



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

**Utilisation of Teaching and Learning Centres in State Universities in
Zimbabwe: Implications for Teaching and Learning**

BY

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A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in Education

in the



Faculty of Education

UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE
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(January, 2019)

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Date 16 April 2019

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Viola Machingura, hereby declare that this research report is the product of my own work, and that where I have used the ideas and words of others, I have referenced these correctly. I also declare that, as advised by my supervisor, the responsibility for referencing correctly is my responsibility.

Signed...  .Date 16 January, 2019.



DECLARATION OF RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE

I Viola Machingura, Student number 201506896, hereby declare that I am fully aware of the University of Fort Hare policy on research ethics and I have taken every precaution to comply with the regulations. I have obtained an ethical clearance certificate from the university of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee and my reference number is MAV071SMAC01.

Signed



Date: 16 January, 2019.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am so grateful to the following people for the special role they played in having this work done and completed:

I am grateful to God almighty for giving me the strength and wisdom to finish this work. It was not easy travelling those long distances across the length and breadth of a foreign land, but because of the divine protection it all went on peacefully and smoothly.

To Professor Mavuso I say thank you for the professionalism and patience and for believing in me and encouraging me when I faltered.

The three state universities for granting me permission to undertake the study in your institutions I thank you.



University of Fort Hare

The staff and students who took part in the face to face interviews and the focus group discussions, I thank you because this could not have been possible. I will always be indebted to you.

My children and grandchildren, thank you for the encouragement, moral and financial support and Mai B for looking after the home and the *vazukurus* in my absence.

My colleagues at the Teaching and Learning Centre: the late C. Chiduuro and Mrs. Zinduku, it is unfortunate you could not see this work to its conclusion. You were my source of inspiration and I will forever cherish the discussions that sometimes spilled into after hours. Mrs. Claris Shoko, you came at the right time, your knowledge of computers and computer programming was of immense help. Thank you very much.

Belita Chitsamatanga, Euritah Nyamanhare, Henry Chinhara, Tapiwa Mudyahoto and all the PhD students at Alice, the professional discussions we had made it all appear so simple and achievable, thank you.

Professors Mugweni, Ganga, Chinyoka and Dr. Mudekunye, I could not have done this without the spiritual support, thank you for the prayers.

My brothers, Cleopas, Francis and Patrick; my sisters, Fiona and Bessie; you were all such a pillar of strength. The unity that prevailed between us made us stronger as individuals and as siblings.

Professor Siyakhwazi, thank you for always being there for me and for being my rock.

Dr. Salachi Naidoo, thank you for giving the manuscript the scrutiny it needed.



DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late mother Salome Mashayamombe, whose tenacity and resilience saw us her children go to school and succeed in life under very difficult conditions, I also dedicate this work to my children, Nyasha and his wife Pauline, Tinotenda and her husband Donald, Vimbayi and her husband Tinashe and the grandchildren Ratidzo, Rutendo, Panashe and Annikka who have had to endure my long absences. I say to them, never stop learning and the sky is the limit in your quest for knowledge.



ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to examine the utilisation of Teaching and Learning Centres (TLC) in state universities in Zimbabwe and the role they are playing in the improvement of teaching and learning in the institutions of higher learning. The social constructivist paradigm was found most appropriate for this study and was the lens by which reality was examined. The study used the qualitative approach and case study design to examine the issue under study. The purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who were rich informants for the study and these included Pro Vice Chancellors, Directors of Teaching and Learning Centres, Deans, lecturers and students. Data were collected through face to face interviews and focus group discussions that were triangulated by analysis of institutional records. The study was also guided by the theoretical lenses of the Social Practice Theory and the Concerns Based Adoption Model that provided the framework for the investigation. The study employed the Tech's qualitative model of data analysis that led to the findings being grouped into five major themes. The study established that Teaching and Learning Centres were not being fully utilised, thus were not helping to improve teaching and learning in a meaningful way in state universities in Zimbabwe. Possible reasons for this were the fact that the unit was not fully understood and different players at different levels in groups and as individuals had varied interpretations of what the TLCs were and what their role in the university was supposed to be. This lack of understanding and the absence of a shared understanding of what TLCs are and what they stand for, coupled with other factors such as the freeze on recruitment on staff in state universities and the assumed superiority of research over teaching for tenure and

promotion, led to the poor positioning and poor staffing of TLCs leading to their poor utilisation in state universities. Each of the staff levels also had concerns about the utilisation of the TLC that made them reluctant to utilise it. The absence of top management support for the TLC, and the perceived superiority of research over teaching again led to poor utilisation of the unit. The study recommends the hosting of symposia between and among state universities for the dissemination of knowledge and information on what the TLC is and what its role should be. Internal consultations by individual state universities on the functions, staffing and positioning of the TLC and exposure for the TLC staff to established units to raise their knowledge and information levels and confidence is encouraged. Removal of the freeze on recruitment of staff so that TLCs can be better positioned and staffed and review of ZIMCHE guidelines to align teaching, research and university service for tenure and promotion would also help. Acquisition of cutting edge technology for teaching and learning and top management to listen to individual and group concerns and act on those that impede on TLC utilisation is a must.

Keywords: Utilisation, individual and group concerns, teaching excellence, top management support, academic development and professionalisation of teaching.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	: Academic Development Centre
ATE	: Awards for Teaching Excellence
ATT	: Academic Technologies for Teaching
CBAM	: Concerns Based Adoption Model
CHESR	: Centre for Higher Education Support and Research
CTE	: Centre for Teaching Effectiveness
CTAG	: Centre for Technology and Academic Growth
CoP	: Community of Practice
CRLT	: Centre for Research on Learning and Teaching
CUT	: Chinhoyi University of Technology
GZU	: Great Zimbabwe University
GOZ	: Government of Zimbabwe
HE	: Higher Education
HEQCOC	: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario in Canada
LOU	: Levels of Use
MSU	: Midlands State University Professionalisation of HE Teaching
MHTESTDZ	: Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology Development Zimbabwe
PDS	: Professional Development for Staff
PVC	: Pro Vice Chancellor
PoTHET	: Professionalisation of HE Teaching
RoTE	: Recognition of Teaching Excellence

SOC	: Stages of Concern
SoTL	: Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
SCT	: Social Constructivist Theory
SPT	: Social Practice Theory
SS	: Student Support
TF	: Theoretical Framework
TFT	: Technology for Teaching
TA	: Teaching Academies
TLC	: Teaching and Learning Centre
TS	: Teaching Services
TDC	: Teacher Development Centres
USA	: United State of America
UZ	: University of Zimbabwe
VC	: Vice Chancellor
ZIMCHE	: Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Universities around the world are beginning to increasingly recognise the importance of offering high quality teaching and learning experiences in undergraduate and post graduate programmes (Ambrose, 2010; Hutchings, Huber, and Ciccone, 2011; Westerheijden, Stensaker and Rosa, 2007). Research surrounding teaching and learning at these levels has generally led to the conclusion that quality teaching is a pre-requisite for quality student achievement (McCaffrey, Lockwood, and Kartz, 2001; Rowan, Corruti and Miller, 2002; Wright, Horn and Saunders 1997) and teacher effects on student learning have been found to be cumulative and long lasting (McCaffrey, 2003). Research has also shown that successful teaching takes much more than a strong background in subject matter and a keen interest to teach (Darling- Hammond, 2006), it is an elaborate cognitive process in which educators are expected to draw on knowledge from multiple domains (Barnett and Hodson, 2001). Teaching and Learning Centres (TLCs) or Academic Development Centres (ADCs) have therefore traditionally played a key support role on university campuses to enhance instructional development (Holt, Palmer, and Challis, 2011). This study sought to examine efforts by state universities in Zimbabwe to improve teaching and learning by examining how TLCs are being utilized in these institutions.

1.2 Conceptualising teaching and learning centres (TLCs).

Training of teachers is a practice that was started in France in 1685 by St. John Baptist De La Salle for elementary and high school practitioners (Landolf, 2007). Special institutions were established to which prospective school teachers would go to be trained into professional practitioners who were well versed with the intricacies of how children learn and pedagogy as well as all issues to do with ensuring that teachers were fully qualified to do their work. No training was available for those teaching at colleges and universities until as late as the early 1980s when the first Teaching and Learning Centre was established in the United States. Until then all that was required for one to teach at university was a good honour's degree or a master's degree or the added advantage of an earned doctorate degree, an indication that expertise in a particular subject area was conventionally a sufficient requirement to teach at this level (Shulman, 2006). This obvious inadequacy in appropriate pedagogical training for university teachers has always left lecturers ill prepared to teach at tertiary level (Huber and Golde, 2006).

Bethune, 2006 observes, and rightly so, that academia until the advent of the Teaching and Learning Centre, was the only professional area that did not instruct its new comers in how to do what they would spend most of their time doing. With time the need to see teaching at university in the same professional light as teaching at primary or secondary school and in did as in Law, Engineering, Medicine and other professional disciplines where training was taken seriously became obvious to many (Landolfi, 2007). This is how TLCs were popularised and became common at most prominent universities across the globe. The 1980s became known as the Teacher Centre movement around Canada, the USA and Australia, where each institution was expected to have a special centre that was centrally positioned in the university

to professionalise university teachers (Lyll 2006). The centres addressed the complex issues involved in improving teaching and learning in higher education. Each institution made a priority of training and developing lecturers as teaching professionals through the TLCs. Furthermore there was a commitment by institutions to provide through the TLC, professional development on a continuing basis for the training to be effective (Phillips, 2006). Ongoing professional development through the centre was meant to also come up with an institutional memory and culture of teaching and learning excellence at all levels of the university (Cook and Sorcinelli, 2002).

Such teacher development in universities has always been assigned to professionals who have been referred to as consultants in some institutions. The TLC was given the mandate to assist lecturers take ownership of their teaching through reflective practice, thus acknowledging that improvements do not just happen overnight and with the assistance of the TLC the lecturer is able to figure out what works and what does not (Bartlett, 2002).



The challenge for most universities across the globe has been how to find a right and dignified place for teaching in a setting where research has been over emphasised (Shulman, 2006). Thus over time TLCs have become

....places that support, preserve and enhance the scholarly work of teaching and learning; a combination of support structures and sanctuaries where lecturers whose scholarly interests include teaching and learning can find safety and even collegueship for good work (Shulman, 2006.p.1).

Thus TLCs have always based their professional development efforts on research on best practice supported by policy that guides all in the university. Everyone's concern where TLCs have been established has been to enhance students' learning (Phillips,

2002). So many universities have established these TLCs since the 1980s to date, and the sole mandate has been to address the pedagogical needs of staff and students. The TLC has gone by a variety of names such as: teaching academies; teaching services; teacher development centres; academic technologies for teaching; centre for teaching and academic growth; teaching support services; centre for higher education support and research; centre for teaching effectiveness etc. They undoubtedly all share a common denominator in their goal of making teachers more effective and learning more enjoyable and fruitful (Landolfi, 2002).

By definition therefore, Teaching and Learning Centres are independent academic units within the university that exist to provide support services for lecturers to help them improve their teaching and professional development (McCaffrey, Lockwood and Koretz, 2008). They may also provide learning support services for students, and other services, depending on the individual institution. According to Chabaya 2011, university lecturers are appointed to teach as experts in their fields and know their content. However that does not guarantee success in teaching as teaching expertise is an altogether different matter. Many university teachers have not been trained to teach and may have difficulties conveying content and concepts to students. TLCs thus, exist to develop lecturers to modernise their teaching; to scaffold concepts and information on teaching in a way that can help students learn more deeply and retain what they have learned (McCaffrey, Lockwood and Koretz, 2008). The students themselves as novices in academic expectations at this level of learning may perceive the contents of lectures, books and other sources as too large amounts of information, rather than meaningful concepts, so need help to connect to make both teaching and learning meaningful (Chabaya, 2011). TLCs are therefore



there to help lecturers to teach in a way that students can meaningfully take in and students to make sense of their learning.

TLCs have also been described as change agents whose responsibilities (depending on the university), span a whole range of activities from offering professional development, mentoring both staff and students and offering consultation services and platforms for the sharing of teaching and learning experiences for staff, and also peer tutoring programmes and academic counseling for students (McCaffrey, Lockwood and Koretz, 2008).

1.3 The Zimbabwean situation

This study was motivated by the fact that the concept of TLCs is a new phenomenon in university education in Zimbabwe (except for the University of Zimbabwe). All state universities are expected to establish TLCs as a quality assurance requirement by the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE). University education in Zimbabwe has grown phenomenally since independence in 1980, from one to seventeen state and seven private institutions (Gwati 2011). This phenomenal increase in the number of universities has occurred despite challenges that the country is experiencing of limited resources, rising student/staff ratios, larger classes than before (Kariwo 2007) and increasing emphasis on research raising concerns about the quality of teaching and learning in the classrooms. The setting up of ZIMCHE in 2006 was a direct response to this growth. ZIMCHE is a quality assurance agency established by an Act of Parliament, Chapter 25:27, to register and accredit institutions of higher education (Government Gazette 2006). The mandate of ZIMCHE is to promote and coordinate education provided by institutions

of higher education and to act as a regulator in the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching and learning, examinations, academic qualifications and research. Through ZIMCHE's laid down procedures, higher education institutions have ultimate responsibility for their internal quality assurance processes and setting up of a teaching and learning centre is one of them. The study therefore investigated how Zimbabwe's state universities have responded to this expectation by finding out how these centres are being utilised to improve teaching and learning.

The three key result areas for every lecturer teaching at university in Zimbabwe are teaching, research and university service. Today, the world over, excellence in all three is a requirement not just for an individual's case for promotion and tenure, but also as an institutional marketing tool to respond to student feedback, to justify system-wide investment in research and scholarship and to provide accountability for public funding (Davies, 2008). However, it is no secret that in state universities in Zimbabwe, excellence in research holds more weight than the other two with lesser emphasis being placed on teaching which is generally taken for granted. University lecturers are generally assumed to have received relevant education in their respective academic fields resulting in the creation of disciplinary specialist identities (Selby and Colhoun, 2002). However, they have generally received little or no training to prepare them for university teaching and for their role as university teachers.

1.4 The situation elsewhere

The concept of TLCs might be new to Zimbabwe but it is not new to other parts of the world. The first TLC going by the name the Centre for Research in Learning and

Teaching (CRLT), was founded at the university of Michigan in 1962 (Gosling, 2001) and the phenomenon has expanded to all universities and colleges over the years. This expansion was in response to several critical reports on HE in the USA that include the Nation at Risk report of 1983, that demanded devotion of more attention and resources towards changing institution-wide practices in order to advance student success and lecturer effectiveness. This expansion has turned TLCs into a common and very visible feature of universities and colleges in both the USA and Canada. HE in these countries has embraced multiple new learning technologies, acquired and contributed to a vastly growing amount of literature on learning and applied these theories to impact teaching practices (Gosling (2001).

In Australia, research has shown a similar quality assurance movement that looks at academic developers in TLCs as an  essential resource that ensures quality academic standards across all faculties, schools and academic centres in the university (Taylor, 2006). In the Australian HE set-up, the academic developers are now increasingly being called upon to provide leadership in problem solving and change at the institutional level. The TLC has thus, in the past forty years taken centre stage in efforts to improve teaching and learning through the organized drive for student centred and active learning approaches as well as the raising of awareness of the evidence based teaching and learning (Taylor, 2006).

Closer home in South Africa, the need for sustained academic advising and support for students and lecturers based on the recommendations of the Education White Paper 3 (1997, 1.27.9), is on the rise. Academic advisors in TLCs in South African universities are strategically visible in clearly defined units across campuses with

responsibilities for various teaching and learning issues such as Professional Development for Staff (PDS), Scholarship of Teaching (SOT), and Technology for Teaching (TFT) as well as Student Support (SS).

This research was also motivated by the fact that the situation in Zimbabwean state universities is a bit far removed from what is happening elsewhere. First, from independence in 1980 to date, universities have changed from being elitist (ivory tower) institutions to open and equal accessed organizations (Chabaya, 2011). That means that before independence, university education was a preserve of a few whites and a sprinkling of blacks. This meant that only the intellectually gifted from among the majority black population of the nation could go to university. The lecturers who were mainly white professors, had no professional training yet worked independently without any regulatory  voices from Government or quality assurance agency, claiming instead, academic freedom to set standards (Chabaya 2011). So in terms of teaching and learning, Zimbabwean state universities are operating in the traditional elitist past, where they teach without any teaching qualification, work hard to research and publish (not necessarily on teaching and learning issues, but on anything that increases number of publications), yet the higher education environment they find themselves in, has dramatically changed (Chabaya, 2011). There is also very little research on the role of TLCs to improve teaching and learning in Zimbabwean state universities so this research will almost be breaking ground in this area.

In Zimbabwean universities, the second observation is the contradictory situation that they find themselves in; they now have to operate in an increasingly competitive

atmosphere in which they compete for both staff and students in an environment of expanded university educational provision. The number of universities rose from just one in 1980 to 17 in 2015. This means students are now coming from diverse backgrounds. They also have to contend with a more liberal and democratic set up that is controlled by both Government, through the parent Ministry, as well as the quality assurance agency ZIMCHE. Thirdly, there is also a reduction in levels of government funding, forcing institutions to seek alternative sources of funds thus further removing concentration from teaching and learning to fund raising through student recruitment for survival. The setting up of ZIMCHE is therefore one of the recent developments that seem to underscore the importance that the Government of Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology Development (MHTESDZ), now places on quality assurance in general and good teaching in particular.



1.5 Statement of the problem

Although TLCs are now a prominent feature of Higher Education in most countries as noted above, they have had their fair share of challenges through their evolution. A study conducted by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario in Canada (HEQCOC) on “The Evolving Role of TLCs in Ontario’s Universities” in January 2012, revealed that the centres experienced a number of challenges in organising and executing their work. Reasons for these challenges were noted to include among others, limited human resources allocated to the centres, lack of time for centre activities and continued diminished value by teaching staff for teaching in comparison to research. The teaching and learning centres were also said to often either lack the capacity or staff willingness to partake in planned programmes for the

centre. Such a scenario points to two possible explanations: that although TLCs were set up in Ontario, they were not fully recognised and were not playing their full roles and that in setting up the centres universities were just doing the expected but did not have the commitment to make them work as expected. In Zimbabwe all state universities started off as university colleges of the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) so have many resemblances to the mother institution. The UZ has a TLC and as such has assisted the new institutions to establish their own. This study, therefore, sought to establish how these centres are being utilised in the institutions to improve teaching and learning given the contradictions noted above, it was also felt that it would be instructive to note if these TLCs are fully understood and thus fully utilised to play their role as expected.

1.6 Main research question



This study was guided by the following research question:

How do Zimbabwean state universities utilise TLCs to improve teaching and learning?

1.7 Sub-research questions

In answering the main question, the following sub-questions were investigated:

- How have Zimbabwean state universities responded to the introduction of TLCs?
- What practices are in place to encourage improvement of teaching and learning in the state universities through the TLCs?

- How do management and staff utilise the services of TLCs?
- How do management and staff perceive TLCs?
- What strategy can be used to improve teaching and learning in Zimbabwean state universities through TLCs?

1.8 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were:

- To establish how Zimbabwean state universities have responded to the introduction of TLCs.
- To find out the institutional practices that are in place to encourage improvement of teaching and learning through the TLCs.
- To find out how management, staff and students perceive TLCs.
- To establish how management and staff utilise the services of the TLCs.
- To establish intervention strategies that can be used to improve teaching and learning in state universities in Zimbabwe through TLCs.



1.9 Purpose of the study

This study examined TLCs in Zimbabwean state universities and how they are being utilized to improve teaching and learning in the institutions.

1.10 Significance of the study

This topic has not been well researched in the existing literature, so it is hoped that it may be relevant to Vice Chancellors, Directors of TLCs, staff and students in Zimbabwean state universities as it may give light on how universities can utilise

TLCs to improve teaching and learning in their institutions. The findings of the study might also guide the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology Development Zimbabwe (MHTESTDZ) in its responsibility to ensure high standards of teaching and learning in higher education institutions in Zimbabwe. The study may also assist management in universities to review and identify gaps in how teaching and learning can be improved and to add to literature that can be used as a source of reference by scholars in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) in Zimbabwe and beyond. Thus the significance of this thesis lies in its contribution to the body of knowledge as follows:

- The scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).
- Technology for Teaching and Learning (TTL).
- Student Support (SS).
- Awards for Teaching Excellency (ATE).
- Professionalisation of HE Teaching (PoHET).
- Recognition of Teaching Excellence (RoTE).



1.11 Delimitation of the study

Three Zimbabwean state universities, including the one the researcher works at as the Director of the Teaching and Learning Centre, have been selected for investigation in this study. These are currently the largest state institutions in terms of student population and staff numbers in Zimbabwe and seem poised for even more expansion as seen by their semester by semester increases in enrolment and increases in programmes of study.

1.12 Definition of terms

- **The Teaching and Learning Centre:** as used in this study, is a central service unit of the university, it is dedicated to helping staff and students succeed in their academic work and careers. It works towards supporting the achievement of the university's institutional goals of excellence in teaching and learning (Henard, 2012).
 - **A state university:** is a public institution of higher learning that was created by an Act of parliament passed by the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ). These institutions are fully subsidised by the national government, and may be considered as corporate bodies.
 - **Improve:** This is to raise the quality of teaching and learning to a better quality or condition. **Utilisation:** The action of making practical and effective use of something.
- The logo of the University of Fort Hare, featuring a shield with a sun and the motto 'Pursuing the Frontiers of Knowledge'.
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- **Individual and group concerns:** Issues that are a matter of interest or importance to university staff and students individually or as a group.
 - **Teaching excellence:** the quality of teaching in the university that is considered as being outstanding or extremely good.
 - **Top management support:** approval or encouragement given by the executive of the university to the Teaching and Learning Centre.
 - **Academic development:** concerned with improvement of the quality of teaching and learning in the state university.
 - **Professionalisation of teaching:** The action or process of giving the teaching staff and the teaching that goes on in the state university, professional qualities, typically through training or acquiring added required qualifications.

1.13 Summary of research methodology

The tenet of the constructivist school of thought was used to guide the research process. Its assumptions are that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. In so doing they develop subjective meanings of their experiences (Okeke and van Wyk, 2015). In this research it was the meanings they attach to quality teaching and learning as espoused by the TLC that was under investigation. These meanings were varied and multiple depending on the level of the participants. Views of the top management were represented by Pro Vice Chancellors, those of middle management by deans and TLC directors, those of the operatives were represented by lecturers as well as those of the students to establish utilisation of TLCs in state universities. That broad spectrum of views made it possible to generalise results (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). As the current Director of the Teaching and Learning Centre at one of the three state universities under study, the researcher's experiences, beliefs, and values were also incorporated into the research. The research relied as much as was possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied by asking broad and general questions so that participants could construct the meaning of the situation, a meaning typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons (Bogopane, 2013). The questions asked were open-ended so that the researcher could listen carefully to what participants said and did in their life setting. Bogopane, 2013, believes that the subjective meanings that come out of such a process are negotiated socially and historically and for this research it was possible to explain the general utilisation or otherwise of TLCs in Zimbabwean state universities.

This is a qualitative research that looked at three separate cases of state universities in Zimbabwe. Qualitative research is the approach usually associated with the social constructivist paradigm discussed above that emphasizes the socially constructed nature of reality. It is about recording, analysing and attempting to uncover the deeper meaning and significance of human behaviour and experience, including contradictory beliefs, behaviours and emotions (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011). Qualitative research allowed the researcher to probe beneath the surface and access the less overt aspects of the institution's culture (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). An interpretive approach to the data that was collected was used where the subjective meanings that participants brought to the study were used to disprove or otherwise the researcher's theory that people are resistant to change. In this case because TLCs are a new phenomenon in state universities in Zimbabwe, that seeks to elevate teaching and learning in an environment that has always been conservative in its teaching philosophy and approach and has always been dominated by research as opposed to teaching, the assumption was that TLCs are viewed with skepticism and suspicion. The qualitative approach was used because there was need to probe beneath the surface to get to each institution's culture and practices that helped to explain whether the institutions were utilising the TLCs or not (Merriam, 2001).

The study looked at three separate cases of state universities in Zimbabwe. The case study design allowed for in-depth exploration of the utilisation of the TLC in each of the state universities under study and was appropriate for examining a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context (Yin, 2003). So because there was a multiple case study, each case had specific boundaries that were identifiable. I was interested in each of the three cases. Such a multiple case study thus, enabled

the exploration of complex situations, allowing for the gathering of multiple perspectives, from a range of sources including contextual information (Yin, 2003). It was also particularly useful when looking at a process (utilisation of TLCs), and answered the 'how' question (Yin, 2000) which was compatible with the research question of this study.

I opted for a multiple case study because looking at just one case would not assist me to generalise the results to all state universities in Zimbabwe. The multiple case study with variety across the cases ensured richness and depth in order to understand the shared phenomenon of interest (Anaf, Drummond and Sheppard, 2007 and Stake, 2000 and 2006). It also helped me to capture emerging contentious issues surrounding the utilization of TLCs in state universities in Zimbabwe and also allowed for constant comparison of emerging issues from the three cases under study.



In this study the population was comprised of the seventeen (17) state universities in Zimbabwe, all of which were expected to have TLCs as quality assurance units to help improve the quality of teaching and learning in the institutions. From the state universities the 17 Pro Vice Chancellors (PVCs), 17 TLC directors, the 238 deans, the 2176 teaching staff and the whole 137 299 student body made up the population of this study.

Three state universities were then purposively sampled for investigation. This means that the researcher deliberately selected particular state universities for the study. These universities were selected because they had the largest numbers in terms of staff and student population (these will be described in full in Chapter 3) and were thought to be in a position to experience the challenges associated with the need for

quality teaching and learning. So the PVC, the TLC Director, 3 deans 3 lecturers and 10 students from each state university were sampled for this study. My reason for selecting a small but information rich sample size was based on the fact that the meaningfulness and insights generated from qualitative inquiry had more to do with the information richness of the case selected and the observational analytical capabilities of the researcher rather than with the sample size (Patton, 2002, 245).

1.14 Chapter outline

The study was divided into six chapters including this introductory chapter that laid out the justification and motivation for the study.

Chapter one:

- 
- **Chapter two** was divided into two parts. The first part centred on the two frameworks i.e. the Social Practice Theory (SPT) and the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) that underpinned the study. The second part focused on literature based on the research questions.
 - **Chapter three** outlined the method used in the study and it spelt out the research paradigm, research approach, research design, population, sample and sampling, data collection instruments and procedures, credibility and trustworthiness, data analysis procedures and ethical considerations.
 - **Chapter four** presented and analysed data gathered.
 - **Chapter five** focused on discussions of the findings.
 - **Chapter six** gave a summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.



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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review has been divided into two parts. The first part discusses the theoretical frameworks that informed the study and the second part is based on relevant literature that is in line with the research questions of the study. The literature presents a synthesis of and critical engagement with existing research, recommendations for further research, and silences or gaps in previous studies on the utilisation of TLCs in universities in general and in state universities in Zimbabwe in particular. The purpose of the review was to evaluate the current state of progress in the study of this topic, to identify, organise and evaluate published material and to show that the reviewer knows what has been done, what is being done, and what needs to be done around the area of utilisation of TLC in state universities in Zimbabwe showing how the researcher intends to fill the gap that exists in knowledge in the area..



2.2 Theoretical framework

The existence of a theory or theoretical framework makes it possible for a researcher to explain phenomena, generate hypothesis, frame and test questions empirically. A theoretical framework is the structure, the scaffolding, and the frame of the study that enables the researcher to determine the type of questions to ask within the disciplinary orientation. Without a theory, it would be difficult to explain phenomena and related concepts that define the world (Silverman, 2007). So the Social Practice Theory and the Concerns based adoption Model were used for this study.

2.2.1 Social Practice Theory (SPT)

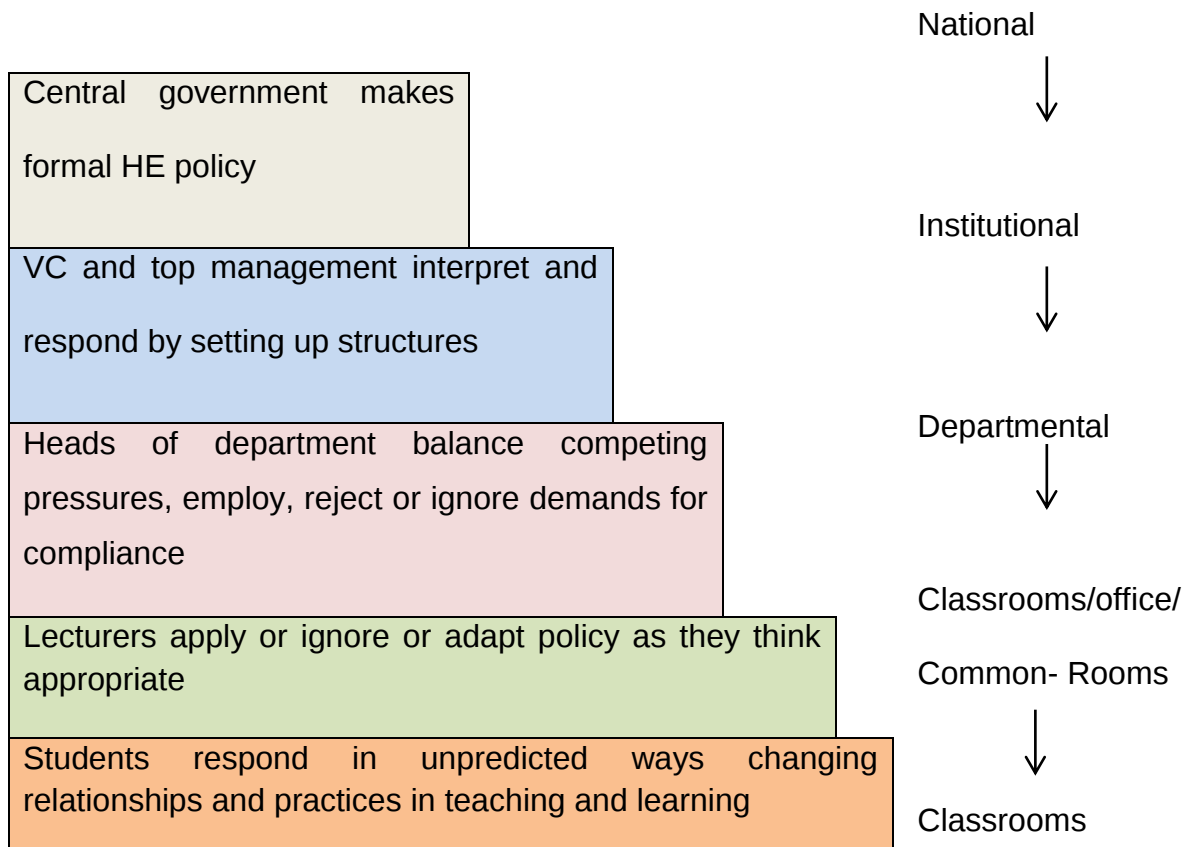
The study draws on the ideas of Social Practice (SP) theorists and researchers such as Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1984; Reckwitz, 2002 a and b; Schtzki, 2002; Shove and Panzar, 2005 and 2007; Warde, 2005 and others to develop a conceptual framework for understanding and analysing Zimbabwean state universities' utilisation of TLCs. The theory contends that, in order to change practices and move towards full utilisation of any innovation, all concerned must first understand what the innovation is and how it is composed and why. The concept of SP is a powerful lens for the depiction and understanding of what goes on in social domains such as Higher Education (HE) institutions. The idea of practice is a key aspect of the Social Cultural Theory (SCT) that says that all social life can be interpreted as consisting of a series of clusters of practices in different fields of activity (Shove and Panzar, 2005). This makes the SPT very appropriate since teaching and learning are the key activities in HE settings. A SP perspective denotes a concern with activity, behaviour, what people do, what they value and what meanings they ascribe to any phenomenon, either singly or in groups, but within institutional contexts through their systems, or nationally through structures like ZIMCHE. Social practice in this sense is the recurrent, usually unconsidered sets of practices that together constitute daily life in the institution, what Huberman, 1993 has called '*engrooved*' practices. Sometimes we are not even aware that the practice has become routine. Individuals participate in practices as 'carriers' of 'routinised' ways of understanding, knowing and desiring (Reckwitz, 2002).



So according to this theory, what people do, is a social phenomenon with discernible characteristics, one which assumes that people act in logical ways to achieve well understood goals in all contexts including university settings (Reckwitz, 2002). So practices in this case become behaviours associated with policy implementation that reflect why actors in the field behave in the way that they do. This perspective is premised on the idea that we access those knowledge resources interactively and continuously as we 'practice' within particular social contexts. In that sense we can say that they constitute the 'rules' that we use to behave in certain ways. However these rules are not fixed or ascribed, but fluid and situational and they contemporaneously shape our practice and are in turn modified by our practice (Blackler, 1995). Implementation of new ideas and new practices in any organisation are essential for the organisation to remain relevant and competitive in a changing environment. The absence of new ideas will eventually lead to stagnation but the challenge to organisations or institutions remains how to overcome the many barriers that appear during the implementation process so that the organisation or institution can successfully convert these ideas into sustainable practices (Chinowsky, 2004).

The most important lesson to be learned from an analysis of successful change in higher education is that it involves – at different times and in different ways – everyone who either wants to achieve change, is affected by the change or has some power over the change, i.e. everyone, but not everyone at the same time or in the same way. Raynolds and Sanders as quoted in Trowler, 2003, talk of an implementation staircase at which varying decisions or reactions to innovations can be noted as illustrated in Figure 2.1:

Figure 2.1: Reynolds' and Saunders' Implementation Staircase



Adopted from Trowler, 2003

The notion of an implementation staircase was introduced by Reynolds and Saunders in 1987, within the SPT, to highlight the significance of different levels of policy making and policy implementation by portraying the role(s) played by those standing on the staircase. Those on the staircase as given in the table above, implement policies, not as passive receivers, but as active agents who affect the process according to the agendas, meanings and values that they bring from their particular level on the staircase (Bamber, Trowler, Saunders and Knight, 2009). The belief by these authors is that since social reality is socially constructed, policies get implemented or rejected because they will look differently at the different levels of the system. So an idea will be seen differently by a Government agency such as

ZIMCHE, by the university top management, by heads of department and at the ground level by lecturers and students in the classrooms. Moreover each level of the staircase will have multiple but different issues, changes and agendas supporting or blocking the implementation of the policy. So policies, bounce up and down the staircase in sometimes unpredicted ways as they meet and are shaped by these realities. Trowler, 2003 warns that any idea that a policy will look the same at the bottom as it did at the top will be naïve. There will always be implementation gaps between the changes that are planned in policy, the changes that are enacted in practice, and the changes as they are constructed in the understandings of all players on the staircase. Any change will be received, understood and consequently implemented differently in different contexts. So policies get localised and domesticated in this way (Trowler, 2003).



