). In the eyes of pre-service students, the value of a
teacher education program is reduced as a result of these perceptions. Entering teacher
education institutions with such prior conceptions of teaching could adversely affect student
teachers in pre-service work, and later when they become practicing teachers. It is, therefore,
the role of teacher education to transform pre-service students into professionally prepared
teachers by changing conceptions of education, as well as to develop particular skills and
competencies. In other words, the life-world of the students is modified by the shared
assumptions about education and specifically teaching derived from their experiences at the
teacher colleges prior to assuming their role as teachers (Habermas, 1990: 135).

Apart from the courses taught, the opportunities provided for ‘hands-on’ teaching in
schools (practice teaching) offers scope for student teachers to develop more appropriate
conceptions of teaching and the broader work expected of teachers. However, Kelly (1993:3),
writing about beginning teachers’ conceptions of teaching, reported that:

Many of the conceptions of teaching developed during these experiences are
based on organization’s practices and procedures rather than on the kind of
teaching expertise promoted in teacher education courses.

Kelly’s argument is that what actually happens during practice teaching has a greater
impact on beginning teachers than what is promoted in teacher education courses. The ideas
and methods emphasized in the teacher education programs do not accord directly with the
challenges subsequently met in the classroom (Kelly, 1993; Ryan, 1980). Therefore, the
students may not bother to study seriously about teaching in a teacher education program.
The theoretical and practical endeavours often represent competing commitments to “ways of
knowing” and “coming to know” teaching (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1986:154). It may
be that the knowledge gained during their pre-service training might not be compatible with
their life-worlds (Habermas 1990: 135). In view of this dichotomy, it would be useful for pre-
service teacher education programs to be grounded in the realities of the work environment,
instead of portraying what might be perceived as an ‘ivory tower’ image to the students.
Apart from preparing for professional life as it really is in the field, the pre-service program
should also consider what life may be like in the field in future.

Since trainees’ conceptions of teaching develop from childhood experiences, and
from the different instructional settings such as the home and the school, concerted efforts
need to be made by teacher educators, especially if student teachers hold negative
conceptions of teaching. The pre-service program should transform the prospective teachers’
skills, knowledge and values to achieve the professionalism demanded of this important
profession. What Merton, Reader and Kendall (1957:vii) wrote with reference to medical
school students may also hold true for teacher education students:

[the training should] shape the professional self of the student, so that he [or
she] comes to think, feel and act like a [teacher].
The educational institutions, i.e. the system-worlds that professionally prepare teachers, are initially responsible for transforming and shaping the professional self of the student teachers before they assume the responsibilities of teachers. Hence, it is essential to provide relevant experiences in the theoretical and practical components of the teacher education program to enable prospective teachers to have better conceptions of the teachers’ world of work, the complexity of which is highlighted in the next section.

2.3 TEACHERS’ WORK

From a professional point of view, the nature and expectations of teachers’ work should best be determined by the profession itself. However, because of its great social responsibility, teachers’ work should be equally determined and influenced by the wider community and the educational authorities. Therefore, teachers’ work should be cooperatively and carefully worked out by the teaching profession, as well as by the educational authorities, in order to see that pre-service teacher education is aligned with teachers’ world of work as perceived by both parties. Since emerging social and institutional contexts may change these perceptions, pre-service teacher education should take account of “institutional contexts in which teachers live and work and which shape their professional lives and their sense of what is possible” (Gill & Doeke, 1999 cited in Australian College of Education, 2000:9).

Nature of Work

Educational researchers have used different occupational ‘labels’ to describe teachers’ work. Teachers’ work is seen as a type of artistic endeavor (Eisner, 1978; Gage, 1978), as a type of craftwork (Huberman, 1993; Pratte & Rurry, 1991) and as a form of labour (Apple, 1988). These are different conceptions of teachers’ work, and these broad occupational labels, as aptly put by Rowan (1994:4), are:

- power symbols that mobilize support and neutralize opposition in debates about educational policy and practice.

Although these broad occupational labels are helpful in terms of classification, they may not distinguish the different kinds of work performed, even within one occupation (Rowan, 1994; Simpson, 1985; Freidson, 1984).

Whatever labels are used it would still be impossible to clearly define the complex and demanding work carried out by teachers (Hackett, 2000; Halsall, 1998; A. Hargreaves, 1997; Seddon & Brown, 1997; Sumisn, 1996; A. Hargreaves, 1994). As Hackett (2000:45) points out, some writers fail to acknowledge the “moral dimensions of teaching or complexities which are involved in being an effective practitioner”.

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A comparison of the work of teachers with that of other workers (non-professionals) was recorded by a prominent Indo-Fijian academic, Bhindi (1989). This is illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1: A comparison of the Work of Teachers and other Workers (non-professionals)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Workers (non-professionals)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Dedication</td>
<td>Continuous commitment</td>
<td>Day to day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Notion of vocation</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Earning a livelihood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Intrinsic satisfaction</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate to low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Relationship to clients</td>
<td>Special</td>
<td>Largely economic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Notion of supervision</td>
<td>Co-ordination of co-equals (collegiate)</td>
<td>Largely master – servant or worker basis relationship (bureaucratic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Membership requirements</td>
<td>Usually academic Qualifications and / or training</td>
<td>Usually skills oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Goal focus</td>
<td>Community oriented</td>
<td>Job oriented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bhindi, 1989:57

On the basis of the seven dimensions identified by Bhindi, one could conclude that teachers’ work requirements are different from those of non-professional workers. With regard to one of the dimensions, that is, ‘goal focus’, the work of teachers is not confined to the four walls of the classroom. Bhindi (1989: 57), stated with reference to comparisons of the work of teachers and those of other non-professional workers, that:

…[although] teachers may share certain common characteristics with others, the essence of their calling is different and special.

For instance, the work of teachers is of major significance, as they are responsible for the development of human capital (Hunt, 1990), for the education of all citizens who will later hold positions of responsibility, contributing to the nation’s development not only in government service, but also in the private sector. For this reason, adequate professional preparation of primary teachers should be high on the political agenda, as it lays the foundation for the development of the basic skills of all the occupations. Studies of teachers’ work reveal that teachers perform a multitude of roles and tasks (Turney et al., 1986; Miller, Trieman, Cain, & Ross, 1980; Hilsum & Strong, 1978). As stated earlier, roles and tasks of
teachers can be broadly divided into three areas: the classroom, the school, and the community domains (Turney et al., 1986). These are examined in the following sections.

Work in the Classroom

Teachers’ work inside the classroom involves carrying out their central function, namely, driving the teaching/learning process, which is rated as highly complex (Australian Science Teachers Association, 2000; Dinham & Scott, 1998; Clark & Peterson, 1985; Berliner, 1984; Gage, 1984; Bolster, 1983; Brophy & Everton, 1976). Teaching in elementary school may be more complex than in other higher levels of formal education, as teachers deal with children who are in their formative stages of development. Obviously considerable care, attention and knowledge is required of teachers at this level of formal education.

In this context, Smyth’s (1989b) suggestion that 'practitioner knowledge' should lead to 'intuitive knowledge' based on reflective practice is relevant. These forms of knowledge in relation to practice are relevant at both local and societal levels. In this context Smyth (1989b: 4) further elaborates the way teachers’ reflective practice is appropriate:

Reflection can, therefore, vary from a concern with the micro aspects of the teaching-learning process and subject matter knowledge, to macro concerns about political/ethical principles underlying teaching and the relationship of schooling to the wider institutions and hierarchies of society. How we conceptualize teaching, whether as a set of neutral, value-free technical acts, or as a set of ethical, moral, and political imperatives holds important implications for the kind of reflective stance we adopt.

Smyth’s use of reflection has a number of functions including the teachers’ examination of practice in the day-to-day role of a classroom teacher. This function is important and is encouraged by teacher educators. However, an additional function referred to by Smyth is the use of reflection to consider the macro aspects of the educational endeavour. This function might include the criticism of the curriculum being taught at particular year levels even to the examination of the whole education system as it exists in Fiji. This higher function of reflection seems not to be a characteristic of educational debate in Fiji and this is demonstrated in the model (see Figure 3) expressing the concerns of the educational community associated with teacher education at the LTC.

While Symth (1989b), uses examples purporting to express objectivity this concept is the opposite of the situation described by Habermas (1971) where seemingly objective concepts are embedded in an interpretive mechanism for communicative purposes. In undertaking this important work, teachers need to plan for learning, initiate and guide learning, facilitate independent learning, monitor the learning environment and also monitor
and evaluate children’s academic performance (Australian Council of Deans of Education, 1998; Turney et al., 1986; Correy, 1980; Smith, 1980). Because of the proliferation of subjects in the curriculum, as well as other issues of critical importance such as environmental education and values education, teachers are expected to handle extra responsibilities (UNESCO, 1996). With regard to planning for learning, teachers need to select appropriate resources and strategies for the delivery of lessons. In addition to the curriculum materials provided for them, teachers still need to further adapt the curriculum to suit the abilities of their students and present the lessons in a logical manner based on children’s prerequisite knowledge (Grant & Wieczorek, 2000; Brock, 1999; Gagne & Briggs, 1979). Other issues, such as children’s different learning styles, add to the complexity of the teachers’ work. As succinctly stated by Darling-Hammond (1988:5):

students are not standardized and teaching is not routine. Consonant with recent research on learning, this view acknowledges that teaching techniques deemed effective will vary for students with different learning styles, at different stages of cognitive and psychological development, for different subject areas and for different instructional goals.

It is certainly true that children are not standardized, and teachers will come across individual differences in children, not only in the way they learn, but also in the kinds of experiences and levels of understanding they bring to learning situations. Since all children have a right to education, it becomes the duty of the teacher to act as a resource for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties. However, studies have shown that beginning teachers have problems and concerns in areas such as teaching techniques, dealing with widely ranging ability groups and adapting teaching to individual learners’ needs (Grant & Wieczorek, 2000; Cairns, 1998; Telfer, 1979; Taylor & Dale, 1971). With reference to beginning teachers in Papua New Guinea, MacNamara (1989) reported that they lacked adequate professional and social skills to deal with the learning needs of children. Veenman’s (1984) review of empirical studies shows that the common problems faced by beginning teachers were classroom discipline, learner motivation, learner differences, student assessment, parental relations, class work organization, materials, learners’ personal problems, and heavy teaching loads. Changes in community expectations of teachers have placed extra demands on primary teachers, as they are also expected to cater for children with ‘special needs’ (Grant & Wieczorek, 2000; Cairns, 1998; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991). As Grant and Wieczorek (2000:913), stated:

In a typical classroom of 25 students, today’s teachers will serve at least 4 or 5 students with specific educational needs that they have not been prepared to meet.
Teachers are often ill prepared to cater for children who have social and other family difficulties (Delors, 1996). This shows that beginning teachers’ skills may be inadequate to deal with a wide range of individual differences in the classroom. Hence, pre-service education needs to address these aspects to ensure that prospective teachers are adequately prepared to cater for such a wide range of differences.

Teacher trainees need to be encouraged by the teacher education institutions to use a constructivist approach to teaching/learning. As stated by Tobin, Kahle & Fraser (1990:411) with reference to a constructivist approach:

...learning is defined as the construction of knowledge by individuals as sensory data are given meaning in terms of prior knowledge. Learning is an interpretative process, involving constructions of individuals and social collaboration.

This is similar to what Good (1983:55) termed “active teaching”. This notion is also developed by Brock (1999:16):

Through addressing the needs, taking account of the interests, and challenging the capacities of each individual student – the essential “social good” pursued by the profession of teaching to maximise the learning …opportunities to help enable each individual student to achieve personal excellence in the intellectual, personal, social, cultural, emotional, physical, moral, spiritual and other aspects of human development.

To achieve these aims, teachers should create opportunities for students in learning by means of observation, discussion and the conducting of experiments.

With reference to teaching, and in particular science teaching at the secondary level in Fiji, Muralidhar (1989) and Whitehead (1986) have reported that it is very ‘bookish’. With regard to teaching Basic Science, Muralidhar (1989) points out that teachers lack adequate background in the subject matter, and also, lack confidence in handling activity-based learning. He argues that the problem is more pronounced in primary schools. Similarly, in a recent study of Social Science teaching, R. Prasad (2000) noted that teachers hardly use enquiry-based learning. Teachers, especially those in developing countries, are not using stimulating approaches to teaching (World Bank, 1990). Learning any subject by rote, for example, does not develop higher levels of thinking skills (Carin & Sund, 1980). In this situation, John Dewey's progressive idea that children should also be given some responsibility for directing and influencing their own learning needs attention (Sharan & Sharan, 1992). Teachers could also enhance learning by drawing upon children's experiences. Prospective teachers should receive appropriate training in pedagogical skills in order to make use of stimulating approaches to teaching (Wideen, Mayer-Smith & Moon, 1998). To achieve this, teachers need to switch roles from “soloist to accompanist and shift emphasis from dispensing information to helping learners seek, organize and manage knowledge, guide
them rather than mould them” (Delors, 1996:144). This would make the teaching/learning process more fruitful and meaningful to the learners, and in turn help improve their academic performance.

This suggests that the transmissive approaches to teaching, such as ‘chalk and talk’ may no longer be considered appropriate. Teachers need to take a more creative approach, instead of rigidly using the transmissive approach alone. As stated by the then Fiji Minister for National Planning and Information, the Honourable Senator Filipe Bole (1999:9), such a change in the teaching/learning process “would develop the problem-solving capabilities of our children, capabilities which are becoming more and more necessary in our rapidly changing world”. Additionally, teachers should be able to relate the curriculum to real life situations in order to make learning more relevant to the learners.

Variations in the complexity of teachers' work are also noticeable from classroom to classroom and from school to school (Rowan, 1994). One of the common features of schools in remote locations is multi-class teaching.

Multi-class teaching

‘Multi-class’ teaching is a situation where a teacher handles the teaching of two or more year groups in one classroom (Collingwood, 1991). Most Pacific Island States have multi-class teaching. Within the South Pacific region, multi-class involves:

- 50% of all primary schools, including 25% of teachers and 28% of the children in Fiji.
- 25% of primary schools in the Solomon Islands.
- 60% of primary teachers, and 50% of the children in Kiribati.
- 8 out of 9 primary schools in Tuvalu.
- 60% of teachers involving 67 out of primary schools in the Marshall Islands.
- 50% of primary schools in the Cook Islands.
- 10% of teachers and 8% of children in Western Samoa.
- 28% of primary school children in Vanuatu.

(Collingwood, 1991:12).

Teachers in schools located in urban areas usually have the responsibilities of single year level class teaching, whereas those in remote schools are required to handle multi-class teaching.

Class size

The work of teachers has become more difficult in some areas because of large class sizes. With reference to class size, international organizations recommended that:

- class size should be such as to permit the teacher to give the pupils individual attention. From time to time provisions may be made for small group or individual instruction for such purpose as remedial work (International Labour Organization [ILO] & UNESCO, 1984:32).
The purpose of this recommendation is to provide more individualized instruction, as it is recognized that a more individualized approach to teaching is necessary to maximise the potential of each learner. The World Bank (1990) suggests that a class size of twenty students or less will maximise teachers’ interactions with students and could boost achievement. However, the class sizes in some countries are unmanageable. A chartered accountancy firm, which carried out Fiji public service job evaluation, highlighted a concern about class size when it commented that “there are too many pupils in one classroom to be taught effectively by a competent teacher in too many classrooms in Fiji’s primary schools” (Deloitte, Touche & Tohmatsu, 1993:90). Teaching a multi-class or a large single year level class is very demanding and challenging to new teachers who are not adequately prepared for these difficult situations. However, these difficulties are exacerbated by having to work in difficult educational contexts such as in remote, rural and isolated areas. These issues, therefore, clearly suggest that the nature of the work performed by teachers is also influenced by the location of the school. A recent study in the Australian state of Queensland on teachers’ pre-service tertiary education preparation indicated that beginning teachers in rural schools were less satisfied with their professional preparation (Queensland Education, 2000). This suggests that beginning teachers in Queensland lack the ability to cope with the difficulties faced in some work contexts. As pointed out by Rowan (1994:10):

...teaching is a highly complex form of work. But there is reason to believe that these ratings underestimate the complexity of work performed by some teachers... The ratings for teachers...are based on a small number of observations conducted over a decade ago, and they ignore potential intra-occupational variations in the nature of teachers’ work.

In spite of these limitations, Rowan’s summary provides us with some valuable information on the nature of the work carried out by teachers in their classrooms. Since teaching is complex professional work, a mandatory program of high quality and relevant preparation is necessary to prepare teachers to meet the varying conditions and needs of different schools. It is only after appropriate teacher preparation that teachers can work effectively. On the whole, “teaching children and adolescents is complex work, and successful performance of this work requires high levels of general educational development and specific vocational preparation” (Rowan, 1994:13). Therefore, to perform effectively in schools, to carry out such complex work, teachers need a great deal of specialized knowledge and skills (Sykes, 1990).

Work Beyond the Classroom

In pre-service teacher education, most consideration is given to the classroom domain and only limited attention to work required in the other two domains referred to by
Goodlad (1983), the school and community contexts. Emphasis, therefore, is on classroom events rather than school-wide practices. However, a school is a community and all its members need to actively participate in contributing to its development (Ginsburg & Kamat, 1997; Cairns & Hase, 1996; Hopkins & Widen, 1984; Goodlad, 1983). For trainee teachers to realise that this is an important area of teacher’s work, teacher education programs need to focus on both the school and community domains, and the roles teachers play in each. Teachers in Fiji are required, for example, to organise co-curricular activities for the children. Apart from working closely with children, teachers need to collaborate with one another and with other people in the provision of these additional educational experiences. In the case of school-based curriculum development, co-operation among teachers and, in particular, the application of appropriate human and interpersonal skills, is vital (Bell & Gilbert, 1994). Disseminating information to parents on children’s school work and locating community resources for teaching/learning have also been considered to be part of teachers’ work. However, research shows that schools and teachers tend to be isolated from parents and more generally from the communities in which they teach (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Turney et al., 1986). For example, a recent Queensland study on teachers’ pre-service tertiary education preparation indicated that beginning teachers had been inadequately prepared for professional and community relationships (Queensland Education, 2000).

Evidence from the literature shows that working with parents can lead to improved pupil behaviour, reduced pupil absenteeism and increased support and participation from parents in school activities (Marsh, 1998; Moles, 1982). Similarly, parents’ participation in school work and partnership with teachers enhances student learning (Rosenholtz, 1989; Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis, & Ecob, 1988). Thus, there are advantages in fostering teacher-parent cooperation. The teacher, therefore, becomes an important component in his/her community’s efforts, not only to handle the impact of change on the lives of its members but also to increase their capacity to absorb it (Maraj, 1981). Hence, teachers need to possess skills in interpersonal relationships in order to enhance their work as teachers.

It is increasingly realized that effective performance in the classroom requires knowledge and skills relevant to the roles involved in other domains, such as the community domain (Smith, 1980). As aptly stated by Turney et al. (1986:7):

If teachers do not learn to operate effectively in each of these domains their pursuit of the fundamental aim of all teaching - promoting pupil learning and development - will necessarily be limited.

The primary teacher in Fiji is a generalist who not only teaches one or more classes, but also attends to a multitude of duties and demands inside and outside of the school (Fiji Teachers Confederation, 1993). For example, they are required to report to parents regarding children’s progress in school work, assist in fund-raising for the school and be in charge of
numerous other activities such as Road Safety, Scouting and general duties. Even though these are non-teaching duties, teachers still need to be well prepared to carry them out because they relate to the all-round development of the children. The then Fiji Director of Public Prosecutions, Ms Nazhat Shameem (1995:1), while addressing FTU members, also emphasized the responsibilities shouldered by teachers:

> A teacher’s burden in a society is a heavy one, for not only is he/she expected to have knowledge and wisdom, but he/she is also expected to have all the attributes that we would like our children to have.

The list of requirements and duties, therefore, indicate not only the varied responsibilities of teachers, but also the community’s expectations of teachers in Fiji.

Investigations of teacher education programs by Kaplan (1977) suggest that student teachers were poorly prepared for understanding the social forces that affect pupils, developing positive attitudes towards working co-operatively with parents and other members of the community, and actually working with non-professionals of all kinds. Similarly, a study conducted in the Australian state of Queensland indicated that pre-service teacher education programs failed to provide opportunities for student teachers to interact and work with parents and other stakeholders (Hobart, Self & Ward, 1994). Research studies on the experiences of new teachers have shown that teacher education programs have inadequately prepared them for the complex and demanding work expected of them (Cairns, 1998; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Johnston & Ryan, 1983). In view of this, teacher education programs may need to be revised and reorganized on the basis of expected teacher roles and possible developments in this area, rather than the content structure of professional studies being the basis for the selection and organization of the material (Turney et al., 1986). Failure to consider teachers’ actual work could lead to narrow and lopsided views of their functions, and an inability on the part of future teachers to fulfil their responsibilities in all areas after certification (Turney et al., 1986).

Teachers, therefore, need not only to consider their classrooms as their primary focus of interaction and responsibility, but also to see their relationships with colleagues, parents and other members of the community as integral to their work. With the passage of time, the work of teachers will become even more complex and challenging because of social changes, curriculum innovation and advances in information and communications technology (UNESCO, 1996). These emerging changes are going to “alter substantially the nature, and add to the complexity” of teachers’ work (Turney et al., 1986).

It is therefore essential to provide student teachers with a sound overview of the work that will be expected of them in the field. In particular, teacher education programs must be oriented in such a manner as to produce multi-skilled and flexible teachers who could work effectively in different educational settings (M. G. Singh & Gale, 1996).
Consideration should be given to these areas in pre-service teacher education, otherwise prospective teachers will be inadequately prepared to respond to the pressures stemming from the wide range of roles and tasks which they will be called upon to fulfil.

The section that follows looks at the perceptions of teachers’ effectiveness.

2.3.1 PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS’ EFFECTIVENESS

Teacher effectiveness is perceived differently by different interest groups. Biddle and Ellena (1964:15) defined teacher effectiveness as:

…the ability of a teacher to produce agreed-upon educational effects in a given situation.

From the above definition, one could say that teacher effectiveness is bounded by both situation and expectation. Their view closely corresponds to that of the Performance Management System proposed by the Fiji Government for the entire civil service, currently being resurrected. In the Fiji context, parents and the community view teacher effectiveness only in terms of pupils’ academic achievement (Fiji Islands Education Commission, 2000). Academics, however, would consider this to be a narrow vision of the educational enterprise, neglecting the more holistic aspects of education. For example, it is considered that the success of pupils does not depend wholly and solely on teacher experience and training (Coleman, 1966).

However, in an influential United Kingdom (UK) based study, Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston and Smith (1979) demonstrated that the quality of teachers contributed to school effectiveness — teachers do make a difference. The above study supports the notion that teacher quality is an important variable in school success. Gardner (1983) highlighted in his book *A Nation at Risk* that the main reason that one school was better than another was the quality of its teachers in handling the educational enterprise. Olson and Hendrie (1998) suggested that well-prepared teachers can improve children’s educational outcomes. Similarly, Ingvarson (1998:20) observed that:

good teachers make good schools, much more than the reverse. Their accumulated knowledge and skills form the principal asset in any school or education system.

Each of these researchers argues convincingly that teacher effectiveness contributes to school effectiveness. Both in turn enhance the attainment of educational outcomes (Bolam, 1997; Hill, Rowe & Holmes-Smith, 1993). Thus, schools can function properly only if they are staffed with well-prepared teachers who are effective in their work and address their responsibilities. This is significantly influenced by the quality of teachers’ professional preparation.
Shaw (1992), in a study of students’ perceptions of effective and ineffective teachers across cultural barriers, found that students in the United States of America (USA) considered personality skills to be an important measure of teacher effectiveness. On the other hand, students of Botswana and Zimbabwe considered instructional skills to be more important (Shaw, 1992). Any behaviour, including that of a teacher, is also influenced by the culture in which the teacher has to operate. Thaman (1992:10) reinforces the role of culture in teacher education as “looking towards the source”, referring to the cultural context of the school in its community.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (1994:36), in its report Quality in Teaching, identified certain characteristics of teacher behaviour that contributes to teacher effectiveness. These are:

- demonstrate commitment.
- have subject specific knowledge and know their craft
- love children
- set an example of moral conduct
- manage groups effectively
- incorporate new technology
- master multiple models of teaching and learning
- adjust and improvise their practice
- know their students as individuals
- exchange ideas with other teachers
- reflect on their practice
- collaborate with other teachers
- advance the profession of teaching
- contribute to society at large.

While the list is very comprehensive, the report described succinctly what teaching involved, stating that it is a process of “knowing and caring” (OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, 1994:36). The results of more recent research into the contribution of teacher behaviours to teacher effectiveness were advocated by Hackett (2000:41). A good teacher, he said:

- is in command of the subject area
- has high expectations of achievement and behaviour
- is a good communicator
- makes lessons interesting
- is caring and enthusiastic
- is patient/warm/approachable/calm under stress
- is a good ‘team’ player
- has good relationship with other staff
- plans carefully
Hackett’s (2000) list is quite extensive and constitutes a mix of pedagogic and management skills as well as personal qualities. Haddad (1990:49), also provides a comprehensive picture of teacher effectiveness when he states that:

Teacher effectiveness usually is indicated by such characteristics as formal academic study, teacher training, subject mastery, verbal ability and attitudes towards teaching.

Most of these characteristics could be developed during pre-service education. Pre-service education, therefore, can contribute significantly in terms of improving teacher effectiveness in all the areas of work expected of them. Apart from factors within and outside the school, Bhindi (1989) also considers that professional factors contribute substantially teacher effectiveness. These include pre-service training for school management, to inform student teachers about their roles and responsibilities and also, about working with the school community in order to enhance their performance. The latter is especially important in a multi-racial society such as Fiji. The teacher needs to be sensitive to the culture and traditions of the various ethnic groups in order to work in collaboration with them (Hackett, 2000).

Teachers, especially well-prepared ones, have a profound impact on pupils’ learning outcomes (Hackett, 2000; Day, 1997; Department for Education and Employment, 1997; King, 1991). Teacher qualities such as competence in handling the teaching/learning process (pedagogy and behaviour management), and knowledge and skills in assessing and diagnosing pupils’ needs and learning difficulties, are some of the factors which contribute to teacher effectiveness (Hughes, 1992). The trainees’ qualities need to be developed and shaped so that they are well prepared to operate successfully in different contexts, such as the classroom, the school and the community. If these qualities are not properly developed during pre-service education, then beginning teachers will have feelings of inadequacy when dealing with essential tasks at the classroom, school and community levels. Good personal qualities, for example commitment, will help beginning teachers establish effective working relationships with children, professional colleagues in the school, parents and others (Hackett, 2000; A. Hargreaves, 1998; Hopkins & Stern, 1996). Hence, pre-service education should develop appropriate qualities and attitudes in prospective teachers so that they can effectively carry out the tasks and meet the responsibilities of all areas of their work. Such qualities include not only knowledge and skills, but also the personal attributes necessary to be adaptable, flexible, supporting of learning and learners, collegial and able to relate well to the clientele (Whitaker, 1997).

The next section looks at the selection criteria for entry into teacher education programs.

2.4 ENTRY INTO PRE-SERVICE EDUCATION
For the purpose of producing good quality teachers, a comprehensive set of recruitment and selection criteria is desirable. The criteria, however, should be reviewed from time to time so that talented young people are admitted into teacher education programs based on emerging needs and trends.

Selection Criteria

Selecting suitably qualified candidates for teacher education is a matter of concern. Some of the questions that could usefully be asked to inform this process are:

- How should they be selected?
- Is the academic record a good guide?
- Is an interview helpful?
- What other criteria of selection might we use?
- How can we tell if our selection system works?

(Elley, 1984:14)

These questions draw the attention of concerned authorities to the need to employ selection criteria that would call for qualities in the entrants befitting the teaching profession. Reliance on academic results or an interview rating alone would not seem sufficient. A study in Wellington, New Zealand indicates that:

... the students who showed up best in academic performance and interview were by no means the best teachers (Elley, 1984:14).

The World Council of Teaching Profession (WCTOP) (1982:50) has also endorsed this view and proposed that:

The criteria used for entry in the teaching profession should not be limited to intellectual aptitude and academic ability.

A similar recommendation was also made by the ILO and UNESCO (1984:24):

... admission to teacher preparation should be based on the completion of an appropriate secondary education, and evidence of the possession of personal qualities likely to help the person concerned to become a worthy member of the profession.

UNESCO (1996) also pointed out that, because of considerable changes in the work of teachers, it is important to consider entrants’ personal qualities rather than their academic qualifications alone. More recently, Ms Elie Jouen (2001), the Deputy Secretary General for Education International, suggested that it is important to recruit talented young people into the teaching profession, although ‘talented’ seems difficult to define in terms of attributes and/or performance. Besides, it is necessary not only to attract better candidates into teaching, but also to help them in their preparation to become more effective in meeting the needs of the changing education system (Galton, 1996).
Another aspect related to trainee selection seems to be previous related experience in teaching or allied fields. In the USA, several educational reforms have been introduced, of which a review of new entry requirements for teacher education programs is one. Darling-Hammond and Berry (1988:11), with reference to entry requirements in the USA, state that:

These new entrance requirements for teacher education programs include tests of academic achievement and ability, minimum grade point averages, and in some cases practicum experience related to teaching.

Results of studies reviewed show that a variety of aspects can be considered in selecting a student for a teacher education program. The emphasis varies from state to state in the USA. Some states used the Scholastic Aptitude Test, California Achievement Test or the pre-professional Skills Test as instruments to measure students’ academic suitability for undertaking a teacher education program (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1988). Those candidates who went through the process of admission tests did well in later teacher certification tests and examinations (Galamboo, 1986). Darling-Hammond and Berry (1988) also noted that some states, such as Alabama, Kentucky and New Jersey, were beginning to make some practicum experience compulsory in addition to using scholastic achievement tests for admission into teacher education programs.

It is interesting to note that in these studies consideration is given prior to practical experience. This is a good criterion, as the trainees would have by then ‘figured out in their minds’ whether they would be able to meet the demands and responsibilities of work in the field. On the basis of these demands, students and institutions could then decide whether it would be fitting for them to undertake teaching as a career. It is also interesting to note that some states in the USA have included other aspects in their selection procedure. As further reported by Darling-Hammond and Berry (1988:13):

In Oklahoma, candidates for teacher education programs must present a 2.5 GPA, adequate reading, writing and communications skills and evidence of a personality that would prove suitable when working with youth, parents and other members of the educational community.

It appears that the State of Oklahoma has adopted very comprehensive selection criteria for admission into teacher education programs. The Australian State of Queensland has considered using personality characteristics apart from Tertiary Entrance scores (Board of Teacher Education Queensland (BTEQ), 1987). To broaden the selection criteria, the BTEQ (1987:2-3) considered the use of:

data from school reports on school achievements, interests, concern for children, talents, interpersonal relationships, oral and written communications skills
data from standardized tests on higher mental abilities, creativity and flexibility
data derived from interviews on communication skills, commitment and self confidence.

While these criteria were not ultimately put into operation, these are comprehensive criteria for selection because emphasis is given to other qualities deemed essential, not restricted to the Tertiary Entrance score which was the criterion used in previous years (BTEQ, 1987). Broadening of the recruitment criteria will ensure better screening of candidates for pre-service teacher education (Delors, 1996).

In an early study of education in Fiji, in addition to scholastic achievement, the personal traits of the teacher recruits were emphasized by the Fiji Education Commission report (1969:33):

> Persons should be selected who exhibit desirable personal traits such as good speech and appropriate attitudes towards other people.

The personality of a teacher is as important as academic achievement, since teachers are required to exhibit appropriate behaviour inside as well as outside the school. This is so because of the nature of the work carried out by teachers and their roles *in loco parentis*, that is, the trust vested in them by virtue of their work. Teachers are expected to display appropriate professional conduct at all times. Not only is this expected of teachers at their workplace in front of an impressionable audience, but also beyond the school gate in the community at large. They are therefore important role models for the children and the community. Recently, the then Fiji Minister for Education, the Honourable Pratap Chand (2000a:13), reminded Fijian teachers of the importance of their professional conduct:

> The teaching profession of the 21st Century will expect its members not only to achieve high levels of competence and skills in their work, but at all times will be expected to possess high moral and ethical conduct befitting [the] profession.

This is also reflected in the UNESCO report (1990), which states that in comparison to other vocations, the teaching profession places a stronger emphasis on social values and professional ethics. Hargreaves (1998:835) also cautions about the danger of ignoring the personal and emotional dimensions:

> Good teaching is charged with positive emotion. It is not just a matter of knowing one’s subject, being efficient, having the correct competences, or learning all the right techniques. Good teachers are not just well-oiled machines. They are emotional, passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge and joy.

Those selected should possess personal qualities befitting the teaching profession such as the burning desire to work with children. This is because “teachers relate to their
charges in a way which is qualitatively different from other professions, such as medicine” (Hackett, 2000:42).

However, it is difficult for those who are responsible for selecting the intake of prospective teachers to determine the personality traits of candidates in a short period of time. Despite this difficulty, it would be advisable to use a comprehensive approach, such as subjective instruments, in addition to objective instruments to gather relevant data. For example, self report questionnaires, structured interviews, tests of knowledge and letters of reference, might be used in order to select only those recruits fit to join the profession (Lovat, 1998; Shank, 1978).

However, there are several other factors which need to be considered when determining intake. These may include socio-political and demographic factors. As aptly stated by Mercer (1984:14):

Matters needing to be taken into account include the proportion of female and male teachers, the number of mature age entrants they would like to see coming into the profession and whether certain groups should receive positive discrimination given the needs of schools and the diverse range of pupil backgrounds in the schools.

The expectation is that the intake of candidates for teaching should reflect the profile of the population of a particular nation. Special measures could be incorporated in the selection criteria to recruit candidates to enter teaching from different backgrounds, whether linguistic or cultural (Delors, 1996).

In the Pacific Island States, the Melanesian group of islands has multiple cultures and languages (Crocombe & Crocombe, 1994). This is also true for the Fiji context, as there are different cultural systems and languages, as well as schools with predominantly Fijian or Indian children. Also, the teaching of vernacular languages needs to be considered in order to have a desired mix of student teachers as potential recruits for the profession.

Having reviewed the literature related to entry into pre-service programs, a close look at the situation in the South Pacific region itself is useful.

The Situation in the Pacific Island States

The quality and qualifications of recruits for primary teacher training programs are comparatively low in most developing countries, and particularly so in the small Pacific Island states. Although entry qualifications are gradually rising, primary teacher training is not a popular option for suitably qualified school leavers (Benson & Singh, 1993). In the Cook Islands, the minimum entry qualification is a pass in the Fifth Form external examination, that is, the New Zealand School Certificate Examination (Moetaua, 1992). In Kiribati, the Kiribati Teachers College (KTC) admits trainees who have completed at least
five years of secondary education (Tabanga, 1992). This is an inadequate entry qualification for primary teachers. The selection of trainees is also based on interview, school principals’ reports and previous career details and references from employers. The latter applies to mature age students who left school some time ago and later decided to take up teaching as a career. The entry requirement in Papua New Guinea Teachers Colleges is completion of grade 10 with upper level passes in the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Social Science and Science (Maha, 1992). The Vanuatu Teachers College (VTC) has raised its entry qualification to Year 12 Examination with a high standard pass together with good character references (Natuoivi, 1997). In Fiji in the 1970s, however, the minimum entry qualification for teacher education was a pass in the Fiji Junior Certificate Examination (FJCE). Even this entry qualification was not mandatory at times. As reported by Benson (1984:90):

In actual practice these minimum qualifications were not strictly adhered to mainly on the Teachers Union insistence that those who had been ... regarded as ‘suitable’ enough by the Government up to then and therefore should not be dismissed out of hand.

The ones referred to in this case are the Licensed Teachers, who were untrained teachers. Even though these teachers provided services during difficult times, and despite the pressure from the Teacher Unions, the authorities concerned should at least have taken heed of their level of performance in the schools before considering them for entry into the Teachers College. A report from their Head Teachers would have been very useful also.

More recently, the General Secretary of the FTU, Mr A. D. Singh (2000a) stated that there was a breach of the guidelines in the selection of students for LTC. Students who did not meet the criteria were admitted. Such inappropriate selection procedures, if unchecked in the long run, will adversely affect the teaching force and lead to mediocre performance in all areas of work and responsibility.

The Government has a policy of positive discrimination to help Fijian students, and 50 percent of the scholarships for teacher training are reserved for them (Vakatale, 1996). They are seen as more educationally disadvantaged than other ethnic groups, so some preferential consideration is given to them. Also, when selecting these students, the Government ensures that there is some representation from each province. Some concern over this issue was raised in parliament in 1996, and the then Minister for Education, the Honourable Taufa Vakatale, clarified the situation by providing the following breakdown for 1996. The table below shows that there is representation from each of Fiji’s 13 provinces at the College.
Table 2: Number of Students per Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ba</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cakaudrove</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kadavu</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lau</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lomaiviti</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macuata</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadroga/Navosa</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naitasiri</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ra</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewa</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serua</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailevu</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotuma</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next table (Table 3) gives details of teachers in the Fiji primary education system as at May 1999, classified according to their qualifications. Table 3 shows that large numbers of teachers have low levels of academic and professional education. The figures also show that a very small number of graduate teachers serve at the primary school level. The Pro-Vice Chancellor of the USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra (2000:11), in an address to the 69th Conference of the FTU on the theme Professionalising the Teaching Service, stated that “at the primary school level, 42 percent [of the teachers] had Form Five or lower education”. This is an indication of the admission of students with low entry qualifications to the teacher education program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Fijian</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untrained</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomas</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untrained</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed FVII</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untrained</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed FVI and Higher</td>
<td>1073</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untrained</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed FV</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untrained</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed FIV and Lower Trained</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untrained</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2686</strong></td>
<td><strong>2196</strong></td>
<td><strong>172</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Children’s learning is strongly affected by the general education, pedagogical skills and motivation of their teachers (World Bank, 1990; Eltis, 1987).

The rationale for a more comprehensive set of entry requirements is to recruit talented student teachers, who in turn would help to improve the quality of primary education after their own appropriate training. In the USA education system, the purpose of introducing tighter entry requirements is to weed out incompetents entering the teaching force and provide incentives to attract and retain talented individuals in the profession (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1988). Tighter and higher entry requirements, therefore, are a first step in ensuring the production of well-prepared teachers. The tightening of entry requirements complements strategies to improve the qualifications of existing teachers. In Fiji now, there is scope for those with minimal professional qualifications to upgrade them through an in-service teacher education program, building to a Bachelor of Education (Primary) at the USP (USP, 2001).

To ensure that better quality teachers are attracted to the education system, the policies governing recruitment of trainees need to be clearly articulated. Appropriate policies on recruitment would be the first component in an array of requirements necessary to provide a challenging program to pre-service teachers. In short, selecting better quality entrants should be one of the foundational aims of teacher education selection policies.

The next section focuses on the literature related to the professional preparation of teachers in relation to duration and initial qualifications.

2.4.1 PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION: DURATION AND INITIAL QUALIFICATIONS

In this section, the duration of the initial professional preparation of teachers and the entry qualifications for that preparation program will be reviewed. Examples will be drawn from the UK, USA and some of the Pacific Rim countries such as Australia. This will help determine the current context of, and trends in, the length of pre-service education and initial professional qualifications required of teachers.

2.4.2 DURATION OF THE PRE-SERVICE PROGRAM

Research indicates that, within reasonable limits, there is a positive correlation between length of pre-service education and the quality of teachers (Avalos, 1991; Lockheed
That is, short duration pre-service education may not adequately prepare teachers for the range of work and responsibilities expected of them. An optimum period of pre-service teacher education could be at least three years.

In Papua New Guinea the pre-service primary teacher program was two years until 1991, when a three-year Diploma in Primary Teaching was introduced (Maha, 1992). All of their nine colleges offer a common diploma in primary teaching that is awarded by Papua New Guinea’s National Department of Education (Maha, 1992). Similarly, in 1991 the Western Samoa Teachers College (WSTC) extended its two year program to three and the graduates are awarded a College Diploma (Esera, 1992). The Tonga Teachers College (TTC) also offers a three-year program, leading to a Diploma in Education (Hurrel, 1992). Teachers for Niue are trained at a New Zealand Teachers Training College for three years and are awarded a Diploma (Ioaane, 1992). The KTC has planned for some time to extend their training program from two to three years and replace the teachers’ Certificate with a Diploma in Education, and this was eventually achieved in 1997 (Tabanga, 1997).

