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# What do you mean by 'learner-centred'?

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MLNTOD001

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the award of the degree of  
Master of Education specialising in Educational Administration, Planning, and Social Policy.

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September 2004

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## Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work(s) of other people has been attributed, and has been duly cited and referenced.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

University of Cape Town



## Abstract

### What do you mean by 'learner-centred'?

'Many policy documents attempt to put forward powerful, persuasive arguments which present their underlying concepts, processes, and terms as uncontested and self-evident. This obscures the untidy nature of the conceptual work that preceded the final version of any public document.'

--from *Ways of Seeing the National Qualifications Framework*  
(Department of Education: South Africa 1995c: 34)

The rhetoric of progressive education deploys terms such as 'learner-centred', 'participatory', and 'experiential'. These terms are variously defined and articulated depending upon the theoretical perspective employed. However, the assumptions and understandings upon which progressive education is constructed are seldom held up to critical analysis.

This dissertation describes a research project which was designed to explore the ways in which 'learner-centredness' has been constructed in South African education policy documents, and by university PGCE students. It uses Bernstein's notion of pedagogic discourse, and the distinction he makes between instructional discourse (selection, pacing, sequencing, and evaluative criteria of educational content and instruction) and regulative discourse (teacher/learner interactions and learner/learner interactions) to establish an analytic device for both collecting and analysing data.

To answer the question, 'What does learner-centred education mean?', a decision was made to:

1. Analyse policy documents in terms of how the notion of learner-centredness is constructed; and
2. Devise an instrument to determine the views of learner-centredness held by 33 PGCE students at a university in the Western Cape province.

The outcomes of the research indicate that South African education policy documents and PGCE students construct learner-centredness in such a way as to:

1. Prioritise learners' control of the specific instructional discourse of selection, pacing, and sequencing of educational content in pedagogic practice;
2. Silence evaluative criteria;
3. Prioritise learner' control of the regulative discourse in teacher/learner interactions.

## Acknowledgements

While this work is my own, many people contributed generously of their time and thoughts towards the development and completion of this research.

Many thanks to...

- The PGCE students who allowed me a moment before their exams to assist with this research;
- The UCT School of Education for always, always, always having open doors and a moment to listen and to talk;
- Dr. Heather Jacklin for helping me find my way to the right question;
- Professor Joe Muller for helping me unpack my own understanding of education and for providing the tools to help me rebuild it;
- Professor Crain Soudien for opening essential avenues throughout the research and for always offering a moment to process;
- Ingrid Thom and Chris Kleinsmith for their help with forms and copy machines and staplers and all manner of office detritus;
- Associate Professor Kevin Rochford for keeping his door open for consultations;
- Zain Davis and Ursula Hoadley for hours of feedback and guidance;
- And Professor Paula Ensor for making sure that this work was creative, concise, and completed. The countless hours of discussion, debate, review, and revision which she afforded me ensured that I always knew what was expected of a high quality research paper. I hope this paper reflects her patience and guidance.

And to y and j for everything.

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
C	Classification
CFC	Consultative Forum on Curriculum
C2005	Curriculum 2005
DoE	Department of Education
EC	Evaluative Criteria
F	Framing
GEAR	Growth, Employment, and Reconstruction Programme
L/L	Learner and Learner Interactions
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NEPAD	New Economic Partnership for African Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
PEI	President's Education Initiative
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
T/L	Teacher and Learner Interactions

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Progressive education is often defined in the language of ideals and grand themes. It is described as democratic, participatory, and liberating. It is said to embody freedom, empowerment, and equality. However, the question then arises, what do these terms mean within education policy and ultimately within classrooms? Is liberation, for example, a process or an end of education? What steps must be taken to ensure it is achieved within education systems? These seemingly simple questions have major implications for how progressive education is constructed and implemented within education policy documents and classrooms.

Much of the language used to describe progressive education is articulated through political ideas and ideals. While these terms can sometimes be defined consistently within and across countries' borders, implementation of these goals varies throughout the world. For example, democratic participation does not suppose one model of democracy. Liberation and freedom both shift and change from country to country. If we compare two democratic models, we will not necessarily find identical processes or ends. Moreover, these differences are beyond contextual variations; the differences are based on widely diverging views of what democracy means and how it should be achieved towards the ultimate goal of a healthy, happy nation.

For instance, both South Africa and the United States ascribe to democracy. South Africa's democracy is based on social equity and economic justice while, as Guthrie & Bodenhausen (1984: 236-238) point out, the United States attempts to balance liberty, equality, and efficiency; with personal liberty as the most powerful of the three. The resulting form of democracy thus varies between the two countries. Both countries can be used as examples of democratic nations but this does not mean that both countries ascribe to one common view as to what democracy means in practice. The same can be said of progressive education, as illustrated below.

Interpretations of common concepts are not limited across countries. In South Africa, if we turn back to one early education intervention which fell under the progressive banner, we will find a variety of interpretations. People's Education was introduced in South Africa in the early 1980's and was concerned with empowering teachers and students to 'take back'

education after the school boycotts of the 1970's and 1980's. People's Education attempted to provide teachers with positive roles to play within *apartheid*-era education instead of teachers either 'dropping out' or being seen as 'tools of the system'. This was seen as crucial since education had long been established as a key field in the struggle towards a new political, social, and economic dispensation. With the advent of People's Education, activists attempted to provide space for teachers and learners to engage with the liberation movement. However, the ways in which this space was developed and defined varied widely due to the oppressive response by the *apartheid* state when People's Education was beginning to take shape. While various authors articulated People's Education in various ways at the end of the 1980's and the early 1990's (Mashamba 1990, McKay & Romm 1992, EPU 1989, Taylor 1990, Alexander 1988), very little can be discerned as to what exactly People's Education meant in policy and in practice. As Alexander argues, 'Only if we augment our direct experience of radical pedagogy can we get beyond the rhetorical, often mere party-political propaganda that now is sometimes marketed as 'people's education' (Alexander 1988: 17).

Vio Grossi (1984) (as quoted in McKay & Romm 1992: 3) argues that these varying interpretations of People's Education were by no means a weakness given the time and place of the initial discussions. At this time, South African academics and practitioners were engaged primarily in critique, not policy development. McKay & Romm (Ibid) suggest that so long as one hoped to 'empower' learners, one was embracing the spirit of People's Education. This suggests that the People's Education banner was intentionally kept open for debate in order to encourage teachers to adopt this new idea more readily. As Levin highlights, 'It is therefore important to note that for the NECC (National Education Crisis Conference) in 1986, the crucial task was not so much the establishment of alternative curricula but the establishment of 'people's power in schools (NECC 1986: 2)' (Levin 1989: 8; emphasis in original).

The NECC did in fact have plans to develop alternative curricula as part of the People's Education movement. This, for the most part, failed to happen. As Unterhalter & Wolpe (1989) point out, the NECC set out to first democratise schools through the establishment of SRCs (Student Representative Councils) and SGBs (School Governing Bodies) and then introduce new curricula. Before this could happen, the state clamped down on the NECC, imprisoning its leaders and virtually banning the organisation altogether (Unterhalter & Wolpe 1989:15). People's Education was never pinned down to a related set of curricula,

pedagogy, and assessment. The Education Policy Unit (1989) offers that People's Education: (1) enables all members of society to understand *apartheid* and participate in a democratic society; (2) 'eliminates capitalist norms of competition, individualism, and stunted intellectual development'; and (3) encourages students, parents, teachers, and workers to actively participate in education and liberation (EPU 1989:5). People's Education aimed to move beyond the existing educational system under *apartheid* but was open to interpretation due to a lack of clearly defined guidelines for what People's Education meant in the classroom.

This is important to note. The lack of a clear pedagogic discourse for People's Education can be argued as both a strength and a weakness for the movement. During the initial stages, where wide participation was imperative, these loosely defined rules allowed students, teachers, and communities to engage in the movement at various levels. However, these loosely defined rules also failed to ensure that improved educational practice occurred since it was unclear exactly what students, teachers, and communities should actually be doing. In some situations, this elusive language may be an asset. However, in other situations, this is a liability, threatening to undo the overall goals of an intervention.

The example above serves to illustrate that loose rules can prove useful but ultimately discourse must be consistently defined in order to ensure that all stakeholders are talking about the same thing. This does not mean that policy must be rigid but rather that it must be consistently understood. To this end, this research is concerned with the construction of progressive education ideology (specifically learner-centredness) across curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment concerning the development of South African education policy as well as the interpretations of learner-centredness by student teachers at the end of their course of study in South Africa.

### **1.1 Learner-Centred Pedagogy**

Much of the discussion around progressive education hinges upon various interpretations of the concept of learner-centredness and what it means in terms of classroom pedagogic practice. 'The principles of child-centredness are ambiguous in their implications for classroom actions and are therefore problematic' (Sugrue 1997: 22). 'Learner-centred' has come to mean many things. Brodie, Lelliott, & Davis (2002) trace the history and development of the concept of learner-centred education by drawing on the research of

Darling (1994), Chung & Walsh (2000), and Cuban (1993). Their review begins with Plato's Socratic dialogue, then turns to Rousseau's *Emile* in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and eventually highlights the work of Dewey and Piaget at the turn of the twentieth century. They address the various interpretations which have developed around the ways in which learner-centred education was intended to link school and 'real life' through project- and activity-based learning. The ways in which children construct knowledge became key principles for the discussion around learner-centred education. Brodie, Lelliott, & Davis (2002) highlight that learner-centredness is found to hold different meanings for different people.

## **1.2 Purpose of the study**

Learner-centredness is central in the rhetoric of educational transformation in South Africa. This alone makes the topic worthy of study; that is, to determine what current understandings of learner-centredness are in circulation. This research looks at two instances of discourse about and within education: namely education policy documents and student teachers. Policy documents shape the setting of a national educational agenda. The ways in which learner-centredness is/is not defined has significance for practice. Teachers are regarded as pivotal agents in giving effect to educational policy. Thus, to engage student teachers as they stand ready to move into schools after completing a course of teacher education reveals their access to the discourse around learner-centredness and how they define it.

This study was conducted in order to establish what 'learner-centredness' means in policy documents and to student teachers. The study aims to investigate what learner-centredness means to different agents in different contexts: we are not necessarily looking for a single, stable definition of 'learner-centred'. To this end the aims of this study are:

1. To determine how learner-centredness is constructed within South African education policy documents;
2. To establish how learner-centred pedagogy is constructed by PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) students at the close of their programme of study, and;
3. To compare each discourse against a common theoretical framework of pedagogy and to contribute towards a common understanding of learner-centred pedagogy within South Africa.

The design for this research involves two parts: Phase 1 and Phase 2. Phase 1 consists of a review of South African policy documents and Phase 2 explores how students construct learner-centredness at the end of their course of study. Both phases ultimately centre on how learner-centredness is constructed.

Phase 1 of this study is based on an analysis of 18 policy documents. This phase examines the discourse of learner-centred pedagogy within South African policy documents from the first White Paper on Education and Training in 1995 through the recent Revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in order to establish what is meant by learner-centred education in these documents.

Phase 2 of the research design is based on an initial exploratory question, questionnaire, and interview data with 33 PGCE students registered for Mathematics courses (21 Primary students and 12 Secondary students). Phase 2 makes use of an open-ended exploratory question, a questionnaire, and an interview schedule, which were developed and administered to establish how learner-centredness is constructed by PGCE students at the end of their course of study. Two groups of students were surveyed: primary student teachers and secondary student teachers at a South African university in the Western Cape.

The development of the questionnaire and the analysis of data from both phases of the research were conducted within a Bernsteinian framework. Having followed a course of study on school reform and educational change, I felt that Bernstein's work provided a delicate language for understanding pedagogy. The intention of this study was to understand different constructions of learner-centredness, not to prescribe what these should be. Bernstein's language is both powerful and non-normative. This analytic framework is described in detail in Chapter 3.

### **1.3 Organisation of Dissertation**

The dissertation is organised as follows. Chapter 2 presents a review of relevant literature which looks at pedagogy from a sociological perspective. Chapter 3 consists of the theoretical framework employed in collecting and analysing the data from both phases of the research project. Chapter 4 explains the research design. Chapter 5 presents the results of the data analysis for Phase 1 and Phase 2. Chapter 6 concludes the dissertation with a summary of the findings and results across both phases of the research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The previous chapter set out the key issues addressed in the dissertation: namely, how learner-centredness is constructed in South African education policy documents and how learner-centredness is constructed by student teachers at the end of their course of study. This chapter provides a more in-depth setting through a review of the relevant literature which investigates policy and educator constructs of pedagogic practice against a sociological framework.

This research project arises out of a study of educational policy and, more particularly, school reform. Thus, the aim of this chapter is not to review the literature on learner-centred education. Such a review would result in an impossibly large field (see Sugrue 1997). But a search of the specific research topic revealed very few studies which interrogate the meaning of learner-centredness as attempted here. In particular, little research has been conducted in South Africa to interrogate teachers' understanding of educational policy. For instance, in a review of South African educational reform since 1994, Taylor & Vinjevold (1999) provide a comprehensive review of research conducted under the 'President's Education Initiative Research Project' (PEI). Only one project explored the ways in which teachers understand the pedagogic practice set out in the new education policy documents. Jansen, Maqutu, & Sookrajh (1999) compare Grade 1 teachers' understanding and implementation of Outcomes Based Education (OBE). In order to address this scarcity of South African literature in this area of enquiry, the literature review also includes relevant international research.

The literature reviewed for this research is presented according to the two key areas of interest which correspond to my own research: education policy and pedagogic practice. In particular, the literature review highlights some of the ways in which Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse has been utilised in various research projects. For the purposes of this review, the relevant research is explored and then Bernstein's theory is discussed in detail in the following chapter.

### **2.1 Studies of Education Policy**

Enquiry should be linked to relevant theory. This point is highlighted throughout much of the literature reviewed (for example Taylor, Muller, & Vinjevold 2003; Sadovnik 1995; Singh 2002; and Young 1971). This section reviews and explores the various ways in which the theory of pedagogic discourse is linked to enquiry. The literature reviewed examines

education policy against a consistent analytic framework. The articles reviewed cover a broad spectrum of education policy areas. The unifying rule of selection is that each paper provides an example of how policy discourse can be explored across time and/or spaces. Since there was very little research available which corresponds to my area of enquiry, it was important for me to come to terms with the various ways in which educational policy documents could be examined. These articles provide an important background to the ways in which policy discourse can be examined across time while utilising a consistent analytic framework.

Walford (2002) points out, 'many researchers have found (Bernstein's) general framework useful in attempting to clarify a range of educational problems' (Walford 2002: 415). He cites Atkinson *et al.* 1995; Sadovnik 1995; Morais *et al.* 2001; Walker 1983; Aggleton & Whitty 1985; Rodger 1985; and Walford 1981, 1986, 1995. Walker (1983), for example, uses Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing to conduct a historical analysis of different social regimes in colleges of education over a century, while Walford (1981, 1986, 1995) examines the problems within postgraduate research and the reproductive role of elite British boarding schools by employing Bernstein's theory to develop a framework of analysis.

Lerman and Tsatsaroni (1998) utilise Bernstein's notions of classification, framing, and evaluative criteria to discern three types of pedagogic practice. Type 1 is characterised by strong classification, strong framing, as well as explicit, formal, and concrete criteria of evaluation; Type 2 is characterised by strong classification, weak framing, and informal criteria of evaluation; and Type 3 is characterised by weak classification, weak framings, and as a matter of principle rejects the idea of testing and evaluation. These 'types' are an excellent example to highlight the ways in which Bernstein's theory is utilised to create an analytic device to compare and contrast pedagogic models. Many of the authors reviewed utilised Bernstein's theory to construct analytic frameworks in similar ways.

Other research into curriculum includes Walford's (2002) comparative analysis of Evangelical Christian and Muslim Schools' curriculum in England and the Netherlands. His main concern was the wider policy aspects of the development of these schools. Through a series of case studies of schools and curricula, he examines the nature of the curricula and their possible effects on children.

In another policy analysis, Moss (2002) explores the distinctions between invisible and visible pedagogies as well as between competence and performance pedagogies for thinking about the literacy curriculum from a social practice perspective. This is done through a systematic analysis of policy documents which define the English Curriculum in school and in Initial Teacher Training (ITT) since the introduction of the National Curriculum for English in England in 1999. She analyses student-produced texts that play an evaluative role under the English Curriculum. She notes that Bernstein's theory utilises categories which can be shown in dynamic relationship to each other as well as to the data. 'The data are not consumed by the theory. The language on the one hand conceptually structures the field by bringing different elements in the scene into association with each other, establishing what goes together and what stays apart' (Moss 2002: 552).

Bernstein's work has also been utilised under the leadership of Ana Morais at the University of Lisbon in Portugal (Morais 2002; Morais, Neves, & Fontinhas 1999; Neves & Morais 2001a; and Neves & Morais 2001b). This work is based within the Sociological Studies of the Classroom Project (ESSA) in the Department of Education at the School of Science, University of Lisbon. The work undertaken by the ESSA Project is important as it shows the ways in which Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse can be utilised across various spaces and agencies to consistently define pedagogic practice. Under the Sociological Studies of the Classroom Project (ESSA), policy is analysed and compared across decades in order to trace the changes in pedagogic practice. In addition, classroom practice is analysed and compared to teacher education discourse. The results are then presented to show the different modalities uncovered.

For example, Morais, Neves, & Fontinhas (1999) and Neves and Morais (2001a) effectively use Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse to chart the changes from the Portuguese education policy documents of 1975 to 1991 educational reforms. These studies utilise Bernstein's pedagogic codes in order to discern the types of classification and framing of pedagogic practice articulated in the policy documents. Both of these studies closely parallel my own research which traces the shape of learner-centredness in South African policy documents from 1994 to 2002. Later, Neves & Morais (2001b) took a more in-depth look at the Portuguese Natural Science syllabuses from Portugal in 1991 in order to define the coding orientation of that particular policy document.

Singh (2002) argues that 'Bernstein's theory of the pedagogic device provides researchers with explicit criteria/rules to describe the macro and micro structuring of knowledge, and in particular, the generative relations of power and control constituting knowledge' (Singh 2002: 571). In addition, Singh (2001) looks at the ways in which selection, organisation, and distribution of school knowledge relate to modalities of power and control.

These examples highlight the ways Bernstein's theory is utilised to examine pedagogic policy and provide some insight into how my own particular interest developed. The next section reviews the ways in which pedagogic practice has been explored. The research in this next section provided much of the inspiration for my own research.

## **2.2 Studies of Pedagogic Practice**

Pedagogic practice, like policy discourse, can be analysed and evaluated in a variety of ways. Teachers' take up of policy is of great interest to researchers while other researchers focus specifically on teachers' understanding of educational policy in regards to classroom discourse. Examples of the latter are reviewed here. The literature reviewed examines the ways in which pedagogic practice is constructed by different agencies.

Al-Ramahi & Davies' (2002) review of the Palestinian Integrated Learning Project (ILP) begins with a review of the pre- and post-ILP curricular reform. They utilise Bernstein's theory of curriculum and pedagogic practice (1996, 1990, 1977, 1971) to describe the type of pedagogy proposed for and implemented in Palestinian schools under the ILP. They review policy and classroom spaces in order to discern the types of pedagogic practice employed. The robustness of Bernstein's theory allows them to utilise a consistent framework across different settings. This research provides a clear example of how the theory can be used to both frame and interpret the data collected.

Utilising only the construct of framing to articulate pedagogic practice in their study of learner assessment, Filer and Pollard (2000) approach the concept of the framing rather differently than other researchers which I came across in the literature review. Often times, the weak or strong 'framing of educational knowledge' is utilised to describe a pedagogic situation. This combining of the instructional and regulative discourses removes much of the precision of the theory. For example, while they associate weak framing over evaluative

criteria with teachers who are more likely to accept learner contributions, they then immediately go on to say that '(T)he implication of frame strength for classroom language is that where framing is stronger, pupil responses may be inhibited; where weaker, the teacher is more likely to be able to access what pupils know' (Filer & Pollard 2000: 114). It becomes difficult to determine whether these pedagogic samples are constructed with weak framing over all the components of the theory (i.e. selection, pacing, sequencing, evaluative criteria, and regulative discourse) or just evaluative criteria. The teacher's ability to 'access' rather than 'assess' seems to have more to do with concern over how the regulative discourse is framed. Also, the ways in which strong framing over evaluative criteria are associated with inhibiting learners' responses appears to have more to do with control over selection rather than whether evaluative criteria are made explicit to learners.

Another example of research which utilises only framing relations in the study of teachers' evaluation criteria is Morais & Miranda (1996) (Sociological Studies of the Classroom Project). In this case, their use of the concept of evaluative criteria focuses on the concept of 'explicitness' of guidance rather than 'access' to answers. Their research analysed how learners understand teachers' evaluation criteria and the ways in which this influences the acquisition of recognition and realisation rules by learners (and thus learner achievement). The results of the study show a strong correlation between 'higher explicitness of the evaluation criteria and higher acquisition of realisation rules by working-class learners' (Morais & Miranda 1996: 622).

Other research into the articulation of characteristics of effective pedagogic discourse by Sociological Studies of the Classroom Project (ESSA) include Morais (2002), Neves & Afonso (2002), Morais & Neves (2001), and Morais & Fontinhas (1993). For example, Morais & Fontinhas' (1993) study utilises Bernstein's theory concerning the relation between social class and code and uses his concept of code as the instrument of analysis.

### **2.3 Summary**

This literature review presents the ways in which theory of pedagogic discourse can be utilised as a framework of analysis. In particular, the work of the Sociological Studies of the Classroom Project (ESSA) in Portugal provided the initial idea for my own research. Neves & Afonso's (2002) explorations of 'a theoretical model of teacher training with

characteristics similar, in general, to the theoretical model of pedagogic practice' (Neves & Afonso 2002:1) were essential in trying to understand the ways in which the theory could be applied directly to a research subject. This is what Bernstein refers to as developing an external language of description from an internal language of description (Morais 2002: 568), that is the implementation of the theory.