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The staircase thus represents the complex relationship(s) between organisational levels and actors of policy in producing what may become un/intended policy outcomes (Trowler, 2003). The central idea in this theory is that policies in HE settings change as they travel up and down each stair, subject to the influence of successive constellations of actors (Eggins, 2014). At the same time actors' actions are likely to be shaped by their values as well as by organisational cultures and norms. The staircase can be particularly helpful in mapping organisational levels, each with a corresponding set of actors. So metaphorically each step down the stair to the shop-floor may turn out to be a driver or barrier to the implementation of a policy depending on the way individuals or collectives make sense of their professional world (Hisman and Tight, 2005). Moreover actors at any level may react to or even anticipate reactions from downstairs, complicating the feedback from

original intentions. Further distortions occur through the means by which the policy is enacted such as resources, student numbers, and how much their voice weighs and impacts on day to day activities (Eggins, 2014). The staircase levels in this study are: the national level represented by ZIMCHE; the institutional management level made up of the VC and his/her management team; the school/faculty/department/centre level made up of deans, directors, chairpersons and finally the bottom stair made up of lecturers and students.

The staircase also shows how implementation gaps develop as the policy travels along the steps. Implementation gaps will be found between the changes that were planned in policy, the changes that are enacted in practice and the changes as they are constructed in the understanding of the students whose learning they were intended to affect (Eggins, 2014). There are differences invariably between planned, enacted and constructed changes (Bamber, 2009). This study explored these gaps by observing these differences in the conceptualisation and utilisation of TLCs not only at the different staircase levels but also the different institutions studied. The suggestion is that perspectives might differ and that this is evocative of the two-fold function of each group or institution that acts as both a receiver and an agent in the implementation of policy messages. The message undergoes adaptation and is interpreted differently according to the distinctive and situated experiences of each stake holding group based on the way in which individuals and collectives make sense of their profession and world (Hisman and Tight, 2015). Trowler, 2003 sees Higher Education bureaucrats acting as filters for any policy that is being transformed into programmes and practice. He does not believe that these people at the different levels or the different institutions act as mere pawns, but suggests that

they contest the policy from a variety of historical developments and contexts. He further notes that although the relationship between attitudes and behaviour is not always straight forward, it is most certainly the case that a stakeholder's attitude towards a policy or innovation may influence his or her behaviour towards its implementation or in this case its utilisation. Attitudes do not only influence behaviour but also determine the ways in which the stakeholder processes information related to the policy or innovation. Attitudes in this case seem to be an important mediating link between the information received from the policy initiator and the implementer of the policy at the different stair levels and the different institutions. These attitudes are said to have an impact on the way that Higher Education managers and lecturers interpret policy and put into effect that policy. However, accepted ways of thinking and behaving set the context into which new policy flows and act as a filter in the policy implementation process, interpretation and negotiation (Bohner and Wanke, 2004). Thus, in larger scale educational initiatives, it seems reasonable to suggest that different issues, benefits, concerns or results may occur for particular communities or individuals. In such cases, Social Practice Theory – which takes greater account of diverse social practices of all the parties involved - has a great deal to offer. Where 'enhancement' is imposed by managers' power, with no accommodation of contextual factors, there is unlikely to be real change in values, attitudes or practices in the long term. Effective change is embedded in its context and comes when those involved make it their own through use and adaptation to local histories and contexts.

Trowler's (2005, 2008) framework for understanding and informing change processes within the educational context is the second theoretical tool used to

support the main argument put forward in this paper. Trowler's starting point is that much of our knowledge of teaching and learning is derived from research at the micro (psychological) or macro (sociological) levels, such that there is a need to focus more at the meso level – teaching, learning and educational change schemes in local contexts, such as the programme, department, or work-group. He uses the conceptual device of Teaching and Learning.

The regimes that he uses are themselves based in the Social Practice Theory (Trowler, 2005) and they provide insights into level dimensions (from management to the classroom) in universities. The significant contribution that his study of can offer to our understanding (and the practice of) change is the fact that they act as 'filters', conditioning the reception and implementation of change, as well as generating their own changes or acting as a brake on change (Trowler, 2005) thus leading to utilisation or non utilisation of TLCs.  During this literature review, the concepts of culture and culture change have been explored and a number of approaches and theories have been discussed. It has been argued by Alvesson (1993, 2002) multiple cultural configurations, fused with Trowler's (2005, 2008) theory of educational change provide better theoretical tools for guiding change initiatives in higher educational institutions, as compared with technical rationalist approaches.

The discussion and review of literature provided above raises questions about the suitability of technical rationalist approaches as the *dominant* informant for educational change initiatives. As indicated by Smith and Sadler Smith (2006), whilst these approaches may provide a starting point for the change agent, they obscure local issues and practices. Technical rationalist, rational purposive and related

approaches tend to provide limited consideration of the different workgroups who are involved in or affected by the change, deploying a 'black box' approach – akin to the behaviourist theory of learning. The work offers some recognition of such complexities, but still does not satisfactorily address local practices. The approach advocated here invites those who lead change initiatives to recognise and account for all the work-groups affected by such change from the start. The work groups being talked about here are the various work levels such as management, deans, directors of TLCs, lecturers and students as defined by this research. By taking account of diversities in work-group practices (Trowler, 2005, 2008) and cultures (Alvesson, 1993, 2002) from the planning stage onwards, policy makers and change agents can gain fuller understanding of environments that they are seeking to affect change upon, such that more genuine culture change might be achievable.



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Further, theories by Trowler and Alvesson are more useful for informing contemporary educational change, because they account for educational institutions *as they are now*: large, diverse, plural, complex. For the change agent, additional recommendations may be made. First, where a culture change represents an aim of an initiative, it may be useful to provide a more detailed explication of what that culture change is and what it is aiming towards. This way, both implementers and recipients may be able to take better account of it in their actions. Second, if we accept that there are differences within universities, for example, with respect to how different departments, schools, faculties, sections and other work-groups exist and function, it would be valuable to apply the perspective at the planning stages, as opposed to assuming a systematic or 'one size fits all' approach, as is a common characteristic and major limitation of the technical rationalist approach. Of course, it

needs to be recognised that there are limitations with the theory too. For example, it is suggested here that it may be difficult to apply the theory as the only approach for informing a change initiative, in complete isolation from other approaches; some aspects of change may need to be handled at a central level. So for the purposes of this study the theory has been taken together with the CBAM. Thus, universities must take seriously the important work of policy making units and committees, such that adoption of an approach requires that their roles and expertise is accounted for at the outset. What is advocated here is that this should take place through a foregrounding of the approach at all stages: creation, design, implementation, evaluation and follow up, such that the dominant theoretical precursor or guide to change is at the planning level itself. In the current climate of government cuts, rocketing student tuition fees, and more general 'chronic uncertainty' (Saunders, 2006), we may need to revisit what a university culture is or what university cultures are. But for now, there is a lot of merit in the theory.



2.2.2 The Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM)

As noted above this study also utilised the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM), another theoretical framework to evaluate the concerns of staff at various grade levels in state universities that are expected to utilise Teaching and Learning Centres (TLCs). The model looks at people as individuals rather than groups in trying to understand how they adopt to change. The model contends that as people experience change; they evolve in the kinds of questions they ask as they go through the change (Horsley and Loucks-Hosley, 1998). Individuals always ask themselves questions concerning a new innovation before they utilise it. Often, researchers say, the problem is not the program, but the way individual educators

respond to it. Each administrator, each principal, each teacher approaches a new program, any change, with a personal set of concerns, researchers have found. Early questions concerning the new innovation are said to be more self-oriented: *What is it? And, how will it affect me?* When these questions have been resolved, questions emerge that are more task-oriented: *How can I use this innovation efficiently? How can I organize myself? And why is it taking so much time?* Finally when self and task concerns have been resolved, the individual can focus on the impact of the innovation on their work. So questions such as: *Is this change working for students? And is there something that will work better?* (Loucks-Harsley, 1996). This means that in an organisation it is possible to find individuals at different levels of acceptance of a new innovation depending on the questions they are asking themselves. So in trying to understand where people as individuals in terms of understanding their acceptance or otherwise of an innovation, it is necessary to address the questions they are asking when they are asking them.

It offers a way to understand, and then address educators' common concerns about change. CBAM has other components but the most readily and commonly used is "stages of concern." The ideas were developed in the mid-1970s and many staff developers have integrated the concepts into their work over the past 25 years. "I run into people all the time who have heard of the stages of concern and kind of keep them in the back of their minds," said Shirley Hord, program manager with the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. She is one of the principal authors of the system. Hord said the program is helpful because it is based on research. "We didn't just think this up," Hord said. Through questioning and correlating answers from teachers and college professors about change, Hord and her colleagues

identified common concerns that most educators – or any group confronted with change – harbor. Some will go through all the stages, leaving one and moving up to the next. Most will skip around and may have several concerns simultaneously, Hord said (Hall and Hord, 1987).

The CBAM framework was developed on the premise that the single most important factor in any change process is the people involved in the change, therefore, facilitating change means understanding the existing attitudes and perceptions of those involved in the process (Hall & Hord, 1987; 2001). It was designed to assist in the adoption and utilisation of any new educational innovation (Hall, George & Rutherford, 1974). It was designed for the study of the adoption of any new educational innovation (Hall, George & Rutherford, 1979).



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The model was initially developed in the 1970s as a model to analyse change (Hall, Wallace, & Dossett, 1973) and evolved out of the work of Frances Fuller in 1969 in response to the innovation focus approach to educational change (George, Hall, Stigelbauer, 2006; and Newhouse, 2001).

2.2.2.1 Assumptions of the CBMA

The assumptions of the CBAM are that, first, change should never be perceived as an event, but as a process that should allow all concerned to have their concerns resolved, all internal debates to take their course and all questions answered (Hord and Hall, 1987). The second thing is that no change should ignore the individuals concerned because they need to change first before the institution can change

(Loucks and Pratt, 1997). All these changes are also initially very personal and private and only become public after a bit of time, that can be quite long for some individuals. So individuals will progress through the identified stages according to their individual emotions and capabilities regarding the innovation (Trowler, 2003). So those responsible for the change process must work in an adaptive and systematic manner and progress needs to be monitored constantly (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin and Hall 1987). What is encouraged by the CBAM is to take personal concerns of all individuals involved seriously because they are legitimate. Any resistance to change, whether demonstrated by the asking of hard questions, dragging of feet, or outright belligerence should be seen as a natural phenomenon. It is normal for people to want to know how something new will affect them and to feel threatened by the implementer's competence, comfort, control and confidence (Holloway, 2003). It is therefore the implementer's responsibility to apply the knowledge of CBAM's Stages of Concern below to help diminish resistance and to understand it when it occurs. The important point to note is that implementers of change will have gone through all the stages of concern and should allow everyone else to do the same. Failure to do so will lead to perceptions that some people do not like the innovation or that they do not like the people behind the innovation (Holloway, 2003) which might not necessarily be true. All that will be happening is a necessary process of adjustment to something new before it becomes part of the institutional culture.

Hord and Hall, 1987, observe that the primary goal of all professional development programmes should be to help everyone to reach the final levels of acceptance for a new innovation as identified by the CBAM. This is particularly critical with new staff

joining the organisation especially during the orientation phase because that would be the best opportunity for the organisation to change its culture of doing things and taking everyone on board. Staff already on the ground become mentors to the new staff and are staff developed first to pass on the new culture to the in- coming staff to ensure a smooth integration of old and new staff. Therefore, the real goal of every new programme is not only establishment of new relationships among staff but to ensure that existing relationships help people learn to work together to implement change in the organisation (Hord and Hall, 1987).

The other assumption is that change should be accomplished by individuals not institutions because for institutions to change, individuals within them must change. This is very different from other popular approaches such as the Organisational Development (OD) that believe that individuals have no choice but to change with the institution when a new innovation has been introduced (Trowler, 2003). The requirement would be that the individual has to comply otherwise there will be a mismatch between them and the organisation and its goals. This does not however imply that the CBAM is saying that the individual can do without the institution in the change process, but that the institutional support is an important part of the whole process (Loucks and Pratt, 1979). Change is also seen as a highly personal experience that affects individuals differently making this personal dimension more critical to the change process than any other dimension. So because of this the CBMA contends that change is brought about by individuals, so their personal satisfaction, concerns, motivations and perceptions all play a part in determining the success or failure of a change initiative (Trowler, 2003). In line with this philosophy, it goes without saying that to attend to the diversity of interests and needs; choices of

what should be happening should take on board all concerned views. This makes change a developmental process that entails growth in feelings and skills of individuals who must of necessity go through stages in their orientation to the innovation and in their skill and innovation in using/utilizing it (Trowler, 2003).

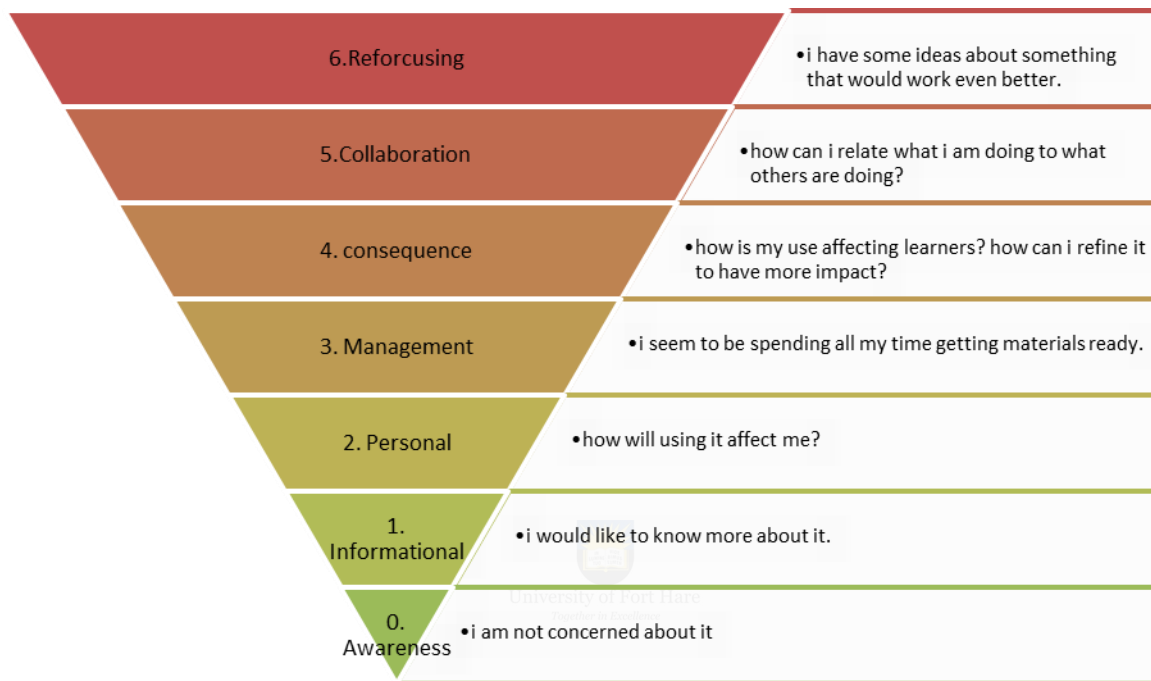
2.2.2.2 The CBAM's Seven Stages of Concern

The model identifies seven stages of concern in the journey that each individual travels in trying to understand an innovation and finally coming to accept (utilise) or reject (not utilise) it. Figure 2.1 aptly illustrates this. The stages point to the importance of attending to where people are and addressing the questions they are asking at any given time since failure to do so might lead to perceived rejection of the innovation. The suggestion is that it takes at least three years for people in an organisation like a higher education institution to have their concerns resolved and yet later ones will still emerge and that concerns for people in management might take at least a year. At times external help in the form of outside resource persons might need to be sought in order to help answer unresolved questions (Hall and Hord, 2011). These authors also contend that at times individuals might even resist efforts to have their questions resolved by refusing to attend workshops that might be trying to assist them resolve their concerns simply because they will still be going through internal debates of their own so help over time might be needed to 'work the kinks out' (Loucks-Horsley, 1998, p. 1). After that the practice becomes routine and no more questions are asked and the same individuals might even champion the innovation and help make the innovation a success. So for speedier acceptance of an innovation in a HE setting, there is need for all concerned especially from those in management, to acknowledge that individuals might have concerns about the



innovation that might need time and help to resolve and that addressing these concerns is critical for progress in the acceptance of that innovation to be made (Hall and Hord, 2011).

Figure 2.2: The seven stages of concern about an innovation



Adopted from Loucks-Horsley, 1998.

The stages of concern are what the individual goes through as they try to come to terms with an innovation that the institution is trying to introduce starting at the lowest possible level.

- **Informational:** Interested in some information about the change.
- **Personal:** Wants to know the personal impact of the change.
- **Management:** Concerned about how the change will be managed in practice.
- **Consequence:** Interested in the impact on students or the school.
- **Collaboration:** Interested in working with colleagues to make the change effective.

- **Refocusing:** Begins refining the innovation to improve student learning results.

Being aware of the concerns allows those in charge of the innovation to tailor aid given to individuals. “Using the stages of concern, you can get a whole profile,” said Gene Hall, one of the CBAM researchers and dean of the college of education at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. For example, if a leader knows a teacher is concerned about how the innovation will be used in the classroom, that teacher can be given additional preparation or paired with a teacher who is using it well. Determining a person’s stage of concern can be as simple as asking questions, Hord said.

2.2.2.3 *The CBMA’s levels of use*

After the innovation has gained initial acceptance, it goes through what Holoway, 2003 has termed levels of use.  The innovation or policy will have received acceptance and what is left is for it to become part of the main stream activities of the organisation that just flow because it has become part of the institutional routines and culture. Like the levels of concern, users will be at different levels at which they will be utilising the innovation. Some members of the institution who might have failed to be concerned about it might out rightly reject the innovation and will be at the bottom rung and will show no interest at all and the stages of use go up to the eighth level where interest in the innovation is such that alternatives will be proffered to make the innovation work even better. Table 2.1 aptly illustrates this:

Table 2.1 Levels of use of an innovation

Level of use	Behavioural indicators of level
Renewal	The user is seeking more effective alternatives to the establishment.
Integration	The user is making deliberate efforts to coordinate with others to utilize the innovation
Refinement	The user is making changes to increase outcomes.
Routine	The user is making few or no changes and has an established pattern of use.
Mechanical	The user is making changes to better organise utilization of the innovation.
Preparation	The user has definite plans to begin utilising the innovation.
Orientation	The user is taking the initiative to learn more about the innovation.
None use	The user has no interest, is taking no action.

Adopted from Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin and Hall (1987)

The first and lowest level of the model is termed the stage of 'None-use' at which the individual has little or no knowledge of the innovation, has no involvement with it and is doing absolutely nothing towards becoming involved. Holloway (2003) suggests that this is the time to involve all concerned in discussions and decisions about the innovation for information giving in small management doses and to arouse interest in the innovation. No questions that individuals ask should be dismissed as foolish because people are not aware. The next level, the 'orientation stage' is still self-centred in that the individual has moved a step up and will be taking action to learn more about the innovation by exploring its value. Clear and accurate information should thus be provided and several ways should be now be used to share

information through the use of a variety of media. As much as is possible the information given should be made to show how the innovation relates to the individual's work (Holloway, 2003). At the next level wraps up the 'personal' concerns at which the individual can now connect with other novice users of the innovation and prepares for first use of the innovation. It is at such a level that staff development activities can be carried out to ensure a smooth utilization of the innovation.

In the mechanical concerns that follow in the next stage, the individual now focuses more effort on the short-term, day-to-day use of the innovation with little time for reflection and does not ask so many questions. Concentration is now more centred towards the mastering of tasks required to use the innovation. The use however might still be disjointed and artificial so  those introducing the innovation might need to be on the watch out for any slips and be prepared to jump in to offer assistance or any explanations that might help smoothen out any grey areas. After this individuals become more stable in their use of the innovation and all they need at this 'consequence' stage is positive feedback that helps individuals look for opportunities to share what they know about the innovation. The innovator now varies the use of the innovation to increase the expected benefits within the immediate sphere of influence (Holloway, 2003).

In the last two stages the individual is now so much into the innovation that their views can now be integrated in exploring alternatives in the utilization of the innovation. The user in the final stage can reevaluate the quality of use of the innovation, seek major modifications of, or alternatives to, present innovation to

achieve increased impact, examine new developments in the field and explore new goals for self and the larger community (Rutherford, William, Huling-Austin, Lesley and Hall, 1987). It is at this point that individuals within the organisation will now be so comfortable with the organisation that they can even facilitate at workshops and present conferences about the innovation. They might even go further as to champion the cause of the innovation to those in lower levels of concern and to market the innovation to those who might not know about it within and outside the institution.

What comes out clearly about the CBAM from the above discussion is that for any new innovation to receive acceptance from those who are supposed to utilise it, all individuals' concerns have to be met at the stage they are at so that they can progress to the next stage. If individual concerns are not addressed, individuals might get stuck at a lower level and not utilize an innovation as expected. Individuals become so isolated that they are not likely to reach higher levels of utilization because they are denied the opportunity to have their concerns resolved.

According to Hall and Hord, 1987, determining a person's stage of concern can be as simple as asking questions. Educators can be asked informally during a chance meeting in the hall or in the lunchroom, something Hall and Hord call a "one-legged interview." Or lecturers can be asked to respond to open-ended questions as part of the original training. For those interested in building statistical data, teachers can be asked to fill out a survey developed by university researchers. That method is best used only by those who have received training and have a particular need for the data. For most, the informal questions of this "one-legged interview" are the most

productive. The questions should be fairly specific: How are your students managing the new math manipulatives? If a lecturer might answer, “I haven’t really had a chance to use those,” the lecturer is at the first stage, awareness, not really concerned about the innovation. A lecturer who answers “Mary Jo and I have been working on some ways to let the students use them more for discovery” has reached the collaborative stage. Lecturers can then get the follow-up support for their stages. The first lecturer may need retraining to get more information and be impressed with how important the innovation is. The second lecturer needs to be encouraged to continue and expand the collaboration. A more formal way to assess an individual’s stage of concern involves asking lecturers to respond to an open-ended question. The question can be asked at the beginning of training, the end, or both. Before and after training, lecturers can be asked a question such as “What concerns you about the new program?” If asked before and after, facilitators can see where lecturers started and how much movement has occurred. Similarly, when asked at the end, responses indicate what type of follow-up is needed with specific lecturers. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model is a conceptual framework that provides tools and techniques for assessing and facilitating reform in an educational environment. The dimensions of CBAM can be used to examine the components of an innovation, to track the progress of implementation, to report the findings objectively, and to design interventions or strategies that will move the process forward. Evaluators may also find these tools helpful in measuring the implementation of specific standards-based reforms.

It is clear therefore that what the CBAM does is give people a set of lenses through which to view and understand the change process and that the CBAM is based on a number of assumptions about the change process. One of the most important

concepts that CBAM is that it stresses that change is a process and not an event, and everything else follows from that, because the tools reinforce the attention to process, and from that perspective everything fits together. Change is also a personal experience; it is a personal feeling; personal frustrations, moments of joy, excitement, depression, discouragement that are part of change. So, if anyone wants change to be successful, they must understand that the personal side to each individual is really important.

Furthermore, what we fail almost always to do is to check up and to see how well management and staff are using a new program or process in the institution or in the classroom in order that we give them additional information and coaching and follow-up to help them improve what they are doing. The CBAM is made up of three dimensions. Stages of Concern: While implementing an innovation, educators are likely to have concerns, whether they are personal concerns, management concerns, or concerns related to the impact of the innovation. Stages of Concern, sometimes called SoC, that use a questionnaire to help identify and describe the concerns educators have during the implementation process.

The other point to note is that Stages of Concern is a way of accessing information about people's attitudes, or reactions, or feelings about a new programme or a new practice. In other words, it is the affective domain -- what they are thinking about it or feeling about it. Levels of Use: Educators will use an innovation to varying degrees. Some may only be thinking about using it. Some may be using the innovation in a very mechanical way, and some may be refining it for maximum impact. Levels of Use, also known as LoU, use an interview protocol to assess the degree to which an educator is using an innovation.

Mostly, the problems that come about with change from the CBAM perspective have to do with, not so much that the innovation is not well designed or not effective, but rather its use is not at the highest level right from the beginning, and so those are the aspects that this study investigated. Innovations are almost always altered by individual lecturers to fit the personal conditions and needs of their students and classrooms.

2.3 Literature based on research questions

The next section of this chapter reviews literature that is grounded on research questions. The section will focus on TLCs, how they have evolved from the earlier emphasis on research by universities as opposed to teaching and learning and how this has affected how TLCs are perceived. Strategies that have been used to enhance positive perceptions towards TLCs will also be discussed.



2.3.1 Response to the introduction of TLCs in universities

Research has shown that many challenges in higher education in general, and university education in particular, have led to the introduction of TLCs in institutions worldwide (Grabove, V., Kustra, E., Lopez, V., Potter, M. & Wiggins, R.). There is a general dwindling of resources that have shifted responsibility for university education from the state to individuals, thus giving parents and students the power to demand for quality teaching and learning and also for value for money invested (Seldin, P. 1997). An historical change is also taking place in higher education; teaching is now being taken more seriously than before (Seldin, 1997). At long last, after years of criticism and cries for reform, more and more universities worldwide,

including state universities in Zimbabwe, are reexamining their commitment to teaching and exploring ways to improve and reward it (Seldin, 1997). The setting up of TLCs in universities is a direct response to this movement to take teaching seriously. The following section focuses on how TLCs have evolved and how this has affected perceptions towards them. As is to be expected, most of these universities are traditionally research intensive, so they present significant scholarly, as well as professional challenges for TLCs (Marshall, Orrell, Cameron, Bosanquet, and Thomas, 2011; Wieman, Perkins, and Gilbert, 2010).

The most important indicator of success for any centre is the extent to which it is utilised by those for whom it was set up (Challis, Holt and Palmer, 2009). A fully successful TLC is the obvious place to go for any matters to do with teaching and learning. A successful centre will be  consulted regarding the development of teaching and learning related policies and it should be represented on relevant teaching and learning committees and its practices and activities will be included in the main fabric of the university life (Challis, Holt and Palmer, 2009).

Taylor, 2005, identifies factors that indicate positive response to the setting up of a TLC in a university. Of these, four have been discerned as being especially important:

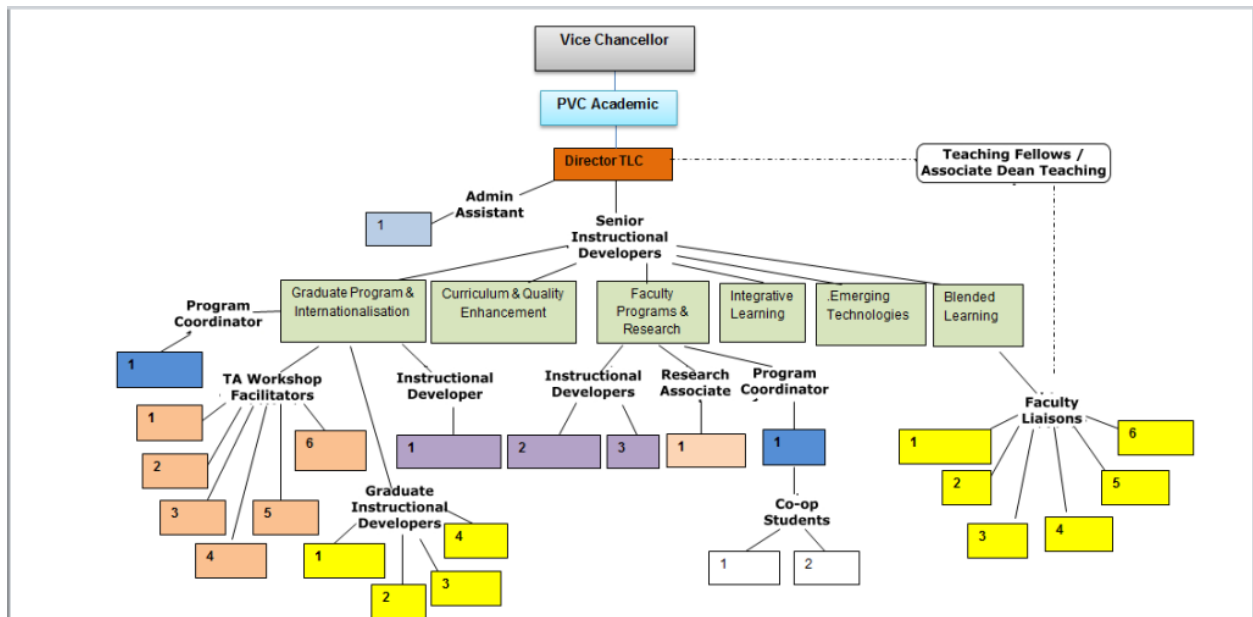
- A clear management structure for the Centre with an executive Director at the helm and clearly defined roles for all in the Centre;
- A shared understanding and appreciation of the role and purpose of the Centre;

- The capacity and capability of the Centre to fulfill its role and achieve its purpose; and
- The ability of the Centre to demonstrate its value.
- While discussed separately below, each, in itself, is a complex interrelated point, illustrative of the complexities involved (Chalmers and O'Brian, 2005).

2.3.2 The structure and leadership of the Centre

Most TLCs are structured in such a way that their purpose is to do what the university asks according to the university statutes. The Centre itself is not the driver of what is supposed to be done (Taylor, 2005). Direction is obtained from the senior management, possibly the office of the Pro Vice Chancellor Academic, who should sit down with all schools; faculties and departments, through Senate, to adequately identify what the Centre should be doing (Taylor, 2005). The success or otherwise of the Centre will be judged by the university's senior executive who by their position have authority oversight and who, by their expectations, also set the context in which the Centre will be judged (Challis, Holt and Palmer, 2009). These authors contend that the ultimate judge of the Centre performance should be a member of the Vice Chancellor's team, The Centre Director should therefore report directly to that office, that way the Centre will be viewed positively by the rest of the university community and its utilisation is assured. Below is a sample structure that works along the way that is suggested by Challis, Holt and Palmer, 2009.

Table 2.2 an example of a TLC organizational chart



Adopted from Gosling, 2008b.

In a research carried out by D'Andrea  and Gosling with Australian universities in 2005, such a structure was noted to have many academic attributes that led to the raising of the TLC profile and ultimately its respectability and utilisation by academics from the faculties. The structure was thought to be in line with best international practice and the majority of staff was employed on academic as opposed to administrative conditions of service leading to their acceptance (D'Andrea and Gosling, 2005). Any academic development activities undertaken by the TLC were viewed positively and considered of value. The conclusion drawn by this research was that the structure gives academic status to the TLC and was thought to enhance the image of the TLC among academics.

Gosling, (2008a) also notes that where there is a symbiotic relationship between the Centre and the VC and the PVC Academic as seen above, there is bound to be

success and hopefully full utilisation of the Centre by the rest of the university because the Centre is most likely to be fully resourced, able to influence academic standards within the institution and able to build robust connection with the schools and faculties. Consequently, while individual Centre staff can have exceptionally good relationships with individuals from across the university, it is the perceptions and general treatment by those at the top end of the strategic leadership that determine whether the Centre is valued and ultimately gets utilized more (Gosling, 2008a).

The situation is however made complex if there is frequent leadership change within the institution, because that affects the stability of the Centre. It has been noted in most universities that any change of university leadership usually leads to a change in the structure of the TLC (Dow, 2007).  In another recent study of Australian centres, it was observed that TLCs seem to have an inbuilt instability due to constant changes of university management leading to the dissolution, sometimes reconstruction or setting up of different purposes of the Centre (Gosling, 2008a). Change in leadership in any organisation can and will have a massive impact, because, after all, leaders are the ones who are able to have the biggest effect, whether that's positive or negative, on their organization. These frequent changes result in confusion and uncertainty within the broader community of the university who will then struggle to adopt and confidence in the Centre is lost and its utilisation diminishes. Sometimes the confusion and the struggle to achieve an accepted identity by the Centre is compounded by the fact that changing direction frequently results in change of name for the Centre (Dow, 2007). There is also a tendency that where there is a change of management there is a deliberate move to chart different

directions from what the previous management regime might have been doing in an attempt to leave the past behind thus compounding the confusion (Gosling, 2008a).

Success in terms of full utilisation is usually achieved where even if there is a highly positive and generative relationship between the executive and the Centre, there is a clear structure that is fully staffed and has a clear mandate that is part of the university statutes, that way it can stand the test of time and any change of top leadership that can occur. However the ambitions of the person in charge at the executive level will always be responsible for shaping the Centre goals and agendas, and where there are frequent personnel changes at that level, that might mean that execution of directions for the Centre might also change (Gosling, 2008a). These are political realities that any Centre Director has to be attuned to. It goes without saying that centres cannot afford to disregard internal university politics of the day, because they are inevitable and affect the university community's perceptions of the Centre and in turn the Centre's utilisation.

Another important factor is that universities are by nature incredibly slow and conservative, and this makes it sometimes very difficult to change an established university culture overnight (Gosling, 2008a). Academics are known to make it very difficult for senior management to implement change for fear of creating too much political tension. So, because academics are so conservative, trying to get them to embrace new ideas might be difficult and takes a bit of time (Dow, 2007). It can therefore be concluded from the above observations that the volatility of leadership with their noted consequent implications is a major reason why many centres struggle to be accepted and to gain full utilisation (Taylor, 2005).

2.3.3 Shared understanding and appreciation of the role of the TLC.

In a survey conducted at Australian and British universities on whether there was a shared understanding and appreciation of the role and purpose of the TLC, it came out clearly that centres work within a complex and often contested environment (Taylor, 2006). This is partly due to the changed role of the enterprise university itself, which over the years has taken on new forms of organisation in terms of method and organisation and values becoming more massified than before (Marginson, and Considine, 2000). There is a broad acceptance that the following purposes of an ideal centre should remain in force:

- maintaining a corporate memory of, and sustained engagement in, the issues and innovations in teaching in HE;
- engaging in comprehensive and systematic implementation of teaching and learning initiatives;
- creating and facilitating communities of learning involved in the iterative and dynamic top-down/bottom-up engagement and management of educational initiatives; and
- Investigating, articulating and disseminating scholarship in (and on) teaching, learning and educational development (Chalmers and O'Brien, 2005, p. 51).



However, despite this seemingly clear role of the Centre, concerns were raised that the role of the Centre was overstated, because these are not the sole prerogative of the Centre and the observations were thought to be more theoretical than practical (Dow, 2007). Centres in the long run would always be accused of encroaching into school, faculty and department territory because of the perception that they are not

in the thick of the teaching action, but observers who might lack hands-on day to day information of the situation on the ground (Havnes and Stensaker, 2006).

Another contentious issue was the extent to which Centre staff should be involved in academic and scholarly activities (Dow, 2007; and Havnes and Stensaker, 2006). What was challenged was the usefulness of such research work since it would be happening outside the actual teaching and learning of the university. Such research is viewed as being relevant to the Centre itself rather than something that could be relied on (Dow, 2007). Such research it was felt should be done in conjunction with faculties, schools and departments and not in isolation because this gives the impression that TLCs are an enclosed professional group (Challis, Holt and Palmers, 2009). So from the results of this survey, there is no shared understanding of the purpose of the TLC because of poor communication between the Centre and the rest of the university community, making it not so clear whether the university really needs the Centre. The conclusions that can be drawn from the above are that whatever the activities the TLC partakes need to be valued by the whole university community and these activities must be linked somehow to what will be happening in the faculties, schools and departments for them to be accepted (Knight, 2006).