In other Pacific Island states, such as Vanuatu, the VTC has maintained a two year pre-service program, leading to a Certificate in Primary Education (Baereleo, 1992). According to the Fiji Education Commission (1969:40) report, the short duration teacher education programs do:

...little more than give teachers a recipe to follow in a ‘cook book’ approach to education long since outmoded.

In the 1970s Fiji had to run short duration courses in order to train teachers as primary schools urgently needed more trained teachers. A graduate of this scheme was known as an ‘Emergency Trained Teacher’ (Fiji Education Commission, 1969). Following the military coup of 1987, there was a huge migration of teachers from Fiji, and the Government had no option but to introduce a Special Teacher Training Scheme (Bole, 1991). School leavers were employed as teachers. Some training was provided to these teachers during the school holidays in their first year of teaching, and they were later required to study only for a year at LTC. The FTU strongly objected to this scheme, but the Government went ahead and implemented it (Chand, 1989). In the above situation an immediate solution was necessary for the welfare and safety of the children required to attend school.

While this has been the response to an emergency situation, there have been continuing demands to extend the duration of initial teacher education programs. For example, Enderwitz (1974:15) recommends that:

All structural differences between teacher categories must be abolished. Most teachers unions or associations want for all teachers, an initial education of the same duration (at least four years at post-secondary level).
Hallack (1990) supports this view. He states that:

Teacher training today can no longer be limited to a two or three year course of study prior to entering the profession (Hallack, 1990:178).

This extension of the training period is necessitated by educational reforms such as the introduction of new subjects into the school curriculum and extended professional responsibilities that teachers are expected to shoulder. Due to the accelerating pace of change, teachers are currently expected to work in conditions of work intensification. Intensification means in this sense the ways in which teachers are pressured into doing more and more work in less time, and has many symptoms (Connell, 1985; Hargreaves, 1994; Luke, 1993). This notion of work intensification is considered by Hargreaves (1994:108) as “a bureaucratically driven escalation of pressures, expectations and controls concerning what teachers do and how much they should do within a school day”. Hargreaves (1994: x-xi) noted the problem of work intensification in these words:

Teachers have become overloaded, they experience intolerable guilt, their work intensifies, and they are remorselessly pressed for time. More and more is added on to existing structures and responsibilities, little is taken away, and still less is completely restructured to the new expectations of and demands upon teaching.

Not only are teachers required to satisfy the immediate demands of their individual classroom contexts but also other extended professional responsibilities. The pre-service program needs to consider this aspect of teachers’ work context and the variety of contextual factors that impinge in their work whilst preparing teachers to meet the increasing volume of work.

For example, in the Australian state of Queensland, considerable changes in school curricula made the work of teachers more demanding as early as 1981 (BTEQ, 1987). Similarly, in Fiji, some new subjects have been introduced and there are plans for more in the future (Racule, 1997). The introduction of Occupational, Health and Safety regulations in the local context places extra responsibility on teachers. Recently, the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) funded the Basic Education Management and Teacher Upgrading Project (BEMTUP), which contributed to the revision of the upper primary curriculum for classes seven and eight in the four subject areas — English, Mathematics, Social Science and Basic Science. This will result in the need to upgrade the pre-service training courses.

To have teachers suitably qualified to cater for reforms and a broadening school curriculum demands a longer duration of pre-service education in order that they be well prepared, not only in the content areas, but also in the pedagogical areas (Carter, 1990; Logan et al., 1990). A short duration pre-service education is not sufficient to adequately cover all
areas of the curriculum, as such teachers are not adequately prepared in both subject matter and pedagogical knowledge. The QBTR (1999) also judged, on the basis of an ongoing review of teacher’s roles and responsibilities, that the demands placed on teacher education to adequately prepare teachers for their challenging roles can no longer be met by pre-service programs of less than four years duration.

England once had teacher education programs of two years duration for primary teachers. However, it was eventually extended to a three year and then gradually to a four year program (Aldrich, 1990). In fact, in England and Wales, James Report (1972) recommended a Diploma in Higher Education of two years duration and equivalent to first two years of a degree program and a second cycle of further, two years to provide the professional preparation for a beginning teacher (Porter, 1996). Most European countries now have a minimum of three years training for primary teachers (Galton, 1996). Most Australian states had one-year training till the early 1950s. Two-year training was introduced in the mid-1950s, three-year in the 1970s and four-year in the 1990s (Ebbeck, 1990). Also, in Australia, primary teacher education programs are offered by the universities, and those intending to pursue a career in primary teaching enrol for a four year bachelors degree program (Ebbeck, 1990). The pattern of a two-year duration pre-service teacher education program no longer exists in Australia, and at present all teachers enter the profession with a four-year qualification (Logan et al., 1990). In more developed countries such as UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand, those who have completed a three-year degree, such as the Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science degree programs, are able to complete a Diploma of Education or Post Graduate Certificate of Education (Galton, 1996). This is a one-year course, after which the trainees are absorbed into primary teaching. This is another route used by employers to recruit candidates for teaching. However, the Fiji Ministry of Education continues to accept a two-year pre-degree qualification from its teacher training institution as adequate for teaching at the primary level.

Evidence suggests that the long tradition of two-year pre-service teacher education seems less than adequate to cope with the contemporary teaching context.

2.4.3 PREPARATION AT A GRADUATE LEVEL

An examination of education in other countries and periods indicates a use in the status of education and a commensurate demand for improved qualifications. The Carnegie Corporation (1986) in its report, A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century and the Holmes Group (1986) recommended that, like other professions, teacher preparation should take place at a graduate level. This was also recently endorsed by UNESCO (1996). The need to raise the qualification of teachers for basic education was also endorsed by the
International Commission on Education (Delors, 1996). With regard to Fiji, the benefits of studying to graduate level in a university before teaching in primary schools was also commended by Horn (1994:24):

It would be of immeasurable benefit to the community and the nation if primary pupils were taught by teachers who had the chance, at whatever point in their careers, to study at university level and then to stay in Primary teaching.

The shift of teacher education programs to the universities has made it possible for student teachers to interact with students doing studies in other academic and professional areas. According to Piaget (1970:125):

...providing the knowledge the teachers need for the later exercise of their profession inside the training college itself ultimately results in cultural limitations, whether one wishes it or not, simply because the students are deprived of the necessary exchanges with other students studying courses leading to different professions.

Therefore, teacher education programs conducted in an institution separate from universities may create a closed social entity, as highlighted by Piaget. Not only could there be interaction within the profession, but also between professions, and universities should be able to provide a congenial environment for such interactions. Fullan (1995) labels this kind of interaction as “interactive professionalism”. An eminent academic at the USP, Velayutham (1995:2), stated with reference to interactive professionalism that:

...teachers need to work cooperatively, collaboratively and complementarily with other professions serving our students and the community.

Since teachers’ work also involves working with parents and other professionals, opportunities need to be provided for such interaction whilst the students are pursuing their teaching training.

In Western Samoa the teacher education program for both primary and secondary teachers has been conducted in the National University of Samoa (NUS) since 1997. The Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE) is also responsible for the training of primary and secondary teachers. The training of primary teachers is of two-years duration, with an award of Certificate of Teaching Primary (Bako, 1999). Like SICHE, the TTC in Tonga provides the training for both primary and secondary teachers. The College, however, runs a three-year program, and confers graduates with a Diploma in Primary Teaching. By virtue of providing training for both primary and secondary teachers, both colleges offer at least some opportunities for interactive professionalism. CCTC in Fiji runs a three year program, and awards the graduates with two certificates - a Primary Teachers Certificate and a Certificate from the Catholic Church authorizing the graduate to teach religion in the...
Catholic schools of Fiji (CCTC, 1997). LTC, on the other hand, continues to offer a two year program, and graduates are awarded the Primary Teachers Certificate (LTC, 2000a). The duration of the program has remained two years since the establishment of the program in 1982. The Government-owned junior secondary teacher training institution, Fiji College of Advanced Education (FCAE), offers a two-year pre-service program leading to a Diploma in Education for secondary teachers (J. Prasad, 1992).

So while the duration of teacher education programs have been extended in UK, Australia and other developed and developing nations, the Government of Fiji-controlled primary teacher training college has retained the two year duration program for those who have already completed sixth or seventh form education. In addition to concerns about the duration of professional training, Fiji continues to offer most of its pre-service primary teacher education programs in separate institutions, while teacher education programs are offered by universities and institutes of higher education in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, UK and the USA. Fiji, therefore, has inherited the early English model of pre-service teacher education and has maintained it. As aptly stated by Taylor and Macpherson (1993:3):

Fiji was a British Colony, and echoes of the education system established during that period are still evident today.

This holds true in the area of primary teacher education, especially in terms of the duration of the teacher education program at the LTC. Despite the fact that both the LTC and FCAE in practice, use completion of Form seven as the entry qualification and offer a two year pre-service program, their graduates receive different awards. This seems a curious state of affairs. The Fiji Education Commission (1969) report proposed the idea of extending the primary teacher education program to three years, as well as the teacher education institutions establishing closer links with the School of Humanities at the USP. However, to date there have been few positive steps taken to implement the proposal.

In 1993 a proposal to initiate a three year program of teacher education for primary teachers was put forward (Jenkins, 1993). Recently (1999) the USP has begun offering an in-service Bachelor of Education degree in Primary Teaching. The graduates from LTC can now complete this degree in two years because USP has recognized the Certificate from LTC as a cross-credit for the first year of the program. The program is designed to offer graduate qualifications to primary school teachers “rather than treating a degree as a ticket for the secondary sector” (Jenkins, 1993:20). However, until recently there existed an anomaly in salary levels for graduates employed in primary and secondary schools. Prior to 1999, those primary teachers graduating with a degree qualification were not paid the graduate salary if they remained in the primary education system. As a result, such teachers were motivated to
join the secondary education system subsequent to acquiring a degree qualification. It became clear that a solution to this problem was needed to make it appropriate and rewarding for graduate primary teachers to remain in the primary education system, as suggested by Lingam (1996:137-138):

...there needs to be some policy change introduced to retain these teachers in the primary education system and to provide the same or comparable kinds of status, remuneration and incentives that are available for secondary teachers.

More recently, this has changed and primary teachers can now expect to receive the graduate salary scale.

This “implies a statement of comparative worth on behalf of those teaching the younger age groups, a philosophy that needs to be better reflected in financial and other arrangements” (Jenkins, 1993:29). Therefore, merely improving the qualification without proper remuneration de-motivates primary school teachers and this, in turn, can adversely affect the delivery of primary education (World Bank, 1990).

The foregoing shows that the duration of teacher preparation is an important factor demanding consideration. As Mager, Alioto, Warchol and Carapella (1995:7) point out:

Layers of knowledge, values, and skills develop, mingle and mature over time to form more complex individuals, more sophisticated thoughts, and more elaborate frames of reference to bring one’s students.

On the bases of such an educational justification, and other factors, such as economic considerations and political pressures, a number of countries have extended the duration of their pre-service programs to ensure better preparation of teachers. Hence, a two-year duration of pre-service education can no longer be expected to provide a thorough preparation for primary teachers. For a better-educated workforce, teachers should be trained at graduate level and in multi-purpose settings such as the universities.

The following section looks at the literature on the teacher education curriculum.

2.4.4 TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The quality of teachers depends, to a large extent on the quality of their preparation and, in particular, the courses in their pre-service program. The courses should be aligned with and relevant to the work and responsibilities they will meet inside and outside the classroom. The courses should, as well, remain responsive to emerging ideas and issues related to teacher education.

Global Influence in Education
Formal education was introduced into the Pacific Island states by the colonisers. They imposed on the indigenous peoples the colonisers’ languages, political systems, belief systems and their education systems. These outside influences on indigenous settings led to profound changes in various aspects of the lives of indigenous people. Great changes were introduced into the traditional education forms (Teasdale & Teasdale, 1999; Thaman, 1994). The structures and ingredients of formal education; that is schools, timetables and examinations mirror those of western education. This is the case with education in general and in teacher education in particular. With reference to teacher education students at another teacher education institution in Fiji, Teasdale and Teasdale (1999: 249) pointed out that “it is hard to tell to which they belong because they all dress in western styles, they all speak in English and they all bring to the college a culture of learning that appear thoroughly western. Their school years have ensured this”.

The previous examples illustrate the influence of western ways of thinking and knowing in teacher education institutions in indigenous settings. There are signs of change in what Alatas (1993:10) referred to as the “indigenisation of academic discourses”. Despite snail-speed changes, indigenous cultures of knowledge and wisdom have been introduced in some settings in the Australia-Pacific region (Gale, 1995; Teasdale & Teasdale, 1994; Thaman, 1994; Beare & Slaughter, 1993). It is the researcher’s position that is essential for scholars in indigenous settings to take initiatives to reassert their own cultural knowledge balanced against those of the west. As Delors (1996) noted, there is both scope and opportunity to incorporate indigenous perspectives into the educational system so as to profit from the strengths of both international and local education. Some initiatives related to the contestation of educational practices and curricular are dealt with in the next section.

Ideal Teacher Education Curriculum for the Pacific Island States

In a meeting of the principals of the Pacific Regional Teacher Training Colleges, the following was highlighted with reference to the teacher education curriculum.

...curricula should be reviewed to take more account of the values - learning styles - cultural milieu in which the training is occurring. In other words, a more Pacific oriented curriculum should be developed (Benson, 1994:2).

This is quite true, as some of the western models of teacher education curricula may be inappropriate for the local educational context. Western teaching methods, such as children working alone in a competitive environment, are not readily adaptable to children’s learning in the Pacific Islands, where there is a stronger ethos of co-operation and generosity (Nabobo & Teasdale, 1994; Benson, 1993; Thomas, 1979). With reference to educational models of developed countries being applied to developing countries, Brock (1993:9) cautioned that:
The temptation to replicate educational models from larger developed countries should be resisted.

There has been some concern raised about western models of teacher education curricula that have been adopted by the regional teacher training colleges (Benson, 1994). Nabobo and Teasdale (1994) also argue that in our formal education system, the Fijian ways of learning, such as group work, are neglected. Similarly, Benson (1993:21) stated that:

While Pacific societies are generally described as co-operative and communal, rather than individualistic, the curriculum and teacher education models we have adopted may mitigate against such sharing.

It is essential, therefore, to consider the cultural sources of Pacific Island people, rather than merely adopting teacher education models from outside the region (Thaman, 1992, 2001, 2002). Even transferring domestic practices and systems from one country to another with a different cultural orientation would not necessarily be very useful without careful evaluation and appropriate adaptation. As Bacchus (2000:4) points out:

This does not mean that one cannot learn much from successful educational practices that have developed in other societies… But such practices would need to be modified where necessary…unlike some other professions such as that of the surgeon who, in most cases, can successfully use the skills, which he/she acquires with patients in one society, in another society.

While teacher education programs recognise the culture and learning approaches of learners in a particular context, this localisation should be complemented by generic teaching competencies.

In a 1995 meeting that included six principals of the regional teacher training colleges, at a Pacific Teacher Education Consultation working group at the USP, participants developed an ideal teacher education curriculum for the Pacific. An ideal teacher education curriculum, they reported, should produce a teacher who:

- has a holistic view — who is concerned for the overall physical, mental, cultural and spiritual development of the child.
- recognizes the cultural underpinning in the various disciplines and uses these to advantage.
- has a thorough understanding of human development in the Pacific, and of the roles of education in Pacific societies.
- views education as preparation for life, not merely for employment, so that she/he develops each child’s potential to become a worthy member of society.
- has sufficient flexibility not only to draw on the strengths and inspirations of his/her cultural roots, but who can cope with and educate children of societal and technological changes. (The ability to balance western and traditional cultural values and methodologies would be valuable).
- has the necessary problem-solving and research skills to be a reflective teacher.
• sees himself/herself as a positive role model for the children and for the community in which he/she serves.
• has appropriate learning to learn skills to cope with changes in the environment.
• has a thorough and up-to-date knowledge of the school curriculum.
• is able to successfully function in multiple class or very large, single class contexts.
• will seek ongoing professional development.
• will be able to evaluate both learning and teaching.
• assists in evaluation and revision of the teacher education curriculum.

Participants added that the curriculum needs to cater for early childhood education, special education, multiple-class teaching, teaching on outer islands, culture-based content and methodologies (Benson, 1995:3).

All these aspects of the ideal teacher education curriculum are relevant, and could be used by the teacher education institutions in the South Pacific to determine whether they are reflected in their curricula. For example, problem-solving and research skills are becoming increasingly important in the development of a reflective teacher (Baba, 1999). The need for tertiary education to better prepare students for research and life-long education in the widest sense was also emphasized by the then Fiji’s Minister for National Planning and Information, the Honourable Senator Filipe Bole (1999).

It would also be wise if the educational and cultural context in which the teachers are going to work were considered when any decision on teacher education curriculum, were made. This would help better contextualise teacher preparation. As suggested by an eminent USP academic and Professor of Pacific Education and Culture, as well as UNESCO Chair in Teacher Education and Culture, Konai Thaman (1998:11):

…teacher educators need to be able to utilize content that is familiar to trainees as well as methods and technologies which are appropriate for and relevant to their learning contexts. These would go a long way towards improving the quality of teacher education in the region.

Teacher educators therefore need to take cognizance of cultural context and try to incorporate certain aspects of the culture, especially in the methods and content of the college courses.

Nevertheless, some relevant and appropriate aspects of the Western model could be adapted and incorporated into the existing teacher education curriculum if they would contribute to enhancing the preparation of teachers. This would ensure that the standard of curriculum at teacher education institutions in Fiji is in accord with other well-developed teacher education institutions in other countries.
The preceding discussion, related to the ideal teacher education curriculum, needs to be viewed in the light of the Pacific context. This curriculum has to be tailored to adequately prepare teachers for the demands they will face in the local context.

Reforms in Teacher Education Curriculum

When reviewing the teacher education curriculum, it has been suggested that the regional teacher training colleges could use Skilbeck’s (1976) model of curriculum development as an appropriate guide (G. Singh, 1994). This model of curriculum development includes ‘situational analysis’ as the first step, and this provides relevant information on the external and internal environments within which curriculum development and its implementation are to occur. The external environment, for example, would provide useful information about the demands of work and responsibilities expected of teachers. The internal environment, on the other hand, would include aspects such as the quality of the teaching staff and the availability of facilities and resources. In relation to the latter, Promkasetrin (1994:33) stated that these are “required to organize relevant activities for teacher education”, and “need careful attention”. With regard to facilities and resources, Long (1986) pointed out that reduced support in terms of college resources can have serious ramifications for the preparation of teachers and, in turn, their performance in the work environment. Sufficient resources and facilities are necessary as they can contribute to the delivery of high quality educational services, and thereby help enrich the preparation of prospective teachers. As stated by King (1991:211), “the bond between textbook provision and teacher training has been made tighter by research suggesting that textbooks contribute to student learning”. Availability of books and other instructional materials could enhance teacher preparation, as well as raise the quality of education (Throsby & Gannicott, 1990; World Bank, 1990; Ainley, 1987; Schieffelbein & Simmons, 1980). More recently, Bates (2002) echoed similar sentiments regarding the need for appropriate resources to provide adequate services in teacher education.

Situational analysis, therefore, can provide valuable information that could form a basis for designing a relevant teacher education curriculum to meet the needs of teachers in their work environment. From time to time appropriate changes in the teacher education curriculum are necessary to meet the new demands of work. In Australia, the establishment of Teacher Registration Boards in some States has helped in monitoring the teacher education curricula. The QBTR (1999), for example, has prepared a set of guidelines on the acceptability of teacher education programs for teacher registration purposes. The guidelines are prepared, on the basis of a review of literature on best practices in pre-service teacher education in other countries, such as the USA (QBTR, 1999). Teacher education programs have undergone revisions to meet contemporary changes in society. The guidelines help the
institutions to update their teacher education curricula and in turn adequately prepare their graduates to meet the demands of work in their communities.

In England, the teacher education curriculum is practically oriented. That is, it concentrates more on what teachers actually do in the classroom (Bridge, 1996; Cowen, 1990). As Bridge (1996:7) reports:

Initial teacher education in the UK has undergone major changes in the last few years with the increasing development of partnership schemes between schools and higher education institutions. The result is that more of the training of student teachers takes place in schools under the guidance of trained teachers.

Similarly, in most USA teacher education institutions the trend has been towards a competency-based teacher education approach (Levine & Ornstein, 1982). However, some argue that a competency-based approach is too narrow for the broad range of duties teachers are required to fulfil (Lester, 1995; Barnett, 1994). Cairns (1998) has proposed that capability rather than competency is a more useful way of understanding what is needed to deal with the myriad changes, challenges and pressures faced by modern day primary teachers.

In this approach there is more emphasis given to classroom practice and student teachers are expected to acquire the various skills needed to function effectively in the classroom. The dilemma these two approaches create is summarised by Horn (1994:83) as:

...one of the two biggest debates in the field of teacher education, which should be stressed in the formation of a teacher...content courses or methods courses?

As stated earlier, teacher education institutions place different emphases on content courses and on methods courses. Grossman, Wilson and Shulman (1989), consider subject matter knowledge to enhance instruction. Likewise, Lawlor (1990) claims that teachers need in-depth study of the subjects in the national curriculum rather than study of theories in education. However, both content and methods courses are important, and Summers (1994) has used the term “curricular expertise” in referring to both content and method of teaching. Summers (1994) and Morrison (1989) regard both types of knowledge, content and pedagogical, as crucial in influencing effective teaching performance. Therefore, teachers having limited content knowledge and limited pedagogical knowledge could seriously affect their work in classroom situations, and undermine the teaching/learning process.

More recently, the OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (1994:14-15) has regarded the following types of ‘knowledge’ and ‘skills’ as appropriate for teachers:

- Content knowledge or knowledge of the substantive curriculum areas required in the classroom.
- Pedagogic skills including the acquisition and ability to use a repertoire of teaching strategies.
- Reflection and the ability to be self critical, the hallmark of teacher professionalism.
• Empathy and commitment to the acknowledgment of the dignity of others.
• Managerial competence, as teachers assume a range of managerial responsibility within and outside the classroom.

A study by Deer and Williams (1996) shows that a number of teacher education programs have embraced these dimensions within the general expectations of ‘knowing and caring’. The teacher education curriculum should enable future teachers both to deliver primary education effectively and simultaneously take charge of the welfare of the children.

Further, the teacher education curriculum should be based on a constructivist perspective of the teaching/learning process. Not only should this perspective be followed in the courses taught, but also in the field experience. As stated by Fosnot (1993:27), who supports this view:

Just as young learners construct, so too, do teachers... Teachers’ beliefs need to be illuminated, discussed, and challenged... Prospective teachers need to confront traditional beliefs, study children’s meaning making and experiments, collaboratively within a classroom context.

It is only through such practices that teachers can contribute to meaningful teaching/learning. A constructivist approach needs to start in initial teacher preparation in order that this approach becomes a part of the teachers’ professional development. Thus, a comprehensive teacher education curriculum is needed so that teacher trainees have adequate knowledge in areas such as learning theory, child development and pedagogy, as well as practical experience in teaching. These would help ensure that teachers attend to the needs of pupils and teach more effectively.

Teachers in small island states are expected to perform multiple roles. This fact also warrants due attention from teacher educators. Farrugia (1993:44-45) has this to say in regard to the professional development of educational personnel:

• The special demands on education officials and administrators in small states, particularly the need to work in a multiplicity of roles, seems to dictate the development of new patterns of professional training. The more appropriate are those of a multi-disciplinary nature, structured on a modular system to reflect the adaptability and flexibility so characteristic of the officials’ work.

• This is not only true for education officials and administrators, but equally for teachers, as they are expected to perform several non-teaching duties, some of which require reaching out to the community the school serves. This is reaffirmed by Velayutham (1987:29), who stated that:

In the field of education teachers not only work with colleagues in the school but also with people outside the school such as parents, community leaders, church workers and even with people at the grass-root level. Hence, the professional role of teachers extends beyond the classroom situation.
To enhance the handling of all these responsibilities and working with other people, agencies and organizations involved in educational development, the initial teacher education curriculum should equip teacher trainees with the necessary skills to collaborate with other relevant organizations in their communities. Thus, the skills associated with working in partnership with the community need to be incorporated into the teacher education curriculum, and teacher trainees need to be prepared accordingly to accept a broader definition of their role.

A number of teachers’ colleges in the Pacific Island states have recently revised their teacher education curricula. In all cases, these revisions were made possible through overseas assistance. For instance, in Kiribati the KTC sought assistance for the Teacher Education Quality Improvement Project from the Auckland College of Education. The intention of the review was to enhance the preparation of teachers by equipping them with the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for them to become reflective and self-improving professionals (Tabanga, 1997). Likewise, in Vanuatu the VTC, through the assistance of the Vanuatu Government, the World Bank and AusAID as part of the Primary and Secondary Teacher Education Project, reviewed the pre-service primary program. The present program is very comprehensive and focuses on the needs of beginning teachers (Natuoivi, 1997). The following are some of the outcomes expected of trainees at the end of the program:

- Be capable of teaching years one to six of primary school
- Show qualities of confidence, initiative, flexibility and personal involvement in the education process
- Be motivated to continue their own professional and personal development
- Be able to devise and to produce material to assist the learning process
- Understand and appreciate the cultural diversity of Vanuatu society and the individual needs of the children in their care (Natuoivi, 1997:43-44).

The revised course structure at VTC consists of three major components:

**Professional Studies**

Organisation and Management for Learning:

Teaching Organisation

Classroom Organisation – Management

  - Teaching Skills
  - Planning and Preparation
  - Teaching Strategies

  - Educational Psychology
  - Theories of Learning
  - Child Development
  - Education and Society
  - History of Education
  - Schools in Vanuatu
School Administration
The School Community

Subject Methodology
Mathematics
English (including English as Second Language)
Social Science
Science
Art
Music
Physical Education
French as a Foreign Language

School Experience
Observation and teaching of small groups in a primary class for part of the day
Block practical experiences of four weeks.

It is interesting to note the inclusion of subject areas such as ‘Schools in Vanuatu’, ‘School Administration’ and ‘The School Community’ in the revised program. These professional courses are attuned to the multiple roles that teachers are called upon to play. Thus, relevant changes were introduced into the VTC teacher educational curriculum to help raise the education standards and training levels of prospective teachers, but also to recognize the partnership in education between schools and community.

After the WSTC merged with the NUS, a review of the pre-service primary teacher education program was undertaken. One of the notable outcomes of the review was a reduction in the number of courses from 37 to 24, in pursuit of a better quality teacher education program (Afamasaga, 1997). Similarly, in the Solomon Islands, the School of Education, which is part of the SICHE, recently reviewed its pre-service primary program (Maneipuri, 1997). In Tonga, the TTC has a policy of reviewing the program at the end of each year, and this is normally done by an external assessor from USP (Finau, 1997).

Any changes in the pre-service program must work toward the improvement of the preparation of prospective teachers. That is, it must meet the needs of teachers in the field.

Structure of the Curriculum
Teacher education institutions in some countries have modularized their programs. In the SICHE, for example, the revised program of primary teacher education has been modularized (Bako, 1999). This program was developed with assistance from the New Zealand Government. The entire program consists of 115 modules. Each module is allocated 12 hours. In the old structure, each course was allocated a certain number of hours per week per semester. The distribution of modules per semester at SICHE is shown in Table 4.
Courses planned and delivered on a modular basis have a number of advantages. For example, the modules allow greater flexibility in delivery than the traditional subject divisions. Also, the modularized program is compatible with recent developments in pre-service teacher education programs. SICHE, therefore, is responsive to international developments in pre-service teacher education. Such innovations are vital in teacher education in order to provide an enriching preparation for teachers to enter their world of work.

Teacher education curricula should, therefore, cater to the different roles and responsibilities which beginning teachers are likely to face. In order to cope with changing educational needs flowing from the increase in knowledge, technological innovation and change, the teacher education program needs to be reviewed periodically. This would ensure that the teacher education program meets the present, and attempts to predict the future, demands expected of teachers. For work and responsibilities inside the classroom, teachers need to be well prepared, as they are the key players in the delivery of education. Similarly, they need to be well prepared to carry out the work outside the classroom. The teacher education curriculum should be broad based and well designed to ensure a smooth transition of the graduates into the teaching profession and, in particular, into the wider work environment comprising the classroom, the school and the community.

### 2.4.4 PRACTICE TEACHING

The practice teaching component of teacher preparation is often a matter of debate within teacher education institutions themselves, as well as among policy makers.

A variety of terms is used to identify practice teaching, such as ‘in-school experience’, ‘teaching practicum’, ‘teaching rounds’ and ‘student teaching’ (Turney, 1987). During this practice-teaching period trainees are given the opportunity to put theory into
practice. Student-teachers are expected to put into practice all the knowledge and skills that they have acquired and developed in the various courses they have studied. As Turney (1987:686) point out:

...the essential element of the operation is that student teachers attempt to apply in school settings certain of the ideas propounded in teacher education courses.

The above suggests that practice teaching is an important component of the teacher education program, and it is normal during practice teaching for student teachers to come to know, for instance, the realities of the classroom and the kind of schools in which they are likely to work after certification. On this basis teaching practice is regarded as the most important aspect of the teacher preparation program (Ramsey, 2000; Goodman, 1985). Not only should students be given this exposure during practice teaching, but such exposure should form part of the on-campus program as well. Campbell (1992:35) writes with reference to practice teaching:

...[it should] continuously relate how theory informs practice and how practice informs theory in both the practicum and on-campus components.

In Vanuatu, the revised teacher education program at VTC consists of not only block practical experiences, but also single day visits to a primary school each week for a term (Natuoivi, 1997). During such visits the trainees observe teaching activities, assist with teaching by working in small groups and plan activities for the class. This enables trainees to have constant exposure to their future workplace and at the same time become better acquainted with the work of teachers.

Thus, appropriate ways and means must be found to integrate theory and practice. In order to achieve this, the “faculty members and co-operating teachers need to join together in the preparation of teachers” (Campbell, 1992:32). Through this cooperation, the college staff would be in touch with the realities of the schools and the classroom teachers could discuss their practice with student teachers. A teacher education network as proposed by Erly (1991) could contribute to optimum student teacher learning. For practice teaching to operate successfully, there is a need to “improve the relationship among teacher educators, school teachers and student teachers” (Lu, 1992: 25).

For this component of teacher education to provide optimum student teaching/learning “…supervisors must be carefully selected and appropriately prepared for their work” (Turney, 1987:694). On the role of supervisors and supervision, Turney (1987:694) observes:

Supervisors must have adequate time to devote to their work, to consult, to plan together, to hold conferences with the students, to observe the students teaching, to become acquainted with the students’ strengths, weaknesses and
concerns, and to collaborate with the students in mutually beneficial educational tasks.

Better preparation of the supervisors could reduce problems associated with supervision and promote worthwhile student teacher learning. In this regard the concept of professional development schools, which has been developed in many parts of the USA and has recently re-emerged there, could be one possible approach. These schools are aimed at providing “quality field-based experiences for beginning teachers, and the support necessary for teachers and teacher educators to re-examine their practices” (Deer & Williams, 1996:67). Not only do the student teachers benefit from this, but other professionals as well. Above all, the professional development schools require that three groups of people work collaboratively to improve their practices: teacher educators, experienced teachers and beginning teachers (Hackett, 2000; Lieberman, 2000; Ramsey, 2000; Darling-Hammond, Cobb & Bullmaster, 1995).

In England, a scheme for teacher training known as the Article Teachers was put forward by Mr Kenneth Baker, the UK Secretary of State for Education in 1990 (Clayton & Pearce, 1993). The intention of this scheme was to “extend student teachers’ time in schools and to involve schools more fully in their training” (Clayton & Pearce, 1993:134). The schools in this scheme have a greater responsibility in educating student teachers into the profession (Barton, 1996; Tomlinson, 1995; Field, 1994). In most European countries, trainees undergo at least 66 percent of their training in schools (Galton, 1996). This reflects true partnership between training institutions and schools. Added to this, the prolonged practical experience in schools provides better exposure of the trainees to their world of work (Ramsey, 2000). For schools to successfully carry out this important and demanding responsibility, proficient mentor teachers are required. Teachers who possess relevant skills and competencies in guiding student teachers in their daily world of work are vital. The mentor teachers should act as good role models to contribute to the professional development of student teachers.

This partnership involving schools, teacher education institutions and the wider community has developed in order to improve teacher education programs and in particular field-based experiences.

The University of Lethbridge has initiated an internship program to provide meaningful experience for the student teachers. As reported by Campbell (1992:41):

Our hope with this program is that beginning teachers will learn in a relatively safe environment (for example: ordering and maintaining classroom supplies, school schedules, writing report cards, working with parents, teaching assignments, staff meetings, school climate, roles and responsibilities etc.) about the practice and politics of teaching which we on campus could never teach them.
In this case, student teachers are provided with better exposure to the teachers’ world of work because the internship goes beyond teaching assignments.

It has been reported that new teachers encounter problems in areas such as working with other teachers, classroom management, administrative procedures, managing curriculum and resources, dealing with parents, and meeting the different needs of students (McCaon & Carpenter, 1987; Hitz & Roper, 1986; Burke & Notar, 1985). In Australia, for instance, some new teachers face problems working with children in remote rural areas, especially with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children (McGarvie, 1988). Similarly, in Fiji, teachers have difficulties handling multi-class teaching (G. Singh, 1993). To prepare for educational contexts which contain different cultural groups, student teachers need to be given opportunities to work with different communities in order to better understand cultures and value systems other than their own (Darling-Hammond & Ward, 1995; Sergiovanni, 1994). These are some of the areas in the education of future teachers that need attention, and an internship would provide an appropriate mechanism for trainees to get exposure to issues relating to the diverse roles of the teacher so that they can learn to understand and prepare for them.

An internship should be of reasonable duration in order for students to gain an appreciation of all aspects of the work carried out by teachers in charge of the classrooms. In the internship, teacher trainees should be accountable and responsible for all matters in the classroom. If this is not done then student teachers will feel they are looking after someone else’s classroom, and they may not benefit. In the Queensland study referred to earlier, the beginning teachers reported that the amount of time devoted to practicum was too little and this hindered their professional preparation (Queensland Education, 2000).

Schools chosen for internship should be representative of schools in which students are likely to teach after graduation, such as rural schools. These ideas lend support to the criticism expressed by Campbell (1992:41):

Teacher education programmes need to do a better job in preparing teachers for the reality of the classroom and the school.

At VTC the trainees undergo 20 weeks of practical experience in the two year program. Table 5 shows the distribution.

*Table 5: Distribution of Practical Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Term One</th>
<th>Term Two</th>
<th>Term Three</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>13 Weeks Classes</td>
<td>5 Weeks Practicum 8 Weeks classes</td>
<td>5 Weeks Practicum 8 Weeks classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>13 Weeks Classes</td>
<td>5 Weeks Practicum 8 Weeks classes</td>
<td>5 Weeks Practicum 8 Weeks classes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It may therefore be said that VTC allocates adequate time for practical experience. This is evident in the number of weeks allocated for practicum.

In Fiji, at CCTC, the trainees spend part of each day in the school in their first year and in the other two years, they undergo three blocks of practical experiences of four weeks duration (CCTC, 1999). In one of the major ‘rounds’ of practice teaching at CCTC, all the trainees are placed in rural schools. This is considered vital, so that all the trainees gain experience working in rural schools and so better understand the challenges and demands of work expected of teachers in such settings. Thus, CCTC has responded positively in meeting the professional needs of teachers working in rural schools.

Britain and Australia have taken steps to identify the skills and competencies required of teachers in the field, especially for effective teaching. The New South Wales Ministerial Advisory Council on Teacher Education and the Quality of Teaching has produced a list of competencies for effective teaching to be used to assess student teachers whilst on practice teaching. The rationale for this, as reported by Field (1994:9), is the emphasis placed on:

...quality assurance that has swept the profession in the last decade. Included in this movement has been world-wide interest in monitoring the quality of teaching, is one of the ways adopted for attempting to improve the quality of teaching performance is to list the skills and competencies needed to carry out the task effectively.

Whitty and Willmolt (1991), however, have criticized a competency-based framework because it leads to a narrowing of conceptions of teaching and teachers’ work generally. Despite this, it is vital that teachers possess relevant competencies in order to enhance performance in their work contexts.

It is necessary, therefore, that during practice teaching student teachers are provided optimum exposure to the teachers’ world of work. They should be trained to work collaboratively with other teachers and the community, and not just in the classroom. This will then enable student teachers to have a better understanding of teachers’ work and a smooth transition from training to their work environment.

The following section looks at teacher educators’ perceptions of their work.

2.5 TEACHER EDUCATORS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR WORK
Lecturers at teachers colleges and university departments of education or teacher education are the key players responsible for the delivery of teacher education programs and the preparation of future teachers.

While copious literature is available that focuses on the way children learn, there is comparatively little literature available on the ways lecturers conceive of learning and teaching and how this relates to the way they approach their teaching (Prosser, Trigwell & Taylor, 1994). As far as Fiji is concerned, there is a dearth of research data available on teacher educators’ or education lecturers’ roles. It is essential that we know how lecturers perceive their own work. For instance, how do they approach teaching and learning? Do they recognize the external factors that support or constrain their interactions with and their views about the trainees? The beliefs that lecturers hold on these aspects of their work will determine how they shape and develop the trainees to become professionally competent teachers.

In a study by Lange-Burrough (1996) on university lecturers’ beliefs about learning, about the learners, and on other beliefs about their roles, the following four elements were identified:

- the lecturers’ understanding of the nature of learning;
- the understandings lecturers hold about their students;
- the sense of responsibility that lecturers have to their knowledge field;
- the responsibility they feel to and for their students.

These four elements influence one another interactively in forming the lecturers’ holistic conception of their roles (Lange-Burrough, 1996).

In the Lange-Burrough study, the most prevalent comment on students was that they lacked interest and concentration. The students were rarely well prepared, and last minute work was very common. On their teaching role, the lecturers perceived it as a didactic one. The students, therefore, were most frequently engaged in receiving information, with little opportunity for reflective and self-directed learning. Hence, a transmissive view of teaching/learning was held by the lecturers. The picture that emerged was of lecturers’ dominant perceptions of their “teaching role as focussed on by traditional transmission and evaluation” (Lange-Burrough, 1996:46). This view leads to a theoretical approach to the teaching and learning process (Burrow, 1993) and also, promotes learning in teacher education through “talking and thinking abstractly” (O'Hear, 1988:17).

If the education lecturers adopt such teaching strategies then the trainees may follow suit when it is their turn to teach. In order to bring about desired changes in the teaching role, lecturers themselves need to teach and assess in ways that encourage the use of ‘deep strategies’, rather than the use of transmission teaching for regurgitative outcomes (Lange-
Butrough, 1996). Otherwise, quality defined in terms of ‘deep learning’ approaches (Biggs & Collis, 1982) will not be seen in students’ learning or later when they teach.

On professional parameters, Lange-Burrough found that the education lecturers identified practical constraints, such as limited resources and large student numbers. Some of the lecturers even talked of self-limitations, such as limited knowledge of teaching and learning. With reference to LTC, lecturers indicated that internal influences, such as availability of resource materials, equipment and poor library facilities were major practical constraints in their work (Lingam et al., 1999). The lecturers also highlighted the need for professional development opportunities. Lingam et al. (1999) also found that lecturers need to see themselves as learners and continue to improve in order to effectively handle the teacher education program, and this requires professional development on the part of the lecturers. In this connection, CCTC and the Australian Catholic University signed a Memorandum of Agreement in 1995 for a staff as well as a student exchange scheme (CCTC, 1999). SICHE has also put in place a policy of providing for at least 10 percent of its staff to undertake off-shore training, and this is supported by the Solomon Islands Government. Initiatives and support of this nature can help teaching staff to remain abreast of current trends and developments in pre-service teacher education, and also enrich teacher educators professionally.