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## Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

This dissertation explores how learner-centredness is constructed in policy documents as well as how it is constructed by student teachers. The dissertation does not address *why* these various constructions are developed but rather illustrates *what* these different interpretations are. In order to accomplish this, the dissertation presents two constructs: what is *privileged* and what is *silenced* when describing a discourse of pedagogy around learner-centredness. *Privileged* refers to what is actually discussed or mentioned. *Silenced* refers to what is not discussed or mentioned. The dissertation highlights what is privileged and what is silenced when learner-centredness is described.

The theoretical framework employed focuses primarily on the work of Basil Bernstein, particularly his theory of pedagogic discourse. This chapter describes the theory and how it is employed in this research to collect and analyse the data. The theory is used here to capture ways in which classroom activity is described against a sociological perspective. Bernstein's work was chosen because it provides a delicate language of description for different modalities of pedagogic discourse. This allows the research to capture what different sources might mean when using the term 'learner-centred'.

### 3.1 Bernstein's Theory of Pedagogic Discourse

Through the development and constant enhancement of his theory of pedagogic discourse, Bernstein (2000, 1996, 1975) asks two vital pedagogic questions: 'How do power and control translate into principles of communication, and how do these principles of communication differentially regulate forms of consciousness with respect to their reproduction and the possibilities of change?' (Bernstein 1996: 18). The theory is intended to make explicit the power and control relations governing the transmission of knowledge in order to understand and improve the learning outcomes of all learners, particularly those of disadvantaged learners.

Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse articulates the ways in which power and control are distributed within and across all points of pedagogic practice. In order to illustrate the ways in which power and control impact on the transfer of knowledge within the education sphere, Bernstein examines the types of symbolic barriers which exist between school subjects, learners, and various components of education and how these impact on educational

situations. The underlying message is that various modes of power and control can be discerned and described in classroom practice according to what occurs in relation to instruction (or the *instructional discourse*) and social regulation (or the *regulative discourse*) in the process of transmitting curricula to learners<sup>1</sup>.

Modalities of pedagogic discourse vary along two axes: classification and framing. Classification is used to describe relationships between contents and provides the basic structure of curriculum (Bernstein 1975: 88). Framing is used to determine the structure of pedagogy (ibid). 'Thus frame refers to the degree of control teacher and pupil possess over the selection, organisation, pacing, and timing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship' (ibid; emphasis in original).

### 3.1.1 Classification

Bernstein first introduced classification in 1971 in his seminal paper 'On the classification and framing of educational knowledge' (Bernstein 1971). In this paper, he states:

Where classification is strong, contents are well insulated from each other by strong boundaries. Where classification is weak, there is reduced insulation between contents, for the boundaries between contents are weak or blurred. *Classification thus refers to the degree of boundary maintenance between contents.* (Bernstein 1971: 89; emphasis in original)

Classification is the strength of boundary between and within discourses, spaces, and agents. Discourses can include languages, symbols, and codes. Spaces (or agencies) refer to the physical and symbolic locations such as the home, school, and community. Agents are all those actors and identities found using these discourses within these spaces.<sup>2</sup> Bernstein uses classification to explicate the origins of power across and within these discourse, spaces, and agencies. When boundaries change, power also changes accordingly. 'But classifications, strong or weak, always carry power relations' (Bernstein 1996: 21).

### 3.1.2 Framing

Framing is employed to describe two types of rule systems: those which deal with the social (or regulative) order of pedagogic situations and those which deal with the instructional order of pedagogic situations. While these rules can be separated analytically, the instructional

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<sup>1</sup> The terms discourse and rules are often used interchangeably when describing the regulative discourse and the instructional discourse.

<sup>2</sup> These examples are by no means exhaustive. They simply begin to show that Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse, while primarily used within the sphere of education, is articulated in such a way as to be utilised broadly.

discourse is in practice embedded within the regulative discourse. Or rather, the regulative discourse is dominant.

The instructional discourse incorporates four components which examine the degree of control teachers and learners have over the following: how content is selected (selection); how fast content is covered (pacing); in what order content is covered (sequencing); and how assessment criteria are made available to learners (evaluative criteria). The regulative discourse refers to the ways in which teacher and learners interact. For the purposes of this research, I have further distinguished the ways in which learners interact among themselves separately. This was in order to develop a questionnaire to look at the ways in which learner-centredness is constructed in relation to the ways in which (1) teachers and learners interact (teacher/learners) and learners interact among themselves (learner/learner). Therefore, in all we have six components. These are illustrated in the figure below.

<b>Pedagogic Discourse</b>	<b>Component</b>
Instructional discourse	Selection
	Pacing
	Sequencing
	Evaluative Criteria
Regulative discourse	Teacher/Learner
	Learner/Learner

**Figure 3.1: Rules and Components of pedagogic discourse**

Bernstein uses the concepts of *strong* or *weak* framing to articulate pedagogic situations with considerable delicacy. Each component (selection, pacing, sequencing, evaluative criteria, teacher/learner interactions, and learner/learner interactions) of the two discourses (instructional and regulative) can be defined according to the various relations of practice. Each component can be strongly framed or weakly framed.

The table below summarises this where ‘+’ represents strong and ‘-’ represents weak.

<b>Pedagogic Discourse</b>	<b>Component</b>	<b>Framing Relations</b>	
Instructional discourse	Selection	F+	F-
	Pacing	F+	F-
	Sequencing	F+	F-
	Evaluative Criteria	F+	F-
Regulative discourse	Teacher/Learner	F+	F-
	Learner/Learner	F+	F-

**Figure 3.2: Framing of pedagogic discourse**

Framing relations can also be described as very strongly framed (F++) or very weakly framed (F--). It is important to understand that this construct (strong/weak framing) is intended to allow us to differentiate consistently across examples.

In the discussion above, I have described Bernstein’s notions of classification and framing, and have done so for completeness. For the purposes of this research, only framing was employed to develop the research instruments and to analyse the data. Since I was interested in the ways in which learner-centred pedagogy was defined by teachers and policy documents, it was necessary to utilise a framework which allowed pedagogy to be defined against a consistent framework. While learner-centredness could be examined using classification to interrogate different forms of curriculum (integrated and differentiated curricula, for example), as in the case of Morais & Miranda (1996) and Filer & Pollard (2000), I chose to focus exclusively on pedagogy in order to examine teachers’ constructions of learner-centred practice. Hence my focus on framing.

### 3.1.3 Instructional discourse

The instructional discourse describes the selection, pacing, sequencing, and evaluative criteria employed by teachers. It suggests that teachers select, pace, and sequence content in certain ways which they think will enable their learners to succeed. Evaluative criteria describe how teachers make the criteria for assessment available to their learners, that is, whether the criteria for assessment are implicit or explicit.

#### **Selection**

Framing over selection within pedagogic discourse relates to the degree of control teachers and learners have over the content that is selected. Content can be introduced by teachers based on what the teacher thinks appropriate, by an external agency (policy or curriculum standards), or it can be brought into the classroom by learner’s themselves. In the language

of the theory of pedagogic discourse, the first example would be considered strong framing over selection; the latter to be weak framing over selection. These two examples could also be described as explicit and implicit, respectively. That is, the teacher explicitly tells the children what they are going to learn in the first example. In the second, the teacher attempts to draw out the answer from the learners and in this way show learners implicitly what will be learned in the classroom.

### **Pacing**

Pacing is used to describe how quickly or slowly content is covered in the classroom and, in particular, who has control over deciding how much time is spent on topics. When the teacher controls how much time is spent on topics, pacing is considered strongly framed. When students have greater control over pacing, this is considered weak framing over pacing.

### **Sequencing**

Sequencing is employed to describe the order in which topics or contents are covered and who has control over determining this order. If teachers have control over the sequence of topics, this is an example of strong framing over sequencing. If students determine the order of topics, sequencing is weakly framed.

### **Evaluative Criteria**

Framing over evaluative criteria is concerned with whether evaluative criteria are made explicitly available to learners or whether teachers attempt to elicit the correct responses from learners. When evaluative criteria are strongly framed, this means that teachers clearly state what learners are expected to do. When evaluative criteria are weakly framed, the criteria for assessment are not made explicit to learners.

#### **3.1.4 Regulative discourse**

The regulative discourse is the dominant discourse and shapes the instructional discourse. It 'establishes the order within the instructional discourse' (Singh 2001:318). Within pedagogic discourse, the regulative discourse describes the types of interactions which occur within the classroom. Bernstein refers to this as the moral discourse which 'creates the criteria which give rise to character, manner, conduct, posture, etc. ...It is quite clear that regulative discourse creates the rules of social order' (Bernstein 1996: 48).

For example, a strongly framed regulative discourse is characterised by a teacher who clearly controls what is happening in a classroom with regard to who may participate and when this participation may occur. A weakly framed regulative discourse describes classroom interactions whereby learners more freely participate in activities and discussions.

Within this context, Bernstein introduces the notion of personal versus positional control (Bernstein 1977). In the two examples above, the teacher who explicitly controls classroom activity would be more likely to use his or her position as teacher as a source of power and control. The teacher would explicitly command the learners in regards to social interactions within the classroom. The teacher would use his or her position as a clear source of control. In contrast, personal control is more likely utilised within classroom situations characterised by 'the absence of explicit structure' (Al-Ramahi & Davies 2002: 63). In such classrooms, learners would exercise greater control than in those where positional forms of control predominate.

Notably, implicit regulative discourse masks the order of power and control between teacher and learners (Sadovnik 1995: 13). Explicit regulative discourse makes the order of control clear and the learner knows what behaviour is expected.

#### **Teacher-Learner Interactions and Learner-Learner Interactions**

Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse refers to the regulative discourse as that relating to the kind of control the teacher exercises over classroom interactions. Inherent in this is not only what kind of control the teacher has over interactions between teacher and learners but also what kind of control the teacher has over interactions among learners. For the purposes of this dissertation, I have chosen to clearly distinguish between teacher-learner interactions and learner-learner interactions in order to highlight both types of regulative discourse. Restricted interactions between learners are described as a strongly framed regulative discourse. Open dialogue among learners is described as a weakly framed regulative discourse.

#### **3.1.5 Internal and External**

Before providing some examples of how the theory can be employed to describe pedagogy, two final concepts must be described: internal framing and external framing. (Internal and external classification also occur, though I will only discuss the concepts in regards to framing here.) Internal and external framing allow the instructional discourse (selection,

spacing, sequencing, and evaluative criteria) to be further described. Bernstein (1996) indicates that 'in the case of framing, then, the external feature refers to the controls over communication outside the pedagogic context entering pedagogic communication within that context' (Bernstein 1996: 29). For example, if a teacher received very explicit content selection direction from outside the classroom (policy, curricular standards, HOD, etc.), this is an example of strong external framing over selection. If a teacher does not receive this direction from outside the classroom, then this is weak external framing over selection. Further, if a teacher working within strong external framing then provides very explicit direction over content selection in her/his classroom, then this is an example of strong internal framing over selection. If learners are given more control over content selection, then this is an example of weak internal framing over selection. These distinctions apply for all components of the instructional discourse.

### **3.1.6 Pedagogic Discourse: Some Examples**

This research uses variations of framing relations as a means of exploring learner-centredness. Various examples are presented below to illustrate how the theory is employed to describe pedagogic practice. All examples developed for the questionnaire were developed to recontextualise the theory of pedagogic discourse (see Chapter 4). As Morais (2002) points out, there is a need to take an internal language of description, which 'is constituted by a theory or set of theories (i.e. Piaget, Vygotsky, Bernstein) that contain concepts and models of a high level of abstraction' (Morais 2002: 564) to develop an external language of description. This external language of description 'is constituted by propositions and models derived from the internal language of description, now with a higher degree of applicability' (Ibid: 564). Together the internal and external languages of description provide the shift from the theoretical framework to the research design.

A few examples follow. These illustrate how the internal language of description (in this case, Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse) was utilised to create an external language of description as a means of exploring learner-centredness.

#### **Example 1: Framing over Selection**

If a teacher explicitly controls the content that can be introduced into lessons, this would be described as strong framing (F+) over selection. That is, if a teacher introduces all content to support lessons, the teacher is clearly in control of selection of content (selection: F+). If learners have greater control which content can be introduced into lessons, then this would be

an example of weak framing (F-) over selection. The teacher may solicit learners' ideas and input in presenting lessons (selection: F-).

#### Example 2: Framing over Evaluative Criteria

If a teacher explicitly tells learners what they are expected to do in regard to assessment, then this would be an example of strong framing (F+) over evaluative criteria. For instance, a teacher may say that learners must format their paragraphs in a very specific way and then the teacher evaluates learners on whether they format their paragraphs in this way (evaluative criteria: F+). In contrast, if a teacher does not dictate exactly what learners must do when they are being assessed, then this is an example of weak framing (F-) over evaluative criteria. A teacher may tell learners that they are free to express themselves in any way they wish and that the teacher will establish whether they've completed the assignment to her or his satisfaction (evaluative criteria: F-).

#### Example 3: Framing over Teacher/Learner Interactions

When a teacher explicitly tells learners when and how they may participate within classroom discussions, this would be an example of strong framing (F+) over the regulative discourse in relation to teacher/learner interactions. A teacher only calls on learners as s/he sees necessary in order to elicit learner input in lessons (teacher/learner interactions: F+). If a teacher allows and encourages learners to participate in classrooms discussions, this would be an example of weak framing (F-) over the regulative discourse in relation to teacher/learner interactions (teacher/learner interactions: F-).

These examples allow us to see how the theory of pedagogic discourse can be employed to consistently describe pedagogic situations. All pedagogic situations are suggestive of one form of framing or another. The theory of pedagogic discourse allows us to consistently describe pedagogic practice across different situations and contexts.

#### Development of an Analytic Device

In analysing policy documents against a consistent framework, I developed an analytic device from the theoretical framework discussed here. This was used to analyse data collected from students through written responses to an open-ended question as well as to a series of vignettes. These will be described later. The grid (See Figure 3.3 below) summarises this framework of analysis. As mentioned earlier, only framing is used since I

was particularly interested in pedagogic situations. Each component of pedagogic discourse can be described as ‘strongly framed’ (F+), ‘weakly framed’ (F-), or ‘ambiguous/not mentioned’ (Ø). ‘Strongly framed’ refers to when teachers are described as explicitly in control of the various components of the instructional and/or regulative discourse. ‘Weakly framed’ is used to describe situations where learners have greater control of the various components of the instructional and/or regulative discourse. ‘Ambiguous/not mentioned’ (Ø) was added to the framework in order to refer to instances where it was impossible to determine what was meant from the information available or nothing was mentioned concerning a particular component of pedagogic discourse when learner-centredness was mentioned. It is important here to emphasise that the analytic framework is employed to study *descriptions* of pedagogy as opposed to pedagogy itself.

Pedagogic Discourse	Component	Learner-Centred Framing Relations		
		F+	Ø	F-
Instructional discourse	Selection	F+	Ø	F-
	Pacing	F+	Ø	F-
	Sequencing	F+	Ø	F-
	Evaluative Criteria	F+	Ø	F-
Regulative discourse	Teacher/Learner	F+	Ø	F-
	Learner/Learner	F+	Ø	F-

**Figure 3.3: Analytic Framework**

The analytic framework, as well as how it was employed in the research, is described in detail in the following chapter.

### 3.2 Summary

Using Bernstein’s theory of pedagogic discourse, the dissertation articulates various modalities of pedagogic practice which allow notions of learner-centredness to be described according to the framing of each component of the instructional discourse (selection, pacing, sequencing, evaluative criteria) and the regulative discourse (interactions between teachers and learners as well as interactions among learner themselves). Bernstein’s framework is employed here because of its ability to specifically isolate these six components, which are common across all pedagogic situations. Using this language of description of pedagogic discourse, we can then develop a set of categories to explore interpretations of learner-centredness both by student teachers and within policy documents themselves (as advocated by Bernstein).

The framework employed for this dissertation is based primarily upon the work towards a sociology of education. While Bernstein's work is more comprehensive than the theoretical framework presented here, this dissertation systematically establishes what is privileged and what is silenced in policy documents and student constructs of learner-centredness. The theoretical framework operates on pedagogic discourse (instructional discourse and the regulative discourse) and, in turn, the components which make up this discourse (selection, pacing, sequencing, evaluative criteria, and regulative discourse) to consistently describe what is privileged and silenced across research sites. The next chapter details how this was done across the two phases of research for this dissertation.

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## Chapter 4: Research Design

This study sets out to explore the various constructs of learner-centredness found within South African education policy documents and by PGCE students at the end of their programme of study. The study draws on the sociology of education, and in particular, the work of Basil Bernstein, to explore a consistent framework for describing discourses about pedagogy. The underlying assumption of the research was that the theoretical framework described in the previous chapter would allow me to capture variations in construction of pedagogic practice using framing over selection, pacing, sequencing, evaluative criteria, and regulative discourse.

This research grew out of a seemingly simple question; ‘What does the term ‘learner-centred’ mean?’ From here, I began to wonder, ‘What does it mean in policy? What does it mean to teachers?’ Brown & Dowling (1998) point out that the ‘act of asking questions is crucial. The process of asking questions ... drives the development of structural coherence’ (Brown & Dowling 1998:138).

The initial research question was then divided into two sub-questions:

1. How is learner-centredness pedagogy constructed within the policy discourse of South African education policy documents?
2. How is learner-centred pedagogy constructed by PGCE students at the close of their programme of study?

The research compares the findings from the research questions against a common theoretical framework of pedagogy to inform towards a better understanding of learner-centred pedagogy within South Africa. The research was designed in two phases based on the two sub-questions.

**Phase 1** established the discourse found within South African education policy documents. This is accomplished through the selection and analysis of South African education policy documents that have been adopted by government from 1994 to the present. These policy documents are analysed using the theoretical framework described in Chapter 3.

**Phase 2** of the research examined how student teachers constructed learner-centred pedagogy at the end of their course of study. This phase consisted of three parts.

**Phase 2, Part 1** was an open-ended, exploratory question which discerns how students construct learner-centredness in an unprompted situation.

**Phase 2, Part 2** consisted of a detailed questionnaire which more specifically asked students what learner-centredness meant to them across each component of pedagogic discourse. The questionnaire is closely modelled on the theoretical framework described in Chapter 3.

**Phase 2, Part 3** consisted of follow-up interviews with student teachers. These interviews established how students understood the questionnaire and probed for possible interpretations of learner-centredness not drawn out in Part 1 or Part 2.

This chapter details the research design by presenting how Phase 1 and Phase 2 were undertaken as well as detailing Parts 1 – 3 of Phase 2. In addition, this chapter explains the ways in which reliability and validity were ensured throughout this study.

## **4.1 Phase 1: Collection and Analysis of Policy Documents**

This section traces the collection of key South African education policy documents for Phase 1 of the research. The criteria used in selecting these documents are explained in detail. Additionally, this section shows how the theoretical framework was employed to analyse these documents.

This research is concerned with the various constructions of learner-centredness found within policy documents. It must be noted that I am not concerned with why or how these constructions may have entered education policy debates. Furthermore, this research does not look at learner-centredness with regard to Special Education, Higher Education, nor Adult Basic Education. The research does not compare how these education policies may or may not reflect how learner-centredness may relate to other important government policies (i.e. GEAR, RDP, NEPAD, etc.) The research only considers how learner-centredness is constructed within the more general education policy documents.

### **4.1.1 Selecting a sample of policy texts**

To ensure the research was carried out in a consistent, rigorous manner, the sample of documents was conducted according to the following six criteria:

- 1. National Department of Education of South Africa**

Both phases of this research project deal very specifically with South African education. Only *policy documents produced by the South African education authority* were considered for analysis since my primary aim for this research was to contribute towards a more informed understanding of learner-centredness within South African schools.

## **2. Policy and Discussion Documents**

Only *official policy documents* have been included in the analysis. The intention of this research is to chart the construction of learner-centredness within policy documents. I am not concerned here with how, from where, or why various constructs may have emerged in South African education policy documents historically. I am rather interested in which interpretations have emerged. Thus, only South African Department of Education policy and discussion documents are included in the analysis. The discussion documents issued by the Department of Education largely dictate the final policy documents and are thus included alongside (and referred to as) policy documents.

## **3. Primary Education**

Only South African Department of Education *policy documents which relate to primary education* are included in this analysis. I choose to focus on primary education in order to delimit the study. Furthermore, since C2005 was rolled out progressively from the primary school level, much policy writing relates to this sector. Phase 1 and 2 of this research look at primary education policy documents and primary and secondary student teachers, respectively. While this research could be extended to senior secondary education in the future, these sectors are beyond the scope of this project. Noticeably, special education and higher education policy documents, of which there are many, are excluded from this study due to time and space constraints.

## **4. Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Assessment**

Since this dissertation is interested in pedagogic practice as it relates to learner-centred education, only *policy documents which relate to classroom issues* (or curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment) are analysed. Those relating to school management and administration, for example, are not analysed for the purposes of this dissertation.

## **5. Post-1994**

While this research is ultimately concerned with how learner-centred education is constructed in South Africa at present, I was also interested in whether learner-centredness has shifted with time since the new dispensation emerged after the first democratic election in April of 1994. It is widely accepted that 1994 demarcated a massive change in education

policy (Jansen 1999, Muller 2000, Adler 2002, Young 2002). Many shifts that occurred before the 1994 elections have been documented. I am interested with *policy documents produced since 1994* and thus only post-1994 South African Department of Education policy documents which relate to primary education are included in this analysis.

## **6. Reference to Learner-Centredness**

Only *references to learner-centredness* were analysed for the study. Analyses were conducted by what was said explicitly as well as by what was implied in reference to learner-centredness. Alternative terms used in policy documents which were linked to learner-centredness (i.e. student-centred, child-centred, etc.) were also analysed as policy references to learner-centredness.