2.3.4 The capacity and capability of the Centre to fulfill its role and achieve its purpose

TLCs were noted by the research above, to require both capacity (resources and opportunities) and capability (in terms of staffing and expertise) in order to achieve success (Challis, Holt and Chalmers, 2009). However even if these are in place, there is need for clarity in terms of what the Centre is meant to deliver and the

research revealed that perceptions on this vary from university to university and among individual academics as to what the Centre is supposed to do.

Taylor, 2005 points out that there also needs to be an acknowledgement that the Centre staff has the skills and capabilities that the university needs, otherwise they lose their relevance. The Centre staff themselves would also want clarity on career opportunities by working in the Centre, which should be comparable and commensurate with what is availed to staff in the rest of the university. Because of any uncertainty in this regard, senior academics who ideally should work in the Centre and use their experience to offer leadership to the rest of the university would not want to work in the Centre (Taylor, 2005).

The approach that is utilised by the Centre,  when staff develop the academics, is another important factor in the acceptance or otherwise of the Centre. The question of who drives the Centre activities will always be asked. Some faculties might demand that all activities should be driven by their stated needs, yet others would expect that the Centre should use its own initiatives to come up with activities (Taylor, 2005). Whichever route the Centre takes, there will always be those that will be opposed to what will be happening (Taylor, 2005).

The other challenge is whether Centre staff is trusted by all or not especially in terms of its experience and exposure to what faculties and schools do. The staff will always be questioned especially if there is a suspicion that the Centre is something the university put together to seem to be doing something in the area of teaching and learning (Taylor, 2005).

2.3.5 The ability of the Centre to demonstrate its value

TLCs tend to rely on persuasion rather than direct authority to execute their mandate to improve teaching and learning in universities (Challis, Holt and Palmer, 2009). That they are not where the action is, i.e. at the systematic implementation of programmes and courses, their work is necessarily behind the scenes (Gosling, 2008a). There are instances that centre staff has to do some rescue work for academics in the faculties and schools, but this is never recognized, if it is, it is in passing and of little consequence. Centre staff might recognize the advantages that might accrue over time from working this way, but the TLC is generally not necessarily acknowledged for this work by the broader university community (Gosling, 2008a).

Gosling, 2008a, further notes that sometimes the Centre ends up being the policy maker as well as the policeman, i.e. interfering and directing where the institution goes, but this leaves it exposed to accusations of not having the right to do so and that they were interfering. So it appears that full acceptance of a Centre's ability takes a long time if at all, because it is only those individuals that have utilised its services who will continue to do so because they are fully aware of the benefits. Demonstrating value can be problematic when the measures are uncertain or when what is being judged is intangible (Taylor, 2005). Knight, 2005 points out that it is pointless just focusing on measuring systems when the key business is teaching, learning and research. He advises that the centres should just concentrate on making clear to all their stakeholders what they want to achieve over a given period of time and make sure it is aligned to the planning process for those units they serve



to be integrated in their programmes. They should then look out for where blockage occurs so that they know when and why it happens, so as to be able to deal with it.

The conclusion that can be drawn from these observations is that there is no formulae for a Centre's success as a combination of factors can work towards its success or failure. What this discussion has managed to do is to raise awareness of the sorts of issues that are likely to have decisive impact on how centres are conceptualized, organized and deliver services designed to enhance teaching and learning (Dow, 2007). How centres are judged is highly contingent on the environment in which they are placed and the expectations of senior management and staff in the faculties and schools.

Members of the university executive and the Centre Director must of necessity work together to set directions and establish roles that will be valued by the university community (Marginson and Considine, 2000). Effective management ensures that the Centre has the capacity and capability to deliver on its mandate (Chalmers and O'Brien, 2005). Having an open door policy on the part of management and the Centre Director is bound to help the Centre contribute its specialist skills and expertise in ways that readily demonstrate their value for the university community (Havnes and Stensaker, 2006). There has to be clarity regarding the core business of the Centre for it to achieve its mandate (Gosling, 2008a).

2.3.6 Practices in place that encourages utilisation of the TLC.

The Zimbabwean Higher Education sector, like all HE sectors world-wide, is under pressure to perform and deliver so as to produce high quality graduates. TLC's were

put in place to ensure that student learning experiences are of equally high quality and this calls for qualified and competent teaching staff so that the quality of education is enhanced and comparable to any in the world (Nicoll, 2012). No university will maintain or improve the quality of teaching and learning by simply maintaining the status quo. The need to consider how to challenge and disrupt orthodoxies and complacency in the HE sector in relation to quality and learning cannot be overemphasized. No university can improve the quality of teaching until every academic staff member understands that they have a level of responsibility, a real accountability for the quality of the student experience and student outcomes (Nicoll, 2012). So as the student numbers increase there is always the risk that academic standards might be compromised (Gosling, 2006). A number of European countries, Australia, Canada and the United States, have already recognized the importance of classroom teaching for quality HE. They have established TLC's to advance teaching and learning in HE. Similar initiatives are taking place globally and below are practices that have been noted to be in place to encourage the utilisation of these TLC's.

2.3.7 Effective Higher Educational development programmes.

In Europe, three decades of Higher educational development work has shown how to best prepare academics to teach and how to best enhance teaching and learning in universities (Clegg, 2009). First, well designed programmes of study rather than the traditional one-off workshops (Ramsden, 1994) have been shown to impact lecturers thinking and conceptions of teaching and learning (Postareff, Lindblom-Ylanne and Nevgi, 2007; Stes, Coertjens and Van Petegem, 2010) and in turn, their

teaching practices (Stes, Clement and Van Petegem, 2007). It has also been noted that programmes that integrate ideas about how students learn and how assessment and teaching affect learning lead to more effective teaching than programmes based only on improving teaching skills (Stes, Clement and Van Petegem, 2007). This is because in such programmes, classroom strategies and theory are closely intertwined.

Secondly learning and change have been noted to require supportive contexts that go out of their way to create cultures in which academics experiment with student-centred curricular and teaching methods. Culture change can also be encouraged through the offering of incentives such as grants, formal or informal recognition and reward structures, peer learning and exchange forum within departments' disciplines and universities (Stes, Clement and Van Petegem, 2007). The programmes work to build a shared language and understanding about student learning. The TLC's role in this case would be to carry information and innovations in teaching across disciplinary boundaries.

Thirdly, the traditional students' evaluation of teaching is now being used especially in Canada and Australia, as a way of ensuring input by the students into teaching enhancement. The TLC's role in this case would be to help distribute and collect questionnaires for student input and finally to interpret the results and help lecturers to plan remedial and action plans. Finally impact assessment of the current programme and restructuring of future programmes can again be carried out by the TLC (Stes, Clement and Van Petegem, 2007).

European universities, have since 2006, also been encouraged to elevate teaching and learning on the agenda of HE policy making and the raising of opportunities and incentives for academics that raise their interest and improves their teaching is highly regarded (Gosling, 2006). Still on programmes, the 2004 European Professionalization of *Academics as Teachers in Higher Education*, position paper concluded that there has to be concerted action at regional, national and institutional levels that creates opportunities and incentives for academics to raise their interest in and improve their classroom practice (Macdonald, 2009). This does not however mean making it compulsory for academics to attend TLC staff development programmes (this kills any interest that they might have), but offering them opportunities that show them the benefits of attending such programmes (Quinlan, 2011). So if the programmes are slow-paced and are introduced progressively, they create champions among the lecturers who would go out of their way to demonstrate their impact, effectively creating friends of the TLC (Pleschova and Simon, 2008).

The following recommendations were made in the position paper by Pleschova, Simon, Quinlan, Murphy, Roxa and Szabo, in 2004, on what TLC staff development programmes should do to professionalise academics as teachers:

- Define professional standards for HE lecturers that allow for recognition and benchmarking of teaching and learning;
- Ensure that teaching effectiveness is measurable;
- Establish post graduate diploma or certificate qualifications that improve pedagogic knowledge among staff;
- Popularise these institutional units so that all academics who come to the university without any professional teaching qualification or experience are

inducted into the teaching profession and are fully supported so that they grow in the profession;

- Strengthen the identity of lecturers as teacher-researchers by offering incentives such as Teacher of the Year Award and by recognizing research on teaching and learning as legitimate;
- Provide funding for TLCs so that they are able to remain viable and to carry out research on teaching and learning. A very powerful movement has developed world-wide, around this kind of research, popularly referred to as Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).

2.3.8 Regional and international HE teacher development initiatives

Some regional blocks like the European Union (EU), have come together to form powerful bodies that recognize the need for qualified and competent staff to teach in universities so that the quality of HE is enhanced and comparable across the region (Gosling, 2006). At national level countries like Australia, Canada, the USA and South Africa, have also established bodies that have moved from a fragmented to a more unified and coordinated approach to HE teacher development. This has seen the establishment of TLCs in universities that are coordinated and funded regionally and nationally. Europe has seen the establishment of the European Science Foundation (ESF), which recognizes the importance of classroom teaching for quality education so make the development of academics' teaching through well-structured centres and programmes a priority (Gosling, 2006). The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) in Australia, was established to challenge and disrupt orthodoxies and complacency in the HE sector in relation to teaching and to ensure that academics understand that they have a level of

responsibility for the quality of student experience and student outcomes through the quality of their teaching (Nicoll, 2012).

In the United Kingdom the Higher Education Academy (HEA); the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF); the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) and the Universities and Colleges Staff Development Agency (UCOSDA) all work cooperatively with government to finance and support TLCs to carry out their mandate in universities. In Australia the situation is no different as there is the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia (HERDSA); the Committee for University Teaching and Staff Development (CUTSO); the Australian Teaching and Learning Council (ALTC) and the Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development (CADAD) to give support to TLCs in Universities. In South Africa TLCs are critical features on all universities as expected by the country's higher education governing associations such as the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA); Council for Higher Education (CHE); the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA); the National Qualification's Framework (NQF) and the Higher Education staff Development Initiatives (HESDI) (Chabaya, 2001). The TLCs in all these countries are expected among other things to do the following:

- Raise the status of teaching in universities;
- Assist lecturers to conduct research into the teaching of their disciplines;
- Support Deans/Chairpersons in promoting the professionalization of teaching among professors and junior lecturers in the faculties/ schools/departments;
- Facilitate workshops, seminars and conferences on issues and discourses that focus on higher education pedagogy;

- Offer courses in Higher Education Studies at Diploma and Master's degree level and generally promote the development faculty learning communities for professional development in teaching (Chabaya, 2001).

2.3.9 Perceptions of TLCs by management and staff

Perceptions of TLCs in universities vary, but it is important to note that research conducted over the years has concluded that these are generally negative and where TLCs are fully accepted, it has taken decades for that to happen. Academics are known to see themselves first and foremost as researchers rather than teachers (Gates, Dobson, Edwards and Friedman, 2009). Some believe that holding a PhD is not a passport for one to be hired as a university teacher, but a guarantee to be a good teacher at that (Quin, 2006). The mindset is that once one has attained a PhD, one can handle anything (Boughey, 2010). Others think that there is no training for academic work. Academics learn through apprenticeship by emulating peers and this is all up to the individual's initiative (Quin, 2006). Yet others regard the TLC as a nuisance or an attempt by the faculty of education to impose its hegemony on other faculties (Gates, Dobson, Edwards and Friedman, 2009).

2.4 Factors that might prohibit the TLC from being utilised.

2.4.1 The debate on whether the TLC should be centralized or devolved

From the sixties to through the seventies and eighties to today, having a centralised TLC has been noted to be the most effective to achieve enhancement of teaching and learning in Australia and surrounding islands (Gosling, 2008a). The reasons put forward were as follows:

- To avoid a fragmented approach to teaching and learning in the university;
- To have a holistic and more sustainable approach to staff development;
- To ensure that staff development is well grounded in the combined scholarship of teaching and learning of the whole institution;
- To create on-going partnerships among faculties/schools and departments on staff development efforts and to see to it that achievements are followed through and rewarded where necessary.

So this debate on whether the TLC should be centralised or devolved is real and a possible factor for the non-utilisation of the TLC. In a centralised set up as in Australia above, the TLC reports directly to management through the office of the PVC Academic or equivalent and or trainers work as one group as internal consultants to the faculties/schools or departments. On the other hand a decentralised arrangement assigns or designates specific trainers as internal consultants to work under the dean of the faculty/school or chairperson of the department.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both setups. Having trainers or consultants under one roof, facilitates a much smoother mentoring of new lecturers and lessens the burden from the dean or chairperson who would otherwise be too busy with other responsibilities to attend to the training needs of their units (Coffey and Gibbs, 2000). Experts can be developed from across the whole university on specific areas of university teaching and learning such as teaching with technology, curriculum development, teaching large /small classes etc. thus developing a career path in training for some of the academics in the TLC (D'andrea and Gosling, 2005).

There will therefore be consistent training design and delivery within the university. Such specialists would find it very easy to identify skill deficiencies among staff since they live in the operation that they support (Bougley, 2010). Where there is subject matter representation it will be easier to develop subject matter expertise in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) in that area and build an institutional subject matter repository in the subject on its teaching. A centralised training budget is in also in the final analysis much easier to maintain in the long run especially during tight financial times as what Zimbabwe is currently going through right now (Challis, Holt and Palmers, 2000). We are experiencing an era of reduced resources that lends itself more to centralization to avoid the duplication of posts and responsibilities that occurs in a decentralised system. It also reduces the added responsibility from the deans and chairpersons of having to deal with staff development on top of their other numerous responsibilities. Centralisation thus becomes more efficient, cost effective and liberating and ensures the same levels of service across the university, bringing about similarities of student learning experiences, student outcomes and the establishment of a university brand (Chabaya, 2012).

The main disadvantage of a centralised TLC however, is the possible perception of individual faculty/school staff that TLC staff is a group of outsiders who are not familiar with what happens in the area leading to TLC programmes being shunned and the unit is not utilised as expected. It might also take longer for TLC staff to identify skill deficiencies as they will be operating from a distance unless the leadership in the faculty/school or departments cooperates because they are more familiar with the goings on in their area (Bougley, 2010). In a centralised

arrangement the training budget for the entire university might be an easy target during cost-cutting times and replacing staff that might leave or retire becomes even more difficult as those posts get allocated to areas that are perceived as being needier (Gosling, 2001).

To overcome these disadvantages and maintain a centralised arrangement, Bezzina, 2006 suggests the following:

- Each faculty/school must be represented in the TLC;
- The representative must attend his or her unit's meetings to capture that unit's needs and bring them to the TLC for tailor made activities to be planned for that unit.
- Issues like training schedules must be left to the individual faculty/school so that they take ownership of the training calendar.
- The TLC must work at developing trust with each and every unit through continuous consultations until the level of trust is such that utilisation of the TLC is automated.
- A process of giving and receiving feedback must be arrived at to avoid a generalist approach to training and staff development.



2.4.2 Levels of understanding of what the TLCs are and what they stand for.

There should never be haphazard understanding of what the TLC is and what it stands for both in the university and among universities especially state universities who should ideally speak with one voice when it comes to teaching and learning. Some countries such as South Africa have achieved this through symposia focusing entirely or in part on teaching and learning in higher education since 2000 (Brew, 2011). The idea that academic staff in universities might benefit from academic development entered higher education in the 1960s, coinciding with the massification of higher education, rapid technology changes, pressures to publish, and changes in thinking about the role and nature of higher education (Grant et al, 2009). This happened in most universities of the western and eastern world. In Africa, the arrival of democracy and increased access to higher education, shifted understandings of the role of university teachers from student development, (the “underprepared” student) to teacher development (Volbrecht 2003; Boughey, 2007). The agenda for staff development has struggled to be accepted as people were busy either teaching or researching for publishing. There is subsequently little shared understanding of the priorities for academic staff development making the understanding of TLCs not so wide spread. Practices have at times contradictory while modernist approaches to development persist (Bozalek and Boughey, 2012; Bozalek and Dison, 2012). In South Africa global trends have influenced academic staff development although the local context has played a critical role in shaping its meaning and scope; there are thus important differences between South African understandings of the role of TLCs from the rest of Africa (Gosling, 2009a).



International literature describes a wide range of professional development activities and initiatives in support of academic staff in their teaching roles (Gosling, 2009a) such as seminars, workshops, educational research grants, peer review processes, teaching awards and TLCs (Trowler, 2008). The terms have histories of usage and different nuances (Gosling 2009), however educational development has largely been understood as comprising induction of new staff into their teaching roles as well as a few taught courses implying a more passive role for university teachers, yet the term professional training implies a more active role for the university teachers (Gosling 2009). Regardless of the baggage that these terms may carry, the literature suggests that both professional development and professional learning are relevant practices in support of improved student learning (Chabaya, 2012). That this is done by the TLC seems to add credence to the fact that this is an important unit in any university and the unit must be understood by all for it to function effectively.

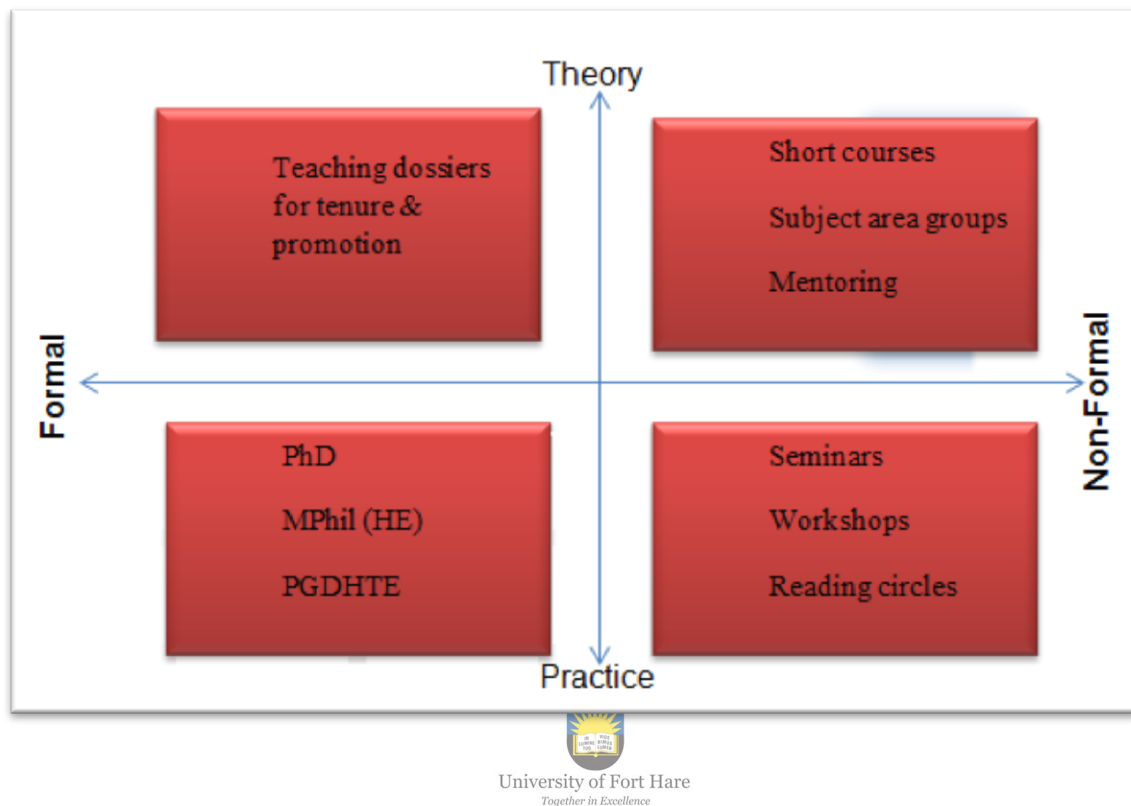


The shift from 'learning to teach' (Ramsden, 1992) to 'professional learning' (Knight, Tait and Yorke, 2006) is indicative of the growing importance of the professionalisation of teaching in higher education, despite its continuing lesser status in relation to research (Brew, 1999), making the TLC a key unit in the university. As professionals, university teachers would be expected to possess systematic knowledge related to teaching and learning, since systematic knowledge is bound up with the idea of professional judgment (Evans, 2008) which is a key attribute of a profession. University teachers should therefore invest their time in acquiring this professional knowledge and there is no way they can do so without fully understanding what the unit that deals with it is all about. As teachers they should be able to legitimate their actions through appeal to this professional

knowledge because it underpins their practice and use it in decision-making on a daily basis. All this they obtain from the TLC (Edwards and Daniels, 2012). It is on the basis of this knowledge that they acquire confidence in their work, they become committed to their work as true professionals and they become open to feedback that comes from colleagues within and without their institution and from the students they teach. An organizational culture that recognizes the TLC and what it is supposed to be doing is critical in ensuring that all are on board and utilizing the unit as expected (Gosling, 2009a).

Most literature cites work load as a feature affecting teaching staff's utilisation of the TLC or even getting to know what it is or what it stands for. Everyone is too busy teaching or attending to their researches to be bothered (Herman, 2015). Mayor and Lloyd, 2011, suggest a continuum of professional learning activities that will get teaching staff interested in the affairs of the TLC and other related non-formal activities. Staff development could be located along the continuum with largely theory-based learning at the one end of the continuum, and informal practice-based acquisition at the other end (see figure 2.2 below).

Figure 2.3 Continuum of professional development and professional learning activities.



What it means is that there are two models of professional learning and a lecturer is given choice in terms of the path they want to follow but either way the lecturer has to come to terms with the model they choose. They have to fully understand the unit that provides the service and utilise it as expected.

2.4.3 Staffing of the TLC

Staffing by definition is a process of management which is concerned with obtaining, utilising and maintaining a satisfactory and satisfied workforce. Its purpose is to establish and maintain sound personnel relations at all levels in the organisation so as to attain the objectives of the organisation and to provide personal and social satisfaction which all employees want (Mathew, 2009). The precipitous rise in Higher

Education worldwide, is well documented (Gosling, 2009a). Particular attention by both individual university managements and the public has been focused on recruiting only lecturers and other 'key' support staff like those working in the Registrar's office and the Bursar's office. Areas such as the TLC are viewed as essential but not necessarily key to the smooth operations of the university (Chabaya, 2012). One of the most important contributors to HE costs in Africa has always been salaries (Chabaya, 2012). Management in state universities are forced to prioritise and put key posts among those to be filled and in most cases TLCs are not considered key for the survival of the university. Thus, staffing and the subsequent utilisation of the TLC seem to be a particularly relevant area of investigation considering the fact that it is the last place to be staffed when given the choice. By implication if an institution does not invest in a unit, the services that are provided by that unit will not be appreciated and it will be underutilised. The caliber of staff that is recruited to man the TLC is an important factor in whether it gets utilised or not so only renowned academics that have a passion for teaching at university level can attract the attention of academics to utilise the TLC.

2.4.4 Negative perceptions of the TLC

Professional development should be an ongoing endeavour for all lecturers because their growth as instructors has a profound impact on their students. There are always new opportunities for improvement, new teaching techniques to learn and master. In culture, that values innovative teaching and learning, faculty development strategies is the cornerstone to educational excellence. Major universities throughout the world have faculty development programmes usually coordinated by a campus wide

teaching and learning centre (Gupta and Omar, 2015). For young universities in Africa and other developing countries the drive is generally to ensure the large classes are taught and students graduate. The issues to do with the quality of what goes on in the classroom are yet to gain popularity. So generally there are negative perceptions towards TLCs and what they organise to the extent that most of their activities are poorly attended (Gupta and Omar, 2015). Yet faculty development should be considered an essential tool to cope with new teaching tasks and is a means for participants to build important career relationships with peers, mentors and other academicians who contribute to academic advancement.

Hunt and Chalmers, (2012), are of the view that the students' evaluation of teaching and learning if used for enhancing teaching and learning, could have academic staff engaging positively and proactively with the quality of what goes on in the classroom. That way, university teachers would take an interest in their students' learning their own academic career paths. One positive way forward that they suggest is for lecturers to place the student at the centre of the teaching and learning process and lecturers focusing on students more than content to enhance the quality of the educational experiences through the strategic use of the student and peer feedback to improve the curriculum and assessment.

They go further to cite a study by Houston in (2009) that looked at staff and students' perceptions of quality processes in one New Zealand University, highlighting the mismatch between their respective views of the meaning of teaching quality. Academic staff equated quality with 'teaching well' while students equated quality

with staff commitment to student learning. For students quality teaching included making expectations clear and carrying out expected learning goals. So given this discrepancy, between these views of quality a further way forward is suggested as discussing with students their notion of quality and what they understand quality teaching and learning to be and how these may inform the programmes offered by the TLC so that everyone's perception of the unit might change for the positive. Such interactions may also help to clarify mutual expectations of what the TLC is and what it should be doing and establish that much needed respect for the unit and consolidate partnerships between the TLC and faculties/schools.

Engaging with quality as transformation requires a partnership among all parts of the institution a way of building a culture of revering quality teaching and learning. At the same time the university management has a part to play in supporting the TLC with professional development resources to  assist the unit to interpret the data coming from peers and students and students in order to build and develop respectable programmes that academics would want to attend.

2.4.5 Presence or absence of supportive mechanisms to encourage TLC utilise

Hunt and Chalmers, 2012, are of the view that the students' evaluation of teaching and learning if used for enhancing teaching and learning could have academic staff engaging positively and proactively with the quality of what goes on in the classroom. That way, university lecturers would take an interest in their students' learning and their own academic career paths. One positive way forward according to them is to place students at the centre of the teaching and learning process and lecturers focusing on students more to enhance the quality of the educational experiences

through the strategic use of students and peer feedback to improve the curriculum and assessment.

Houston, (2007), cites a study of academic staff and students' perceptions of quality processes in in one New Zealand University, highlighting the mismatch between their respective views of the meaning of teaching quality. Academic staff equated quality with 'teaching well' while students equated quality with staff commitment to student learning. For students quality teaching included making expectations clear and carrying out stated learning goals.

So given the potential discrepancy between students and staff views on the quality of teaching, a further productive way forward is to discuss with students their notion of quality and what they understand quality teaching and learning to be and how these may inform the programmes offered by the TLC so that everyone's perceptions of the TLC might change for the positive (Houston, 2007). Such interactions were thought to help clarify mutual expectations of what the TLC is and what it should be doing and establish that much needed respect for the unit and consolidate partnerships between the TLC and faculties/schools.

Engaging with quality as transformation requires a partnership among all parts of the institution as a way of building a culture of revering quality teaching and learning. At the same time the university management has a part to play in supporting the TLC with professional development resources to assist the unit to interpret the data coming from peers and students in order to build and develop respectable programmes that academics would want to attend.

For any unit to be utilised therefore, the following must be in place:

- Buy-in from user units;
- Buy in from students;
- Support from top management in the form of resources (both material and human), moral support and publicity of the unit;
- A clear vision of where the unit is coming from, where it is and where it is going;
- Visibility of the unit; and
- Shared understanding of what the TLC is and what it stands for.

2.4.6 Tenure and promotion requirements

For one to be tenured what most research universities including state universities in Zimbabwe is research.



2.5 Summary

This chapter was divided into two sections. The first section discussed the theoretical frameworks that informed this study. These were the Social Practice Theory and the Concerns Based Adoption Model. The relevance of these two was highlighted. The second section looked at utilisation of TLCs and challenges they face as they implement their mandate. It came out through the review that some countries have come a long way and have support systems in place that support full utilisation but negative perceptions of TLCs still exist. The next chapter deals with the methodology adopted in this study.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology is more than just the methods used to collect data. It is often necessary to include a consideration of the concepts and theories which underlie the methods (Baptiste, 2000). All researchers have different beliefs and ways of viewing and interacting with the environment (Baptiste, 2000) so, in this study the working definition of methodology is that it is the research strategy that translates the ontological and epistemological principles guiding the research into guidelines that show how the research was conducted (Creswell, 2003). Marczyk, De Matteo and Festinger, 2005, on the other hand point out that the methodology section also points out the principles, procedures and practices that the research followed. Thus this chapter presents the phases and sub-phases that guided the researcher in the choice of methods and the techniques, procedures and tools that were found appropriate at each stage of the research process. This chapter therefore discusses the research paradigm; the research approach; the research design; the samples and sampling techniques; negotiating entry; data collection instruments and procedures; credibility and trustworthiness issues; data analysis, ethical considerations as well as reflexivity. The merits and demerits of the stated components will also be discussed as a way of justifying their relevance to this study. So methodology in this case is a way of systematically and scientifically developing the research with a sound theoretical and philosophical base (Healy and Perry, 2000), by listing the steps that were followed, establishing the research setting and



providing the necessary means, tools and instruments used for data gathering (Creswell, 2003).

3.2 Research Paradigm

Understanding the differences in epistemology among research paradigms begins primarily as a philosophical exercise. Philosophical assumptions or a theoretical paradigm about the nature of reality are crucial to understanding the overall perspective from which the study is designed and carried out (Trichim, 2000). Three interrelated terms are of importance in understanding the research paradigm. These are epistemology, ontology and methodology. Epistemology comes from the Greek word *episteme*, which means knowledge and how we come to know (Trichim, 2000), while ontology is about the philosophy of reality. Since epistemology addresses how we come to know reality, methodology thus identifies the particular practices to attain knowledge of that reality (Krauss, 2005). Therefore from a philosophical point of view, a research paradigm comprises a view of reality (ontology), whether it is external or internal to the knower; a related view of the type of knowledge that can be generated and standards for justifying it (epistemology); and a disciplined approach to generate that knowledge (methodology) (Taylor and Medina, 2013). A theoretical paradigm is thus the identification of the underlying basis that is used to construct a scientific investigation; or, a loose collection of logically held together assumptions, concepts, and propositions that orientates thinking and research. By definition therefore, a paradigm is a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality that gives rise to a particular world-view (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). The same point is stressed by Mackenzie and Knip, 2006, who are of the view that the choice of paradigm sets down the intent and motivation and the expectations for the research. To reiterate, the purpose of this research was to examine TLCs in



Zimbabwean state universities and the role they are playing to improve teaching and learning in the institutions by looking at how these TLCs are being utilised in the universities.

So nominating a paradigm became the first step towards putting in place principles that systematically led to the establishment of valid steps for examining the utilisation of TLCs in Zimbabwean state universities. The constructivist paradigm was found most appropriate for this research and was the lens by which reality was examined. Its assumptions are that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. In so doing they develop subjective meanings of their experiences (Okeke and van Wyk, 2015). In this research it is the meanings they attach to quality teaching and learning as espoused by the TLC that is under investigation. These meanings are varied and multiple depending on the level of the participants. The views of the top management represented by Pro Vice Chancellors, those of middle management who are the deans and TLC directors, those of the operatives represented by lecturers as well as those of the students were sought to establish utilisation of TLCs in state universities Zimbabwe.



The constructivist paradigm says that social reality is constructed differently by different individuals who participate in that reality (Baptiste, 2000). It is therefore to be expected that the realities of the different players in this study, from their different positions in the university, are well represented by these groups. Baptiste further points out that, social reality is socially constructed and that the role of the researcher is to understand what meanings people give to reality not to determine how reality works apart from these interpretations. Individuals thus gradually build their own understanding of the world through experience and maturation and the human mind should not be looked at as *tabula rasa* (blank slate) upon which

knowledge that comes to it is written, but as an active processor of knowledge that comes to it to make sense of that knowledge. So any research that uses this paradigm seeks to find ways to make individuals to reveal their constructions of the social realities under study (Baptiste, 2000), in this case, their understanding of the benefits or otherwise of TLCs that lead them to utilise or not to utilise the TLCs in their respective state university. As the researcher, I am an integral constructor of that social reality through transforming the lived experiences into a textual expression of its essence through reading, writing and re-writing the information obtained from the participants (Baptiste, 2000). I used this paradigm to gain insightful descriptions of the way individuals' experiences of TLCs could be used to answer the main research question; 'How do Zimbabwean state universities utilise TLCs to improve teaching and learning?'



Constructivism also assumes that the meaning of experiences are constructed by individuals who then share with the people around them, so people construct the realities in which they participate and share (Charmaz, 2006). This study therefore sought to elicit from the participants and understand how they construct their individual and shared meanings around the phenomenon of TLCs. So individuals construct their meaning(s) of what these TLCs stand for and use that understanding as a basis for either utilising or not utilising the TLCs. The paradigm also acknowledges co-construction of the researcher's interpretation in constructivist research and this puts demands on me the researcher to conduct the research in a reflective and transparent manner so that participants can freely give the required information (Mills, Bonner and Francis, 2006). Reflection entails 'thinking about the conditions for what one is doing (and) investigating the way in which the theoretical, cultural and political context of individual and intellectual involvement affects

interaction with whatever is being researched' (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000, p. 245). Articulating my assumptions and experiences (as the current Director/Coordinator of a Teaching and Learning Centre at one of the state universities under study), through reflective and analytical memos, written prior to and during data gathering and analysis, helped achieve this transparency (Mills, Bonner and Francis, 2006).

My experiences as the Director/Coordinator of a TLC, my research interests in SoTL as well as the fact that I teach on the Post Graduate Diploma in Higher and Tertiary Education, provided me with a number of professional and personal lenses for approaching this research. Specifically, I brought to the research process:

- a good understanding of the role of TLCs in universities;
- a critical perspective about the relevance of TLCs to university education obtained from my visits to universities in the UK and in South Africa and my own experiences as Director;
- an appreciation of that how other universities utilise their TLCs within the Zimbabwean state university context is important and worthy of research, and,
- a desire to get to the root of how TLCs should be utilised to best effect.

The other important point to note about this paradigm is that it works on the assumption that there is not one reality out there to be measured but that objects and events can be understood by different people differently, and that these perceptions and reality or realities are what the researcher should concentrate on (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). The paradigm extends interpretivist philosophy by emphasizing the importance of exploring how different stakeholders in a social setting construct their beliefs about a particular phenomenon and how a consensus

can be reached among the participants to explain why things are the way they are (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). The researcher's role was to identify the different interest groups in the state universities, and then to interactively elicit from them what they think and then gradually try to develop a shared perspective on the shared problem being researched, in this case the utilisation of TLCs in state universities. The constructions of a variety of players at different levels of the state university system that have an interest in TLCs were deliberately chosen and widely variable viewpoints were elicited, challenged, and exposed to new information and new, more sophisticated ways of interpretation until some form of consensus was reached.

What is critical in this paradigm is that the information obtained with the different participants is not separate and different from each other, but is used to highlight differences and consensus so that the way forward can be worked on. The methods of data collection were interactive and had room for further interrogation of issues, so in this case interviews (with individuals or groups) were mostly favoured. Thus concerns, issues and interests of each stakeholder group formed the bases of negotiating for information to reach consensus (Yedes, et al, 2004).