The four aspects of lecturers’ roles identified by Lange-Burrough (1996) and referred to earlier, are similar to the six key principles of effective teaching in higher education proposed by Ramsden (1992). An effective teacher at this level is a motivator, nurturer, evaluator, provider of appropriate structures for students’ learning, acceptor of responsibility for their students, and lastly evaluator of how their teaching is received via student behaviour and performance. In addition, Rudduck (1993a:160) has suggested that lecturers in higher education need to:

- understand the problems and achievements of teachers and learners, in different contexts, taking into account social, historical and ideological perspectives;
- be well informed about changing structures and practices in the school system;
- understand and to accept responsibility for helping others to understand, the pressures and values that influence such structure and practices.

For effective teaching, Rudduck’s suggestions and the six principles proposed by Ramsden (1992) are quite useful goals for lecturers work, and if followed would bring about better preparation of teachers. Otherwise, those graduating from tertiary teacher education institutions may have only a superficial knowledge of work expectations and responsibilities (Ramsden, 1987).
2.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The literature reviewed spells out the need to consider several aspects of teacher education in order to survey the literature related to the provision of an adequate and enriching professional preparation for teachers. This aspect of the literature review examines programs from the Pacific region as well as programs from those outside the region. It highlights the need to keep examining and reviewing the teacher education curriculum, especially on the basis of the demands of teachers’ work, to continually find ways to further improve their preparation. This requirement acknowledges the differences in community perceptions of the role of teachers at this primary school level. Another ingredient highlighted in the literature is the need to consider international trends and developments in teacher preparation, so that the training offered to prospective teachers is cognizant with similar situations elsewhere. In addition, the context, both internal and external, for which the teachers are being prepared, should be taken into account to ensure that beginning teachers fit into and effectively execute the work expected of them. As well as appropriate curricula, a qualified cadre of teacher educators is a pre-condition to building a well-prepared teaching force. Widely held beliefs in the Fijian community recognize and support the role of teacher educators who have a vision of always looking for ways to make things better - constantly inventing or reinventing new and better ways of preparing teachers. Additionally, the providers of teacher education need to be very supportive, in terms of formulating appropriate policies to ensure that prospective teachers undergo an adequate and enriching preparation for the work expected of them in the field.

This understanding of the work required in schools reflects the theories of Habermas in the understanding widely held views in the community of those involved in education (life-world) that a particular type of training is required and that the training address particular skills and competencies – viz, the breadth of professional responsibilities in a school setting (Habermas, 1971). Added to these requirements is the need to use appropriate procedures for recruiting candidates for teaching. The provision of high quality teaching/learning resources and facilities is also necessary to enable an adequate and enriching professional preparation for teachers. If consideration is given to all these factors, then the professional preparation of teachers would be enhanced.

A useful theoretical foundation for this study is found in the work of Habermas (1971) and this philosopher’s work is able to accommodate the issues raised by Smyth (1989b) concerning the macro-levels of education and its provisions. Habermas’s conceptions of the system world and life-world are relevant and appropriate to an analysis of the pre-service teacher education system in relation to the work of primary teachers. In the present study, the pre-service teacher education in Fiji is considered as a system in itself as
well as a sub-system of the educational system. Each of these systems is defined by shared understandings as well as the individual beliefs and values of the individual within each system. The shared understanding provides a common ground for the sharing of ideas. This is one of the principles on which Habermas (1971) has built his framework for the establishment of conditions supporting the argument. System analysis provides for choosing a particular unit of analysis such as the pre-service teacher education system. The “purposive-rational” actions with “technocratic intentions” and the “communicative actions” that is oriented towards “shared cultural meaning” and “internalization of values” form part of the way social systems behave and operate (Habermas, 1971).

System World
The ‘system world’ of pre-service teacher education could be also viewed using Habermas’s operators. As depicted in the conceptual framework of this study (Figure 1), the policies and programs influence the system world of pre-service teacher education. In addition, emerging trends such as the extended duration of teacher training, emphasis on competency-based training, and the increased role of schools in teacher preparation, determine what the pre-service teacher education system world is to accomplish.

Habermas’s understanding of the system is exemplified in teacher education where administrative structures largely based on bureaucratic models with substantial degree of central government control, are subject to political involvements in the system world. Within this system world different resources including, available or allocated time as a resource, are utilized. The two major 'players', namely, the teacher educators and the student teachers have direct and significant inputs into the system world of pre-service teacher education program. This is largely achieved by means of a shared language and concept base derived from common experiences.

Life-world
On the other hand, the 'life-world' of teachers refers to the context in which they work, i.e. the 'Field'. As spelled out earlier, the concept of 'Field' encapsulates all contextual variables which influence teachers’ work. This implies the ground realities of the context in which teachers work, i.e. the 'real world' also need to be considered. As mentioned earlier, teachers' work, in the 'Field' could be broadly divided into three main domains: classroom, school, and community. The classroom domain is the immediate life-world of the teachers. It is the place where teaching-learning is carried out by the teachers. Apart from the classroom duties and responsibilities, teachers are also expected to carry out other related activities in the school such as extra-curricular activities. Teachers’ work also goes beyond the school domain. The extended professional duties and responsibilities which teachers carry out are
expected to involve the community and this constitutes the “greater life-world” of teachers, particularly when cultural diversity is encountered.

Multicultural classrooms are a common sight in most educational settings including in Fiji. Teachers working in multicultural classrooms need knowledge and perspectives of cultures other than their own. However, studies (for example, Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist, 2003; Hickling–Hudson, 2003) show that teachers are ill-prepared to work in diverse cultural settings. In fact, many teacher education courses are weak in preparing student teachers to undertake intercultural teaching. Since we are part of a global village, knowing about diverse cultures would enrich our understanding of the world and of the life-world.

For teachers, knowledge and perspectives of other cultures would help them enhance their social relations with children as well as enable them to work in close partnership with the community. Teacher education institutions, especially in multicultural settings, need to include knowledge of intercultural issues in their pre-service programs.

Some of these expectations extend beyond the community and involve the whole society, its value and emerging changes. Especially in a multi-cultural setting such as in Fiji, this is an important consideration of the extended life-world. Smyth's (1989a: 485) reference to a "process of becoming different by” thinking critically and creatively would enable teachers to make “increasing sense of the world” in which we live, and work.

With accelerating pace of change, teachers are faced with the problem of work intensification. This is evident not only in the classroom domain but also in the other domains of teachers' world of work. The teachers’ work is further intensified by the expectations of the central bureaucracies on the one hand and the professional role expectations on the other. Smyth (1989b) has suggested a four-stage process of teacher reflection that involve describing what teachers do, informing oneself about what does this mean, confronting with the question 'How did I come to be like this', and then reconstructing how it might be done differently or improved. What would be otherwise a mere work intensification, could be thus subjected to intensive reflection.

On the basis of the foregoing review of literature related to pre-service teacher education, a framework has been developed to help conceptualize the professional preparation of teachers for the ‘world of work’ in the Pacific as influenced by several factors. These are shown in Figure 1.

The conceptual framework illustrates that teachers’ work is affected by a number of factors that emanate from the different contexts that impinge on this work. These contexts are the education system, society, school, and teaching/learning, together with international trends and changing national and international contexts. These collectively and unevenly affect teachers’ work. As can be discerned from the following diagram (see Figure 1.) the issues reviewed pertaining to education in the South Pacific and particularly Fiji have
addressed issues that Smyth (1989b) would consider to be at the micro-level; the more practical aspects of education provision. Chapter three addresses the macro issues referred to by Smyth such as economic and political features of Fiji and what type of changes might be undertaken to improve the nation’s education.

Teachers’ work influences and is influenced by the policies and programs of pre-service primary teacher education. Constructive feedback from practicing teachers regarding the actual demands of their work should be obtained from time to time. These teachers have a better knowledge about the ‘ground realities’ of the situation in the field. This feedback should then inform the authorities concerned, such as teacher educators and providers of education, about the work expected of teachers. On the basis of this, appropriate changes should be phased in. Input from practicing teachers could be incorporated in pre-service programs to enhance the professional preparation of teachers.

FIGURE 1: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION
A two-way relationship, as shown in the diagram (see Figure 1), should exist between pre-service primary teacher education and the teachers’ world of work. Otherwise, prospective teachers will have unrealistic work expectations, which might adversely affect their educational practice in the field. This could be interpreted as faulty professional preparation of teachers at pre-service level. While designated “faulty” at the surface level, the problem exists at a level in which the required teaching did not match the students’ life-
world. Although teachers’ work should have the greatest influence on pre-service primary
teacher education, five other factors also have an important influence. These are teacher
educators, trainees themselves, philosophies and ideologies of teaching/learning, emerging
trends within teacher education and the structure of the education system. Thus, the
conceptual framework demonstrates that the professional preparation of teachers for the work
required of them was influenced by a range of factors, all of which will be considered in this
study. An underlying level would examine issues such as the economic structures of Fiji and
the proportion of the economy allocated to education provision and what ramifications this
might have for the future of Fiji. Subsidiary issues such as the incorporation of technology,
including computers falls within the province of the issues addressed in Figure 1.

SUMMARY

This chapter has focused on a review of literature pertaining to pre-service
primary teacher education, with a special reference to the Pacific. The literature has shed
light on current practices and developments in pre-service teacher education, which attempt
to meet the demands of the complex work carried out by teachers. In the light of this
literature, the chapter has also outlined a conceptual framework based on the work of
Habermas and that encapsulates factors that need to be considered in the professional
preparation of teachers for their subsequent work contexts. In accordance with this
framework, pre-service education at LTC has been examined to determine whether it is
providing an adequate and enriching professional preparation for its graduates, in order to
meet the demands expected of them in the field.

The next chapter describes the study context, namely the Fiji context,
followed by a chapter on the methodology employed for conducting this research.
CHAPTER THREE

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter has shown that the professional preparation of teachers is a multi-faceted and complex process wherein a range of factors interact. Some of these factors stem from the specific cultural context within which the preparation of teachers takes place. The current chapter now deals specifically with Fiji’s social, cultural and educational context. It provides a brief overview of the demographic, cultural, political and economic situation, as well as considering issues related to pre-service primary teacher education.

3.1 GENERAL SETTING

Fiji is now formally known as the Republic of the Fiji Islands. It lies in the South Pacific (see Appendix A) and enjoys a tropical climate. Fiji is one of the nations in the Melanesian region and has two main islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, and many smaller islands. One hundred of these islands are inhabited. The islands are scattered over about three million square kilometers of the Pacific Ocean, with the most distant island, Rotuma, being about 400km from the capital city, Suva, which is on the main island of Viti Levu. The geography of the Fiji group has led to the widespread distribution of its population and, in turn, its schools and teachers.

According to the 1996 census Fiji’s population was 775,075, and the current rate of annual population growth is just over one percent (Fiji Islands Education Commission, 2000). The population is of mixed ethnic background, with indigenous Fijians (50.78 percent) and Indo-Fijians (43.71 percent) being the two major ethnic groups (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 1996). There are several other significant minority groups, such as the Chinese, Rotumans (from Rotuma Island) and the Banabans (from the former Gilbert and Ellice Islands). The indigenous Fijian people, who are classified as Melanesians, are said to have arrived from South East Asia in about 500 B.C. and had extensively settled the islands before Europeans arrived in the early 1800s (Stanley, 1993). The Indians are mainly descendants of the indentured labourers who were brought from India by the British in the late nineteenth century to provide labour in the sugar industry.

Fiji became a crown colony of Great Britain on 10 October 1874, and gained independence on 10 October 1970. After independence, the Fijian-dominated Alliance
Government was in power until 1986. During this period the political situation was quite stable. Fiji retained close links with Britain – the locally based governor-general was the head of state and represented the British sovereign. Fiji was a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations. In 1987, however, two military coups were staged, and the democratically elected Government, the Indian dominated coalition of the National Federation Party and the Labour Party, was overthrown. A civilian government consisting mostly of indigenous Fijians was then appointed. The constitution was changed in 1990 to favour the indigenous Fijians, and Fiji’s relationship with the Commonwealth was severed.

This constitution was widely considered to be undemocratic, and pressure from outside and from political parties within Fiji led to the promulgation of a new constitution in 1997. This new constitution was drawn up in line with the United Nations principles of basic human rights, and was seen then as being acceptable to all groups in Fijian society. Consequently, in 1997 Fiji was readmitted to the Commonwealth after a lapse of ten years. The new constitution did not restrict members of any ethnic group from becoming the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister of Fiji in 1997, the Honourable Sitiveni Rabuka, who was instrumental in the promulgation of the new constitution, regarded it as a model for multicultural societies (Rabuka, 2000). Recently, the Chief Justice of the Fiji Islands, Sir Timoci Tuivaga (2000:3), stated that the “present constitution…has been widely acclaimed for its democratic values and for protecting human rights and promoting public accountability and transparency”. Thus, the new constitution appeared to have a public acceptance from prominent Fijian political leaders. The 1999, General Elections were contested by various political parties under the new constitution and the People’s Coalition, comprising the Fiji Labour Party, the Party of National Unity and the Fijian Association Party, won the majority of seats in Parliament.

The manifesto of the People’s Coalition stressed, amongst other things, the need to align education to meet the demands and challenges of a progressive society (The People’s Coalition, 1999). To meet this need, the People’s Coalition set up an Education Commission to inquire into the current system of education, which reported in late 2000. The People’s Coalition had a broad agenda to improve education, including teacher education.

The People’s Coalition Government remained in power for only a year of its five-year term, as it was overthrown by a civilian coup on 19 May 2000. Fiji subsequently went through another very difficult period of political turmoil, social upheaval and economic uncertainty. These naturally impacted on the education system as well. In August 2001 the country had another general election. A Fijian-dominated government has been installed, with the challenge to provide security and development. However, certain aspects of the 1997 constitution appear to have been disregarded by the government, and the Indian-dominated opposition party has challenged these matters in court. At the time of writing, no durable and
amicable solution has been found or put forward to deal with the train of unfortunate events faced by the country, except for the Appeal Court ruling that the 1997 Constitution is still intact and could form a basis for a return to the rule of law and democracy. A state of political uncertainty therefore still continues in Fiji.

Sugar and tourism are large income earners for Fiji. Sugar has been regarded as the “lifeblood of Fiji’s economy” (Vakatale, 1994:8). In addition, the garment manufacturing industry, copra and gold are significant sources of income. Economically, Fiji is better off than most of the small neighbouring island states of the South Pacific. However, it is not a rich country when compared to Australia, New Zealand and other modern economies. Budgetary allocations for education have declined, not only in Fiji, but also in most of the other countries of the region, because of higher spending on other areas, such as military and police services (R. Crocombe & M. T. Crocombe, 1994). Overall, the Government spends approximately twenty percent of its budget on education (Fiji Islands Education Commission, 2000). However, current economic factors following the recent coup may change this.

In 1999 the Secretary-General of the Pacific Basin Economic Council, Mr Bob Lees, stated that Fiji has experienced low economic growth, and in the last two decade, growth has averaged around two to three percent. Recently, the Fiji Islands Education Commission (2000) stated that Fiji’s economic growth has been low due to the political turmoil, which has caused a severe economic downturn, and this has implications for educational development. This economic downturn has slowed growth and could adversely affect, plans for all sectors of the society and the economy. The economic downturn after the coup of mid-2000 and the sanctions imposed by overseas countries affected educational plans. The crisis forced the Government to make cuts in the budgetary allocations for all sectors of the economy, and the education sector was no exception. Parents also faced a lot of hardship in meeting the costs of education for their children, as many of them lost their jobs. In this post-coup climate, all matters requiring financial support or increased budget allocation need to be supported with the highest levels of rational argument. With respect to education, the Minister responsible would need to be both diplomatic (representing an already high cost area) and technocratic (Lingam, 1996). The incumbent would need to provide clear evidence and educational justification to convince the Cabinet, together with the Ministry of Finance, that more funds are needed to ensure that education generally is not adversely affected. The same applies to the area of teacher education.

Based on this brief account of the political history of Fiji, the next section will examine the history of LTC. This study deals mainly with pre-service teacher education at LTC, which has a history that stretches just over two decades. However, the history of the development of pre-service teacher education in Fiji dates back to the early twentieth century. The following section highlights this.
3.2 DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY TEACHER EDUCATION

After the introduction of formal education in Fiji by missionaries in the 1830s, there was a need for trained teachers. As a result “the missionaries began training pastor teachers to instruct village children in reading, writing and arithmetic and to teach Christian scripture” (Maan, 1936:24). These teachers were called ‘pastor teachers’ as they were also responsible for handling scripture lessons, which were in line with the initial intention of the missionaries, to convert the indigenous population to Christianity once they were able to read the Bible. In fact, the training of pastor teachers was done on an ad-hoc basis, since there was no specific place designed to carry out their training. However, this problem was eventually resolved by the establishment of a central teacher training institution at Davuilevu in 1908 (Mangubhai, 1984).

The establishment of this teacher education institution was not the initiative of the Government, but of the Methodist Mission. In this institution, members of the indigenous population who belonged to the Methodist denomination were trained as teachers. With the passage of time the demand for education rose in all communities, especially among the Indians, and there was a need for more trained teachers (Mangubhai, 1984). Unfortunately, the Methodist Teacher Training Institution could not provide the required number of teachers. Mangubhai (1984:189) states that:

While the Methodists paved the way for teacher education, over the early decades of the twentieth century, they could not meet the need either in quantity or quality of instructors.

The training of Indian student teachers in a totally Methodist Christian environment was not encouraged, on the grounds that they may be converted to Christianity, and this drove the colonial authorities to set up another teacher training facility (Fiji Education Commission, 1926). This was opened in 1929 in the Western Education Division, at Natabua in Lautoka. This teacher training facility, together with the one in Davuilevu, helped to improve the supply of teachers for some time. The quality of teachers, however, was reportedly poor. Mayhew's (1936:5) observation with regards to the training of teachers in the Teachers College revealed that:

Teacher training tends to be formal and stereotyped… There is far too much copying by the students of long disquisitions on method and principle, instead of ample talk and, still better, ample demonstrations and practice.

The two teacher training institutions, the Methodist and Government owned, did not adequately prepare their teachers. The trainees had a low basic education, and at the training college they were taught in a similar manner to the methods used in primary and secondary schools, for example the, ‘chalk and talk’ method of teaching. Thus the quality of teachers produced by these institutions was considered sub-standard (Stephen, 1944). Consequently, a
recommendation was made to establish one large institution to cater for improved teacher training in terms of numbers and quality (Stephen, 1944). This recommendation was implemented with the establishment of the Nasinu Teachers College in 1947. Even this large Government-owned teacher training institution did not solve all the problems associated with teacher supply. There were still some disappointments, as observed by Mangubhai (1984:190):

Although the establishment of the Nasinu Institution resulted in marked improvements in the quality of primary school teachers, the upgrading process over the years was slow, especially for teachers on the outer islands.

This indicates that there were teachers out in the field who were still teaching without being properly trained for the job. With Government’s approval, another teacher training college was established in the 1940s, known as Fulton College (FC). This was through the initiative of the Seventh Day Adventist Mission in order to meet needs in three main areas: teaching, business and pastoral training. The college not only catered for the staffing needs in these areas for Fiji, but also for other small Pacific island states such as Tuvalu, Tonga, Samoa, Tahiti and the Cook Islands (FC, 1969).

Over the years the Catholic Church had been requesting the Fiji Board of Education to allow it to establish a Catholic Teachers College. In June 1954 the Board finally consented to the establishment of a Catholic Teachers College to prepare teachers for those schools run by the Catholics. The passage of time saw the establishment of a teacher training institution in 1958, known as the Corpus Christi Teachers College (CCTC) in Suva. At the opening of the College, Archbishop Victor Foley, who was one of the key persons behind the establishment of this institution, stated that:

The main aim of the college would always be to bring forth teachers who would be so deeply and personally committed to Christ the Perfect Teacher that would unconsciously radiate the warmth of His Love and draw the hearts of the children whom they would Serve to Christ and the Father (CCTC, undated:1).

Similarly, Sir Ronald Garvey commended the opening of the College:

The teachers that would come from the College would have a firm spiritual background and lofty ideals, so necessary if they have to be able to teach Fiji children that there is much more to life than pure materialism (CCTC, undated: 3).

This training college is still owned and operated by the Catholic Church today.

With the growing demand for education, enrolments in primary schools escalated, and the teacher training institutions were not able to provide an adequate supply of trained teachers (Fiji Education Commission, 1969). Schools then had no choice but to employ
untrained teachers to handle the job of teaching. This was highlighted in Council Paper 19 (1970:10):

…just prior to independence in 1970, over 20 percent of the colony's 3446 primary school teachers were untrained licensed teachers.

In 1971, the Ministry of Education also granted approval to CCTC to run a three-year Junior Secondary Conversion Teachers’ Course. A one-year program later replaced this for Licensed Teachers who were specifically trained, upon graduation, to handle classes one to four. The Ministry of Education finally terminated this course in 1977, when it realized that there were sufficient teachers trained for this level. The CCTC shouldered additional responsibilities apart from offering the Primary Teachers’ Course.

To cope with the training of all licensed teachers, the Government established another teacher training institution at Natabua in Lautoka in 1977. Lautoka Teachers College (LTC) is located on the site of the first Government Teacher Training Institution, which was established in 1929. LTC was intended to:

- provide in-service and refresher courses for licensed teachers;
- offer a pre-service course to primary school teachers; and
- increase the work force of trained teachers in order to:
- meet the demand for the annual increase in the teaching roll
- replace existing untrained teachers.

(Fiji Ministry of Education 1975:2).

The opening of the College was a significant development in the field of teacher education, especially in terms of serving the dual roles of pre-service and in-service programs.

In the early 1980s the Government decided to close the Nasinu Teachers College, with the intention of concentrating primary teacher education, both pre-service and in-service, at LTC. This change took effect from 1983. This left LTC as the only Government primary teacher training institution. As a result, the College training program was changed to a full two years, and its role changed from in-service to pre-service training of teachers (LTC Handbook, 1989). This situation has continued to the present day. More recently, in 1999 the College started offering a one-year program for licensed teachers in Special Education and Early Childhood Education.

In the recent past, the President of the Methodist Church of Fiji made a proposal at the Methodist Church Conference to establish a further teacher training college (Lasaro, 1994). However, this proposal is yet to be implemented. The aim of this college would be to provide teachers to Methodist schools. This is compatible with the policies of CCTC and FC, which normally supply teachers to schools run by their religious orders and organizations.
Since this study focuses on pre-service primary teacher education, it would be useful if some mention were made of the salient features of the primary school system in Fiji. These are discussed in the next section.

3.3 NATIONAL PRIMARY CURRICULUM

Fiji has a National Curriculum for primary schools. There are 15 subjects such as Mathematics, Social Science, Basic Science and English offered at this level, including vernacular languages such as Fijian, Tamil, Hindi, Chinese and Urdu. These vernacular languages are mainly taught to the children of their respective ethnic groups.

Since Fiji is a multiracial society, the learning of one another’s languages is believed to enhance cross cultural understanding and empathy. A subject, tentatively called Conversational Fijian, has been introduced to cater for this need (Bole, 1996). Not only will this subject be an innovation in the primary curriculum, but plans are being made to introduce several other subjects, such as Home Economics and Agriculture. There appears to be no plans to introduce other languages such as Conversational Hindi, to complement Conversational Fijian. This work towards subject diversification started in 1993, and it is expected to be completed by 2002 (Racule, 1997).

In the recent past, proposals in the Senate for compulsory primary education have also included a variety of specialist, vocational curricular areas, such as Basic Agriculture, Basic Home Economics, Basic Carpentry and Woodwork, Basic Accounting, Economics and some Moral Values Education (Bole, 1996). The latter subject has already been introduced at the primary school level. Recently the AusAID funded BEMTUP, amongst other things, assisted with the revision of the upper primary curriculum. Only four subjects, namely English, Mathematics, Social Science and Basic Science, related to Classes seven and eight curricula were catered for by the project. The revision was based on the constructivist approach to teaching/learning (Lingam, 1999).

The teaching of vernacular languages and other subjects in the national curriculum for primary schools requires professionally prepared teachers. Allowing inadequately prepared teachers to teach this wide range of subjects will lead to a dilution of standards in the teaching force, and in students’ performance. The teacher education curriculum needs for cater to all subject areas in the curriculum at the primary level, and these needs to be a better trained, teacher population to handle the teaching of these subjects. The Ministry of Education, therefore, should not only be concerned with an adequate supply of teachers but, more importantly, with the quality of that supply. Quality of the teachers is as important as increased number of teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1988).
The National Primary Curriculum has major implications for teacher preparation. The teacher training institutions need to keep pace or even set the pace, with changes made in the school curriculum. For instance, developments involving the introduction of new subjects, creates the need to ensure that teachers produced by the college are able to handle the whole range of curriculum activities effectively and efficiently.

3.4 ADVERTISEMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

An outstanding feature of Fiji primary schools is the non-Government ownership of schools. The great majority of primary schools are owned and run by the different communities, such as the Indian and Fijian communities. At present the Government runs only two primary schools, the rest being progressively handed over to various communities to manage. More than 98 percent of the Fiji Islands’ education sites are privately owned and managed (Fiji Ministry of Education, 1999). In this regard, the Ministry of Education’s role is a facilitative one in partnership with various education stakeholders. However, the Government remains responsible for providing building grants and teaching personnel to all schools, as well as paying salaries to all civil servant teachers and temporarily appointed teachers. Since independence, there has been a vast expansion in the number of primary schools. Because of this expansion, the teachers’ colleges have had to increase their output of teachers to meet the staffing needs at the primary school level. However, in responding to increasing national needs, the qualitative aspects of preparing teachers to meet the needs of communities seem to have been sacrificed.

In accordance with Government policy, all primary schools are paid a per capita tuition fee. This was revised in 1994, and in the new structure the following are provided:

- rolls up to 49 children receive a total of F$3,500 per annum
- rolls from 50 to 99 receive a total of F$4,000 per annum
- rolls from 100 to 149 receive a total of F$4,500 per annum and
- rolls greater than 150 receive a total of F$30 per child per annum

In 1997 the Government paid a total of F$4,875,252 to primary schools (Fiji Ministry of Education, 1998). This assistance has to some extent reduced parents’ expenditure on the education of their children. This continuing partnership in the provision of primary education between Government and non-Government organizations representing community groups is encouraging. The communities realize the importance of education, and make contributions to other school development purposes such as building funds, library funds and sports funds. While this may reduce the Government’s financial burden, the financial contribution by communities is considered a burden to low-income families. As
noted earlier, a consequence of recent political upheavals has been increasing unemployment, which has exacerbated the situation.

Primary schools in Fiji are of two types, one with Classes one to six and the other with Classes one to eight. This variation in progression from primary to secondary is quite unusual when compared with other education systems overseas. The Fiji Education Commission (1969) recommended that the system be changed to involve only six years of primary schooling, with students then being automatically allowed entry to Form one at the secondary school level. Due to lack of Government control of the system and pressure from parents, the restructuring has not been very successful (Hindson, 1988). The current structure of schooling in Fiji is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Structure of Schooling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Examination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 6</td>
<td>Class 7</td>
<td>Fiji Intermediate Examination (FIE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 8</td>
<td>Form 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form 2</td>
<td>Form 3</td>
<td>Fiji Eighth Year Examination (FEYE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form 4</td>
<td>Form 5</td>
<td>Fiji Junior Certificate Examination (FJCE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form 6</td>
<td>Form 7</td>
<td>Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form 7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fiji Seventh Form Examination (FSFE)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The structure of schooling shows that children can enter a secondary school after completing Class six or Class eight. The two types of primary schools are identified by these end points. However, emerging trends show that secondary schools are slowly handing over their Forms one and two to primary schools to become Classes seven and eight. The Ministry of Education encourages this. In addition, most primary schools that initially went up to Class six are now catering for Classes seven and eight. Approximately two thirds of children at this age level are in Classes seven and eight in primary schools, one third in Forms one and two at secondary school level (Fiji Ministry of Education, 1999).

Primary schools in Fiji are classified as small, medium or large based on student enrolment. In particular, small schools are found in remote localities where the population is
small and there is low pupil enrolment. Because of this low enrolment, classes are being combined. As reported by the then Minister for Education, the Honourable Taufa Vakatale (1993:9):

The smallest island school [had] only eighteen children with ages ranging from six years to twelve years. There [were] two teachers on the island.

Those teachers who are posted to remote areas have no option but to handle two or more classes in one classroom. This arrangement, as mentioned earlier (see section 2.3), is termed multi-class teaching, and it is quite common in small schools (Collingwood, 1991). Because of geographical isolation and distribution, close to 70 percent of primary schools are classified as rural. According to the Fiji Islands Education Commission (2000:162), rural schools are in three categories:

(i) 10-20 km from a town boundary  
(ii) equal to or greater than 20 km from a town boundary  
(iii) very remote schools.

On the basis of these criteria, the breakdown of the number of rural schools per Education District is shown in Table 7. Nine Education Districts are responsible for the administration of primary education, under the officers in the Central Office of the Ministry of Education in Suva and the Divisional Education Officers. This to some extent facilitates decision-making at the District Level. The Central Office, however, is still responsible for all major decisions and policy making.

Table 7: Number of rural schools per Education District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATION DISTRICT</th>
<th>NUMBER OF RURAL SCHOOLS AS PER CATEGORY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macuata/Bua</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cakaudrove</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nausori</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suva</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadroga/Navosa</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lautoka/Yasawa</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ba/Tavua</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ra</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fiji Islands Education Commission, 2000:162

3.5 PRIMARY ENROLMENT

Primary education is generally recognized as the first level of formal education, and the primary school is one of the most common and widely scattered social institutions. Primary education is also seen as the “major vehicle for meeting basic learning needs”
An examination of the educational statistics for the South Pacific countries indicates that primary education has the highest level of enrolment (Baba, Cokanasiga & Caballes, 1992). Fiji has about 98 percent of the primary school age population attending school (Fiji Islands Education Commission, 2000). This is an excellent achievement, especially when education in Fiji is on a voluntary basis. The then Minister for Education, the Honourable Taufa Vakatale (1993), stated that the Government had adopted the 1990 Jometian Declaration of “Education for All”, and hoped to achieve the attendance of the remaining two percent of the school age population by the year 2000. However, recent statistics indicate that two percent of the primary age cohort is still not attending school (Fiji Islands Education Commission, 2000). An increase in enrolment alone will not contribute to the quality of education if well-prepared teachers are not available. Such an increase, without a corresponding increase in trained teachers, may not only affect the quality of education provided to the children, but also the long term development of the nation. In terms of meeting social development needs, it would be desirable for a developing country such as Fiji to plan for an adequate supply of well-prepared teachers who can provide quality education to children at all levels, but particularly at primary.

3.6 EXAMINATIONS

Fiji, like other British colonies, inherited the British system of public examinations (Thomas & Postlethwaite, 1984). At the primary school level, two national examinations are currently conducted — FIE and FEYE at Class six and eight levels respectively. Despite the fact that these external examinations are not compulsory, most schools continue to present their students for these examinations, and there is an increasing obsession with examination results. This support for external primary examination reflects the existing national orientation towards external examinations (Hindson, 1988). Most students participate in the two external primary examinations. A total of five national examinations are conducted at different stages of schooling (see Table 6).

With regard to the academic achievement of children, the then Minister for Education, the Honourable Pratap Chand (1999), stated that 20 percent of children never get past Class eight. This may have some bearing on the preparation of teachers. On the whole, there is a great deal of debate relating to the existence of these examinations, as they undermine the Government’s drive for education up to, and beyond, Class eight level (Vakatale, 1993). The recent Fiji Islands Education Commission (2000) has recommended that the two external examinations be phased out and be replaced by a system of school-based assessment. This calls for the appropriate preparation of teachers at the pre-service level to undertake this task in future.
3.7 TEACHER APPRAISAL

This section briefly discusses one of the major reforms in the Fiji Public Service, which includes the teaching profession. This reform also has implications for the preparation of teachers.

At present, the performance of all civil servants is assessed using a standard form known as GP36. This form consists of 15 dimensions. Each dimension has five statements and the reporting officer is expected to tick the statement which best describes the person being reported on. This report is sent to the Ministry of Education in the case of teachers, and it is supposed to be kept confidential.

In the near future that system will be replaced by what is known as the Performance Management System. The following are two of the salient features (FPSC, 1998):

- a two-way commitment—between the organization and the individual
- continual monitoring of performance against objectives

The central focus of this system is to help improve the performance of individual staff members. In doing so, it aims to improve and enhance the quality of government services to the people. As reported by the FPSC (1998:2),

...through focusing individual effort on specific agreed objectives, each Ministry/Department will achieve its goals and the Public Service will achieve its overall goals.

This system of performance assessment is competency-based and productivity oriented, and those who perform their duties well are to be rewarded (FPSC, 1998).

Hence, prospective teachers need to acquire relevant professional skills and knowledge in their training program so that they are able to perform their duties well. This could be expected to enable the delivery of educational services of the highest quality to the clientele.

3.8 SUMMARY

The preceding discussion has thrown light on some of the challenges facing educators in Fiji. Among the challenges that have been identified are, for example, geographical fragmentation of the country; the multi-cultural nature of society; urban and rural contexts; differing academic achievements of the children; varying levels of economic development and the adoption of a new staff appraisal system. These challenges need to be recognized as they have implications for teacher education, especially in the context of this study.

This chapter has also provided details about the political, economic and socio-cultural background of Fiji, and issues in primary and teacher education more specific to this
study have been highlighted. The next chapter, Chapter Four, will discuss the research methodological components employed in this thesis.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed to examine the questions posed in this study. In particular, it justifies the choice of a combined approach to data gathering to examine the key research and underlying questions. These are restated below. The chapter also discusses the process of data collection and concludes with a description of the procedures used for data analysis.

Key Research Questions

(i) Does LTC’s pre-service teacher education program meet the socio-cultural expectations of Fiji’s primary schools?

(ii) Is LTC’s pre-service teacher education program compatible with the demands of work expected of beginning teachers?

(iii) Does LTC’s pre-service teacher education program reflect the emerging trends and developments in teacher education as expressed in contemporary international principles and practices?

Underlying Questions

(i) What are the policies and programs of LTC?

(ii) What is the allocation of resources and facilities for the pre-service program?

(iii) What is the value of LTC students’ preparation for their subsequent world of work as perceived by recent LTC graduates, LTC staff, Head Teachers of primary schools and Ministry of Education officials?

4.1 QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGIES

Research methodology is a broad concept which includes aspects such as design, data collection, data analysis and theorizing, as well as the social, ethical and political concerns of researchers (Burgess, 1984). On the basis of this construction, research methodology can be categorized as quantitative or qualitative.

With reference to quantitative methodology, Cohen and Manion (1994:42) state that it “involves eliciting answers to predetermined questions, recording measurements,
describing phenomena and performing experiments”. In contrast to this description of quantitative methodology, Widen and Tisher (1990:7) argue that qualitative methodology “stresses descriptive data collection involving observation, interviewing, transcript analysis and direct participation”. Burns (1994) further notes that both methodologies have some inherent weaknesses and strengths.

Goodwin and Goodwin (1984) argue that the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research methodologies lies in the strategies used to collect, analyze and interpret the data. However, the distinction is by no means always clear, as Goodwin and Goodwin (1984: 378) further state:

Although certain methods are usually linked to certain paradigms, the association between paradigm and methods is far from exclusive. The choice of research procedures — including design, sampling plan, instructions, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques should match the research question and be optimally efficient, powerful, valid and reliable. Sometimes the methods of choice will be qualitative, sometimes quantitative, and sometimes there will be a combination of both procedures. Trying rigidly to link paradigm and method will inevitably lead to research that is conducted inappropriately and which, therefore will produce findings that lack credibility.

Miles and Huberman (1984) caution that even though qualitative data are a source of well grounded, rich description and explanation of a process occurring in local contexts, they can sometimes reflect weak reliability.

Some authors claim that the two methodologies cannot be amalgamated (Smith, 1983; Smith & Heshusius, 1986), but there are many others who have favoured a combined use of the two methodologies in one study (Mason, 1993; Salomon, 1991; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1984; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Reichardt & Cook, 1979; Filstead, 1979). Goodwin and Goodwin (1984:380) advance the following reasons for a combined approach:

...it is sometimes advantageous to add a qualitative component to what is basically a quantitative design to increase the meaning of the obtained data. For example, qualitative measurement techniques such as intensive observation or interviews can help the researcher identify the values and perspectives of objects in ways that are often impossible with strictly quantitative strategies.

According to these authors and others (for example, Creswell, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Patton, 1990), an integrated approach seems to be more fitting in some research studies in which aspects of both quantitative and qualitative approaches are appropriately combined. Further, Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) convincingly argue for the use of mixed methodology. They (1998:25) emphasise that:

At some points during the research process, it is likely that both types of inferences and methods will be used simultaneously. When this occurs, then we have the mixed model studies with multiple applications…
They concluded that mixing the quantitative and qualitative approaches to research "is not only feasible but also quite beneficial in many diverse research settings" (p.167). The present study is thus positioned, guided by this research approach that judiciously combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:167) also point out to:

the preeminence of the research question over considerations of either method or paradigm. … The best method is the one that answers the research question(s) most efficiently and with foremost inference quality.

The mixed method of employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches is appropriate for seeking possible answers to the research questions raised in the study. However, the weighting given to one or the other could vary, depending on the nature of the study to be undertaken. Integrated approaches have been employed by a number of researchers with an interest in the outcomes of different aspects of teacher education.

Graber (1996), for example, carried out document analysis and conducted interviews with six beginning teachers and ten faculty members to determine the impact of teacher education programs. Bramald, Hardman and Leat (1995) determined the effects of courses on thinking about teaching/learning by using questionnaires and interviews. Shapiro (1991) studied change in student teacher thinking by employing interviews and questionnaire surveys. Wubbels and Korthagen (1990), while carrying out a six-year study on conceptual change in beginning teachers, utilized multiple instruments employing quantitative and qualitative approaches. Clarke (1995) also utilized multiple methods such as questionnaires, journals and interviews to determine pre-primary teachers’ perceptions of their pre-service program. Cabello and Eckmier (1995) used questionnaires and interviews to determine student teachers’ perceptions within a model multi-cultural program. Loflin (1993) used both qualitative and quantitative research methods to determine the changes in perspectives and orientations of beginning teachers.

From these studies one can conclude that that methodology should be used which best achieves the objectives of the study. This could be qualitative, or quantitative or an amalgam of both methodologies. Patton (1986:39) refers to this as “methodological appropriateness”, that is, favouring one method over the other depending on the nature of the study. He further argues that, instead of locking into a particular paradigm, methodological flexibility needs to operate in the real world — given the purpose of the inquiry, questions to be researched and resources available. He adds that this has to be approached with a research culture of “situational responsiveness” (Patton, 1986:39). Unfortunately undue emphasis placed on the so called scientific approach that is based on positivistic paradigm that presupposes control, prediction and predetermined methods tend to ignore other relevant paradigm. But now there is a greater acceptance of a post-positivist paradigm in which 'lived
reality’, common sense and making pertinent connections are recognized. Any possible bias and apparent contradiction are corrected by using mechanisms for cross-checking and correlating such as triangulation in the post-positivist paradigm (Phillips, 1990).

Looking at the key research questions to be examined, the underlying questions posed, and the sources of data as well as other comparable studies mentioned earlier, the present study warrants the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches as recommended by Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989). The use of an amalgamated approach is based on the premise that "quantitative knowing depends on qualitative knowing" (De Landsheer, 1982:2). In other words, in using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies as proposed by Salomon (1991:16), each methodology “can inform the other and guide the other”. The use of quantitative methodology provides data in pre-specified categories about the phenomena, in this case pre-service education. The respondents supply information on pre-ordered material without explanations or elaborations to the data. In order to enhance understanding of the phenomena, the use of qualitative methodology is necessary to obtain complex data and to provide deeper insights into the data. Neither of these is possible by use of quantitative methodology alone (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Richards & Richards, 1987). Thus, to enhance understanding of the phenomena, and to compensate for the shortcomings of each method, a complementary range of research methods is considered appropriate. The next section takes up the major research approach employed for the present study.