### **4.1.2 Policy Texts Reviewed**

The following documents were initially considered for the study but were excluded from further analysis since they make no explicit or implicit references to learner-centredness. They are listed here to indicate that they were initially analysed for the study but did not meet the criteria listed above and were thus excluded from further analysis for this study. These documents included:

- South Africa's New Language Policy: the facts (Department of Education: South Africa 1994b)
- Organisation, Governance, and Funding of Schools: A Draft Policy Document for Discussion (Department of Education: South Africa 1995d)
- Organisation, Governance, and Funding of Schools: Education White Paper 2 (Department of Education: South Africa 1995e)
- Discussion Document: Lifelong Learning Through a National Qualifications Framework: Report of the Ministerial Committee for Development Work of the NQF (Department of Education: South Africa 1996c)
- Discussion Document: Draft Statement on the National Curriculum for Grades 9 (Department of Education: South Africa 1997b)
- Norms and Standards for Teacher Education, Training, and Development: Discussion Document (Department of Education: South Africa 1997c)
- General Education and Training Certificate (GETC): Discussion Document (Department of Education: South Africa 2000a)
- Norms and Standards for Educators (Department of Education: South Africa 2000b)

- Recognition of Prior Learning: The Development, Implementation, and Quality Assurance of RPL Systems: A Policy Document Draft (Department of Education: South Africa 2002b)

The sampling of policy documents begins with the Draft white paper on education issued in 1994 and moves chronologically to the Revised National Curriculum Statement of 2002.

The documents read for this analysis are listed below in chronological order. In the next chapter, each document is analysed in turn.

1994

1. Draft White Paper on Education and Training: Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa: First Steps to Develop a New System (Department of Education: South Africa 1994a)

1995

2. White Paper on Education and Training Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa: First Steps to Develop a New System (Department of Education: South Africa 1995a)
3. Curriculum Framework for General and Further Education and Training: A Discussion Document (Department of Education: South Africa 1995b)
4. Ways of seeing the National Qualifications Framework (Department of Education: South Africa 1995c)

1996

5. Structures for the Development of National Policy Regarding Curriculum and Related Issues: Report of the Consultative Forum on Curriculum: Discussion Document (Department of Education: South Africa 1996a)
6. Norms and Standards for Teacher Education (Department of Education: South Africa 1996b)

1997

7. Curriculum 2005: Lifelong Learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A User's Guide (Department of Education: South Africa 1997a)

1998

8. Assessment Policy in the General Education and Training Band, Grades R to 9 and ABET (Department of Education: South Africa 1998)

2002

9. National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 9 (schools) (Department of Education: South Africa 2002a)

Each of the first nine documents is analysed in Chapter 5 by employing the analytic framework described in the previous chapter. As each document was read, explicit and

implicit references to pedagogy were extracted and analysed according to frame strength, though this was not always a straightforward exercise. Sometimes the documents were explicit and an interpretation was relatively easy. On other occasions, the documents were not explicit, but conclusions could be drawn from what was implied. The difficulties encountered in this process will be elaborated further in Chapter 5.

## **4.2 Phase 2: Collection and Analysis of Student Responses**

Phase 2 of the research, the collection and analysis of student teacher responses, consists of three parts: the exploratory question, the questionnaire, and the focus group interviews. This section of the dissertation explains in detail how this phase, and each part in particular, answered the sub-question; how is learner-centred pedagogy constructed by PGCE students at the close of their programme of study? This section first explains the criteria for selecting the two groups of students involved in the study and then details the development of each part of phase 2. To this end, the related instruments and/or methods employed throughout this phase of the study are explained. The theoretical framework is returned to throughout this section.

### **4.2.1 Sample**

The sample population consisted of twenty-two (22) Primary and twelve (12) Secondary Mathematics student teachers at the end of their PGCE programme. These two groups were both from the same teacher training institution in the Western Cape. Initially the research intended to include all five Western Cape teacher-training institutions and their PGCE students across all subjects. I had initially hoped to compare results across these pre-service, teacher training institutions (University of the Western Cape, University of Stellenbosch, University of Cape Town, Cape Technikon, and Peninsula Technikon), subject specialities (Maths, Science, etc.), and grade level (primary/secondary). Time constraints meant that I needed to limit my sample to one institution within one subject speciality including both primary and secondary student teachers. The resultant sample is what Bell refers to as 'an opportunity sample' (Bell 1999: 83).

The PGCE is a one-year course which provides entry into the education profession by preparing students to teach in classroom situations. The qualification is recognised throughout South Africa as well as in many countries around the world. The course is open to graduates with the required teaching subjects and is recognized by employing authorities as a qualification for either primary or secondary school teaching in South Africa. For

acceptance into the PGCE, a student must have at least five credits in 'school subjects' (as per the list approved by the Department of National Education).

The sample for this study included one group of students from the PGCE Intermediate and Senior Phase programme for teachers of Grades 4-9 and a second group from the PGCE Senior Phase and Further Education for teachers of Grades 7-12. These two groups are referred to as PGCE Primary students and PGCE Secondary students throughout the dissertation.

I chose PGCE students because these students, at this particular time in their course of study, have recently been exposed to a government-approved pre-service teacher-training programme. While these students had not yet worked full-time in the field as teachers, they had spent time teaching in classrooms as part of their course training. By using these two groups of students (Primary and Secondary), I hoped to be able to compare across two different course options offered to pre-service student teachers.

#### **4.2.2 Analytic Framework and Development of Instruments**

The data collection for this phase of the study involved three parts:

1. Initial exploratory data collection through an open-ended question
2. Questionnaire
3. Focus group interview

These three parts were used to triangulate findings across the data as well as across each data collection instrument's ability to elicit the intended information. Each part is discussed below. (The data collection instruments used in part 1 and part 2 are shown in full in Annex 1.)

##### **4.2.2.1 Part 1: Initial exploratory question (Section A)**

The initial exploratory question collected data through an open-ended question. The question, 'What does the expression 'learner-centred' mean to you?' was employed for two reasons. First, I hoped to establish whether any privileged utterances and silences existed in student teachers' thinking concerning constructions of learner-centredness. By asking an open-ended question, I would be able to note what was mentioned (privileged) and what was not mentioned (silenced) when student teachers construct learner-centredness. This then led to the second reason for employing the initial open-ended question. By looking at what was privileged, I wanted to confirm the appropriateness of Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse in relation to open-ended as well as more directed tasks. That is, whether the

framework would be delicate enough to acknowledge all possible privileges in student teachers' constructions of learner-centredness.

Both Primary and Secondary student teachers were presented with the initial exploratory question. Each student was given a sheet of paper, at the top of which was written 'What does the expression 'learner-centred' mean to you?' They were asked to write their answers below the question. I explained that the purpose of the activity was to enquire about what 'learner-centred' meant to PGCE students as part of my Masters dissertation. Respondents were informed that their participation was optional and would not affect their course mark in any way. They were then given 15 minutes to complete the exercise. I also asked the lecturer of each course to answer the question as well, though these papers were not used in the data analysis. I also explained that this exercise would lead to the development of a more specific questionnaire which I would present to them in two weeks time.

In addition, students were asked for their age and gender on the exploratory question because at that early stage in the research, I was unsure if this information would be useful or necessary. In the end, I did not use this information in any of my data analyses. Instead, the data is analysed within and across the two groups sampled (Primary students and Secondary students) as originally planned.

#### **4.2.2.2 Part 2: Questionnaire**

After collecting the initial data and making a preliminary analysis, I set about constructing an instrument which presents various examples of pedagogic practice. These examples were based on the theoretical framework as explained in Chapter 3 and drew on the work of Morais & Neves (2001) and Neves & Afonso (2002). They developed an external language of description based on the internal language of description from the theory of pedagogic discourse. I also used the questionnaire as a means to recontextualise the theory and interrogate PGCE students' definitions of learner-centredness. The research of Morais & Neves as well as Neves & Afonso describes and develops pedagogic situations.

The framework employed for this section is summarised in the table below where 'F' represents what type of framing relation is illustrated by the example. Note that the sections of the questionnaire discern between framing relations over selection, pacing, sequencing, etc.

WIDE World Courses:

	Pedagogic Discourse	Types of Examples		
➤ PB – Pacing?	F++	F+	F–	F– –
➤ Other Participative and Activities:	F++	F+	F–	F– –
Teacher/Learner	F++	F+	F–	F– –

1. Documented Susan Alexander from WCE's tech integration lesson of poetry of the same theme. The framing of Pedagogic Discourse the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2004. I am currently busy converting it into digital segments to be placed on a CD or on the website for samples of effective technology integrated lessons. This framework was used to develop the data collection instrument and to analyse the data.

2. WPUV Vilho Abraham from QCE arrived and we caught up on all his assignments. He is left with the pre-test and survey! Gave each of the student teachers a copy of Inspiration chapter for educational product evaluation as well as tables on how to breakdown the evaluation criteria.

In the first section, Section B of the questionnaire (the exploratory question was referred to as 'Section A') presents two statements about classroom life which can be described by the framing relations described above. One example is 'strongly framed'; the other is 'weakly framed'. Only two degrees of strength of framing for each component (selection, pacing, sequencing, evaluative criteria, teacher/learner relations, and learner/learner relations) are used in this section (F+ and F–). Twelve examples are presented in total in this section.

Section C of the questionnaire includes four vignettes of classroom situations. Each includes different combinations of the strongly framed and weakly framed components of pedagogic discourse. All components of pedagogic discourse listed in Table 4.2 are included within each vignette.

Section D shows four maths assessment samples illustrating teacher comments/evaluations of learners' work. This section of the questionnaire is based only on the evaluative criteria component of pedagogic discourse. This section presents more finely distinguished examples of how assessment criteria can be made available to learners (F++, F+, F–, F– –).

Section E of the questionnaire presents five classroom images that are suggestive of various teacher/learner and learner/learner relationships. This section looks exclusively at the regulative discourse and employs more finely distinguished examples (F++, F+, F–, F– –).

The following directions were written at the beginning of the questionnaire:

---

Below are a number of statements about learning. Based on your opinion, please circle one choice for each statement. The choices are:

- Learner-centred – You definitely associate this statement with learner-centredness.
- Not learner-centred – You definitely do not associate this statement with learner-centredness.
- Either – You think this statement could be associated with either learner-centred or non-learner-centred classrooms.
- Cannot determine – You cannot determine an answer from the information given.

For example, if you think the first statement is not an example of learner-centred education, then circle 'Not learner-centred' like this:

Learner-centred      Not learner-centred      Either      Cannot determine

---

These same categories are used throughout the questionnaire and are revised at the beginning of each section.

Two weeks after the initial exploratory data was collected, the same groups of students were asked to complete the questionnaire. Some students who had not been present during the collection of the initial exploratory question were asked to answer the exploratory question before completing the questionnaire. This additional initial exploratory data was also used in the final data analysis. The lecturers left the room during the completion of the questionnaire. This took about 15 minutes.

Each section of the questionnaire is described in detail below.

#### **Section B: Pedagogic Practice Examples**

The twelve statements in Section B contain two contrasting examples for each of the components of pedagogic discourse listed above whereby one example represents a strongly framed (F+) component of pedagogic discourse and one example represents a weakly framed (F-) component of pedagogic discourse. For example, the questionnaire includes the following two statements about framing of selection over the instructional discourse:

Learners learn best when teachers make the key decisions about what material should be studied in lessons since teachers are the subject experts.

(Section B, Statement 8)

Learners learn best when they are able to decide on the subject matter that should be studied because this allows links to be made to learners' own interests.

(Section B, Statement 5)

The first statement is an example of selection which is strongly framed (selection: F+) and the second is an example of selection which is weakly framed (selection: F-). Only two degrees of framing (F+, F-) for each component are used in Section B. I chose not to include more examples where framing could be discerned by finer degrees of framing (i.e. F++, F+, F-, F-- ) since I felt that this would have made the questionnaire quite complex. I also chose not to include examples of external and internal framing over selection, pacing, and sequencing. Instead, I chose to interrogate external and internal framing in Section C of the questionnaire. This is described later in the chapter.

The twelve teaching statements from Section B of the questionnaire are presented below in Table 4.3 along with the coding orientation they are based on.

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Teaching Statements from Section B		Framing relation
1	Learners learn best when teachers determine the amount of time that should be devoted to each topic.	Strong framing over pacing
2	Learners learn best in an environment in which learners know clearly what behaviour is expected of them; in which teachers are firmly in control; and in which clear boundaries are placed on communication between teachers and learners.	Strong framing over regulative discourse between teacher and learners
3	Learners learn best in an environment in which discussion between teacher and learners, as well as discussion between learners themselves, is strongly encouraged.	Weak framing over regulative discourse between learners and learners
4	School subjects need to be learned in a particular order, and learners learn best when teachers decide on what order to present material.	Strong framing over sequencing
5	Learners learn best when they are able to decide on the subject matter that should be studied because this allows links to be made to learners' own interests.	Weak framing over selection
6	Learners learn best in an environment in which discussion between learners is kept to a minimum to encourage maximum individual effort.	Strong framing over regulative discourse between learners and learners
7	Learners learn at different rates and they learn best when they can determine the amount of time they should spend on a particular topic.	Weak framing over pacing
8	Learners learn best when teachers make the key decisions about what material should be studied in lessons since teachers are the subject experts.	Strong framing over selection
9	Learners learn best when teachers tell them exactly what it is that they need to learn, and then correct them when they make mistakes.	Strong framing over evaluative criteria
10	There is no necessary sequence in the learning of school subjects in terms of what topics should come before others and learners should be able to decide on the order in which they learn material.	Weak framing over sequencing
11	Learners learn best in an environment that is relaxed and informal, in which there are always opportunities for discussion between teacher and learners.	Weak framing over regulative discourse between teacher and learners
12	Learners learn best when teachers encourage them to explore subject matter and when teachers do not attempt to make clear distinctions between right and wrong answers.	Weak framing over evaluative criteria

**Table 4.2: Framing Relations of Section B**

We can see that each component of pedagogic discourse is illustrated twice: once with a strongly framed example and once with weakly framed example. For example, statements 5 and 8 both refer to selection but in very different ways. Statement 5 illustrates a situation where the learners' control of the selection of content and statement 8 illustrates a teacher in control of the selection of content.

Table 4.4 below summarises the framing relations of the statements where 'F' stands for 'framing', '+' stands for 'strong', and '-' stands for 'weak'.

Statement	Framing relation
1.	Pacing: F+
2.	T/L: F+
3.	L/L: F-
4.	Sequencing: F+
5.	Selection: F-
6.	L/L: F+
7.	Pacing: F-
8.	Selection: F+
9.	EC: F+
10.	Sequencing: F-
11.	T/L: F-
12.	EC: F-

**Table 4.3: Coding of statements from Section B of Questionnaire**

### Section C: Classroom Vignettes

The four classroom vignettes in this section were designed to illustrate examples of what Bernstein calls explicit, implicit, and mixed pedagogies (Bernstein 1996). By presenting complex examples of pedagogic practice, I was able to establish which component of pedagogic discourse was likely to correspond to students' views of learner-centredness.

Classroom vignette 1 is examined below to illustrate how each vignette was constructed in relation to the instructional and regulative discourses of pedagogic discourse. Throughout the vignette, I have inserted notes in parenthesis regarding the specific coding orientations assigned to the vignette. The vignette was included in the questionnaire without these notes.

### **Classroom Vignette 1 (from questionnaire)**

This is a mathematics classroom. It is the start of a new term, and after the teacher greets the class she gives the learners a brief overview of the three topic areas they will cover over the term (Selection: F+). She tells them that they will be tested after each topic, and that a homework assignment will be given each week. She reassures them that, as in the past, work will be corrected and returned to them as soon as possible after each assignment and test so they can check on their progress (Evaluative Criteria: F+). She then proceeds with the first topic. She introduces a new concept (Sequencing: F+), illustrates it by using a few everyday examples (often asking learners to provide their own) (Selection: F-), and then gives them some exercises to practise on their own. She does most of the talking, but if learners do not understand they can raise their hands to ask for clarity (Teacher/Learner: F+). When this happens the teacher explains briefly, and then continues with the lesson. If it happens that learners say they cannot cope with new work because they don't feel confident with work they have learned previously, the teacher will deviate from her plan and backtrack to revise and consolidate previous work (Pacing: F-, Sequencing: F-). If only one or two learners say they don't understand she tells them she will see them later (Pacing: F+). The desks in the classroom are arranged in rows (Learner/Learner: F+). While the teacher is talking the learners are silent (Teacher/Learner: F+), but when they are working on the set exercises they sometimes consult with one another (Teacher/Learner F-). Because there is a lot of syllabus material to cover the teacher expects them to work quickly and keep together, and if learners don't complete the work in class they are expected to complete it at home (Pacing: F+).

### **Classroom Vignette 1 Description**

This vignette illustrates a classroom with both strong and weakly framed instructional and regulative discourses. The rest of the classroom vignettes can be broken down in the same way to isolate how specific coding modalities of pedagogic discourse are illustrated in the vignettes. The other three vignettes are included as they appear in the questionnaire.

Following each vignette is a description of their associated framing relations. The framing relations for the vignettes, along with the type of pedagogic practice each illustrates, are also summarised below in Table 4.5. From the table, we can see that two of the classroom vignettes (1 and 3) illustrate examples of mixed pedagogies.

### **Classroom Vignette 2 (from questionnaire)**

This is a mathematics classroom in a religious school, which was built to serve a particular religious community. This religion places great emphasis upon respectful relationships between adults and children, so lessons tend to be very formal. The learners stand to greet the teacher and only speak when they are invited to do so. Lessons are silent places of work and talk between learners, as well as between learners and teachers, is not encouraged. There is a lot of work to be covered each term, high standards are set, and mathematics lessons take the form of a brief explanation of work to be covered, followed by exercises for the learners to practice. Learners can check their work by looking at the answers at the back of the textbook and if they have difficulties they can approach the teacher at her desk for help. All learners are expected to work at the same pace and if they fall behind they are expected to catch up at home. Learners are given tests three times a term, and so receive feedback on their progress in this way.

**Classroom Vignette 2 Description**

Classroom vignette 2 illustrates both strongly framed instructional and regulative discourses. The teacher decides what will be taught (Selection: F+), in what order the lessons will be taught (Sequencing: F+), as well as how fast the lesson will be taught (Pacing: F+). This teacher also makes it clear to students what they are expected to produce concerning classroom assessment activities (Evaluative Criteria: F+). Finally, this teacher strongly controls who can talk in the classroom as well as when learners may participate (Regulative discourse: F+). This classroom is strongly framed across the instructional and regulative discourses.

**Classroom Vignette 3 (from questionnaire)**

This is a mathematics classroom. It is the start of a new term, and after the teacher greets the class she gives them a brief overview of the three topic areas they will cover in the term. She has packs of material that cover the three topics and learners are allowed to choose a pack to start working on. Learners can decide on the order in which they work on the topics, but each topic is sequenced in a particular way and they are expected to follow this sequence. This means that the whole class is not necessarily working on the same topic, but learners group themselves according to the topic they are working on. They then work either alone or with others in the group on mastering the material. They work at their own pace in class and at home. The teacher expects them to cover all three topics by the end of the term, so the learners are expected to draw up a plan of work to enable them to do this. The packs contain self-tests which learners complete and mark themselves, and if they have difficulties they can approach the teacher who will assist them. At the end of the term learners write a major test on all three topic areas and the teacher provides detailed feedback on their performance.

**Classroom Vignette 3 Description**

This vignette describes a classroom with differently framed instructional and regulative discourses. The teacher provides an overall list of content which will be studied (Selection: F+) but allows learners to choose from this list (Selection: F-). We can say selection strongly framed at the meso or intermediate level, and weakly framed at the micro level. In addition, this vignette illustrates a situation whereby learners determine the amount of time spent on topics (Pacing: F-) but the teacher determines the order that topics will be studied (Sequencing: F+). The teacher then makes clear to learners what exactly they are expected to do concerning assessment through the self-tests and the detailed feedback on the exam (Evaluative Criteria: F+). Moreover, the teacher allows more learner participation (Regulative discourse: F-). This classroom contains a mix of strong and weak framing over the instructional discourse and weak framing over the regulative discourse.

**Classroom Vignette 4 (from questionnaire)**

This is a mathematics classroom. It is the beginning of a new school term, and after greeting the class the teacher begins the lesson by writing three problems on the board. These are challenging problems which require modelling of problems that arise in everyday life. In order to solve these problems learners will have to master a number of mathematics topics that will become apparent to them as they proceed. Learners are able to choose a problem from the three presented, or, if they feel so inclined, are able to suggest other problems that might interest them more. They are able to work alone or in groups on these problems, and can work in the classroom or in the library. They are given a week to solve the problem of their choice. If the solution to the problems requires mathematical knowledge which the learners have not encountered before, the teacher directs them to textbooks or the internet to find out about it, and provides assistance herself when needed. She feels strongly that learners need to find things out for themselves, so she is reluctant to tell them too much herself and prefers to show them where they can find what they need. After a week, the learners present their work to the group, and different solutions to the problems are discussed. The teacher is much more interested in the strategies learners use to solve their problems than of finding the right answers, and she encourages learners to approach problem solving in this way. The term's work is arranged around the presentation of problems in this way.

**Classroom Vignette 4 description**

Vignette 4 illustrates a classroom which is weakly framed across the instructional and regulative discourses. The teacher here allows children to exercise considerable control over what is taught (Selection: F-), how quickly or slowly work is covered (Pacing: F-), and in what order subject matter may be covered (Sequencing: F-). The teacher does not make clear to learners what they must do in regard to classroom assessment. The teacher instead guides learners towards the answers but refrains from clearly telling them the answer (Evaluative Criteria: F-). Furthermore, this teacher allows learners to participate and interact more freely (Regulative discourse: F-). All components of pedagogic discourse are weakly framed in this vignette.