3.3 Research Approach

As noted above the study is embedded in the constructivist interpretive paradigm, it thus adopted the qualitative approach which emphasizes the social nature of reality (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative research is all about recording, analysing and attempting to uncover the deeper meaning and significance of human behaviour and experience including contradictory beliefs and behaviours (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). In general, qualitative research is based on a relativistic, constructivist

ontology that posits that there is no objective reality. Rather, there are multiple realities constructed by human beings who experience a phenomenon of interest. People impose order on the world perceived in an effort to construct meaning; meaning lies in cognition not in elements external to us; information impinging on our cognitive systems is screened, translated, altered, perhaps rejected by the knowledge that already exists in that system; the resulting knowledge is idiosyncratic and is purposefully constructed (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). As a researcher I was interested in gaining a rich and complex understanding of people's experiences of TLCs in state universities in Zimbabwe. The aim was not to use the information so obtained to generalize results to other groups of universities, but to develop a theory or pattern of meaning in the utilisation of TLCs in state universities in Zimbabwe. The researcher was guided in this search by the theoretical lenses of the Social Practice Theory and the Concerns Based  Model that provided a framework for my investigation. Consistent with qualitative research, the data so obtained was textual in form, based on the interactions I had with the participants through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and studying of official records that augmented information obtained in the face-to-face data gathering sessions (Sarantakos, 2000).

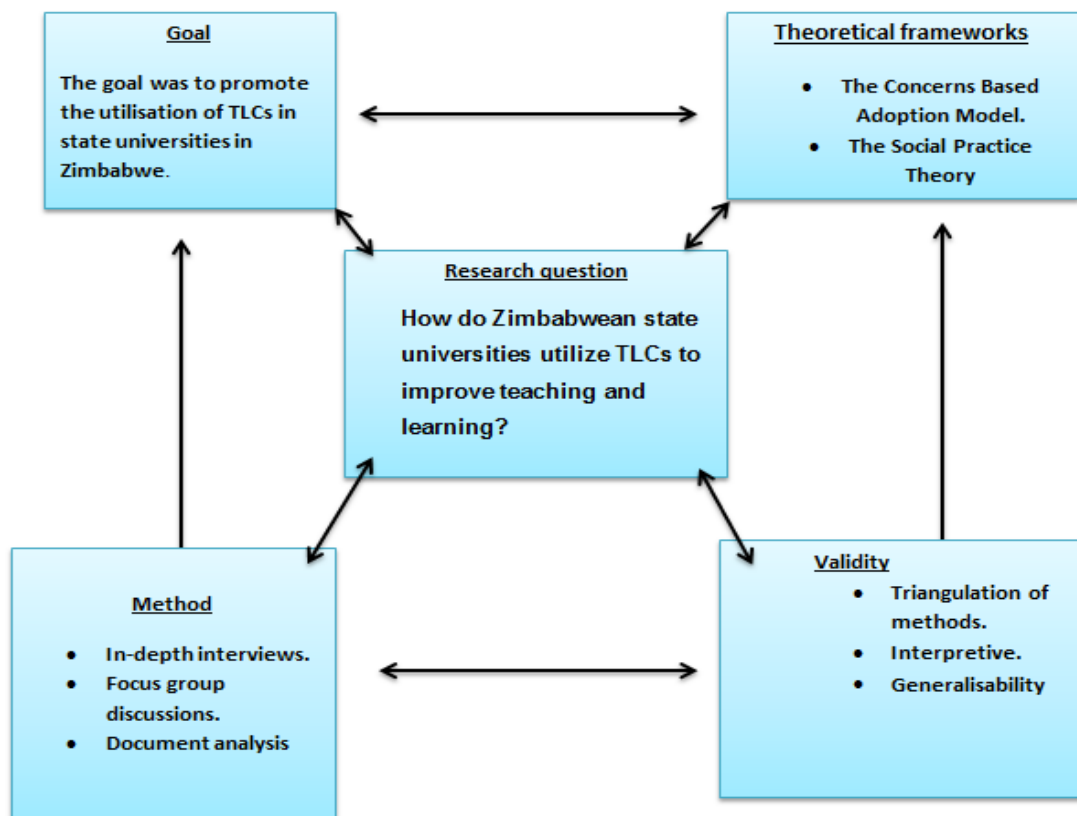
Use of the qualitative approach meant that I had to give participants a certain degree of freedom and permit spontaneity through the use of open-ended questions rather than forcing them to select from a set of pre-determined responses that might not have reflected their thoughts, feelings, attitudes or behaviours as far as their utilisation or otherwise of TLCs was concerned (Berg, 2001). The participants were given room to go beyond the initial question or response, giving room for expansion on initial responses (Cohen. Morrison and Manion, 2011). This helped the participants to open up and not just give the expected responses but to give what

they genuinely felt about TLCs. A small number of participants (27 in all; each focus group was counted as one), was thus used to generate richer and more robust data (Yin, 2003). Generally the emphases were on the quality and depth of information, rather than on scope or breathe of information provided as in quantitative research (Nieuweinhuis, 2007a).

Adoption of the qualitative approach was a smart move as its interpretive nature allowed all levels that are concerned with the utilisation of TLCs to be represented. These were the PVC representing management and also as head of academic affairs; the deans as custodians of standards and quality in the faculties/schools; the TLC directors as the managers of the unit under study down to the academic staff and students who stand to benefit most from utilising the TLC. Participants were allowed throughout the interviews and focus group discussions to be heard and their submissions were the basis upon which an understanding of the utilisation or otherwise of TLCs was built (Creswell, 2007). The major aim was to describe and understand the utilisation of TLCs within their naturally occurring context i.e. seeing through the eyes of the selected respondents (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). The main assumption in this approach was that the way of knowing reality was through exploring the experiences of those involved. To this end, the stories, the experiences and voices of the respondents were the medium through which I explored and understood the reality embedded in the utilisation or otherwise of TLCs in state universities in Zimbabwe (Richards and Morse, 2007). The qualitative approach allowed me to attend to individual participants and the following interactive model of the qualitative approach was used.



Figure 3.1: The Interactive model



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Source: Maxwell, 2005.

The model was preferred because of its interactivity. Each of the components had implications for the other components and the interactivity allowed for a holistic overview of the research process. For instance, data analysis started from the onset as I conducted the first interview, so all stages influenced each other and had a bearing on each other's development (Mutemeri, 2012).

The beauty of this approach lies in the fact that it is concerned with the inquiry process of understanding and exploring social or human problems. The qualitative approach typically studies people or systems by focusing on their meanings and interpretations (Holloway & Wheeler, as cited in Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Qualitative research is also known to emphasise quality and depth of information as opposed to

its scope or breath (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Also of note is the fact that the basis of qualitative research lies in its interpretive approach to social reality and in the description of the lived experiences of the players in a particular setting (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002).

That qualitative research is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002), made it attractive for this kind of study. The study used the approach to explore why the different players behaved the way they did, i.e. utilised the TLC or not; their feelings as they did so and their experiences because these lie at the core of their lives. The underlying principle here is that lived experiences determine people's behaviour. The experiences make people form opinions and attitudes of particular phenomena thereby creating particular behaviours that can translate into lived cultures of in this case utilisation or non utilisation of the TLC. So one of the characteristics of this approach is that the researcher strives to understand the meaning people have constructed about their world and experiences (Merriam, 2001) making qualitative research naturalistic and interpretive (Snape & Spener, 2003).



In all this, the researcher is a primary instrument for data collection and data analysis and his/her voice is very visible as the study progresses through the collection of the data, sorting it and putting it all together in meaningful chunks. That the researcher is human and prone to bias cannot be overlooked. The issue of possible bias was minimised by triangulation of instruments to ensure that voices are heard from different angles (Merriam, 2001). The researcher in this case is a coordinator of a TLC in a state university; this means that she is in a position to immerse herself in the thoughts and feelings of the participants with whom she is exploring the issues of

the utilisation or non-utilisation of TLC. Holloway and Wheeler, 2002 point out that this is normal because in qualitative research the relationship between the researcher and the researched is by its nature very close and interactive and should be acknowledged as such. There is always that close contact that occurs during interviews and focus group discussions that will always produce a level of intimacy that cannot be avoided (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). The positive side to it is that participants will in most cases express themselves freely because they identify with the researcher and will have developed trust in her as the research progressed. The negative side however would be the overdependence of the approach on the investigative abilities and skills of the researcher (Anderson, 2010) and the possibility of the researcher manipulating the findings. The answer to all this as has already been stated is triangulation and in this case the face to face interview was triangulated with institutional records and focus group discussions and this helped the researcher test and retest the emerging findings.



The benefits of qualitative research for this study can thus be summarised as follows:

- Human behaviour is significantly influenced by the setting in which it occurs;
- The technique in quantitative research could have affected the findings;
- One cannot understand human behaviour without understanding the framework within which subjects interpret their feelings, thoughts and actions;
- More valid results could be obtained based on research experiences;
- This particular research problem lent itself more to qualitative research than to quantitative research;

- It helped me to understand what lay behind the phenomenon of utilisation of TLCs about which little is known;
- Details of phenomena that are difficult to convey with quantitative methods could easily be obtained;
- I felt questionnaires would threaten the validity of the study;
- It helped in identifying variables important to the phenomenon under study;
- It helped me understand the perceptions and experiences of participants and their community which was the university setting; and
- The field study allowed me to explore the process and meaning and provided comprehensive descriptions of how TLCs were being utilised;

3.4 Research design

The research design was the blue print or plan that guided the research process in an effort to answer the research question.  It is defined as all the issues involved in planning and executing a research project from identifying the problem through to reporting and publishing the results (Punch, 2011). It also situates the researcher in the empirical world and connects the research questions to the data and findings of the study (Wengraf, 2002). Four key ideas emerge as to what the research design is all about:

- the strategy;
- the theoretical framework;
- the question of what will be studied; and
- the tools and procedures for analysing data.

So in a sense it is the plan of action for the study that ties up together the paradigm and the research approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The design that was chosen

for this study was the case study because it fits very well with qualitative approach. Qualitative research has the unique goal of facilitating the meaning-making process. The complexity of meaning in the lives of people has much to do with how meaning is attributed to different objects, people and life events. Erikson (1963) elaborated on the importance of meaning when he broke it down into two sub-categories: common meanings and unique meanings. What has a common meaning to a group of people may have a unique meaning to an individual member of the group. Thus, understanding unique meanings has to do with the construction of the meaning process and the many different factors that influence it. This is the unique work of qualitative research and data analysis in particular – to identify the contributors to an individual's (or groups') unique meaning.

Consistent with the qualitative paradigm, I found the case study to be the most appropriate strategy for use in this research and a multi-case study design was adopted consisting of 3 state universities as the three cases. The case study design is often used in the field of education to build up a rich picture of an entity, using different kinds of data collection and gathering strategies that express views, perceptions and experiences of diverse individuals and groups relating to the case (Holliday, 2007). The case study also provides rich data and in depth insights into participants' lived experiences within the particular contexts such as the state universities in this study (Richards and Morse, 2007). The case study has been defined by Merriam, 2001, as an intensive, description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit, or as 'a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context' (Miles and Huberman, 1994) and it must be a specific functioning thing (Stake, 1994). The phenomenon is the Teaching and Learning Centre, which is supposed to be a functioning unit of all state universities in Zimbabwe and the



context are these state universities that are all supposed to have TLCs. The aim of the study was to establish the utilisation of these TLCs in the context under investigation. The case study:

- investigated the contemporary phenomenon of the TLC within its real-life context (the research physically visited each case to interview the identified levels of participants, studied the institutional records and had focus group discussions with the students); and
- relied on the use of multiple sources of evidence i.e. the face to face interview, the institutional records and the focus group discussions

Use of the case study served a number of purposes; it was however its exploratory nature and its interpretive ability that made it appropriate for use in this study because it made it possible for me to describe TLCs and their utilisation in state universities in Zimbabwe (Myers, 2002). Being descriptive meant that the end product of a case study was a qualitative, rich and a thick description of the phenomenon under study (Myers, 2002). Three Pro Vice Chancellors, two Directors of TLCs, three deans each, three lecturers each as well as one focus group each from the three universities under study, were interviewed and their views constituted the findings of this study.

In adopting this design the researcher had observed some special features of qualitative case studies in research studies literature. Case studies have been characterized as being particularistic, descriptive and heuristic (Chabilall, 2010). *Particularistic* means that case studies focus on a particular situation, event, programme, or phenomenon (Chabilall, 2010). In this study it is the phenomenon of the TLC that was under investigation, in particular its utilisation. This specificity of

focus on a particular phenomenon which is the TLC makes it an especially good design for finding solutions to the TLC's practical problems- for questions, situations, or puzzling occurrences arising from everyday practice (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006). Because of the case study's *descriptive* quality, it is possible for the researcher to illustrate the complexities of a situation by revealing all the factors that contribute to the problem under study, to show all the personalities that influence the issue by revealing actual quotations, extracts of interviews or documents ascribed to them (Creswell, 2007). Information can be obtained from a variety of sources such as people, documents and actual occurrences that were actually observed. This makes it possible for the phenomenon to be studied over a long period of time that can cover many years, if necessary, that show how preceding decades led to the situation under study (Creswell, 2007). The information so obtained can be presented in a wide variety of ways that reveal the viewpoints of different groups such as the Pro Vice Chancellor (representing top management), the deans, the Directors of the TLCs (representing middle management), and the lecturers and the students (representing the shop floor) in this study. The case study became *heuristic* because it explains the reasons for the problem by giving the background to it and why things happened the way they did thereby showing why an innovation is working or is not working. It even goes further to discuss and evaluate alternatives to the innovation as given by the participants (Mertens, 2010).

To study a case, Stake (2005) recommends data collection of the following types of information:

- The nature of the case;
- Its historical background;
- The physical setting;

- Other contexts such as economic, political, legal, and aesthetic;
- Other cases through which this case is recognised; and
- Those informants through whom the case can be known.

The case study therefore was noted to have a number of advantages for a study of this nature:

- It is able to utilise multiple sources of and techniques in the data gathering process (Yin, 2009);
- it is holistic in that it is dealing with human beings whose nature can only be understood by studying and understanding behaviour that is portrayed;
- It produces detailed qualitative accounts that can explore or describe the data in real-life situations (the state university itself) which cannot be captured in experiments or surveys (Zainal, 2007);
- The results are difficult to predetermine through hypotheses as in experimental research (Wills, 2007); and
- The data collected was rich and detailed (Wills, 2007);

The case study does have its own weaknesses:

- They are often accused of lacking rigour (Zainai, 2007) and this goes back to the issue of bias as stated under the qualitative approach above;
- The other observation is the inability to generalise the results of case studies because each case is considered as unique and difficult to duplicate. However as the name 'case' depicts, because the study is meant to study a particular case or cases in order to describe that case or those cases in detail

and not to make generalisations (Hancock, 2009). So the purpose is to generalise to theoretical propositions not to populations (Yin, 2009).

- The amount of massive data that case studies generate is another cause for concern and this does require in-depth knowledge and understanding on the part of the researcher to decipher and make sense of the findings.

Despite these possible shortcomings the case study was still judged to be the most appropriate for this study.

As to the process of making comparisons with other cases, I feel this should be left to the reader of the case study report whom I expect comes with pre-existing knowledge of similar and/or different cases to ascribe whatever meaning that they find in the report to suit what they are looking for. All that is unique about each case should be preserved and not destroyed because it is what makes that case what it is.

This study looks at three cases of TLCs in 3 different state universities in Zimbabwe and the results will be presented case by case without necessarily comparing them. The main focus of the study is to show the utilisation of TLCs or otherwise in each case. No generalisations will be made from the findings; it is the intrinsic nature of each case that is viewed as important and described accordingly (Mertens, 2010). It has also been noted by Yin (2009), that no statistical tests are typically appropriate for use as a criterion for case study decisions, rather researchers should use judgment to identify different patterns that are sufficiently contrasting to reveal the qualities of rival propositions and in so doing develop an emergent theory for the study. The theory in this case becomes the understanding of what is being studied; the utilisation of TLCs (Youm, 2007).

A multiple case study design was chosen to promote the richness; depth and complexity that are drawn from multiple events that help one understand the phenomenon of interest that is shared among the diverse cases (Creswell, 1998). However, a multiple case studies risks reducing complex cases to a few comparable variables, resulting in the loss of the idiosyncrasies of individual cases. To mitigate this risk, Creswell (1998) suggests that no more than four cases be examined to allow individual cases to be adequately explored, thus only three cases were chosen for this study.

3.5 Research sites

The research sites included three (3) state universities in Zimbabwe. These state universities have TLCs as per dictates of the statutes that established them i.e. state university acts of parliament. It is important to foreground briefly the specific nature of university expansion in Zimbabwe. Up to 1980 at independence there was only one university in Zimbabwe; the University of Zimbabwe (UZ). Now thirty six (36) years after independence there are 17 state universities and more are on the cards to be established. The UZ naturally became the founding institution for those that came after it, making these emerging universities near replicas of the UZ, with similar units, programmes and structures. However the insistence by the parent Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Science and Technology that each university should have a special niche has led to the rebranding of all state universities around their niche areas giving them unique identities of their own (Chabaya, 2011). The sampled three state universities for this study are the largest providers of university education in terms of staff establishment and student enrolments.



3.6 Population, sample and sampling technique

The population was the seventeen (17) state universities in Zimbabwe as at 2015, the 17 PVCs, at these universities, the 17 directors of TLCs, the 113 deans of schools/faculties in the state universities and the more than 172108 students enrolled in the state universities at the time. These were judged to be too many to be studied in one swoop hence the need to sample just a few. Three state universities were purposively sampled to participate in the study for the simple reason that they were the largest in terms student numbers among all the state universities. Within that population the subjects of interest were the Pro Vice Chancellors, the Deans, the Directors/Coordinators of TLCs, the lecturers and the students. All the PVCs and two of the Directors of TLCs could participate (the third Coordinator was the researcher) because their number was deemed to be manageable. The deans, lecturers as well as the students also had to be sampled because their numbers were too large for all of them to participate.



Purposive sampling was used for the deans, lecturers and students on the basis of some defining characteristic that made them the holders of the data needed for this study. So in the end the sample comprised the PVC, three Deans, three lecturers, the Director/Coordinator of the TLC and ten students (counted as one) from each of the state universities studied. The major reason for the preferred sample was that the PVC as the head of academic affairs is responsible for teaching and learning issues and would ideally direct the affairs of the TLC. The Deans in turn are the custodians of teaching and learning quality in their faculties/schools and would be interested in the activities of the TLC and their utilisation. The TLC Director/Coordinator manages the day to day affairs of that unit ensuring that they

are planned and executed to the dictates of the TLC user community and the lecturers and students are the immediate beneficiaries of the TLC activities.

The two tables below summarise the total population of the three state universities that participated in the study and the sample that I worked with:

Table 3.1 The population of the three state universities of the study

Institution	No of PVCs	Number of deans	No. of TLC directors	Number of lecturers	Number of students
SU1	1	6	1	1102	15650
SU2	1	9	1	1452	21300
SU3	1	12	1	2316	33215
Totals	3	37	3	3870	70167



Table 3.2. The selected sample of the study

Institution	No. of PVCs	Number of deans	No. of TLC directors	Number of lecturers	Number of students
SU1	1	3	1	3	10
SU2	1	3	1	3	10
SU3	1	3	1	3	10
Totals	3	9	3	9	30

Sampling decisions were therefore made for the explicit purpose of obtaining the richest possible source of information to cover the research question. As this is a qualitative study, I opted for purposive sampling because I sought valid

representation of data brought by the information rich participants because of their characteristics (Richard and Morse, 2007). Good informants are those that know the information required maybe because it is part and parcel of what they deal with on a day to day basis, so they are likely to be willing to reflect on the phenomenon because they have an interest in it and have the time and willingness to participate (Henning, 2004). All the sampled informants were 'information-rich' as far as answering the research question was concerned (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). The sample size was determined by the need to answer the research question by picking on a sample size that adequately answered the research question within the available time and with the available resources (Henning, 2004). In a qualitative study, the aim of sampling is to allow understanding of the social process under study. The technique that was used is purposive sampling where the most productive sample to answer the question.



The goal of sampling in this qualitative study, it must be noted, was to understand phenomena and not to represent the population. All the participants were chosen because they were felt to be information-rich for the intensive study. The size of the sample was arrived at after the following considerations:

- The validity, meaningfulness and insights generated from qualitative enquiry had more to do with the information, richness of cases selected and the analytical capabilities of the researcher than with sample size;
- Depended upon completion of data-sample selection to the point of redundancy;
- Began with a small sample based on expected reasonable coverage that could be expanded if needed;

- It was large enough to make meaningful comparisons;
- It was small enough for phenomena to be described, justified and explained well;
- It would not lead to overgeneralisation from purposive samples.
- The number of groups had to remain manageable – more groups would have meant more samples;
- The complexity and depth of information-more in-depth information go for small sample;
- It was easier to explain similarities and differences in particular context; and
- I had to work within the confines of the available of resources.

3.7 Research Instruments



3.7.1 The Interview

The interview was the principal data collection instrument for this study. Qualitative interviews that consisted of open-ended questions that provided qualitative data were used. Qualitative interviews are also called in-depth interviews because they well is a qualitative research technique that allows person to person discussion which can lead to increased insight into people's thought, feelings and behaviour on important issues. The interview was used as one of the effective ways for understanding reasons for problem behaviours and gather ideas to guide measures to correct a problem, in this case the problem of the utilisation of TLCs.

The interview is generally characterised by extensive probing and open-ended questions and these were used to obtain in depth information about a participant's

thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, reasoning, motivations and feelings on the utilisation of TLCs (Henning, 2004). Qualitative interviewing allowed me to enter into the inner world of other people to gain an understanding of their perspectives on the utilisation of TLCs in state universities in Zimbabwe. The interview guide approach was used. This was where the interviewer; entered the interview session with a plan to explore specific topics and to ask specific open ended questions that were on the interview guide. These topics and questions were on an interview protocol that I wrote before the interview session. The interviewer, however, did not have to follow the topics and questions verbatim during the interview in any particular order. The interviewer could change the wording of any questions listed in the interview guide as per dictates of how the interview was proceeding. Specific questions concerning verification were also generated as the interview progressed and these guided subsequent data collection and analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1984).



The tool that was used for the interview was the interview guide. The guide was structured along the research questions and the questions were open-ended to allow the participants to give as much detail as possible. Different sets of interview guides were used to suit each group of interviewees although similar questions were asked. The guide made the interviewing more systematic and comprehensive and what was interesting was the fact that similarities and differences emerged of how TLCs were being utilised among the sample as the interview progressed.

The interviewer made sure that the questions did not elicit simple YES or NO answers by ensuring that probes were embedded in the interview guide. The probes were used to prompt the respondents to speak further when an initial question

failed to elicit the desired information. The topics were never rigid, but were phrased, ordered and sometimes redefined to fit the characteristics of each responded or group of respondents. The interviewer ensured that the questions were clear, unambiguous, simple and easy to understand, reasonable and within the experience of the targeted sample.

The initial themes for the interview were based on the research questions and centred on how the university community responded to the introduction of the TLC; their perceptions of the TLC; the practices in place that encourage improvement of teaching and learning through the TLC and how management and staff utilised the TLC. To these I added literature generated themes such as levels of understanding of the players and their utilisation concerns as well as implementation and utilisation gaps in the system. These themes were  etic categories that represented what TLCs mean to me as the researcher, based on my experience as well as those I generated from literature (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). Within these themes questions were devised that invited detailed discussion of issues, mindful of course, not to force interview data into preconceived categories (Mutemeri, 2013). Although the themes guided the interview, the participants guided the agenda by the extent of their enthusiasm for the topics (Holliday, 2007). A constructivist approach was used to elicit the participants' views as well as to tap into their assumptions as well as implicit meanings (Charmaz, 2006). Because of this approach unanticipated stories and statements emerged and all I had to do was to maintain a balance and ensure that the interview remained on course to explore the research topic.

Charmaz, 2006, suggests four stages/levels to the interview process and these were followed as they were found appropriate for this study. The first level was meant to

put the participant at ease through asking questions about the self-leading to the creation of a settled atmosphere. At this level the issue of anonymity was emphasized and participants' privacy and confidentiality were assured. It was at this level that the need for recording the conversation was explained and then the interview consent forms were signed. I tried as far as possible to keep the conversation light by cracking jokes where appropriate but without destroying the main fabric of the interview. This helped in creating a relaxed atmosphere that helped the respondents to open up and express their honest opinions.

At the second level close attention was paid to when to probe and to allow participants to add flesh to what they were saying thereby creating rich data that was both informative and self-explanatory. This was done whenever it was felt that the respondent was right on track on a given theme and there was need for expansion on the given point.



The third level was all about understanding the experiences of the participants on the utilisation of the TLC and for them to validate its significance to them as individuals. This helped to place each individual on the CBAM's stages of concern highlighted in 2.2.1.2 above and helped paint a clear picture of why the situation for each institution was what it was.

The final stage that Charmaz, 2006 termed the closure stage was used to bring the interview to an end on a positive note. The participant was given the opportunity to add anything that they felt added value to the issue of the utilisation of the TLC without of course starting a new path to the whole interview process and the generation of irrelevant data. If such issues arose the participants were assured that their issues would be the subject for further research. The whole idea of this stage

was to summarise the discussion and to agree on the points raised and to pin point those that needed to be emphasised. For examples of interview guides see Appendices i-iv.

The questions asked to each category of participant were tailored to emphasise the needs and demands of each level as far as the utilisation of the TLC was concerned and to fit the interviewee's knowledge, degree of involvement with the TLC and status. For an illustration see the interview matrices in Table 3.1:



Table 3.3: Interview matrices

Focus	PVC	Dean	TLC Director	Lecturers	Students
Response to the setting up of the TLC	How has Top Management responded to the setting up of the TLC?	How have deans responded to the setting up of the TLC?	How has the Director responded to the setting up of the TLC/	How have lecturers responded to the setting up of the TLC?	How have students responded to the setting up of the TLC?
Institutional practices in place	-Where in the structure of the university is the TLC and does this position allow for its full utilisation? -What institutional internal mechanisms are in place to support improvement of teaching and learning through the TLC? -How do lecturers and students respond to the need for them to utilise the TLC? -Are there awareness programmes in place to sensitise the university about the TLC?	-Where in the structure of the university is the TLC and does this position allow for its full utilisation? -What institutional internal mechanisms are in place to support improvement of teaching and learning through the TLC? -How do lecturers and students respond to the need for them to utilise the TLC? -Are there awareness programmes in place to sensitise the university about the	-Where in the structure of the university is the TLC and does this position allow for its full utilisation? -What institutional internal mechanisms are in place to support improvement of teaching and learning through the TLC? -How do lecturers and students respond to the need for them to utilise the TLC? -Are there awareness programmes in place to sensitise the university about the	-Where in the structure of the university is the TLC and does this position allow for its full utilisation? -What institutional internal mechanisms are in place to support improvement of teaching and learning through the TLC? -How do you respond to the need for you to utilise the TLC? -Are there awareness programmes in place to sensitise the university about the TLC?	-What institutional internal mechanisms are in place to support improvement of teaching and learning through the TLC? -How you respond to the need for you to utilise the TLC? -Are there awareness programmes in place to sensitise the university about the TLC?

		TLC?	TLC?		
Levels of understanding	-What motivates management and staff to utilise the TLC? -What supportive mechanisms are in place to encourage the utilisation of TLCs? -Are there any negative perceptions of the TLC by management and staff? - How has some staff managed to utilise the TLC despite any negative perceptions that might be there? - How best can TLC utilisation in your university	-What motivates management and staff to utilise the TLC? -What supportive mechanisms are in place to encourage the utilisation of TLCs? -Are there any negative perceptions of the TLC by management and staff? - How has some staff managed to utilise the TLC despite any negative perceptions	-What motivates management and staff to utilise the TLC? -What supportive mechanisms are in place to encourage the utilisation of TLCs? -Are there any negative perceptions of the TLC by management and staff? - How has some staff managed to utilise the TLC despite any negative perceptions	-What motivates you to utilise the TLC? -What supportive mechanisms are in place to encourage the utilisation of TLCs? -Are there any negative perceptions of the TLC by management and staff? - How has some staff managed to utilise the TLC despite any negative perceptions that might be there? - How best can TLC utilisation by lecturers be guaranteed?	-What motivates you to utilise the TLC? -What supportive mechanisms are in place to encourage the utilisation of TLCs? -Are there any negative perceptions of the TLC by management and staff? - How have some students managed to utilise the TLC despite any negative perceptions that might be there? - How best can TLC

	be guaranteed?	that might be there? - How best can TLC utilisation in your faculty/school be guaranteed?	that might be there? - How best can TLC utilisation in your university be guaranteed?		utilisation by students be guaranteed?
Implementation gaps	From the foregoing discussions, how can the following help to improve the utilisation of TLCs in state universities: Pro Vice Chancellors? Directors of TLCs? Deans of faculties/schools? Lecturing staff? Students?	From the foregoing discussions, how can the following help to improve the utilisation of TLCs in state universities: Pro Vice Chancellors? Directors of TLCs? Deans of faculties/schools? Lecturing staff? Students?	From the foregoing discussions, how can the following help to improve the utilisation of TLCs in state universities: Pro Vice Chancellors? Directors of TLCs? Deans of faculties/schools? Lecturing staff? Students?	From the foregoing discussions, how can the following help to improve the utilisation of TLCs in state universities: Pro Vice Chancellors? Directors of TLCs? Deans of faculties/schools? Lecturing staff? Students?	From the foregoing discussions, how can the following help to improve the utilisation of TLCs in state universities: Pro Vice Chancellors? Directors of TLCs? Deans of faculties/schools? Lecturing staff? Students?

Again the questions that were asked can be divided into categories as indicated in the table below:

Table 3.4: Categories of interview questions

Types of questions	Examples
Interpretive	When you hear the term TLC what quickly comes to your mind?
Leading	Would you say the student throughput in your faculty/school has changed because of utilising the TLC?
Ideal	From the foregoing discussion, how can the following help to improve the utilisation of the TLC?
Multiple	Are there any programmes that have been organised by the TLC for staff and students in your faculty/school? How have the programmes contributed to its utilisation?
Provocative	I have heard people saying TLCs are an unnecessary unit in the university- what do you think?
Loading	What are your own views of the TLC and what it stands for?

In conducting the interview the following was as much as was possible done:

- Self-introduction;
- Explanation of the general purpose of the interview;
- Impression upon the respondent that his/her opinions were important;
- Privacy was sought;
- Establishment of rapport and ensuring of confidentiality;
- Consent for interview and recording was sought;
- Carried the interview in a natural, conversational style;
- I had knowledge of the objectives of each question to make sure that the answers satisfied it;
- Made sure the interview ran dry – use expressions like “Uh-huh” or “That is interesting” or “I see” were used;
- I was always alert to discover drifting of conversation; and
- I always wrapped-up the interview at the end

3.7.2 Focus group discussions.

One focus group discussion of ten students was held at each of the three state universities under study. A focus group has been described by Hennink, 2007, as an explorative research tool that collects data interaction with a small group of about 6-12 members. These members were purposively sampled to participate in the discussion. Ten was thought to be small enough a number for everyone to have their say and large enough to provide diversity of opinions from among the students. A comfortable location was selected in consultation with the group in each of the three locations and interactions were free and well controlled by the researcher. The questions that were asked were similar to those asked in the face to face interviews and tried to elicit the student's experiences with the TL C; their knowledge of the unit; their opinions of its role and feelings towards what the TLC was trying to do; and their input in ensuring that what the TLC was doing was a success through its utilisation. The discussion was recorded after the consent of the group had been sought.

One of the benefits of focus group discussions is that interactions among participants enhance data quality since participants are able to express views that they might not be able to express in a face to face interview (Paton, 2002). This is because they will be freer, spontaneous and secure in the ambit of being in a group. As a result very rich and well thought-out responses were given.

3.7.3 Documentary analysis.

Document analysis was also used to source for information. Bloor and Wood, 2006, describe it as a careful examination of standardised documents and their content in order to draw conclusions about the social circumstances in which the documents are produced and read. Documents are a repository of an institution's culture and procedures so are a perfect window with which to look at whether TLCs are being utilised or not. They can also be used to confirm or refute information that is obtained through face to face interviews and focus group discussions. Documents are thus a useful source of information on an organisation because they document the behind-the-scenes goings on in that organisation (minutes) and the basis upon which decisions are made (policy documents). So such documents as minutes of meetings, university charters and Acts of Parliament, mission statements and memos were carefully studied to corroborate face to face interview and focus group discussion data in order to draw conclusions on the utilisation of the TLC. In this study document analysis was then used to triangulate what emanated from face to face interviews and focus group discussions. The techniques used in the document analysis were:

- Content analysis in order to describe the characteristics of the content;
- Interpretative analysis in order to explore meaning within content; and
- Critical analysis in order to focus on the relationship between documents and aspects of social structures (Kariem, 2010).

3.8 Data analysis.

Data analysis is the process of making sense of the data and discovering what it had to say about the utilisation of TLCs in state universities in Zimbabwe. Analysis was on-going from data collection, transcription to the final analysis in Chapter 5. The data collected was voluminous and had to be sorted into groups and sub-groups, a process Billups, 2010 calls 'chunking'. All similar groups that belonged together were put under codes and clusters for ease of referencing, see Table 3.2 below:

Table 3.5 Codes of individual interviewees

Code	Explanation
PVC1	Pro Vice Chancellor State University 1
PVC2	Pro Vice Chancellor State University 2
PVC3	Pro Vice Chancellor State University 3
DRTLC2	Director TLC State University 2
DRTLC3	Director TLC State University 3
D1SU1	Dean 1 State University 1
D2SU1	Dean 2 State University 1
D3SU1	Dean 3 State University 1
D1SU2	Dean 1 State University 2
D2SU2	Dean 2 State University 2
D3SU2	Dean 3 State University 2
D1SU3	Dean 1 State University 3
D2SU3	Dean 2 State University 3
D3SU3	Dean 3 State University 3
L1SU1	Lecturer 1 State University 1
L2SU1	Lecturer 2 State University 1
L3SU1	Lecturer 3 State University 1
L1SU2	Lecturer 1 State University 2
L2SU2	Lecturer 2 State University 2
L3SU2	Lecturer 3 State University 2

L1SU3	Lecturer 1 State University 3
L2SU3	Lecturer 2 State University 3
L3SU3	Lecturer 3 State University 3

These participants were all interviewed and qualitative data were collected for analysis and discussion in this chapter.

Table 3.6 Codes of individual focus group discussions with students

Code	Explanation
FGSU1	Focus Group State University 1
FGSU2	Focus Group State University 2
FGSU3	Focus Group State University 3



University of Fort Hare

Three focus group discussions were held with a group of ten students from each state university and again qualitative data were collected.

Not all data from the above processes was usable or relevant so further reduction had to be done. The researcher had to go through the process of getting sense of the data again before categorising the data into clusters as follows:

3.9 Credibility and Trustworthiness

According to Nieuwenhuis, 2007, for qualitative data to be valid and reliable, it has to be credible and trustworthy and Guba and Lincoln, 2005 also add that it must also be transferable, dependable and confirmable. Triangulation through face to face interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis was the main tool that

was used to achieve credibility. Time permitting; the audio recordings were played back with the participants to again check on the credibility of what had transpired in the interviews and focus group discussion.

Transferability was achieved through the careful sampling of participants where each category was represented by same level of participants e.g. top management was represented by PVCs; middle management by Deans and Directors and academics by Lecturers and students by part 4.1 groups. All the audio tapes were kept to ensure dependability should the need arise.