4.2 CASE STUDY APPROACH

As mentioned in Chapter One, this research is based on a case study. In the literature several definitions are provided for the term ‘case study’ (for example, Stake, 2000; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Merriam, 1988; Stenhouse, 1984; Yin, 1984; Kemmis, 1980). Yin (1984:23) refers to a case study as an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context”. Stake (2000) has suggested that a case study is different from other research approaches in that it is specific, unique and is undertaken in a bounded system. According to Yin (1989:23) a case study methodology employed as an empirical inquiry technique has the following features:

1. It investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context.
2. The boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.
3. Multiple sources of evidence are used.

The present study incorporates the three important features of a case study that involves an empirical research. Yin (1989) advances the use of theory to develop
propositions for guiding the research strategy. Also he speaks of generalization in terms of the ability of the case to enhance theory. However, Stake (2000) emphasizes the use of case studies where the interest is not in theory building as such but in the 'intrinsic' and the 'particular' of a case or an object of study. Despite these differences there are some aspects of case studies in which both concur. Some of these include: the existence of subsections (Stake) or units (Yin) within cases; the use of conceptual structures (Stake) or theoretical proposition (Yin) as an aid to knowledge acquisition; and triangulation (Stake) or multiple sources of evidence (Yin).

Thus, one finds that Yin (1989) and Stake (2000) appear to be polarized in their views about case study method of research. But on closer analysis they seem to be either converging on most aspects of the case study or viewing as complementary aspects. On the basis of these views, the present study is considered a case study.

Stake (2000) further identified three types of case studies - intrinsic, instrumental and collective. In the first, the researcher has a particular interest and intends to obtain better insight and understanding of the phenomenon (Stake, 2000). An instrumental case study, on the other hand, is undertaken to provide “insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization” and “a zone of combined purpose”, and these factors make it different from an intrinsic case study (Stake, 2000:437). A collective case study “involves a number of cases in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition” (Stake, 2000:437). The present study best represents an intrinsic case study. The researcher in this case has specific interest in the phenomenon, pre-service teacher preparation at LTC. Through the participants’ perceptions the researcher intends to gain deeper and better understanding about the phenomenon. Despite certain limitations, case study, and in particular intrinsic case study, can also contribute in some way toward grand generalization (Stake, 2000: Vaughan, 1992; Campbell, 1975; Cronbach, 1975). Therefore, despite these differences between Yin (1989) and Stake (2000), a case study such as the present one can yield findings and show pointers that could be suitably applied to comparable situations or similar issues. Thus it would lend itself to not only studying in detail or in-depth, but also could be expected to contribute to some generalizations.

4.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

With reference to ethical practices, Zikmund (2000:83) succinctly stated that “the researcher and the participants in research situations have certain rights and obligations”. With this in mind, the present study proceeded within a set of ethical procedures and standards.
These procedures and standards safeguarded the participants’ rights to informed consent, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality (Gay & Airasian, 2000; Zikmund, 2000; Christians, 2000; Tuckman, 1999; Cohen & Manion, 1994). Ethical clearance on these procedural matters was obtained from Griffith University’s Ethics Sub-Committee for Experimentation on Humans, and the procedures were followed throughout the study. Further details about these ethical procedures used in the current study are included in the section which follows.

### 4.4 DATA COLLECTION

The present study employs multiple methods for data collection. The use of multiple methods is also referred to as ‘triangulation’ (Mathison, 1988; Patton, 1980; Denzin, 1978). Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) cited in Creswell (1994:175) advanced the following reasons for combining methods in a single study:

- triangulation in the classic sense of seeking convergence of results
- complimentary, in that overlapping different facets of a phenomenon may emerge
- developmentally, wherein the first method is used sequentially to help inform the second method
- initiation, wherein contradictions and fresh perspectives emerge
- expansion, wherein the mixed methods add scope and breadth to a study.

Therefore, the idea of mixing methods would enable a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon to be studied. It has been suggested that using triangulation ensures that the weaknesses of one method may be overcome by the strengths of other methods (Kane, 1993; Denzin, 1978). Also, the use of data obtained from different sources provides information which is more “complex and complete” and so proffers a more comprehensive insight into the study (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984: 39). As Fielding and Fielding (1986) aptly point out, the use of different methods potentially adds breadth and depth to the data. However, this process of triangulation is not without criticisms and reservations. As Mathison (1988: 15) cautions, there is a “predominance of the assumption that triangulation will result in a single valid proposition…we look for convergence of evidence and miss what I see as the greater value in triangulation”. According to several other writers (for example, Murray & Lawrence, 2000; Mathison, 1988; Patton, 1980) this is a fair criticism. Denzin (1978) has provided a very useful classification and clarification of the different types of triangulation, and identified four basic types. They are: data triangulation, theory triangulation, methodological triangulation and investigator triangulation. In this study, data and methodological triangulation have been applied. Denzin (1994) has added a fifth type, referred to as interdisciplinary triangulation. A certain degree of interdisciplinary
triangulation has also been employed, particularly with respect to the development of a conceptual framework, in the interpretation of the findings and of drawing implications. Disciplines and sub-disciplines such as teacher education, policy studies, educational sociology and educational psychology have all contributed to the present study. Employing triangulation for the sole purpose of converging evidence could mean the researcher losing many insights into the phenomenon under study. The researcher acknowledges this advice, and utilizes triangulation as a way of illuminating the findings in relation to other sources of information. Additionally, triangulation adds a robustness to the data that would not otherwise be available using only one methodological approach, such as a solely quantitative survey instrument.

In order to obtain a better insight into the perceptions that participants offer, the study involves the following research methods.

(i) Documentary Analysis

Merriam (1998) uses the term ‘document’ to refer to print and non-print materials. Burns (1996:372) offers a comprehensive list that includes a variety of items, such as “letters, agendas, minutes, administrative reports, files, books, diaries, budgets, newscuttings, photographs, lists of employees/pupils etc”, as documents which provide relevant and valuable information for a case study. The selection of documents in this case study was generally guided by the research questions, together with the conceptual framework developed and presented in Chapter Two (see Figure1).

Several researchers (for example, Kellehear, 1993; Yin 1989; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983) consider documentary evidence to provide stronger insights about the phenomenon under study, by cross-validating, corroborating and augmenting evidence gathered from other sources, thus contributing to data triangulation. In the present study, documentary analysis was carried out to obtain relevant information on current policies and practices in pre-service teacher education. Since there are few documentary sources of information on these areas available locally, relevant materials in documents from overseas countries were also analysed. On the basis of this literature, the third research question has been examined: ‘Does LTC’s pre-service teacher education program reflect the emerging trends and developments in teacher education as expressed in contemporary international principles and practices?’ That is to say, the focus is on whether the pre-service education at the LTC is compatible with current trends and developments in pre-service teacher education overseas. To ascertain this, written accounts from different sources were scrutinized and
analysed. These sources were categorized as internal or external, these terms referring to documents which were available within and outside the College respectively.

**Internal Sources**

These included the College Handbook, minutes of Academic Board Meetings and submissions made to the Ministry of Education as well as submissions made to the Fiji Islands Education Commission 2000. These educational documents and commentaries were generally from the post-1980 period. The College Handbook contained details of the courses offered and assessment procedures adopted. The minutes of the Academic Board Meetings provided information relating to academic matters such as course approval and certification of students. The documents containing the College’s submissions provided information about its requirements and the challenges it faces.

**External Sources**

These written accounts included education policy documents, addresses given by Government officials at Graduation Ceremonies, Ministry of Education Annual Reports and newspaper articles. These documents indicated the Government’s views and intentions with regard to pre-service education. In addition, the contents of the documents reflected the Government’s position on pre-service education at LTC. The written accounts from both internal and external sources were evaluated on the basis of the framework derived from review of literature as well as being used to cross-check with informants during interviews. These written accounts were useful, considering the nature of the study. They provided a range of useful data, and in so doing contributed to the scope and deeper understanding of the present study. The use of this unobtrusive method of documentary analysis also allows questions of reliability and validity to be re-examined by other researchers (Kellehear, 1993). In addition, the written accounts provided valuable insights into pre-service education at LTC.

(ii) **Questionnaire Survey**

A questionnaire schedule was designed to collect data from beginning teachers on the appropriateness of their preparation for meeting the needs of their work environment (see Appendix B). To determine the needs of this group, a large sample of beginning teachers was needed in order to support the findings, and thus enhance reliability and validity. To satisfy these requirements, a questionnaire survey was conducted involving all 180 beginning
teachers who graduated from LTC in 1999. These teachers were targeted because of the recency of their teacher education experience and their potential to reflect on their perceptions of the pre-service program which they undertook whilst at the College. In view of the size of the sample, a questionnaire schedule was used. Also, a questionnaire survey is an effective means of gathering data from a geographically scattered population (Gay, 1992).

In Fiji, beginning teachers are posted to schools in all administrative divisions. As noted in Chapter Three, the primary schools are widely dispersed and therefore the use of a questionnaire survey permitted the gathering of data from beginning teachers in geographically isolated schools. A covering note, as recommended by Cohen and Manion (1994), accompanied the questionnaire (see Appendix C). The covering note spelled out the purpose and the importance of the study to the preparation of future teachers. An assurance of confidentiality and request for feedback were other vital matters included in the covering note.

The questionnaire for beginning teachers was administered in August 2000. The questionnaire consisted of different dimensions, such as the content of various courses taught, in determining the usefulness of their preparation in terms of their applicability to the actual teaching/learning process in the primary school. The questionnaire was piloted with final-year student teachers at LTC with the aim of ensuring ease and clarity of use, as well as eliminating any unintended difficulties.

The first section of the questionnaire dealt with the graduates' perceptions of the pre-service teacher education program that they undertook. They were asked to respond to an array of items by ticking the choice applicable to them using a four point scale, ranging from one ‘most negative’ to four ‘most positive’. In addition, one open-ended question was included to provide the opportunity for any individual beginning teacher to provide additional information regarding the pre-service program.

The second section related to the practice teaching component and consisted of two parts. The first part sought responses to the question: “How important have the following influences been on your performance during practice teaching?” A list of 17 influences was provided, and the graduates were asked to respond to each item as they had the previous section. The second part of this section invited open responses. The respondents were required to choose and comment on three of the most positive and three of the most negative influences experienced during practice teaching sessions. These two sections of the questionnaire provided relevant data to examine research question number two: “Is LTC’s pre-service teacher education program compatible with the demands of work expected of beginning teachers?” In addition, these sections provided answers to underlying question number three: “What is the value of LTC students’ preparation for their subsequent world of
work as perceived by recent LTC graduates, LTC staff, the Head Teachers of primary schools and Ministry of Education officials?"

The final section dealt with resources. A list of resources was provided in the questionnaire, and the respondents were asked to select ten resources that they considered would help enhance the initial preparation of teachers. This section, therefore, was designed to provide answers to underlying question number two: “What is the allocation of resources and facilities for the pre-service program?"

In addition, a small but representative sample of Head Teachers (60) at schools to which beginning teachers were appointed was invited to respond to a questionnaire that sought to elicit their views (see Appendix D). This questionnaire also had a covering note with relevant details. The questionnaire consisted of 10 open-ended questions. The feedback from the Head Teachers helped provide answers to underlying question number three: "What is the value of LTC students’ preparation for their subsequent world of work as perceived by recent LTC graduates, LTC staff, Head Teachers of primary schools and Ministry of Education officials?"

(iii) Interviews

Because of the nature of this study, personal interviews with Ministry of Education officials and College teaching staff were conducted to obtain data on their perceptions of pre-service teacher education (see Appendices E and F respectively). This, in turn, provided relevant information on “insider” accounts of the situation (Burgess, 1984:203). These interviews allowed great flexibility and depth of investigation (Osborne & Gilbert, 1980). While conducting the interviews, general principles to be observed in interviewing, were adhered to (Tuckman, 1999; Patton, 1987; Abrahamson, 1983; Spradley, 1979). These principles included asking questions in the same order to all the participants and recording the interviews with the consent of the participants. Tape recording of interviews ensured accurate gathering and retrieval of information. This increased the validity of the interview as a method of enquiry (Brenner, 1998; Crowl, 1993). Interviewees occupied different levels in the educational hierarchy. This enabled the researcher to determine the participants’ perspectives on the issues, which contributed to the richness of the data included in the study. Structured interview schedules were used to obtain the views of College teaching staff and Ministry of Education officials on the professional preparation of beginning teachers at LTC.

When implementing the interview procedure it was necessary to consider what Lofland and Lofland (1984:25) had to say about researchers asking interview participants to, “… grant access to their lives, their minds, [and] their emotions”. Similarly, Cohen and Manion (1994: 359) suggest that “[researchers] must take into account the effect of the research on participants, and act in such a way as to preserve their dignity as human beings”.

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In view of these suggestions, protocols were observed in order to respect participants’ privacy and obtain their permission for the interview. In addition, care was taken to preserve the dignity and social status of the participants in Fijian society. With regard to the interviews with Ministry of Education officials, letters seeking their cooperation were sent. These letters also contained the goals of the research, together with the proposed interview schedule and request to record interviews. The interviews with the Ministry of Education officials took place on 17 January 2000 at the Ministry of Education in Suva. The interviews were conducted with two officials, the Chief Education Officer Primary (CEOP) and Minister for Education. Since LTC is the responsibility of the primary section of the Ministry of Education that is headed by the CEOP, it was considered appropriate to interview the CEOP regarding pre-service education. The Minister was interviewed because he makes decisions on policy matters, which are then further delineated and elaborated as part of policy formulation by the senior administrative team of officials within the Ministry before the policies are operationalised.

The Minister for Education and the Chief Education Officer looking after Primary Education and LTC as the institution preparing primary teachers, at the time of the field research were both Indo-Fijians. The former had visited the LTC on a few occasions and the latter had visited the College on a number of times. The researcher, also being an Indo-Fijian presented no difficulty in ‘entry’ into the interview situation. However, during the interview, care was taken not to allow the interview process to be tainted in anyway by the cultural affinity. After the initial informal exchange of greetings, interview was carried out in a more formal atmosphere. The interviews with Ministry of Education officials provided answers to underlying question number one: “What are the policies and programs of LTC?” Specifically, the focus of the interview with the Ministry of Education officials was more on current and future policies related to pre-service education.

At LTC, the consent of the Principal and Vice-Principal was similarly obtained for the interviews. They were also briefed on the study and the purpose of the interview. In a meeting, all staff members were officially informed about the study and its purpose. The staff members agreed to cooperate and a suitable time was established for each staff member to be interviewed, depending on their availability. Again, the interviews were tape recorded with the consent of participants. As at March 2000, the College had 26 staff members. All the staff members were interviewed regardless of the position they occupied, as all of them were responsible for the preparation of teachers. Interviews with the staff provided answers to underlying questions numbers one and two respectively: “What are the polices and programs of the LTC?” and, “What is the allocation of resources and facilities for the pre-service program?” Also, the interview with the lecturers provided data to examine research question
number one: “Does LTC’s pre-service teacher education program meet the socio-cultural expectations of Fiji’s primary schools?”

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS

This section discusses the procedure adopted for data analysis for both quantitative and qualitative data respectively. The task of analysing the qualitative and quantitative data was undertaken using ‘low-tech’ methods (Vulliamy & Webb, 1992). That is, data analysis was carried out manually.

Of the 180 survey questionnaires sent to the beginning teachers, 106 (59 percent) were returned, and they were all usable. The quantitative data was obtained from Parts A, C and E of the beginning teacher questionnaire (Parts B and D invited individual comments, and these will be addressed in another section). Part A and Part C involved ratings of items on a four point scale. Part E, however, had a list of resources, and the respondents were required to choose ten resources that they considered important in the preparation of teachers.

The data obtained from Part A and Part C were analysed using a common statistical measure known as the ‘mean’. The mean is a descriptive statistic which is by far the most useful of the measures of central tendency (Heiman, 1999; Roscoe, 1975). It is determined by adding all the scores in the distribution and dividing by the total number of scores (Mehrens & Lehmann, 1991). Clarke (1995), for example, used a similar technique in analysing the data derived from questionnaires to determine the strengths and weakness of the pre-primary teacher pre-service program.

Each item was analysed on the basis of the ratings given, and for each item the mean was calculated. Accordingly, the items were categorised as negative or positive depending on the mean. That is, items having means of greater than or equal to the scale mean (2.5) were categorised as positive, whereas items having means of lower than the scale mean (2.5) were categorised as negative. The negative items indicate those areas of work in which the beginning teachers perceived that they were not well prepared. On the other hand, the positive items show those areas of work in which they were adequately prepared.

Part E was analysed on the basis of the frequency counts, and the resources were subsequently ranked. ‘Frequency tabulation’ is a descriptive procedure that serves to provide a convenient summary statistic for a set of data to enable the investigator to discern at a glance the general distribution of the data, as well as aid in the interpretation of trends in the data (Cooksey, 1984; Roscoe, 1975). The frequency is determined simply by systematically arranging a collection of measures depending on the number of times the different values of the variable occur (Cooksey, 1984; Roscoe, 1975). These were used to rank the resources in order of their importance, from the most important to the least. This ranking shows the priority of
resources that beginning teachers consider would help in the professional preparation of teachers.

With regard to the qualitative data, Patton (1990:371-372) states that the challenge of qualitative research is to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal. In other words, it would be inappropriate to use any quantification measures such as statistical procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Further, there are no set guidelines to analyse qualitative data (Patton, 1990; Miles & Huberman, 1984). Bogdan and Biklen (1992:145) suggest that qualitative data, involves “working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others”. In analysing qualitative data, several writers (for example, Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Patton, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Miles & Huberman, 1984) suggest that certain meaningful labels can be assigned to them on the basis of the objectives of the study.

In this study, therefore, the researcher analysed the transcribed qualitative data on the basis of issues pertinent to the research questions of the study. Thus, the interview data were analysed for significant issues such as ‘resources’, ‘courses’, ‘practice teaching’, ‘policies’ and ‘constraints’ in order to identify specific areas for categorisation and discussion. The research questions were addressed using the conceptual framework that viewed teacher education from the perspectives of both the system world of teacher education and the actual life-world of teachers based on Habermas’ theoretical formulation (Habermas, 1971). This conceptual framework also offered the basis for discovering the patterns that were identified in the analysis. The categories were subjected to analysis by searching for patterns of commonalities and differences within the responses made by the participants. These issues were then supported by typical responses from the respondents. The use of quotes from the interviews and statements from the free response section of the questionnaire survey follows the suggestions of Rudduck (1993:19) that “some statements carry a remarkably rich density of meaning in a few words”. In presenting the interview data, the respondents’ confidentiality was maintained by referencing their comments using an alphanumeric code to identify sections of the text used in the study. For example, BT1 would denote beginning teacher number one, SM1 would denote staff member number one and HT1 would denote Head Teacher number one. However, the interview material obtained from officials holding senior administrative positions has been labelled using their names and job titles, with their consent.
4.4 SUMMARY

This study is concerned with pre-service primary teacher education and, in particular, the adequacy of teacher preparation for the world of work. The nature and purpose of the study determines the choice of research methods employed. For this study, documentary analyses, questionnaire surveys and interviews were considered appropriate to address the three key research questions together with the underlying questions posed.

This chapter has sought to justify the choice of research methods adopted in this study and, as well, has indicated some limitations to be expected of the methods employed. The procedure adopted for the data analysis has also been outlined. The following chapter, Chapter Five, presents the results obtained by means of questionnaire surveys, interviews and an examination of the relevant documents.
CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The adequacy of beginning teachers’ pre-service preparation in meeting the demands of professional work is the focus of this study. The writings presented in the preceding chapters reviewed literature related to pre-service preparation of teachers, provided relevant details of the context within which the study was conducted, and explained the methods used in gathering and analyzing data for the study. Following a content analysis of the data from the different sources a number of categories were developed to arrive at the findings. Accordingly, the findings are presented under these categories. The purpose of this chapter then, is to present these findings. A discussion of the findings would be presented in the next chapter.
5.1 RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this section data obtained from policy statements and other documents sourced from within and outside the College, as well as data obtained from the interviews and questionnaire surveys, are analysed. The results are grouped under five main headings, presented in Table 8: administrative system, resources, student teachers, teacher educators and teacher education curriculum. The headings used are derived from the conceptual framework developed and summarized in Chapter Two (see Figure 1).

Table 8: Identified Categories of the Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sub-categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1.1.</td>
<td>Administrative System</td>
<td>Organizational Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Decision-Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.2.</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Teaching Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hostel Accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dining Hall</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.3.</td>
<td>Student Teachers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Entry Qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recruitment Criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.4.</td>
<td>Teacher Educators</td>
<td>Workload</td>
</tr>
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<td>Qualifications</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1.5.</td>
<td>Teacher Education Curriculum</td>
<td>1984 Review of Teacher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BEMTUP Intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Current Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Course Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Beginning Teacher Feedback</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Head Teacher Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Practice Teaching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.1.1 ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

The management and administrative system (for example, policies, procedures, control and decision making) should ensure that an institution functions effectively and in a responsive way to provide the high quality educational services necessary to enable quality professional preparation of teachers for the demands of work in the field (Throsby & Ganicott, 1990; Winkler, 1989 and Hanson, 1986 cited in World Bank, 1990). To determine the degree to which this is achieved at LTC, the data on management and administration derived from the interviews, questionnaire surveys and documentary analyses are presented below.

Organizational Structure

LTC has been operational since 1977. It functions as a Government owned teacher education institution, with its mission statement being “to promote pre-service and on-going education of primary school teachers…in the Fiji Islands” (LTC, 2000a:6). LTC is under the direct control of the Ministry of Education and the FPSC. Figure 2 shows the organizational structure of the College.

FIGURE 2: COLLEGE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Source: LTC Data, 2000
The diagram shows how the College comes under the direct control of the Permanent Secretary for Education through the CEOP. At the College, the Principal is the official head of LTC and the Vice-Principal is the deputy. The Principal is responsible to the Ministry of Education for the professional as well as administrative aspects of the College. The Principal and Vice-Principal are charged with the responsibility of providing leadership to both staff and students. There exist three levels in the teaching staff: Head of School (HOS), Senior Lecturer and Lecturer. 1999 saw the implementation of one of the recommendations of the 1993 Job Review Report that related to the establishment of six HOS positions. The then Minister for Education, the Honourable Pratap Chand (2000b), noted during an interview that the establishment of the HOS position was a significant achievement for the College:

…Job review recommendation provided some relief… Has been useful administratively and also in terms of providing promotional opportunities… that is an area of improvement we have seen.

Hitherto, Senior Lecturers had carried out dual responsibilities; being in charge of the department and also conducting full-time teaching duties, as there was no established HOS position at the College. The Ministry of Education is yet to implement other recommended establishments.

Decision-Making

During the interview the Principal stated that most decisions, such as those concerning the running of the College, were made at the Central Office of the Ministry of Education. The following criticism of current policy is contained in the LTC (2000b:1) submission to the Fiji Islands Education Commission 2000:

At present decision-making are too centralized…the Ministry of Education should stop interfering with decisions made by the College relating to academic matters and disciplinary cases…Decisions relating to academic matters and disciplinary cases have been reversed in the past.
Messages have to be sent by fax, letter or telephone to the officers in the Central Office of the Ministry of Education because “approval [is] needed for a lot of decisions” (LTC, 2000b:3). There are delays in receiving approval, and this affects the work at the College. For example, concern about the lack of autonomy was expressed by the Principal:

For the last two years the Ministry has been giving us a relieving library assistant but it usually takes 5 - 6 months of waiting before the appointment is made. By then a semester is over (A. Prasad, 1999:2).

The comments reflect the difficulties faced by the College in undertaking its administration. During the interview, the following comment was made by the Principal, Mr A. Prasad (2000c), related to decision-making:

There are issues of not getting staff appointed on time...These are simple things... I have to seek Ministry’s approval... Decision-making, you know, devolution would greatly help.

The Principal cited some other instances where permission had to be sought from the Central Office for matters which might have been effectively handled locally. These issues have been listed below:

- hiring buses to transport students during practice teaching
- all disciplinary matters
- choosing chief guests for the graduation ceremonies
- approval for non award experience – attachment
- dealing with academic misconduct
- planning for graduation dinner

Such day-to-day management matters remain very much in the control of the Central Office of the Education Ministry.

5.1.2 RESOURCES

The resources available for the professional preparation of teachers have a major impact on the quality of graduates and their ability to meet the demands of the work which they are expected to carry out (Hawes & Stephens, 1990 Throsby & Gannicott, 1990; Long, 1986; Ainley, 1987). Documentary analyses, interviews and surveys were conducted to examine the availability of physical facilities and educational resource materials for the professional preparation of teachers at LTC. The results of these enquiries follow.

Teaching Space

The College has a total of nine classrooms and four specialist rooms — Science laboratory, Audio Visual Aid (AVA) room, Gymnasium and Industrial Arts room. According
to the Principal, the specialist rooms are also used for lectures. He pointed out that without using the specialist rooms in this way it would be difficult to accommodate and run sufficient classes in the other available classrooms. He also stated that some of the existing rooms are too small to accommodate all the students in each section comfortably (Teaching units or classes at the College are called ‘sections’). The student section lists for 2000 showed that there were about 35 students per section. In 2000 there were 12 sections of students, and so 12 classrooms were in use at any given time of the day. During the interview the Principal, Mr A. Prasad (2000c), further pointed out that in the late 1980s and early 1990s the Dining Hall and the Library were also used as classrooms because of high enrolments.

According to the Principal, the original buildings constructed at LTC in 1976 were made possible with financial assistance from the British government. Provision was made for facilities to cater for some 300 - 400 pre-service and in-service students. However, in 1978 there was a change in national Government policy. As a result, the funds allocated for the construction of facilities at LTC were diverted to the construction of Nasinu Secondary School in Suva (Nabobo, 1996). As a consequence, certain projected facilities for LTC were not built. These included the planned science laboratory, workshop, the music building, the in-service block, the girls’ and in-service hostel, and the multi-purpose hall. The construction of the in-service block and in-service hostel could have helped the College to provide facilities to support the on-going education of primary teachers.

Hostel Accommodation

LTC is a residential College and accommodates both male and female students. There are two triple-storey buildings with twin rooms, which accommodate 132 male students. The female students occupy four newly constructed single storey buildings with twin rooms. According to the Principal, a total of 112 places are available for female students. These female residential buildings were built by the Government in 1993. Prior to this, one of the double storey buildings, which currently accommodates male students, was occupied by female students. The College now provides a total of 244 boarding places.

During the interview the Principal conceded that some female students were currently accommodated in the ‘sick bay’ to ease the problem of scarce accommodation. A former Principal, Mr Joeli Nabuka (1990), found that the performance of day students was lower than their residential counterparts. He suggested that this was because the day students were boarding in overcrowded homes, and that that adversely affected their studies. Based on the findings of Nabuka’s (1990) study, the then Principal, Mr Remesio Rogovakalali (1991), presented a submission to the Ministry of Education for additional dormitories (hostel accommodation) to be built, so that all students could be accommodated on campus. As a
result, the four newly constructed buildings mentioned earlier were built to provide additional boarding places. However, as of 2000, 68 final year students were still without hostel accommodation.

**Dining Hall**

The dining hall has a capacity of 280 students. In the interview the Principal, Mr A. Prasad (2000c), lamented that the dining hall cannot accommodate all the students in one sitting, especially for lunch, when both boarders and day scholars are provided a meal by the College. Consequently, lunch hour is staggered into a number of sittings. He further pointed out that the dining hall is also used as a multi-purpose hall. It is used for College assemblies, cultural activities and, in the past, graduation ceremonies.

**Library**

The College Library is located on the top floor of a double storey building adjacent to the Girls’ Hostel and the dining hall building. The gymnasium is located on the ground floor. According to the Principal, the Library has a capacity for approximately 100 students to study at any given time and has a stock of about 5,000 books. Most of the publications are quite old except those that were provided during the BEMTUP. The then Minister for Education and Youth, the Honourable Dr Ahmed Ali (1983:3), in his speech during the College Graduation Ceremony, noted, amongst other things,

…the need to upgrade and keep up-to-date Library facilities…at this Teachers College.

The following comments were made by the Chief Librarian of the Fiji Library Services, Ms Tuimoala (1996:1), in her report regarding the Library collection:

[the collection] is outdated and barely supports the curriculum teaching or training of the College. Shelves are filled with irrelevant materials which should be weeded out…Basic reference materials — Encyclopaedia, Dictionaries, Subject Dictionaries, Almanacs, Gazetteers etc are lacking.

Furthermore, in his submission to the Ministry of Education the then Principal of the College, Mr Rogovakalali (1993:40), stated, amongst other things, that:

The Library in the last 10 years has not been able to purchase any books due to a very small budget.

The Chief Librarian, Ms Tuimoala (1996:1), also expressed similar comments pertaining to the funds allocated for the Library:

The Library budget for books and other Library supplies is inadequate ... if the Library should subscribe to educational periodicals, then the allocated
budget would absorb all the book allocations leaving nothing for technical books and other resources.

The interim review of BEMTUP pointed out that the Library was not adequately resourced to facilitate the College teaching program:

The situation and effectiveness of the Library is still acknowledged as a disaster area by all consulted (G. Singh & Booth, 1997: 16).

According to the staff in the Library only F$500 was allocated for books in 1998. The furniture in the Library is old, and only about 30 single tables for study are available. A photocopier was bought by the College only recently, and is now available to students and staff. At present there exists no system for interlibrary loans, and the catalogue system is yet to be computerized.

A small office is available for Library staff and also for storage of books. The Library opening hours are from 8:30am to 4:30pm from Monday to Friday and it is closed during the lunch hour from 1pm to 2pm. The lecturers sometimes volunteer to open the Library in the evenings. The BEMTUP advisors who were attached to the College also provided assistance in this regard in 1996/1997. Despite many submissions to the Ministry of Education, there is only one staff member responsible for the Library, which means it is not open during the evenings, weekends or public holidays, which might otherwise be ideal times for students to use it (A. Prasad, 2000a).

As far back as the late 1980s a submission was made to the Ministry of Education by the Principal, Mr Nabuka (1989), requesting the upgrading of LTC in terms of both human and material resources, as well as its administrative structure and status. Nothing materialized from this submission. In the ensuing years several other submissions were presented to the Ministry of Education. In 1991 the Principal, Mr Rogovakalali, made a fresh submission outlining matters raised in the previous submissions, together with a list of resources. Among his justifications, one referred to improving “the image, the function and morale of the College” (Rogovakalali, 1991:1). The following year another submission was presented, the covering letter of which entreated:

Several attempts had been made in the past through submissions…to justify the need for upgrading…to put very clearly before you the nature and scope of, as well as the reason and justification… We hope that you will give the proposal a sympathetic consideration (Rogovakalali, 1992:1).
In another submission to the Ministry of Education, Mr Rogovakalali (1995) reiterated the need for teaching materials and proper physical facilities to enhance the pre-service program. Unfortunately these resources, which would have positively impacted on the quality of the pre-service program, were not provided.

Recently the Principal, Mr A. Prasad (1999:1), submitted to the Ministry of Education a list of requirements for the College:

…you had asked me to submit a list of things with the approximate costing to you in order to improve facilities and services offered by the College… there are many areas needing improvement.

With regard to books for the Library, the Principal stated the following in his submission:

…the majority of the books are outdated in the Library. We were fortunate to receive some books as part of BEMTUP. There are hardly any books in the Library on Early Childhood and Special Education although we have started these new programs this year…seeking F$15,000 to buy books for the College Library (A. Prasad, 1999: 4).

Again, there was no positive response from the Ministry of Education.

The issue of facilities and resources was one of the items in the LTC (2000b:2) submission to the Fiji Islands Education Commission 2000:

There are inadequate lecture rooms, staff office, specialist rooms, AVA resources. There is no computer lab or a lecture theatre… A national institution should have improved facilities if it is to improve [teacher preparation]… Because of funding constraints there is no Internet facilities for student and staff use. Many high schools are better equipped in terms of resources and facilities than LTC.

The submission drew attention to deficiencies related to the Library. Specifically, the submission (LTC, 2000b: 4) highlighted that:

The library is in urgent need of resources. The allocation for the Library is not at all enough to buy resources and make any significant improvement… need to expand the library, increase the number of librarians as well as computerize the records to improve services.

More recently (June/2000), a memorandum was sent from the College to the Ministry of Education requesting the appointment of an additional staff member to the Library, which for all these years had had only one staff member. The Principal advanced the following rationale for the request:

All these years we have been requesting for another permanent appointment for the simple reason that the College is a tertiary institution and library services need to be made available to students after hours to do research and assignments. It should be noted that research and accessing of new information are the hallmarks of a tertiary institution (A. Prasad, 2000a:2).
A major concern here was that the long-standing problem of Library service was yet to be addressed, and it was noted that this hindered effective operation and services to clients. In 1997 a senior officer in the Development and Planning section of the Ministry of Education, Mr Filipe Jitoko, submitted a project proposal to the European Union (EU) to expand and upgrade the physical facilities. The proposal indicated, amongst other things, indicated that there were:

…limited facilities at LTC…specialist rooms are being used as general purpose classrooms because all classrooms have to be utilized to fit everyone. This is highly unsatisfactory because the lecturers are unable to set up the classrooms in advance for lectures as they are being used for most of the day for other classes (Jitoko, 1997: 2).

The following comment was made on the College Library in the proposal:

The current Library facilities have been a disappointment for such an institution as noted by the Australian Consultants (Jitoko, 1997: 5).

Analyses of data derived from documents suggest shortcomings in the provision of teaching space and educational resource materials. Some areas of concern that have re-emerged include the issue of physical facilities and resources that would better equip the lecturers to carry out their duties.

In relation to constraints faced in the preparation of teachers, all 26 lecturers highlighted physical facilities and resources. For example:

…resources are not there… Library I would say is a disgrace because the materials out there is so outdated…used during our time at Nasinu Teachers College way back in the early 1980s …very limited new resources are there in the library (SM2, 2000).

…the classroom and apart from [that], shortage of materials…in the library there are very few resources…good books [and] whenever we ask our administrators to buy more books the reason they give us…do not have funds (SM17, 2000).

…we do not have the resources that we need to teach our courses effectively (SM13, 2000).

This is a Government institution…we have a problem of resource [materials]…we need computers…I think information technology is very important and I must admit we are lacking the basic things at the moment (SM3, 2000).

…the College is very short of library resources… No access to Internet, department still needs computers…we have made numerous submissions through us and by the Board of Governors [but] seems nobody knows what is happening (SM5, 2000).
On physical facilities for the College, the then Minister for Education, the Honourable Pratap Chand (2000b), mentioned that his Ministry relied on funding from the EU:

…depending on the EU project…We have already signed the initial agreement…and so LTC project is also tied to that. There is no separate allocations [from the Ministry] for any development at LTC.

The CEOP, Mr Satish Singh (2000), also highlighted plans under the EU project to provide LTC with physical facilities such as a lecture theatre and a multi-purpose hall. Both the Minister for Education and CEOP indicated that, because of the financial constraints, the Ministry was unable to undertake any capital works therefore such projects depended on overseas funding.

Additional data were derived from a questionnaire survey of beginning teachers who had trained at LTC. These teachers were provided with a list of facilities and resources, and were asked to identify the ten most important items from the list that they considered would contribute to the professional preparation of teachers. As well, the beginning teachers were asked to provide brief comments on why they considered their choices vital. Their responses are arranged and listed on the basis of their frequency in Table 9.

Among facilities and resources, the Library stands out as the most important.

Comments from the beginning teachers included, for example:

…main source of information to everyone (BT1, 2000).
…for research work there is need to have a resourceful library (BT13, 2000).
…to do assignments properly (BT6, 2000)

Table 9: Resources and Facilities LTC needs to better prepare teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library fully resourced</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Laboratory</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Laboratory</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well qualified lecturers</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop (Students assignment preparation room)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Aid Facility</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVA fully resourced</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Resource Centre</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Room fully resourced</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Theatre</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostel Accommodation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookshop and stationery supplies</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Athletics and field facilities</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnasium fully resourced</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro-teaching Laboratory</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well furnished classrooms</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art &amp; Craft Workshop</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming pool</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Council Office</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Common room</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Laboratory</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well equipped and presented Administration Block</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Store rooms</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N =106

Source: Collated from questionnaire data with the beginning teachers, 2000.

A fully resourced Library is followed by a Computer Laboratory in the rankings. Some comments related to the latter were:

- It is modernized world…everyone should be computer literate (BT3, 2000).
- To be up with time, teachers need to be well versed with its use (BT41, 2000).
- To get first hand experience in the use of computers (BT35, 2000).
- …is really needed with internet services…we need to be updated with information technology if they expect us to present good assignments then they need to provide a good computer laboratory (BT65, 2000).

The need for a Computer Laboratory was also emphasized by the Principal, Mr A. Prasad (1994:4), in a submission to the Ministry of Education:

- Students at the teachers college need to be familiar with computers and their use. While we have computer laboratories in high schools there is no such facility at the only government primary teacher institution in the country. The college trains students to be teachers of primary school children and they need better facilities for training if we wish to improve basic education in this country.

The third most important resource according to the beginning teachers was the Science Laboratory:

- The condition of the present science lab is very poor (BT59, 2000).
- [the science lab needs improvement] to carry out experiments effectively (BT64, 2000)].
- [the science lab needs improvement] to make science learning more interesting (BT98, 2000)].

This resource is followed by the need to have well qualified lecturers. Some of the comments included:

- [lecturers] will have a wide knowledge of things to be taught…also good role models to the student teachers. More effective learning could take place (BT69, 2000).
These comments reflect on the situation at the College in relation to resources.

5.1.3 STUDENT TEACHERS

A number of writers (for example, Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1988; Galamboo, 1986; Elley, 1984) have indicated that comprehensive selection criteria can contribute to effective teacher preparation. For example, the quality of the professional preparation of teachers, and in turn their ability to meet the demands of work in the field, depend partly on the basic qualifications with which they enter the pre-service program (Logan et al., 1990; World Bank, 1990; Eash & Rasher, 1977). To gauge the situation at LTC, the data on student intake have been analyzed and organized in what follows under the headings of enrolment, entry qualification and recruitment criteria.

Enrolment

The College records show an increase in student enrolment after the military coups of 1987. The LTC Handbook (1992: 16) provides the following as reasons for the increase in the student population:

- increase in the primary school enrolment
- lowering of retiring age of teachers from 60 to 55
- unexpected resignation and migration of teachers due to the events of May and September, 1987.

In particular, the two military coups of 1987 led to a discrepancy between teacher demand and supply. Large numbers of primary school teachers resigned and migrated to overseas countries. This led to a higher teacher-pupil ratio in primary schools. In some cases teachers were required to handle classes as large as 60 pupils (Lingam, 1996). The change in Government policy with respect to teacher retirement age also had ramifications for teacher supply and demand, contributing to severe shortages of teachers. The Government had to introduce emergency recruitment and short-term training measures because of the urgent need for more teachers. In 1988 the Special Teacher Training Scheme was introduced. Under this scheme qualified school leavers were selected and posted to schools to fill the vacant teaching positions. Besides teaching, these students attended some training programs during the school holidays in their first year. The following year they came to LTC for a year’s training, after which they were certificated. The last batch of students certified under this scheme graduated in 1992. During the period 1988-1992 the College had two groups of
students, one group doing the normal two-year training program and the other doing one year’s training.

Table 10 shows the enrolment figures for the College since 1995. In addition, the table displays the breakdown of students in terms of gender and ethnicity.

Table 10: Student Enrolment from 1995 – 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fijians</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Others</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>153</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>204</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>170</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: LTC data, 2000

The statistics show that over 300 trainees were enrolled in the College from 1995 to 2000. Overall, there seems to be an equitable distribution of student intake on the basis of ethnicity and gender. Also, during the period leading to the development of a constitution for Fiji in 1997 there was a climate of political uncertainty in the country. This may have triggered a higher than usual rate of migration of professionals including primary teachers. To meet the shortfall, additional trainee teachers were admitted in 1997. This elevated admission rate gradually dwindled and settled back to the normal intake number of around 150. A perusal of Table 10 shows this trend for the years 1997 to 1999.