**Summary of Vignettes**

Classroom vignette 1 illustrates a blending of strong and weak framing over the instructional discourse as well as a blending of strong and weak framing over the regulative discourse. Classroom vignette 3 also presents a similar blending of instructional discourse and illustrates a clear weakening of the regulative discourse. Thus, the key difference between Vignette 1 and Vignette 3 is the type of regulative discourse illustrated. By presenting these two examples in particular, I am able to draw out a number of important points. First, if students consider both examples as learner-centred, then the instructional discourse would be privileged over the regulative discourse since the instructional discourse in both vignettes are very similar and the regulative discourse is quite distinct from one another. Second, if the

students consider one of the examples to be learner-centred and the other to not be learner-centred then I am able to distinguish which type of regulative discourse is privileged because, as in the first point, the instructional discourse is similar and the regulative discourse is quite distinct. The vignettes are summarised in Table 4.5 below.

Classroom Vignette	Framing Relations
1	Selection: F+ Selection: F- Pacing: F+ Pacing: F+- Sequencing: F+ Sequencing: F- EC: F+ T/L: F+- L/L: F+-
2	Selection: F+ Pacing: F+ Sequencing: F+ EC: F+ T/L: F+ L/L: F+
3	Selection: F+ Selection: F- Pacing: F- Sequencing: F+ EC: F+ T/L: F- L/L: F-
4	Selection: F- Pacing: F- Sequencing: F- EC: F- T/L: F- L/L: F-

Table 4.4: Coding of Classroom Vignettes from Section C of Questionnaire

#### Section D: Maths Assessment Tasks

In the next section of the questionnaire, the Maths assessment tasks present examples of evaluative criteria based on various levels of framing strength (F+ +, F+, F-, F--). Each task uses the same mathematical problem with the same learner response, as shown below. Four different teacher assessment responses are presented. Respondents are asked to choose whether a teacher assessment response is an example of learner-centredness.

For this section of the questionnaire, a wider range of framing strengths are employed (i.e. F++ and F--). These are used to distinguish adequately between the various examples. Though two strongly framed examples are presented, one is more strongly framed than the other. This is also true of the weakly framed examples. As will be shown below, a teacher can be explicit in making evaluative criteria available to learners and can then be more explicit. Thus, it becomes necessary to utilise F++ and F-- in this section of the questionnaire to distinguish between the assessment tasks presented.

Maths Assessment Tasks 1-4 from the questionnaire are shown in full on the following page. One can see clearly that the learner's answer to the mathematics problem is the same in each example. Only the teacher's response changes. This should highlight that evaluative criteria in pedagogic discourse is concerned with whether the teacher makes clear to the learner what is expected. Following the illustration of Section D is a table which includes the framing relations of each example.

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**Sample Task 1**

Write in words the number 315,090.

The learner writes:

$$\begin{array}{r} 315 \\ 520 \\ \hline 520 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 090 \\ 090 \\ \hline 0180 \end{array}$$

The teacher writes:

~~X~~ Please talk with other learners and refer to your book for help.

Teacher's comment is (circle one):

Learner-centred    Not learner-centred    Either    Cannot determine

**Sample Task 2**

Write in words the number 315,090.

The learner writes:

$$\begin{array}{r} 315 \\ 520 \\ \hline 520 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 090 \\ 090 \\ \hline 0180 \end{array}$$

The teacher writes:

~~X~~ You have misunderstood the question. You were asked to write the number 315,090 in words. The answer is 'three hundred and fifteen thousand and ninety'.

Teacher's comment is (circle one):

Learner-centred    Not learner-centred    Either    Cannot determine

**Sample Task 3**

Write in words the number 315,090.

The learner writes:

$$\begin{array}{r} 315 \\ 520 \\ \hline 520 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 090 \\ 090 \\ \hline 0180 \end{array}$$

The teacher writes:

~~X~~ You have misunderstood the question. Go back to section 3 in the textbook and revise the work, do the corrections, and resubmit them to me.

Teacher's comment is (circle one):

Learner-centred    Not learner-centred    Either    Cannot determine

**Sample Task 4**

Write in words the number 315,090.

The learner writes:

$$\begin{array}{r} 315 \\ 520 \\ \hline 520 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 090 \\ 090 \\ \hline 0180 \end{array}$$

The teacher writes:

~~X~~

Teacher's comment is (circle one):


Learner-centred    Not learner-centred    Either    Cannot determine

**Figure 4.1: Section D of questionnaire in full**

In each of the four Maths assessment tasks, a different teacher response is indicated which is an example of the varying degrees of strength over framing of evaluative criteria.

In the examples above, Maths Assessment Task 1 is an example of weak framing (F-) over evaluative criteria since the teacher does not clearly tell the learner exactly what response is needed to correctly answer this problem. Maths Assessment Task 2 is an example of very strong framing (F++) over evaluative criteria because the teacher clearly says exactly what the learner should do to have the correct answer. Maths Assessment Task 3 is an example for strong framing (F+) over evaluative criteria. Here the teacher specifically tells the learner where to find the answer and then asks the learner to resubmit the corrections to be checked again. Maths Assessment Task 4 was first regarded as very weakly framed (F-- ) over evaluative criteria since the teacher provides the learner with no other information other than that the learner is wrong. In this sense, evaluation is implicit. This is in keeping with Morais' definition of weak framing over the evaluative criteria. Upon further analysis, however, I have revised my views on this and will discuss this in greater detail in Chapter 5 to discuss the important points which arose in the course of the research in regard to using these samples.

Maths Assessment Tasks 1 and 2 are presented below to illustrate how each example was created based upon the analytic framework discussed in Chapter 3. All of the tasks use the same example of a student's work since evaluative criteria are concerned with the teacher's response to student's work, not necessarily the student's work itself. For example, in Maths Assessment Task 1, the teacher writes:

 *Please talk with other learners and refer to your book for help.*

This is an example in which evaluative criteria are weakly framed.

However, in the second example, Maths Assessment Task 2, the teacher writes:

~~X~~ *You have misunderstood the question. You were asked to write the number 315,090 in words. The answer is 'three hundred and fifteen thousand and ninety'.*

This is an example in which evaluative criteria are very strongly framed.

Table 4.6 below provides the complete list of variations in framing used in the questionnaire concerning evaluative criteria.

Maths Assessment Task	Framing Relations
1	EC: F--
2	EC: F++
3	EC: F+
4	EC: F-- --

**Table 4.5: Coding of Maths Assessment Tasks from Section D of Questionnaire**

As the table illustrates, this section allowed the study to discern how students constructed learner-centredness in relation to evaluative criteria. This section was important for two reasons. If students silenced evaluative criteria in the initial exploratory question, I needed to know how they would construct evaluative criteria when specifically confronted with this component of pedagogic discourse. And, while Section B established whether students thought learner-centred was constructed with strong or weak framing over evaluative criteria, Section D not only was able to confirm this but it also allowed finer detail when talking about evaluative criteria and how students consider this in their constructions of learner-centredness.

#### **Section E: Classroom Images**

The five classroom images presented in the questionnaire are employed to establish whether certain classroom layouts and teacher/learner situations are suggestive of learner-centredness, and, if so, which ones. All of the images are contextual since they are literally snapshots of interactions with no additional commentary provided. The images are intended to establish if students were likely to associate classroom layouts/situations with certain types of pedagogy.

What do you mean by 'learner-centred'?

The images are suggestive of either a weakening or strengthening of the regulative discourse between teachers and learners as well as amongst learners themselves. For instance, Image 1, shown below, is suggestive of weak framing over the regulative discourse between teacher and learners because the teacher is sitting on the floor amongst the learners. In addition, learners are free to interact among themselves suggesting a weakening of the regulative discourse amongst learners. Again, I use the word suggestive since we do not know exactly what is happening in any of the situations presented. The images appear in the questionnaire like this:

---

**Image 1**



(circle one)

Learner-centred

Not learner-centred

Either

Cannot determine

In all, five images are five images are presented in the questionnaire. Image 1 is shown above. Images 2-5 are shown below.

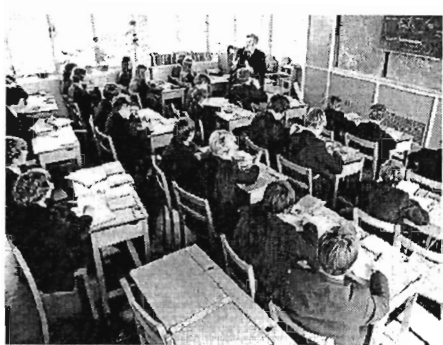


Image 2



Image 3



Image 4

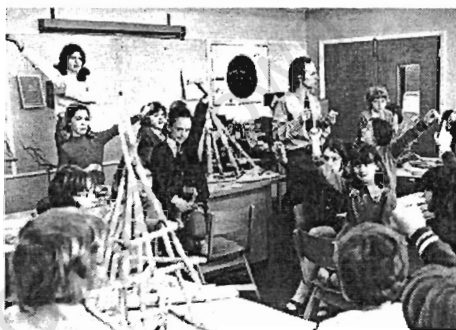


Image 5

The use of these images is intended to reveal whether students associate particular classroom arrangements with learner-centredness. By presenting such images, I was able to establish whether these images suggest learner-centredness to student teachers. The coding of the images is ultimately based on the type of regulative relationships the images *suggest*. The images do not completely illustrate what is happening in a classroom or what type of relationships each entails concerning teacher/learners and learner/learner interactions. For example, Image 2 shows a teacher sitting in front of a classroom talking to learners. The learners are sitting in rows and taking notes. We do not know what the teacher is saying nor if and/or how the learners are allowed to respond. We also do not know if the learners are allowed to talk with one another. These are key components of regulative discourse found in classrooms and since the image does not illustrate these key components, we are able to determine whether students associate particular classroom situations and arrangements with learner-centredness.

The table below describes the images by their framing relations. As mentioned earlier, we do not actually know what is happening in each image. Thus, these framing relations are those which I believe would be most commonly associated with the images.

Image	Framing Relations
1	T/L: F- L/L: F-
2	T/L: F+ L/L: F+
3	T/L: F- L/L: F-
4	T/L: F+ L/L: F+
5	T/L: F+ L/L: F-

**Table 4.6: Coding of Images from Section E of Questionnaire**

While it is difficult to ascertain the strength of framing over the regulative discourse that each of these images illustrates, we can gauge whether students associate particular images of classrooms with learner-centredness. More importantly, these images should allow the confirmation of the findings concerning the regulative discourse that students associate with learner-centredness which are drawn out in the other parts of Phase 2 (Part 1, initial exploratory question; Part 2, Section B; and Part 2, Section C).

#### **4.2.2.3 Part 3: Focus Group Interviews**

After the collection and data analysis of the Parts 1 and 2 of Phase 2, focus group interviews were conducted. The focus group interviews were planned from the beginning of the study. They were initially intended to explore how the students understood the questionnaire to improve internal validity and reliability through triangulation of findings. Due to the time constraints I faced, I was unable to pilot the instrument and thus included focus group interviews to interrogate students' understanding of the questionnaire. While it would have been ideal to pilot the

instrument, considering the limited amount of time students were available given that the research took place toward the end of the academic year, this proved impossible.

After the initial data analysis of questionnaire responses, I decided to interrogate responses which were *unclear*. As the research developed, I realised the focus group interviews would provide a valuable platform to discuss the distinction between finer forms of the instructional discourse; namely internal and external framing. To this end, the focus group interviews had three main goals. These were:

1. To establish whether students understood the format of the questionnaire;
2. To probe *less clear* and *unclear* responses to the questionnaire; and
3. To probe for student understanding of external/internal framing over the instructional discourse.

Two groups of students volunteered for the interviews: one group from the Primary PGCE students and one group from the Secondary PGCE students. These groups consisted of five and three students respectively. Students were selected solely on a voluntary basis. Both interviews were recorded in full on cassette and shortly thereafter transcribed. Excerpts from the interviews are employed throughout the data analysis. Full transcripts amount to over 35 pages and are thus not included with this dissertation.

The interviews were intended to be open-ended to allow students space to discuss the various components of the questionnaire which elicited ambiguous responses. That is, when many respondents answered 'either' or 'cannot determine', or when responses tended to be across all categories, these answers were deemed 'ambiguous'. A more complex framework for analysis was developed to determine what was an 'ambiguous' response and was a 'clear' response to questionnaire items. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

In both groups, *unclear* responses turned out to be nearly the same. At the end of the initial data analysis, I determined that both group's responses were *unclear* across the various sections of the questionnaire. The sections of the questionnaire which included for discussion in the interview are listed below in Figure 4.4. Due to time constraints, not all items were discussed in the both interviews.

What do you mean by 'learner-centred'?

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Group A	Group B
Section B Statement 1	Section B Statement 1
Section B Statement 2	Section B Statement 2
	Section B Statement 6
Section B Statement 7	Section B Statement 7
Section B Statements 8 and 5	Section B Statements 8 and 5
Section B Statement 10	Section B Statement 10
Compare Section B Statements 1 & 7	Compare Section B Statements 1 & 7
Section C Vignette 1	Section C Vignette 1
Section D Task 1	Section D Task 1
Section D Task 3	Section D Task 3
Section E Image 4	Section E Image 4
Section E Image 5	Section E Image 5

**Figure 4.2: Sections of Questionnaire Probed in Focus Group Interviews**

In all, between 8 and 10 items were discussed with each group over the approximately one-hour interviews. About half of the items from each section were discussed in the interviews. The interviews tended to follow similar patterns. The interviewer read an item from the questionnaire, informed the interviewees what the total responses/percentages were for each choice, and then asked them to comment and discuss this item.

### 4.3 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity were ensured throughout the study in a number of ways. First, while the two phases of the research should be seen separately, the framework employed to analyse data is consistent across both phases of the study. This framework, in turn, provided the basis for the development of the research

What do you mean by 'learner-centred'?

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instruments developed for Phase 2; namely, the initial exploratory question, the questionnaire, and the focus group interviews. Cohen & Manion refer to this approach, using different methods on the same object of study, as ‘methodological triangulation’ (Cohen & Manion 1994: 236).

Face validity is ensured through the assistance of various faculty members having reviewed the instruments (discussed below) before these were utilised to collect the data, as recommended by Bell (1993: 65). While I would have preferred to pilot the instruments to confirm clarity, layout design, ease of use, etc., due to time constraints, this was not possible. The data was collected from students who were about to complete their PGCE course of study. In order to utilise this sample, I needed to either develop the instruments in a timely manner while utilising other reliability and validity checks (see below) or delay the collection of the data by a full academic year. Based on the feedback I received on the initial questionnaire design from various faculty members, I felt confident that the instruments were appropriate and robust and thus chose to go ahead with the data collection. In order to establish the validity and reliability of these instruments, I employed the following steps.

#### **4.3.1 Policy Documents**

After performing an initial review of various documents related to learner-centredness in South Africa, a discrete list of criteria was established in order to select relevant documents which would allow me to answer my three research questions clearly. These criteria were adhered to throughout the collection and analysis of policy documents.

#### **4.3.2 Initial Exploratory Question**

The initial exploratory question was developed to be as open-ended as possible in order to allow initial privileges and silences to be drawn out. These responses led to the development of the questionnaire.

#### **4.3.3 Questionnaire**

After an initial analysis of the responses to the open-ended exploratory question, I developed my questionnaire within the framework of the theory of pedagogic discourse. I asked eight lecturers at the University of Cape Town to scrutinise the questionnaire before it was distributed to respondents to check face validity, as

What do you mean by ‘learner-centred’?

indicated by Bell (1993: 65). I explained the use of the theoretical framework employed to develop the questionnaire to the lecturers. Most of the lecturers are familiar with the work of Basil Bernstein and at least half of them have worked intimately with his theory of pedagogic discourse, upon which the questionnaire is based. The recommendations included conducting focus group interviews to confirm understanding of questionnaire as well as to interrogate the responses concerning more discrete forms of pedagogic discourse not covered in the questionnaire. These suggestions were integrated into the research.

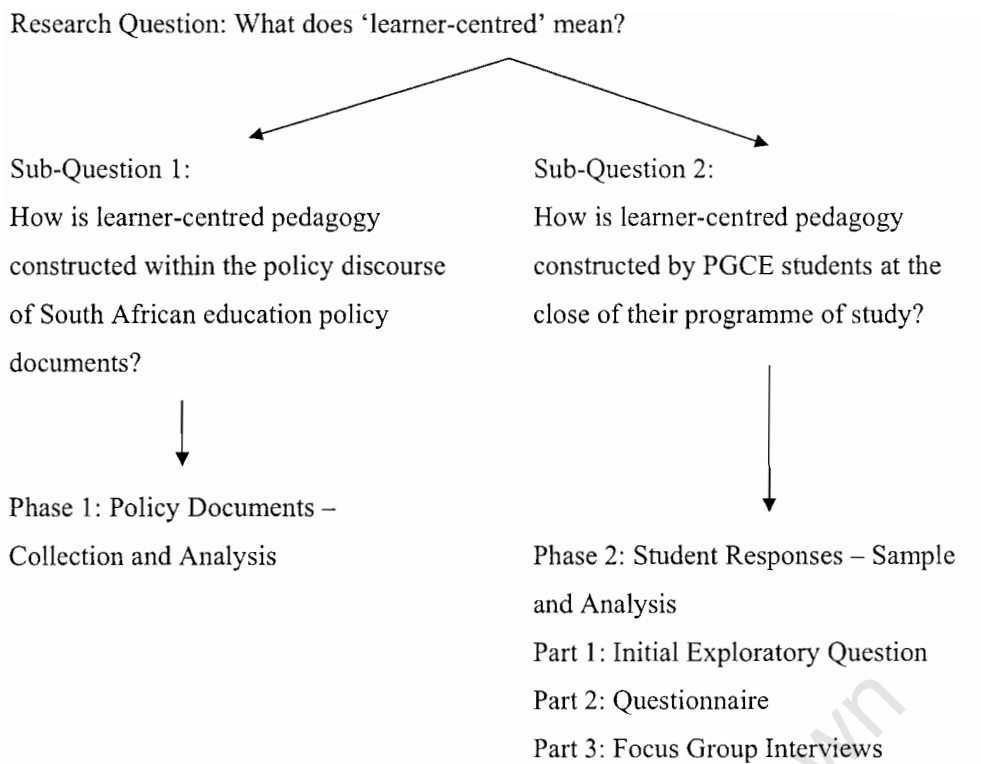
Also, after collecting the data and performing the initial data analysis, I then asked two PhD students who are both working with Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse in their own research, to blind code the instrument using the same theoretical framework. This was done in order to establish the reliability of the coding upon which the in-depth data analysis is based. Both PhD students' blind coding of the questionnaire confirmed that the various components of the questionnaire represented clear examples of the various components of pedagogic discourse. A full comparison of the original coding of the questionnaire to the coding conducted by each PhD student is presented in Annex 2.

#### **4.3.4 Focus Group Interviews**

I choose to record these interviews on cassette and transcribe the interviews afterwards in order to focus on the discussions which would allow me to explore responses more intimately. The focus group interviews followed pre-determined lists of questionnaire responses for each group.

### **4.4 Summary**

This chapter has set out to describe the research design employed for this study. It presents the sample of the study and the data collection instruments employed. I also set out the theoretical framework upon which these tools were based as well as how the theoretical framework was employed to articulate the various understandings of learner-centredness. In brief, the research design can be summarised as follows:



**Figure 4.3: Research Design**

The next chapter analyses the data from both phases of the study in turn.

## Chapter 5: Results and Analysis of Data

The aim of this study was to establish how 'learner-centred' is constructed within South African policy documents as well as how it is constructed by PGCE students at the end of their course of study. Towards these ends, the data was collected and analysed using a consistent framework, allowing comparisons both within and across all data collection sites. This framework needed to be delicate enough to provide opportunities for all possible interpretations of learner-centredness as a pedagogic practice. As illustrated in Chapters 3 and 4, Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse was utilised as the primary analytical tool to develop the data collection instruments as well as to interrogate the data collected.

Pedagogic discourse is composed of instructional discourse and regulative discourse. The instructional discourse refers to the ways in which teachers select, pace, and sequence content as well as how they make evaluative criteria (assessment) available to their learners. The regulative discourse refers to the ways in which teachers interact with learners, as well as how teachers allow learners to interact with one another. Each of these components can be articulated as either explicit (strongly framed: indicated by F+) or implicit (weakly framed: indicated by F-). The data analysis also employed  $\emptyset$  to indicate when policy documents and/or respondents did not refer to a component or that the reference was ambiguous. Figure 5.1 below illustrates the categories and the framing relations used to indicate the strength of framing over each component. 'F+' = strongly framed, 'F-' = weakly framed, and ' $\emptyset$ ' = no reference/ambiguous reference. (One section of the questionnaire distinguishes strength of framing more finely by using very strongly framed [F++] and very weakly framed [F--] in order to examine varying modalities of practice.)

Pedagogic Discourse	Component	Learner-Centred Framing Relations		
		F+	Ø	F-
Instructional discourse	Selection	F+	Ø	F-
	Pacing	F+	Ø	F-
	Sequencing	F+	Ø	F-
	Evaluative Criteria	F+	Ø	F-
Regulative discourse	Teacher/Learner	F+	Ø	F--
	Learner/Learner	F+	Ø	F--

**Figure 5.1.1: Framing of pedagogic discourse**

The analytic tool illustrated above allowed the same grid to be used throughout the analysis. This tool allows us to say which pedagogic rules are used to construct learner-centredness as well as how these rules are defined. For example, if teacher/learner interactions are deemed important in constructing learner-centredness, we need to be able to say clearly how these interactions are defined. For each component of pedagogic discourse, we can say whether it is defined as strongly framed (explicit teacher control) or weakly framed (learners have greater control over how interactions take place). We can then create a list of defined rules which articulate how learner-centred is constructed. These lists of defined rules use the same language and definitions across all data collection sites; from early policy documents to more recent policies, from primary students to secondary students, from policy documents to student teachers. The constructions of learner-centredness may be different, but the language used to describe these various constructions remains consistent.