3.10 Ethical considerations, confidentiality and anonymity

Rules of morally good conduct from the research must always be observed in modern research (Best & Kahn, 2006; Gomm, 2008). The rights, dignity and privacy of respondents as well as the integrity of the institutions being studied were assured through the process of first obtaining permission and consent form all concerned to conduct the research (Creswell, 2009). It was also imperative to assure participants that their privacy and confidentiality by informing them that their identity would not be revealed. To this end code names were used as highlighted above (Anderson, Babbie and Morton. 2005). No one was referred to by name.

3.11 Informed consent

All the participants were clearly informed of the purpose of the study from the onset and that they had a right to participate voluntarily so participants signed informed consent documents at the start of face to face interviews and focus group

discussions and the Registrar of each state university gave the researcher written consent letters allowing access into the institution and access to institutional documents.

3.12 Summary

This chapter discussed the methodology for the study clarifying the research paradigm, design and approach that the study used. The qualitative approach was found most convenient for this study as it allowed the lived experiences of the participants to be fully explored. The constructivist paradigm was found most appropriate for the study because it allowed the researcher to examine the reality of TLCs in state universities in Zimbabwe. The design that was used was the case study and three state universities were purposely sampled and constituted the three cases of the study. The population, sample and sampling technique were also discussed. How the data were collected and analysed was discussed ending with a section on credibility, trustworthiness and confidentiality. The next chapter focuses on data presentation and analysis.

CHAPTER 4

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANNALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the data that were collected by means of interviews, focus group discussions and analysis of institutional records of the three Zimbabwean state universities under study. The main informants were three PVCs, two directors/coordinators of TLCs, nine deans of faculties/schools and nine lecturers as well as thirty students (ten each) from the three state universities who participated in focus group discussions. As the data were being collected, the process of analysis was already being undertaken and notes were being written in an attempt to answer the research question. So this chapter was written on the basis of the concurrent analysis and the further analysis that was undertaken after all the data had been collected. The purpose of the analysis was to describe how TLCs were being utilised, then interpret the information so obtained for purposes of understanding what is happening in state universities on the utilisation of TLCs. Three state universities were studied and these were described concurrently highlighting significant observations.

4.2 Biographic information of participants

Biographic information on the age, marital status, and experience in the relevant position, highest academic and professional qualification and whether the appointment was substantive or acting was sought for each group of the interviewees. Table 4.1 below illustrates the distribution of participants by age:

Table 4.1: Distribution of participants by age and marital status

Age	Marital status	Number
40-49	All married	5
50-59	All married	17
60+	Married	1
Total		23

The majority of the interviewees are in the age range 50-59 years showing possible maturity and a tendency to adhere to laid down procedures in the institutions. However the flipside to having such an age group dominating is the possibility that they might feel that they are an experienced group and might not see the need for any staff development through the TLC as expected. All participants according to the table are married, suggesting that family circumstance might influence people to utilise the TLC in order to develop themselves or the flip side could be that family commitments could keep them away from taking part in TLC organised activities. The participants were also looked at in terms of being in an acting capacity or substantive in their various positions. Table 4.2 below illustrates this well:

Table 4.2: Appointed on a substantive or acting capacity

Appointment	Number
Acting	4
Substantive	19
Total	23

Most of the participants are in substantive positions, a factor that could work either positively or negatively towards the utilisation of the TLC. Being substantive gives security of tenure to any employee but for those in leadership; this gives them more authority to enforce rules and regulations. Pro Vice Chancellors especially, as leaders of academic affairs need the backing of being substantive to be able to stamp their authority and work with confidence in enforcing rules. Only one PVC however, among the three is substantive, the other two are acting, a factor that could work against the utilisation of the TLC. However, as was noted during interviews and focus group discussions with students, sometimes being substantive makes those in post complacent and unwilling to participate in staff development workshops organised by the TLC.

Experience in post was another factor that was looked at and analysed, see table 4.3 below:

Table 4.3: Experience in post in years

Experience in years	Number
1-5	6
6-10	10
11-15	5
16+	2
Total	23

The experience in post for all the participants is varied but generally low, with those who have been in post between 6-10 years having a slight edge over the other groups. Zimbabwean state universities, like all other institutions and establishments in the country, have not been spared of the brain drain that the country has been experiencing in the past two decades, robbing these institutions of their most experienced staff. This might have a negative impact on the creation of a stable social and academic culture that could see staff attaching significant importance to the utilisation of such units as the TLC. Coupled to this is the current freeze on all recruitment of staff of all grades that has been in force since January 2014. This has had the effect of rendering most TLCs redundant where perceptions of their role have limited them to induction of new staff.

Highest academic and professional qualification was another variable that was looked at. 14 of the 23 participants hold PhDs. A look at the institutional records of the three participating state universities indicates that there is a concerted drive to encourage all staff already in the system that do not have PhDs to acquire them because the entry requirement for one to teach at university according to ZIMCHE

has now been pegged at the PhD (ZIMCHE, 2007). So it is now either one has the PhD or is studying towards one. This is a good indicator of the caliber of staff in the state universities who might perceive engaging in staff development activities of the TLC as an important aspect of their professional growth. However those still grappling with their studies might see those activities as time consuming as they are too busy with their studies.

In presenting the results of this study, the researcher took note of Lester's 1999:3 caution that in qualitative research there is need to be "faithful to the participants and to be aware (insofar as is possible), of (possible) biases being brought by the researcher", guarding also against misrepresenting, distorting or deleting findings that have been provided in good faith by respondents. Special note was taken of this as the data was coded, managed and organised for ease of analysis. Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, also argue along the same lines to say that qualitative research should as much as possible, try to keep the flavour of the original data, so direct phrases and sentences were taken verbatim so as to be faithful to the exact words used by the respondents. So detailed 'thick' descriptions were given (Mason, 2002) to demonstrate the richness of what happened in the way the TLCs were being utilised or not. This also should give the reader the opportunity to bring to the text own interpretations and to evaluate the plausibility of explanations and descriptions made by the author. In the spirit of maintaining the original text as given by the responded, the thick data were not corrected for grammar, hesitation features and disconnections within sentences associated with spoken language, they were taken verbatim. The patterns that emerged from these descriptions helped in coming up with explanations of the utilisation or otherwise of the TLCs.



In the next section therefore, focus of the presentation was on the responses to the research questions of the study. The following sub-research questions guided the study from the start:

- How did state universities respond to the introduction of TLCs?
- How do management and staff perceive TLCs?
- What practices are in place to encourage improvement of teaching and learning in the state universities through the TLCs?
- How do management and staff utilise the services of TLCs?
- What strategies can be used to improve teaching and learning in Zimbabwean state universities?

The sub-sections constitute the themes that were derived from the questions asked on the interview instrument. The Tesch's model of data analysis guided the presentation of data through the eclectic use of excerpts, anecdotal reports, narratives, tables and graphs (Tesch, 1990; Creswell, 2011 and de Vos et al, 2011). The tool suggests that the data analysis process should involve the collection of data; the sorting of data into categories; the distilling and reduction of the data; the building of themes and eventually the writing of the qualitative text (Tesch in Creswell, 2002, Miles and Huberman, 1994 in Punch, 2011). This was followed in this study and the Tesch's tool was utilised fully. The response rate was 100% at each university that was visited, so it was hoped that the rich data that was collected was representative of the utilisation of TLCs at each of the state universities. The researcher came up with five themes on the basis of the research questions.



4.3 Theme 1: How the state universities have responded to the need for them to introduce TLCs.

Each of the three state universities that were studied has responded positively to the need to establish a Teaching and Learning Centre because they each set up such a unit in their respective institutions. All state universities in Zimbabwe, except the University of Zimbabwe (UZ), are relatively new, having been established after independence in 1980. The three state universities under study fall in this category because they are all less than twenty years old and all started as university colleges of the UZ. They all started off without TLCs of their own and had to rely on the UZ TLC mainly for induction of new staff. SU1 opened its TLC in 2011, SU2 in 2009 and SU3 in 2005, making the TLC at SU3 the oldest followed by SU2 and SU1 which has the youngest TLC.



4.3.1 Staffing of the TLC

At each state university personnel have been appointed to run the TLC. At SU1 there is a Coordinator, a secretary that is shared with two other departments and a teaching assistant. At SU2, the TLC is headed by a Director assisted by three trainers, an administrator and a secretary. Finally at SU3 there is a coordinator, two trainers, an administrator and a secretary. That there is staff appointed to run the activities of the TLC could be an indication of the respective administration's commitment to ensuring the success of the TLC project. Most of the participants however expressed some displeasure at the level of staffing at the TLC pointing out that it did not show the seriousness on their part to make the TLC function.

...The TLC should be a hub of activity with enough staff to plan activities and to attend to academics from all the academic units of the university who need assistance on issues to do with teaching and learning. So to just have the Coordinator and a teaching assistant to do all that work does not show some seriousness on the part of the university to have the TLC functioning properly (Dean1).

The same observation that the TLC was understaffed was made in all the three state universities as shown in the organograms in section 4.3.2 below.

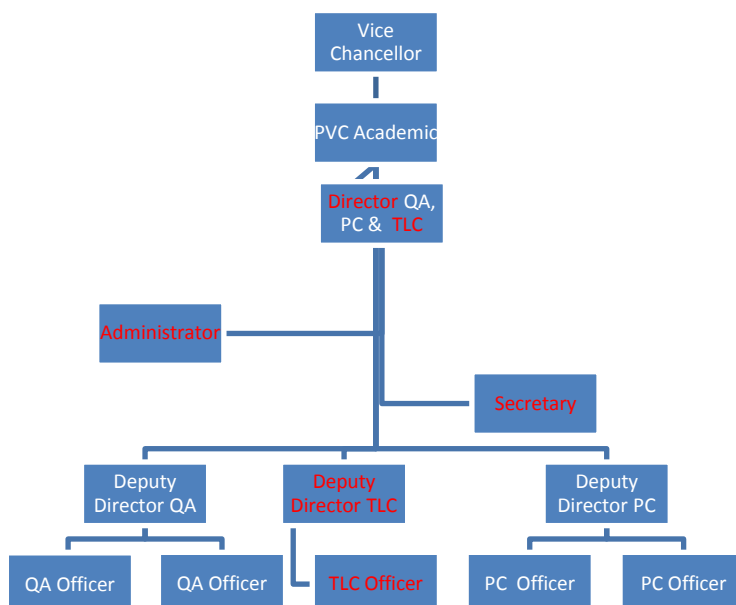
...I get frustrated because the University 5 Year Strategic Plan has given me targets to meet and periodically report on, all that is impossible with the level of staffing that the TLC has (DRTLC3).

4.3.2 The position of the TLC in the structure of the university.

Data from all three institutions under study show that participants are also not happy with the position of the TLC in the university structure because it does not lead to it being utilised. At SU2, the TLC is a stand-alone unit that is at the level of a faculty/school and the Director of the unit is at the level of a Dean of faculty/school so he reports to the PVC Academic and sits on management committees. The organogram below illustrates this well:



Figure 4.1 Organogram for SU2



Source: Institutional records.

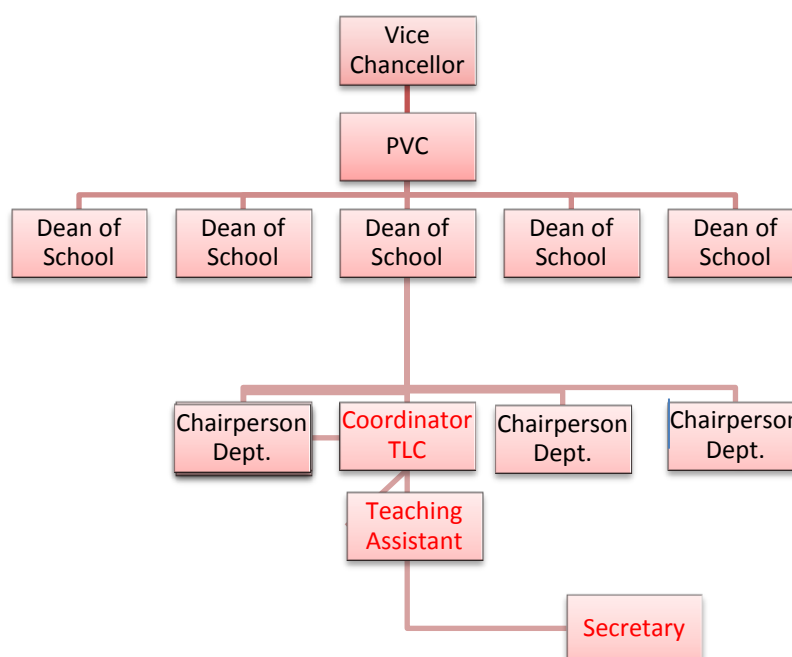


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Only two of the sections below the Director are operational i.e. Quality Assurance and the TLC. The posts for Performance Contracting (PC) have not yet been filled. All the Deputy Director posts are still vacant. The TLC was allocated only one TLC Officer yet the other two sections were allocated two officers' posts each. The Director was of the view that these three sections were too unrelated to be under one umbrella and were causing utilisation problems especially for the TLC whose functions are sometimes relegated to the Faculty of Arts.

In the other two state universities, (SU1 and SU3), the TLC is at the level of a department and is headed by a Coordinator who reports to the Dean of a faculty/school to which the TLC is attached, see the two organograms below:

Figure 4.2: Organogram for SU1



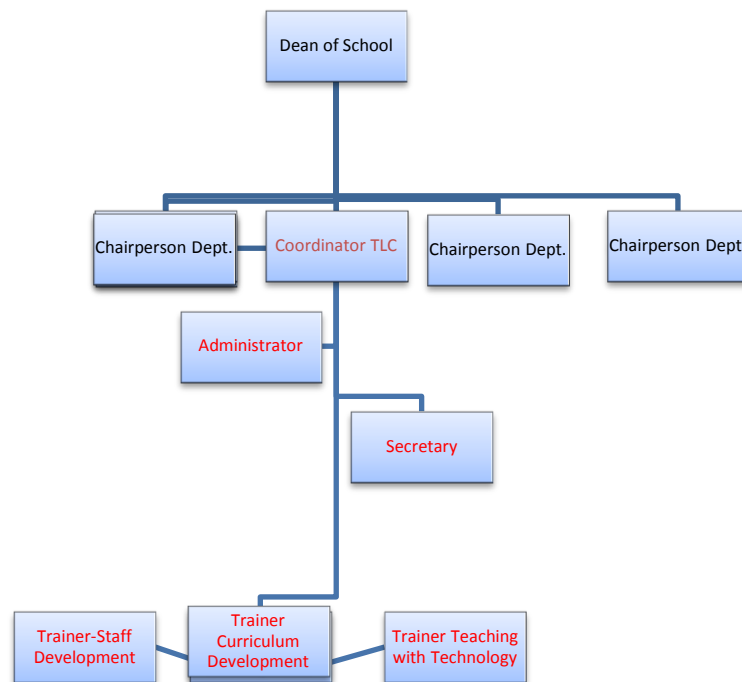
Source: Institutional records

In the arrangement above, the Coordinator is at the level of a chairperson of a department in the Faculty/School. She reports to the Dean of the School and works with a Teaching Assistant and shares a secretary with another department in the School. According to one of the lecturers who participated in the study, this arrangement does not reflect any seriousness that would lead to the TLC being utilised:

...The university just set up the TLC to be seen to have put in place such a unit but not to have it functional. Seriously how are these few people supposed to function? (L3: SU1).

SU 3 is not much different from SU1; the only difference is that SU3 has a bit more staff (see Organogram below):

Figure 4.3: Organogram for SU3



Source: Institutional records

The three TLC Trainers assist the Coordinator in coming up with activities for the Centre in the area of Staff Development, Curriculum Development and Teaching with Technology. One of the Deans at SU1 commenting on the position of the TLC in the hierarchy of the university structure had this to say:

...The placement of a unit in the hierarchical system of an organisation, speaks volumes of how it is perceived and the importance attached by top management to what it is supposed to do **(Dean1 SU1)**.

Another Dean also noted that:

...The use of certain titles such as manager, director, or supervisor for the head of the unit, reflects management's attitude towards the unit. As a director the TLC head would sit on such university committees such as the Academic Board, the Dean's Committee and Management Committee. These are the committees that work hand in glove with top management **(D2 SU1)**.

It is in these committees that decisions are made on the way the university is run and placing the TLC so far away from management was perceived by most deans and lecturers from SU1 and SU3 to point to the little regard that the university has for the TLC and what it stands for.

All the three state universities indicated that they were not happy with the position their TLCs hold in the university hierarchy. Although the TLC at SU2 seems to be better positioned than the TLCs at SU1 and SU3, the TLC Director at SU2, felt that this position was watered down by the fact that his unit is not just a TLC, it also doubles up as a Quality Assurance unit and a Performance Contracting unit and in his opinion top management was more interested in the Quality Assurance side of things to the detriment of the TLC. He called this arrangement 'a marriage of convenience'.



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...This is a marriage of convenience that does not help to ensure that the TLC is utilised. Management overemphasises Quality Assurance issues to the neglect of TLC functions. For an example, there is no direct budget for the TLC, yet quality assurance is well funded (DRTLCSU2).

The Director went on to advocate for the separation of the three units so that each would have its own budget to allow it to plan activities that would attract the university staff to utilise it.

...I love my job, but I find myself being torn in the middle and forced to attend to only one third of my role to the detriment of the other two. We need a director for each of the functions for them to function well. As far as the TLC is concerned I am always being directed to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts for anything that I might want. It is only for Quality Assurance issues that I report to the PVC Academic. I get frustrated sometimes when things to do with the TLC don't move (DRTLCSU2).

The implication of what the Director is saying here is that he is at a dean's level only for quality assurance issues but he is relegated to a chairperson of a department for TLC issues and Performance Contracting issues for which he has to refer to other deans. The rest of the university seeing this will not utilise the other two units including the TLC.

At SU1, the TLC is a department in the School of Education and the head of the unit is a Coordinator which is equivalent to a chairperson of a department. The Coordinator reports to the Dean of the School and sits on the School Board and the School Planning Committee. Both these committees only make decisions on matters that relate to the School not the university as a whole thus removing the Coordinator from the rest of the university TLC users. At SU3, again the TLC is a department in the Faculty of Education and Arts and the head is a Coordinator who is equivalent to a chairperson of a department reporting to the Dean of the Faculty. Commenting on his position and the reporting structure, the Coordinator reiterated that he faces a lot of challenges that make it difficult for him to be visible to the TLC user community and to have his needs addressed.

...Reporting to the Dean of the Faculty of Education and Arts is not practical and does not get my issues attended to on time. It means that my issues never get to top management on time. The Dean does not prioritise whatever comes from me because it does not directly affect the running of the faculty per se but affects the whole university and I am always accused of eating into the Faculty budget with problems that are not necessarily for the Faculty (DRTLCSU3).

So the position of a unit in the structure of the university plays a key role in making or breaking the unit and whether it will be utilised or not. The argument from the

participants especially the coordinators is that it is almost as if they have been hidden in the faculties/schools where the TLC is being hosted yet they are not accorded any recognition by the host making the TLC too far away from top management. The reporting structure seems to tuck the TLC it away, where it will be ignored by the rest of the university and will not be utilised as expected. Another point raised by the Coordinator of the TLC at SU3 is that of the planning of TLC activities that he felt should not be in the hands of a Faculty/School Planning Committee. This role according to him should instead be done by a Teaching and Learning Committee because it has a global view of the whole university (This point is discussed at length under theme 3 below).

4.3.3 Capacity and capability of the Centre to fulfill its role and achieve its purpose.

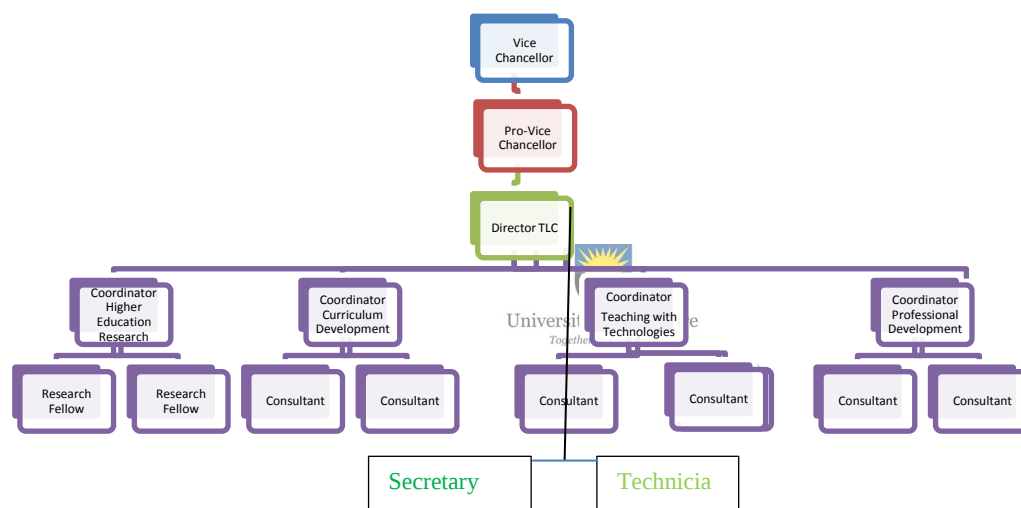


In asking this question the issues that needed to be ascertained were whether the TLCs are well resourced and have opportunities to deliver on their mandate (capacity) and whether they were sufficiently staffed to do their work (capability). The TLC at SU1 operates from an office in one of the departments in the School of Education and this office is shared between the Coordinator and the Teaching Assistant who works in the Centre. There are no labels to indicate where the TLC is. This makes the TLC not so visible to its user community. In response to why things were like that, the PVC said:

...This arrangement is temporary and we hope that as soon as the freeze on recruitment has been lifted, the TLC will move to a new home as a stand-alone unit reporting to this office (PVC1).

Hopefully what the PVC is saying is the reality. On staffing again the PVC pointed out that the TLC's approved structure would be implemented as soon as the freeze had been lifted. Below is the structure that was approved by Senate on 13 November 2013. Most of the posts have not yet been filled leaving just the Coordinator (who ideally should be the Director), working with a teaching Assistant and sharing a Secretary with another department.

Figure 4.4 Approved structure for SU1



At SU2, the TLC is located in a building of its own that is clearly labeled making it accessible to the user community. Being at the main campus means the TLC is in a neutral place and is directly under top management. The Director was particularly happy about this arrangement pointing out that the building has sufficient office space for future projections and the posts that were yet to be filled. The TLC at SU3 is housed in the Faculty of Arts where it belongs but does not have offices yet. The trainers share a large room and only the Coordinator has a little cubicle that has been demarcated temporarily for him and the Secretary has a cubicle outside the

office in the corridor a situation that removes any element of privacy and confidentiality.

...This arrangement means there is no privacy. When lecturers come for individual consultations, discussions are carried out in the open, so they end up not coming (DRTLCSU3).

Besides the level of staffing, on the TLC's capability to fulfill its role and achieve its purpose, the issues that were looked at were those to do with staff qualifications and experience. At SU1 the Coordinator holds a Master's degree in Education and is about to finish her PhD. She has been with the university since 2000 as a lecturer in the School of Education and was noted by the three Deans to have the requisite qualifications and experience to offer leadership in the TLC. The PVC1 had this to say:



...The Coordinator has been with this university for a long time, in fact, she is one of the founding academics of the university and has most of the regulations on her fingertips. We trust her and the programmes she is rolling out are proving to be invaluable. Unfortunately we don't always make use of her because of our very busy schedule and we have not given her the required staff to work with due to the freeze on recruitment (PVC1SU1).

It seems most of the academic staff including top management are too busy to utilise the TLC and this can be very frustrating for the incumbent who might end up feeling frustrated.

The Director at SU2 holds a Master's degree and a PhD in Educational Management. He has risen through the university ranks to become an Associate Professor and has been in university education for the past twelve years. He too is

one of the founding members of his institution. The PVC2 pointed out that the Director is a seasoned educationist with a wealth of experience.

...He was specifically brought into this post to lead a team of retired professionals to give guidance to our academics on professional university teaching (PVC2).

The question however still remains if these are truly respected and listened to by the user community.

The Coordinator at SU3 has a Master's degree in Education and has been with the university for five years. The PVC3 had this to say:

...We should have appointed someone with a PhD. It is not that he is failing to do his work, but you know academics, they look at your credentials before they decide if they want to work with you or not (PVC3).

When asked to explain what he meant,  he said that he had received such requests from lecturers who felt that he was too junior for them to receive guidance and advice from. One wonders why all this was not taken into consideration at the time of appointment.

4.3.4 Ability of the Centre to demonstrate its value

At SU1 the TLC was turned into a teaching unit to coordinate the teaching of university-wide modules. This did not go down well with the deans who felt that the TLC was encroaching onto their turf because they are the owners of the regulations for the teaching of those modules.

Why should the TLC teach our modules, we have the regulations and the manpower to teach? **(D1SU1).**

It was also felt that Management had failed to justify the existence of the TLC and was creating these responsibilities to find work for staff in the TLC who had nothing to do.

...They (Management) were busy creating work for these people who seem not to have anything to do (D2SU1).

It would appear that the TLC is being crippled in its efforts to demonstrate its value by having to attend to responsibilities being thrust on it by Management. However SU1 has successfully launched the Post Graduate Diploma in Higher and Tertiary Education. Initially this project was rejected by academic staff but after it was made mandatory in Semester one 2016 for all university lecturers to have the Diploma for them to be tenured and promoted the numbers of teaching staff enrolling on the programme have been gradually rising from only five in Semester one 2016 to twenty seven in Semester two 2018.  This has had the effect of increasing the Centre's visibility and perceived 'usefulness'.

...I have told all my lecturers to register on the diploma. At least now the TLC is useful and we are now benefitting from their knowledge (D3SU1).

At SU2 the “marriage of convenience” (**DRTLCSU2**) between the TLC and Quality Assurance has not helped the TLC to demonstrate its value. The TLC Director feels that he is being forced to pay attention more to Quality Assurance issues at the expense of TLC issues. SU3 has three trainers and together with the Coordinator, they have managed to roll out a lot more programmes.

...We have managed to do at least two staff development workshops per semester plus the induction workshop for new staff. So, although attendance was poor, at least we managed to have a sizable number attending (DRSU3).

4.4 Theme 2: Knowledge of the TLC and what it stands for in the university.

Responding to how management and staff perceive TLCs, participants showed varied perceptions of the unit. Some appeared not to know what it is and what it is supposed to do and others had an ideal view of TLCs that they had experienced at other institutions outside the country where the TLC was noted to be fully functional and fully utilised by its user community.

4.4.1 Views by top management

Top management in all the selected state universities was represented by the PVC Academic and each of the state universities at the time of data collection had one Pro Vice Chancellor in post, although SU2 and SU3 indicated that they were in the process of filling up posts for other PVC portfolios such as PVC University Enhancement and PVC Business Development. At SU1 these are under Directors and would be turned into PVC positions when cleared by the Ministry. Each PVC was asked the question “When you hear the name TLC what quickly comes to your mind?” This same question was asked of all other participants to ascertain if participants, who ranged from lecturers, middle management represented by Directors/Coordinators of TLCs and Deans of faculties/schools as well as the PVCs representing top management and also as the heads of academic affairs in their respective state universities, had knowledge of what the TLC is and what its role in the scheme of things at the university is supposed to be. It was necessary to establish their knowledge of this important unit because the knowledge the participants have of the TLC would influence their utilisation or otherwise of the unit. In the case of management, it would also influence the support management gives to the unit making it possible for the TLC to be visible to its end users and making it



possible for it to execute its mandate. Below are responses from interviews that the researcher had with the three PVCs on this question.

...The TLC is the place where training is offered to university lecturers to enhance their teaching skills and at this university students are also supported to get academic skills that make them competitive in the job market and it is where they get the university brand (PVC1).

...The TLC is a unit that is associated with lecturers being assisted to improve their teaching. It is there to staff develop lecturers (PVC2).

...The TLC is the place where lecturers are given survival skills to empower them for effective teaching (PVC3).

All the three PVCs seem to be pointing to the support that the TLC is supposed to give to the university lecturers to improve their teaching. It is only SU1 that according to the PVC1 has extended that support to students thus giving the TLC a teaching role through the coordination of the teaching of university-wide modules in Communication Skills, Research Methods and Statistics and ICT. According to PVC1 the regulations for these modules reside in teaching departments and all that the TLC does is to bring the actual teaching under one roof. The other two PVCs pointed out that the TLC is a non-teaching unit except where it runs a post graduate qualification for lecturers that gives them a professional qualification in teaching. At SU1 and SU2 the Post Graduate Diploma is up and running but at SU3 the regulations are yet to be passed by ZIMCHE. PVC 2 and PVC3 were of the view that students did not need to be assisted by the TLC on their academic journey.

*...This University only recruits the **cream da cream** of 'A' level graduates, who have no problems fitting into different academic establishments. We also have a strong mentoring system run by the English Department in the School of Arts that gives students all the support they need especially in Communication Skills (PVC2).*

...Students do not need any centralised academic support; they get that on a day to day basis from all their lecturing staff. The TLC should really focus on giving lecturers the relevant teaching skills and the lecturers will ensure that students get the requisite academic skills in the day to day lectures in the classroom and on giving feedback on written work (PVC3).

So from the above, differences emerged on the TLC's perceived role. The main difference that emerged in the knowledge of the TLC from the PVCs was on who its target users are or should be. For SU1 the TLC was there to give support to both staff and students on academic issues yet for both SU2 and SU3 the TLC is there to give academic support to lecturers only and has no direct role as far as students are concerned. On being pressed on this, the above responses were given. It is only SU1 that has deliberately assigned a teaching role to the TLC that sees students being given academic skills through the teaching of university-wide modules. The TLC is the coordinating unit for the teaching of Communication Skills, Research Methods and Statistics and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). According to PVC1, this was deliberately done to ensure that all graduates of the university possess certain basic academic skills required in the world of work.

This arrangement has seen the TLC teaching academic programmes that belong to academic units to which the regulations belong and according to D3SU1 this has created some conflicts between the TLC and those units. PVC1 was of the view that these conflicts were superficial and felt that with time they could be resolved.

...The TLC is strategically placed to meet the academic needs of students through the coordination of the teaching of university-wide modules such as Communications Skills, Research Methods and Statistics and Information and Communications Technology. The TLC also coordinates

the teaching of bridging programmes in language proficiency for foreign students who come from non-English speaking backgrounds. In future we are however thinking of revisiting the regulations to allow students not to do these important modules as one-off examinable modules, but as skills that need polishing throughout the course of the degree programme (PVC1).

...Such an arrangement takes away the responsibility of the Department Chairperson who really is the custodian of standards in all teaching of programmes to an outsider unit that is not answerable for quality (D2SU1).

These mixed reactions could be an indication of the limited knowledge all the three PVCs might have of what the TLC really is and what its role in the university should be, leading to a lack of seriousness attached to it in terms of its utilisation in each of the three state universities under study.



4.4.2 Views of middle management represented by Deans and TLC Directors

The deans that were interviewed in all the three state universities showed that they were aware of what the TLC is and what it should be doing, but were not happy with what was happening on the ground, clearly indicating that management and staff were not in sync as far as what the TLC is and what it should be doing. One Dean contended that the TLC activities should be on going to keep teaching in the university abreast with trends on teaching and learning globally.

...The TLC should be a centre that is the first and last resort of call for both lecturers and students for academic skills. Even experienced lecturers must be familiar with the dynamics of teaching so the TLC must put in place programmes that assist lecturers to keep on learning about their profession because learning how to teach is a lifelong process not an event (D1SU1).

Ideally the TLC should support academic staff and students in their pursuit of teaching excellence and learning success. This should be done through the provision of professional development services and workshops (D2SU1).

It is not clear from this how the TLC is supposed to support students given the opposition by the deans to the teaching arrangement above.

...The TLC should support the mission of the university by providing staff with professional development opportunities aimed at facilitating, promoting and recognizing excellence in teaching and learning (D3SU1).

All the three deans at SU1 appeared to be tentative in their responses giving the impression that what they were giving were the ideal and not the reality in their university. On being pressed they each admitted that they were giving responses on what they knew from experiences elsewhere and not on what was going on in their university. It was further revealed that the TLC was not well staffed and did not have a budget of its own to carry out its activities but depended on *ad hoc* funding given from time to time by top management when funds were available. Outsiders are generally used as facilitators to offer services as and when an activity does happen at the TLC, but this was said not to be often. The researcher is the Coordinator of the TLC at SU1 and can confirm that what the deans were saying is very true because the TLC has just the coordinator staffing the unit. Although there are posts in the TLC, these have been moved to other departments that were felt to be priority areas. There is currently a freeze on all recruitment across all state universities and top management is supposed to use its discretion in moving staff around for the survival of the university.

At SU2 the TLC is a stand-alone unit headed by a Director who is at the level of a dean. The unit is however combined with Quality Assurance and Performance Contracting under the same Director. The deans had this to say about what the TLC is and what it is supposed to do:

...The TLC is the academic hub whose responsibility is to ensure that high standards of teaching and learning are achieved and that everything to do with teaching and learning is of quality (D1SU2).

...I associate the TLC with the Director whom I see running around to ensure that quality is achieved in all aspects of university life (D2SU2).

When the two deans above were asked to explain if their use of the word 'quality' in their explanations justified the combination of the two units (the TLC and Quality Assurance) under one roof, they professed ignorance of the difference between the two if it existed.



...This is the Centre that is responsible for developing academics to deliver in their teaching (D3SU2).

The DRTLCSU2 had this to say:

...To be honest with you, because of the three hats that I am wearing, I am not too sure I can separate them. However I can safely say the TLC side of things is to do with transfer of skills from this unit to academics in order to enhance their teaching skills and indirectly benefit the students' learning. However I deal more with policy issues and leave the running of activities to the Faculty of Arts until the Deputy Director TLC is appointed. He should be a specialist in the teaching of English so s/he can handle Communication skills with ease (DRTLCSU2).

It is clear from the above that this Director has a confused idea of what the TLC side of his job entails. He is happy to delegate whatever is to do with the TLC to another department while he awaits the appointment of his deputy who will be there specifically for the TLC. However it can also be safely said that DRTLCSU2 is well placed to ensure that the TLC is utilised because he reports directly to the PVC Academic and has direct access to the VC so he can potentially influence the utilisation of the TLC. That he is waiting for the appointment of someone who knows what to do puts the TLC in limbo and might not allow for its utilisation. There also seems to be no shared understanding of the role of the TLC and this might lead to it not being utilised.

4.4.3 Views of the lecturers

Surprisingly lecturers seemed more conversant with what the TLC is and what it is supposed to do, but expressed frustration with the caliber of Directors/Coordinators in office as well as the lack of coordination between higher offices and themselves to ensure that the TLC is fully utilised. L1SU1 articulated a very rich and complex explanation of what the TLC is:

...The TLC exists to help lecturers to modernize their teaching in a way that students can meaningfully take in. It is also there to help students learn more deeply and retain what they have learnt (L1SU1).

The implication of the above is that the TLC should offer academic support to both the lecturers and students. The same lecturer expressed some frustration in not having a 'properly constituted' and run TLC that gives academic support to both staff and students.

...The TLC is the place where we as lecturers are reminded of the tools of our trade and the latest developments in the teaching profession at this level of teaching and learning. You however don't find this at this university; it is very frustrating (LISU1).