**Entry Qualification**

With regard to entry qualification, the following is stipulated in the LTC Handbook (2000a:8)

An applicant needs to have passed at least the Fiji School Leaving Certificate (Form Six) or an equivalent examination and should be over 17 years of age.
The Principal, Mr A. Prasad (2000c), asserted during the interview that over the years the entry qualifications of those entering LTC have improved considerably. The minimum entry-level qualification used to be a pass at Form Six, level but at the date of this study admission to LTC requires a pass at Form Seven level. The CEOP, Mr S. Singh (2000), also highlighted this during the interview:

...recently we have noticed that the recruitment at the College is made at a very high level...Form Seven qualification. Even though the basic qualification is Form Six...we are recruiting students with Form Seven qualification.

However, for indigenous Fijians the minimum entry mark is below that of Indo-Fijians. The CEOP stated that, for entry at LTC, the minimum mark for indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians is 220 and 260 respectively of a possible mark of 400. Officially, this arrangement is described as in line with the affirmative action policy initiatives of successive governments, designed to ensure that at least 50 percent of places at LTC are awarded to indigenous Fijians.

The table below shows the entry qualifications of student teachers from 1991-2000.

*Table 11: Basic Qualifications of Student Teachers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Form 6</th>
<th>Form 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: LTC data, 2000

The table shows that since 1994, all students who entered the College had completed FSFE. While all students achieving places were at the Form Seven level, there was no opportunity for them to respond to the reduction in the number of places by achieving higher grades. Those with higher grades tended to study at USP to become secondary teachers.

**Intake Criteria**

The intake of student teachers for LTC is mainly the responsibility of the Careers Section of the Ministry of Education. They are short-listed for an interview and their names are published in the local newspapers. Three locations are mainly used for the interview — Lautoka, Suva and Labasa. In Lautoka and Suva the centres are LTC and FCAE respectively. In Labasa, the Divisional Education Office is used as the centre. The composition of the
interview panel in each centre includes a representative from the Careers Section, Central Office of the Ministry of Education, FPSC and a staff member from LTC. The latter was included in the panel only recently. Thus, one finds that there is very little scope for the College to select the students or have say in the intake. The criteria for and mechanism of selection is mainly in the hands of the Ministry of Education and the FPSC, with only a token participation by the LTC staff. This is evident in the College’s submission to Fiji Islands Education Commission 2000 which states that:

> It is a pity that the College has very little say in selecting students to LTC. At present our staff is only represented in the interview panels (LTC, 2000a: 2).

The Principal stated that the final selection of students to be admitted to the College is done by the Permanent Secretary for Education, assisted by two Deputy Permanent Secretaries, two Chief Education Officers, one officer from the FPSC and two officers from the Careers Section. He pointed out that selection is generally based on marks attained by the students in the FSFE, as well as the gender and ethnicity of the applicants. Thus a combination of formal qualifications as well as the applicants’ gender and ethnicity are used as criteria for admission to the College. The former is based on the twin criteria of merit and suitability. The latter takes into account demographic criteria of gender and ethnicity.

### 5.1.4 TEACHER EDUCATORS

From a human resources development point of view, recruitment of well qualified and adequately experienced staff is needed in order to improve the quality of the teacher preparation program. The underlying assumption here is that better qualified staff, assuming reasonable workloads, can help raise the quality of the teaching profession. This notion is supported by evidence from the literature (for example, Deloitte, Touche & Tohmatsu; 1993; World Bank 1990).

Apart from the consideration of adequacy of the qualifications of teacher educators, it is useful to look at the ethnic and gender composition of the staff. The following information concerning staffing was derived from interviews and document analyses, and begins with a breakdown for ethnicity and gender.

**Table 12: Staffing for the Year 2000 - Race and Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fijian</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: LTC Handbook, 2000a:2
In aggregate, 84 percent of staff were males and 16 percent females. It is interesting to observe, that although women make up approximately 60 percent of primary school staff, the LTC staff is dominated by males. While qualified College staff would be able to provide quality teacher education program, the gender balance may also be relevant. For instance sufficient number of female lecturers may be able to serve as ‘models’ for female trainees, provide appropriate guidance and support both in the class and outside the class.

It was found that all 26 staff carried out a variety of work. Not only were they involved in teaching pre-service teachers, but also in the supervision of students during practice teaching, conducting tutorials, counselling, administration and other activities conducted at the College. The following two quotations are indicative of the variety of work carried out by College staff:

…apart from carrying out the teaching load I also look after a group of students as their personal tutor…look after department materials…also help in organizing the teaching practice at the College (SM2, 2000).

Apart from teaching I engage in the supervision of students in teaching practice, cultural programs, sports programs and [conduct] tutorials to some of my students (SM15, 2000).

In the area of practice teaching, lecturers are required to visit primary schools to assess trainees’ work, prepare reports and work closely with the Associate Teacher and Head Teachers of the cooperating schools.

Those lecturers who resided on the LTC campus stated that they were also required to carry out hostel duties:

…also help in the supervision of hostel duties [and I am ] Senior Women’s Tutor (SM6, 2000).

On the subject of work and responsibilities, the Principal, Mr Nabuka (1989:03), in his submission to the Ministry of Education, indicated the heavy workload and responsibilities shouldered by the staff:

The pressure of work is proving too much for the College staff…The type of responsibility that has come to be expected of the staff at the College has become so demanding that they are finding it increasingly difficult to cope.

He suggested that this was due to an increase in College enrolments. The LTC (2000b:3) submission to the Fiji Islands Education Commission also highlighted anomalies between staff at LTC and at the other teachers college, FCAE:

Both the institutions are very similar in enrolment, years of training…yet the College [LTC] is expected to function with a minimum number of staff.
The staffs at the College were mostly recruited from secondary schools. Some of the lecturers had experience teaching in both primary and secondary schools, but none of the lecturers had any tertiary teaching experience until they joined LTC. As at 2000, of the 26 established positions, 73 percent were held by those with degree qualifications and 27 percent by those with non-degree qualifications (LTC, 2000a). The latter mostly held teaching positions in Physical Education, Music and Art and Craft. Some of the lecturers indicated that they upgraded their qualifications while at LTC through personally funded extension studies. Two lecturers were awarded the Primary Teachers’ Certificate by the College after they fulfilled the criteria. The criteria for this award were determined by the College staff and approved by the Ministry of Education. Currently four staff members have taken the initiative to undertake distance education at their own expense:

…own initiative to do further study…from the University of Southern Queensland (SM14, 2000).

…I am carrying on my studies on my own expenses (SM2, 2000).

…we made a special request to USP to offer classes on Saturdays… I am attending Saturday classes every fortnight. I am going to Suva to attend classes to do my studies (SM17, 2000).

Table 13 shows details of the qualifications of the teaching staff.

Table 13: Qualifications of the Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positions</th>
<th>Certificate</th>
<th>Diploma</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Post Graduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Lecturers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heads of Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Principal</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: LTC Handbook, 2000:2

Most of the teaching staff (57.7 percent), including the Principal and Vice Principal, hold degree qualifications, and another four staff members (15.4 percent) hold post-graduate qualifications.

Only a few of the teaching staff have had opportunities for non-award professional experiences, such as attachments to other post-secondary institutions in the region. Those lecturers who were offered attachments mentioned that the Institute of Education (IOE) at the USP met all their expenses. As of 1997, the IOE funded the Vice-Principal’s and the Principal’s attachment at TTC and the then WSTC respectively. All requests for attachment had to be forwarded to the IOE through the Ministry of Education. The IOE makes the decision on the basis of the Ministry of Education’s recommendation. The Ministry of
Education has not made any provision for the upgrading of the teaching staff at the College. This was also noted by the then Minister for Education, the Honourable Pratap Chand (2000b), during the interview:

I think more on individual efforts, we do not have a program for the College as such…one of the casualties you know all these [professional development] program has been the issue of loss of manpower in the colleges.

In the area of professional development, all the 26 lecturers indicated an urgent need for professional upgrading. For example:

...very rare, I suggest that we should have more frequent chance of having the in-service either for short-term attachment or long term programs (SM1, 2000).

...we immediately deserve the gesture from the people concerned (SM2, 2000).

Ever since I joined the College I have not had any chance for professional development and I will appreciate Government looking at this aspect very seriously (SM3, 2000).

That’s an ongoing cry from lecturers…have another shot at further improving themselves to be good lecturers to prepare the students for the major task of becoming primary teachers (SM4, 2000).

All staff…need to upgrade their qualifications to at least Masters level or Post Graduate level… qualifications of the students we having now have achieved Form 7 so we can not be having BA degrees…Gone are those days (SM13, 2000).

The Principal was fortunate, as he was considered in 2000 for a Management and Leadership course. However, he commented that:

…this is the first real…course that I have done in my last 25 years of teaching… I am learning about the job after being in the chair…There has been no systematic professional development for our staff… Every body either came from the primary or secondary system and they are required to find their own way in the College.

The BEMTUP report also pointed out that:

Most staff require upgrading of their academic background as well as opportunities to share with other models and approaches of teacher education (G. Singh & Booth, 1997: 40).
These statements reflect the situation at the College in relation to the professional development of staff.

While qualified College staff would be able to provide a quality teacher education program, the gender balance may also be relevant. For instance, sufficient numbers of female lecturers may be able to serve as “models” for female trainees, providing appropriate guidance and support in the class and outside the class as well as providing academic content equivalent to their male colleagues.

5.1.5 TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

A number of writers (for example, Bacchus, 2000; Baba, 1999; Thaman, 1998) have suggested that there is a particular need to regularly review and update pre-service courses to ensure that they are in line with the current demands required of teachers in the field. This thesis attempts to go some way toward meeting the challenge to examine LTC pre-service courses to determine whether they meet the work demands encountered by beginning teachers. The following information was derived from questionnaire surveys, interviews and documentary analyses. The results are organized and presented under the headings of: 1984 review of teacher education; BEMTUP intervention; current curriculum; course assessment; beginning teacher feedback; Head Teacher feedback; and practice teaching.

5.2 1984 REVIEW OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Only one major review of the teacher education curriculum has been carried out since the establishment of the College. This was carried out in 1984, and was funded by the Australian Government. A resource person, Dr Anne Campbell from the Canberra College of Advanced Education, was provided by the Australian Government to assist the College with the review. A wide range of stakeholders was involved in this project. There were seven Head Teachers, four District Education Office staff, seven Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) staff, nineteen LTC staff and four Senior Officers from the Central Office of the Ministry of Education. The purposes of the review were:

♦ To revise the pre-service certificate program with consideration of such factors as:
  • higher entry qualification
  • changes in primary curriculum
  • other developments in teacher education relevant to Fiji.
♦ To strengthen professional links between LTC and CDU and promote interaction among LTC staff and staff from CDU, schools and district and
To provide an opportunity to the College staff for personal development in Teacher Education, with specific focus on course assessment, evaluation and revision. (Fiji Ministry of Education, 1984:1).

The project employed seminars and workshops as the basis for conducting the review. These programs ran from 19 – 29 June 1984. The program was officially opened by the then Deputy High Commissioner of Australia. The seminars covered areas such as *Recent Trends in Pre-service Education* and *Approaches in teaching at the Tertiary level*. A considerable amount of work was carried out by the participants in reviewing the pre-service teacher education curriculum. With regard to a semester’s program, the following was proposed:

- Lectures - 13 weeks
- School Experience - 4 weeks
- Examinations - 2 weeks
- Assessment - 1 week
- Mid-Semester break - 1 week

The proposal was for a semester comprising 21 weeks, and 4 semesters in the two-year teacher education program. With regards to the courses, a total of 20 courses and three segments of practice teaching were proposed.

- Compulsory courses
  - 4 Education courses
  - 8 Curriculum courses
  - 3 Segments of Practice teaching

- Majors
  - A set of four sequential or related papers in a particular field of the student’s choice.

- Electives
  - 4 elective papers on four different fields of the student’s choice other than that covered by the major.

(Fiji Ministry of Education, 1984:10).

On the basis of the above, student workload was distributed as shown in Table 14.

*Table 14: Workload Per Semester*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Program</th>
<th>Semester 1</th>
<th>Semester 2</th>
<th>Semester 3</th>
<th>Semester 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ED101</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED102</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED203</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED204</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C101</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C102</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>C103</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>C104</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>C205</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C206</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C207</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C208</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fiji Ministry of Education, 1984: 10
In addition, it was proposed in the review that no student be allowed to enrol for more than five papers unless the College Academic Board grant approval. The review involved money, time and effort. According to two staff members who were participants in the project, the recommendations of the review were not implemented:

…a review was carried out but it was not implemented. And whatever preparation was done was put aside (SM9, 2000).

This was also indicated by the then Principal of the College, Mr G. Singh (1984:11):

.....there was an element of tentativeness in the whole exercise. It was realized that implementation of the course as designed is yet to be approved.

Unfortunately, as with many other recommendations, this recommendation has not been implemented, even to this day.

BEMTUP Intervention

During an interview with the Principal it was mentioned that a small-scale review of the pre-service teacher education curriculum was carried out in 1997 by the BEMTUP. The project consisted of various components, one which involved a review of work at the College. As with the previous review, this project was funded by the Australian Government. Technical assistance was provided in executing the work. The aims for the College component of the project were twofold, to:

- advise and assist LTC to revise its Pre-service Certificate Program with particular emphasis on upper primary elements and
- co-teach, co-assess and evaluate the revised courses with LTC staff (G. Singh & Booth, 1997:6).

A small proportion of the core courses reviewed related to Classes seven and eight curriculum, in four subject areas. The subjects were Mathematics, Social Science, English and Basic Science. Advisors were attached to each subject area, and they worked closely with the lecturers in reviewing the upper primary courses. The advisors were attached to LTC for a semester to carry out the required work, but the advisors and counterpart staff expressed difficulties in reviewing only four subject areas within the programme:

…it was difficult to change little bits (the upper primary curriculum courses) without reviewing the whole curriculum. The need for a review of the current curriculum was acknowledged by most staff consulted in the College (G. Singh & Booth, 1997:18).

The project also allocated funds (F$70,900) for the provision of educational resource materials. Textbooks and computers were the key resources bought with the funds allocated. The revised course outlines have been implemented, and use of the resources has helped in
the teaching of other courses as well. To facilitate the work, a number of follow-up workshops were convened at different centres with LTC, CDU and BEMTUP staff.

5.3 CURRENT CURRICULUM

According to the Principal and the LTC Handbook (2000a), the academic courses are divided into four categories. These are:

| Category A | - | Education |
| Category B | - | Curriculum |
| Category C | - | Foundation |
| Category D | - | Elective |

The courses are coded. The LTC Handbook (2000a:9) stipulates that:

- the two initials signify the subject code of the paper
- the first digit signifies the year in which the paper is to be attempted
- the second digit signifies the semester in which the paper is to be attempted
- the letter after the digit signifies the nature of the paper:

  C - Curriculum Paper
  P - Compulsory Paper
  E - Elective Paper

With the exception of Education papers, all papers have one of the above letters after the digit. Details on the papers in each category — code, title and the semester in which they are offered — are shown in Table 15.

In the first year, student teachers study nine courses in semester one and eight courses in semester two. In their final year, they study eight and seven courses in semesters three and four respectively. In addition, student teachers are required to enrol in a total of two elective courses. According to the Principal, Mr A. Prasad (2000c), student teachers have the option to enrol in elective courses in any semester convenient to them. The student teachers are required to study a total of 34 courses. On average, they study 9 courses per semester. Apart from the academic courses, Sports and Cross Culture programs are included in each semester. Attendance in these programs is compulsory. These programs are also included in the College timetable.

A day’s program at the College commences at 8:25 am and ends at 3:15 pm. Each day is divided into 7 sessions of 45 minutes duration, except on Friday when the lectures end at 2:30 pm. Also, 15 minutes is allocated in the morning for recess and 45 minutes for lunch.
Each semester comprises 14 weeks of lectures, 4 weeks of teaching practice and a week each for study break and examination. With the exception of semester one, all other semesters have a teaching practicum.

Table 15: Courses offered per Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMESTER ONE</th>
<th>SEMESTER TWO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MA11</td>
<td>SS12C SOCIAL SCIENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED11 FOUNDATION OF EDUCATION</td>
<td>CURRICULUM 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC11P FOUNDATIONS OF ART EDUCATION</td>
<td>ED12 HUMAN DEV/TEACHING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS11P CULTURAL INTEGRATION</td>
<td>&amp; LEARNING PROCESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS11P LANGUAGE STUDIES</td>
<td>SC12C SCIENCE CURRICULUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) TM11P Basic Tamil</td>
<td>CC12P CROSS CULTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) FJ11P Fijian Cultural Studies</td>
<td>PE12C FOUNDATION MATHEMATICS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) HI11P Basic Hindi</td>
<td>EN12P INTRODUCTION TO LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) UR11P Basic Urdu</td>
<td>AC12C ART &amp; CRAFT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC11P CROSS CULTURE</td>
<td>CURRICULUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE11P ACQUISITION OF SKILLS</td>
<td>EDT12 EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EN11C THE ACQUISITION OF LANGUAGE AND LITERACY</td>
<td>ELECTIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MU11P INTRODUCTION TO MUSIC SKILLS</td>
<td>AC12E(I) BASIC DRAWING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AC12E(II) WATER COLOUR PAINT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MU12E(I) MUSIC ELECTIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MU12E(F) MUSIC ELECTIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LS12E(H) ADVANCED HINDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LS12E(U) ADVANCED URDU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LS12E(T) ADVANCED TAMIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LS12E(F) ADVANCED FIJIAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SS12E ASIA PACIFIC STUDIES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMESTER THREE</th>
<th>SEMESTER FOUR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MA23C MATHS CURRICULUM 2</td>
<td>SC24C SCIENCE CURRICULUM 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED23 CURRICULUM STUDIES</td>
<td>CC24 ADVANCED CROSS CULTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC23P SCHOOL GARDENING</td>
<td>EN24P CHILDREN’S LITERATURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS23C LANGUAGE STUDIES</td>
<td>(WHOLE LANGUAGE PROGRAMME)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CURRICULUM 1</td>
<td>HL24C HEALTH EDUCATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EN23C LANGUAGE CURRICULUM (UPPER PRIMARY)</td>
<td>MU24C MUSIC CURRICULUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDS23 SPECIAL EDUCATION</td>
<td>LS24C LANGUAGE STUDIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS23C SOCIAL SCIENCE</td>
<td>ED24 EDUCATIONAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All 26 lecturers indicated that the breadth of the pre-service program is colossal. However, on the depth of the courses all 26 lecturers reported it to be superficial. The following are some of the comments which highlight this:

…wide coverage [but] not too much in depth…shallow (SM9, 2000).

…at the moment we are not going deeper into [the courses] which would prepare [the students] well. We are just touching on the surface now (SM13, 2000).

So many things…almost all the things are important and we are not able to cover all those things… We have to rush because of the shortage of time (SM26, 2000).

…look at the number of courses… We do not have much time especially… that we are preparing general teachers who should be able to teach Classes one to eight…should be able to teach all the subjects (SM20, 2000).

While such criticisms have been directed at the level of the courses, criticisms directed at their usefulness were received from only two lecturers (8 percent), who considered that some aspects of the pre-service program were not very helpful. For instance, one noted:

…while I consider sports to be important I do not consider that we should timetable that…we have Physical Education [course], it looks after the skills and other aspects (SM5, 2000).

The remaining 24 lecturers (92 percent) considered at all the learning undertaken by the trainees contributed to their knowledge of teaching. For example:

…all the aspects whatever the students do here are helpful in someway or the other (SM19, 2000).

Everything is useful in our program… I think they just need to be strengthened (SM21, 2000).
Mention was also made by some of the lecturers of considerable overlap between courses, and of the vital need for an urgent review of the pre-service program:

… make another review of [the] pre-service program. It would be better so that we can have a balanced program (SM20, 2000).

This issue was also recognized by the LTC Academic Board (2000:1) who noted the need to address the high degree of overlap between courses:

Overlapping of the courses to be [sorted out] later maybe in the staff development.

With reference to the duration of the pre-service program, all the 26 lecturers indicated the need to extend the program in order to better prepare teachers for all aspects of work and responsibility in the field. They all considered the present two-year program insufficient:

…too many things are squeezed into and just have to skim through within that limited time (SM20, 2000).

There is a lot to cover and we often receive complaints from students when we overload them with the assignments… it is more like a compressed [program] (SM25, 2000).

…we have got a large number of subjects to cover within two years so we are not really doing the justice… more justice to the course [is needed] (SM18, 2000).

Three years is needed to get qualified teachers I mean fully trained or to develop them fully (SM14, 2000).

The Minister for Education, the Honourable Pratap Chand (2000b), and the CEOP, Mr S. Singh (2000), conceded during the interview that there was no immediate plan to extend the pre-service program or to offer a graduate level preparation. They also mentioned that LTC would remain a primary teacher training institution. The Minister further suggested that the priority was for FCAE to introduce degree programs. However, both the Minister for Education and the CEOP indicated that a third year pre-service program would help to better prepare teachers for the responsibilities they will face in the field.

5.3.1 COURSE ASSESSMENT

According to the LTC Handbook (2000a), course assessments have two components. These are coursework and an end-of-semester examination. For all the courses, with the exception of Special Education and an Elective course in Art/Craft, there is a 60 percent weighting for coursework and a 40 percent weighting for end-of-semester examination. Special Education and the Elective course in Art/Craft have a 70 percent allocation for
coursework and a 30 percent for examination. In almost all the courses, two to four pieces of work account for the 60 percent coursework component. In so far as the delivery of courses was concerned, all 26 lecturers pointed out that they used a variety of approaches:

…straight lecturing, some of the things require group work, role play and independent learning (SM6, 2000).

The revised courses encourage, for example, activity-based learning, independent study and micro and peer teaching (G. Singh & Booth, 1997).

Table 16 indicates the forms of continuous assessment employed by each School in the College. The students are required to submit all assigned work for continuous assessment and pass the course work before they were allowed to sit for the end of semester examination. The duration of examinations in the courses was from two to three hours. The LTC Handbook (2000a) stipulates that student teachers need to get at least 20 percent of the total marks allocated for each course, in the exam. To qualify for a pass in the course the minimum mark was 50.

Table 16: Forms of Continuous Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORM</th>
<th>SCHOOL (Courses)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Test</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Work</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folio</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource File</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Assignment</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro Teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Collated from interview data with LTC staff, 2000

Depending on their performance in the course, a grade was awarded as shown in Table 17.
The academic register of the trainees showed that some of the trainees who failed one or two courses were nevertheless certified. For instance, three trainees who failed some courses in 1998 were allowed to graduate. One of them failed the first year English course (EN12P), whereas another failed the second year Science curriculum course (SC24C). The third student did not even attempt two courses - Music (MU24C) and Vernacular languages (LS24C). These curriculum courses closely related to the Music and Vernacular subjects included in the official primary school curriculum. In relation to the students mentioned, the minutes of the LTC Academic Board Meeting (8/98:1) stated, “the board decided that students failing or not appearing [for exams] be allowed to graduate”.

Another case related to academic matters was highlighted. The Academic Board terminated the enrolment of a student who could not cope with the pre-service program. The Ministry of Education, however, instructed the College to readmit the student. The College staff found it difficult to deal with the Ministry of Education on this matter, and registered their concern with the teacher unions. The General Secretary of the FTA, Mr Marika Namudu and Mr A. D. Singh of the FTU, objected to the Ministry of Education’s decision:

It undermines the authority, autonomy and accountability bestowed on the College’s Principal and staff for the professional and academic development of the College as a training and learning institution…to maintain the quality and standard, academic discipline is absolutely necessary. We urge you therefore to reverse the decision and uphold the dignity of the Colleges staff as responsible and respected chosen representatives of your Ministry (Namudu, 2000:1).

…FTU is rather perturbed to note the irregular instruction given to the College to readmit a student who had failed academically…your instruction if not challenged would set a very dangerous precedent and would compromise the standard practice… The Ministry of Education should have least influence in such matters and to take a stand that contrary to all practices is beyond reasoning (A. D. Singh, 2000b:1).

Through these strong objections from the teacher unions, the Ministry of Education had to reverse its decision on the grounds that it was neither just nor fair and was inconsistent

---

Table 17: Grading Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Signifies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>85 – 100</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>80 – 84</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>75 – 79</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>65 – 74</td>
<td>Credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>60 – 64</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>0 – 49</td>
<td>Below pass standard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

with intake and progression provisions. Such practices by the Ministry of Education, if left unchallenged, could lead to a drop in the quality of pre-service students. At the same time, the above case represents a clear indication of the vulnerability of the LTC Academic Board to political interference in its academic affairs.

Data indicate that there is very little scope for the College to select the students for admission or have a say in the intake numbers, gender or ethnic distribution of the student intake. The criteria for and mechanism of selection is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and the FPSC, with only a token participation by the LTD staff.

5.4 BEGINNING TEACHER FEEDBACK

This section presents an analysis of the data collected by means of a survey questionnaire given to beginning teachers. The questionnaire (see Appendix B) provided a list of work demands and responsibilities, and the beginning teachers indicated whether their courses prepared them adequately for those activities. Responses were indicated on a four point scale. The mean was calculated from each respondent’s rating of each factor on a four to one scale, with four representing the higher end and one the lower end. A summary of the results is presented in Table 18. The table indicates a number of positive and negative aspects associated with beginning teachers’ preparation for work and responsibilities.

On the positive side, the beginning teachers perceived that their pre-service program adequately prepared them, to plan their work (3.6), develop their personal confidence (3.5) and improve their pedagogical practices in some of the subject areas, especially Mathematics (3.3). The negative aspects, areas of work and responsibility in which the beginning teachers thought they were inadequately prepared, included handling multi-class teaching (0.8), performing administrative duties (1.0) and supporting children with learning difficulties (1.8). The beginning teachers were also asked to reflect on and write down any additional comments on the pre-service program they completed. Table 19 presents a summary of the comments derived from this open-ended question.
Table 18: Preparation of Teachers for Work and Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.4.1 AREAS PERCEIVED WELL PREPARED</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has developed my ability to plan my work</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has helped to develop my personal confidence</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocated methods which are useful in my teaching of — Mathematics</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocated methods which are useful in my teaching of — English</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has made me enthusiastic about teaching</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocated methods which are useful in my teaching of — Basic/Elementary Science</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocated methods which are useful in my teaching of — Art/Craft</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocated methods which are useful in my teaching of — Physical Education</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has provided me adequate theoretical knowledge on the teaching—learning process</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has helped me to develop skills in planning for teaching</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocated methods which are useful in my teaching of — Social Science</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has developed my ability to learn independently</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.4.2 AREAS PERCEIVED INADEQUATELY PREPARED</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has prepared me adequately in maintaining class discipline</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has made me familiar with assessment techniques</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has prepared me adequately for teaching</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has helped me to give support to children with learning difficulties</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has helped me to organise and conduct extra curricular activities in the school</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocated methods which are useful in my teaching of — Vernacular</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has enabled me to cope with the realities of most classroom situations</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has helped me in managing difficult children</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocated methods which are useful in my teaching of — Music</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has developed my ability to work with children and parents of other ethnic groups</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has developed my ability to work collaboratively with parents and colleagues</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has helped me to work outside the classroom with parents and colleagues</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has helped me to carry out the work in the school's community</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has prepared me to perform administrative duties</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has helped me in handling multi-class teaching</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 106

Source: Collated from questionnaire data of beginning teachers, 2000.

The need to review the College program was one of the items most frequently indicated by the beginning teachers in the free response section. For example:

…[the pre-service program] must be appropriate and challenging to meet the current demand…some of the [areas] in the program at LTC are outdated and needs to be improved (BT52, 2000).

…a new program should be drawn up which is more challenging and prepares trainees to fit into rural schools (BT60, 2000).
…it also has to review its curriculum in order to keep up with the changes (BT50, 2000).

Furthermore, the respondents perceived that the pre-service program was more theoretical than practical:

“More emphasis should be placed on practical work” (BT47, 2000).

The need to introduce additional courses was ranked third. The following were some of the comments which reflected the need for additional courses:

…have very little knowledge of handling composite class. The situation exists in real life (BT48, 2000).

Computer studies should be introduced in the pre-service program so that we are in par with the outside world (BT95, 2000).

…and [trainees] should be taught about the running of the school (BT6, 2000).

…the program should include typewriting and computer [education] (BT38, 2000).

The need to reduce the workload, the need for better facilities and resources, and the need to upgrade the program to Diploma level were other problems identified by most beginning teachers. It is worth quoting a couple of the comments from beginning teachers which indicate issues of concern:

…the main reason why [trainees] can not get the best from the subjects is simply because the program at LTC is overcrowded, just imagine how can the trainees devote their time equally to all subjects when they have to do about nine units per semester (BT31, 2000).

The amount of work we do is just not worth a Certificate…We deserve something higher… most of the facilities and resources are not available… it seems that the Ministry of Education has made LTC a forgotten institution (BT105, 2000).

A summary of additional comments has been presented in Table 19.

Table 19: Summary of Additional Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Percentage (%) indicating this [N=106]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need to review the College program</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much theory</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to introduce additional courses</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much work</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better facilities and resources</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College to offer Diploma</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time is too short</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need some changes in assessment</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program is okay</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need changes in teaching methods</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Upgrade lecturers’ qualifications | 0.7
Beginning teachers will learn through Experience | 0.7
Trainees lack discipline | 0.7
Need some independence at the College | 0.7

Source: Collated from questionnaire data of beginning teachers, 2000.

5.4.3 HEAD TEACHER FEEDBACK

This section presents an analysis of the data derived from the questionnaires given to Head Teachers to ascertain beginning teachers’ performance and knowledge in the various areas of their professional responsibility. Forty questionnaires, representing 67 percent of the total number of questionnaires distributed to Head Teachers, were returned. The questionnaire administered (see Appendix D) elicited useful responses. These were analysed on percentage terms, and the results presented below.

5.4.4 SUBJECT MATTER KNOWLEDGE

On subject knowledge, only 14 Head Teachers (35 percent) indicated that they thought the beginning teachers possessed adequate subject matter knowledge, while the majority, 26 (65 percent), commented on the lack of it. The responses included, for example:

No. They need to go through [subject] prescriptions at the College (HT11, 2000).

…They do not usually have the basic in-depth knowledge in a particular subject (HT6, 2000).

Although they are supposed to be generalists they lack thorough knowledge in some (subject) areas especially the ones which are not their interest areas (HT4, 2000).

5.4.5 FAMILIARITY WITH CURRICULUM

With regard to familiarity with the primary curriculum as a whole, there was an overwhelming view by the Head Teachers (87.5 percent) that the beginning teachers were not familiar with all areas of the primary curriculum. They noted, for example:

Some are only familiar with [the curriculum for the] classes they have handled during practice teaching (HT21, 2000).

[They are not familiar with] the curriculum for extra-curricular activities (HT9, 2000).
LTC should familiarize [the beginning teachers] on the whole primary school curriculum that is, from classes one to eight in all subject areas (HT19, 2000).

5.4.6 TEACHING METHODS

On the use of appropriate teaching methods, only 9 Head Teachers (22.5 percent) felt that the beginning teachers were employing suitable teaching methods in teaching primary children. The majority of Head Teachers (77.5 percent) pointed out that the beginning teachers used inappropriate teaching methods. The following are some typical responses:

They find it difficult teaching infant classes (HT26, 2000).

No, methods are rather monotonous and learning room atmosphere is dull …too much chalk and talk (HT31, 2000).

They lack creativity. They seem to lack this even more after they graduate and when they have a class of their own (HT22, 2000).

5.4.7 INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

The majority of Head Teachers (90 percent) believed that the beginning teachers did not have the ability to cater for individual differences. For example,

The different ability groups demand multi-level teaching. But teachers concentrate only on those students who are responding well to them and others are ignored (HT21, 2000).

Depends on how much time is available. Those teaching composite classes have a difficult time (HT39, 2000).

The weaker ones are missed out. More emphasis is placed on smart and average children (HT38, 2000).

5.4.8 CLASS MANAGEMENT

On the ability to manage a class assigned, the Head Teachers generally felt (60 percent) that the beginning teachers had the ability to manage the class assigned to them. The remaining Head Teachers (40 percent) commented that the beginning teachers faced some difficulties in managing the class. Some of the comments reflecting this were:

Find difficulty in managing a multi-level and multi-racial class (HT9, 2000).

Find it very difficult with large classes (HT14, 2000).

Not always, especially with upper primary…one teacher cried in the room (HT29, 2000).
5.4.9 CHILDREN OF DIFFERENT BACKGROUND

In relation to the ability to handle children from different cultural backgrounds, 16 Head Teachers (40 percent) thought that the beginning teachers were able, while the majority (60 percent) commented on their inability. For instance,

Without much exposure during their years of training at the College… This is a problem in the classroom for them (HT31, 2000).

This is one area where LTC can rectify by sending teachers to different schools where they can come across children of different ethnic groups (HT5, 2000).

… Difficulties arose with language especially in lower classes (HT8, 2000).

5.4.10 COLLEGIAL WORK

Generally, most of the Head Teachers (57.5 percent) believed that the beginning teachers were able to work collegially with other teachers in the school. The remaining Head Teachers (42.5 percent) indicated that the beginning teachers lacked the ability to work collegially with other teachers in the school, because of factors such as poor personal qualities. For example:

There are a few who are sometimes very reserved. They fail to share new approaches in teaching or are reluctant to ask for assistance (HT8, 2000).

Some have attitude problem and they show disrespect to the experienced teachers (HT24, 2000).

5.4.11 PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND COMMUNITY

With reference to the ability to work as partners with parents and community members, 17 Head Teachers (42.5 percent) felt that the beginning teachers were able. The remaining Head Teachers thought that the beginning teachers lacked the ability to work as partners with parents and community members. However, they believed that the beginning teachers would be able to do so with the passage of time. The following were some of the comments:

… A little more training can lead to a better understanding (HT19, 2000).

To some extent they are able to work, but again lack of experience hinders in this area (HT28, 2000).

… A better relationship is established with a few more years of experience (HT8, 2000).
5.4.12 SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

On familiarity with the running of the school organization, 7 Head Teachers (17.5 percent) commented that the beginning teachers were familiar. On the other hand, 20 Head Teachers (50 percent) perceived that the beginning teachers were not familiar with this. Another 13 Head Teachers (32.5 percent) believed that the beginning teachers needed more experience in order to become familiar with the running of the school organization. For example,

… Some administration units should also be taught at LTC (HT8, 2000).

They are not very familiar at the beginning but they learn as they become used to the school system (HT7, 2000).

5.4.13 OTHER SUGGESTIONS

In relation to suggestions as to how LTC could improve teacher preparation, the Head Teachers indicated a variety of ways, and these are presented below in descending order of their frequency:

- Need to acquire in-depth knowledge in all subject areas
- More practical work to be emphasized at the College
- Emphasis be placed on the teaching of vernacular languages
- Need to improve the admission criteria
- Increase the duration of practice teaching
- Increase the duration of pre-service training plus award higher qualifications
- Prepare teachers for extra-curricular activities.

The above analyses provide relevant views held by Head Teachers on various aspects of the preparation, LTC, of primary teachers who had recently entered the teaching profession.

5.4.14 PRACTICE TEACHING

An effective practice teaching program enhances the professional preparation of teachers by enabling trainees to have sufficient experience of the real world of work of teachers (Hagger, Burn, & McIntyre, 1995; Campbell, 1992; Turney, 1987; Goodman, 1985).

As indicated in Chapter Four, documentary analyses, interviews with College staff (see Appendix F) and a questionnaire survey of beginning teachers (see Appendix B) were conducted to gauge certain aspects of the LTC practice teaching program, and determine its...
usefulness in terms of beginning teachers’ professional preparation. The data gathered from these sources were analysed, and the results have been presented in the following section.

At LTC, trainees currently undergo three segments of practice teaching each of four weeks duration over the two year period (LTC, 2000c). The first segment is home-based and the other two LTC-based. Table 20 shows the practice teaching schedule.

**Table 20: Segments of Practice Teaching**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year One</th>
<th>Semester One</th>
<th>Semester Two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practice Teaching One Home-Based</td>
<td>Practice Teaching One Home-Based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Two</td>
<td>Semester Three</td>
<td>Semester Four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practice Teaching Two LTC-Based</td>
<td>Practice Teaching Three LTC-Based</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: LTC, 2000c:2

An interview with the LTC staff member responsible for practice teaching indicated that in the home-based practice teaching component, trainees were given the option to select their schools. He explained that this freedom was given because the College did not take responsibility for the trainees’ transport, accommodation or lunches. The trainees are expected to meet all their expenses. The practice teaching Coordinator also pointed out that in some cases trainees were required to stay with relatives, in order to access schools. All nine Education Districts were used in providing places for trainees in this session of practice teaching.

In the first practice teaching session, trainees were expected to carry out detailed observations of lessons, undertake some tasks related to teaching and learning and do some teaching (LTC, 2000c). Preparation of a school profile and scheme of work were some of the tasks included. The Coordinator stated that the class level assigned to trainees was left to the discretion of the Head Teachers. With respect to supervision, he conceded that many of the trainees were unsupervised by College tutors. He attributed this, not to the laxity of the tutors, but to the College’s inability to pay for their mileage claims and subsistence allowance involved in carrying out this task. The trainees in remote locations were therefore not supervised. The Coordinator pointed out that some Head Teachers had expressed concerns about trainees being left unsupervised by College staff. In response to this criticism, the following rationale was provided by the College in its budget submission to the Ministry of Education, which asked, among other things, for an increase in the allocation for practice teaching (A. Prasad, 2000a:3):

- to cover mileage claims for practice teaching.
• to hire two buses [to transport trainees] for practice teaching at a cost of about F$2,200 for each [round] of practice teaching sessions.

• to post students to schools where composite class teaching is taking place. An urgent increase of F$10,000 is warranted to send students to rural areas to do composite class teaching. We want to send students for rural practice but are unable to do so because of funds.

Despite this justification there was no significant increase in the allocation provided for practice teaching.

Recently, the Deputy Permanent Secretary for Education, Mr Sefanaia Koroi (2000:3), via a memorandum, indicated further control of expenditure related to practice teaching:

School visits to see students work on teaching practice must be restricted. Restrict choice of schools for students to nearby schools to save travel costs and make alternative arrangements to satisfy the College’s requirements on this aspect of the course.

This information was later given to staff members by the Principal, and he acknowledged it as follows:

…there is 30 percent reduction in our College budgetary allocations. There is going to be no travelling vote — hence no future mileage claims [to supervise students whilst on practice teaching] (A. Prasad, 2000a: 1).

The Coordinator of the College-based practice teaching program indicated that he liaised with the Head Teachers of primary schools in arranging for trainees’ placements subsequent to the Principal of the College approving the schools to be used. In most cases the schools in the Lautoka/Yasawa education district are used, as the majority of the schools in this district are near the main highway. It is less expensive and easier to transport trainees from the College in this manner. The Principal of LTC, Mr A. Prasad (2000c), conceded during the interview that, because of financial constraints, student teachers were sent only to the schools closest to the College. Most of the schools in the area have straight classes (non-multi-class). The practice teaching list for the final year trainees for 2000 shows that, of the 47 schools used only two had multi-classes and the remainder had straight classes. In the same year, out of 168 final-year trainees, only four were placed in the two schools with composite classes, and the rest in schools with straight classes.

The trainees were allocated to lower and upper primary classes in the second and final segment of practice teaching respectively. Consecutive placements, either in the same class and/or the same school were avoided. The practicum proper commenced with a pre-practice visit, which involved spending a whole day in the school. The rationale for this was to enable the trainees to familiarize themselves with the school environment, and also to collect relevant resource materials in order to undertake advance preparation for school work.
A checklist was used to determine the amount of preparation trainees had done before the practicum proper commenced. The checklist below (see Table 21) was used in 2000.

In addition to teaching, trainees are expected to do some subject tasks which form part of the course work for some courses at the College. With regard to supervision, tutors were supposed to make one introductory visit, preferably in the first week of the practicum, and two subsequent visits for conducting assessment. The assessment requirements consist of a number of items to be commented upon depending on the trainees’ performance. The tutors do not assess the trainees in teaching all the subjects at a particular class level. At most, they assess them in two subject areas.

Table 21: Checklist for Teaching Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Prepared Time Table</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Prepared Work Book Wk 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Prepared Attendance Register</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Completed Lesson Plans for Week 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Made some Teaching Aids</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Prepared Class Organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Collected Resource Materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Designed School Experience File</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As of the year 2000, the tutors were allocated about 8-10 students each:

...here at the College the lecturer and the student ratio is high. At the moment some of the staff are overloaded... Have 10 [students] at certain times of practice teaching sessions ... needs to look at the staff and student ratio (SM12, 2000). Staff and student ratios reported in the interim review of BEMTUP were 1:30 and 1:15 for LTC and FCAE respectively, and were concern to staff at LTC (G. Singh & Booth, 1997).