Upon analysing the data obtained through the grid above, I established a framework which would then allow me to state consistently which pedagogic rules were used in policy documents and by student responses to construct learner-centredness. I was able to say how many times a specific pedagogic rule was used to construct learner-centredness in each phase and part of the research and then articulate precisely what that number represented.

For example, if 44% of respondents in Section B of the questionnaire (Phase 2) said that ‘School subjects need to be learned in a particular order, and learners learn best when teachers decide on what order to present material’ was ‘learner-centred’, what would that mean? Would 44% represent a clear indication that students thought strong framing over sequencing was an instructional rule of learner-centredness? Reviewing Ebel’s (1972) discussions on standard deviations, I decided that responses indicated a *very clear* marking

out of learner-centredness when two-thirds (67%) of respondents selected a rule. For example, if 72% of respondents say that strong framing over sequencing is an example of learner-centredness then I was confident that this is a *very clear* indication that respondents use this instructional rule to construct learner-centredness.

To further distinguish responses, I decided that if 50% to 66% of respondents chose a specific pedagogic rule, this represented a *less clear* indication of learner-centredness. Responses falling between 49% to 34% represented an unclear indication. Figure 5.2 below illustrates the framework for analysis which was employed throughout the data analysis.

Percentage of Responses	Indication
67% - 100%	Very Clear
50% - 66%	Less Clear
34% - 49%	Unclear

**Figure 5.1.2: Framework for Analysis**

Using the framework of analysis described above, the results from Phase 1 and each part of Phase 2 are presented and analysed consistently.

With this in mind, let us now turn to the results and analysis of the policy documents from Phase 1 of the research and then the results and analysis of student responses from Phase 2 of the study.

## **5.1 Phase 1: Results and Analysis of Policy Documents**

This phase of the study presents the results from an analysis of South African education policy documents from 1994 to the present. The previous chapter details how these documents were selected as well as the framework for analysis which was developed. This chapter describes the results of the analysis and shows how learner-centredness is constructed within the documents. Each document is analysed in turn. The analytic framework follows the grid detailed above in Figure 5.1. This framework is employed throughout this phase of the research. It is important to note that this section does not review policy documents in their entirety. The research is only concerned with how learner-centredness is constructed within policy discourse. Each document is analysed in turn below to discern how learner-centredness is constructed through education policy

discourse in South Africa. This section of the dissertation quotes heavily from the policy documents reviewed for the research due to the nature of the analysis.

As mentioned earlier, the use of both explicit and implicit references to learner-centred pedagogy created difficulties in the analysis of policy discourse. On occasions, very explicit statements about pedagogy were made, in which case analysis was straightforward. On other occasions, the statements made in themselves were explicit about certain features of pedagogy, and by association I was able to link these with central features of my analytic framework. By showing explicitly how I have analysed the data, any threats to validity have been addressed.

### **5.1.1 White Paper on Education and Training**

The Draft White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education: South Africa 1994a) and the final White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education: South Africa 1995a) describe the important principles and actions which the government embraced towards the new education dispensation undertaken in 1994. The White Paper on Education and Training is ‘the first policy document on education and training by South Africa’s first democratically elected government’ (Department of Education: South Africa 1994a: 7). While the Draft White Paper and the final White Paper have some significant differences overall, the approach in the two documents to pedagogic practice is very similar, which is our primary interest here, and thus both documents will be discussed together here.

The White Paper explicitly advocates and articulates learner-centredness, saying:

Educational and management processes must therefore put the learners first, recognising and building on their knowledge and experience, and responding to their needs (Department of Education: South Africa 1995a: 21).

This statement begins to suggest that learner-centredness is the pedagogic practice associated with the new education dispensation articulated in these first education policy documents. The White Paper goes on to introduce an example of pedagogic practice which can be analysed using the analytic framework developed. This example must be assumed to support this notion of ‘putting learners first’. The White Paper states that education policy:

...must provide an increasing range of learning possibilities, offering learners greater flexibility in choosing what, where, when, how, and at what pace they learn (Department of Education: South Africa 1995a: 21).

This statement suggests that the policy advocates weakening framing over the instructional discourse of pedagogic discourse. That is, it advocates that learners should have more control over the selection, pacing, and sequencing of content. Also, ‘how’ could be interpreted as advocating a weakening of framing over the regulative discourse of pedagogic discourse. This statement suggests that learners have greater control of how classroom interactions (and regulative discourse) occur. No explicit reference is made about what type of evaluative criteria should accompany this ‘greater flexibility’ which will be offered to learners.

The table below analyses the White Paper on Education’s construction of learner-centredness, where ‘F+’ = strongly framed (teacher in control), ‘F-’ = weakly framed (learner is in greater control), and ‘Ø’ = no reference/ambiguous reference.

<b>Pedagogic Discourse</b>	<b>Component</b>	<b>Learner-Centred Framing Relations</b>		
Instructional discourse	Selection			F-
	Pacing			F-
	Sequencing			F-
	Evaluative Criteria		Ø	
Regulative discourse	Teacher/Learner			F-
	Learner/Learner			F-

**Table 5.1.1: Analysis of White Paper on Education and Training**

These two documents do not ‘constitute the government’s final blueprint for educational transformation’ (Department of Education: South Africa 1994a: 59) but they do provide the basis for the rest of the documents analysed below. As both documents highlight, the White Paper on Education and Training does not cover all aspects of education and training policy and thus the Ministry of Education publishes other policy documents to further articulate education policy in South Africa. Let us now turn to some of these other documents.

### **5.1.2 Curriculum Framework for GET and FET**

The Curriculum Framework for GET and FET discussion document (Department of Education: South Africa 1995b) presents eleven principles which the Ministry should use to guide the design and delivery of the new curriculum for South Africa. These principles are: human resource development; learner-centredness; relevance; integration; differentiation, redress, and learner support; nation-building and non-discrimination; critical and creative thinking; flexibility; progression; credibility; and quality assurance.

Learner-centredness is considered one of the key components for curriculum construction and delivery in this discussion document. It is necessary here to quote the document at length before discerning how learner-centredness is constructed. Below is the entire section on learner-centredness.

Curriculum development, especially the development of learning programmes and materials, should put learners first, recognising and building on their knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience, and responding to their needs. Curriculum development processes and delivery of learning content (knowledge, skills, abilities, and values) should take account of the general characteristics, developmental and otherwise, of different groups of learners. Different learning styles and rates of learning need to be acknowledged and accommodated both in the learning situation and in the attainment of qualifications. The ways in which different cultural values and lifestyles affect the construction of knowledge should also be acknowledged and incorporated in the development and implementation of learning programmes.

Motivating learners by providing them with positive learning experiences, by affirming their worth and demonstrating respect for their various languages, cultures and personal circumstances is a pre-requisite for all forms of learning and development. This should be combined with the regular acknowledgement of learners' achievements at all levels of education and training and the development of their ability and willingness to work both co-operatively and independently. Learners must be encouraged to reflect on their own learning progress and to develop the skills and strategies needed to study through open learning, distance education, and multi-media programmes (Department of Education: South Africa 1995b: 16-17).

The document defines learner-centredness as taking account 'of the general characteristics, developmental and otherwise, of different groups of learners'. To accomplish this, children should have greater control over the sequencing and pacing of content since 'different learning styles and rates of learning need to be acknowledged and accommodated' by teachers as they construct and deliver the curriculum. Children should also have greater control over selection of content in order for teachers to acknowledge 'the ways in which different cultural values and lifestyles affect the construction of knowledge'. While evaluative criteria are discussed in other sections of this document, they are not mentioned concerning learner-centredness in the document.

In addition, a weakly framed regulative discourse allows teachers to 'motivate learners by providing them with positive learning experiences, by affirming their worth and demonstrating respect for their various languages, cultures and personal circumstances'. The last statement requires teachers to weaken framing over the regulative discourse, giving learners greater control and the opportunity to work together and alone. Bernstein details

the dominance of the regulative discourse when constructing a specific pedagogic discourse. When the instructional discourse is weakly framed (as here), he argues that it is impossible to keep the regulative discourse strongly framed (Bernstein 1996: 28). Learner-centredness here is associated with weakly framed instructional discourse. Evaluative criteria are not mentioned. The regulative discourse here also gives learners in greater control of classroom interactions.

These framing relations are summarised in the table below.

Pedagogic Discourse	Component	Learner-Centred Framing Relations		
Instructional discourse	Selection			F–
	Pacing			F–
	Sequencing			F–
	Evaluative Criteria		∅	
Regulative discourse	Teacher/Learner			F–
	Learner/Learner			F–

**Table 5.1.2: Analysis of Curriculum Framework for GET and FET**

### 5.1.3 Ways of seeing the NQF

This document (Department of Education: South Africa 1995c) discusses the government's development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The NQF is envisioned to provide the framework for an integrated education and training strategy across all Ministries and/or sectors within South Africa which will, in turn, promote lifelong learning for all South Africans.

Only one explicit reference to learner-centredness is made in this document. The document states that:

With the use of learning outcomes and appropriate assessment criteria, the move towards a learner-centred approach – which makes the learners active participants in the process – is very much easier (*sic*). The performance which will now count is the learners', not the teachers (Department of Education: South Africa 1995c).

This makes it clear that teachers are expected to employ learner-centred pedagogy.

However, it does not make it clear how learner-centred pedagogy is constructed other than by suggesting the weakening of framing over the regulative discourse by making the learners 'active participants'. Otherwise, no information is given in regard to learner-centredness within the document. The table below summarises that no specific information

is provided in this document as to how learner-centredness is constructed concerning instructional discourse.

Pedagogic Discourse	Component	Learner-Centred Framing Relations		
			∅	
Instructional discourse	Selection		∅	
	Pacing		∅	
	Sequencing		∅	
	Evaluative Criteria		∅	
Regulative discourse	Teacher/Learner			F –
	Learner/Learner			F –

**Table 5.1.3: Analysis of *Ways of Seeing the NQF***

The NQF is intended ‘to provide a means of formal recognition of each person’s progress throughout a lifetime of learning’ (Department of Education: South Africa 1995c: 13). This notion of ‘lifelong learning’ is central to the NQF. *Ways of Seeing the NQF* does not explicitly state whether learner-centredness forms part of the concept of lifelong learning. Nevertheless, the *Report of the Consultative Forum on Curriculum* does in fact link learner-centredness to lifelong learning as the discussion below illustrates.

#### **5.1.4 Report of the Consultative Forum on Curriculum**

This discussion document (Department of Education: South Africa 1996a) is intended primarily to assess and/or recommend possibilities to develop various structures which the Ministry of Education can use to support lifelong learning in South Africa. Lifelong learning is defined in many ways throughout this document. Importantly, lifelong learning is meant to include all schooling in that ‘learning will no longer be the sole property of formal education but can take place anywhere, at any time, and through any means’ (Department of Education: South Africa 1996a: 10). Lifelong learning suggests that ‘all people are learners in a learning society with developmental needs’ (ibid: 12). The document is analysed concerning how learner-centredness is constructed.

This discussion document draws on the 1994 White Paper on Education and Training (which is analysed above) to assist in defining ‘lifelong learning’. The CFC states that lifelong learning would,

in the words of the White Paper, ‘provide an increasing range of learning possibilities, offering learners greater flexibility in choosing what, where, when, how, and at what pace they learn’ (par. 6, p. 21) (Department of Education: South Africa 1996a).

This implies that lifelong learning is characterised by learners' greater control over the instructional discourse of pedagogic discourse. As described earlier, this can be defined as weakly framed instructional discourse with regard to selection, pacing, and sequencing. This is how 'lifelong learning' is defined.

The CFC goes on to describe lifelong learning as follows:

Lifelong Learning Development is 'sparked' by foregrounding 'learner-centredness' rather than mere 'learner-development', or content-centredness. Therefore constructing or generating new knowledge is emphasised, rather than merely transmitting or consuming knowledge. In other words, the learning process is more important than the product, and is activated in the context of a changing society (Department of Education: South Africa 1996a: 8; emphasis in original).

The discussion document also states that:

In Lifelong Learning Development one does not focus either on content or on the learner. One develops a process of learning in which all are involved (ibid: 9).

This view of knowledge and pedagogy would necessitate weak framing over selection, sequencing, pacing, and regulative discourse, since the extract emphasises that pedagogy must go beyond what the teacher offers and move into what the learner constructs. Teachers should continually give learners greater control over the rules of selection, sequencing, and pacing as well as over the regulative discourse.

The document also makes it clear that teachers will still play an important role as these instructional and regulative discourses shift to greater control by learners:

It must be noted, however, that this does not represent a diminution of the teacher's professional responsibility, not a dismissive attitude towards the needs of the learner. Lifelong Learning Development is a dynamic process, where teachers and the learners function as learners, lifelong, in a changing, developmental and transformational social context' (ibid: 10).

This means that while framing can be weakened, it cannot disappear altogether if pedagogy is to proceed. However, beyond this, the role for teachers is not elaborated. The excerpt suggests that teachers should allow learners more control in selecting content, establishing pacing and sequencing activities, and establishing how regulative relationships in the classroom will be defined. 'Lifelong Learning is characterised by flexibility and an abundance of content, learning material, learning techniques, and learning modes' (ibid: 14). Thus learner-centredness, as constructed in this document, can be summarised by the table below.

Pedagogic Discourse	Component	Learner-Centred Framing Relations		
Instructional discourse	Selection			F–
	Pacing			F–
	Sequencing			F–
	Evaluative Criteria		∅	
Regulative discourse	Teacher/Learner			F–
	Learner/Learner			F–

**Table 5.1.4: Analysis of Consultative Forum on Curriculum**

### 5.1.5 Norms and Standards for Teacher Education

The Draft White Paper on Education and Training states that ‘The national Ministry of Education has the responsibility for setting norms and standards for the education system, which involves the development of curriculum frameworks and core curricula’ (Department of Education: South Africa 1994a: 14). Three important norms and standards documents were read for this study. These include the Norms and Standards for Teacher Education (Department of Education: South Africa 1996b), the Norms and Standards for Teacher Education, Training, and Development (Department of Education: South Africa 1997c), and the Norms and Standards for Educators (Department of Education: South Africa 2000b). This section of the analysis looks only at the Norms and Standards for Teacher Education. The discussion document on Norms and Standards for Teacher Education, Training, and Development (Department of Education: South Africa 1997c) makes no explicit references to learner-centredness throughout the document and is thus not analysed in this study. The Norms and Standards for Educators (Department of Education: South Africa 2000b), which does explicitly reference learner-centredness, is analysed later in this section of the study. Let us turn now to the Norms and Standards for Teacher Education to discern how learner-centredness is constructed within this document.

In regard to learner-centredness, the Norms and Standards for Teacher Educators states that:

Teacher education programmes should ensure that the teacher is able to -

- facilitate learner-centred classroom practice by employing a range of teaching strategies appropriate to the subject or topic and, on the basis of careful assessment, to the pupils in his or her classes, for example, by using cross-curricular concerns with subject related teaching; and
- create contexts (learning situations) in which there is a paradigm shift in emphasis from teacher initiated and determined activities to ones in which

the learners are encouraged to reflect and to make their own critical choices' (Department of Education: South Africa 1996b: 19).

The first statement does not specify what teachers should do to adopt learner-centred approaches. 'Employing a range of teaching strategies' does not elaborate on how teachers should select and deliver content, how they should assess learners, nor how they should establish regulative discourse. However, it does associate learner-centredness with a weakening of the boundaries between subjects in the reference to 'cross-curricular concerns'. This implies a weakening of classification of subjects.

The second statement suggests that framing over the instructional and regulative discourses should be weakened. Learner-centredness here is constructed as a shift in emphasis from teacher-initiated activities to learner-initiated. That is, as a weakening of the framing over the instructional discourse of selection, pacing, and sequencing and the regulative discourse. There is no reference to evaluative criteria in this construction of learner-centredness. While evaluative criteria are addressed elsewhere in the document, they are not discussed with regard to learner-centredness other than learner-centredness requiring teachers to make decisions based on 'careful assessment', which does not refer to making evaluative criteria available to learners. The table below summarise how learner-centredness is constructed in this document using Bernstein's categories.

Pedagogic Discourse	Component	Learner-Centred Framing Relations		
Instructional discourse	Selection			F-
	Pacing			F-
	Sequencing			F-
	Evaluative Criteria		Ø	
Regulative discourse	Teacher/Learner			F-
	Learner/Learner			F-

**Table 5.1.5: Analysis of Norms and Standards for Teacher Education**

### 5.1.6 Curriculum 2005

Curriculum 2005 (C2005) (Department of Education: South Africa 1997a and b) was the government's first curriculum statement after the 1994 elections.

This document sets out the new curriculum framework for all General and Further Education and Training in South Africa. It is intended as a reference document for policy makers and other educationists and is set within the context of the principles and other principles stated in the 1995 White Paper (on Education and Training), and developments since then, including the legislative framework and the NQF (Department of Education: South Africa 1997b: 3)

The document refers throughout to various components of pedagogic discourse and how each of these is defined to construct the pedagogic practice associated with C2005. Below, only references in relation to how learner-centredness is constructed in this document are examined.

To construct learner-centredness, this document draws heavily from the *Curriculum Framework for GET and FET*, which is examined earlier in this section of the dissertation. In fact, the document echoes the section analysed earlier in the dissertation. The section on learner-centredness in the C2005 document states:

Curriculum development, especially the development of learning programmes and materials, should put learners first, recognising and building on their knowledge and values and lifestyles and experience, as well as responding to their needs. Different learning styles and rates of learning need to be acknowledged and accommodated both in the learning situation and in the attainment of qualifications. The ways in which different cultural values and lifestyles affect the construction of knowledge should also be acknowledged and incorporated in the development and implementation of learning programmes (Department of Education: South Africa 1997b: 6).

This is very close to the *Curriculum Framework for GET and FET* document analysed earlier. Only two significant differences emerge. Firstly, the statement 'Curriculum development processes and delivery of learning content (knowledge, skills, abilities, and

values) should take account of the general characteristics, developmental and otherwise, of different groups of learners' which appears in the *Curriculum Framework for GET and FET* document has been removed. Secondly, the entire second paragraph, which dealt with the regulative discourse in relation to learner-centredness, is also omitted.

The *Curriculum Framework for GET and FET* document constructs learner-centredness with weakly framed instructional discourse (except for evaluative criteria, which are not mentioned) and weakly framed regulative discourse. The C2005 document can be summarised similarly with regard to how learner-centredness is constructed. The instructional discourse is weakly framed over selection, pacing, and sequencing and evaluative criteria are not mentioned. While there is no explicit mention of the regulative discourse, they are implied because of the emphasis on individual learning style and rates of learning. To accommodate these individual learning styles, the regulative discourse will be weakly framed.

Pedagogic Discourse	Component	Learner-Centred Framing Relations	
Instructional discourse	Selection		F–
	Pacing		F–
	Sequencing		F–
	Evaluative Criteria	∅	
Regulative discourse	Teacher/Learner		F–
	Learner/Learner		F–

**Table 5.1.6: Analysis of C2005**

### 5.1.7 Assessment Policy: GET Band and ABET

The National Education Act (No. 27 of 1996) (also known as the *Assessment Policy in the General Education and Training Band, Grades R to 9 And ABET*) (Department of Education: South Africa 1998) articulates what form assessment should accompany the new education policies laid out in the White Paper on Education and Training. Minister Bengu states in the foreword to the policy, 'This new assessment policy for the General Education and Training Band, alongside the new national curriculum framework, provides the pedagogic basis for our new education and training system' (Department of Education: South Africa 1998: 7). The assessment policy talks about assessment in various ways, but our interest lies in how the policy constructs learner-centredness.

The document states:

Outcomes-based education (OBE) is a learner-centred, result-oriented approach to education and training that builds on the notion that all learners need to and can achieve their full potential, but that this may not happen in the same way or within the same period.

It implies the following:

- what learners are to learn is clearly defined;
- each learner's progress is based on demonstrated achievement;
- each learner's needs are accommodated through multiple teaching and learning strategies and assessment tools; and
- each learner is provided the time and assistance to realise his or her potential (Department of Education: South Africa 1998: 9).

If we are allowed to associate OBE as equal to learner-centred (as stated in the policy document), then learner-centred pedagogy is clearly constructed in this document with strong framing over selection, weakly framed instructional discourse with regard to pacing, since learners should be 'provided with the time and assistance to realise his or her potential'. In addition, for this to happen, regulative discourse between teacher and learner must also be weakly framed to allow learners the opportunity to receive help and assistance freely. Sequencing is not mentioned. Regulative discourse regarding learner interactions among one another is also not mentioned explicitly, though the four bullet points in the document are a manifestation of personal forms of control which require weak regulative discourse.

Further into the document, the policy document states:

This process (assessment) must be transparent such that the various specific outcomes and their assessment criteria must be available to learners to inform them of what is to be assessed. Learners who do not meet the criteria must receive clear explanations with an indication of areas that need further work, and must be assisted to reach the required criteria. The transparency of the outcomes make explicit that which was formerly only implied or assumed (ibid: 11-12).

This statement makes it clear that teachers should make evaluative criteria explicit to learners. In other words, the policy document suggests that evaluative criteria under OBE (and thus learner-centredness) should be strongly framed.

We can use the analysis and summarise how learner-centredness is constructed in the document with the table below.

Pedagogic Discourse	Component	Learner-Centred Framing Relations		
Instructional discourse	Selection	F+		

	Pacing			F-
	Sequencing		∅	
	Evaluative Criteria	F+		
Regulative discourse	Teacher/Learner			F-
	Learner/Learner			F-

**Table 5.1.7: Analysis of Assessment Policy**

### 5.1.8 Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 9

The Revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (Department of Education: South Africa 2002a) sets out the values upon which the curriculum is based, the kind of learners and teachers which are envisaged, and the principles of the Revised NCS. These principles include: social justice, a healthy environment, human rights, and inclusivity; outcomes-based education; a high level of skills and knowledge for all; clarity and accessibility; and progression and integration. The document also presents the structure and concept employed in the learning area statements.