...It is a unit that supports management to maintain high professional standards of teaching and should be mandated to monitor the quality of the teaching that goes on in the university (LISU2).

...I have taught at two universities in South Africa where TLCs are huge establishments that are a hive of activity, with programmes running every week for staff and students. These activities are part of the university calendar and most of them are mandatory for staff to attend. As a lecturer I felt well supported there, because both myself and my students had, not only a drop-in Centre where we could seek help, but there was a whole team of professionals responsible for planning and running academic activities for everyone as per our needs or simply to give regular support and to introduce current and modern best practices that keep lecturers abreast with what is happening elsewhere (L2SU1).



Strikingly, all the three lecturers above had an idea of what the TLC was, but it was the question of its role that had varied interpretations with most of them pointing at the lack of seriousness by their institution in allowing it to do what it is supposed to do. At **SU2**, the bone of contention was around the fact that the TLC also doubles as a Quality Assurance unit. Two lecturers from **SU2** felt that these two functions should have been separated to allow each of the units to effectively operate according to its mandate.

...The quality assurance side of things is overemphasized disadvantaging the TLC. After all quality assurance is about establishing a checking mechanism to ensure implementation of policies and maintenance of high standards and the TLC should be a developmental centre that quality

assurance should also be looking at. So how can the centre police itself? (L1SU2).

...“Ndezvekutsvakirana mabasa.” (Meaning, ‘It’s all about creating jobs for some people’ (L2SU2).

It is clear from this that some respondents did not believe the TLC is a necessary unit yet others felt that it is being underutilized or being used for functions that are not meant for it.

...There is a definite conflict of interest here (L2SU2).

When asked how this is so, the response was

...How does an institution create a unit whose function it is not very clear about, doesn’t that impact negatively on who is employed to head it? It would have been better to engage a consulting firm to do the ground work and then employ people to specific posts with specific roles (L2SU2).



At SU3 the lecturers felt that because of the multi-campus nature of their university, their TLC is either failing to cope with such an arrangement because it is not very visible, or the unit is not being used for the correct or full purpose.

...I have only come across the TLC ounce when I went through the induction workshop when I started work in 2005. I have never heard of any other activities organised by them. I know the TLC coordinator but I am not too sure what his role is besides offering induction workshops (L1SU3).

...It is not a very busy unit because they don’t seem to have much to do especially now when there are no new staff for them to induct due to the current freeze on recruitment (L2SU3).

Clearly from these observations it would appear that the lecturers feel that first, no prior planning seems to have gone on before the establishment of the TLC in each of the state universities to streamline what the unit is supposed to do. Maybe the TLC

was set up simply because each state university was expected by ZIMCHE to have one, but the planning of the unit was not given any seriousness to link it to its perceived role, or because of the freeze on recruitment, the TLC was not prioritised by management. Secondly, it would appear the TLC's function is not clear to management and the planners making it even more difficult for utilisation to be enforced.

It is sad though that the lecturers clearly articulated the role of the TLC very well and seemed to expect more from it than what was happening in all the three state universities.

...The TLC is an educational change agent that supports lecturers to design courses, set better assignment and examinations questions and also to address the many learning difficulties that students might have. They also may be involved in offering staff development programmes in e-learning and similar changes happening in Higher Education from time to time (L1SU2).

...We were very excited when the TLC was established and were very hopeful that the challenges some of us from non-teaching backgrounds were facing would be addressed. Most of us are specialists in our fields but we do not have the relevant teaching skills (L2SU2).

...The TLC must of necessity address specific lecturer-student issues that can affect classroom dynamics and academic performance and also respond to the current learning demands of the students (L3SU2).

All this is in stark contrast to the views expressed by one of the deans above that lecturers must assist students overcome academic challenges as they teach, thus indicating that the TLC has no role to play in this regard.

4.4.4 Views of the students

It would be folly for any university to assume that students on joining the university have a full understanding of what is expected of them by the university community from top management to the lecturers who teach them. A concerted effort has to be made to initiate all students to university life, the rigors of studying at this level and the general expectations of all concerned for the student to achieve success. This does not start and end at the initiation stage, but is a continuous process of support with clear structures in place to give the students all they need to succeed in their studies. Such structures as the Students' Affairs Department have a prominent place in most universities to attend to the social, health, sporting and other needs of the students while they are on campus. The TLC in most universities has the responsibility to fill the gap of supporting students in the academic side of their stay in the university.



This study engaged students in focus group discussions to find out from them how they are being supported academically by their institutions and to find out if the TLC has any role in this regard and if so to ascertain the level of utilisation of the TLC by the student body. Three focus group discussions were held with students from the three state universities under study. Ten students made up the focus group for each university. The same questions asked of the other categories i.e. top management, middle management and lecturers were also asked to each focus group. On the question of what the TLC is and what it stands for, varied reactions were received.

...The TLC is the place where we go for lectures when we are in our second largest campus. (FGSU1).

(SU1 named the place where classrooms are in one of the campuses, the 'Teaching and Learning Centre' and had the same name for the TLC).

...The other one is also the place where we go to when we have queries on university-wide modules (FGSU1).

...On joining the university, we were all anxious about whether we would manage studies at this level coming as we did from the high school where we relied a lot on what our teachers provided. We were also very nervous and worried thinking that we would not manage. The Coordinator of the TLC gave us a talk during orientation where she explained her role at the TLC in coordinating university-wide modules (FGSU1).

So SU1 has two TLCs; the first one is just the place where classrooms are located in one campus and the second one is the TLC which is a department in the School of Education. Interestingly on going to the SU's website that unit is not there but the place where classes are is very prominently captured in the University's pictures both on the website and the brochures that advertise the university. That confusion is also evident in the students' responses as noted above because the students correctly identified the two places. They went further to observe that they were addressed by someone from the TLC during the orientation week and they had come to associate the TLC with university-wide modules. These had been explained by the PVC earlier on, as the centralised teaching of some modules with the hope of creating a brand of university graduates that can communicate effectively, are computer literate and are guided by research in all their dealings. So the TLC was mandated by the university to coordinate the teaching of these modules and to ensure that all students have gone through them by the time they graduate. These modules are supposed to give the students professional skills that students will need for their academic journey in the university and in the world of work when they finish



their degrees. Academic and professional communication is given in Communication Skills; research skills are given in Research Methods and Statistics and technology skills are given in the ICT module. Every student is expected to do and pass these modules.

...It is the place where we find the Coordinator of university-wide modules (name supplied) and we go to her when we need assistance about those modules (FGSU2).

Very confusing indeed especially considering that the students still have to go to their Dean or Chairperson for the same modules and get their issues resolved.

At SU2 the TLC does not have direct dealings with students and the students professed ignorance of what it was and what its role was.

...It must be the place that is headed by Prof---- (Name supplied). He is in charge of quality assurance. He always introduces himself when he comes checking if lecturers are coming for lectures. The lecturers are afraid of him (there are giggles round the group) (FGSU2).

The same is also true at SU3 where students professed ignorance of the unit but claimed that they had seen a building with that name.

...We have never heard of a TLC. But there is a building that has a label with that name but we do not know what it is. It must be part of management (FGSU3).

Students in all the state universities under study do not have much information on the TLC and each group has its own interpretation of what the TLC is and what it stands for in the university. At SU1 the students do have something that they do with the TLC. They have modules that they do that the TLC oversees and the TLC is where they go if they experience any problems with those modules that they agree are called 'university-wide modules'.

4.5 Theme 3: How management and staff utilise the TLC.

4.5.1 Top management's utilisation of the TLC.

Top management's utilisation is seen by the way it supports the TLC to function. Top management support (TMS) has two main key roles to play i.e. providing leadership and providing the necessary resources that the TLC needs to function and for it to be utilised. So where there is limited or poor involvement or contact with top management as noted to be the case in the three state universities under study, there is bound to be weak implementation/utilisation of the TLC by management. Such a weakness always gets noticed by the university community that is supposed to utilise the unit in question and has an impact on the decision to utilise it or not. Lecturers as the main beneficiaries of TLC activities do take notice of the lack of support from top management and either take advantage of the weakness by using the time that is supposed to be spent at the TLC for other things or use it as free time.

There were varied perceptions on top management support for the TLC and its activities. The questions that all interviewees were asked were:

Question 6: Where in the structure of the university is the TLC?

Question 7: In your opinion does this position that the TLC holds allow for its utilisation?

The table below summarises findings to these two questions from information obtained from institutional records and responses from the interviewees:

Table 4.4: Presence of supporting conditions for TLC utilisation

Condition	SU1	SU2	SU3
TLC stand-alone unit	No- a department in the School of Education	Yes but Director also responsible There is an unfilled post for Deputy Director responsible for the TLC function Quality assurance.	No- a department in the Faculty of Arts
TLC headed by Director	No- TLC headed by Coordinator	TLC headed by a Deputy Director but post not filled.	No- TLC headed by Coordinator
TLC's access to PVC Academic Affairs	No- reports to Dean of School	Yes- reports to PVC Academic Affairs through the Director Quality Assurance.	No- reports to Dean of Faculty
Presence of Teaching and Learning Committee Structure	No- activities planned ad-hoc by coordinator Coordinator-chairperson within the school	Yes- activities directed by the committee Director- Dean of the combined unit	No- activities planned ad-hoc by coordinator Coordinator- Chairperson within the faculty
Staffing	There is a Coordinator, a teaching assistant and a secretary shared with two other departments.  University of Fort Hare Together in Excellence	There is a Director, one trainer, an administrator and a secretary	There is a Coordinator, two trainers, an administrator and a secretary
TLC plans activities for the whole university	Yes- but activities planned and directed by hosting School Planning Committee.	Yes- but in the absence of the Deputy Director, TLC activities planned separately from QA activities and directed by a Faculty Planning Committee.	Yes- but activities planned and directed by a hosting Faculty Planning Committee.
TLC head has relevant prior experience	Yes, appointed specifically for the post, initially as Director but relegated to Coordinator on expiry of contract.	No- one of the lecturers elevated to Director after attaining associate professor status.	No- one of the lecturers elevated to Coordinator.
Funding/Budget	No budget, Coordinator applies for funds as and when required	No budget, Director relies on faculty budget and applies for funds as and when required.	No budget Coordinator relies on faculty budget and applies for funds as and when required.
Job security and job mobility for the head.	Yes- Coordinator is a permanent lecturer in the TLC but is not attached to any other department.	Director loaned from another department and can go back on expiry of Director's contract.	Coordinator loaned from another department and can go back on expiry of coordinator's contract.

Source: **Institutional records.**

From the data above it can be noted that only one state university (SU2) had a somewhat clear mandate for its TLC. To start with, the TLC is a stand-alone unit that is at the level of a faculty/school and the Director of the unit is at the level of a Dean of faculty/school so he sits on management committees. In the other two (SU1 and SU3), the TLC is at the level of a department and the heads of the unit are both called by the name 'coordinator' and they report to the Dean of the faculty/school to which the TLC is attached. It was pointed out by deans that the placement of a unit in the hierarchical system of an organisation, speaks volumes of how it is perceived and the importance attached by top management to what it is supposed to do. Even the use of certain titles such as manager, director, or supervisor for the head of the unit, reflects management's attitude towards the unit. All the three state universities indicated that they were not happy with the position their TLCs hold in the university hierarchy. Although the TLC at SU2 seems to be better positioned than the TLCs at SU1 and SU3, the TLC Director at SU2, felt that this position was watered down by the fact that his unit is not just a TLC, it also trebles up as a Quality Assurance unit and a Learning and Contracting unit. In his opinion top management was more interested in the Quality Assurance side of things to the detriment of the TLC. He called this arrangement 'a marriage of convenience'.

...This is a marriage of convenience that does not help to ensure that the TLC is utilised. Management overemphasises quality assurance issues to the neglect of TLC functions. For an example, there is no direct budget for the TLC, yet quality assurance is well funded (DTLCSU2).

The Director went on to advocate for the separation of the two units so that each would have its own budget to allow it to plan activities that would attract the university staff to utilise it.

...I love my job, but I find myself being torn in the middle and forced to attend to only one third of my role to the detriment of the other two. We need a director for each of the functions for them to function well. As far as the TLC is concerned I am always being directed to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts for anything that I might want. It is only for Quality Assurance issues that I report to the PVC Academic. I get frustrated sometimes when things to do with the TLC don't move (DRTLCSU2).

The implication of what the Director is saying here is that he is at a dean's level only for quality assurance issues but he is relegated to a chairperson of a department for TLC issues.

At SU1, the TLC is a department in the School of Education and the head of the unit is a Coordinator which is equivalent to a chairperson of a department. The Coordinator reports to the Dean of the School. At SU3, the TLC is a department in the Faculty of Education and Arts and the head is a Coordinator who is equivalent to a chairperson of a department reporting to the dean of the faculty.

...I have to report to the Dean of the Faculty of Education and Arts, this means that my issues never get to top management on time. The Dean does not prioritise whatever comes from me because it does not directly affect the running of the faculty per se but affects the whole university and I am always accused of eating into the Faculty budget with problems that are not necessarily for the Faculty (DRTLCSU3).

So management support plays a key role in making or breaking the unit in the organisation. Top management support has two main key roles to play i.e. providing leadership and providing the necessary resources. So where there is limited or poor involvement or contact with top management as is the case above, there is bound to be weak implementation/utilisation of the said unit. Such a weakness always gets

noticed by the university community that is supposed to utilise the unit in question and has an impact on the decision to utilise it or not.

4.5.2 Teaching staff's utilisation of the TLC.

The results have revealed that lecturers as the main beneficiaries of TLC activities do take notice of the lack of support from top management and either take advantage of the weakness by using the time that is supposed to be spent at the TLC for other things or use it as free time.

...I have only attended one function by the TLC which was the induction workshop when I just got here at the beginning of my university career and I have been here for five years. The other workshops always come when I am busy. Since these workshops are always on offer, I can always attend the next one if I have time (L1SU1).



At SU1 each lecturer must teach a minimum of four modules per semester and this does not leave lecturers with time to attend TLC activities.

...Teaching is not critical for tenure and promotion, so I use the time that I am supposed to attend TLC functions to do my research which is a big requirement for my upward mobility (L2SU2).

The above position is true of all state university because all tenure and promotion procedures are guided by the ZIMCHE Guidelines that each state university must use and these are thought to overemphasise research at the expense of teaching.

...I have been teaching in colleges and universities for the past nine years. I don't see the need to be trained on something that I know I have done successfully for all that time, I am sure that is why the university does not put too much emphasis on attendance (L3SU3) .

...Personally I do not think this unit is necessary. If it was, why would it be ignored by management? (L3SU1).

...Sometimes the Coordinator goes ahead to plan some activities despite lack of support from top management and we have noticed that the TLC in those instances will be on its own because the rest of the faculties noticing how forced those activities are always stonewall those initiatives and don't attend those them especially the workshops and seminars (L1SU2).

Top management in all the three state universities is, from the data above, perceived to be ignoring the TLC, this has had the adverse effect on the unit in that it is not being fully utilised or is being ignored by the user community. Further distortions also seem to occur when the university community looks at issues such as the distribution of resources, and how much the TLC voice weighs and impacts on day to day activities. If the TLC is generally ignored by top management, everyone else will do the same at their level. So support means that top management has to truly back the unit through the provision of resources, and giving support to the team that is running it through recognition of the individual heading it. That recognition can come in the form of the title of the head or the position of the unit in the institutional hierarchy and if the unit is placed too far off from top management, the user community might also not respect it and its activities much.

The staff establishment of the TLC was another area where top management support of the unit can be ascertained. At SU1 the TLC staff is made up of a Coordinator, a teaching assistant and a secretary who is shared among three departments; at SU2, there is a Director, an administrator, a secretary and three trainers and at SU3 there is a Coordinator, an administrator, a secretary and two trainers.



The situation in all the three is a far cry from the ideal as proposed by Gosling, 2008 in Table—above where the TLC is a huge establishment with departments to do with teaching and learning.

4.6 Theme 4: Practices in place to encourage the utilisation of the TLC.

This theme is closely linked to the Management and staff's utilisation of the TLC theme above but only in so far as top management was thought to have the responsibility to create the culture of TLC utilisation. Three questions were asked of all those that were interviewed on this theme:

- a) Where in the structure of the university is the TLC?
- b) In your opinion does this position that the  TLC holds allow for its full utilisation?
- c) What institutional internal mechanisms are in place to support the utilisation of the TLC?

An institutional culture for the utilisation of a unit, particularly in the early years of the unit, is inevitably tied to the personality, background and values of those in management or founders as well as their vision for the future of the unit and the institution as a whole.

...There is no quick resolution of TLC issues because of too many in-between offices through which they have to pass (D3SU1).

...I have been to many universities in the region and abroad, I have never seen a TLC that is housed in a Faculty, it must be a stand-alone department that works closely with the PVC Academic. I don't think our management is knowledgeable of how this unit should be positioned and structured (D2SU3).

Discussing along the same lines some lecturers reiterated the need for the TLC to be a stand-alone unit so that the TLC can be seen to attend to all lecturers' needs and this minimises the possibility of friction among faculties and departments and it is clear structurally what the TLC stands for **(L1SU1)**. Being in a faculty makes the TLC appear as if it is there to promote the agenda of the hosting faculty or school.

...Whatever activity that the TLC puts in place will always be viewed with suspicion as an agenda of the faculty where the TLC is accommodated
(L3SU1).

A good example that was cited at SU1 was the response of schools to the introduction of the PGDHTE. Lecturers in non-education schools had felt that the School of Education was trying to turn scientists, economists, accountants, lawyers, agronomists etc. into teachers and this  did not go down very well with them. After some heated debate in one Senate meeting, a decision was taken for the Human Resources Department to mount a team building workshop for middle management. Among others the following were the resolutions of the workshop on the issue of university-wide units that resided in schools:

- All such units must be respected and their programmes attended.
- Policies must be put in place that ensured attendance of such events;
- Not everyone could sit on management committees, so those who did had the responsibility to disseminate information and to be true representatives of their respective units on those committees.

On the issue of institutional mechanisms in place to encourage the utilisation of the TLC, several of the respondents were of the view that the position of the TLC and its structure do not encourage utilisation. Explaining further one lecturer went on to say

...A lecturer who sits on the Academic Board is better placed to appreciate students' performance across all schools and make plans, than the Coordinator who sits only on the School of Education Boards (L1SU1).

Of grave concern to the lecturers was the teaching workload that left them with little time to do their research, attend to their community service obligations and attend TLC activities. At SU1 the teaching workload per lecturer is four modules per lecturer; at SU2 it is four and at SU3 it is three. This heavy teaching load was compounded by the size of each class that was on average noted to be around one hundred students in all the three institutions.

...Much as I might want to attend the TLC workshops, my workload does not leave me with much time to do so. I have got three large classes of about a hundred students each and a fourth post graduate class of fifteen. The amount of marking I have to do leave me with little time for anything else (L2SU2).

The introduction of the Post Graduate Diploma in Higher and Tertiary Education as a mandatory programme for all staff who do not hold a teaching qualification was initially resisted but has since led to a surge in TLC utilisation especially at SU1 and SU2 where it has been running for the past three years. Lecturers that have gone through the programme speak highly of the immense benefits they have derived from going through the programme. At SU3 some lecturers have gone to other institutions that offer the qualification to attain the qualification through their own initiative.

...I don't regret the time and effort that I put into getting this qualification. It was most worthwhile because now I am doing my work from an informed

decision. I am most grateful to the TLC for the continued guidance and support (L1SU1: Dataset 3).

At both SU1 and SU2 those who enroll on the programme are assisted with the payment of tuition fees by their respective institutions lightening the burden and acting as an encouragement to enroll. Some lecturers are however still sitting on the fence and various reasons were given for not enrolling on the programme:

...The academic role of teaching is not given as much attention as research so it is better to give more of my time to research (L3SU1).

...I have been teaching successfully without the qualification for the past twelve years, I don't see the need for it now (LISU3).

4.7 Theme 5: Strategies that can be used to improve teaching and learning



This question required each respondent to suggest what each level from the PVC, the Directors/Coordinators of TLC, the Deans, the lecturers to the students could do to improve teaching and learning through the TLC. All the suggestions will be put together under each level.

4.7.1 The Pro Vice Chancellor

The following are the suggestions that were put forward on what the PVC could do to improve the quality of teaching and learning through the TLC:

- The PVC should advocate for more staff for the TLC to enable the unit to fully function, this includes advocating for the removal of the freeze on recruitment of staff (**DRTLCSU2**).

- Members of staff in the TLC should be sent for staff development so that they are fully conversant of their roles **(PVC2)**.
- The PVC should ensure that Deans have the TLC consistently on their radar so that all planned programmes have their buy in and input. **(PVC1)**.
- The PVC should ensure clarity of policy on TLC utilisation so that there is shared understanding of what the TLC is and what it is supposed to do **(DRTLCSU2)**.
- The PVC should push at management level for the TLC to be a stand- alone unit:
 - That reports to the PVC's office;
 - That is not in a faculty; and
 - Whose functions are not cluttered with other functions such as quality assurance and teaching (except for the teaching of the PGDHTE) **(PVC2)**.
- The PVC must at every opportunity, sensitise the university teaching community on the importance of attending TLC functions and events **(D1SU1)**.
- The PVC must ensure that the Teaching and Learning Committee is active and through it come up with policies and procedures that raise the status of teaching and give respectability to the TLC **(D2SU1)**.
- The PVC should change the title of the Coordinator TLC to Director TLC or equivalent **(D3SU3)**.

4.7.2 Directors/Coordinators of TLCs

Most respondents were of the view that the TLC Director/Coordinator could do more than what was currently obtaining to ensure quality teaching and learning in the university. Below are some of the suggestions:

- ❖ The Director could carry out surveys to identify areas of need in the schools/faculties and departments and come up with programmes that address these **(L1SU1)**.
- ❖ The Director should take charge of student evaluation of teaching and use information gathered from that exercise to come up with activities that improve student learning. **(FG1)**.
- ❖ The Director should collaborate with sister TLCs in state universities and other universities in the region and beyond on teaching and learning issues in order to share notes and learn from each other **(L2SU2)**.
- ❖ The Director should not lose heart; he should continue doing what he is doing; assisting lecturers improve in their teaching, the results might not be obvious but we know we are benefitting **(L3SU1)**.
- ❖ The Director should teach us how to use the computer for teaching because we are lagging behind other institutions in the use of technology for teaching **(L3SU3)**.
- ❖ The Director should get students' view on how they are being taught and come up with remedial activities **(FG3)**.
- ❖ The Director should ensure that lecturers see the value of the TLC by coming up with targeted workshops for all groups at which each group sees the benefits that can be derived from attending TLC activities **(DRTLCSU2)**.

- ❖ The Director should market the TLC through fliers so that the university community is constantly reminded of the benefits that can be derived from attending TLC events **(DRTLCSU2)**.
- ❖ The Director should organise regular workshops with chairperson to help them understand the role of the TLC and get feedback from them on the areas that need attention in their departments to improve teaching and learning. He should request invites to Departmental board meetings to collect data for workshops on teaching and learning (L1SU1: Dataset 4).
- ❖ The Director should engage lecturers for more awareness of the TLC and generate an instrument on which lecturers indicate their needs. These become the source of information for workshops **(L2SU2)**.
- ❖ The Director should lobby for incentives for workshop presenters to build a pool of specialists who will continue coming to present at TLC workshops **(L3SU1)**.



4.7.3 Deans of Schools/Faculties.

According to PVC2 deans are the biggest culprits who can raise or lower teaching standards in universities. They have a lot of responsibilities to ensure that the quality of teaching is of international standard so they should:

- ✚ Create time for TLC programmes and other teaching and learning staff development initiatives;
- ✚ Ensure chairpersons, subject coordinators and students attend activities that promote high standards of teaching and learning as per their needs;
- ✚ Work closely with the TLC Director to craft those programmes that will benefit teaching and learning in the university;

- ✚ Use feedback from external examiners, peer and student evaluation of teaching to feed into TLC programmes to ensure resolution of identified teaching and learning problems; and
- ✚ Identify common areas of concern that should feed into staff development programmes (PVC2).

Discussing along the same lines PVC1 indicated that deans should include improvement of teaching in their action plans for each semester and liaise closely with the TLC Coordinator to formulate practical plans and activities that help to solve any identified problems (PVC1).

Speaking for themselves most of the deans were of the view that as far as improvement of teaching is concerned, theirs was more of an oversight role where administratively they must ensure  good planning, effective monitoring and supervision of staff. Any adverse issues arising from these activities must then be taken to the TLC for remedial action in the form of workshops, seminars and other related symposia **(D2SU3)**. D3SU1 further noted that deans are responsible for quality in their faculties so they should ensure that quality teaching skills are acquired by all. The deans have access to evaluations of teaching by peers and students as well as reports from external assessors that can inform any symposia that is planned by the TLC. In addition to the above D2SU1 was of the view that the VC relies on the dean as the CEO off the faculty to advise management on all matters to do with teaching and learning in the university, so they should play a proactive role in suggesting policies that add value to teaching and learning in the university. Lectures too put the deans in the driving sit of coming up with suggestions for programmes that can improve teaching and learning. They should also identify

from among the staff in their faculties lecturers who have specific strengths in teaching to lead as resource persons in workshops and seminars **(L1SU2)**.

4.7.4 Lecturers

Most respondents felt that lecturers had the responsibility through self-evaluation and the feedback from peers, students and external examiners to identify gaps in their teaching that need to be attended to by staff development efforts.

*...Lecturers should also participate more willingly in staff development activities **(L2SU1)**.*

A call was made by all PVCs for a change in attitude among teaching staff towards staff development initiatives and lecturers were encouraged to grab opportunities for self-improvement as and when they arose.

*...Lecturers should really take an interest in helping students to score higher grades by observing students' learning trends more closely with a view to rectify any anomalies **(PVC2)**.*

It is the lecturers' research results on teaching and learning that should guide TLC plans and activities because this will have a direct bearing on the actual work going on in the classroom.

*...Lecturers should also believe in their experiences and use these to inform the TLC to plan activities. They should also always create time for those activities that help solve the teaching challenges that they face on a day to day basis, in fact some workshops and seminars should be initiated by lecturers **(D3SU3)**.*

4.7.5 Students

All participants were in agreement that students had been left out of efforts to improve teaching and learning. The students' voice was judged by all to be critical in informing all concerned of gaps that need attention.

...The student is our biggest client who deserves to be listened to and his concerns addressed. We wouldn't be here if there were no students. We must respect the students' voice (D1SU1).

The following points were raised when the question of how the students' voice could be listened to more:

- Results of Students' Evaluation of Teaching should be done more professionally by an independent body, the results made known to the individuals concerned and challenges taken to the planners of staff development programmes for attention.
- Students must be represented in all committees that are not to do with examinations and those representatives must be well inducted on their role of bringing to meetings what students want and taking back feedback.

4.8 Summary

This chapter presented and analysed the data that were collected through interviews, focus group discussions as well as analysis of institutional records to ascertain Zimbabwe state universities' utilisation of TLCs. The views of top management represented by the PVC Academic; middle management represented by deans of faculties/schools and TLC directors/coordinators and those of lecturers and students were presented and analysed. What emerged was a very limited and in

some cases no knowledge of what the TLCs are and what their role is or should be in the university across the board. Huge differences also emerged especially on who the target users of the TLC should be with one university having turned the TLC into an academic teaching unit and the other two concentrating on its role as a professional development unit. Lack of coordination between and among the user academic units within the universities was also thought to lead to non utilisation of the TLC. There was also a perceived lack of top management support for the TLC and generally the conditions in place were thought not to be conducive for the full utilisation of the TLC.

The next chapter discusses these results with the aid of the Concerns Based Adoption Model and the Social Practice Theory.



CHAPTER 5

4 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter puts the results from Chapter 4 above in context by giving meaning to them. The discussion is premised on the identified themes that were drawn from the research questions that guided the data collection for the study. The process of data presentation and analysis in chapter 4 culminated in the following emergent themes:

- Theme 1- How the state universities have responded to the need for them to introduce TLCs.
- Theme 2- Management and staff's perceptions of the TLC.
- Theme 3- How management and staff utilise the TLC.
- Theme 4- Practices in place to encourage the utilisation of the TLC.
- Theme 5- Strategies that can be used to improve teaching and learning.

These are the themes that framed my understanding of what the data portrayed as guided by the research questions. It is these themes that structure the discussion in this chapter. It is important to point out from the onset that these themes are not isolated, but rather interconnected and interwoven as discussion in one theme has implications for other themes.

An attempt was made to assess the importance of the findings by relating them to findings of similar studies and to the two theoretical frameworks identified for the study. The chapter also explains the significance of the results and places them into a broader context. The major objective of the chapter was to consolidate the findings from Chapter 4 with existing knowledge on the utilisation of TLCs in universities in general and in state universities in Zimbabwe in particular.

5.2 Response to the establishment of the TLC.

The idea by ZIMCHE to establish TLCs in universities in Zimbabwe was well received because all the three institutions under study did establish these centres as required. What emerged from the results however is that ZIMCHE left it to the individual institutions to structure, position and staff their TLCs as they saw fit, so universities came up with TLC structures that are different and unique in that management decided on what was thought to be the best for the institution. Huber and (Goldi, 2006) are of the view that opening a TLC in a university is an important step that should be applauded, but if the TLC through its structure and positioning does not respond to the contemporary demand being placed on lecturers in the changing academic environment that they are currently in, that exercise will be futile and will not serve any useful purpose. (Abbas and McLean, 2003) further assert that such a pronouncement should have come with a minimum expectation so that there would be a clear understanding of the role of such a unit. The results however indicate that each state university came up with its own interpretation of what the TLC should look like and how it should fit into the general organogram of the university. This in turn left the user community free to decide if management was serious or not before utilising or not utilising the unit. In general the result was poor utilisation of the TLC in all the three state universities.

Gosling, 2008 is of the view that the organisational structure of a unit depicts the seriousness of those who set it up to have the unit succeeding in its mandate. He goes further to suggest sections in the TLC that must be there if the TLC is to succeed and be utilised. The Director TLC is the first and critical person that must be hired to oversee both the strategic direction and day to day operations of the centre

and this Director does in liaison with the PVC Academic. This is a far cry from what is happening in the state universities under study.

Below the Director would be experts who go by different names in universities around the world. Some call them consultants and yet others call them instructional developers. Their role is to provide expertise in various areas of higher education pedagogical development such as new educational technologies, blended learning, curriculum development and programming for teaching staff. They also assist lecturers with teaching and learning initiatives especially with regards to technology for teaching, working closely with them to determine student learning objectives and helping them to design learning tasks and assessment strategies.



The TLC ideally should have a research associate in post who initiates and supports research on teaching and learning issues among teaching staff with a focus on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) (Shulman, 2006). On the administrative side the norm is for the TLC to have an administrator, technicians and secretaries the numbers of who are determined by the sections to be serviced. The role of the administrator is to keep the daily workflow of the centre on track by handling the centre budget, booking centre meeting sand venues for all events and coordinating all events for the centre team. In the study most of these positions are either not there or are just on paper but not filled displaying a low level of seriousness towards ensuring that the TLC is fully staffed and functional. On the side of student support none of the universities has in place peer facilitators to offer fellow

students with discipline specific instructional support. Embarrassingly all students do not know anything about a real TLC.

5.2.1 The position of the TLC in the university establishment

In countries such as Australia, Canada, the USA and most European countries, the setting up of the TLC in universities was a direct response to the demand by parents, taxpayers, industrialists, business leaders, legislators and the students themselves, for students to be educated better for them to justify the investment in them and for them to be accepted by future employers. So the TLC is there to enhance teaching and learning through mostly supporting pedagogy at the institutional level (Cook & Sorcinelli, 2002b; Hutchings, 2005; McCormic, 2006; Shulman, 2006).

In South Africa the position of the TLC is such that the TLC has been mandated to train lecturers for effective teaching. Although the initial focus for AD in SA was to remedy the ills of the disadvantaged underprepared learners, its focus has since changed to support all underprepared learners regardless of race, as well as academics to prepare them for the role of teaching and facilitating learning for the under prepared learners. Academics are supported through a suite of programmes formal and informal. Among others are workshops on a range of pedagogical issues; teaching and learning issues; assessment; curricula; student evaluation of lecturers and subjects; e-learning and integration of educational technology in teaching and learning, curriculum development and re-circulation and professional development (Monnapula-Mapesela, 2014). In some universities there has been a drastic and total change in focus from students to academics where the argument is that students are not the victims and that a good teacher will produce a good student. Programmes in

these universities are now focused on training the trainer. Academics are expected to engage in amongst other things, researching their own teaching and learning, as well as reflective practice. In those institutions, the scholarship of teaching and learning has become very important. Funding support has been sought from external bodies and the Department of Higher Education and Training to support and incentivize academics to improve their teaching through engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning. It must be noted, however, that the vast majority of institutions still focus on support for both students and academics.

Of the three TLCs under study, one is a department in the Quality Assurance unit and the other two are departments in faculties/schools. According to Maclean, 2004, the position that is assigned to the TLC, will reflect the institution's devotion to enhancing teaching and learning. Data revealed that top management lacked that devotion even in the one university where the TLC was a department under the Quality Assurance unit because it was assigned other responsibilities that made it not concentrate on teaching and learning per se. The TLC was assigned to also look after Quality Assurance and Performance Contracting and responses from participants from all levels indicated that the university concentrated its efforts on quality assurance to the detriment of the other two responsibilities including teaching and learning. Putting the TLC in a faculty/school was interpreted by the participants to mean that there was no seriousness attached to teaching and learning because no one faculty/school could successfully plan for the rest of the university and succeed to be listened to.

The results have also indicated that any unit that is meant to enjoy university-wide utilisation should be placed in the university structure in such a way that it earns university-wide respect. It was noted that placing the TLC as a department under a Faculty/School did not help the unit earn that respect. Academics are sticklers to protocol and no dean would take instruction from an office holder who is junior or in a similar position to them (Chabaya, 2012). Being in a position equivalent to a chairperson implied that the director/coordinator reported to the dean of that faculty/school who in turn would have the responsibility to persuade colleagues at the same level (fellow deans and directors) to spread the word of utilisation. Such a long and arduous route was thought to be very difficult to sustain and led to TLC non-utilisation. The Dean of the faculty/school was thought not to have any obligation to prioritise TLC issues as he/she had the priorities of the faculty/school to concentrate on. Clearly these results point to the need for a TLC to be a stand-alone unit as opposed to being a department in a faculty/school.



The results also point to the importance of the reporting structure of the TLC and participants were of the view that the TLC Director/Coordinator should report directly to the PVC Academic giving the PVC overall control and oversight over all TLC activities. In a study by Young and Jordan, 2008, on top management support for a new unit, the results also revealed that:

5.2.1.1 Where top management has actively identified and focused investment on the most strategic areas of the organisation, there is better utilisation of the unit and participation in planned activities. It emerged from the findings that all participants felt that the level of commitment on the part of top management as reflected by the

investment in the unit, did not show any seriousness. If anything it was almost as if the universities were setting up the TLC simply because they were expected to do so. This did not encourage the respective users to want to utilise the TLC, so they simply ignored it or openly resisted any programmes that were put in place for them to attend.