As well as the tutors, the Associate Teachers are required to carry out one formal assessment. On the basis of these assessments, the tutors determine the performance rating of the trainees. If, in the opinion of the tutor, a trainee deserves either an A+ or A grade, then the tutor is required to obtain a second opinion on the trainee’s performance. The same procedure is followed in the case of somebody who displays substandard performance.

At the end of practice teaching, tutors prepare a final report and awarded one of the following grades: A+, A, B+, B, C+, C or D. The report covers areas of competency such as preparation for teaching, communication skills, class management and written tasks. The report is prepared on the basis of the school report and the Practice Teaching File and the assessments of lessons by the College tutor and Associate Teacher. The trainees are required to read and endorse their reports before they are forwarded to the Coordinator. In a situation
where a student fails, supplementary practice teaching arrangements are made with nearby schools, and trainees are expected to find their own time, such as during semester break, to do the supplementary practice. All practice teaching reports are stored in the personal files of the trainees after the results are presented to the Academic Board of the College.

With regard to practice teaching, all 26 LTC staff indicated that the duration of practice teaching should be extended. The following comments reflected this:

…duration needs to be extended instead of 4 weeks only [for each round] … they should be given two months maybe so that they have a good practice (SM14, 2000).

…the span of time is not enough… [need to] give them more… I think they will be able to learn more (SM17, 2000).

…school experience should be taken over a longer period (SM4, 2000).

Apart from duration, the 26 staff indicated the need to expose trainees to rural schools and, in particular, schools teaching composite classes:

… we are just concentrating on schools in Ba, Nadi and Lautoka which have straight classes…in terms of multi-class teaching we are not able to address using these schools because of financial constraints (SM5, 2000).

… we need to prepare them also for composite classes because that is the reality of Fiji situation (SM4, 2000).

…we need to make sure that our students go out to the rural area…right at the moment we are putting them in town schools. But the ideal situation… to post the students to rural schools because these are the schools most of them would be posted to (SM11, 2000).

…do not have a chance of sending students to rural schools… They are not exposed to rural [teaching] atmosphere which is very important in practice teaching (SM16, 2000).

To ascertain which factors influenced the professional preparation of beginning teachers whilst on practice teaching, the sample of beginning teachers was given a questionnaire which contained a list of possible factors, and asked to indicate whether they contributed positively or negatively to their professional preparation. The scale mean (2.5) was used to separate the positive and negative factors. The summary of the results is presented in Table 22.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors seen as Positive</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice Teaching Handbook</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s response to my work</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 22: Influences on your performance during teaching practice
Table 22 shows that beginning teachers rated information contained in the *Practice Teaching Handbook* (3.3), children’s responses to their teaching (3.1) and familiarization visits to the school (3.0), as some of the factors that were very useful in their professional preparation. However, when asked to comment separately on the positive aspects of practice teaching, beginning teachers highlighted assistance from the associate teachers as the most positive influence on their preparation. The *Practice Teaching Handbook* was considered the second most positive influence on the trainees development. For example:

…the associate teachers are indeed very helpful, always guides us throughout our practice teaching [and] also improves our weaknesses (BT48, 2000).

Associated teachers provided a lot of help as far as teaching career is concerned. (BT92, 2000).

[The Handbook] provided us with all the information as to what has to be done (BT13, 2000).

The third ranked positive influence reported by respondents was the familiarization visit to the school:

…made me ready for what was to come (BT105, 2000).

…was an important one whereby we were able to familiarize ourselves to the school [before the practice teaching proper began] (BT57, 2000).

Other aspects noted by the beginning teachers as contributing positively to their professional preparation included assistance and support from other teachers in the school (2.8) and sharing of ideas with their peers (2.9).

Perceptions of negative influences during practice teaching ranged widely. Some of the factors negatively rated by the beginning teachers were the duration of practice teaching
blocks (1.3), the time allocated for preparation for practice teaching (1.2) and feedback from college tutors after assessment (1.0). The following comments by beginning teachers reflect concern about the time allocated for practice teaching:

The time was too short for practice teaching [that is,] as we started to enjoy the lessons with the children, we had to come back [to the College] (BT52, 2000).

Time allocated for preparation is not enough. Lesson plans and teaching aids preparation require a lot of time (BT92, 2000).

Aside from the above factors, lack of resources for teaching and learning (1.0), lack of reflection on practice teaching (1.3) and the extra work assigned (subject tasks) (1.2) were other factors seen as adversely affecting beginning teachers’ professional preparation.

5.5 SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the findings obtained by means of questionnaire surveys, interviews and an examination of the relevant documents. The chapter has presented the analysis of data from these sources under relevant headings. The data from these sources form the basis for ascertaining the contention set out in Chapter One, namely, the adequacy of pre-service preparation in meeting the demands of beginning teachers’ professional work. The next chapter, Chapter Six discusses these findings and in the light of these findings the chapter addresses the three key research questions raised in Chapter One.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.0 INTRODUCTION

The findings of the study, analysed and presented in the previous chapter, have focused on main components in the model and illustrate interchanges between system and life-world. The administrative system, available resources, student teachers, the teacher educators, the teacher education curriculum and the emerging trends in teacher education, were considered. In the present chapter these aspects will be discussed with a view to relate
the phenomenon under study, namely, pre-service teacher education at LTC, to the context in which pre-service teacher education is undertaken. On the basis of this discussion, an adapted conceptual framework to view pre-service teacher education is developed. The chapter concludes with an answer to the key research questions raised initially in this study.

6.1 DISUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Discussion of the research findings is taken up in the following sections, presented under the headings: Administrative System, Resources, Student Teachers, Teacher Educators, Teacher Education Curriculum and Emerging Trends. The latter heading is an addition to facilitate reflection upon the findings. The chapter ends with answers to the key research questions.

On the basis of the findings the conceptual framework (see Figure 1) has been re-developed, taking into account the significant factors identified in the study and showing their salience. These factors are represented in Figure 3.
6.1.1 ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

Analysis of the data obtained shows that, under the present administrative structure, the work of the College is adversely affected by a range of factors (see section 5.1.1). The College is located about 250km from the capital city of Suva, and this distance creates a number of problems. Not only are there difficulties in terms of communication between the College administration and the Ministerial officers in the Central Office at Suva, but also the Central Office staff appear to have very little knowledge and understanding about the needs of the College. There are delays in dealing with requests from the College administration. It appears that the geographical location of the College contributes to what staff perceive as the neglect of LTC. Velayutham’s (1994:77) appraisal of the matter offers a solution to the problem of geographical isolation:

The situation can be corrected to a great extent by requiring the officers to spend a significant part of his/her time in the field than in their offices. This will promote greater appreciation and understanding of the distant realities.

Velayutham argues that a regular attachment at LTC would force the relevant officers in the Central Office to grapple with realities. Also, the implication of the above argument for the teacher preparation at LTC would be to place the students and the lecturers
who supervise teaching practicum in a range of locations, which would provide a first-hand experience of what Velayutham (1994) refers to as ‘distant realities’.

The Principal appears to have little discretion in the running of any aspect of the College. What emerges from analysis of the data on management and administrative systems is that the College does not have professional or institutional autonomy. The impediments placed on management are exacerbated by a variety of onerous demands created by the Ministry of Education on behalf of the Government. Since the College is operated by the Government through its distant officials, most decisions are made in the Central Office. The process of obtaining permission is a long one, even for trivial matters. The College administration has to obtain prior approval from the Central Office of the Ministry of Education for taking appropriate action. It is unfortunate that tasks such as the selection of trainees, which could be carried out by the LTC staff, are handled by senior officers at the Ministry of Education and FPSC. This results in an impression of Central Office interference, a lack of control over College matters by its own staff and a perceived devaluation of local College staff.

Because of the elaborate procedures that are required to be followed in having to submit requests to officers in the Central Office for approval, College Administration has become reluctant to take any pro-active and constructive steps to improve the situation. The danger is that they seem more concerned with the maintenance of norms, such as the set procedures to be followed, rather than with the quality of the professional preparation of teachers. This is a result of the ‘red tape’ which commonly delays the decision-making processes. Without the necessary support services from the Government, and in particular the Ministry of Education, the College is handicapped in its ability to provide an adequate and enriching professional preparation for prospective teachers in most of the areas of work and responsibility they will face. As a result of this, the preparation of teachers is perceived to be substantially affected.

6.1.2 RESOURCES

Analyses of the data collected shows that the College does not have adequate resources, neither physical facilities, educational resource materials nor financial resources (see section 5.1.2). The existing physical facilities are inadequate and some are in substandard condition. For example, beginning teachers reported that the science laboratory is poorly equipped, and although it is supposed to be used solely for conducting experiments, it has been used as a multi-purpose lecture room for cultural programs as well. Even though teaching science lessons at the primary level does not require sophisticated equipment, this does not mean that LTC should not strive to extend the knowledge and skills of trainees in
this area. Furthermore, science is an important subject in the primary curriculum and so all teachers need to be well prepared to handle its teaching. A laboratory of poor standard does not facilitate the practical teaching of science (Muralidhar, 1989).

With regard to teaching space, the research shows that this is insufficient. The existing spaces are unable to comfortably accommodate the number of students in each section (class). While not directly related to the teacher education curriculum, the problems with inadequate space also apply to other facilities, such as the dining hall. Lunch hour for the students is staggered — in the present arrangement first year students are scheduled for lunch earlier than final year students. This does not provide the opportunity for students to have lunch together and to interact with one another, which would otherwise have been possible, were the dining hall more spacious and a common lunch hour feasible. Provision of a large communal area, such as a multi-purpose hall, would help develop a sense of community through activities such as assemblies and cultural programs. These activities could lead to the promotion of group identity, collegial relationships and a sense of belonging.

The hostel facilities are inadequate and cannot accommodate all the students who are required to live on campus. In addition, some of the existing specialist facilities exist only in name such as the AVA, where most of the equipment is not in working condition. There is also a need for additional specialist facilities, such as a lecture theatre and micro teaching laboratory. A lecture theatre would enable the delivering of lead lectures, and the classrooms could then be used for small group tutorials.

The College physical facilities, such as the number of classrooms, are inadequate and improvement is urgently needed. In his speech at the College graduation ceremony, the then Minister for Education, Youth and Sport, the Honourable Filipe Bole (1991:6), made the following comment related to the physical facilities:

I would like to thank the College staff who have so willingly accepted additional responsibilities to train a large number of students without a corresponding increase in physical facilities.

This quotation makes it clear that, over the years, the College has been given expanded responsibilities without any corresponding increase in infra-structure and academic staff.

Library

The Library is usually regarded as the hub of an academic institution, but this is not so at LTC. The data collected indicated that the College Library is not well enough resourced to provide appropriate services to the teaching staff and the student teachers enrolled. Relevant resource materials are limited in all the subject areas - Science, Physical Education,
Music, Art and Craft, Languages, Mathematics, Education and Social Science. Most of the collections in the Library are outdated and of little use in the preparation of teachers. The Library is stocked with an insufficient supply of recent publications; the most recent available are those supplied from the AusAID funded BEMTUP.

Library services are also limited. Student teachers are allocated very little time to use the Library on weekdays because they are scheduled for lectures almost throughout each day. The only time they could make use of the Library would be during the weekends, on public holidays or in the evenings, but the Library is closed during these times. Operational concerns related to the Library were also highlighted in the BEMTUP report (G. Singh & Booth, 1997). The findings about Library facilities are consistent with the views expressed by the Chief Librarian, Tuimoala (1996:3), in her report entitled *Upgrading of the Lautoka Teachers College Library*:

in its present status, the Library is a far cry from satisfying the needs of the institute through its collection, services, [and] resources.

15 years after the then Honourable Minister for Education, Dr Ali’s (1983) comments, the BEMTUP report contained similar comment:

the Library needs to upgrade so that the college Library is an appropriate tertiary facility for teacher education (G. Singh & Booth, 1997: 2).

Allocation of funds signifies support. It must be said, however, that the budget allocated to the College has been insufficient, and this has constrained the roles and functions of the College. The funds allocated for the purchase of resource materials have always been meagre, and it has therefore been impossible to buy more books, furniture, periodicals and other basic reference materials. Providing insufficient financial resources is tantamount to cutting back on certain areas of teacher preparation. This has had an adverse impact on the quality of the professional preparation of teachers, which is not currently appropriate for the work demands expected of them in the field. Put quite simply, it is generally accepted that the ‘bottom line’ for providing an adequate and enriching preparation of teachers is the allocation of sufficient financial resources. LTC should receive sufficient funding to meet the cost of the professional preparation of teachers. This is a critical area because the preparation of quality teachers is essential if they are to meet the demands of work in the field, and in turn provide the well educated community necessary for national development.

Nabobo (1996) argued that LTC would have had all the required facilities if there had been no changes in Government policy in the late 1970s. Insufficient supply of high quality educational resources and lack of proper physical facilities has prevented the College from providing an adequate and enriching professional preparation of teachers. This was also
reflected in what the former Principal of the College, Mr Rogovakalali (1992:5), noted in his submission to the Ministry of Education, stating that it is:

…necessary for the nation to have its primary teachers thoroughly prepared in order to bring quality education to all the communities… For this to happen, it is important to have LTC sufficiently equipped to carry out its teacher training program.

Complaints on the level of resourcing for LTC have been expressed periodically by senior civil servants (for example, A. Prasad, 2000a; Jitiko, 1997; Tuimoala, 1996; Rogovakalali, 1993) to external reviewers of the College program (for example, G. Singh & Booth, 1997), and even in speeches and statements made by educational officials and political leaders (Bole, 1991; Ali, 1983). These concerns indicated that the College is ill equipped in terms of educational resources and physical facilities.

What is evident is that the principal stakeholder, namely the Ministry of Education, is familiar with the constraints faced by the College, especially in terms of physical facilities and material resources. Indeed, the shortage of physical facilities and material resources has been a recurring theme in recent years in all the submissions from the College.

The analyses also indicates that the key stakeholder, the Government, for many years did little to upgrade the facilities at the College, despite repeated submissions presented to senior officers in the Ministry of Education. Unfortunately, officers in the Central Office have failed to listen to the people they are expected to serve, and consequently have not responded to requests, such as for the upgrading of facilities. They need to learn to listen and act as promptly as possible on the basis of information available from the College, to ensure acceptable policies are formulated and thereby act as a more responsive bureaucracy (Strivers, 1994; Velayutham, 1994).

It was not until 1997 that the Ministry of Education realized that the preparation of teachers was not possible without proper facilities. It was then that it made a request to the EU to financially assist in the expansion and upgrading of the College facilities. The following justification was provided:

Enrichment of learning experiences need to be enhanced through the use of proper specialized facilities and up-to-date technology… at the moment due to the specialized rooms being utilized for classrooms. As such specialist facilities and modern technology cannot be installed due to lack of proper classroom spaces (Jitoko, 1997:3).

This proposal is still under consideration by the EU.

In 1999 the College was further charged with the responsibility of training special education and pre-school teachers. While these areas are not covered within the scope of this study, it must be said that the College has been required by the Ministry of Education to
accept expanded responsibilities without providing appropriate physical facilities and educational resources to meet them.

In regard to the consideration of resources necessary to support the preparation of primary teachers, the then Prime Minister of the Republic of the Fiji Islands, the Honourable Mahendra Pal Chaudhary (2000:5), in his keynote address at the 70th Annual Conference of the FTU, highlighted the need for schools to use technological equipment:

...to keep pace with trends in modern education, our schools will have to be equipped with all sorts of technological gadgets and resources.

He suggested that the use of such technological equipment could bring enormous benefits to school children. For this to happen, first and foremost trainee teachers need to be trained to use even simple technological equipment, such as overhead projectors, during their pre-service program. Only then will they be able to make optimal use of technological equipment in their professional work. The basic items needed for the pre-service program were not available at the College, let alone up-to-date technological equipment.

An adequate and enriching professional preparation of teachers must be facilitated by the provision of appropriate utilities, such as physical facilities and the supply of relevant educational resource materials – these are essential for the preparation for teaching (Ainley, 1987). On the whole, the feedback from the beginning teachers and the College staff in particular, indicate that all agree that the College is handicapped by shortages of teaching materials, classrooms, books in the Library, equipment and funds. The finding here is similar to that of the small scale study reported earlier (Lingam et al, 1999). The situation at the College regarding resources may have deleteriously affected staff, despite their best efforts in providing quality education and training to beginning teachers.

6.1.3 STUDENT TEACHERS

Selection Criteria

Policies related to recruitment have a bearing on the quality of the trainees selected for professional preparation, and subsequently have an impact on the teachers’ ability to respond to the demands of work in the field (Cairns, 1998; Delors, 1996).

Analysis of the data on selection criteria shows that the intake at LTC was generally based on prior academic achievement (see section 5.1.3). It has been suggested that admitting students for teacher training solely on the basis of academic qualification is insufficient (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1988; Elley, 1984). Students may be academically well qualified but not attitudinally fit for the teaching profession. As stated by Nabobo (1996:108), “teachers must not only portray excellence in academic but moral ideals as well”. Similarly, other writers (for example, Brock, 1999; Lovat, 1998; Oser, Dick & Patry, 1992)
have also emphasised the ethical and moral dimensions of teaching. In his speech at the 70th Annual Conference of the FTU, its President, Mr Bal Ram (2000:5), stressed the need for teachers to display high moral standards:

…society [is] extremely critical of insignificant misdemeanours on the part of teachers… As teachers we are charged with the noble responsibility of educating and moulding the lives of future generations…teachers belong to a profession that [is] under the microscope twenty four hours a day.

Failure to take cognisance of this message could lead to adverse effects on the quality of work that teachers carry out. Character references, positive attitudes, maturity and a sense of commitment to duty are other vital aspects that need to be considered. Thus, apart from academic achievement, emphasis should also be placed on other important factors, such as the personal qualities and character of applicants, to ensure they demonstrate the program basics and are ready to develop as teachers.

Entry Qualification

The basic qualifications with which trainees enter the pre-service program have an impact on their ability to profit from their professional preparation, and subsequently their ability to meet the demands of work in the field (Cairns, 1998; Logan, et al.,1990; World Bank, 1990).

The data gathered show that in recent years there has been a marked improvement in the academic qualifications of the students enrolled at LTC. Most LTC students’ qualifications are equivalent to those of students gaining admission to FCAE. In the 1970s, the academic qualifications of students admitted were passes in the FJCE or New Zealand School Certificate (Fiji Education Commission, 1969). At present, however, the minimum academic qualification for entry to the College is a pass in the FSLC, and it is pleasing to note that all students who are now admitted to the College have attained a pass in the FSFE. The findings further show that the Indo Fijian students are better qualified than the indigenous Fijian students. This was evident from the information provided by the Chief Education Officer regarding the differential minimum aggregate mark required for the two groups of students. Because of the Government policy of reserving 50 percent of the intake at LTC for indigenous Fijians they generally enter the College with lower marks. From a social point of view, this quota system at least maintains social stability. The quota system has been advocated by successive Governments, as it provides opportunity to bridge the gap between the two major ethnic groups with respect to entry into most tertiary institutions. This view is supported by a recent landmark UNESCO document (Delors, 1996). These trainees have certain potentials which need to be developed, utilising strategies such as bridging courses and remedial work which could be employed as part of an affirmative action policy. If such
strategies are not pursued, then some less educated teachers will continue to exit from the College, and this could set up a vicious circle with respect to Fijian education. As a matter of fact, the affirmative action policies have not made any significant impact in raising the level of Fijian education (Sharma, 2000, 1997; Puamau, 1991; Baba, 1986; Whitehead, 1975). More recently, the Government has again put together an affirmative action ‘blueprint’ for the advancement of the education of indigenous Fijians over a ten-year period (Fiji Ministry of Education, 2000). It is not possible here to undertake further discussions on Fijian educational issues, as they are beyond the scope of this study.

In order to improve primary education, first and foremost well-qualified students must be enlisted for teacher training. Whatever criteria are used, they must possess the basic educational ability needed to cope with the pre-service program and then provide a teaching service at the required level of competence. What is evident is that during the 1990s there was a reasonable improvement in the entry levels of the College intake.

### 6.1.4 TEACHER EDUCATORS

Analyses of the data related to College staff indicate that most of them are not academically well qualified for College work, and they also lack opportunities for on-going professional development (see section 5.1.4). It came to light that none of the staff had had any chance to attend international conferences, seminars or workshops. The BEMTUP report also highlighted the need for further professional development of the teaching staff (G. Singh & Booth, 1997). Professional development is essential in order to improve the professional skills, and knowledge of staff related to the professional preparation of teachers, such as designing, writing and reviewing courses, teaching methods and assessment strategies.

Most of the teaching staff hold Bachelors degrees. Since LTC is a post secondary institution, the Principal, Vice Principal and all Heads of School should have postgraduate qualifications and, in particular, the Principal and Vice Principal should have qualifications in Educational Administration in order to professionally manage the functions of the institution. Even for teaching staff at the secondary school level, a Bachelors degree alone is not sufficient, and for those at the post-secondary level, higher qualifications are highly desirable. Also, in view of the far-reaching changes and increase in complexity of teacher education programs, as well as the significant new trends and issues in education in general, lecturers should have postgraduate qualifications in education. In addition, it would be preferred that College lecturers have some experience teaching in primary schools. The latter would help staff to have a better understanding of primary teaching and the subjects included in the National Primary School Curriculum, as well as the other work demands and responsibilities faced by primary teachers. For lecturers at teacher education institutions, a Post Graduate
Certificate or Diploma in Tertiary Teaching would be an appropriate qualification. This would not only advance their skills and knowledge about teaching at this level, but also enable them to professionally reflect on their practice, improve the teacher education curricula and provide the best possible education to student teachers. In addition, it would help lecturers to achieve a smooth transition from primary or secondary teaching to tertiary level teaching. Some tertiary institutions abroad have already made such a program, a Post Graduate Certificate or Diploma in Tertiary Teaching, mandatory for their academic staff, and the regional teacher training colleges have indicated a strong interest in this program (Landbeck, 1997).

To ensure that the College provides better training to its student teachers, the lecturers’ professional qualifications and experience could be upgraded periodically. Upgrading the lecturers, either through non-award or award experiences, would enable the lecturers to refresh and update their professional competence (Hatton, 1994). They would then become better prepared and equipped to discharge their duties to provide adequate and enriching professional preparation of teachers. Well educated and professionally prepared lecturers should be well versed in recent changes and developments in teacher education. The changes and developments taking place suggest a heightened need for targeted professional development at this time (Cairns, 1998; Lallez, 1982). These changes and developments could then be incorporated into teacher education programs. However, it is noted that there have been very limited opportunities available for the teaching staff at the College to upgrade their qualifications. This may have adversely affected the preparation of teachers for the work they are expected to perform. An essential ingredient in raising the standard of pre-service teacher education, and for the formation of well-trained teachers, is to take account of the advantages to be accrued by upgrading the qualifications of all the teaching staff to at least a Masters Degree. This, in turn, could help to improve the central functioning of the College, and ultimately produce better trained and more able teachers who would be able to work more effectively in the field.

**Staffing/Student Intake**

The number of trainees enrolled should be such that quality teacher preparation is not compromised. The number of the staff and the size of trainee groups have a bearing on the quality of trainees’ preparation for the range of work and responsibilities they will face in their professional lives (World Bank, 1990). Analysis of the data on the staffing/student intake shows that there was no increase in the number of teaching staff to accommodate the increase in the intake of trainees at the College. This has markedly increased staff workloads. Apart from teaching duties, staff members are also expected to carry out other responsibilities, such as supervision of hostel activities and sports. With regard to their
teaching duties, the lecturers have a heavy teaching schedule, an added disadvantage of which is the related onerous demand of a large number of assignments to mark. This has placed a heavy burden upon the existing lecturers as no additional staff were provided by the Ministry of Education. In such a situation it is difficult for the lecturers, to relate to the trainees individually or in small groups. Paying individual attention to or maintain close supervision of trainees is not really possible. A high lecturer/trainee ratio reduces the lecturers’ effectiveness in carrying out their duties, particularly their teaching duties (World Bank, 1990; ILO & UNESCO, 1984). The lecturers cannot provide an adequate and enriching professional preparation for prospective teachers if they are not able to effectively carry out their workload.

The events of the May 2000 coup and ongoing political uncertainty could possibly lead to a similar situation as that which arose after the military coups of 1987. That is, the consequent mass exodus of teachers from the service could reasonably be expected to necessitate an increased College intake. There is a danger that history might repeat itself, and the College be saddled with more trainees to prepare for professional roles without any additional support in terms of staffing, classrooms and books. This could lead to difficulties in the preparation of trainees for their professional roles. A lower lecturer/trainee ratio is vital for the lecturers to provide better professional preparation to prospective teachers.

6.1.5 TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Classroom and School Related Work

Analysis of the data on classroom and school-related work reveals that a majority of the beginning teachers thought that the pre-service program at LTC adequately prepared them to plan their work and build their personal confidence. As part of this goal, the trainees are required to prepare workbook and scheme of work. These are also official requirements of the Ministry of Education. It is encouraging to note that beginning teachers consider that they are well equipped in these areas. With regard to personal confidence, it can be concluded that the pre-service program has improved their competence to undertake the challenges of the teaching profession. The analysis also shows that a large proportion of beginning teachers perceive that they have received adequate preparation in the pedagogical aspects of the subjects taught at primary school level. However, the feedback from the Head Teachers indicates that the beginning teachers are not using appropriate pedagogy. Interestingly, the results indicate a higher rating for subjects related to the revised courses conducted by the BEMTUP. The subject Social Science, however, received a lower rating (see Table 18). This outcome is similar to the findings of a recent local study, which also found that a ‘chalk and talk’ approach to instruction in Social Science was still prevalent (R. Prasad, 2000). Results
of the questionnaire suggest that students appreciate courses that have been revised and updated, as they perceive them to be easier to prepare for. By contrast, the beginning teachers indicated that they felt inadequately prepared to deliver the Vernacular languages and Music subjects. These subjects are important in a multi-racial Fiji, so, the pre-service program should adequately prepare beginning teachers in their pedagogical aspects. The responses of the Head Teachers also indicated that beginning teachers possessed inadequate subject matter knowledge, and were not well versed in the primary curriculum. According to the literature (for example, Grossman, Wilson & Shulman, 1989; Morrison & Ridley, 1988; UNESCO and ILO, 1966), student teachers need to be thoroughly prepared in the teaching methods appropriate for the different subjects included in the curriculum. The uses of appropriate teaching strategies are essential to ensure that teaching and learning are meaningful and interesting to the children (Brock, 1999; Delors, 1996). For instance, to enable children to apply what they have learnt at school in a variety of settings, they need hands-on learning. The beginning teachers also drew attention to a perceived inadequacy in their preparation for handling ‘difficult children’. Teachers need counseling skills to deal with difficult children so that these children are better managed within the classroom context.

Although the analysis shows that beginning teachers thought that they were adequately prepared in the methodological aspects of most subject areas, they reported receiving inadequate preparation in handling and supporting children with learning difficulties. The Head Teachers also indicated that beginning teachers could not cater for individual differences. This may partly explain media reports highlighting the use of private tutors to supplement or substitute for regular teachers. The front page of Fiji’s leading newspaper — the Fiji Times (3 April 1996:1), highlighted the need for more private tutors. It stated that:

There has been a reported increase in the demand for private tutors, indication that the education system is not geared to handling slow-learners in Fiji schools.

One of the conclusions one could draw is that teachers are not being adequately prepared to cater for all the demands of work in their classrooms, for instance in catering for the different needs of learners. Parents have thus opted to pay private tutors. One parent (Fiji Times, 3 April 1996) stated that he was paying F$3.50 per hour to his child’s private tutor, a lot of money for a Fijian parent. This situation is quite depressing, and not all parents can afford to do this. This is not an acceptable situation. The success of students in terms of academic achievement depends in part on the calibre of teachers, which in turn depends in part on the adequacy of their professional preparation. Research literature confirms that children are not standardized entities, and teachers should therefore be prepared to effectively handle and support all the children they might encounter in their classes (Darling-Hammond,
This implies that the course on Special Education (EDS23) taught to the teacher trainees at the College may not have equipped them adequately with the knowledge and skills required to effectively help children with learning difficulties. Maintaining class discipline, assessment techniques, managing difficult children and organizing and conducting extra-curricular activities are other areas of work and responsibility by teachers. The low mean scores in Table 18 indicate that beginning teachers thought pre-service program did not adequately prepare them in these areas. This concurs with the views expressed by Head Teachers. The findings here are consistent with those of other studies in other jurisdictions (Cairns, 1998; McCahon & Carpenter, 1987; Hitz & Roper, 1986; Burke & Notar, 1985; Veenman, 1984; Rutter et al., 1979).

Without the ability to maintain class discipline it is not possible to effectively carry out the process of teaching and learning. In view of this, teachers need to possess appropriate strategies to maintain class discipline, and the pre-service program should adequately prepare them for this. Also, with the introduction of Occupational Health and Safety regulations to Fiji, teachers need to be more aware of children’s safety and welfare. Close supervision of pupils is therefore required both at school and during other curricular activities.

Analysis of the data on classroom and school related work shows that the beginning teachers also felt that they received inadequate preparation in the use of appropriate assessment techniques. The College courses, however, employ a variety of approaches to assess trainees’ performance, such as seminar presentation, short test, research project and final examination. Since the emphasis at the primary level of schooling in Fiji is now shifting to internal assessment, teachers need the relevant skills to properly assess children’s performance. Internal assessment is very demanding, and teachers need to keep up-to-date records to match assessment instruments to knowledge taught and moderate results with others. The pre-service program, therefore, should adequately prepare beginning teachers to enable them to effectively execute this responsibility.

Teachers should be prepared to undertake extra-curricular activities with their children, as well as becoming active members of their local communities. Inadequate preparation was also noted in the important area of co-curricular activities. Trainees are provided opportunities at the College to learn about clubs such as Scouting, Girl Guides, and Red Cross, but since these activities are not assessed, the trainees may not take them seriously. At the primary school level, teachers are often required to conduct these activities as part of their professional responsibilities. Adequate preparation is desirable in these areas to enable beginning teachers to effectively undertake extra-curricular activities with children.

A professional relationship with other colleagues in the school is vital. With the introduction of the new appraisal system (Performance Management System) for teachers,
teachers need to work as a team. The comment by the College Principal, Mr A. Prasad (2000b:10), at the 24th Graduation Ceremony, applies equally to the school context:

…no man is an island unto oneself. The happiness and the well being of each and everyone is linked to the well being of everyone else. It is said that civilization is wonderful fruit that grows on a “tree of co-operation”. It is the outcome of people learning to work together, each doing their part for the good of all.

The above aptly describes the need for all teachers in the school to maintain a professional relationship with one another. Were they to do so, Mr A. Prasad’s vision for the institution could be achieved.

Analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire survey, interviews and documents reveals that the pre-service teacher education program at LTC did not adequately prepare the majority of the beginning teachers for multi-class teaching. Statistics from the primary education system show the incidence of multi-class teaching in Fiji (Deloitte, Touche & Tohmatsu, 1993; Collingwood, 1991). Despite this, the training program neither prepared the teachers theoretically nor provided them with practical experience that related to multi-class teaching. The problems of multi-class teaching situations in Fiji are further compounded by the fixed curriculum for each class level. This makes the teaching situation more complicated and difficult for teachers, especially for those who are not well prepared for multi-class teaching. It is unfortunate that the pre-service teacher education program does not cater for the needs of teachers in this situation. As stated by G. Singh (1986:6):

…theoretical and practical skills and a deep appreciation of constraints and challenges of teaching in rural schools would indeed be most helpful, if these are dealt with in the pre-service teacher education program.

The outcomes presented here are consistent with those reported by the BEMTUP consultants, G. Singh and Booth (1997:14):

The theme [multi-class teaching] has received very little attention in the preparation and teaching of the upper primary courses in the subject areas.

Analysis of the data indicates that the College does not provide opportunities for the majority of trainees to understand and become aware of the situation in rural schools, such as the school context, the availability of resource materials and the social and economic background of the children. When the trainees become classroom teachers they may find it difficult to work with confidence in a wide range of educational environments because of their inability to cope with the challenges which they are most likely to encounter. To ensure that trainees are provided with an understanding of the teachers’ world of work, they need experience working in a variety of educational contexts during their practice teaching. The College, therefore, needs to expand the range of schools participating in practice teaching to specifically include rural schools, especially those with multi-class contexts. However,
because of restrictions on travel funds, the Ministry of Education wants the College to restrict access to schools that are near the College, which are generally urban schools with ‘straight’ classes.

The other aspect that beginning teachers reported having very little preparation for was performing administrative duties. It would be worthwhile for them to possess relevant knowledge and skills related to administration. This could help them contribute to the effective running of the school organization. This aspect is discussed in greater detail in the curriculum revision section.

Community Related Work

As a teacher in Fiji one has to keep in mind the different areas of work in which one is expected to perform. As mentioned earlier, these areas of work are related not only to the classroom and the school, but also to the community. However, evidence (for example, Turney et al., 1986; Goodlad, 1983) suggests that classroom and school-related work receive the most attention in pre-service education. Analysis of the data shows that all aspects of work and responsibility associated with the community domain have been identified by beginning teachers as areas in which the pre-service program did not adequately prepare them. For example, they indicated that the pre-service program did not adequately prepare them to work with a range of ethnic groups other than their own (see Table 18). This is consistent with views expressed by Head Teachers. The College offers two courses in Cross-Cultural Studies (CC11P and CC24), but it seems that these courses have failed to convince beginning teachers that they have acquired the basic functional skills needed to deal effectively with parents, children and others from different ethnic backgrounds. Despite the management of schools in Fiji being largely divided on racial lines, statistics suggest that racial integration nonetheless exists:

…36 percent of the Fijian committee schools with 597 teachers have 108 (18 percent) Indian teachers. These schools with 6769 students have 497 (7.3 percent) Indian students. On the other hand 63 percent of Indian schools with 1577 teachers have 270 (17.1 percent) Fijian teachers. These schools with 35,521 students have 8820 (24.8 percent) Fijian students (Chand, 1999:19).

The then Minister for Education, the Honourable Pratap Chand (1999), was aware of this racial divide and intended to counter it by promoting racial integration in schools. This calls for more emphasis on cross-cultural studies. As suggested by Tulasiewicz (1994), in order to effectively carry out the teachers’ professional roles in multicultural classrooms, awareness of other people’s cultures and affective elements such as sensitivity to other cultural groups are vital. Similarly, UNESCO and ILO (1966) have expressed the need for teachers to be able to work with people from different racial backgrounds. The findings here
are similar to those of other studies (for example, Queensland Education, 2000; Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Turney et al., 1986). In the multi-cultural context of Fiji, knowing about and understanding others cultures could greatly help teachers in their work context.

Training for community related work, as evidenced by this research, is very much marginalized at LTC. This area of work is very important for teachers, especially in the local context, as most of the schools are community owned and, to enhance the activities in the school, the support of the community is vital. As aptly stated by Baba (1986:3):

... after all in our communities much of the school related activities are tied up with the community and much of the community activities revolve around the school, thus it makes good sense to recognize the critical role of teachers in this and encourage it accordingly.

It is essential to expose trainees to community related roles during the pre-service program. In order to achieve this teacher educator’s first need to identify what the community roles are that teachers are expected to carry out. These roles could then be a focus in the pre-service teacher education program. Acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to collaborate with others would also be vital. The notion here is consistent with those reported in a broader context by Kelly (1993:118):

While pre-service teacher education courses prepare students for their prospective relationships with children…such courses too frequently neglect the interrelationships with colleagues, parents and members of the community that are integral to their work as teachers.

In the community there are many different social institutions which can impact on the school, such as the religious organizations, business organizations and government agencies. Prospective teachers need to be made aware of these links to ensure that they work in close partnership with these social institutions. Doing so would help prospective teachers gain confidence and, in turn, achieve optimum support from the community in the education of the children. Support from the community will then enable prospective teachers to function more effectively in their professional work. The literature confirms that working collaboratively with parents and other members of the community as well as with various organizations and social institutions can greatly enhance the work of teachers (for example, Hopkins & Wideen, 1984; Goodlad, 1983). One only needs to refer back to the comments of leading USP academics, Velayutham (1987) and Baba (1986), on the community related responsibilities which teachers in Fiji need to meet, to realize the importance of this aspect of teachers’ world of work. Community related work and responsibilities should not be neglected in the pre-service teacher education program.
Practice Teaching

The data from the survey in relation to practice teaching presented in Table 22 indicate seven factors which beginning teachers rated as having a positive influences on their professional preparation. These are:

- Practice Teaching Handbook
- Children’s response to their work
- Familiarization visits to the practice teaching schools
- Sharing of ideas with their peers
- The school environment
- Assistance and support from other teachers in the school
- Assistance from the Associate Teachers.

Since these factors received strong positive comments from the beginning teachers, it would be worthwhile for them to be maintained. This would ensure a continued positive contribution to beginning teachers’ professional preparation. For instance, in relation to the Associate Teachers who supervise trainees in their school practice teaching, the College could provide professional support. The Associate Teachers would in turn provide better guidance in the professional preparation of the pre-service teachers whilst on field experience. The Practice Teaching Handbook could include relevant information on the work and responsibilities expected of teachers at the primary level. With regard to the placement of the trainees for practice teaching, the College could also consider having trainees of different ethnic background in the same school. This would not only help them to share ideas, but also learn to work together and understand the cultural differences behind their perceptions. Subsequently, the beginning teachers might be better prepared for working with teachers from other ethnic backgrounds.

Aside from the positive influences, the beginning teachers indicated ten factors that were not conducive to their professional preparation. These are:

- Opportunities for lesson observation
- Assistance gained from reading text about teaching
- Help and guidance given by tutors during College classes
- Briefing sessions conducted at the College
- Time for reflection
- Duration of practical teaching
- Subject task allocated
- Time allocated for preparation
- Feedback from the College tutors after assessment
- Availability of resources for teaching and learning.

The literature confirms that action without reflection is unlikely to lead to any significant improvement in the professional practice of a teacher (Calderhead & Gates, 1995; Schratz, 1993; Schon, 1983). The low mean score for the item ‘time for reflection’ (see Table
s) suggests that beginning teachers did not get sufficient opportunity to reflect on their practices during practice teaching sessions. It also implies that the lecturers may have been unable to provide time for reflection or may not be aware of the importance of 'reflective practice' themselves. The pre-service program should develop trainees’ ability to reflect on their work during practical sessions, that is, enable them to become effective reflective practitioners. Reflecting on one’s work is not only useful for teacher trainees, but for teachers college lecturers as well (Calderhead & Gates, 1995).

Analysis also indicates that beginning teachers perceive they were not given enough time to prepare for practical sessions. As mentioned earlier, primary teachers are expected to be generalists, hence they have to cover a very broad curriculum that demands heavy commitments of time. Student teachers have little time at school to prepare for lessons. All preparations for the lessons, such as lesson plans, lesson notes and teaching aids, need to be prepared well in advance. It seems that prior to the commencement of practical sessions, very little time is allocated to prepare for the work required in the field. One of the inhibiting factors may be the availability of resources. The College should stock sufficient curriculum materials for Classes one to eight, and these should be made available to trainees to prepare for teaching during practical sessions. Unless sufficient time is allocated to prepare and provide for relevant resource materials, it is impossible to attain optimum benefit from the practical sessions. These factors impacted on the beginning teachers in their professional preparation.

The analysis also shows that trainees thought that they were not exposed to a sufficient variety of educational settings for practice teaching, in particular rural schools. In Fiji over 57 percent of primary schools are located in rural areas (Fiji Ministry of Education, 1999; Deloitte, Touche & Tohmatsu, 1993). Unless trainees have exposure to rural schools during their initial teacher education program, they may find it extremely difficult to work effectively in a rural situation. Experience in rural schools is necessary in order for the trainees to have a better understanding of the constraints faced by teachers working in this context. As CEOP, Mr S. Singh (2000), indicated, most beginning teachers are initially posted to rural schools after certification. Thus, rural teaching experience is an essential preparation for beginning teachers.