Under ‘outcomes-based education’, the critical and developmental outcomes are described to establish what types of learners the curriculum hopes to foster. These outcomes:

emphasise participatory, learner-centred, and activity-based education. They leave considerable room for creativity and innovation of the part of teachers in interpreting what and how to teach (Department of Education: South Africa 2002a: 21).

This implies that learner-centredness means that teachers have ‘considerable’ control over how pedagogic practice is constructed. That is, external framing over selection is weakened and teachers are able to decide how the instructional and regulative discourses are defined. Also, while it is not clear what ‘activity-based’ means, read contextually, it usually means that learners engage directly with activities rather than the teacher having direct control. Again, this implies weak framing over selection, sequencing, and pacing as well as over the regulative discourse.

Only one other reference to learner-centredness is made within the document. Under the Natural Science Learning Area Statement, it states:

The Natural Sciences Learning Area starts from the premise that all learners should have access to a meaningful science education. Meaningful education has to be learner-centred. It has to help learners to understand not only scientific knowledge and how it is produced but also the environmental and global issues (ibid: 31).

A 'meaningful science education' implies that learners' content must be introduced in many different ways. Framing over selection must be weakened for this to happen.

The table below summarises the analysis of this document.

Pedagogic Discourse	Component	Learner-Centred Framing Relations		
		F+	Ø	F-
Instructional discourse	Selection			F-
	Pacing			F-
	Sequencing			F-
	Evaluative Criteria		Ø	
Regulative discourse	Teacher/Learner			F-
	Learner/Learner			F-

**Table 5.1.8: Analysis of Revised NCS**

### 5.1.9 Summary

In all, eighteen policy and discussion documents were read for this analysis. Of these, nine discuss learner-centredness<sup>3</sup> and are analysed and discussed in detail above. The table below summarises the findings across this phase of the research. ('Very clear' responses are shaded in the tables in order to highlight these privileges and silences in student constructions of learner-centredness.)

Pedagogic Discourse	Component	Distribution of Responses		
		F+	Ø	F-
Instructional discourse	Selection	12.5%	12.5%	75%
	Pacing	0%	12.5%	87.5%
	Sequencing	0%	25%	75%
	Evaluative Criteria	12.5%	87.5%	0%
Regulative discourse	Teacher/Learners	0%	0%	100%
	Learner/Learner	0%	0%	100%

**Table 5.1.9: Distribution of responses from Phase 1: Policy Documents**

The table shows that learner-centredness in policy documents is associated with weak framing over selection, pacing, and sequencing. In addition, policy documents are seldom explicit about evaluative criteria. Further, the documents indicate learner-centredness is constructed with weak framing over the regulative discourse. In summary, South African

<sup>3</sup> Note that the Draft White Paper on Education and Training and the White Paper on Education and Training are analysed together.

primary education policy documents since 1994 construct learner-centredness with the following instructional and regulative discourses:

1. Learners have greater control over selection of content;
2. Learners have greater control over pacing of content;
3. Learners have greater control over sequencing of content;
4. Evaluative criteria are seldom mentioned; and
5. Learners have greater control over the regulative discourse.

## 5.2 Phase 2: Results and Analysis of Student Responses

### 5.2.1 Part 1: Initial Exploratory Question

As discussed in Chapter 4, students were asked to answer the following open-ended, exploratory question: ‘What does the term learner-centred mean to you?’ This was employed to see what utterances were privileged and what silences would emerge when students constructed learner-centredness in a free response situation. This open-ended question provided an opportunity for students to construct learner-centredness and to determine which components of pedagogic discourse they utilised to do so.

The responses to the open-ended exploratory question were coded against the analytic tool illustrated in Figure 5.3. It is included again here since it is important to understand clearly how this tool was employed to describe responses to the exploratory question.

Pedagogic Discourse	Component	Description of Responses		
		F+	Ø	F–
Instructional discourse	Selection	F+	Ø	F–
	Pacing	F+	Ø	F–
	Sequencing	F+	Ø	F–
	Evaluative Criteria	F+	Ø	F–
Regulative discourse	Teacher/Learners	F+	Ø	F–
	Learner/Learner	F+	Ø	F–

Figure 5.2.1: Framing of pedagogic discourse

Responses to the initial exploratory question were described using the strongly framed (F+), no mention/ambiguous (Ø), and weakly framed (F–) scale for pedagogic discourse. To illustrate what this entailed, we can take a few examples from the responses to the ‘What does the expression ‘learner-centred’ mean to you?’ and how these responses were described using the analytic tool above.

For instance, one Primary PGCE Student responded:

The teacher provides subject matter that puts the learner in the position to acquire knowledge through a 'self-initiated' process.

This statement constructs learner-centredness such that the teacher 'provides the subject matter' for learners to work with in the classroom and then the students initiate how to work through it. For this to happen framing over selection must be strong while the framing over pacing and sequencing must be weakened. Framing over the regulative discourse will also need to be weakened.

Another Primary PGCE Student states that learner-centredness means that:

...(learners who) have mastered a certain level can then progress to the next level, giving the teacher/facilitator time to deal with those who need help.

In this example, the instructional discourse over pacing is weakly framed, allowing learners to cover topics at their own rates.

Yet another student constructs learner-centredness by weakening the framing over the regulative discourse between teachers and learners when s/he states:

The teacher just acts as a guide and the learner becomes responsible for his/her own learning, making choices, discussing, and debating issues.

The learner in this example has greater control over the interactions between teacher and learners since the learner is able to make choices over selection, pacing, and sequencing. This type of interaction would not be able to take place unless the teacher has weakened the framing of the regulative discourse between teacher and learners and weakened the framing over selection, pacing, and sequencing.

These examples illustrate how the responses to the exploratory question were analysed. All results are presented in Table 5.2.1A and Table 5.2.1B below (Primary student responses and Secondary student response, respectively). ('*Very clear*' responses are shaded in the tables in order to highlight what is mentioned as well as what is not mentioned in student constructions of learner-centredness.)

Pedagogic Discourse	Component	Distribution of Responses		
		F+	Ø	F-
Instructional discourse	Selection	5%	77%	18%
	Pacing	0%	95%	5%
	Sequencing	0%	95%	5%
	Evaluative Criteria	0%	100%	0%
Regulative discourse	Teacher/Learners	0%	33%	67%
	Learner/Learner	0%	81%	19%

**Table 5.2.1a: Distribution of responses from Primary PGCE students**

Pedagogic Discourse	Component	Distribution of Responses		
		F+	Ø	F-
Instructional discourse	Selection	0%	85%	15%
	Pacing	0%	92%	8%
	Sequencing	0%	95%	5%
	Evaluative Criteria	8%	92%	0%
Regulative discourse	Teacher/Learners	0%	31%	69%
	Learner/Learner	0%	77%	23%

**Table 5.2.1b: Distribution of responses from Secondary PGCE students**

It is *very clear* that students associate learner-centredness with weak regulative discourse with regard to interactions between teacher and learners. Over two-thirds of both Primary and Secondary students responded that ‘learner-centred’ meant weak framing over the regulative discourse between teacher and learners. In addition, students seldom make reference to selection, pacing, sequencing, and evaluative criteria (either explicitly or implicitly) when constructing learner-centredness in this free-response situation. Interestingly, in contrast to framing over the regulative discourse between teacher and learners, framing over the regulative discourse among learners themselves were *very clearly* not mentioned by both groups. When constructed in an unprompted manner, learner-centredness is deemed to be equal to a weakly framed regulative discourse.

Overall, the data analysis of this part of the study shows that students primarily construct learner-centredness using a weakly framed regulative discourse when questioned in an open-ended manner. This does not mean that students consider learner-centredness as *only* about the regulative discourse. This is simply what students draw on in the first instance when asked to construct learner-centredness in an unprompted situation.

### 5.2.2 Part 2: Questionnaire

The questionnaire sought to prompt students about learner-centredness against the instructional and regulative discourses of pedagogic discourse. The results of the questionnaire are presented below. For each section of the questionnaire, the Primary PGCE student results are presented first, then the Secondary PGCE students. Various supporting tables are presented throughout to highlight important patterns and findings. The tables distribute the response by the total numbers of responses (raw data) and by the percentages of responses (rounded to nearest whole percent) for each section of the questionnaire. The data analysis was conducted using the scale described in Figure 5.2 where responses from 67% - 100% are considered *very clear*, responses from 50% - 66% are considered *less clear*, and responses from 34% - 49% are *unclear*. Each data set is followed by a discussion of the important trends which emerged through the analysis. Where *unclear* responses emerged, excerpts from the focus group interviews are included which probe these responses further. The focus group interviews are also discussed in detail in the summary of this chapter. Some statements from the interviews will also be included here since the interviews were intended to probe the responses to the questionnaire.

After this section, the results across the exploratory question, the questionnaire, and the focus group interviews are discussed to establish what the term 'learner-centred' means to PGCE students at the end of their course of study.

#### Section B: Pedagogic Practice Examples

The questionnaire seeks to determine what 'learner-centredness' means to students when prompted with each component of pedagogic discourse. Students were asked to read each statement and choose one of four options: 'Learner-centred', 'Not learner-centred', 'Either', and 'Cannot determine'.

From the questionnaire, it was *very clear* that Primary students construct learner-centredness with weakly framed instructional discourse over selection and evaluative criteria and with weakly framed regulative discourse. Of Primary students surveyed, 67% felt that weak framing over selection was an example of learner-centredness. (Learners learn best when they are able to decide on the subject matter that should be studied because this allows links to be made to learners' own interests [Section B, Statement 5]). Also, 91% of Primary students responded that the following statement was an example of learner-

centredness: 'Learners learn best when teachers encourage them to explore subject matter and when teachers do not attempt to make clear distinctions between right and wrong answers' (Section B, Statement 12). Eighty-six percent of respondents felt the weak framing over the regulative discourse between teacher and learners represented learner-centredness. Moreover, 95% of respondents felt that weakly framed regulative discourse between learners was learner-centredness.

Sixty-two percent of Primary students construct learner-centredness with weak framing over pacing in the instructional discourse as illustrated in Statement 7: 'Learners learn at different rates and they learn best when they can determine the amount of time they should spend on a particular topic' (Section B, Statement 7).

Secondary students *very clearly* construct learner-centredness with weakly framed instructional discourse over evaluative criteria and with weakly framed regulative discourse. Sixty-seven percent of respondents said that Statement 12 illustrated learner-centredness (see above). Seventy-five percent of respondents said that learner-centredness was illustrated by weak framing over the regulative discourse between teacher and learners. Eighty-three percent said that weak framing over the regulative discourse among learners was learner-centred. These students *less clearly* construct learner-centredness with weakly framed instructional discourse over selection and pacing. Fifty-eight percent of Secondary students responded that learner-centredness was illustrated by Statement 5: 'Learners learn best when they are able to decide on the subject matter that should be studied because this allows links to be made to learners' own interests' (Section B, Statement 5). Fifty percent of Secondary students responded that Statement 7 was an example of learner-centredness: 'Learners learn at different rates and they learn best when they can determine the amount of time they should spend on a particular topic' (Section B, Statement 7). Neither group of students indicated that they constructed learner-centredness using any strongly framed rules across the instructional discourse of pedagogic discourse.

The results from the examples of teaching practice in Section B of the questionnaire are presented in the two tables below. The tables presented below group strong framing examples together and weak framing examples together. This is done to make the table easier to read. Responses which are *very clear* are **shaded** in the tables below to highlight these responses.

Framing Relations	Statement Number	Distribution of Responses from Primary PGCE Students			
		Learner-centred	Not learner-centred	Either	Cannot determine
Selection: F+	8	0 / 0%	16 / 76%	4 / 19%	1 / 5%
Pacing: F+	1	0 / 0%	13 / 62%	7 / 33%	1 / 5%
Sequencing: F+	4	0 / 0%	15 / 71%	4 / 19%	2 / 10%
EC: F+	9	0 / 0%	17 / 81%	2 / 10%	2 / 10%
T/L: F+	2	2 / 10%	13 / 62%	6 / 29%	0 / 0%
L/L: F+	6	0 / 0%	18 / 86%	3 / 14%	0 / 0%
Selection: F–	5	14 / 67%	2 / 10%	5 / 24%	0 / 0%
Pacing: F–	7	13 / 62%	1 / 5%	6 / 29%	1 / 5%
Sequencing: F–	10	10 / 48%	1 / 5%	3 / 14%	8 / 38%
EC: F–	12	19 / 91%	0 / 0%	2 / 10%	0 / 0%
T/L: F–	11	18 / 86%	0 / 0%	2 / 10%	1 / 5%
L/L: F–	3	20 / 95%	0 / 0%	1 / 5%	0 / 0%

**Table 5.2.3a: Responses to Section B (Statements) by PGCE Primary Students**

Framing Relations	Statement Number	Distribution of Responses from Secondary PGCE Students			
		Learner-centred	Not learner-centred	Either	Cannot determine
Selection: F+	8	0 / 0%	6 / 50%	4 / 33%	2 / 17%
Pacing: F+	1	0 / 0%	2 / 17%	5 / 42%	5 / 42%
Sequencing: F+	4	0 / 0%	6 / 50%	4 / 33%	1 / 8%
EC: F+	9	0 / 0%	9 / 75%	3 / 25%	0 / 0%
T/L: F+	2	4 / 33%	6 / 50%	2 / 17%	0 / 0%
L/L: F+	6	0 / 0%	5 / 42%	6 / 50%	1 / 8%
Selection: F–	5	7 / 58%	2 / 17%	2 / 17%	1 / 8%
Pacing: F–	7	6 / 50%	1 / 8%	3 / 25%	2 / 17%
Sequencing: F–	10	4 / 33%	2 / 17%	2 / 17%	4 / 33%
EC: F–	12	8 / 67%	1 / 8%	3 / 25%	0 / 0%
T/L: F–	11	9 / 75%	0 / 0%	3 / 25%	0 / 0%
L/L: F–	3	10 / 83%	0 / 0%	2 / 17%	0 / 0%

**Table 5.2.3b: Responses to Section B (Statements) by PGCE Secondary Students**

Primary students *very clearly* consider strongly framed instructional discourse over selection, sequencing, and evaluative criteria and strongly framed learner/learner regulative discourse as not learner-centred. These students also *less clearly* construct ‘not learner-centredness’ through strongly framed pacing and strongly framed regulative discourse in regard to teacher/learners regulative discourse.

Of note in the data analysis, is statement number 10 from Section B of the questionnaire.

This statement says:

‘There is no necessary sequence in the learning of school subjects in terms of what topics should come before others and learners should be able to decide on the order in which they learn material.’

Responses from both groups were ambiguous. It is possible that this is because of the format of the statement rather than with how students construct learner-centredness concerning sequencing. When conducting the focus group interviews, students were asked about this statement. One of the Primary students said,

‘I’m sure I put learner-centred cause it definitely sounds like to me it is. But ‘There is no necessary sequence...’ I don’t know. Suddenly those words, are kind of going to mean... It’s inexplicable (*sic*), it’s sort of like, ‘Well, there’s no necessary sequence’ It’s kind of either/or.’

Other students had similar comments about statement 10. Based on feedback from the interviews, if the statement had simply read, ‘Learners should be able to decide on the order in which they learn material’ then this would result in a clearer response. The qualifying statement about there being no particular order in the learning of school subjects in regard to topics confused respondents as to what the statement was saying in regard to the instructional discourse. This was confirmed in the focus group discussions. Piloting the instrument would have allowed this rewording of the statement to avoid ambiguity and confusion.

Additionally, statements 1 and 6 produced *unclear* responses from the Secondary students, though not from the Primary students. Statement 1 was discussed in the interviews while statement 6, due to time constraints, was not discussed. Since the distribution of responses to these two items is similar, a brief discussion of statement 1 should provide key information regarding both items.

Statement 1 says:

Learners learn best when teachers determine the amount of time that should be devoted to each topic.

When asked why they thought most responses to this statement were ‘Either’ and ‘Cannot determine’ one student said that ‘Either’ did not necessarily mean this is not learner-centred but rather that it could be an example of a learner-centred classroom or a not learner-centred classroom. In the focus groups interviews with Secondary students regarding this

statement, some confusion emerged over the use of the term 'Either'. Some students considered 'Either' and 'Cannot determine' to be interchangeable while others used 'Either' to mean that they did consider this as learner-centred but that they also thought it could be used in a non-learner-centred classroom. Again, piloting the instrument would have avoided this confusion. Importantly, no one answered that statement 1 (strong framing over pacing) or statement 6 (strong framing over the regulative discourse among learner interactions) was learner-centred.

Given the constraints on the interpretations made above, the data suggests that student teachers construct learner-centredness with weakly framed instructional and regulative discourses; that is, with rules which place the learner in greater control of the classroom pedagogic practice. The results also indicate that students construct 'not learner-centred' with strongly framed instructional and regulative discourses; that is, rules which firmly place the teacher in control of the classroom. As one student put it in the focus group interviews, 'As soon as you have, "the teacher determines" or "the teacher decides", then immediately, you associate that with not learner centred.'

### **Section C: Classroom vignettes**

The four vignettes illustrate various types of pedagogic practice. Bernstein uses the terms explicit pedagogic practice (Vignette 2), implicit pedagogic practice (Vignette 4), and a mixed pedagogic practice (Vignettes 1 and 3). These terms are more fully defined in Chapter 3. Briefly, they are employed to describe classrooms where the teacher is visibly in control (explicit), where the learners have greater control (implicit), and where control shifts between teacher to learners at various times in the lesson.

The results from the classroom vignettes in Section C of the questionnaire are presented in the two tables below.

Classroom vignettes	Framing Relations	Distribution of Responses			
		Learner-Centred	Not learner-centred	Either	Cannot determine
1	Selection: External: F+ Internal: F- Pacing: External: F+ Internal: F- Sequencing: F+ EC: F+ T/L: F+- L/L: F+-	2 / 10%	13 / 62%	6 / 29%	0 / 0%
2	Selection: F+ Pacing: F+ Sequencing: F+ EC: F+ T/L: F+ L/L: F+	0 / 0%	19 / 91%	2 / 10%	0 / 0%
3	Selection: External: F+ Internal: F-- Pacing: F- Sequencing: F+ EC: F+ T/L: F- L/L: F-	19 / 91%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%	2 / 10%
4	Selection: F- Pacing: F- Sequencing: F- EC: F- T/L: F- L/L: F-	17 / 81%	0 / 0%	3 / 14%	1 / 5%

**Table 5.2.4a: Responses to Section C (Classroom Vignettes) by PGCE Primary Students**

Classroom vignettes	Framing Relations	Distribution of Responses			
		Learner-Centred	Not learner-centred	Either	Cannot determine
1	Selection: External: F+ Internal: F- Pacing: External: F+ Internal: F- Sequencing: F+ EC: F+ T/L: F+- L/L: F+-	2 / 17%	5 / 42%	4 / 33%	1 / 8%
2	Selection: F+ Pacing: F+ Sequencing: F+ EC: F+ T/L: F+ L/L: F+	0 / 0%	11 / 92%	1 / 8%	0 / 0%
3	Selection: External: F+ Internal: F- Pacing: F- Sequencing: F+ EC: F+ T/L: F- L/L: F-	10 / 83%	0 / 0%	2 / 17%	0 / 0%
4	Selection: F- Pacing: F- Sequencing: F- EC: F- T/L: F- L/L: F-	11 / 92%	1 / 8%	0 / 0%	0 / 0%

**Table 5.2.4b: Responses to Section C (Classroom Vignettes) by PGCE Secondary Students**

Both groups *very clearly* responded that the example of an explicit pedagogic practice where the teacher is firmly in control of the instructional and regulative discourses was not learner-centred. Moreover, both groups *very clearly* responded that the example of an implicit pedagogic practice where the learners have greater control over the instructional and regulative discourses was learner-centred. When the teacher is in control then this is not a learner-centred classroom; when the learners are in greater control then this is a learner-centred classroom. But what happens when control shifts back and forth between teacher and learners? What kind of classroom is this?

Responses to the examples of mixed pedagogic practice differed while the vignettes themselves only differed in one way. Both vignettes illustrate an instructional discourse which is at times strongly framed and at times weakly framed. These vignettes both describe times in the classroom where the teacher is firmly in control of the instructional discourse and times where the learners have greater control over the instructional discourse. However, the vignettes describe different regulative discourses. In Vignette 1 the control over the regulative discourse shifts between teacher and learners. In Vignette 3 the learners have greater control over the regulative discourse. Both Primary and Secondary students *very clearly* associate Vignette 3 with learner-centredness. Moreover, neither group associate Vignette 1 with learner-centredness.

These responses indicate that a weakening of framing over the regulative discourse is *very clearly* associated with learner-centredness. What we can now begin to discern is the importance of a weakly framed regulative discourse in notions of learner-centredness.

#### Section D: Maths Assessment Tasks

These assessment tasks illustrate assessment situations where the teacher makes it very clear to the learner what the learner is expected to do and also situations where the teacher makes it less clear to the learner what is expected. While the responses to the open-ended question showed that students background evaluative criteria when constructing learner-centredness in an unprompted manner, this section of the study sought to prompt students regarding evaluative criteria in order to further determine what type of rules in regard to evaluative criteria students would associate with learner-centredness. Below are responses from Section D of the questionnaire, the Maths Assessment Tasks.