5.2.1.2 As task interdependence increases in a project (as seen at SU2), there are increased barriers to the utilisation of units that are multitasking. In the first place it was obvious to the user community what aspects of the unit the university preferred as seen in the investment, and it was that aspect that was utilised more. The TLC was poorly invested in so it was not utilised as expected.

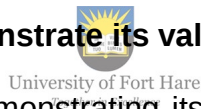
5.2.1.3. Top management should champion key projects by having them directly under their control to ensure their success, especially at the beginning, in order to resolve any stakeholder conflicts and win the hearts and minds of the project team. The arduous route that issues from the TLC have to travel from top management to the shop floor, has frustrated prospective users from wanting to utilise the TLC.

5.2.1.4 The involvement of a top manager (like the PVC) in the implementation of a project will in most cases get the support of the middle managers (such as deans and directors) who have the responsibility to make time for the project to be implemented successfully. The PVC in all the three universities is too far away to be in a position to influence the utilisation of the TLC. The middle managers (Deans and Directors) who on paper are in charge of the TLC are too busy to make time for TLC activities and they do not think that the TLC is really their business and what happens there can be done in the faculties/schools and departments.

5.2.1.5 The title of the head of the TLC was another issue that was thought to affect its utilisation. Indeed the title Coordinator is used for other posts that are below the Chairperson, so not only was this thought to be demeaning to the head of such an important unit, it did not encourage the user community to want to utilise the TLC.

5.2.1.6 Tied to the title of the head of the TLC were his/her qualifications. The study revealed that participants felt that the TLC should be headed by an academic of long standing, whose qualifications, experience and achievements in teaching and learning would give confidence to the user community to utilise the TLC. The responses portrayed an element of hand-picking for those in post that did not go down well with the user community who opted not to utilise the unit.

5.2.2 Ability of the TLC to demonstrate its value



The TLC cannot be said to be demonstrating its value due to the fact that it is not performing its intended. Quality assurance and teaching regular modules are not TLC roles since they belong to other units.

On the PGDHTE some measure of success has been realised and the TLC is being utilised just for that purpose where the diploma is on offer. However this acceptance and utilisation of the TLC is a bit contrived because having the diploma has been made mandatory for tenure and promotion. In some universities what is made mandatory are certain modules such as Assessment of Learning and Professional Development that are thought to be critical for every higher education practitioner to have. Experience in those universities however has shown that once participants on the programme have passed those modules; they end up willingly wanting to do the rest of the modules and finish the diploma, a clear sign of the benefits they would

have seen on the programme for their practice. Participation on other activities and utilisation of the TLC then becomes more automatic and uncoerced leading to a culture of utilisation of the TLC emerging. Immediately all resistance to TLC organized activities falls away and the university ends up with users checking when the next activity will be and making time for those activities.

According to the CBAM, this is how individuals in large numbers end up at stage four to six of the Stages of Concern. At stage four questions and observations such as:

- ❖ How is using this (utilising the TLC) going to affect the students I teach?
- ❖ I am concerned about whether I can change this in order to ensure that students will learn better as a result of introducing this idea in my practice.
- ❖ At stage five the individual is more interested in working with colleagues to make the changes more effective which helps in spreading the word of TLC utilisation by saying to themselves:

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- ❖ I am concerned about relating to what I am doing to what other lecturers are doing and;
- ❖ I want to see more cooperation among lecturers as we work with this innovation.

Finally at stage six the individual is involved in refocusing the innovation and begin refining it to improve student learning results saying to themselves:

I have some ideas about something that would work better than this (Hall and Hord, 1987).

Lecturers begin to participate in SoTL and research in order to have the results informing their teaching and vice versa i.e. having their teaching informing their future researches.

5.3 Understanding of the TLC and what it stands for in universities.

The study inquired if the participants understood what the TLC is and what its role in university education is supposed to be. The findings of the study revealed that most participants had varied understanding and conceptions of what a TLC is and what its role in university education should be and expressed different views of who the beneficiaries of TLC programmes should be. What dominated was the view that the TLC should be there only to staff develop university teachers giving them teaching skills and the view that it should ideally have nothing to do with the students was uppermost among all levels. To all the students, the TLC is a physical space that was identifiable within the university but with little to do with them. One university has gone to the extent of creating some confusion by naming a physical space where teaching and learning occurs, the “Teaching and Learning Centre” while at same time using the same title for the real TLC. That the TLC is there to staff develop university lecturers is confirmed by most literature (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Volbrecht, 2003; Volbrech, 2009; and Chabaya, 2012). Related to this staff development role the TLC was also noted to have the role of inducting new teaching staff into university life and to give them the much needed teaching skills as they are perceived to only have subject content but no pedagogical knowledge, so the need to train them in the art and science of teaching from the onset was emphasised which is consistent with findings from the literature above.

By contrast to the other two state universities SU1 gave a teaching role to the TLC creating the impression that the TLC was giving academic support to the students especially in common academic areas such as Communication Skills, Research Methods and Statistics and Computing, an issue that was heavily contested in the institution and construed as interference in an area that should ideally be left to the custodians of the regulations of the teaching of those particular modules who are the departments. These results clearly show that there is some confusion as to what the TLC should be doing and this borders on ignorance and has the potential of creating a negative perception of the TLC by departments who felt that the TLC was interfering in their turf. That the TLC was seen as bunching cross-cutting subject specialisation in the creation of these university-wide modules was also emphasised again further heightening a possible area of conflict between the departments and the TLC on the understanding that this was at variance with academic freedom and autonomy. All this led to the non-utilisation of the TLC.

All this is in line with the contention by the Social Practice Theory (SPT) that says that, in order to change practices and move towards full utilisation of any innovation, all concerned must first understand what the innovation is and how it is composed. That there is confusion as to what the TLC is, is bound to lead to non-utilisation as the users are not clear of who they are dealing with and what their role is supposed to be. TLC utilisation cannot become an engrooved practice (Huberman, 1993) because the TLC is viewed with suspicion.

Interestingly, some of the participants claimed to have got exposure to world class TLCs, especially at universities in South Africa, but were content with non utilisation claiming that they are overworked. Some of the participants are members of the Teaching and Learning Committee of their respective institutions where they could influence the university community towards utilisation of the TLC through the crafting of policies that encourage utilisation, but did not do so blaming instead the TLC Coordinator/Director for failing to come up with a policy. Research studies are well documented that point to the role that committees such as the Teaching and Learning Committee can play in ensuring that innovations such as the TLC are fully understood and utilised (Ryan, 2004; Chabaya, 2012). Instead the results revealed that in two of the institutions, the committee is no longer functional leaving doubts as to which body in the university oversaw the functioning of the TLC. Indeed the absence of such a body, and obviously the possible haphazard manner in which the activities of the TLC are being planned and run might lead to the TLC not being utilised. That the students are not benefitting in any meaningful way from all the three TLCs, could be further testimony of how the unit is misunderstood and thus not being fully utilised.

The other issue that came out very strongly in the findings was that of whether university lecturers need any training on how to teach or not, which links very closely to the need for TLCs. The findings revealed that some of the participants were of the view that they did not need any training on how to teach because they have always taught successfully without any training so why would they need it now? Lyall (2006) strongly feels that each university should make a priority of training and developing lecturers as teaching professionals. Furthermore there must be a commitment to

providing professional development on continuing basis as opposed to a once off opportunity at induction (Phillips, 2002; Hutchings, Huber, and Golde, 2006). This ideally should be handled by specialists in the TLC (Cook and Sorcinelli, 2002a). This has rightly been termed the *teacher centre movement* by Nemser and Applegate, 1983. Most universities worldwide have set up and allowed these centres to grow and develop into huge establishments run by specialist consultants responsible for supporting teaching staff and students to achieve high standards of teaching and learning. This movement has caught up with state universities in Zimbabwe leading to the call for the setting up of TLCs. Obviously improvements do not happen overnight and it would appear the state universities under study are still in the process of trying to understand what TLCs are and what their role is supposed to be leading to these differences in perceptions among the three universities under study. The study from the findings has revealed that although TLCs have been introduced in state universities in Zimbabwe, not all universities are taking the need to instruct new comers on the teaching staff on how to do what they would spend most of their time doing seriously (Bethuine, 2006.). Having the subject specialisation in a particular field is viewed as sufficient qualification to teach at university. Shulman, 2006 and Golde, 2006, are of the view that this is an ill-conceived idea that borders on ignorance, because having an honour's degree or a master's degree or even the added advantage of an earned PhD in an area, do not automatically turn one into a competent and professional university teacher, hence the need for the services of the TLC. It would therefore be accurate to note that most lecturers at state universities in Zimbabwe are not qualified to teach at this level. That they are not utilising the TLC fully, confirms the ignorance theory above and



since the problem affects almost everyone, maintaining the *status quo* is preferred by many.

It should however be noted that offering the Post Graduate Diploma in Higher and Tertiary Education and making it mandatory for tenure and promotion at one of the institutions is beginning to bear fruits because lecturers who have gone through the programme have described it as an ‘eye opener’ and that it has had a positive influence on them wanting to utilise the TLC more. Some have gone on to question why management does not raise the profile of the TLC as this would in turn raise the status of teaching as opposed to research confirming findings elsewhere that indicate that the academic role of teaching was not always given as much attention and space as research by most academics (Gosling, 2005; Kagan, 2000; and Marsh, 2011). Marsh, 2011, further notes that if the status of teaching is not raised, lecturers might fail to see any relationship between their research and their teaching. The study revealed that all institutional tenure and promotion policies highlighted research more than teaching as a basis for decision making as guided by the ZMCHE Guidelines that they all used, again further disadvantaging teaching and what the TLC is trying to do.

The study also revealed the absence of unity among the different levels of the university communities on what they perceived the TLC to be. Whereas top management represented by PVCs, concentrated their efforts on who the beneficiaries of TLC programmes should be, middle management represented by deans and some TLC directors portrayed a halfhearted appreciation of the TLC and

its programmes but however preferred to ignore any efforts by the TLC or concentrated on non- TLC activities like quality assurance or teaching. All this appeared to be deliberate because the ideal role of the TLC was well articulated by most of them. Various reasons were given for the non utilisation such as shortage of staff caused by Government's freeze on recruitment leading to work overload that left little or no time for staff to attend TLC organised activities and management's perceived lack of support for the TLC. This is consistent with the Social Practice Theory's position that individuals or groups in an organisation, sometimes behave in certain ways as a way of articulating displeasure or disapproval of how some policies or programmes are handled especially by top management (Reckwitz, 2002; Shove and Panzar, 2005). In some cases the TLC was perceived to be a dumping ground for people that management would be creating jobs for and in others it was thought to have been especially created for the blue eyed personnel of top management. Linking the above observations to Reynolds and Saunders' Implementation Staircase (See table 1 above), it would appear that:

- Government through ZIMCHE, has pushed for the establishment of TLCs in state universities without ensuring that the institutions could recruit staff for those units;
- Top management in each state university that was studied, either abused the unit for unscrupulous deals making them unviable and non-utilisable.
- Middle management as the drivers of academic activities in most state universities decided to ignore the TLC and concentrated more on the core and more pressing business of teaching and research.
- Lecturers and students on observing the confusion just did not utilise the TLC.

This confirms Reynolds and Saunders, 1987's, thinking in the SPT that various actors on the implementation staircase are active agents of change that can make a policy work or fail. In this case utilisation of the TLC has failed because in one way or another each level's behaviour led to the non-utilisation of the TLC.

Top management was noted to be confused about what the TLC was and what its role in the university should be. Assigning a teaching role of regular modules was either a clear sign of ignorance or a stop gap measure while awaiting the appointment of a full complement of staff for the TLC. Either way whether well intentioned the results backfired as noted by the resistance from teaching staff who did not utilise the TLC as expected.



Middle management on the hand showed some awareness of what the TLC was and what it was supposed to do but indicated their unhappiness with what was happening. It is clear therefore that these two levels are not in sync on the issue with middle management opposed to the teaching role that has been assigned to the TLC. One of the directors of the TLC showed clear signs of ignorance of his role and that of his unit further confirming the ignorance theory.

The lecturers seemed more conversant and more informed of the role of the TLC but appeared powerless and frustrated the lack of coordination and agreement between top and middle management and themselves on the way forward. They lecturers end up utilising the TLC as and when they see it fit at an individual level as reflected in

their perceived support of the PGDHTE. The issues that they raise are quite pertinent and lead to the establishment of a more credible TLC that is utilizable:

- ✚ Coordination between top management, middle management, lecturers and students and coming up with a shared understanding of what the TLC is and what it is supposed to do;
- ✚ The need for seriousness reflected in the positioning, staffing and general support of the TLC;
- ✚ Separation of functions between the TLC, teaching units and others such as Quality Assurance;
- ✚ Making the TLC visible to its users;
- ✚ More informed and shared articulation of the role of the TLC; and generally expecting more from the TLC than what currently prevails.



The students are in the dark and have no idea what the TLC is all about, let alone what it is supposed to do especially with them. They are also confused by the confused loose naming of the TLC. They are again confused by the double spiked handling of university-wide modules that lacks clarity as to where students' issues in these modules are supposed to be handled and resolved. There seems to be a blame game at play that leaves the students nowhere.

5.4 Practices in place to encourage the utilisation of the TLC.

5.4.1 The position of the TLC in the structure of the university

As noted in 5.2.1 above, the position of the TLC in the structure of the university is a far cry from what obtains in universities elsewhere. However what is worth noting in favour of the decision by state universities to place the TLC much lower in the institutional hierarchy than expected, are the financial constraints and the freeze in recruitment that the universities have to operate under. So all the three institutions have opted to operate with a TLC that is diminished in stature and offering minimalistic activities such as induction of new staff until things improve. That this has led to the non-utilisation of the unit is unfortunate but was most likely not anticipated.



5.4.2 The PGDHTE programme

On the positive the introduction of the PGDHTE has seen a surge in numbers of lecturers from non-education departments enrolling on the programme giving a seemingly positive account of the utilisation of the TLC. There are however still some misconception on who should utilise the TLC with all institutions holding the view that those in education do not need the services of the TLC. According to (Seyoum, 2011), academic development programmes in universities should be for all teaching staff because they are designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning through the professionalisation of university teaching as opposed to school teaching. Staff support for teaching and learning should involve a variety of programmes, namely:

- Professional development for staff – TLCs should coordinate enrolment of academics onto the PGDHTE;
- Technology for teaching at university should be offered by this unit, this will force the institution to ensure that the technology is in place;
- Workshops on a variety of higher education teaching and learning themes and priorities are a must;
- Individual staff support can also be provided on request; and
- Institutional policy support which can include among other things, analysis of national policies and development of institutional policy.

Most of the lecturers who are from educational backgrounds are from primary school and secondary school backgrounds but through attainment of masters degrees have found themselves in university settings. So they do need to utilise the TLC. So they would benefit from such programmes to upgrade their skills.



The staff development programmes may also involve leadership training for those in university management such as chairpersons, directors and deans. It is thus meant to develop a culture of teaching the disciplines through short courses, seminars and workshops. In some instances, as has happened in state universities in Zimbabwe, a formal course like the PGDHTE can be offered.

5.4.3 Other practices militating against TLC utilisation

On the negative it was noted that in all the three universities under study, the practices in place that did not favour the utilisation of the TLC were the not so

popular positioning of the TLC in the university hierarchy that left most prospective users feeling that the university management was not serious about this unit. However it must be acknowledged that the financial constraints that all the state universities were operating under did not favour the full utilisation of the TLC. Teaching might be a core business, but as long as universities are producing results and students passing, the issues of the TLC positioning and its staffing might continue to be set aside until things normalise. So the three institutions under study seem to have opted to concentrate the existing staff (in the face of the freeze on recruitment) in core activities such as teaching and research and relegated the TLC to low levels of staffing until the situation has improved. This has however, almost killed the TLC and frustrated those in post as well as prospective users making the unit almost non utilisable.



Other practices such as too many in between offices between top management and the TLC do not allow for the quick resolution of TLC issues again making it non-utilisable. It emerged that where the Director of the TLC was at the level of a dean as at SU2, resolving of TLC issues was a lot better than if the TLC was in a faculty/school under the leadership of a dean. The class sizes and number of modules per lecturer per semester were considered too large to allow teaching staff to attend to any other activities such as attending TLC activities and research. It would appear most TLCs elsewhere have had to go through these struggles that TLCs in state universities in Zimbabwe are going through. In Australia for example, TLCs are undergoing profound change, however like in Zimbabwean state universities, the challenge is one of how centres can position themselves at the very heart of operating 'centre' of their university's endeavours in teaching and learning

(Holt, Dale, Palmer, Stuart and Challis, 2011). The need to change beliefs from the older paradigm that emphasised subject knowledge as opposed to pedagogical knowledge in university teaching is something state universities in Zimbabwe might need to interrogate more vigorously than what obtains.

Another observation that emerged from the results was the absence of networking among state universities that saw them crafting different structures for their TLCs. Networking among TLCs has seen them successfully changing practices elsewhere. Through the network of centres, they can demonstrate strategic leadership through speaking with one united voice and contributing to the creation of vision and direction for all centres in Zimbabwean state universities. Mintzberg, (1989), in studying the five key design factors that shape the structure of organisations, classifies universities as professional bureaucracies organized by discipline specialisation into faculties/schools and departments. The work of the TLC instead of being hierarchical is seen to be horizontal and cutting across the faculties/schools and the departments so that they are easily accepted and differences not similarities are emphasised. So the question of networking suggested above would make TLCs speak with one voice and hopefully change practices in state universities.

5.5 How management and staff utilise the TLC

5.5.1 TLC utilisation by management

The results categorically stated that management should make the TLC should a stand-alone unit that reports direct to the PVC Academic so that he or she constantly

has the TLC on his radar for direction, advice and monitoring. It is evident that all three state universities have incapacitated the TLC by putting it under an unrelated unit or as a department in a faculty/school. It was also noted that the absence of a Teaching and Learning Committee has left the TLC without any institutional representation creating a void in the TLC management that has again incapacitated the unit because it is operating without direction or representation from the user community.

Staffing levels in all three state universities are way below the approved levels for each centre or the ideal as proposed by specialists in the field of higher education such as Gosling, 2009. A lot of existing posts left by people who have retired, left or died, have not been filled or have been moved to perceived needy areas again making the unit non-utilisable.



5.5.2 TLC utilisation by middle management

Deans, directors are the drivers of all university academic functions because they own the regulations and constantly look at them for accuracy, marketability review and renewal, Andrews and Powell, 2012. It was therefore sad to note that they were not making time for TLC activities. The implications of such negative attitudes towards the staff development of staff in general and the lack of drive to ensure the reskilling of teaching practitioners in particular, has negative impact on what goes on in the classroom where the quality of work going on there is compromised. Young Jordan, 2008 in a study on Top Management support for an institutional innovation make the following very important observations:

- ❖ That if top and middle managers as the drivers of innovations do not come to the realisation that they have the most influence on whether a project fails or succeeds the success or failure of those innovations lie squarely on their shoulders.
- ❖ That top and middle managers must of necessity take a business approach towards the implementation of projects for them to succeed i.e. good planning practices, results oriented implementation strategies and evaluation practices that propel the project and the organisation forward.

From the findings what is obtaining in the state universities is a far cry from what these findings observed as staff in the various levels are still busy fault finding and taking a hap hazard approach to doing things.



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5.5.3 Utilisation of the TLC by teaching staff

The study has revealed that teaching staff are taking their cue from their leaders i.e. top managers and middle managers on the attitude they portray towards the TLC and subsequent utilisation or non utilisation of the unit. They also question why management has taken what they perceive as a negative attitude towards the unit as portrayed by its positioning, staffing and the title given to the head of the TLC.

It was also noted that the teaching staff were affected by the heavy teaching work load into not creating time for TLC activities and this was buttressed by the fact that 'if management ignore the unit, why should we be bothered?'

5.6 Strategies suggested for improvement of teaching through the TLC

These were suggested per level and were quite informative in terms of participants' expectations. The PVC was expected as the person in charge of academic affairs to give policy direction and to raise the profile of the TLC in such a way that it could discharge its mandate. The deans and directors were expected to operationalise the TLC in such a way that time was set aside for TLC activities and all were made aware of the existence and role of the unit. They were also expected to identify areas of need for their respective constituencies and to ensure that all those needs were catered for in staff development efforts. Lecturers were there to participate in the staff development efforts whole heartedly and ensure that they were abreast of current practices and developments in higher education. It was evident from the suggestions that all levels except for the students were conversant of what they felt should be happening in the TLC for the betterment of teaching and learning.



Holt, Dale, Palmer, Stuart and Challis, 2011 carried out a comparison between what they termed traditional and new TLC paradigms and although this was peculiar to Australian universities, this comparison is very illuminative of what could be the way forward for TLCs in state universities in Zimbabwe for the improvement of teaching and learning. Zimbabwean state universities could be said to be still in the traditional paradigm because of the lack of clear vision reflected in the fragmented efforts to make TLCs work. Below is a table that summarises their views:

Table 5.1 Comparison between traditional and new TLC paradigms

Dimension	Traditional TLC paradigm	New, emerging TLC paradigm
Relationship with top management	Disconnected	Strong connection with Top Management
Involvement in university planning and policy making	Marginal	Central
Relationship with faculties/schools or equivalent	Separate and remote	Openness and active involvement
Professional development approach	Primary reliance on inflexible institutional workshop and seminar programmes.	Multi-faceted, responsive and flexible set of approaches that is central and local.
PGDHTE	Conducted in isolation from faculties/schools	Conducted in partnership with faculties/schools.
Work of academic developers	Working in a vacuum	Working in tune with organisational vision and direction
Academic development capacity	Limited	Expanded through recognition of contribution of faculty/school members
Relationship with faculty/school based peers.	Disconnected.	Strong connection through professional development work and forums.
Centre purpose, functions internal structure/decision making.	Confused and non-aligned	Clear and well-aligned.
Organisational arrangements	Closed to internal and external opportunities and productive partnerships.	Openness to opportunities and partnerships.
Faculty/school leadership	Lack of well-defined faculty/school leadership	Well established levels and layers of faculty/school leadership.
Access to and use of evidence	Difficulty in accessing and using data and scholarship for improvement	Good access to, generation and use of data and scholarship for development and improvement.
Resources and rewards	Lack of capacity to mobilise resources and rewards for outstanding performance	Strong capacity to support innovation and development and rewards for outstanding performance.
Focus on staff capacity building.	Limited in building and using capacities.	Strong in building and using capacities.
Focus on productive career development.	Little or no effort.	Major and substantial effort.
Synergies between above domains.	Not seen and not exploited.	Fully recognised and supported.

Adopted from Holt, Dale, Palmer, Stuart and Challis, 2011

5.7 Summary

This chapter captured what emerged in the findings relating them to what emerged in literature. Clearly the results have shown poor utilisation of TLCs by state universities in Zimbabwe and weak to poor support systems to make the TLCs utilisable. The many constraints that these TLCs face are such that they are rendered ineffective in any attempts to improve teaching and learning, Chief among these being that they are not fully understood thus were not fully embraced.



CHAPTER 6

6.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this concluding chapter is to establish whether the data collected shed light on the research problem and answered the sub-questions indicated in the first chapter. So to this end, a summary of findings on the utilisation of TLCs in state universities in Zimbabwe will be highlighted. Conclusions drawn from the two theoretical frameworks, the reviewed literature and the methodology used in the study will also be discussed.

6.2 Summary of findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the utilisation of TLCs in state universities in Zimbabwe. The thrust of the study within this purpose was to expose the pockets of good practices, if any, that encouraged the utilisation of the TLC in the universities.



6.2.1 How the state universities responded to the need to introduce TLCs.

The study revealed that despite the fact that state universities quickly went on to establish TLCs when required to do so, the manner in which this was done left a lot to be desired.

6.2.1.1 Staffing of the TLC

None of the three TLCs under study were sufficiently staffed to be able to execute their mandate both in terms of the caliber of staff and the numbers that would make them function effectively. Ideally TLCs take many forms, perform many functions and have complex roles (Taylor, 2005), there is no doubt that a key element for the utilisation of the TLC is appropriate resources for it to undertake the functions delegated to it and key among these is staffing (Gosling, 2008). In all cases the level of seriousness attached to the establishment of the TLC in terms of staffing was minimal to say the least and left the TLC unutilisable.

6.2.1.2 The position of the TLC in the structure of the university



All the state universities under study set up a centralised TLC and its positioning was thought to be critical for it to be utilised. The thinking among the participants was that the TLC should be a stand-alone unit that is not tied to any other unit to make it accessible to all its users through its visibility and the absence of any clash of interests through that positioning. That the TLCs were either in a faculty/school or was tied to other unrelated functions was thought to make it difficult for the TLC to be utilised. Such arrangements have seen TLCs elsewhere continually being restructured (Gray & Radloff, 2006; Gosling, 2009a; Weimer, 2007).

6.2.1.3 Capacity and capability of the TLC to fulfill its role and achieve its purpose

What emerged was that the TLC is not very visible to its user community and no efforts were being made to make it stand out visibly. To add to that the few members of staff that are in post have not been afforded office and professional space that gives them dignity and respectability. The post of Director /Coordinator has not been filled by people with the relevant qualifications and experience to attract users to the TLC. A teaching and learning leader, (Director or equivalent) plays a central role in the development and impact of the TLC. Directors come from a variety of backgrounds and experience (Blackmore & Blackwell). A 2006 survey of Australian TLCs revealed that visibility and the caliber of the Director are factors that cannot be ignored if the Centre is to be successful in its endeavours and be utilised (Holt & Challis, 2010).



6.2.1.4 Ability of the TLC to demonstrate its value

TLCs should have clearly defined roles that are universal. TLCs in state universities in Zimbabwe were however thought to be crippled by responsibilities like quality assurance and teaching regular academic modules that should ideally have been in teaching departments to avoid friction between the TLC and those departments.

6.2.2 Knowledge of the TLC and what it stands for in the university

The results revealed that there is generally some confusion in Zimbabwe's state universities of what the TLC is and what it should be doing. Although the TLC can

take many forms (this is evident from the various names that they are given), perform many functions and have complex roles, there are some basics that are expected of them (Taylor, 2005). Among some of the roles that are a must for a TLC according to Taylor above are: provision of staff development for staff; supporting evidence-based evaluations of teaching and learning; exploring innovative pedagogies to enhance student learning; supporting and providing leadership in the scholarship of teaching and learning and the promotion of best practices of teaching excellence that facilitates students' learning. Of all these only provision of staff development is getting some recognition which is however fraught with restrictions. The creation of space for students to be supported informally in their learning is another function of the TLC which was totally ignored in all the three cases under study. The views were expressed from top management (represented by PVCs), through middle management (represented by deans and directors), to lecturers and students and was well supported by institutional records. In all the state universities, the TLC had no uncontested role for the students and not much could be obtained from the students because they did not know what the TLC was.

6.2.3 How management and staff utilise the TLC

Management's utilisation of the TLC could be seen in the way it supported the unit. There was generally poor support seen by the poor positioning and staffing of the TLC and the absence of a clear mandate being assigned to it. The rest of the staff seemed to take their cue from management and only utilised the TLC when they had to absolutely do so. This could be seen in the way that they utilised the TLC in large numbers to obtain the PGDHTE for them to get tenure and promotion.

6.2.4 Practices in place to encourage the utilisation of the TLC

The only positive practice in place that encouraged the utilisation of the TLC was the introduction of the PGDHTE that has seen most teaching staff without an educational background enrolling on the programme in large numbers. The centres were noted to face a lot of challenges top among these was the confusion about their role and place in the university, followed by the issue of universities prioritising research over teaching and the time pressures faced by all university staff that has to balance between teaching and other supervisory roles with TLC utilisation (Gosling, 2008). Because the activities of the TLC are outside the day-to-day experiences of the rest of the university community, their visibility and ease of utilisation was noted to be a big challenge.



6.2.5 Strategies to improve teaching and learning

Participants offered suggestions on what could be done at the various university levels to improve teaching and learning in the universities through the TLC.

6.2.5.1 PVC

The PVC (especially the PVC Academic), was said to be strategically placed as a member of Top Management to position the TLC strategically, increase its staffing levels and to have the correct caliber of staff recruited. The PVC could also 'keep the

TLC on his radar' for monitoring of activities and ensuring that activities do happen continuously and that everyone is sensitised on what the TLC is and what its role is supposed to be. There should also be a Teaching and Learning Committee that oversees the activities of the TLC and that committee should be the PVCs responsibility.

6.2.5.2. Directors/ Coordinators of TLCs

These should be called by a name that affords them respect and they on their part were encouraged to fight for a better positioning for their units. They have the responsibility to identify areas of need through surveys in order to come up with viable activities for the TLC. They were encouraged to work on improving themselves so as to earn the respect of their user community. Students' evaluation of teaching should be taken seriously as a possible source of information on what needs to be done in the TLC and that process should be handled by the TLC. The Director was encouraged not to expect visible results on the work of the TLC but to accept that it is always behind the scenes (Blackmore and Wilson, 2005). The Director/Coordinator was also encouraged to be the Marketing Office and the Public Relations Officer for the unit.

6.2.5.3 The deans

The deans were given the responsibility to make time for TLC activities and to use the feedback they get from external examiners, management, staff and students to inform the TLC of areas of staff development need for the university. They were also

encouraged to work together with the TLC in suggesting and planning activities for the centre.

6.2.5.4 The lecturers

Individual lecturers have the responsibility to identify gaps in their knowledge and to present these to the TLC for activities to be planned around their specific needs. A call was made for a change of attitude among the lecturers who must take an interest in TLC activities for their own academic development and growth.

6.2.5.5 Students

Students who have generally been left out of the TLC should be allowed to play their part through airing their views on what their needs are and having their voice heard through representation on key committees. This could also be achieved through their evaluations of lecturers' teaching. They were encouraged to take a leading role through peer facilitation to ensure success in their learning.



6.3 Implications for theory

Basically the findings of the study supported the two theoretical frameworks that informed the study. The study used the Social Practice Theory and the Concerns Based Adoption Model to understand the utilisation of TLCs in state universities in Zimbabwe.

6.3.1 The Social Practice Theory

The theory contends that, in order to change practices and move towards full utilization of any innovation, all concerned must first understand what the innovation is and how it is composed and why. The TLC as a concept seems not to have been interrogated enough to be fully understood and planned for success. The theory further puts people in any social setting on a staircase that reflects the role that each level must play in order to achieve the social cohesion that the organization intends to achieve around an innovation and all players at their respective levels have the responsibility to ensure the success of that innovation. The results revealed that this was not the case in the state universities under study. Each level from top management through middle management to the lecturers and students had different interpretations of what the TLC was and what it was supposed to do. So the complex relationships of the people on the staircase led to the players utilising or not utilising the TLC.



The theory further illuminates the difference between social practice as an entity and social practice as behaviour (Shove and Panzar, 2007). The implication of this for the study is that although some groups, especially lecturers, displayed some knowledge of what TLCs are and what they stand for, this did not automatically translate to TLC utilisation. This is where the participants reverted from behaving as a group to considering their interests and concerns as individuals.

6.3.2 The Concerns Based Adoption Model

Unlike the Social Practice Theory that looks at people's reactions to an innovation in groups, this theory looks at people as individuals and how they come to utilise or not utilise an innovation. The results revealed that whereas as groups they were influenced into not utilising the TLC because of perceived poor practices such as the positioning of the TLC and its staffing, as individuals they could not afford not to enroll on the PGDHTE programme because this directly affected their tenure and promotion at individual level. So they enrolled on the programme in large numbers. The model contends that as people experience change; they evolve in the kinds of questions they ask as they go through the change. Of the seven stages of concern that each individual is supposed to go through in deciding whether to utilise the TLC or not, it emerged that individuals were at varying levels of decision making on the issue but with most lecturers being at Stage 4 which is the Consequence Concern that pushes individuals to do something simply because they are not comfortable with the consequences of non utilisation. Very few members of staff have reached Stage 5 and 6 for them to collaborate with staff at the TLC and wanting to encourage others into utilising the TLC.



The CBAM identifies and provides ways to assess the seven stages of concern and these concerns were noted in the results to have major implications for the utilisation of the TLC. First, they pointed to where stakeholders were in their concerns on whether to utilise the TLC or not. Most of them seemed to be asking themselves what the consequences of not utilising the TLC would be in order to make their decision. Because of the dire consequences of not getting tenured or promoted they

were driven to utilise the TLC though in a limited way. Secondly, the model suggests the importance of paying attention to utilisation over several years so as to be noticeable; it takes at least three years for early concerns to be resolved and later ones to emerge (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin and Hall, 1987). It emerged that most individuals are at the very early stages of self-introspection so it might take them long to utilise the TLC fully.

Finally, it emerged that with all the pressures on lecturers (teaching, student supervision, community engagement and research), they found it difficult to create time for TLC utilisation so they raised even more stage 2 and 3 concerns. It thus emerged that it takes some organisational priority setting as well as deliberate attempts to stimulate interest to achieve meaningful and uncoerced utilisation of the TLC. To the strength of the CBAM for this study was in its reminder for institutions to pay attention to individuals and their various needs as a way to have them utilise new innovations and accept change.

6.4 Justification of methodology

The study adopted interpretive qualitative methods to examine the utilisation of TLCs in state universities in Zimbabwe. Such an approach allowed the researcher to study people in their natural setting and allowed them to air their views on TLCs thus focusing on the meanings and interpretations that they brought to this phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). To this end the researcher had face-to-face interviews with PVCs, Directors of TLCs, deans of faculties/schools and lecturers and had focus group discussions with students. Participants' feelings, experiences, opinions and

perceptions on the utilisation of TLCs were thus explored and interrogated. Institutional records were also analysed to confirm the views of the participants.

The method also gave the researcher a wide choice of instruments to use and I opted for interviews and focus group discussions triangulated by institutional records. That triangulation of data balanced and confirmed the information obtained leading to the admissibility of the conclusions drawn. Participants' views were captured verbatim making them uncontestable.

6.5 Conclusions

The study sought to examine the utilisation of TLCs in state universities in Zimbabwe. The findings revealed that  TLCs are not being fully utilised due to a number of challenges.

6.5.1 There is evidence of ongoing contestations in state universities in Zimbabwe of what TLCs are and what they must focus on between student support, academic support, academic development support, institutional development or support for teaching and learning.

6.5.2 Although TLCs are in place, they are still on a journey of transition and all the three institutions under study seem to be experimenting with new approaches, introducing new roles for the TLC from the norm, in order to improve support activities or to deal with those that have proved to make little or no impact.

6.5.3 Staff in the TLCs are too few to be able to execute their mandate.

6.5.4 The centres have notable similarities and differences in the following:

- Personnel and resources and visibility;
- Roles and functions;
- Student support offered in the centre if at all;
- Naming of the centres and the programmes they offer; and
- The title of the person heading the centre.

6.5.5 The positioning of the TLC on the institutional establishment of the university was thought to militate against its utilisation and the staffing levels in the TLC made it impossible for it to execute its mandate. The user community felt that the TLC was being ignored by management and so they ignored it too. Middle managers who would ideally ensure the TLC's utilisation had a lot to contend with that also made them ignore the TLC and not do much to encourage its utilisation. Lecturers only utilised the TLC as a stepping stone towards attaining tenure and promotion. It was therefore clear that first, there was no shared understanding of what the TLC was and what it was supposed to do; secondly, due to the freeze on recruitment of staff in all state universities, universities were forced to prioritise where to position the TLC and how to staff the unit at minimal cost.