In addition, the findings show that both the lecturers and beginning teachers consider that field-based experience alone is insufficient. As a result, the beginning teachers did not get enough time to experience all aspects of the teachers’ world of work. On the basis of the amount of time allocated for field-based experience (12 weeks), it can be concluded that practicing teachers and schools play a minor role in the professional preparation of teachers. In recent years the emphasis has been on partnership in pre-service teacher preparation, with schools taking joint responsibility for training (Hackett, 2000; Lieberman, 2000; Ramsey,
2000). To enable trainees to obtain optimum exposure to all domains of teachers’ work, it would be desirable to prolong field-based experience. Instead of relying on the major sessions of practice teaching, it would be preferable for such experience to be more frequent (Hagger et al., 1995). The trainees could then at least spend some days per fortnight in the field to experience aspects of the teachers’ world of work such as general school operation. The subject departments at the College could arrange these shorter duration visits. As it is, the trainees receive plenty of ‘preaching’ and very little practice. The criticisms presented here on the duration of practice teaching are similar to those of other studies (for example, Queensland Education, 2000; Clayton & Pearce, 1993).

Furthermore, the analysis indicates that the beginning teachers consider that they were not effectively supervised. The lecturers were allocated many students and, apart from supervising students on practice teaching, have also to attend to teaching duties at the College. The feedback from lecturers indicates that they were not able to devote enough time to the trainees to assist them with their practicum experience. The beginning teachers have corroborated this. In particular, lecturers were not available in the first session of practice teaching, when the trainees need most assistance. Infrequent or non-existent visits by the College staff reduces the benefit to trainees of the practicum experiences, and in turn their overall professional preparation for work (Avalos, 1991). This is not the fault of the teaching staff, but is the result of the budgetary allocation for pre-service teacher education, which does not provide sufficient funding for practice teaching. Due to these financial constraints, the College cannot afford to allow lecturers to make more visits than specified to provide minimum professional assistance and guidance to the trainees. Also because of financial constraints, urban schools close to the College are mostly used for practice teaching, cutting back on the use of rural schools.

On the basis of these problems associated with the limited supervision time available to the trainees, it can be concluded that the College does not provide sufficient relevant practical experience for the professional preparation of teachers.

6.1.6 EMERGING TRENDS

Some of the emerging trends in pre-service teacher education could be profitably considered for application at LTC. For example, independent learning, emphasis on continuous assessment and on-the-job training, multi-mode delivery, curriculum revision and the use of information technology could be appropriately adapted to suit Fiji’s context.
Independent Learning

There has been recent emphasis at tertiary level on independent learning (Sumssion, 1996; Hollingsworth, 1994). At LTC, due to the heavy workload of student teachers, independent learning is not really possible. Hence, training at the College does not equip the trainees to be responsible for their own professional development, and thus does not help them realize that as teachers they will be required to be life-long learners. The data show that a number of additional courses have been introduced over the years, with a consequent overload of the trainees’ timetable. The trainees are engaged throughout most of the day in lectures, and receive insufficient time during the day to undertake any independent work, such as reading professional literature or consulting lecturers for professional guidance and assistance in their work at the College. The BEMTUP report also highlights the busy schedule of work for student teachers:

....the crowded schedule... gave little time for independent study and reflection (G. Singh & Booth, 1997: 14).

The College operates on a time schedule similar to a typical primary school. Classes begin at 8:25 am; recess is at 10:50 – 11:05, while lunch for one group begins at 12:00 and for the other at 12:40. Classes end at 3:15pm. The focus of the previous sentences relies on the understanding of the procedures associated with the College as a type of reflection advocated by Smyth (1989b). Smyth’s approach would transcend the day-to-day concerns described, to examine the macro level in which questions would have been asked about the appropriateness of the College as a model and the ramifications of such a strategy in the teaching of young adults. Such a modelling would also support the existing state of affairs rather than encouraging different models of administration.

The BEMTUP report expressed concern about the inflexible schedule for class contact (G. Singh & Booth, 1997). The data show that the trainees were required to do almost nine courses per semester. In each course the trainees were expected to do at least two major assignments, one test and some tutorials. Thus, in a semester they do a total of 18 major assignments, 9 tests, and attend a number of tutorials. This suggests that the trainees are overloaded, as they are expected to do too much work within a short period of time. This affects the quality of the students’ work because they do not get a reasonable amount of time to do their assignments and other work assigned to them by the lecturers. Assigning too much work to the trainees affects not only the quality of their work, but also their overall professional preparation.

Course Assessment

The information collected on course assessment shows that almost all courses have a 60 percent weighting for coursework and a 40 percent weighting for end of
examinations. It is only in Special Education and an Art/Craft Elective course where the percentage weighting for examination is reduced.

At the post-secondary level, and in particular for teacher education, it would be desirable to further increase the weighting for coursework. This would ensure that the trainees’ performance is monitored continuously throughout the semester. The trainees’ performance could be measured by employing a variety of assessment methods apart from the normal written assignments. They could include tasks such as writing reflective journals, collaborative group assignments, seminar presentations and micro-teaching. Similarly, portfolio samples of student teachers’ work could form part of the assessment process in all Schools at the College (Ward & Ward, 1999). Student teachers assessed by the use of portfolio samples can use this same assessment method with their own students when they enter the workforce. A consequence of continuous assessment would be the requirement for the Academic Board, under existing practices relating to the reporting of results, to meet at least once a month to discuss the student teachers’ performance.

The current practice of having examinations at the end of the semester may not really indicate the knowledge and skills which the students have acquired. Since there is no provision for remedial or follow-up work after the examinations, and the trainees do not receive their examination scripts back, it does not enable them to know their strengths and weaknesses. It is interesting to note that some other teacher training colleges in the South Pacific region have started placing more emphasis on formative assessment (Robertson & Arcus, 1992). The trainees could benefit in their professional preparation from more emphasis being placed on formative assessment and regular constructive feedback being given to them by the teaching staff.

Analysis of the data presented shows that the College has graduated some students who have not fulfilled some of the graduation requirements. Sufficient to say that if teachers with such inadequate subject knowledge are allowed to graduate, children’s education could suffer. This practice is a clear indication that the LTC Academic Board itself has trouble adhering to its own established procedures. This is consistent with the report of BEMTUP component at LTC:

The expectation that “all will pass” appears to militate against excellence by some students (G. Singh & Booth, 1997: 40).

Those who are admitted at the College have an expectation that they will graduate. By effectively encouraging this, the College not only produces some inadequately qualified teachers but also teachers, who may later face difficulties in carrying out classroom activities and other related educational and professional responsibilities. Further, the certification of students who have not met the academic requirements could lead to deprofessionalisation of the primary teaching force. Instead of trying to make improvements and developing high
professional standards that are required of teachers, this policy reverses as well as contravenes the current trend of reprofessionalisation of the teaching force. If this policy continues then it will have serious repercussions for the teachers’ world of work and on the teaching profession as a whole.

**Mode of Delivery**

Analysis of the data on the College courses shows that all the courses were delivered through face-to-face mode. The current trend in the preparation of teachers is toward the use of flexible delivery systems such as distance education, radio broadcasts, and the internet (Chandra, 1999). As Chandra (1999:11) pointed out:

> It is important to relate to the growing trend to take education and training to the students and the workplace; rather than grudgingly accept these changes … who should proactively take advantages of these trends to promote our organization and to ensure ... high quality education.

The current course delivery system is therefore not consistent with recent trends in the delivery of teacher education courses. The present method of delivering courses continues to divorce the trainees from their future workplace. It would be better if the trainees spend more time in the field acclimatising themselves to the different areas of work expected of them when they become teachers, rather than spending so much time at the College. Through appropriate delivery systems the College could transfer the training packages to the students whilst they are in the field. The redeveloped program for primary teacher education at SICHE, for example, consists of a semester of learning in distance mode while the trainees are doing their teaching practicum (Bako, 1999). LTC could adopt this method taking education and training to the trainees’ future workplace. A semester, say, in rural schools would seem appropriate.

**Curriculum Revision**

Analysis of the LTC courses shows that their content has remained basically the same for almost two decades. The then Principal of the College, Mr Rogovakalali (1995:7), emphatically stressed the need to review the courses:

> … LTC prescription is about 10 years old and urgently needs to be revised.

Recently a senior academic with extensive work experience in Fiji, especially in the area of teacher education, Hindson (2000:7), also expressed a similar view about the LTC courses:

> The Certificate level of the LTC course is a hang-over from days when there were low entry requirements and the course has not been reviewed for some years.
As mentioned earlier, a major review of the College curriculum was carried out in 1984, but the suggested revisions to the teacher education curriculum were not implemented. The lack of action in response to the review made a farce of the whole exercise - so much time and effort was spent in reviewing the College curriculum but, surprisingly, no concerted effort was taken by the relevant authorities to implement the revised curriculum. It was proposed that the trainees would be required to do only five papers during each semester. This reduction in in-class time would leave more time available to the trainees to do independent study, and the workload would also have been more reasonable for tertiary level studies. Thus, some of the present concerns, such as the overloaded curriculum, would have been resolved if the authorities concerned had acted upon the recommendations of the report.

The AusAID funded BEMTUP revised four courses in the upper primary curriculum in 1996/1997. The work at LTC was in line with the objectives stipulated in the BEMTUP terms of reference. It reviewed upper primary teaching, which was agreed upon by the Ministry of Education and the contractor for the project. It would have been appropriate for those responsible for negotiating the contract to take heed of the disadvantages of such a piecemeal revision of the teacher education curriculum (only in core courses related to Mathematics, Social Science, English and Basic Science for upper primary classes), but the nature of the terms of reference for the project precluded this.

The courses at the College are now of different academic standards (G. Singh & Booth, 1997). The revised courses are more academically challenging than the unrevised courses. The revised courses employ the constructivist perspective, involving activity-based learning as the main medium of upgrading subject knowledge and skills in the teaching of Social Science, Mathematics, English and Basic Science. Furthermore, these subjects continue to receive a lot of emphasis in schools. Other subjects tend to be marginalized, and those teachers graduating from LTC may take these attitudes with them. The Fiji Islands Education Commission (2000) also found that these revised subjects receive a lot of attention compared to other subjects at the primary level, such as physical education, music, gardening, agriculture, art and craft and vernacular languages. Thus, other courses at LTC, other subjects in the official primary school curriculum and even teaching at the middle and lower primary levels may not receive due attention. It would have been of greater value had the courses related to the lower primary curriculum been revised first, rather than the courses related to the upper primary curriculum. A graded and progressive approach would have been more appropriate in the LTC context. If prospective teachers had better subject knowledge and teaching skills at the lower primary level, then they would help build a solid foundation under children’s lives and in turn contribute significantly to the improvement of education at subsequent levels.
Extensive collaboration and consultation was necessary, especially with the major stakeholders, in this case between the staff of LTC and the Ministry of Education, before approaching the contractors or aid agencies for assistance to plan for a review of the program. This would have encouraged the teaching staff to provide a more considered justification for revising the entire College curriculum or the courses related to the lower primary curriculum, rather than the piecemeal revision of the courses related to the upper primary curriculum. This is not to discredit the work done by the BEMTUP, but to illustrate that, to be effective, such interventions warrant proper planning and consultation with relevant stakeholders.

In future, it would be preferable to ensure that any revision of courses in the teacher education curriculum be done in close consultation and interactively with staff, in order to achieve a greater coherence in the academic standards of all the courses. Although there have been some changes effected in the pre-service teacher education curriculum since the inception of the College, these were sporadic and patchwork at best. To lay a better foundation at the primary level, the lower primary level courses, in particular, need to be upgraded. This would ensure that future teachers are adequately prepared with up-to-date knowledge and skills related to their world of work.

Some of the landmark documents covering issues concerning teacher preparation such as Delors (1996), the UNESCO (1998) report on Education for the 21st Century and other declarations have provided useful advice on teacher education curricula. Such advice has the potential to enhance pre-service teacher education so as to provide an adequate and enriching professional preparation of teachers. For instance, Delors (1996:141) highlighted the need for all countries to design teacher education curricula which would “create positive attitudes to learning, awaken curiosity, stimulate independence, and encourage intellectual rigour”. As far as the latter aspect is concerned, almost all students enrolled at the College have high entry qualifications - FSFE. It would be fitting, as stated by G. Singh et al. (1999:8), to make “adjustments in the College offerings to maintain a reasonable degree of intellectual challenge for the students”. At present the standard of the BEMTUP revised courses provides intellectual challenge to the trainees, but indications are that the standard of the other courses needs to be raised. To do so would have the advantage of matching the high entry qualifications of the trainees, as well as for cross credit purposes in the Bachelor’s degree for primary teaching offered by USP. The current College offerings are related only to the work teachers are expected to do in the classroom, that is, implement the National Primary School Curriculum. As it is, the College is not able to respond effectively even to this work because of factors already outlined, such as the quality of the courses and the lack of educational resources for teaching and learning. In order to meet the needs of contemporary Fiji, the teacher education curriculum should be designed to adequately
develop teachers to work competently not only in the classroom, but also beyond its four walls.

Baba (1999:18-19) suggests that, for teachers in the Pacific region, the teacher education curriculum needs to cater for the following:

- an ability to think critically and facilitate critical thinking
- an ability to understand and conduct research
- an ability to understand the context of development which impinges on education, and
- An ability to understand human values and approaches to reaching these.

The latter aspect is similar to one of UNESCO’s (1998) recommendations which aims to promote understanding and respect for the aspirations and needs of all ethnic groups in a multicultural environment such as the Fiji context.

On the basis of the foregoing discussion of the local teacher education curriculum, it would be appropriate to integrate the above ideas into the existing courses to provide an adequate and enriching professional preparation for primary teachers that meets the demands of the 21st Century.

Because of the wide current emphasis on the usefulness of inquiry-based learning, it would be wise to include a course on Basic Research Methods in order to provide support for the intellectual journey trainee teachers undertake. As G. Singh et al. (1999:1) suggest, “the culture of inquiry and research will become an increasingly important component of institutional work in Colleges both in terms of staff development and raising the pedagogical skills of students in the future”. Also, the Principals of the teacher training colleges in the region have suggested that the topic of research be included in their respective teacher education curricula. For example, in 1995 they observed:

Preparing a reflective teacher has to begin through the teacher training program. Therefore, the Teacher Education Curriculum should include a component of Basic Research Skills / Methods / Analysis. The Colleges can incorporate these appropriately in their overall programs, with relevant theory/practice sessions (IOE, 1995:55).

A Basic Research Methods course could include aspects such as writing research proposals, methods of data gathering and data analysis. Knowing the basics of research, especially during their initial training, will help students appreciate the notion of teacher-researcher (Hackett, 2000; Stenhouse, 1985, 1975). Hackett (2000:45) aptly stated that “willingness to engage in school-based research as a teacher-researcher often rests on a teacher’s previous experiences of a research-focused orientation during their initial teacher training”.

In addition, this would help prepare reflective teachers who would find alternative ways to improve their practice, who would always be on the lookout for ways to do things
better. In this way they would be equipped to ascertain whether a particular approach to teaching were more effective than others. It is through this reflective aspect that they would be better able to identify problems and then try to make appropriate changes in their teaching. By engaging in educational enquiry teachers will continue to improve their teaching performance. As G. Singh et al. (1999) pointed out, the emphasis in the Pacific region has been mainly on preparing student teachers for teaching and the individual planning of lessons, but very little has been done to develop reflective practitioners. The research data presented here shows that this also holds true for LTC. Thus, the introduction of a Basic Research Methods course would benefit prospective teachers in their professional work in the field. Apart from teaching research skills, staff at the College need to become active researchers themselves.

School Administration is another component which warrants attention. In terms of administrative duties, the data collected in this study indicate that the pre-service program does not comprehensively prepare a large proportion of beginning teachers for administrative and leadership responsibilities. A comment summarising this matter came from the CEOP, Mr S. Singh (2000), that some of the LTC graduates have been expelled for not following the professional norms and codes of behaviour. To avoid any further loss of teachers through professional misconduct (for example, absence from work without notification and poor attendance), it would be prudent for the College to include some instruction in School Administration. As it is, teachers preparation for leadership in the regional teacher training colleges is unknown, and some preparation would be desirable (Sanga, Pollard, & Jenner, 1998). In this way, future teachers might be less likely to bring disrepute upon the teaching profession. In addition, there is currently no specialized training for those holding positions of responsibility in primary schools. It is desirable that prospective teachers undergo some training on this aspect during their pre-service education, because at some stage of their careers they will probably hold some positions of additional administrative leadership responsibility.

Having some basic knowledge and skills relevant to running a school organization, such as in basic administration and planning, would help them run schools efficiently and effectively, and hence improve educational outcomes. Also, the administrator and those being administered would have a better understanding of each other’s responsibilities. This would promote better co-operation amongst the staff, and in turn help them to make decisions collectively and amicably at the school level. Pre-service teacher education in School Administration could be “another effective way of improving attitudes, work practices and world views” (Velayutham, 1994:78). Research shows that the leadership role of the school head is one of the main factors, if not the principle one, in determining school effectiveness.
(Delors, 1996:151). Therefore, a course in School Administration would help achieve these objectives.

**Information Technology**

A course in Information Technology would also be highly desirable. As aptly observed by Chandra (1999:9):

> The world has witnessed a dramatic revolution in information and communications systems reaching the far corners of the globe. This revolution has not only been dramatic, but it is intensifying. Already, there has been a paradigm shift in our thinking about societies and development. The future world will be even more information intensive than present.

The speed of change in information technology and communications is much greater today than during earlier periods, and could be reasonably expected to accelerate. Information Technology has become a part of the modern world, and in turn a part of our lives. For example, the internet and computers provide access to knowledge that changes the role of teachers. The influx of these and other related technologies has meant changes in our ways of thinking and learning of new ideas.

We cannot escape from advanced information technologies. The education system as a whole, including in particular teacher education, needs to cater for this development at the pre-service level. This will enable prospective teachers to acquire relevant knowledge and skills, and be better informed about new and developing information technologies for the 21st Century learning environments (Newman & Moss, 1997; Barton, 1996; Gates, Myhrvold, & Rinearson, 1996). Already some of these technologies are available to children, and they are increasingly exposed to them daily. Unless we take the initiative and incorporate information technology into the teacher education curriculum, teachers will have limited knowledge about these and will be far behind their students. As pointed out by Chandra (1999:10), as a result:

> …teachers are likely to not only become a hindrance to development, but also lose their standing in the eyes of students who are increasingly likely to be more adept at using these new technologies.

It would be more appropriate and cost-effective to include information technology courses in the College curriculum, rather than mounting in-service programs later. Already a large part of the education budget is spent on teachers’ salaries, leaving little for other purposes such as in-service programs and capital investment. As a consequence, it is unlikely that the Ministry of Education will be able to afford in-service programs for all teachers across the country. The researcher’s experience of working in Fiji as a secondary teacher, and later as a teacher educator, suggests that minimal attention is given to continuing professional
development such as induction into the teachers’ world of work and in-service training. Even though, educationally, it would be preferable to deal with some things later, when teachers have had some experience in professional work in the field, it is more cost effective to introduce these in a pre-service program. Even if the Ministry of Education does organize in-service programs, teachers may not be able to leave their classes unattended to participate. In view of this it would be worthwhile not to leave anything to chance, but to prepare fully professional teachers during the pre-service teacher education program.

The teacher education curriculum needs to keep up with recent developments in teacher education, and education in general, in order to provide quality teacher preparation for the demands of work in the field. At LTC, however, the teacher education curriculum has basically remained stagnant for almost two decades. Not only does this affect the professional preparation of teachers, but also lags behind new trends and developments in pre-service training of teachers elsewhere. It is therefore highly desirable that appropriate measures be taken to upgrade the courses in teacher education at LTC, in order to adequately prepare prospective teachers to cope with the multidimensional demands of their work.

6.2 THE KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

The lecturers, Head Teachers and beginning teachers have all indicated their dissatisfaction with the professional preparation of teachers at LTC. They perceive that the pre-service primary teacher education at LTC does not provide an adequate and enriching professional preparation for beginning teachers in a diverse range of areas of work and responsibility. Even though no trainee leaves the College as a full fledged teacher, some of the deficiencies in their professional preparation could have been easily avoided. LTC is fraught with many problems. For example, decision-making is made by a remote government bureaucracy, which means that the College has to go through ‘proper channels’ and the hierarchy to have even simple things done. Over the years the College has been identifying areas needing attention to ensure better professional preparation of teachers, and has made submissions to the principle stakeholder and superior authority, the Ministry of Education. However, almost every submission from the College that has drawn the attention of the Ministry of Education to the lack of physical facilities and educational resources has been inadequately dealt with. These constraints, combined with others mentioned earlier, are seen to be detracting from the provision of an adequate and enriching professional preparation for teachers. What is frustrating for the staff is that the Ministry of Education, despite being well aware of the situation that pertains at the College, has shown an imperious lack of concern for the professional preparation of teachers. It seems that, until recently, the Ministry of Education has given a low priority to the pre-service education conducted at LTC. However,
if the EU funded project is implemented, then LTC will have better physical facilities for teacher preparation (see Appendix G).

Following a request from the Ministry of Education in 2000, an AusAID funded project was to commence in 2001 to upgrade the pre-service teacher education program (Hindson, 2000). The project has already been approved in principle by AusAID. The project documents indicate that it would help address some of the concerns raised in this study by uplifting the professional preparation of teachers. These concerns include issues such as resources, staff upgrading and review of the courses. An interim Teacher Education Planning Adviser from the International Centre of Griffith University was based at the College in 2000 to prepare the details of the project design. This work was suspended due to the political mayhem of May 2000 and subsequent sanctions by Australia. Specifically, the project would be expected to include:

- overall overhaul of the LTC courses
- professional development for the staff
- improvement of the management structure
- upgrade the certificate the College awards to diploma level and
- provision of resources

This project provides a clear vindication and validation of the main findings of this study, which indicates areas that need to be addressed in order to improve pre-service teacher preparation at LTC. The project would therefore hopefully rectify some of the concerns highlighted in the present study. Once completed, the project could boost the effectiveness of the College in the production of quality teachers, who in turn would be more adequately prepared to meet the demands of work in the field. It is anticipated that the designing of the project will recommence during 2002.

Although the LTC pre-service program has inadequately prepared beginning teachers in certain areas of work and responsibility, overall it could be rated as moderately effective, having helped teachers to survive in the field and make a positive contribution to the education of Fiji’s children. As pointed out by the then Minister for Education, the Honourable Pratap Chand (2000b), during the interview:

… but let me say that given the constraints I think the College has done well. I would say that we have not had any major difficulties and crises anything like that in quality… Overall, I think College staff should take satisfaction that they have done well in spite of the constraints.

This is not to say that the existing situation could continue forever, or that the main stakeholder should become complacent. Because of new demands of work and responsibilities arising from changing times and the perceived needs of the Republic of the Fiji Islands society, the College must develop to provide high quality educational services. This means that, in order to make a continuing positive contribution, the College must
improve its principal function, the professional preparation of primary teachers. In so doing, future teachers would be better prepared to carry out the specific functions of teaching and more broadly the other demands of work and daily professional activities.

It is now possible, through examination of the data collected from the different sources, to address the three key research questions that guided this study:

(i) Does LTC’s pre-service teacher education program meet the socio-cultural expectations of Fiji’s primary schools?

On the basis of the evidence cited, the general perception is that LTC pre-service teacher education program has not appropriately prepared recent graduates for the socio-cultural expectations in the field. Despite having a course on Cross Cultural Studies, the College has not really helped beginning teachers to become well acquainted with the complexities and demands of a multi-cultural society. It appears that the course which was designed to enhance cross-cultural understanding has failed to promote a more meaningful and enduring understanding and appreciation of other cultures in beginning teachers. What this failure reveals is that beginning teachers face difficulties working in a socio-cultural milieu different from their own. It would be useful for the College to revisit and strengthen this course in view of the beginning teachers’ feedback.

(ii) Is LTC’s pre-service teacher education program compatible with the demands of work expected of the beginning teachers?

With regard to this research question, the data revealed that, in the main, there were substantial gaps in the pre-service teacher education program, and therefore the professional preparation of teachers. The College was under-resourced, both in the area of on-campus courses, and in the work experience area where student teachers work in schools. Areas of under-resourcing include physical facilities, library facilities, lecturer qualifications, lecturer/trainee ratio and the types of courses offered. Undoubtedly, these deficiencies have resulted primarily from financial difficulties, and have in turn contributed to gaps in teacher preparation. As a consequence, beginning teachers leave the College under-prepared for the demands of work in the field.

(iii) Does LTC’s pre-service teacher education program reflect the emerging trends and developments in teacher education as expressed in contemporary international principles and practices?

The finding in relation to the above research question is that the LTC pre-service teacher education program does not effectively reflect the emerging trends and developments in teacher education. From the research it is evident that the College pre-service program has not been revised for many years. A well-designed program was proposed following the review in the 1980s, but apparently it was not implemented. A partial revision of the program was introduced by BEMTUP, but evidence in the findings of this study indicates that there
are still too many courses offered, as well as a high degree of overlap between these courses. Evidence from the international literature, on the other hand, indicates that significant reforms have been introduced elsewhere in the area of teacher education, especially pre-service teacher education, but the LTC program has not kept pace with these new imperatives. Generally, pre-service teacher education at LTC has responded too slowly to changing circumstances, and could best be described as stagnant. While not all changes in teacher education in overseas countries would be relevant to Fiji, changes to Fiji society and its needs within a global economy have not been supported by changes in the education system that would have resulted from changes in teacher education.

6.2.1 EDUCED PERCEPTIONS OF THE FINDINGS

Figure 2 describes the inter-relations existing at the level of analysis commensurate with the life-world of the staff, graduates of the College and the head teachers of the schools to which the graduates are posted. There is remarkable consistency in the understanding of the issues involved in the preparation of teachers and their duties and responsibilities in the field. However, there exists another level of discourse that transcends the system world depicted in Figure 2. It is interesting that few references to this discourse were present in the data analysed. There seems to be a reticence or even a lack of awareness of over-arching issues under which the system world of the College is described.

These macro considerations refer to issues such as the impact on the College and its operation of the financial basis on which the provision of education in a developing nation has been made. Under these macro provisions, the budget accorded education is determined within the national budget and experiences fluctuations according to the economic climate existing at the time. Frequently education experiences a downturn in financial support in times of crises. From the education budget described, funds are allocated to the primary schools and to any relevant teacher education facilities in the local context. Past experiences, indicate that reduced support for particular institutions may have eventuated in times of financial difficulties.

Contrasting with the economic downturns and their potential influence on education budgets, the provision of overseas’ funding contributes in many ways to the education system of the nations involved. Overseas’ funding assistance takes many forms and these are negotiated with the parliaments of the nations involved. As mentioned previously, the example of AusAID assistance in upgrading the LTC certificate program and the EU funded development of physical facilities at the College would contribute to enhancing the professional preparation of pre-service teachers in Fiji. This overseas contribution to the development of the College and its programs has catalysed considerable excitement and
anticipation in both staff and students. One unanticipated outcome of this additional support to the College from overseas sources has been the increased levels of postgraduate study undertaken by staff. While the additional qualifications obtained would contribute in a very positive way to the quality of the programs taught at the College, there is a need to reconcile the requirement of the communities at large to maintain their indigenous heritage with the importation of western education. The Ministry of Education in Fiji in its various publications stresses the importance of local ways of knowing and thinking. This maintenance of a truly Fijian conceptual basis for deciding the role and format of education co-exists with attitudes and customs that reflect not only the indigenous life but also the colonial heritage. For example, the support for exams within the education system as was highlighted in Chapter Three, and other examples quoted by Teasdale and Teasdale (1994) indicate how western educational traditions have been accommodated within the education system in Fiji.

6.3 SUMMARY

This chapter has focussed on the discussion of the findings associated with pre-service teacher preparation at LTC. In addition, the chapter has addressed the central research questions underlying this study. In summary, the evidence gathered from multiple sources: documentary analysis, questionnaire surveys and interviews supports the hypothesis that pre-service teacher education at LTC has not provided an adequate professional preparation for beginning teachers which would enable them to cope well with diverse duties and obligations in the field.

Given that the beginning teachers were inadequately prepared for their diverse professional functions, the following chapter outlines the implications of the findings, as well as offering recommendations which may help improve pre-service teacher preparation at LTC. These recommendations could be a useful catalyst for restructuring and improving the professional preparation of teachers at LTC. Such an initiative is vital for the nation’s primary schools. They need to continually upgrade their educational services, and LTC could facilitate this by providing well-prepared teachers.
CHAPTER SEVEN

EMERGENT ISSUES AND RELATIONS

7.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of a set of significant issues and accompanying tensions that have emerged from an analysis of the LTC case study. These issues and their impact centre on Fijian society itself, and also, it follows on the fabric and life of LTC. Six areas of influence and tension have been selected for particular comment: 1) The Colonial Administrative Framework; 2) Post Independence - Colonialism Persists; 3) A Colonial Curricula Continues; 4) Centralised Authority: Master and Servant; 5) Centralised Authority and Its Impact On The Case Study and 6) Colonial Influence and Examinations. A seventh illustrative postscript concerning uniformity also has been provided. In each case the tension of the relationship between colonial or post-colonial influences and both traditional and contemporary Fijian society has been illuminated.

7.1 COLONIAL INFLUENCE ON EDUCATION

This section highlights salient features arising from the present study, in education in general and pre-service teacher preparation in particular, in the context of Fiji that could be traced to its colonial inheritance. The model in Figure 4 below illustrates a number of features emanating from the British colonial education system and their impact on LTC in preparing teachers for the nation’s primary schools. The arrows indicate the strength of influence.

Figure 4: Colonial Influences on Education
(1) The Colonial Administrative Framework

LTC can be seen as one component in a complex of related institutions within the social structure of Fiji and serves Fiji’s communities through the preparation of teachers. The influences on LTC depicted in Figure 3 (see Chapter Six) can be interpreted as those existing at one moment in time: a system in equilibrium but containing tensions that could
compromise this stability. One perspective that is able to illuminate aspects of the web of links surrounding LTC is to consider the location of LTC within Fiji's historical administrative framework, within the important period that formed the colonial foundations of the education system. While LTC has been located at Lautoka in comparatively recent times the preparation of teachers was conducted by different instrumentalities at different times. LTC will be used to exemplify issues relating to teacher education over a period of time.

This period is relevant in that the data derived from the study also indicate manifestations of colonial impact on Fijian education. Despite the differences in current educational provision in terms of school locations, size, and ownership there still exists a large measure of commonality with the colonial past. It is essentially the British colonial influences in Fiji’s public services and institutions and the education sector as a whole that have ensured the perseverance of these institutions, including LTC and its predecessors.

More recently, Campbell (2004: 3) emphasised that "relationships of boundaries and identities would not exist if various colonising powers had not established colonial governments". As a consequence of these divisions of these arrangements, administrative systems were developed to support the governing of these newly created entities. Education followed. As pointed out earlier (see Chapter Three), the present form of schooling is the consequence of colonial influence on Fiji as well as on the other small island states of the Pacific region. The colonial powers, whether British, French, German, or American brought with them ideologies of education that they considered would civilise the indigenous population as well enhancing contributions to their own economies. In Fiji, to achieve the latter, the British colonial administration needed trained people such as clerks and other types of educated workers to provide appropriate specialised labour needed for the economy. Schools were established to help serve this function. A consequence of this function was that the then newly established formalised educational systems tended to erode the existing cultures of the original inhabitants. Smith (1989) describes such a colonial influence as pernicious. Likewise, Goldsmith (1993: 285) describes colonial influence on cultural traditions, including learning and knowledge, in harsh terms:

The colonial powers sought to destroy the cultural patterns of traditional societies largely because many of their essential features prevented traditional people from subordinating social, ecological and spiritual imperatives to the short-term economic ends served by participation in the colonial economy. There is no better way of destroying a society than by undermining its educational system.

This denigration of the cultures of indigenous peoples is not restricted to Fiji and the Pacific but occurred throughout the colonised world. For example, in Africa, Ross (2004: [176}
118) describes the tension between traditional and western education in Ghana, a former British colony:

…the contrasting foci of the two systems…[western education] is characterised by an emphasis on independence, competitiveness, and examination results. In contrast, indigenous education in Ghana developed as a holistic approach aimed at preparing learners for membership in society in ways that integrated rather than separated skills, emphasising relationships and inter-dependence of individuals to the whole.

These examples from now independent nations indicate that the colonial influence eroded and subverted post-colonial independence. An indigenous Tongan scholar, Thaman (1998) pointed out that western education has greatly affected the indigenous Pacific peoples' ways of knowing and learning. Other writers (for example, Teasdale & Teasdale (1999) and Gale (1995) have expressed similar sentiments about the loss of indigenous peoples' ways of thinking and knowing. This appears to be the case in Fiji, also.

(2) Post Independence - Colonialism Persists

Post-independence had the potential to have brought in radical changes to the old order of government and public service structures including education but, instead, aspects of colonialism were carried over. It seems that the Fiji government valued certain aspects of the administration imposed during the colonial era and as such, despite changing times, some of these aspects have been retained. Some of the colonial influences retained include systems of educational administration and, as well, language of instruction, where English has been retained. Western academic knowledge and ways of knowing are central to current education provisions. It could be argued that the Fijian community, through its government and constituents, perceives these aspects as providing better opportunities for the local communities in the contemporary world. Some of the features derived from the colonial education heritage include such matters as curriculum plans, catering for its multi-cultural society, entry qualifications, and single graded or multi-graded schools (see Chapter Two, Figure 1). In areas such as the curriculum and examination systems, the post-colonial era witnessed a number of reforms to make them more relevant and contextualised. It would seem that some of the concerns of the staff at LTC relate to their lack of opportunities to pursue a western type of education for their students. Lecturers make comparisons with, for example, resources, qualifications, administrative systems, teacher education curriculum and opportunities (see Figure 1) available to teacher education institutions in developed countries.

(3) A Colonial Curricula Continues

Despite educational reforms, aspects of the curriculum such as the prescriptive character of the ‘syllabus’ persisted and continues to this date in Fiji. Although a Curriculum
Development Unit (CDU) was established in the 1970s to develop and distribute to schools a more contextualised curricula, the centralised, standardised, and uniform character reminiscent of the ‘syllabus’ of the British colonial period still persists. It is not uncommon to see a great degree of ‘sameness’ in the methods of teaching adopted in schools. As pointed out by Muralidhar (1989) the use of transmissive approaches are still widely used in teaching and learning. Appropriate measures could be also taken to incorporate aspects of the culture, especially in the methods and contents of the teacher education courses (Thaman, 1998) and the Ministry of Education has attempted to redress the imbalance, at least in principle if not practice, in the recently published report of Fiji Islands Education Commission (2000). Furthermore, at the school level, even the classroom design, textbooks, and teaching materials used reflect the degree of uniformity based on English education rather than variety and diversity more representative of the needs of particular cultural groups.

(4) Centralised Authority: Master and Servant

In most classrooms in Fiji, the teacher is the unquestioned authority in knowledge and values. While there are some exceptions relating to the more articulate pupils in urban settings, the teacher is held in high regard. This servant and master relationship that facilitates classroom practices mirrors the hierarchical relationship between the Ministry of Education and sections of education such as LTC. Also the Westminster framework and civil service has been continued, with the Minister as the head and with a supporting structure containing LTC, CDU, schools and other sections of the Ministry of Education. This is also mirrored in the administrative structure of LTC itself where an explicitly hierarchical structure exists (see Chapter Five, Figure 2).

The system of administration of education in the school system and post-secondary institutions such as LTC also has changed little in the post-colonial period and appears to be less than realistically responsive to the needs of an independent nation. The education system is still basically centralised and the Ministry of Education continues to direct, control and regulate from a distant central office, located in Suva. LTC, located approximately 250 kilometres away from the central office, has been very much enmeshed in the continuing centralised administration of education in Fiji. There is some semblance of administrative decentralisation at the Divisional and District levels but schools and post-secondary educational organizations such as LTC continue to be controlled by the Ministry of Education through the Divisional and District Offices. While this process gives the central office immense power in the operation of the College there is a concomitant inertia for change. The bureaucratic style leading to delays in decision making were clearly evident in the study.
(5) Centralised Authority and Its Impact On The Case Study

Although LTC is a specialised educational institution responsible for the preparation of the bulk of teachers for the nation’s primary schools, it is still controlled and managed by the Ministry of Education. The College has little autonomy to conduct its own internal affairs. For all resourcing, including staffing, the Ministry of Education is solely responsible. The supply of resources to the College is a typical example of administrative procedures of public service practice with requests signed by various officers at different levels of the Ministry of Education before permission is given and they are available to the College. The slow flow of resources to the College impedes all its functions (Strivers, 1994; Velayutham, 1994). This procedure described clearly shows that power over finances and resources is vested in central office staff and constitutes real power. This is consistent with the views expressed by Nagel and Snyder (1989) and Weick (1976) in relation to teacher education in developing countries. The role of the College is then just to prepare teachers who would later operate as technicians or ‘functionaries’ rather than as reflective practitioners. The teaching staff at the College operates in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Fiji Public Service Commission (FPSC). These regulations are evident in the College’s daily hours of operation are start of work time of 8:00 am, and end of work time at 4:00 pm. Thus the perception of the College by the staff at LTC as reminiscent of a school with its strict adherence to public service rules and regulations. Emerging national, regional and global pressures challenge Fijian authorities with the need to reorient the educational structures to meet the present as well as the future demands of education systems.

As a result, the bureaucratic administrative machinery retained after the nation’s independence continues to affect the public services such as education in general and institutions like LTC in particular. Most of the malaise afflicting other bureaucracies such as 'red tapism', and not being sufficiently responsive to changes and demands in the social system of the country, afflict LTC also. Increasing government control marginalises the professional perspectives which teacher educators bring to their work. As shown in the present study, teacher educators had to leave decision-making in critical areas of teacher education program such as the placement of the trainees in schools for practical preparation, and the selection of trainees to the Ministry of Education instead of they themselves making decisions. What happens to their expertise and professional knowledge? The teaching staff of the College are subjected to direct management from the Ministry of Education. Teacher educators' skills, practices, and knowledge are diluted and discounted. Teacher educators believe that they should have greater control of the process and content of teacher education programs. This study has shown that the Principal reported the College situation and endemic difficulties to the authorities and also recommended to the authorities ways of assisting and supporting the preparation of teachers. Even though the response had been often
unfavourable the resolute effort of the Principal demonstrated the College’s concern to produce more appropriately and better prepared teachers. The sentiments expressed by the College staff in regard to the Ministry of Education is one of a pervasive sense of disparagement, ignorance of the needs of the College and procrastination. The staff and the Principal of the College indicate differences in perceptions of their roles in preparing teachers compared with the views of the Ministry of Education.

There have been suggestions and recommendations that LTC should be granted a measure of autonomy for it to fulfil its professional role in an appropriate and responsive manner. Even within a bureaucratic framework, ways can be found to facilitate and enable professional input. For instance, a bureaucrat can take on a more professional role and contribute to educational development and provision (Velayutham, 1994). In the case of LTC, as recently as 2000, the Fiji Islands Education Commission has made a convincing case for LTC to be autonomous, with a College Council that can make the institution's policy decisions, determine priorities and work directly with the College’s Chief Executive, namely, the Principal. Crocombe and Crocombe (1994) also suggested the need for greater independence to be exercised by the regional teachers colleges to enhance their operations. An influential indigenous Fijian scholar, Dr T.L. Baba (1997) (former Professor and Head of Education at the University of the South Pacific) stressed specifically the need for LTC to be autonomous.

(6) Colonial Influence and Examinations

Fiji inherited an examination system from the British period (Thomas & Postlethwaite, 1984), and its impact is still evident in all aspects of the school work and teacher education. It is useful to take note of the Fiji Islands Education Commission’s (2000: 12) comment on the system of public examinations:

Criticism [is widespread] that our education, in its academic orientation, narrow prescriptions and examination-centeredness has remained colonial in its assumptions about what is worth knowing and learning.