Maths Assessment Task	Coding	Responses			
		Learner-Centred	Not learner-centred	Either	Cannot determine
1	EC: F-	9 / 43%	2 / 10%	7 / 33%	3 / 14%
2	EC: F++	0 / 0%	20 / 95%	1 / 5%	0 / 0%
3	EC: F+	3 / 14%	7 / 33%	10 / 48%	1 / 5%
4	EC: F--*	0 / 0%	15 / 71%	1 / 5%	5 / 24%

**Table 5.2.5a: Responses to Section D (Maths Assessment Tasks) by PGCE Primary Students**

Maths Assessment Task	Coding	Responses			
		Learner-Centred	Not learner-centred	Either	Cannot determine
1	EC: F–	3 / 25%	5 / 42%	2 / 17%	2 / 17%
2	EC: F++	2 / 17%	8 / 67%	0 / 0%	2 / 17%
3	EC: F+	6 / 50%	2 / 17%	3 / 25%	0 / 0%
4	EC: F– –*	0 / 0%	11 / 92%	0 / 0%	5 / 42%

**Table 5.2.5b: Responses to Section D (Maths Assessment Tasks) by PGCE Secondary Students**

The results of this section contained both *very clear* responses as well as *unclear* responses. Both the Primary students and the Secondary students responded that assessment situations where the teacher tells the learner exactly what is expected, as in Assessment Task 2, are not learner-centred. But both groups also *very clearly* responded that assessment situations where the teacher does not give the learner any indication as to what is expected, as in Assessment Task 4, are also not learner-centred. However, it is the other two examples which are much more revealing; not from the responses to the questionnaire but from the discussions about evaluative criteria which took place in focus group interviews.

The other two assessment tasks (1 and 3) illustrate situations where the teacher does not explicitly tell the learner what is expected, but the teacher does provide some information as to where to look for the answer. Assessment Task 1 and Assessment Task 3 show strong framing over evaluative criteria. Assessment Task 3 is ‘more strongly’ framed than Assessment Task 1. The responses to these two items do not *very clearly* describe how students construct learner-centredness. The discussions from the focus group interviews more clearly illustrate how students define learner-centredness with regard to evaluative criteria.

Both focus groups said that they found Assessment Tasks 1 and 3 difficult to describe. They felt there was not enough information. Many students said they had to know the context of the classroom more completely to be able to say whether these assessment situations were learner-centred or not. Most students wanted to know whether the teacher was ‘being nice’ to the learners or whether the teacher was just being lazy by telling learners to ‘go check their books for the answers’. One student said:

I think maybe you need a little bit of context about the teacher. (Assessment Tasks 1 and 3) can come from a teacher who is lazy and trying to do as little work as possible, who doesn’t believe that kids have the capacity to do (the

work). (If that's the case) then that's one thing. If it comes from a teacher that is very caring and kids know that she is there for them to approach and discuss and talk with etc, and this is how she believes kids learn the best, then that's a different story altogether.

The other members of the focus group agreed. Weakly framed evaluative criteria (Assessment Task 1) and more strongly framed evaluative criteria (Assessment Task 3) can be examples of learner-centredness but that very strongly framed instructional and regulative discourses (Section C, Vignette 2) cannot be learner-centred. One student summed up what the others said would be an example of learner-centredness when s/he said,

'I was going to say, for these (the Maths Assessment Tasks), there's no example of 'come and talk to me.' And then you could do exactly what she (referring to another student's comment in the focus group) was saying. 'Why do you think?' or 'Where do you think?' ...rather than 'You got that wrong.'

In a learner-centred classroom the teacher should ask the learner 'Where do you think you went wrong? Let's try another one. Have a look back at that one.' Not just saying that's wrong. But rather asking 'Where? Why? How?'

In the focus groups, this was the most common response. Students said that learner-centred assessment situations should include a teacher who does not explicitly tell learners what is expected of them but should rather guide the learners to the correct answer through a series of probing questions. The learners should be treated as though they already have the answer and the teacher is simply trying to draw it out.

#### **Limitations and further development of Assessment Tasks**

The Assessment Tasks were initially constructed to illustrate a wide range of framing over evaluative criteria. It became apparent that the samples developed needed to be adjusted in order to illustrate the intended range of framing over evaluative criteria. The teacher writing an '✖' in each example was intended to simply indicate that the answer was marked wrong. The additional comment/text from the teacher was intended to provide the background for assessment tasks. After further analysis of the samples, it appears that the '✖' is an indication of strong framing over the regulative discourse. This was unintended in the initial development of the instrument. The examples should rather have shown that the teacher says (rather than writes) a response to each learner's answer. The samples could then have been clear indications of whether the teacher makes evaluative criteria explicit.

The results of the research clearly indicate that when framing over evaluative criteria is very strong, that is, when the teacher very explicitly points out what is incorrect and what is missing in the answer, students do not associate this with learner-centredness. This point alone makes this section of the research extremely valuable.

In addition, the sample assessment tasks demonstrate elaborated and restricted examples of explicit and implicit teacher responses to learners' answers. Table 5.2.6 illustrates how each sample task is an example of a form of elaborated/restricted and explicit/implicit evaluative criteria. Notably, Sample Task 4 does not fit into this table. As mentioned earlier, it is rather an example of strongly framed regulative discourse between teacher and learners.

	Elaborated	Restricted
Explicit	Sample Task 2	
Implicit	Sample Task 3	Sample Task 1

**Table 5.2.6: Categorisation of Sample Tasks**

As mentioned earlier in the design section of this dissertation, this instrument was developed on the basis of the work of both Morais & Neves (2001) and Morais & Miranda (1996). To expand their work, evaluative criteria should be explored using a framework which examines explicit/implicit distinctions in relation to elaborated/restricted texts in order to articulate a range of framing relations over evaluative criteria (i.e. F++, F+, F-, F--). Using this framework, explicit/implicit determines whether evaluative criteria are strongly framed or weakly framed (i.e. F+ or F-) and elaborated/restricted determine the degree of strong or weak framing (i.e. F++ to F--). For example, if the teacher explains to the learner how s/he will be assessed in such a way as to articulate what is expected in a complete manner, this would be explicit and elaborated. If the teacher explains to the learners what is expected but not in a complete manner, this would be explicit and restricted. And so forth. This is illustrated by Table 5.2.7 and the examples presented below.

	Elaborated	Restricted
Explicit	F+ +	F+
Implicit	F -	F--

**Table 5.2.7: A Framework for Framing over evaluative criteria**

The results clearly differentiate responses whereby when teachers make evaluative criteria explicit to learners, this is considered not learner-centred. If done again, I would extend Morais & Neves (2001) and Morais & Miranda (1996) to highlight explicit/implicit modalities of elaborated and restricted texts. Some examples are presented below.

Explicit, Elaborated (F+ +)

The teacher says: *You have misunderstood the question. You were asked to write the number 315,090 in words. The answer is 'three hundred and fifteen thousand and ninety'.* (From Sample Task 2)

Explicit, Restricted (F+)

The teacher says: *That is incorrect. You should use words, not numbers.*

Implicit, Elaborated (F-)

The teacher says: *Are you sure? Look at the question again. It says that you should write the answer with...? With what...? (Attempting to get the learner to complete the sentence.) Yes, with words. Now, what is the first number there? Yes, 3. How do we write three in words?*

Implicit, Restricted (F- -)

The teacher says: *That's a very interesting way to answer the question. Are you sure about your answer? I'd like you to talk with your other group members to see what they did.*

Though I would construct this section of the questionnaire differently in future, the data nonetheless indicates that when evaluative criteria are made explicit and elaborated to learners, this is not considered learner-centred practice. When learner-centredness is the dominant pedagogic discourse, there will be a tendency for teachers not to want to tell the learners what is right or wrong and not to want to explicitly tell them what the answer should be.

### **Section E: Images**

As discussed in Chapter 4, these images must be thought of as suggestive of regulative discourse rather than as unambiguous representations of regulative discourse. The images can be interpreted in many ways. One of the lecturers who reviewed the instrument replied that he found it impossible to decide if images were learner-centred or not learner-centred. These images were intended to draw out whether certain regulative discourses, which are suggested within the images, are used to construct learner-centredness.

The image which was suggestive of a situation where the teacher is firmly in control (Image 2) was *very clearly* described as 'not learner-centred' by both Primary and Secondary

students. In addition, the two images where the learners have greater control over classroom interactions (Images 1 and 3) were both *very clearly* described as ‘learner-centred’ by both groups of students.

On the other hand, Images 4 and 5 elicited *less clear* and *unclear* responses from both groups of respondents. Neither image was readily described as ‘learner-centred’ or ‘not learner-centred’. In focus group discussions, students felt these images in particular required more information. As one student said,

‘I think I circled ‘Either’ for image 4, purely because ...we don’t know enough about the context. Is this the child teaching the class, and he’s done a bit of research and he’s helping them out and they’re having this big discussion...? Or have they sat down, they’ve done an exercise that the teacher’s marked and they’ve gone through it and she’s just trying to keep them awake and get one person up at the board to write it down?’

The two tables below summarise the findings from both groups of respondents.

Classroom Images	Framing Relations	Distribution of Responses			
		Learner-Centred	Not learner-centred	Either	Cannot determine
1	T/L: F- L/L: F-	17 / 81%	0 / 0%	4 / 19%	0 / 0%
2	T/L: F+ L/L: F+	0 / 0%	16 / 76%	3 / 14%	1 / 5%
3	T/L: F- L/L: F-	20 / 95%	0 / 0%	1 / 5%	0 / 0%
4	T/L: F+ - L/L: F+ -	13 / 62%	0 / 0%	6 / 29%	2 / 10%
5	T/L: F+ L/L: F-	10 / 48%	0 / 0%	7 / 33%	4 / 19%

Table 5.2.8a: Responses to Section E (Images) by PGCE Primary Students

Classroom Images	Framing Relations	Distribution of Responses			
		Learner-Centred	Not learner-centred	Either	Cannot determine
1	T/L: F- L/L: F-	8 / 67%	1 / 8%	2 / 17%	1 / 8%
2	T/L: F+ L/L: F+	0 / 0%	8 / 67%	3 / 25%	1 / 8%
3	T/L: F- L/L: F-	11 / 92%	0 / 0%	1 / 8%	0 / 0%
4	T/L: F+ - L/L: F+ -	5 / 42%	0 / 0%	7 / 58%	0 / 0%
5	T/L: F+ L/L: F-	6 / 50%	1 / 8%	4 / 33%	0 / 0%

**Table 5.2.8b: Responses to Section E (Images) by PGCE Secondary Students**

When the image suggested learners have greater control over classroom interactions, students were willing to call this ‘learner-centred’ with no other information available. In addition, when an image suggested teacher control, students were willing to call this ‘not learner-centred’ with no other information available. Yet, when an image required more information, the students wanted to know the teacher’s motives before they were willing to describe an image as ‘learner-centred’ or ‘not learner-centred’. The focus group discussions continually highlighted that if a teacher explicitly takes control of a classroom, then this is described as ‘not learner-centred’. Moreover, if learners have greater control over classroom interactions, then this was described as ‘learner-centred’.

### 5.2.3 Summary

Focus group interviews were employed to probe students’ understanding of the questionnaire as well as to explore ambiguous results found in the initial data analysis. One focus group interview was held with Primary students and one with Secondary students. A list of approximately 10 points to explore in each interview was developed according to *less clear* and *unclear* responses which emerged in the data analysis of the questionnaire. These discussions were recorded and transcribed. Key comments were isolated and used in the data analysis of the questionnaire.

As discussed earlier, the interviews had three main goals. These were:

1. To establish whether students understood the format of the questionnaire.
2. To probe *less clear* and *unclear* responses to the questionnaire.
3. To probe for student understanding of internal/external framing over the instructional discourse.

Throughout the interviews, one of the underlying themes was whether students understood the format of the questionnaire concerning the items on the questionnaire (i.e. statements, images, etc.) as well as the responses they were able to choose from (learner-centred, not learner-centred, either, and cannot determine). This was sometimes explicitly asked and at other times probed through discussions which arose throughout the interviews.

Both interviews began by discussing the first section of the questionnaire. When students were asked what they thought about Statement 10 from the questionnaire which says,

There is no necessary sequence in the learning of school subjects in terms of what topics should come before others and learners should be able to decide on the order in which they learn material.

Students were specifically asked why they thought this statement received a large percentage of 'Either' and/or 'Cannot Determine' responses. In both focus groups, the discussions immediately revolved around whether this statement represented an example of good teaching practice or not. Students had to be continually reminded that the question was whether this was an example of learner-centred pedagogy, not whether it was good teaching practice. This distinction arose often throughout the interviews. Some students felt that perhaps other students may have read the questionnaire as such when answering 'Either' and/or 'Cannot Determine'. This may account for some of the *unclear* responses which the questionnaire elicited.

The data from both the initial exploratory question and the questionnaire indicate that:

1. Students privilege the regulative discourse and background the instructional discourse when constructing learner-centredness in an unprompted manner;
2. Students privilege weakly framed regulative discourse and weakly framed instructional discourse when constructing learner-centredness in a prompted manner;
3. When students are presented with two competing examples of pedagogic practice where the instructional discourse is similar and the regulative discourse differs, students privilege weakly framed regulative discourse when constructing learner-centredness; and
4. Students associate learner-centredness with weakly framed evaluative criteria.

Each of these points was then confirmed through the interviews. The resulting *unclear* responses arose primarily through questionnaire format and language. When these *unclear* responses were probed, students gave examples of how the item could be changed to illustrate learner-centredness or not learner-centredness. Students' examples always

mirrored the four points above. Students continually privileged the regulative discourse and then constructed learner-centredness using weakly framed regulative and instructional discourse across pedagogic discourse. As one student said,

‘When I think of learner-centred, I think more of the choices that are made in the classroom as the choices of the learner rather than choices of the teacher.’

Students continually highlighted that learner-centredness was about learners having greater control over pedagogic discourse, not teachers having greater control.

This point in particular was probed concerning the instructional discourse across selection, pacing, and sequencing. I particularly wanted to ascertain whether students distinguished between internal and external framing over these components of the instructional discourse and, if so, how this influenced their constructions of learner-centredness.

In the interviews, the students were asked at one point,

When you say ‘giving them choices,’ since you just said something about ‘giving them four choices,’ where do those ‘choices’ come from? What do you use to decide on what you’re going to teach? When are you going to give choices like that?

To which one responded,

I guess it’s probably going to be based on the curriculum. You’re going to break up what you think is important for them to learn and then the I guess the learner-centred part comes in where they tell you what is most interesting to them. They decide how much time or in fact whatever you’re going to put into it. I think the basis of it is that it’s hard to get away from the curriculum. There’s still going to be things that they’re going to need to have covered by a certain stage. So, whether you give them the right to choose which one to do first or not is going to depend on the subject... Knowing what they know, how difficult it is, are we going from less advanced to more advanced, etc. or are they just completely unrelated topics.

Students felt that learner-centredness in practice would have to bend to the needs of the curriculum. While most continually pointed out that in a learner-centred classroom ‘the teacher steps back and the learners do their own work’, they felt that, while preferable, this was not always feasible. The strong external framing over selection put the teacher in control of selection over the long term while the weak internal framing over selection put the learners in greater control of selection on a more short-term, day-to-day basis. This internal framing over selection allowed learners to decide on topics from a pre-selected list which the teacher had compiled. Students may have strengthened the framing over external selection and weakened the framing over internal selection, but the regulative discourse

remained dominant and ultimately decided how a pedagogic practice would be described. That is, as in classroom vignettes 1 and 3, the internal/external distinction could be made over selection, pacing, and sequencing but that ultimately the regulative discourse would decide whether a classroom would be described as learner-centred or not learner-centred.

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## Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusions

This study set out to address the question: What is meant by the term 'learner-centred'? Since this term is ubiquitous in policy documents and teacher education discourse, it was interesting to probe the meanings that have become associated with it. By employing Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse, this dissertation has described modalities of pedagogic discourse in order to then describe the ways in which learner-centredness is constructed in South African education policy documents and by student teachers. The frame strength of each component of instructional discourse (selection, pacing, sequencing, evaluative criteria) and regulative discourse (interactions between teachers and learners and interactions among learner themselves) were utilised throughout the collection and analysis of the research. In this way, the dissertation establishes what is privileged and what is backgrounded in policy and student constructs of learner-centredness.

Eighteen South African education policy and discussion documents were read for this analysis. Of these, nine included references to learner-centredness and were analysed and discussed in detail. In addition, two groups of PGCE students (one from the primary stream and one from the secondary stream, totalling 33 participants in all) completed an initial exploratory question and a detailed questionnaire. A small focus group from each group participated in a follow-up interview.

The study found that South African education policy documents since 1994 have constructed learner-centredness by prioritising the following framing relations:

1. Learners have greater control over selection of content;
2. Learners have greater control over pacing of content;
3. Learners have greater control over sequencing of content;
4. Evaluative criteria are seldom mentioned; and
5. Learners have greater control over the regulative discourse.

The findings from the initial exploratory question, the questionnaire, and the focus group interviews indicate that:

1. Students privilege the regulative discourse and background the instructional discourse when constructing learner-centredness in an unprompted manner;
2. Students privilege weakly framed regulative discourse and weakly framed instructional discourse when constructing learner-centredness in a prompted manner;
3. When students are presented with two competing examples of pedagogic practice where the instructional discourse is similar and the regulative discourse differs,

- students privilege weakly framed regulative discourse when constructing learner-centredness; and
4. Students associate learner-centredness with weak framing over evaluative criteria.

The research indicates that South African education policy documents and PGCE students associate learner-centredness with practices that place learners in greater control of selecting what they learn, covering content that they have selected at their own pace, and in the order they choose. Learners should be free to come up with various answers which should not be judged according to whether they are right or wrong, but rather whether these answers show that learners have attempted to answer the problem creatively. Moreover, learner-centredness suggests that learners should be free to have open interactions within the classroom, between themselves and the teacher as well as amongst themselves.

Bernstein associates these framing relations with an *invisible* pedagogy (Bernstein 1975), where knowledge is transmitted in a largely implicit manner. Invisible pedagogy is characterised by weaker framing over pedagogic discourse. In contrast, a visible pedagogy is characterised by stronger framing over pedagogic discourse, whereby control is made explicit (Ibid). These two types of pedagogic discourse should be seen ‘as opposing modalities of pedagogic practice, which either way still do their work in the field of symbolic control’ (Moss 2002: 555).

In the first instance, this study set out to explore the ways in which learner-centredness has been used. This is intrinsically interesting, given the centrality of this idea in educational discourse. The question is – what are the implications of these findings for policy and practice? Here it is necessary to be somewhat tentative, and bring the findings of this study into discussion with other research work in the field, research which raises significant questions about educational transformation and social justice.

All South African policy documents since 1994 have indicated the need to overhaul the education system to ensure equity throughout the education system. The Draft White Paper on Education and Training articulates the government’s challenge ‘to create an education and training system that will fulfil the vision to “open the doors of learning and culture to all”’ (Department of Education: South Africa 1994a: 9). This is meant both literally and symbolically, through the provision of classrooms as well as through the reform of teaching and learning which occurs within these classrooms, respectively.

As was shown in the review of educational policy documents, half of the education policy documents available since 1994 refer explicitly to learner-centredness as a central theme for educational reform in South Africa. While learner-centredness is central to educational reform in South Africa, policy discourse takes for granted that one common understanding of this key concept prevails. Interestingly, this research shows that, at one level, there is common agreement as to what learner-centredness means, namely weak framing over selection, sequencing, pacing and the regulative discourse. However, it is significant that there is a relative silence around evaluative criteria in relation to learner-centredness.

There are those who would argue that this relative silence has major implications for the government's challenge to 'open the doors of learning' to all. Morais, for example, points out that the research conducted by the Sociological Studies of the Classroom Project (ESSA) 'so far points to explicating the evaluation criteria as the most crucial aspect of a pedagogic practice to promote higher levels of learning of *all* students' (Morais 2002: 568; emphasis in original). She finds that children from working class backgrounds need strong external framing of selection, sequencing, pacing and evaluation, and weak internal framing at the micro level of the classroom over selection, sequencing, pacing, and regulative discourse. This type of framing enables students to ask question, turn back and go over previous material, deviate where necessary, and speed up or slow down, all of which assist them to understand. However, as noted above, the crucial factor is that learners need strong framing over evaluative criteria.

Here it is important to acknowledge two issues which I did not attend to in this study. While these issues would deepen the analysis, they do not invalidate the research. The first issue would be to consider classification as well as framing. The second issue would be to consider external and internal framing when discussing framing. In this study, I concentrated largely on internal framing; that is, the framing of selection, pacing, sequencing, evaluative criteria, and regulative discourse in the context of the classroom. This was a justifiable since the policy documents and students were primarily concerned with classroom interaction. Though I did not differentiate between internal and external framing, the study suggests that policy documents and students concentrate mainly on classroom aspects and do not foreground evaluative criteria.

Other studies suggest that the weakening of framing over instructional discourse may have unintended consequences for learners from working class and disadvantaged backgrounds. Rose (1999) found that ‘when indigenous children (in Australia) come to school, in order to engage successfully with the decontextualising forms of school discourse, they will tend to need explicit instruction in their purposes, texts, and forms of interaction’ (Rose 1999: 225). A visible pedagogy ensures children from disadvantaged backgrounds are able to recognise and acquire ‘an elaborated orientation to discourse’ (Ibid). ‘The weakening of framing of evaluation criteria and even of selection leaves children who entered school in disadvantage more disadvantaged – there is a text legitimised and valued by school and by society to be learned and *all* students should have access to that text’ (Morais & Neves 2001: 204; emphasis in original).

Bourne (2003) looked at a classroom which has increased achievement for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. She found that the teacher employed ‘strong and explicit regulation in the classroom’ (Bourne 2003: 516). While she argues that the teacher uses strong framing over pedagogic discourse, learners occasionally provided local examples within the teacher-led selection of content. External framing over selection is strong; internal framing is occasionally weakened to allow learners to ‘come in with their own experience’ (Ibid: 517). The teacher highlights that learners must understand knowledge at many levels. This is accomplished through the explicit selection of school content (strong external framing over selection) and explaining where learners’ own experiences fit within the school content (occasional weak internal framing over selection). The teacher also explicates the pace and sequence for which content will be covered. At times, learners are allowed to ask questions and debate issues and concerns relating to the texts but they must eventually return to the pace and sequence set by the teacher. Throughout, ‘the underlying purpose (of the lesson) was known by all students’ (Ibid: 512). Evaluative criteria remain strongly framed throughout.