6.5.6 In the study it was noted that the TLC was poorly positioned by being placed in a faculty/school or being paired with other non-TLC functions of the university making the TLC invisible and easy to ignore. This also created friction between the TLC and other departments in the university who felt that the TLC was usurping their powers.

6.5.7 The study indicated that the TLC's positioning placed it too far away from the PVC who ideally should be the driver of teaching excellence in the university. This

gave the impression to the user community that teaching was not as important as other key result areas of the university.

6.5.8 It also emerged that there were other variables that made it difficult for the TLC to be utilised such as perceptions of research being superior to teaching thus being the main decider for tenure and promotion for teaching staff and the heavy work overload that left lecturers with little time for attending TLC activities. This left them with little option but to concentrate on research and ignore teaching.

6.5.9 It also emerged that students had been left out of TLC utilisation and that this was mostly out of ignorance of the nature of the support that the TLC could give them thereby depriving them of a very necessary support system for their studies.

6.5.10 Despite these seemingly gloomy observations on TLC utilisation in state universities in Zimbabwe, the study has revealed some pockets of good practices in the utilisation of the TLCs. The good practices encompassed the requirement that lecturers must hold the PGDHTE for them to be tenured and promoted and this saw them utilising the TLC through enrolling on the programme.

6.6 Contribution to new knowledge

This study examined the utilisation of TLCs in state universities in Zimbabwe for effective teaching and learning. It emerged that TLCs were not being fully utilised. Below are suggestions for an alternative framework for the utilisation of TLCs for the improvement of teaching in state universities in Zimbabwe:

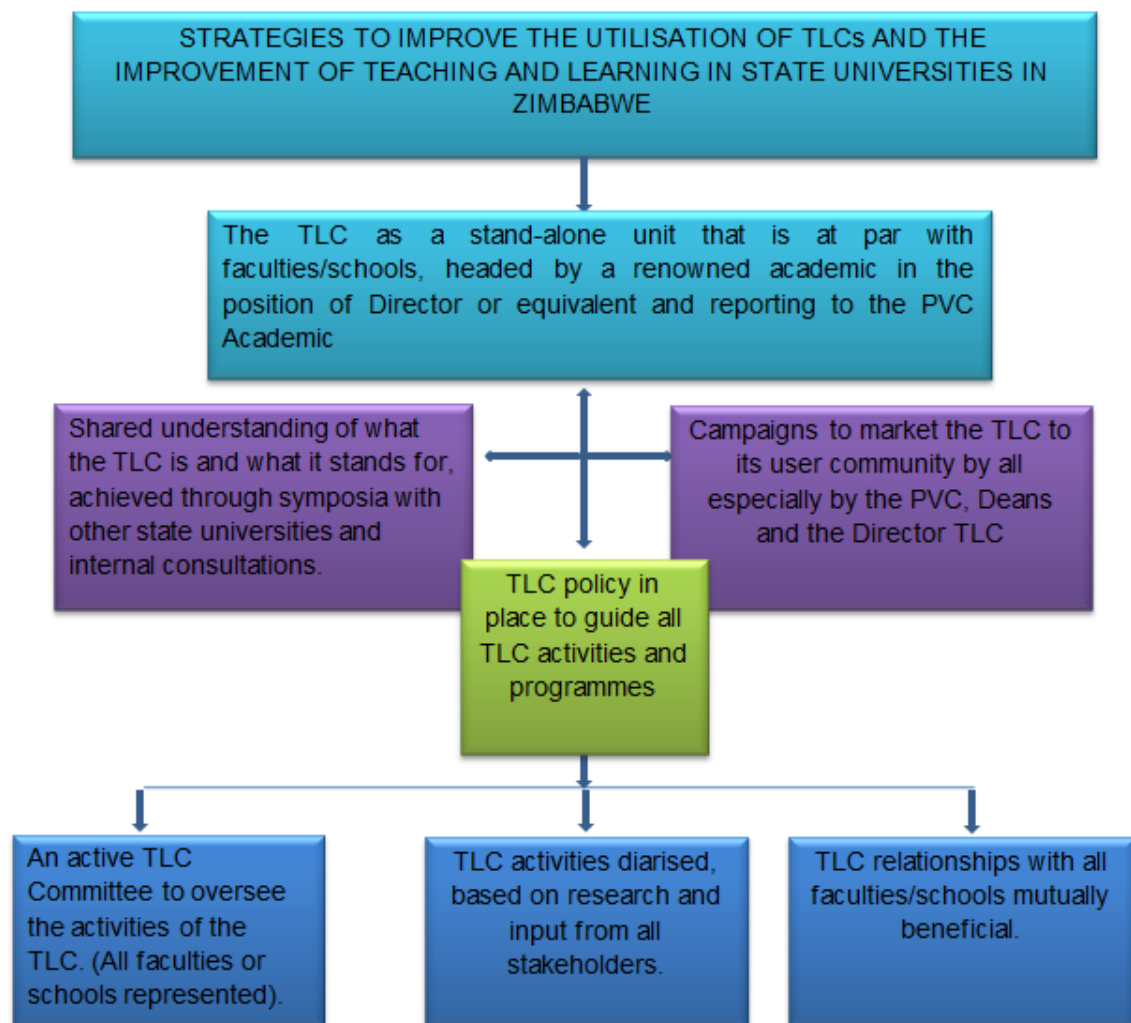
Table 6.1: Alternative framework for utilisation of TLCs

Identified areas of discord	The current situation in the state universities	Good practices suggested by this study
The position of the TLC in the institutional hierarchy	The TLC a department in a faculty/school or placed under an unrelated unit.	The TLC as a stand-alone unit that is not attached to any other unit faculty/school.
The title of the head of the TLC	Deputy Director/Coordinator equivalent to a chairperson of a department.	Director or equivalent at a minimum level of a Dean of a faculty/school.
Reporting structure for the TLC.	The TLC reporting to the Dean of a faculty/school or the Director of an unrelated unit.	The TLC reporting directly to the PVC Academic.
Qualifications of the head of the TLC.	Any one of the lecturers who holds a Master's degree in Education elevated to the position.	Full professor, who holds an earned PhD who has not less than 10 years' experience teaching in university settings.
Visibility of the TLC	The unit tucked away in some office in the corridors of the hosting faculty/school.	A clearly labeled stand-alone structure with all the relevant sections to do with teaching and learning.
Staffing of the TLC	Deputy Director/Coordinator, one or two trainers and a secretary.	Director, 2 or more SoTL research fellows, 3 or more coordinators of the different sections of the unit, an administrator, technicians and a secretary.
Functions of the TLC	Induction of new staff, a couple of staff development workshops as and when time permits; offering the PGDHTE; teaching university-wide modules.	-Induction of new staff -professionalisation of teaching staff through on-going symposia, -offering the PGDHTE, organising, -monitoring the presentation of awards to staff for each of the key result areas of the university, -offering student support through peer led tutorials,

Tenure and promotion of staff	Anchored more on research with clear guidelines from ZIMCHE, teaching and learning and community engagement not guided.	There should be clear guidelines for each of the three key result areas then tenure and promotion can be based on all three equally.
Funding and budget for the TLC	Funded through the faculty/school or unrelated unit hosting the TLC.	As a stand-alone unit the TLC should be funded independently and have its own budget.
Support for the TLC from top management.	There is weak support for the TLC as evidenced by its positioning and staffing.	Support can be strengthened by positioning the TLC under the PVC Academic and all the relevant sections staffed as required.
Creation of time for TLC activities.	The TLC has to hunt for gaps in the university calendar in an adhoc manner.	TLC activities should be diarized in the university calendar and all other activities should not encroach on these allocated times.
Presence of a TLC Committee	Not always there or if it is there it is not very active.	An active TLC Committee whose meetings are diarised on the university calendar.
Clarity of policy on TLC utilisation	Absence of policy.  University of Fort Hare	Clear policy must be in place on how the TLC should be utilised.
Clarity on the role of the TLC	Confused understanding of the role of the TLC	There should be clear and shared understanding of the role of the TLC.
Relations between the TLC and other academic units in the university.	Strained relationships between the TLC and other academic units in the university.	Mutually beneficial relationships needed between the TLC and other academic units of the university.
Identification of gaps in lecturers' knowledge of teaching and learning issues.	This is not based on any research.	Reflection on the part of individual lecturers, surveys carried out by the TLC as well as issues emerging from the TLC Committee should guide the activities of the TLC.
Attitudes towards the TLC	These are negative and not leading to the utilisation of the TLC	Concerted efforts should be made by all to market the YLC to its user community.

Below is a diagrammatic representation of the above framework:

Fig 6.1 Alternative framework for utilisation of TLCs



6.7 Recommendations

Based on the presented research findings, the study suggests the following:

6.7.1 TLCs in all state universities should come together under the auspices of the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education or ZIMCHE, to assist each other find their feet and craft a clear identity. Such an association would help harmonise TLCs, raise improve users perceptions of them and their usability in all state universities.

6.7.2 As revealed in the findings that there is confusion among state universities as to what TLCs are and what their role is, universities could take turns to host symposia that brings in consultants from established TLCs from the region and beyond, to interrogate the concept of a TLC and its role, and analyse the various models in universities around the world so as to help state universities establish their own from an informed position.

6.7.3 State universities should consult internal stake holders in a robust way to allow them to take ownership of the emerging TLC and remove any excuses for not utilising it.

6.7.4 State universities should initiate in-service programmes and around the world exposure and secondment to existing TLCs for TLC staff who are in post to raise their profile and skills levels and give them confidence to execute their mandate.

6.7.5 State universities should push for the removal of the freeze on recruitment so that they can staff TLCs in a manner that shows some seriousness and intention to have them fully utilised.

6.7.6 ZIMCHE Guidelines that seem to give more weight to research over teaching and community service should be reviewed to give respectful and equal weighting to the three key result areas of the university system in Zimbabwe.

6.7.7 State universities should train student peer academic supporters to work in the TLC to give students the much needed support that was noted to be lacking.

6.7.8 The student voice should also be heard more through their participation on the evaluation of teaching that should be handled and coordinated by the TLC.



6.7.9 Universities should create space, mobilise resources and acquire cutting edge technology for teaching and learning to be fronted by the TLC.

6.5.10 Top management in state universities should create and encourage healthy relationships between the TLC and the rest of the university staff to allow for the TLC to be utilised.

6.7.11 Management at all levels must listen to the concerns of all players at individual and group level in teaching and learning in order to raise their awareness and utilisation levels of the TLC.

6.8 Recommendations for further research

Based on the findings, further research is recommended in respect of the following:



6.8.1 There is need to explore the impact of induction programmes and other TLC organised staff development programmes as a way to motivate staff to utilise TLCs.

6.8.2 Research could also be carried out to establish activities that could be considered relevant for university teacher development.

6.8.3 New programmes that are convenient for the new generation of IT literate students could also be worked out through research before implementation on staff development activities.

6.8.4 Further research is needed on lecturer's views on teaching especially on whether they think they can benefit from professionalisation of teaching programmes would be of great help.

6.8.5 Further research could also be done to develop theories, frameworks and tools on staff development programmes.

6.8.6 Research is also required on the teaching of specific disciplines in order to develop their own scholarship of teaching and learning.

6.8.7 This research was purely qualitative; there is also need for mixed methods research on Higher Education teaching especially on the utilisation of TLCs. It would also be interesting to get the views of other stake holders such as VCs, Chairpersons, subject coordinators who did not participate in this research.

6.8.8 There is also need to explore the students' views a bit more especially on the way they are being taught and to identify gaps in their learning that the TLC can work on.



6.8.9 Finally, although it has been established that TLCs are not being fully utilised, it is equally important to look at why and how some TLCs in the region or abroad have managed to make it and succeed to be utilised. The situation in non-state universities also needs investigating

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE REC-270710-028-RA Level 01

Certificate Reference Number: MAV071SMAC01

Project title: **The utilization of Teaching and Learning Centres in Zimbabwean State Universities: Implications for Teaching and Learning.**

Nature of Project: PhD in Education

Principal Researcher: Viola Dhudhla Machingura

Supervisor: Dr M.P Mavuso

Co-supervisor: N/A

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby give ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). Should any other instruments be used, these require separate authorization. The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this certificate, using the reference number indicated above.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

The Principal Researcher must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

Special conditions. Research that includes children as per the official regulations of the act must take the following into account:

Note: The UREC is aware of the provisions of s71 of the National Health Act 61 of 2003 and that matters pertaining to obtaining the Minister's consent are under discussion and remain unresolved. Nonetheless, as was decided at a meeting between the National Health Research Ethics Committee and stakeholders on 6 June 2013, university ethics committees may continue to grant ethical clearance for research involving children without the Minister's consent, provided that the prescripts of the previous rules have been met. This certificate is granted in terms of this agreement.

The UREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance Certificate if
 - Any unethical principal or practices are revealed or suspected
 - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
 - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require
 - The conditions contained in the Certificate have not been adhered to
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
- In addition to the need to comply with the highest level of ethical conduct principle investigators must report back annually as an evaluation and monitoring mechanism on the progress being made by the research. Such a report must be sent to the Dean of Research's office

The Ethics Committee wished you well in your research.

Yours sincerely



Professor Wilson Akpan
Acting Dean of Research

24 January 2017

APPENDIX B: INTRODUCTORY LETTER FROM UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE



Faculty of Education, SFCE

School for Further and Continuing Education

Private Bag X1314

Alice, 5700

PABX 2089

Email: pmavuso@ufh.ac.za

16-11-2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE A RESEARCH STUDY- PHD IN EDUCATION

This serves to request you to grant Mrs Machingura Viola a permission to undertake research study towards her Doctor of Philosophy in Education degree. Mrs Machingura, student number 201506894, is a registered student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Fort Hare and is now ready to go and collect data for her study. Her approved topic is titled: *'The utilisation of teaching and learning centres in Zimbabwean state universities: Implications for teaching and learning'*

Your assistance in this matter is highly appreciated.



Faculty of Education, SFCE

School for Further and Continuing Education

Private Bag X1314

Alice, 5700

PABX 2089

Email: pmavuso@ufh.ac.za

16-11-2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

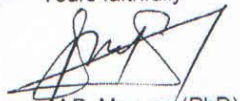
Dear Sir/Madam

PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE A RESEARCH STUDY- PHD IN EDUCATION

This serves to request you to grant Mrs Machingura Viola a permission to undertake research study towards her Doctor of Philosophy in Education degree. Mrs Machingura, student number 201506894, is a registered student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Fort Hare and is now ready to go and collect data for her study. Her approved topic is titled: *'The utilisation of teaching and learning centres in Zimbabwean state universities: Implications for teaching and learning'*

Your assistance in this matter is highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully



M.P. Mavuso (PhD)

SUPERVISOR

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

This form is to be completed by the researcher as well as by the interviewee before the commencement of the research. Copies of the signed form must be filed and kept on record

Viola Machingura, a PhD student at the University of Fort Hare/Education Department is asking people from Zimbabwe's state universities labeled State University A, B and C to answer some questions, which she hopes will benefit the university and possibly other universities in the future.

Viola Machingura is conducting a research regarding the utilisation of Teaching and Learning Centres in state universities. She is interested in finding out more about the extent of the utilisation of the Teaching and Learning Centres in order to improve teaching and learning in state universities in Zimbabwe. She is carrying out this research to help transform the higher education system for the benefit of state universities, and others at large.



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Please understand that you are not being forced to take part in this study and the choice whether to participate or not is yours alone. However, Viola Machingura would really appreciate it if you do share your thoughts with her. If you choose not to take part in answering these questions, you will not be affected in any way. If you agree to participate, you may still stop her at any time and tell her that you don't want to go on with the interview. If you do this there will also be no penalties and you will **NOT** be prejudiced in **ANY** way. Confidentiality will be observed professionally.

Viola Machingura will not be recording your name anywhere on the interview guide and no one will be able to link you to the answers you give. Only the researchers will have access to the unlinked information. The information will remain confidential and there will be no "come-backs" from the answers you give.

The interview will last around 45 to 60 minutes. Viola Machingura will be asking you questions and she asks that you are as open and honest as possible in answering these questions. Some questions may be of a personal and/or sensitive nature. She will be asking some questions that you may not have thought about before, and which also involve thinking about the past or the future. Viola Machingura knows that you cannot be absolutely certain about the answers to these questions but asks that you try to think about these questions. When it comes to answering questions there are no right and wrong answers. When she asks questions about the future she is

interested in what you think is the best thing to be done for Teaching and Learning Centres to be fully utilised to improve teaching and learning in Zimbabwe's state universities.

If possible, Viola Machingura would like to come back to your university once she has completed her study, to inform you and your institution of what the results are and discuss her findings and proposals around the research and what this means for people in the university.



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INFORMED CONSENT

I, hereby agree to participate in the research regarding The Utilisation of Teaching and Learning Centres in State Universities in Zimbabwe. I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally.

I have received the telephone number of a person to contact should I need to speak about any issues which may arise in this interview.

I understand that this consent form will not be linked to the interview, and that my answers will remain confidential.

I understand that if at all possible, feedback will be given to the university on the results of the completed research.

.....

Signature of participant

Date:

.....

I hereby agree to the tape recording of my participation in the study

.....

Signature of participant

Date:

.....

.....

Signature of Researcher

Date:.....



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APPENDIX D: EDITOR'S DECLARATION

EDITOR'S DECLARATION I, Dr. Salachi Naidoo (Vice Chancellor's Office, Great Zimbabwe University), confirm that I edited Viola Machingura's PhD thesis in Education titled: UTILISATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTRES IN STATE UNIVERSITIES IN ZIMBABWE: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING During the editing process, the following issues were corrected: grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure and phrasing. The editor endeavored to ensure that the authors intended meaning was not altered during the editing process. All amendments were tracked with the Microsoft word 'Track Changes' feature. Therefore, the author has the option to reject or accept each change individually.



Editor's signature

Date: 1 February, 2019



APPENDIX E: APPLICATION LETTER SEEKING PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH.

LETTER TO THE VICE CHANCELLOR

.....
.....
.....

RE: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE UNIVERSITY FOR DOCTORAL STUDIES

I write to request authority and permission to  conduct research in your university. I am a doctoral student with the University of Fort Hare. The research study is on **THE UTILISATION OF TEACHING LEARNING CENTRES IN STATE UNIVERSITIES IN ZIMBABWE: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING.**

I wish to assure you with confidence that the findings of the study shall be strictly for my academic studies only and not for external publication. I shall be indebted to you for your support on this matter and request.

Thank you in anticipation of your support and assistance.

Sincerely

Viola Machingura



University of Fort Hare
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APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH THE PVCS.



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INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH THE PRO VICE CHANCELLORS

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Date of interview.....
2. Gender: Male () Female ()
3. Marital Status:
4. Age range: Below 20 years () 20-29 years ()
30-39 years () 40-49 years ()
50-59 years () 60-69 years ()
70+ years ()
5. Experience as PVC:
1-5 years () 6-10 years () 10-15 years ()
15+ years
6. State whether your appointment is substantive or acting
7. What is your highest academic and professional qualification:
Certificate in Education () Diploma in Education ()
Bachelor of Science degree (BSc) ()
Bachelor of Arts degree (BA) ()
BSc + Graduate Diploma in Education (Grad. DE) ()
BSc + Post Graduate Diploma in Education (BSc +PGDE) ()
BA + Grad DE () BA +PGDE () Bachelor of Education ()
Honours degree () Master's degree () PhD ()

Section B:

The researcher intends to uncover a full array of multiple realities relevant to the intended inquiry to propagate the utilisation of teaching and learning centres in state universities in Zimbabwe. This interview will allow the PVC to express his or her views on the utilisation of the TLC to improve teaching and learning in the university. The discussion will not serve for any personal evaluation.

All responses are anonymous and they will be treated confidentially.

Thank you for your cooperation.

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

How are TLCs utilised by Zimbabwean state universities to improve teaching and learning?

Objective (i): To establish the views of the PVC on the utilisation of the TLC at the university.

Question 1: When you hear the name Teaching and Learning Centre, what comes to your mind?

Question 2: What are your own views of the TLC and what it stands for?

Question 3: What is the staff establishment of the TLC? (Probe: why?).

Question 4: What does policy say about the utilisation of the TLC in your university?

Question 5: How is the TLC assisting you in improving teaching and learning in your university?



Objective (ii): To find out the institutional practices in place to encourage the utilisation of the TLC.

Question 6: Where in the structure of the university is the TLC?

Question 7: In your opinion does this position that the TLC holds allow for its full utilisation? (Probe: why?).

Question 8: What institutional internal mechanisms are in place to support the utilisation of the TLC?

Question 9: As lecturers and students join the university, how do they respond to the need for them to utilise the TLC?

Question 10: How are your awareness programmes (if any) assisting in sensitising the university about the TLC and its utilisation? (Probe: why?).

Objective (iii): To find out management, staff and students' utilisation of the TLCs.

Question 11: What opportunities has management put in place for the staff and students to ensure full utilisation of the TLC?

Question 12: How have staff and students responded to those opportunities? (Probe: why?).

Question 13: Are there any programmes that have been organised by the TLC for students and staff? How have the programmes contributed to its utilisation? (Probe: why?).

Question 14: Would you say the student throughput has changed because of utilising the TLC? (Probe: Why?).

Question 15: Are there any negative perceptions of the TLC by management and staff?

Objective (vi): To establish intervention strategies that can be used to enhance the utilisation of the TLC to improve teaching and learning in state universities in Zimbabwe.



Question 16: From the foregoing discussions, how can the following help to improve the utilisation of TLCs in state universities:

- Pro Vice Chancellors?
- Directors of TLCs?
- Deans of faculties/schools?
- Lecturing staff?
- Students?

Question 17: What strategies can be used to enhance the utilisation of the TLCs for the improvement of teaching and learning in the university?

APPENDIX J: INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH THE DIRECTORS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTRES



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH THE TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTRE DIRECTOR

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

8. Date of interview.....
9. Gender: Male () Female ()
10. Marital Status:
11. Age range: Below 20 years () 20-29 years ()
 30-39 years () 40-49 years ()
 50-59 years () 60-69 years ()
 70+ years ()
12. Experience as TLC Director 
 1-5 years () 6-10 years () 10-15 years ()
 15+ years
13. State whether your appointment is substantive or acting
14. What is your highest academic and professional qualification?
 Certificate in Education () Diploma in Education ()
 Bachelor of Science degree (BSc) ()
 Bachelor of Arts degree (BA) ()
 BSc + Graduate Diploma in Education (Grad. DE ()
 BSc + Post Graduate Diploma in Education (BSc +PGDE) ()
 BA + Grad DE () BA +PGDE () Bachelor of Education ()
 Honours degree () Master's degree () PhD ()

Section B:

The researcher intends to uncover a full array of multiple realities relevant to the intended inquiry to propagate the utilisation of teaching and learning centres in state universities in Zimbabwe. This interview will allow the TLC Director to express his or her views on the utilisation of the TLC to improve teaching and learning in the university. The discussion will not serve for any personal evaluation. **All responses are anonymous and they will be treated confidentially.**

Thank you for your cooperation.

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

How do Zimbabwean state universities utilize Teaching and Learning Centres to improve teaching and learning?

Objective (i): To establish the views of the Director TLC on the utilisation of the TLC at the university.

Question 1: When you hear the name Teaching and Learning Centre, what comes to your mind?



Question 2: What are your own views of the TLC and what it stands for?

Question 3: What is the staff establishment of the TLC? (Probe: why?).

Question 4: What does policy say about the utilisation of the TLC in your university?

Question 5: How is the TLC assisting the university to improve teaching and learning?

Objective (ii): To find out the institutional practices in place to encourage the utilisation of the TLC.

Question 6: Where in the structure of the university is the TLC?

Question 7: In your opinion does this position that the TLC holds allow for its full utilisation? (Probe: why?).

Question 8: What institutional internal mechanisms are in place to support the utilisation of the TLC?

Question 9: As lecturers and students join the university, how do they respond to the need for them to utilise the TLC?

Question 10: How are your awareness programmes (if any) assisting in sensitising the university about the TLC and its utilisation? (Probe: why?).

Objective (iii): To find out management, staff and students' utilisation of the TLCs.

Question 11: What opportunities has management put in place for the staff and students to ensure full utilisation of the TLC?

Question 12: How have staff and students responded to those opportunities? (Probe: why?).

Question 13: Are there any programmes that you have organised at the TLC for students and staff? How have the programmes contributed to its utilisation? (Probe: why?).

Question 14: Would you say the student throughput has changed because of utilising the TLC? (Probe: Why?).

Question 15: Are there any negative perceptions of the TLC by management and staff?



Objective (vi): To establish intervention strategies that can be used to enhance the utilisation of the TLC to improve teaching and learning in state universities in Zimbabwe.

Question 16: From the foregoing discussions, how can the following help to improve the utilisation of TLCs in state universities:

- Pro Vice Chancellors?
- Directors of TLCs?
- Deans of faculties/schools?
- Lecturing staff?
- Students?

Question 17: What strategies can be used to enhance the utilisation of the TLCs for the improvement of teaching and learning in the university?

APPENDIX K: INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH DEANS OF FACULTIES/ SCHOOL



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH DEANS OF FACULTIES/SCHOOLS

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

15. Date of interview.....
16. Gender: Male () Female ()
17. Marital Status:
18. Age range: Below 20 years () 20-29 years ()
 30-39 years () 40-49 years ()
 50-59 years () 60-69 years ()
 70+ years ()
19. Experience as Dean..... years
 1-5 years () 6-10 years () 10-15 years ()
 15+ years
20. State whether your appointment is substantive or acting
21. What is your highest academic and professional qualification

Certificate in Education () Diploma in Education ()
 Bachelor of Science degree (BSc) ()
 Bachelor of Arts degree (BA) ()
 BSc + Graduate Diploma in Education (Grad. DE ()
 BSc + Post Graduate Diploma in Education (BSc +PGDE) ()
 BA + Grad DE () BA +PGDE () Bachelor of Education ()
 Honours degree () Master's degree () PhD ()

Section B:

The researcher intends to uncover a full array of multiple realities relevant to the intended inquiry to propagate the utilisation of teaching and learning centres in state universities in Zimbabwe. This interview will allow the Dean to express his or her views on the utilisation of the TLC to improve teaching and learning in the university.

The discussion will not serve for any personal evaluation. **All responses are anonymous and they will be treated confidentially.**

Thank you for your cooperation.

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

How are TLCs utilised by Zimbabwean state universities to improve teaching and learning?

Objective (i): To establish the views of the Dean on the utilisation of the TLC at the university.

Question 1: When you hear the name Teaching and Learning Centre, what quickly comes to your mind?

Question 2: What are your own views of the TLC and what it stands for?

Question 3: What is the staff establishment of the TLC? (Probe: why?).

Question 4: What does policy say about the utilisation of the TLC by your faculty/school?



Question 6: How is the TLC assisting you in improving teaching and learning in your faculty/school?

Objective (ii): To find out the institutional practices in place to encourage the utilisation of the TLC.

Question 6: Where in the structure of the university is the TLC?

Question 7: In your opinion does this position that the TLC holds allow for its full utilisation? (Probe: why?).

Question 8: What institutional internal mechanisms are in place to support the utilisation of the TLC in your faculty/school?

Question 9: As lecturers and students join the faculty/school, how do they respond to the need for them to utilise the TLC?

Question 10: How are your awareness programmes (if any) assisting in sensitising the faculty/school about the TLC and its utilisation? (Probe: why?).

Objective (iii): To find out management, staff and students' utilisation of the TLCs.

Question 11: What opportunities has management put in place to ensure full utilisation of the TLC by staff and students in your faculty/school?

Question 12: How have staff and students in your faculty/school responded to those opportunities? (Probe: why?).

Question 13: Are there any programmes that have been organised by the TLC for staff and students in your faculty/school? How have the programmes contributed to its utilisation? (Probe: why?).

Question 14: Would you say the student throughput in your faculty/school has changed because of utilising the TLC? (Probe: Why?).

Question 15: Are there any negative perceptions of the TLC by management and staff?

Objective (vi): To establish intervention strategies that can be used to enhance the utilisation of the TLC to improve teaching and learning in state universities in Zimbabwe.



Question 16: From the foregoing discussions, how can the following help to improve the utilisation of TLCs in state universities:

- Pro Vice Chancellors?
- Directors of TLCs?
- Deans of faculties/schools?
- Lecturing staff?
- Students?

Question 17: What strategies can be used to enhance the utilisation of the TLCs for the improvement of teaching and learning in the university?

APPENDIX L: INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH LECTURERS



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH LECTURERS

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

22. Date of interview.....

23. Gender: Male () Female ()

24. Marital Status:

25. Age range: Below 20 years () 20-29 years ()

30-39 years () 40-49 years ()

50-59 years () 60-69 years ()

70+ years ()

26. Experience as lecturer

1-5 years () 6-10 years () 10-15 years ()

15+ years



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

27. State whether your appointment is substantive or acting

28. What is your highest academic and professional qualification?

Certificate in Education () Diploma in Education ()

Bachelor of Science degree (BSc) ()

Bachelor of Arts degree (BA) ()

BSc + Graduate Diploma in Education (Grad. DE) ()

BSc + Post Graduate Diploma in Education (BSc +PGDE) ()

BA + Grad DE ()

BA +PGDE ()

Bachelor of Education ()

Honours degree ()

Master's degree ()

PhD ()

Section B:

The researcher intends to uncover a full array of multiple realities relevant to the intended inquiry to propagate the utilisation of teaching and learning centres in state universities in Zimbabwe. This interview will allow the lecturer to express his or her views on the utilisation of the TLC to improve teaching and learning in the university. The discussion will not serve for any personal evaluation. **All responses are anonymous and they will be treated confidentially.**

Thank you for your cooperation.

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

How are TLCs utilised by Zimbabwean state universities to improve teaching and learning?

Objective (i): To establish the views of lecturers on the utilisation of the TLC at the university.

Question 1: When you hear the name Teaching and Learning Centre, what comes to your mind?

Question 2: What are your own views of the TLC and what it stands for?

Question 3: What is the staff establishment of the TLC? (Probe: why?).

Question 4: What does policy say about the utilisation of the TLC in your department and faculty/school?

Question 5: How is the TLC assisting you in improving your teaching?



University of Fort Hare

Objective (ii): To find out the institutional practices in place to encourage the utilisation of the TLC.

Question 6: Where in the structure of the university is the TLC?

Question 7: In your opinion does this position that the TLC holds allow for its full utilisation? (Probe: why?).

Question 8: What institutional internal mechanisms are in place to support the utilisation of the TLC?

Question 9: As lecturers when you joined the university, how did you respond to the need for you to utilise the TLC?

Question 10: How are the awareness programmes (if any) assisting in sensitising you about the TLC and its utilisation? (Probe: why?).

Objective (iii): To find out management, staff and students' utilisation of the TLCs.

Question 11: What opportunities has management put in place for the staff and students to ensure full utilisation of the TLC?

Question 12: How have lecturers responded to those opportunities? (Probe: why?).

Question 13: Are there any programmes that have been organised by the TLC for lecturers? How have the programmes contributed to its utilisation? (Probe: why?).

Question 14: Would you say the student throughput has changed because of utilising the TLC? (Probe: Why?).

Question 15: Are there any negative perceptions of the TLC by lecturers?

Objective (vi): To establish intervention strategies that can be used to enhance the utilisation of the TLC to improve teaching and learning in state universities in Zimbabwe.

Question 16: From the foregoing discussions, how can the following help to improve the utilisation of TLCs in state universities:

- Pro Vice Chancellors?
- Directors of TLCs?
- Deans of faculties/schools?
- Lecturing staff?
- Students?



Question 17: What strategies can be used to enhance the utilisation of the TLCs for the improvement of teaching and learning in the university?

APPENDIX M: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH STUDENTS



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Together in Excellence

APPENDIX

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH FINAL YEAR STUDENTS

The researcher intends to uncover a full array of multiple realities relevant to the intended inquiry to propagate the utilisation of teaching and learning centres in state universities in Zimbabwe. This interview will allow the students to express their views on the utilisation of the TLC to improve teaching and learning in the university. The discussion will not serve for any student evaluation. **All responses are anonymous and they will be treated confidentially.**

Thank you for your cooperation.

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION



How are TLCs utilised by Zimbabwean state universities to improve teaching and learning?

Objective (i): To establish the views of students on the utilisation of the TLC at the university.

Question 1: When you hear the name Teaching and Learning Centre, what comes to your mind?

Question 2: What are your own views of the TLC and what it stands for?

Question 3: What does policy say about the utilisation of the TLC in your university?

Question 4: How is the TLC assisting you in improving your learning in your university?

Objective (ii): To find out the institutional practices in place to encourage the utilisation of the TLC.

Question 7: What internal institutional mechanisms are in place to support students' learning through the TLC?

Question 8: In your opinion do these mechanisms meet the needs of students?

Question 9: What are your views about the student support activities of the TLC are they serving the purposes they are intended to serve?

Question 10: How do students respond to the need for them to utilise the TLC?

Objective (iii): To find out students' utilisation of the TLCs.

Question 11: What opportunities has management put in place for the students to ensure their utilisation of the TLC?

Question 12: How have students responded to those opportunities? (Probe: why?).

Question 13: Are there any programmes that have been organised by the TLC for students? How have the programmes contributed to its utilisation? (Probe: why?).

Question 14: Would you say the student throughput has changed because of utilising the TLC? (Probe: Why?).

Question 15: Are there any negative perceptions of the TLC by students?

Objective (vi): To establish intervention strategies that can be used to enhance the utilisation of the TLC to improve teaching and learning in state universities in Zimbabwe.

Question 16: From the foregoing discussions, how can the following help to improve the utilisation of TLCs in state universities?



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- Pro Vice Chancellors?
- Directors of TLCs?
- Deans of faculties/schools?
- Lecturing staff?
- Students?

Question 17: What strategies can be used to enhance the utilisation of the TLCs for the improvement of teaching and learning in the university?

APPENDIX N: INSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

APPENDIX

DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS REVIEW

Documents and records are an unobtrusive source of information that enables the researcher to access them at a time convenient to self (Creswell, 2014). The researcher intends to collect documents for qualitative discourse analysis from the TLC and other offices that the TLC services. Among the documents might be TLC Senate reports, TLC end of year reports, the university strategic plan, Minutes of TLC Committee meetings, memos to and from the TLC, Letters to and from the TLC stake holders, TLC registers at events, E-mails between the TLC and its stake holders and personal journals.



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THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

How do Zimbabwean state universities utilize Teaching and Learning Centres to improve teaching and learning?

A guide to documents and reports sought for this study

Source Type	Vice Chancellor's office	PVC's office	Registrar's office	Individual Lecturers	Faculty/school office	Departmental offices	TLC office	TLC Con Sec
TLC Senate reports							x	
TLC annual reports							x	
Strategic plan			X					
Memos to and from the TLC	x	X	X	x	X	X	x	x
Letters from students					X	X	x	
TLC registers of its activities							x	
e-mails between TLC and its users	x	X	X	x	X	X	x	
Personal journals		X	X				x	
Letters to students and staff	x	X	X	x	X	X	x	