Certain aspects of the colonial education system have been retained and owe more to the satisfaction of particular needs within the society than a reliance on previous British models. One of the most important functions of the education system is to cater to a multicultural society by offering an examination system that was considered by the communities to be ‘objective’, that is, not favouring one or other of the ethnic groups in Fiji. This attitude extends to the selection of students for teacher education preparation programs and also the selection of teaching staff and the careful balance of indigenous Fijian and Indo-Fijian lecturers at the College. The community support for examinations is evident in their persistence at all levels of schooling and further education, in spite of reports advocating
change in assessment priority. Submissions to the Fiji Islands Education Commission (2000: 344) expressed concern if the long standing tradition of having examinations was disbanded:

The quality of education, the motivation of students and the effort of teachers, principals and head teachers would all either suffer or be wasted if external examinations were abolished or their importance reduced.

Although modern teaching methods and research-based approaches to teaching are taught in the College, the trainees are easily inducted into an examination dominated school system. As a result of the examination-oriented curriculum, some of the knowledge is marginalised in the curriculum which the majority of the people would regard as basic to their social and cultural well being. However, the emphasis given during the colonial era to academic subjects has continued whereas other areas of knowledge receive a low status in the hierarchy of school-based knowledge. At the College itself more flexible, relevant and appropriate newer methods cannot be demonstrated and practised because of the resource limitations imposed by the Ministry of Education. Therefore, very little innovative and creative work can be attempted by the College with its students. In short, LTC is treated like any other primary or secondary school in terms of its administrative control and direction.

(7) A Postscript on Uniformity

Another visible feature of Fiji’s education system, although not directly related to the work at LTC, is the requirement of most schools to expect their students to wear distinctive school uniforms. This is a tradition inherited from the colonial era. Although the rationale for this practice is not officially and clearly stated, one could assume that it helps to mask the ethnic background and socio-economic status of the students. It is argued that uniforms also help the students to identify themselves with the school and build a sense of belonging to the institution. This uniform adherence is no longer required at LTC.

7.2 SUMMARY

Despite the social upheavals and the constitutional reforms, little has changed in terms of public service reforms to grant a measure of autonomy to LTC, and similarly to other post-secondary educational institutions. On the contrary, tighter control seems to have been imposed. Aid donors and other countries that provide assistance to Fiji further limit the local autonomy by imposing their 'rules of the game'. As a result LTC has to grapple with limited ability to innovate and change its professional programs and offerings.

Thus one finds that Fiji’s education system in general, and LTC in particular, the focus of the present study, have inherited some of the features, approaches and administrative systems of the colonial period. Even after three decades of independence, like most post-colonial societies, Fiji has retained aspects of structures and approaches of the colonial
period. It is ironic that the colonising country, Britain and some developed former British colonies such as Australia and New Zealand have introduced, in their own constituencies, substantial educational reforms that have transcended colonial educational systems to reflect contemporary needs. Fiji, on the other hand, continues to retain some aspects of its educational system that were derived from what former British colonies have done.

Other independent nations with a colonial history may well have experienced similar residual features but these features would have been supported by the particular needs of the communities within these nations. This generalized statement of the influence of colonial education on current educational practices has been depicted in Figure 5. In this model, based on data from Fiji, historical events have interacted with contemporary situations to create needs that were able to be satisfied by practices derived from early histories of the country.
A way forward would be to adopt lessons learnt from the successful educational practices in other contexts (Thaman, 2002; Bacchus, 2000; Brock, 1993), especially from former colonisers themselves as well as from former British colonies to enhance educational development and provision.
CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.0 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented a discussion of the broader issues in relation to the preparation of teachers at LTC. Overall, the study revealed inadequacies in the professional preparation of beginning teachers in meeting the work demands expected of them. Based on this, the following chapter presents conclusions of the study, together with a number of recommendations to improve and strengthen the preparation of teachers at the pre-service level so that they might better meet the range of work and responsibilities they will face in the field.

8.1 CONCLUSIONS

Chapter Two, which focused on a review of literature, raised critical issues regarding the importance of having a relevant pre-service teacher education program, one which enhances the initial professional preparation of teachers for the diversity of their commitments. Teachers are the ‘lifeblood’ of an education system, and their ability to cope with the demands of work in the classroom, school and community domains depends in many respects on how well they have been prepared during their pre-service program. Beginning teachers need to be fully aware of the professional demands of their future work context. There will be instances when they face difficulties of one form or another, but if they are well prepared then they will have options to choose from in coping with various eventualities – with unexpected, changing and demanding situations in the work environment. Well-prepared teachers are likely to adjust more comfortably to accommodate their initial professional positions, and will be more likely to positively contribute to realizing the hopes, aspirations and visions of the total community. Well-prepared teachers are therefore the ‘engine’, and not just a vital component, in meeting the quality needs of the Fiji community.

The findings of this study, however, show that there are disjunctures between beginning teachers’ professional preparation and the demands of their work, as well as an absence of both broad academic support and essential policies and programs for pre-service teacher education in Fiji. These have impeded the provision of an adequate and enriching professional preparation for beginning teachers. The data from this study have shown that the pre-service program at LTC is moderately successful in terms of providing professional
preparation to teachers, preparing beginning teachers adequate only in certain areas their work. As well as the gaps identified, there is little exposure to emerging trends and developments. As noted earlier, the BEMTUP introduced a small-scale intervention, involving a ‘piecemeal’ revision of only some parts of the core courses, yet substantial work is yet to be done to complete the initiated revision. Further, current policies and practices in the pre-service teacher education program do not measure up to new developments, or emerging concepts and trends, in pre-service teacher education that were identified in Chapter Two. As a consequence, there are a number of gaps and inadequacies that can be observed in the professional preparation of teachers at LTC.

Inadequately prepared teachers will face difficulties in carrying out their work effectively. This leads to a need for more in-service courses to upgrade the capacity of teachers who are already in the field, in order to improve their work performance. Professional development of teachers involves more funding. Not long ago, the then Prime Minister of Fiji, the Honourable Sitiveni Rabuka made promises to teachers about in-service courses (Fiji Times, 9 October 1997). However, the Ministry of Education indicated that funds were not available to provide them. This gap between promise and delivery has been a subject of media comment:

Teachers are keen to remind Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka about his commitment to in-service training as he outlined…It is important to note that training is not a cost. It’s an investment (Fiji Times, 9 October 1997: 2).

With the curtailment of professional development for teachers ‘in the field’, the area of pre-service education becomes even more crucial to the development of a successful teaching force. Thus, the period of initial preparation will always be the foundation that sets the professional starting point and standard for beginning teachers. It is preferable for the actual world of work of primary teachers be taken into account when designing and delivering the pre-service program. This would ensure that beginning teachers had a smooth transition into the profession, manifested better performance in the field and were more cost effective.

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS: PROGRAMMATIC CHANGES

The following recommendations emerge from the results of analysing the data derived from an integrated use of research instruments, such as documentary analysis, questionnaire surveys and personal interviews. These recommendations are also based on the theoretical framework developed on the basis of Habermas’ (1971) notion of ‘system world’ and ‘life-world’. In this framework the pre-service teacher education provided by LTC is considered as the system world. In providing such professional training the teacher trainees
are prepared for the lifeworlds of a variety of primary schools and classrooms. Further, recommendations which follow could be also applied to similar contexts, where teacher preparation programmes continue to be undertaken by tertiary education institutions besides university departments or faculties.

⇒ Recommendation One

LTC should work closely and collaboratively with other tertiary teacher training institutions with similar activities and primary schools. This is because the world of work of a typical primary school teacher would share a number of characteristics and similar functions.

Literature demonstrates that establishing strong teacher education network would facilitate teacher preparation activities (for example, Campbell, 1992; Erly, 1991). It is vital for LTC to establish strong and effective links with primary schools, and other higher education institutions such as universities. Primary schools could provide necessary feedback on the performance of new teachers in the field. In case of any deficiencies noted in the performance of teachers, in particular of beginning teachers, appropriate action could then be taken to address the problems during the pre-service program. On the other hand, links with universities could provide relevant information on the latest developments in teacher education, and thus enable better preparation for teachers in all areas of their work. Such links or networks between institutions are essential to prevent LTC becoming professionally isolated from the realities of teachers’ world of work, as well as from new developments and emerging trends in education. Such links are vital in that they allow for the exchange of relevant information and even identify areas of co-operation. Such exchange and cooperation could improve all aspects of pre-service primary teacher education, and help beginning teachers meet the demands of school work in the Fiji context.

⇒ Recommendation Two

The Ministry of Education should recognize the need for, and provide, staff upgrading. Presently the 'system world' of pre-service teacher education is very much owned and operated by the Ministry of Education

The professional development of LTC staff needs to be operationalized through a program of upgrading. Two broad avenues of professional development have been identified. Attachments to other higher education institutions could provide relevant exposure to staff, and simultaneously broaden their perception of the work required of them. Staff members who have spent considerable periods away from primary schools should be given the opportunity to be attached to primary schools and work with classroom teachers. This would have the added advantage of teacher educators being in touch with the realities in the field, and then being able to make appropriate changes in the pre-service program to enable beginning teachers to be better equipped to meet the demands of work. Also, College
lecturers could undertake research, either individually or collaboratively, and the results of that research could further inform their practice in relation to teacher preparation. Further studies are also essential to help improve the professional competence of teacher educators in effectively handling the preparation of teachers. The ultimate beneficiaries of a well qualified teaching staff would be the trainees, who would then have a better capacity to perform in the teachers’ world of work. Through better trainees the whole nation, by means of a better overall education system in Fiji, would benefit.

⇒ Recommendation Three

*There is an urgent need for a comprehensive staff recruitment policy with a view to recruiting well qualified staff.*

With regard to the recruitment of academic staff to the College, it would be appropriate to select staff members who have previous primary teaching experience, as they have a better understanding of teachers’ world of work at that level. Those recruited without a primary background should be exposed to the primary school environment as soon as possible to gain first-hand experience, preferably through a period of attachment to a primary school. Primary teaching experience needs to be taken into account in framing guidelines for recruitment. In some respects, staff without prior primary experience have the advantage of learning first hand without being adversely affected by previous biases, prejudices and entrenched positions, but this can only be a positive if they are at some time provided an opportunity for attachment to a primary school. In addition, the staff selected should possess relevant teaching qualifications together with a postgraduate qualification, preferably a Masters degree with a focus on primary education. This is essential because the quality of student intake at LTC in terms of scholastic achievement is significantly higher than in the 1980s. Also, in a post secondary institution such as LTC, suitably qualified staffs are essential to fulfil the job of professionally preparing future primary teachers for the demands of work and responsibilities they will face in the field.

⇒ Recommendation Four

*An urgent review of the pre-service teacher education program is warranted, with the intention of meeting the demands of professional work and responsibilities.*

Studies suggest that teacher education programmes need to help beginning teachers cope with and equip them to play meaningful role in the rapidly changing world (for example, Turney et.al, 1986; UNESCO, 1996). The teacher education curriculum needs to be revised periodically to ensure that it is relevant and appropriate for the present time, as well as for the future. Factors such as the rapid expansion of knowledge, curricular changes in the schools and technological innovations have an impact on the work expected of the teachers. As a result, appropriate changes need to be periodically introduced into the pre-service
teacher education program to ensure that it is well aligned with the emerging demands of the work situation. Exposing trainee teachers to an outdated curriculum has an adverse affect on their carrying out their roles after certification. The teacher education curriculum is one of the most important aspects of teacher preparation. This is because the nature and content of the teacher education curriculum largely determines the sort of professional preparation trainee teachers undergo. In the different states in Australia, for instance, there exist Teacher Registration Boards, which amongst other things monitor the standard and required regular updating of the pre-service teacher education program. In the Fiji situation, a Teacher Registration Board could be set up to be responsible for advising LTC, and other teacher education colleges, on all areas concerned with pre-service teacher education, and providing guidelines for reviewing courses and assessment procedures. The then Minister for Education, the Honourable Pratap Chand (2000b), seems to have also lent support to this view when he noted:

I support that…providers for teacher education is increasing… And I think that is where the Teacher Registration Board becomes immensely important, which qualifications should be recognized to maintain a national standard and I think that is where the Teacher Registration Board would come rather than the Ministry merely registering the institution.

A body similar to a Teacher Registration Board has been proposed by the recent Fiji Islands Education Commission (2000). The Board’s function would be to guide developments in both pre-service and in-service teacher education. Apart from a Teacher Education Board, the Education Commission also recommended the creation of an Education Service Commission to look into personnel matters such as appointments, promotions, disciplinary matters and study leave.

A Teacher Registration Board or an Education Service Commission could consist of representatives from the teachers colleges, two teacher unions, practicing teachers and the Head Teachers and Principals Associations. A Teacher Registration Board would allow College teaching staff to operate with greater professionalism and professional autonomy and at the same time could continuously enhance all operations and functions related to the preparation of teachers to meet the demands of work in the field.

⇒ Recommendation Five

The duration of the current pre-service program should be extended to enhance the preparation of teachers.

Literature confirms that a two-year pre-service programme is no longer sufficient to meet the professional development needs of future teachers (for example, UNESCO, 1996; Carter, 1990; Logan et.al, 1990). It would be desirable for the duration of the teacher education program to be extended. Considering that primary teachers are expected to teach
all subjects stipulated in the National Primary Curriculum, as well as be competent in teaching at all class levels in the primary school, the goals of the current two year pre-service teacher preparation program appear to be too ambitious. Too much is expected of the trainee teachers within the two year duration of the pre-service program. There is an urgent need to rationalize the course loads to prevent student teachers being overworked. In addition, it is at present not possible, because of time constraints, for teacher educators to go deeply enough into key pedagogical issues at a level required by competent teachers. For an adequate coverage of the teacher education curriculum, and to provide professionally well-prepared teachers, an increase in the education and training period to at least three years is desirable.

⇒ Recommendation Six

_The Ministry of Education should adequately resource LTC, with particular attention to improving physical facilities, educational resource materials and financial input._

The College should be provided with adequate resources, such as physical facilities and educational resource materials. The library needs to be equipped with the latest appropriate publications – books and journals as well as access to appropriate on-line materials. Not only would these be of benefit to the trainee teachers, but also to the teacher educators who need to constantly update their knowledge on teacher education so as to provide the best preparation to the prospective teachers. The library needs to have extended hours for students, as they need opportunities to work there during weekends, late evenings and public holidays.

With regard to equipment, it is imperative that trainee teachers be exposed to educational technology such as overhead projectors, computers and other relevant audio visual aids. Training in the utilization of such equipment is vital, as it enables teachers to use it more effectively in their work context. This can only be fully achieved if the equipment is made available, and teacher educators trained to use it, in their respective courses. If the proposed contribution by EU is implemented, then provision of a better teaching/learning environment for the professional preparation of teachers should be a priority area for attention. This could contribute markedly to improving the quality of the professional preparation of beginning teachers. For instance, it would offer greater opportunities for independent learning to the trainees than are available with the current practice at LTC.

⇒ Recommendation Seven

_The Ministry of Education should review its present policy on management and provide as much professional autonomy as possible to ensure LTC effectively fulfils its roles and functions._
There is an urgent need to reform some aspects of the administration of LTC. In the present arrangement, the Primary Section of the Ministry of Education is responsible for the administration of LTC. On the other hand, a recently established secondary teacher education institution, FCAE, is directly under the control of the Permanent Secretary for Education. The Ministry of Education is responsible for almost all aspects of primary teacher education. As summed up by Baba (1997:4) in his address to the FTA Annual Conference:

In the Fiji setting, the selection of students in the Government Training institution is done by the Ministry of Education, the curriculum for teacher education is similarly influenced by the Ministry of Education and even the policy of passing and failing students.

This shows that LTC as a tertiary institution has very little input into professional matters, as well as little operational discretion to offer the kinds of services that trainees need. Instead, the College is responsible merely for implementing the policies of the Ministry of Education, which continues to exert a strong directive influence in almost all aspects of the pre-service program.

As a tertiary institution, LTC needs to be given greater autonomy in dealing with professional matters pertaining to pre-service teacher education. Currently, because of central control, teacher educators are marginalized in making decisions in areas concerning their work, such as selecting student teachers, the structure of the College programs and even the certification of student teachers. In order for the teacher educators to discharge their responsibilities more fully and successfully, a move towards greater autonomy for LTC as a mature tertiary institution would be desirable.

⇒ Recommendation Eight

There is an urgent need for a comprehensive student recruitment policy to attract better quality students.

Evidence from the literature suggests a need for a comprehensive student intake policy (for example, Delors, 1996; Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1988). Further improvement is needed in the quality of students selected for teacher training. The selection of entrants should not be based solely on academic results and an interview rating. Character references, aptitude tests, practical skills tests or even records of practical experience in primary teaching could also be incorporated. Character references might at least help ascertain the suitability of candidates for the teaching profession. This could help maintain the very high standard of ethical behaviour within the teaching profession that is expected. The need to discipline and even dismiss teachers for unacceptable behaviour could be considerably reduced by the introduction of more comprehensive selection measures. Also, any previous teaching experience could enable potential trainees to re-examine and clarify their own values and decide if they wish to commit to a teaching career. The recruitment and admission criteria

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should be such that the most capable and enterprising students are selected for a primary teaching career.

⇒ Recommendation Nine

_There should be provision of professional development to the staff of schools who are involved in practice teaching to improve the quality of field experiences._

Professional development of practising teachers is an important issue. Workshops and seminars need to be conducted regularly for the benefit of all groups responsible for the professional preparation of teachers. Some of the key groups include Head Teachers, Education Officers and, most importantly, Associate Teachers and College staff. The workshops and seminars could focus on some of the following areas:

- Monitoring and assessing trainees’ performance
- Planning for teaching
- Improved methods of teaching
- Working with and in the community
- Work ethics and values
- Use of technology in education
- Working with professional colleagues

Emphasis needs to be placed, in particular, on improving the professional practice of Associate Teachers, as undoubtedly better Associate Teachers would be able to provide better guidance to trainees to enable them to be well equipped for the different aspects of teachers’ world of work. Through such programs each group would come to better understand and accept its respective roles and responsibilities and make positive contributions to the better preparation of future teachers. The Head Teachers and Associate Teachers would then become better role models for the trainees to observe and work with. By organizing workshops and seminars, the College would ensure that all these groups have a common goal, that is, to improve their educational contribution to raise the quality of teacher preparation.

⇒ Recommendation Ten

_Strategic plans should be prepared to upgrade pre-service teacher education to Diploma level._

Evidence from the literature suggest a need to raise the professional qualifications of teachers (for example, Delors, 1996; UNESCO, 1996; Holmes Group, 1986). Generally, the current entry qualification to LTC is quite satisfactory. Since entrants now have higher qualifications, it would be fitting to raise the academic standard of the College curriculum and award the graduates a Diploma. A challenging teacher education curriculum would involve the trainees in more serious intellectual work, which in turn would help them realize...
the multitude of tasks teachers are required to carry out — not only in school, but also in the broader context of nation building.

⇒ Recommendation Eleven

*Support programs should be organized to address identified weaknesses in the trainees.*

Because of the quota system for applying to the intake at LTC, both trainees with high scores and low scores will continue to enter the pre-service program. The trainees with low scores will need more support. At the moment there is no additional program run by the College to cater for these trainees, such as provision for remedial sessions or bridging courses. If such measures are not employed, then some inadequately prepared teachers could leave the College, which would have a deleterious effect on their work in the field. Hence, some kind of bridging program needs to be put in place for those entering the College with low marks.

⇒ Recommendation Twelve

*Teaching of cross-culture courses needs to be strengthened to enable future teachers to operate effectively in the multi-cultural context.*

The need to prepare teachers to cope with cultural diversity is well-documented in the professional literature (for example Hickling–Hudson, 2003; Teasdale & Teasdale, 1994). Teaching in a multicultural society presents a number of challenges to teachers. It is reasonable to expect that these challenges be canvassed in the teacher education program. Appropriate strategies should be developed to ensure that beginning teachers work successfully in multi-racial and multi-cultural schools. The Cross-Culture courses offered by LTC therefore need to be strengthened.

⇒ Recommendation Thirteen

*LTC should adopt the proposed mode of teacher preparation to better meet the challenges of work in the field.*

The findings of this study show that the current pre-service activities at the College are not producing an adequate and enriching professional preparation for teachers to enable them to meet the demands of work in the field. Therefore, an alternative mode of teacher preparation is proposed.

LTC could, for example, build on the experience of the SICHE teacher education program. Instead of the two year and conventional academically oriented College-based teacher education program, a judicious balance between face-to-face and distance teaching in a three year teacher education program could be adopted. At the end of the training program the trainees should be awarded a Diploma in Primary Teaching. Not only would this upgrade
the status of the College, but it would also help the College maintain a status comparable to other colleges within and outside Fiji, and also improve its recognition by institutions inside and outside Fiji. The College could operate on a school term basis. This would not only allow ample time for face-to-face and distance teaching, but also allow the trainees to get used to working in the ‘term’ system, as they will be required to do after certification. In a three-year sequence, the face-to-face contact and distance teaching could be run as follows:

**PHASE ONE** — College-based for two school terms. The trainees could be taught foundation courses and receive basic training in classroom management skills. Also, the trainees could be taught curriculum courses across the National Primary Curriculum. Education courses could also be provided. Formative assessment in these courses could be conducted throughout each term. Observation and some teaching in a primary classroom for a day or part-day each week for two terms would be appropriate.

**PHASE TWO** — School-based for a term. Trainees to be assigned partial teaching responsibilities and some other tasks to be carried out whilst in the field. College tutors, Head Teachers and Associate Teachers to provide collegial guidance and monitor trainees’ performance.

**PHASE THREE** — College-based for two terms. Residential courses in different subjects and professional areas.

**PHASE FOUR** — School-based for a term. Trainees to be given full-teaching responsibilities for a certain number of days per week. Trainees to be assessed in teaching practices collaboratively by the College tutors, Head Teachers and Associate Teachers.

**PHASE FIVE** — Continuation of school-based teaching practice for another two terms. Trainees to be given full-teaching responsibilities for the whole week. They could be assigned some correspondence modules and written projects. District Education Officers, Executive Teachers, Associate Teachers and Head Teachers offer school level tutorials and lesson supervision. There could also be weekly radio broadcasts from the College to supplement and elaborate on correspondence materials. At the end, trainees’ teaching practices are assessed.

**PHASE SIX** College-based for a term. Consolidation phase, involving remedial and reflection sessions to address any deficiencies identified by the teaching staff. These ideas are summarized and presented in Table 23.

As the literature strongly suggests (for example, Hagger, et al., 1995; McIntyre, Hagger, & Burn, 1994; Williams, 1994), student teachers learn more effectively about the work and responsibilities of teachers in school-based experience than in College-based experience. In view of this, the proposed mode of teacher preparation would provide a reasonable time for student teachers to experience the range of teachers’ work in the field. They would experience not only classroom related duties, but also duties related to the school
and community domains. This would then help the trainees to better understand the varieties of work expected of primary school teachers, in particular broader the demands and related responsibilities placed upon them.

The school based programs would also provide opportunities for trainees to work with other professionals in the field — District Education Office staff, Head Teachers, Executive Teachers and Associate Teachers, as well as parents, non-government organisations and others with whom they would be required to work after leaving the College. In this approach the schools would play a significant part in the professional preparation of student teachers. This would indicate a true partnership between the practicing schools and LTC in the professional preparation of teachers. Indeed, evidence from the literature (for example, Tomlinson, 1995; Field, 1994; Campbell, 1992; D. Hargreaves, 1992) shows that this is a favoured approach to teacher preparation.

Table 23: Proposed Mode of Teacher Preparation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Term</th>
<th>Year One</th>
<th>Year Two</th>
<th>Year Three</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term One</td>
<td>Phase One College-Based</td>
<td>Phase Three College-Based</td>
<td>Phase Five School-Based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Academic courses</td>
<td>• Academic courses</td>
<td>• Full teaching responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Correspondence modules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Two</td>
<td>College-Based</td>
<td>College-Based</td>
<td>School-Based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Academic courses</td>
<td>• Academic courses</td>
<td>• Full teaching responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Correspondence modules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Three</td>
<td>Phase Two School-Based</td>
<td>Phase Four School-Based</td>
<td>Phase Six College-Based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Partial teaching responsibilities per day.</td>
<td>• Full teaching responsibilities for some days per week.</td>
<td>• Remedial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Graduation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As noted earlier, in the local context there are many geographically isolated schools, and trainees in these locations may need additional support in the distance education modules. Since the Fiji Ministry of Education has a Schools Broadcast Unit, this could be effectively used to broadcast relevant programs to support trainees studying distance education modules. The BEMTUP project employed this medium to support practicing teachers in the distance education component of the project. Not only did BEMTUP use the Schools Broadcast Unit that aired programs on Tuesdays at 10:30am every week, but also Radio Fiji One, Island Network Corporation, to air regular weekly radio programs, called the
Likewise, LTC could gainfully use these media to support trainees in their work. A time could be set, and important messages, information relating to the distance education modules, clarifications and other matters of interest could be aired weekly for the benefit of trainees. It may be appropriate to shift the Schools Broadcast Unit to LTC in order for it to make optimum use of this service.

With respect to the taught courses, it would be desirable for them to be delivered on a modular basis. Modularization increases flexibility of delivery and provides scope for innovatory approaches and experimental work. All the courses that are offered at present need to be revised and, along with the proposed courses in Basic Research Methods, School Administration and Information Technology, should be modularized and delivered by both distance and on-campus mode. The inclusion of these courses would increase the breadth of the professional preparation of teachers.

The proposed approach to teacher preparation could reduce the gap between theory and practice — a perennial problem according to contemporary models of teacher preparation, and one that the findings show obtains at LTC. There would be more opportunities for hands-on experience, which presently are minimal in the pre-service program. Teacher educators would also be in constant touch with the ‘ground realities’ of schools, and would not remain divorced from the real world of work of primary teachers in Fiji. Teacher educators would also be encouraged to adopt new approaches and methods. They would then have more time to spend in the field, and would see for themselves that these ideas are workable there. It is therefore envisaged that the proposed mode of teacher preparation would bring about improvement in teacher preparation and, therefore improve the capabilities of teachers in the different areas of their professional duties.

8.3 SUMMARY

The central focus of this study is on the adequacy of teacher preparation at LTC in helping its graduates meet the demands of work. Overall, the study reveals inadequacies in the preparation of teachers to meet their professional obligations in the school setting.

This chapter has shed some light on the implications of the findings of the study. The chapter has also suggested useful ways and means to redress the inadequacies found in the professional preparation of teachers at LTC. The final chapter, Chapter Nine, summarises the study and proposes areas for future research that might indicate how the pre-service program at LTC could better reflect the demands of work in the field.
CHAPTER NINE

SUMMARY AND FINAL COMMENTS

9.0 INTRODUCTION

This research investigated pre-service primary teacher education at LTC, particularly the adequacy of the professional preparation of beginning teachers to meet the demands of the work expected of them. This final chapter summarises the main findings of this study and suggests areas for further research.

9.1 SUMMARY

Notwithstanding the limitations outlined in Chapter One, this study uncovered a number of weaknesses, as well as a few strengths, in the professional preparation of beginning teachers. Although we should not expect beginning teachers to graduate as finished products, certain weaknesses in their preparation could have been avoided to make them better informed and equipped for the work required of them in the field. These weaknesses are largely the result of deficiencies in the policies and programs of pre-service teacher education. In some cases the key stakeholder, the Ministry of Education, has ignored certain policies which it formulated itself, such as improvements to the selection criteria. This, together with an outdated pre-service program and the lack of appropriate resources and facilities, has inhibited the provision of an adequate and enriching professional preparation for teachers. Since there are aspects of the policies and the pre-service primary teacher education program that need urgent attention, it would be timely for appropriate measures to be taken to address the situation. This is vital in order to ensure that trainees are offered a high quality professional preparation to help them meet their professional responsibilities in the field. Failure to rectify the situation would mean that more and more teachers would be leaving LTC having been inadequately prepared for the demands of work.

Certain developments in the field of teacher education and education in general would warrant relevant changes in the policies and programs of pre-service teacher education. For instance, improvements in pedagogy and information technology must have an impact on pre-service education. This need has been highlighted as far back as the 1970s by Coombs, when he succinctly stated:
No more than a grown man can suitably wear the clothes that fitted him as a child, can an educational system successfully resist the need to change itself when everything around it is changing (Coombs, 1970: 5).

In this respect, LTC should look at the policies and programs related to pre-service primary teacher education of not only developed countries, but also of some neighbouring Pacific Island states. Pre-service teacher education in countries such as the UK and Australia has undergone transformation in response to several factors, for example, the need for the ongoing improvement of teacher performance at work and the need to learn new skills to meet new demands in response to curriculum change at the primary school level. By adopting certain relevant policies and programs from overseas countries, LTC would be able to attain a better standard of teacher preparation. When doing so, the College needs to ensure that the policies and programs tailored to meet the Fiji educational context are geared towards providing quality training and at the same time ensure that the training is comparable to that offered by other reputable teacher training institutions.

LTC also needs to take account of international trends, standards and developments in pre-service teacher education to ensure that it does not lag behind similar institutions elsewhere. It should offer a high standard of preparation so that a high standard of performance in all areas could be expected of its graduates. The professional preparation of teachers, in particular beginning primary teachers, should be recognised and receive top priority from the main providers of teacher education. A well-prepared teacher cadre will contribute positively to the development of education in general, and more specifically will carry out effectively the demands of teachers’ world of work, as rightly and eloquently stated in the report by Delors (1996:141):

…much will be expected, and much demanded, of teachers, for it largely depends on them whether [any] vision can come true.

In terms of national development, LTC is very important to human resource development. Producing well qualified teachers, who will in turn contribute positively in all areas of their duties, must ultimately contribute to nation building. In view of this, LTC deserves genuine attention in order to improve its current pre-service practices, so that it is better aligned with teachers’ work and can therefore improve the professional preparation of teachers.

The pervasiveness of colonial forms of education, including an historical version of western-styled education, still lingers in Fiji despite the passing of more than three decades of independence. This is the case in teacher education at LTC too. Some of the inherited features, approaches, and administrative systems of colonial education have been retained. One of the notable aspects relates to the administration of education. The over-control of the
pre-service activities was seen as pernicious in terms of hindering the College in meeting its professional role. It marginalised the professional perspectives of the College staff and in turn adversely impacted the preparation of teachers for the nation's primary schools. The call for greater independence, it is perceived, if put into action, would improve the performance of all Fijian institutions, including teacher education institutions such as LTC.

It is therefore vital for the main provider, the Ministry of Education, which directs and oversees teacher education, to take cognizance of this and support the College in its efforts to provide an adequate and enriching professional preparation for prospective teachers. However, it is of concern to note from the findings of this study that the Ministry of Education has thus far not done this.

9.2 FUTURE RESEARCH

Ongoing investigations into the policies and programs of pre-service primary teacher education, as well as other areas related to teacher education, can continuously inform and extend our knowledge in this important area. This continued commitment is essential because of the impact that the dynamics of the school, community and changing national needs have on the schooling process. It is for this reason that a perfect congruence between initial professional preparation and teachers’ work is difficult to achieve. Also, the teachers’ world of work is context specific, and it may not be possible to fully cater for this in the pre-service program. Hence, beginning teachers need further professional development during their teaching careers, and the Ministry of Education should continue to support teachers through in-service and other professional development programs. Nevertheless, with quality initial professional preparation, future teachers should be able to better adapt to and cope with the initial demands of work and related responsibilities in the field. At the same time it would help to prevent beginning teachers experiencing ‘shock’ when faced with various dimensions of their work context.

Future research would be useful if it probed into other specific areas of pre-service teacher education allied to this study. This could include, for example, investigating ways to make practice teaching more effective and the preparation of teachers in different subject areas. Similarly, future research could evaluate the preparation for teachers to meet the different demands of work and responsibilities in urban and rural educational contexts. In addition, a comparative study could be conducted to ascertain the adequacy of the preparation of teachers graduating from the different primary teacher education colleges within Fiji. The findings obtained from these studies could be utilized to further improve the quality of the preparation of teachers. It would be expected that the findings of such investigations would
also help the Teachers College update its policies and programs, by infusing better ideas on how to adequately prepare teachers for the demands of work.

9.3 CONTRIBUTION TO THEORY

The study benefited from Habermas’ (1971) theoretical model of ‘the system world’ and ‘the life-world’. It has also established that this model fits well with the teachers ‘world of work’ as well as the system world of pre-service teacher education. Hence the present study reflects the usefulness and the appropriateness of Habermas’ theoretical position.

Similarly, the ‘practical knowledge’ gained at LTC, which is also of ‘professional nature’ when applied in the several classrooms and school situations will need to transform into ‘intuitive knowledge’ as conceptualised by Smyth (1989b).

The Habermas theory on which this study is based invites investigation of other nations that experienced a British colonial heritage. Changes to the imposed educational systems brought about by nationhood may well include residual elements of their colonial past. These elements may indicate perceptions of education held in different communities from which Fiji could learn.

9.4 FINAL COMMENTS

The study examined the adequacy of the professional preparation of the beginning teachers in terms of their meeting the demands of work in the field. Overall, the study suggests that, although entry qualifications have improved, this alone can not bring about any significant improvement in pre-service teacher preparation. Other factors, as shown in the conceptual framework (see Figure1), must be recognised as equally important, and addressed, if pre-service teacher education is to improve. It now appears that there is substantial concern about the need to improve primary education and the preparation of primary teachers in Fiji (Fiji Islands Education Commission, 2000). These sentiments have recently been endorsed by Fiji’s current Prime Minister, the Honourable Laisenia Qarase. In an address to the 68th Annual Conference of the FTA, he stated:

To assist you in your professional development and in pursuit of a general improvement in teaching quality, we propose to enhance the teacher training certificate program at the Lautoka Teachers College. This qualification for primary teachers is to be elevated to diploma level (Qarase, 2002:17).

The present study may make a contribution to the current debate and initiatives relating to teacher preparation.

The pre-service program therefore needs an overhaul in view of the emerging and unmet demands of the work context. An improvement in and strengthening of the
professional preparation of teachers is a key factor in development for all dimensions of the economy, and in turn the nation. The present study will hopefully generate some constructive discussion among various stakeholders, such as teacher educators, teacher trainees, staff in primary schools and the education authorities. Implementation of the above recommendations would be a way forward in improving and strengthening pre-service primary teacher education at LTC, and would in turn lead to a more versatile teaching force at the primary level.
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The Fiji Islands

This map shows Fiji’s location in relation to other countries in the South Pacific and the geographical dispersion of the islands in Fiji.
APPENDIX B

Beginning Teacher Questionnaire

This section of the questionnaire focuses on the appropriateness of the pre-service program in meeting the needs of teachers’ work.

Section A: Pre-Service Program

(Please place a √ in the appropriate column of the numeral that applies to you)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The Pre-Service Program

1. Has helped me in handling multi-class teaching
2. Has helped me to organize and conduct extra curricular activities in the school
3. Advocate methods which are useful in my teaching of
   **English**
   - Mathematics
   - Social Science
   - Physical Education
   - Music
   - Art/Craft
   - Vernacular
   - Basic/Elementary Science
4. Has helped me to develop skills in planning for teaching
5. Has prepared me adequately for teaching
6. Has enabled me to cope with the realities of most classroom situations
7. Has provided me adequate theoretical knowledge on the teaching/learning process
8. Has prepared me adequately in maintaining class discipline
9. Has helped me to carry out the work in the school’s community
10. Has helped me to work outside the classroom with parents and colleagues in the school and its community
11. Has helped me to give support to children with learning difficulties
12. Has made me enthusiastic about teaching
13. Has helped to develop my personal confidence
14. Has helped me in managing difficult children
15. Has made me familiar with assessment techniques
16. Has prepared me to perform administrative duties
17. Has developed my ability to work collaboratively with parents and colleagues
18. Has developed my ability to plan my work
19. Has developed my ability to learn independently
Has developed my ability to work with children and parents of other ethnic groups

Any additional comments on the Program:

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**Section B: Practice Teaching**

*This section of the questionnaire focuses on the usefulness of practice teaching component of the beginning teachers’ professional preparation.*

How important have the following influences been on your performance during practice teaching?

(Please place a √ in the appropriate column of the numeral that applies to you).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Practice Teaching Handbook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Briefing sessions conducted at the College.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Familiarization visit to the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistance gained from the Associate Teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistance and support from other teachers in the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistance gained from reading texts about teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Help and guidance given by tutors during College classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunities for lesson observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The subject task allocated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback from College tutors after assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Availability of resources for teaching/learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sharing of ideas with other trainees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Time for reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Time allocated for preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The school environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Children’s response to my work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Duration of practice teaching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment on three of the most positive (+ve) and three of the most (-ve) influences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Influences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Influences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

Section C: Resources

This section of the questionnaire focuses on the resources needed for quality teacher preparation.

What resources do you believe Lautoka Teachers College needs in order to provide an adequate and enriching professional preparation of teachers? Tick from the following list ten (10) resources, which you consider to be the most important. Also briefly state their importance in teacher preparation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>✓</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Comments on its importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Library fully resourced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AVA fully resourced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Micro-teaching Lab</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Science Lab</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hostel Accommodation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curriculum Resource Centre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computer Lab</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students common room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gymnasium fully resourced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well qualified lecturers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students Council Office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Department store rooms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workshop (students assignment preparation room)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Art &amp; Craft Workshop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lecture Theatre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language Laboratory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First Aid Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bookshop and stationery supplies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well furnished classrooms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well equipped and presented administration block</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music room fully resourced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Swimming pool</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good Athletics and field facilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

ETHICAL ISSUES

This covering note not only consists of relevant information about the study but also vital information associated with ethical consideration:

I am G.I. Lingam, a Ph.D. student at Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia. I am conducting a research on “Teacher Preparation for the World of Work: A Study of Pre-service Primary Education in Fiji”.

As part of this investigations into the Pre-service Primary Teacher Education at Lautoka Teachers College, I am seeking information from graduates about their perceptions of the pre-service program which they undertook whilst at the College. Your response will assist me not only in obtaining the necessary data for the study but also contribute towards strengthening of the pre-service teacher education program. It would be helpful if you respond as honestly as possible to this questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into three sections. Section A relates to the overall pre-service program. Section B specifically relates to the practice teaching component of the program and Section C deals with resources.

The results for the study will be reported in aggregate terms and not on the basis of individual feedback. As such your identity will remain confidential.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire.
APPENDIX F
Head Teacher Questionnaire

This set of questions focuses on the work-capability of the beginning teachers in the field.

Thanking you for agreeing to contribute to this research endeavor. Kindly respond to the following questions in relation to the teachers in your school who recently graduated from LTC.

In your opinion do they possess relevant subject knowledge in the subjects of the primary curriculum?

Are the beginning teachers familiar with the primary curriculum as a whole, that is, all areas of primary curriculum?

Do they adopt suitable pedagogy (teaching methods) in teaching primary children?

Are they able to cater for the individual differences of children?

Are they able to manage the class assigned to them.

Are they able to handle children from different cultural background?

Are they able to work collegially with other teachers in the school?

Are they able to work as partners with parents and community members?

Are they familiar with the running of an educational organization?

10. Any other comments you would like to make related to the preparation of teachers at LTC.
APPENDIX G

Interview Schedule used for the College Staff

This set of questions focuses on College lecturer’s work related to the professional preparation of teachers.

What does your work involve?

What approaches do you use in the delivery of the courses you teach?

What are your comments on the breadth and depth of the pre-service program?

Are you able to comfortably prepare teachers for all aspects of work in the two-year duration of the program?

Have you faced any constraints in regard to the preparation of teachers? If yes – what are these constraints?

Do you have any suggestions as to how these could be addressed to improve the preparation of teachers?

What are your comments on practice teaching?

Have you had any chance for professional development?

What aspects do you find least helpful in the program?

Are there any other things, which need to be introduced for better preparation of teachers?

Is there anything else you would like to mention?
APPENDIX H

European Union Project at LTC
Existing and Proposed Physical Facilities

This map shows the layout of the existing physical facilities at the LTC premises. Also the map shows additional physical facilities to be constructed through European Union funding. It is envisaged that the college will have enough facilities such as specialist facilities as well as the state-of-the-art technology for the wider range of educational offerings. Such provisions would better the teaching/learning environment and in turn may benefit LTC in its effort to adequately prepare teachers.

Not for publication

Source: Kumar Architects Ltd., 1998.