The research above suggests that learner-centredness, when implemented with weak framing over evaluative criteria, will have serious implications for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. When evaluative criteria are weakly framed or silenced, learners must guess what is expected of them. When evaluative criteria are strongly framed, learners know ‘the underlying purpose’ of the lesson. Learners who are able to deduce the evaluative criteria from school contexts will have likely learned the rules elsewhere. Often

this ability mirrors class distinctions, where those who are able to infer the evaluative criteria are from middle class backgrounds (Holland 1981, Morais & Neves 2001).

Additionally, the findings of Morais (2002), Rose (1999), and Bourne (2003) caution against a learner-centred discourse which does not distinguish between external and internal framing over selection, pacing, and sequencing of content. A clear distinction between school knowledge and everyday knowledge must be presented to learners. Moreover, through explicit evaluative criteria, learners will see how school knowledge is organised and prioritised.

In South Africa, the Review Committee on Curriculum 2005 argued that changes in the curriculum statements must be made in order to promote 'social justice, equity, and development' (Department of Education: South Africa 2000c: 91). They found that C2005 under-specified selection, pacing, and sequencing of content and that the evaluative criteria, though addressed in detail through various measures, remained unclear (Ibid).

The Review Committee successfully argued that an implicit pedagogic discourse is unlikely to improve outcomes for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and thus the National Curriculum Statement for South African schools should articulate a visible pedagogic discourse where selection, pacing, and sequencing are clearly defined and the evaluative criteria are made explicit for all learners. This was later taken up in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (Revised NCS) (Department of Education: South Africa 2002a).

It is important to distinguish between the analysis of learner-centredness in policy documents and the analysis of pedagogic discourse within policy documents. Though pedagogic discourse within policy documents may articulate stronger framing over instructional and regulative discourse, this research shows that learner centredness is constructed using a weakly framed pedagogic discourse. That is, learner-centredness, as constructed in South African policy documents and by PGCE students, is an implicit pedagogic discourse. If teachers attempt to use a learner-centred pedagogic discourse similar to those constructed in policy documents, this will contradict the requirements of the Revised NCS, where a more strongly framed pedagogic discourse is articulated.

Muller points out that ‘the powerful impulse behind progressivism as an educational movement was social justice...’ (Muller 2002: 59). (Learner-centredness can be seen to fall squarely under the ‘progressive’ banner.) However, much of the literature indicates that an implicit pedagogic discourse is more likely to disadvantage the very learners who are most in need of help (Singh 2001, Rose 1999, Holland 1981, Muller 2000, Morais 2002, Morais et al 2001). Sadovnik & Semel (cited in Singh 2001) elaborate:

Bernstein suggested that invisible pedagogic modes might work for children who were not oriented to school knowledge by family socialisation. This pedagogic mode could only work if a number of conditions were met, including: (1) careful selection of teachers; (2) adequate preparation time for teachers; (3) time to construct lessons that allow students to recognise themselves; and (4) regular parent-school meetings (Singh 2001: 332).

These conditions have not been met for the majority of South African learners (Adler 2002). Yet, half of all education policy documents include references to learner-centredness where an implicit pedagogic mode is articulated. It appears that educational reform in South Africa will continue to rely on a learner-centred pedagogic practice as a key component for success.

As noted above, the pedagogic discourse of learner-centredness and the pedagogic discourse articulated in the Revised NCS are in great contrast to one another. The positions articulated are mutually exclusive. Teachers will likely find great difficulty identifying what is expected of them in regards to integrating learner-centredness across the curriculum unless learner-centredness is re/constructed to reflect a mixed mode of pedagogic discourse. Learner-centredness should be re/constructed in education policy and teacher education programmes to ensure: instructional discourse and regulative discourse are clearly distinguished from one another; selection and evaluative criteria are explicated to all learners; and external framing over selection, pacing, and sequencing remains strong while internal framing over selection, pacing, and sequencing weakens as needed by learners. In the foreseeable future, teachers and learners will continue to require explicit guidance on how to select, pace, and sequence content as well as how to ensure evaluative criteria are explicit. This will ensure conceptual coherence and progression, as articulated by the C2005 Review Committee (Department of Education: South Africa 2000c). Since the term ‘learner-centredness’ is unlikely to disappear from policy documents any time soon, it must rather be re/constructed accordingly if it is to be effectively utilised to ‘open the doors of learning’ for all South African learners.

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## Annex 1: Questionnaire

University of Cape Town

## Questionnaire

### Section A

What does the expression “learner-centred” mean to you? Please use the space below to write what you think.

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## Section B

Below are a number of statements about learning. Based on your opinion, please circle one choice for each statement. The choices are:

- Learner-centred – You definitely associate this statement with learner-centredness.
- Not learner-centred – You definitely do not associate this statement with learner-centredness.
- Either – You think this statement could be associated with either learner-centred or non-learner-centred classrooms.
- Cannot determine – You cannot determine an answer from the information given.

For example, if you think the first statement is not an example of learner-centred education, then circle “Not learner-centred” like this:

Learner-centred   Not learner-centred   Either   Cannot determine

---

1. Learners learn best when teachers determine the amount of time that should be devoted to each topic.

Learner-centred   Not learner-centred   Either   Cannot determine

2. Learners learn best in an environment in which learners know clearly what behaviour is expected of them; in which teachers are firmly in control; and in which clear boundaries are placed on communication between teachers and learners.

Learner-centred   Not learner-centred   Either   Cannot determine

3. Learners learn best in an environment in which discussion between teacher and learners, as well as discussion between learners themselves, is strongly encouraged.

Learner-centred   Not learner-centred   Either   Cannot determine

4. School subjects need to be learned in a particular order, and learners learn best when teachers decide on what order to present material.

Learner-centred   Not learner-centred   Either   Cannot determine

5. Learners learn best when they are able to decide on the subject matter that should be studied because this allows links to be made to learners’ own interests.

Learner-centred   Not learner-centred   Either   Cannot determine

6. Learners learn best in an environment in which discussion between learners is kept to a minimum so as to encourage maximum individual effort.
- Learner-centred      Not learner-centred      Either      Cannot determine
7. Learners learn at different rates and they learn best when they can determine the amount of time they should spend on a particular topic.
- Learner-centred      Not learner-centred      Either      Cannot determine
8. Learners learn best when teachers make the key decisions about what material should be studied in lessons since teachers are the subject experts.
- Learner-centred      Not learner-centred      Either      Cannot determine
9. Learners learn best when teachers tell them exactly what it is that they need to learn, and then correct them when they make mistakes.
- Learner-centred      Not learner-centred      Either      Cannot determine
10. There is no necessary sequence in the learning of school subjects in terms of what topics should come before others and learners should be able to decide on the order in which they learn material.
- Learner-centred      Not learner-centred      Either      Cannot determine
11. Learners learn best in an environment that is relaxed and informal, in which there are always opportunities for discussion between teacher and learners.
- Learner-centred      Not learner-centred      Either      Cannot determine
12. Learners learn best when teachers encourage them to explore subject matter and when teachers do not attempt to make clear distinctions between right and wrong answers.
- Learner-centred      Not learner-centred      Either      Cannot determine

### Section C

Set out below are four texts. Please study them carefully and, as before, circle one choice for each statement. Again, the choices are:

Learner-centred      Not learner-centred      Either      Cannot determine

---

#### Text 1

This is a mathematics classroom. It is the start of a new term, and after the teacher greets the class she gives the learners a brief overview of the three topic areas they will cover over the term. She tells them that they will be tested after each topic, and that a homework assignment will be given each week. She reassures them that as in the past, work will be corrected and returned to them as soon as possible after each assignment and test so they can check on their progress. She then proceeds with the first topic. She introduces a new concept, illustrates it by using a few everyday examples (often asking learners to provide their own), and then gives them some exercises to practise on their own. She does most of the talking, but if learners do not understand they can raise their hands to ask for clarity. When this happens the teacher explains briefly, and then continues with the lesson. If it happens that learners say they cannot cope with new work because they don't feel confident with work they have learned previously, the teacher will deviate from her plan and backtrack to revise and consolidate previous work. If only one or two learners say they don't understand she tells them she will see them later. The desks in the classroom are arranged in rows. While the teacher is talking the learners are silent, but when they are working on the set exercises they sometimes consult with one another. Because there is a lot of syllabus material to cover the teacher expects them to work quickly and keep together, and if learners don't complete the work in class they are expected to complete it at home.

(circle one)

Learner-centred      Not learner-centred      Either      Cannot determine

#### Text 2

This is a mathematics classroom in a religious school, which was built to serve a particular religious community. This religion places great emphasis upon respectful relationships between adults and children, so lessons tend to be very formal. The learners stand to greet the teacher and only speak when they are invited to do so. Lessons are silent places of work and talk between learners, as well as between learners and teachers, is not encouraged. There is a lot of work to be covered each term, high standards are set, and mathematics lessons take the form of a brief explanation of work to be covered, followed by exercises for the learners to practice. Learners can check their work by looking at the answers at the back of the textbook and if they have difficulties they can approach the teacher at her desk for help. All learners are expected to work at the same pace and if they fall behind they are expected to catch up at home. Learners are given tests three times a term, and so receive feedback on their progress in this way.

(circle one)

Learner-centred      Not learner-centred      Either      Cannot determine

**Text 3**

This is a mathematics classroom. It is the start of a new term, and after the teacher greets the class she gives them a brief overview of the three topic areas they will cover in the term. She has packs of material that cover the three topics and learners are allowed to choose a pack to start working on. Learners can decide on the order in which they work on the topics, but each topic is sequenced in a particular way and they are expected to follow this sequence. This means that the whole class is not necessarily working on the same topic, but learners group themselves according to the topic they are working on. They then work either alone or with others in the group on mastering the material. They work at their own pace in class and at home. The teacher expects them to cover all three topics by the end of the term, so the learners are expected to draw up a plan of work to enable them to do this. The packs contain self-tests which learners complete and mark themselves, and if they have difficulties they can approach the teacher who will assist them. At the end of the term learners write a major test on all three topic areas and the teacher provides detailed feedback on their performance.

(circle one)

Learner-centred      Not learner-centred      Either      Cannot determine

**Text 4**

This is a mathematics classroom. It is the beginning of a new school term, and after greeting the class the teacher begins the lesson by writing three problems on the board. These are challenging problems which require modelling of problems that arise in everyday life. In order to solve these problems learners will have to master a number of mathematics topics that will become apparent to them as they proceed. Learners are able to choose a problem from the three presented, or, if they feel so inclined, are able to suggest other problems that might interest them more. They are able to work alone or in groups on these problems, and can work in the classroom or in the library. They are given a week to solve the problem of their choice. If the solution to the problems requires mathematical knowledge which the learners have not encountered before, the teacher directs them to textbooks or the internet to find out about it, and provides assistance herself when needed. She feels strongly that learners need to find things out for themselves, so she is reluctant to tell them too much herself and prefers to show them where they can find what they need. After a week, the learners present their work to the group, and different solutions to the problems are discussed. The teacher is much more interested in the strategies learners use to solve their problems than of finding the right answers, and she encourages learners to approach problem solving in this way. The term's work is arranged around the presentation of problems in this way.

(circle one)

Learner-centred      Not learner-centred      Either      Cannot determine

Section D

Below is an assessment task given to learners with a learner's incorrect answer and a teacher's comment regarding the answer. Please circle *what type of teacher comment* you think each represents.

**Sample Task 1**

Write in words the number 315,090.

The learner writes:

$$\begin{array}{r} 315 \\ \underline{520} \\ 520 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 090 \\ \underline{090} \\ 0180 \end{array}$$

The teacher writes:

~~X~~ Please talk with other learners and refer to your book for help.

Teacher's comment is (circle one):

Learner-centred    Not learner-centred    Either    Cannot determine

**Sample Task 2**

Write in words the number 315,090.

The learner writes:

$$\begin{array}{r} 315 \\ \underline{520} \\ 520 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 090 \\ \underline{090} \\ 0180 \end{array}$$

~~X~~ You have misunderstood the question. You were asked to write the number 315,090 in words. The answer is "three hundred and fifteen thousand and ninety".

The teacher writes:

Teacher's comment is (circle one):

Learner-centred    Not learner-centred    Either    Cannot determine

**Sample Task 3**

Write in words the number 315,090.

The learner writes:

$$\begin{array}{r} 315 \\ \underline{520} \\ 520 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 090 \\ \underline{090} \\ 0180 \end{array}$$

The teacher writes:

~~X~~ You have misunderstood the question. Go back to section 3 in the textbook and revise the work, do the corrections, and resubmit them to me.

Teacher's comment is (circle one):

Learner-centred    Not learner-centred    Either    Cannot determine

**Sample Task 4**

Write in words the number 315,090.

The learner writes:

$$\begin{array}{r} 315 \\ \underline{520} \\ 520 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 090 \\ \underline{090} \\ 0180 \end{array}$$

The teacher writes:

~~X~~

Teacher's comment is (circle one):

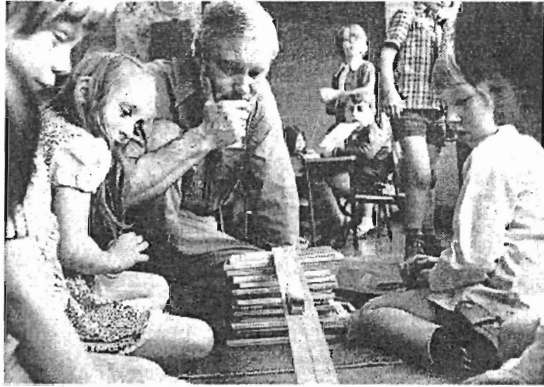
Learner-centred    Not learner-centred    Either    Cannot determine

Section E

Below are five classroom images. Using the same choices as before, please circle what type of situation you think each represents.

---

Image 1



(circle one)

Learner-centred

Not learner-centred

Either

Cannot determine

Image 2



(circle one)

Learner-centred

Not learner-centred

Either

Cannot determine

Image 3



(circle one)

Learner-centred

Not learner-centred

Either

Cannot determine

Image 4



(circle one)

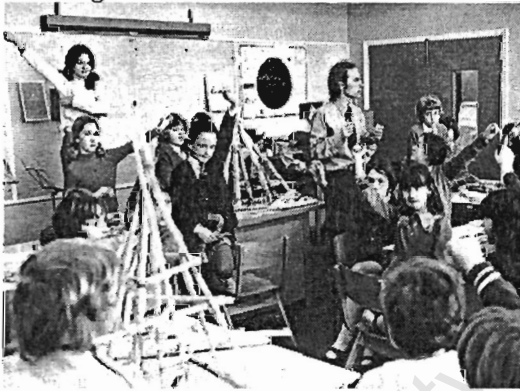
Learner-centred

Not learner-centred

Either

Cannot determine

Image 5



(circle one)

Learner-centred

Not learner-centred

Either

Cannot determine

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your assistance with this research is greatly appreciated. Really.

The following information, while optional, would be helpful to this research. All information will be kept confidential and no names, personal nor institutional, will be used in any way.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Gender \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any additional comments, please feel free to write them on the back of this paper or contact Todd Malone at [tmalone@ananzi.co.za](mailto:tmalone@ananzi.co.za).

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## Annex 2: Validity Check Comparison Spreadsheet

Questionnaire: Validity check coding results

	Original	Coder 1	Coder 2	Comparison	Notes
<b>Section B:</b>	1 Pacing F+	Pacing F+	Pacing F+	Same	Same
<b>Statements</b>	2 Hierarchy F+ (T/L)	Hierarchy F+	Hierarchy F+	Same	Same
	3 Hierarchy F- (T/L and L/L)	Hierarchy F-	Hierarchy F-	Same	Same
	4 Sequencing F+	Sequencing F+	Sequencing F+	Same	Same
	5 Selection F-	Selection F-	Selection F-	Same	Same
	6 Hierarchy F+ (L/L)	Hierarchy F+	Hierarchy F+, L/L C+	Same	Coder number 2 noted this also as an example of strong classification over learner/learner interactions
	7 Pacing F-	Pacing F-	Pacing F-	Same	Same
	8 Selection F+	Selection F+	Selection F+	Same	Same
	9 EC F+	EC F+	EC F+; Selection F+	Same	Coder 2 noted this also as an example of strong framing over selection.
	10 Sequencing F-	Sequencing F-	Sequencing F-	Same	Same
	11 Hierarchy F- (T/L)	Hierarchy F-	Hierarchy F-	Same	Same
	12 EC F-	EC F-	EC F-, Selection F-	Same	Coder 2 noted this also as an example of weak framing over selection.

	Original	Coder 1	Coder 2	Comparison	Notes
<b>Section C: Vignettes</b>	1 Selection Fe+	Selection Fe+	Selection F+	Similar	Coder 1 and 2 both suggest that, as in the original, this vignette is an example of a mixed pedagogic situation.
	Selection Fi- Pacing Fe+ Pacing Fi-	Selection Fi+ Pacing Fe+ Pacing Fi-	Selection F+ Pacing F+ Pacing F- Pacing F+		
	Sequencing F+ EC F+	Sequencing Fi+ EC Fi+ EC Fi+	EC F+		
	Hierarchy T/L F+ Hierarchy T/L F- Hierarchy L/L F+ Hierarchy L/L F-	Hierarchy T/L Fi- Hierarchy L/L Fi- Hierarchy T/L Fi+	Hierarchy F+ Hierarchy F- Hierarchy F+ Hierarchy F- Space: Classification		
	2 Selection F+	Selection Fe+	Selection F+	Same	All coders suggest that this vignette is an example of an explicit pedagogic situation.
	Pacing F+	Pacing Fi+ Pacing Fe+	Pacing F+		
	Sequencing F+ EC F+ Hierarchy T/L F+ Hierarchy L/L F+	EC Fi+ EC Fi+ Hierarchy L/L Fe+ Hierarchy T/L Fe+ Hierarchy L/L Fi+ Hierarchy T/L Fi+	EC F+ EC F+ Hierarchy F+		

Original	Coder 1	Coder 2	Comparison	Notes
3 Selection Fe+	Selection Fe+	Selection F+	Similar	Coder 1 and 2 both suggest that, as in the original, this vignette is an example of a mixed pedagogic situation with implicit regulative discourse whereby the learners have greater control over classroom interactions.
Selection Fi-		Selection F-		
Pacing F-	Pacing Fi-	Pacing F-		
	Pacing Fe+			
Sequencing F+	Sequencing Fi+	Sequencing F+/-		
	Sequencing Fe+			
EC F+	EC Fi+	EC F-		
		EC F+		
Hierarchy T/L F-	Hierarchy Fi-	Hierarchy F-		
Hierarchy L/L F-				
4 Selection F-	Selection Fi-	Selection F-	Similar	Coder 1 and 2 both suggest that, as in the original, this vignette is an example of an implicit pedagogic situation whereby learners have greater control over what happens in the classroom.
		Selection F-		
		Selection F-		
		Selection F+		
Pacing F-		Pacing F-		
Sequencing F-				
EC F-	EC Fi-	EC F-		
	EC Fi-			
Hierarchy T/L F-				
Hierarchy L/L F-	Hierarchy L/L Fi-	Hierarchy F-		
		Hierarchy F-		

	Original	Coder 1	Coder 2	Comparison	Notes
<b>Section D: Maths Assessment Tasks</b>	1 EC F-	EC F-	Hierarchy F-	Similar	Coder 1 saw this as an example of weak framing over evaluative criteria, as did the original coding of the questionnaire. Coder 2 however saw this as an example of weak framing over the regulative discourse.
	2 EC F++	EC F++	EC F+	Same	Coder 1 considers this an example of extremely strong framing over evaluative criteria (as did the original coding) whereas Coder 2 see this as an example of strong framing over evaluative criteria. These are very similar interpretations.
	3 EC F+	EC F+	Hierarchy F+	Similar	Coder 1 saw this as an example of strong framing over evaluative criteria, as did the original coding of the questionnaire. Coder 2 however saw this as an example of strong framing over the regulative discourse.
	4 EC F--	EC F-- (?)	EC F-; Hierarchy F+	Similar	Coder 1 considers this an example of extremely weak framing over evaluative criteria (as did the original coding). Coder 1 notes that this example is difficult to code with the information provided. This is similar to the interpretation of this sample in Chapter 5. Coder 2 see this as an example of weak framing over evaluative criteria. Coder 2 also noted that this is an example of strong framing over the regulative discourse.

	Original	Coder 1	Coder 2	Comparison	Notes
<b>Section E: Images</b>	1 L/L F-; T/L F-	L/L F-; T/L F-	L/L F-; T/L F-	Same	Same
	2 L/L F+; T/L F+	L/L F+; T/L F+	L/L F+; T/L F+	Same	Same
	3 L/L F-; T/L F-	L/L F-	L/L F-	Similar	Original interpretation was that this image is an example which suggests that learners are in greater control teacher/learner interactions. Both coders saw this only as an example where learners have greater control over learner/learner interactions.
	4 L/L F+; T/L F+	L/L ?; T/L ?	T/L F-	Different	Neither coder agrees with the original interpretation of this image. Coder 1 was unable to specify what coding the image is suggestive of while coder two felt that this was an example which suggests that learners have greater control over both teacher/learner interactions and learner/learner interactions.
	5 L/L F+; T/L F-	L/L F-; T/L F-	L/L F-; T/L F-	Similar	Original interpretation was that this image is an example which suggests that learners have greater control over learner/learner interactions and the teacher is in control of teacher/learner interactions. Both coders saw this as an example whereby learners have greater control over both learner/learner and teacher/learner interactions.