Democratisation of Teaching and Learning: a tool for the implementation of the Tuning Approach in Higher Education?

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Abstract: Teaching and learning in Contemporary Higher Education is experiencing a change of paradigm in the approach used for curriculum design and instruction. This paper examines the application of democratisation of teaching and learning as a crucial tool for the implementation of the Tuning Approach in the teaching and learning processes in higher education. A qualitative research approach was used to collect information from two institutions of higher learning in Botswana. Findings from the study indicate, that, there are democratic elements in the teaching and learning processes as evidenced by the use of the learning –outcomes approach in lesson planning by the lecturers, and in the various ways students are engaged in teaching and learning processes. However, the study revealed that students are not fully involved in planning curriculum and workload.

Keywords: Democratisation; Higher Education; Learning; Teaching; Tuning Approach.

I. Introduction

The Tuning approach emphasises on student –centred methodological approach to teaching and learning. It focuses on the fact that students' voices should be heard both in planning curriculum, lesson plans and through the ways they are engaged in the teaching and learning processes. Teachers need to create a culture that operates on the principles of equality and functions as integrated, interactive and evolving whole.[1] Student/

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[1] Alice Lesnick and Alison Cook- Sather, "Building civic capacity on campus through a radically inclusive teaching and learning initiative," *Innovative Higher Education* 35, no. 1 (2010). http://repository.brynmawr.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1013&context=edu_pubs.

teacher partnership based on educational interests would help promote democratic principles in higher education. Democratisation of teaching and learning is a concept that advocates for equal opportunity in the classroom. Equal opportunity in this case involves an enabling environment that allows for equal access to appropriate learning tools, the subversion of barriers that hinder students' participation in teaching and learning sessions and of course, the blurring of lines that demarcate traditional student-teacher roles. Democratisation of teaching and learning processes allows for the equalisation of student-teacher roles in influencing the nature, creation and transmission of knowledge.[2] It involves the subversion of social and cultural barriers that hinder participation and equal access to appropriate learning tools.

The 21st century Higher Education teaching and learning process is experiencing a paradigm shift from what used to be the teacher dominated and teacher centred learning, to a more contemporary and democratic approach, which is student centred teaching and learning. In student –centred approach to teaching and learning, the learner is the focus of the learning process. The interest of the learner should be the main concern of the teacher who is there to play the role of a facilitator rather than dictating the teaching and learning processes. Students are allowed to make their voices heard, rather than being subdued as mere listeners, who should tread carefully in order not get into trouble with the teacher.

This paper examines the utilisation of democratisation of the teaching and learning processes in Institutions of Higher Learning in Botswana. In 1977, Botswana's First National Policy on Education was unveiled. The philosophy which informed the 1977 Education Policy was "Social Harmony". The philosophy of social harmony has four main principles: Unity, Development, Democracy and Self-Reliance. These principles were meant to permeate all aspects of lives of the people of Botswana, including, how teaching and learning is conducted in institutions of higher learning.[3] This study examines the application of democratisation of teaching and learning as a tool that could be used for the implementation of the Tuning Approach in Higher Education. Democratisation of teaching and learning allows for decentralisation of learning and teaching processes, loosens what could be termed strictly vertical and top-down approach to

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[2] D. Croxon, "Fair go with web 2.0: Effective strategies for the democratisation of learning and teaching process using web 2.0 technologies," *Macquarie Matrix* 4, no. 1 (2014), http://studentjournal.mq.edu.au/issue4_1.html.

[3] Republic of Botswana, *Education for Kagisano: Report of the national policy on education* (Gaborone: Government printer, 1977).

teaching and learning, thereby creating enabling opportunities for increased bottom-up and horizontal learning contexts to take place. The School of thought which advocates for democratisation of teaching and learning argues that, the bottom-up control of educational practices which comes with democratic principles, allows students to have an increased degree of learning responsibility, self-regulated learning processes, avenues for formative feedback to be given to their teachers and dynamic peer-to-peer interactions which permit collaborative and cooperative learning.[4] The Massification of Higher Education in the 21st century has contributed to the diversified nature of learner populations across the globe, and Africa is not left out in this phenomenal development in the higher education system. With increased enrolment in the higher education arena, comes the issue of how best to make teaching and learning effective and worthwhile. The provision of inclusive, equal learning and teaching experiences to higher education students through democratisation of teaching and learning will help to unravel what kind of learning our students are exposed to, and how best we can engage them to achieve desirable learning -outcomes.

II. **Problem statement**

Contemporary teaching and learning lays emphasis on the need to reach out to the students and allow them the freedom to be co-drivers of the learning process. Encouraging a student- centred approach to teaching and learning has been a long-term process which is becoming more prominent with Massification of higher education in the 21st century. Most institutions, through research studies have realised the need for student –centred learning over the traditional pedagogy, of active learning over passive listening and of experiential learning over abstruse lectures.[5] Despite the strides in creating an awareness of the usefulness of student –centred approach to teaching and learning, some faculty members and institutions of higher learning still sing the song of the traditional teacher –centred approach to learning and emphasise unduly on curriculum content rather than the

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[4] Alexandra I. Cristea and Fawaz Ghali, "Towards adaptation in e-learning 2.0," *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia* 17 (2011): 205, accessed October 13, 2016, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13614568.2010.541289; Anastasia Kitsantas and Nada Dabagh, "The role of web 2.0 technologies in self-regulated learning," *New Directions for teaching and learning* 126 (2011): 99, 102, accessed October 13, 2016, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/tl.448/abstract.

[5] Claus Nygaard and Clive Holtham, *Understanding Learning-Centred Higher Education* (Denmark: Narayana press, 2008).

effectiveness of the learning process. In this era of globalisation where people are overwhelmed by huge information- based realities, there should be a paradigm shift from, students learning content disseminated, to knowing how to find out facts by themselves. Democratisation of teaching and learning entails that our students should be set free in the process of teaching and learning, and be provided with the opportunities and freedom to learn and discover things by themselves. This study examines the exercise of democratisation of teaching and learning in Botswana to determine if it is a necessary tool for the implementation of the Tuning student –centred approach in higher education.

Research objectives:

1. This paper examines the implementation of the principle of democracy in teaching and learning at higher education level in Botswana.

2. The study sets to find out if higher education students are involved in planning the curriculum used for instructions

3. The paper discusses the extent of democratic activities in the teaching and learning processes in Botswana's Institutions of Higher Learning

The following questions were addressed:

1. Is the learning –outcome approach applied in lesson planning?
2. How engaged are the students in the teaching and learning process?
3. Are students involved in planning curriculum?

III. **Democratisation of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education**

Democracy allows people to participate in decisions that affect their lives in political, community, social and economic affairs. For democratic principles to be made functional, individuals must have ample information to make wise choices and decisions, which should be respected and taken into account by decision makers at all levels of governance.[6] There are different models of democracies promoted by theorists in recent years. These models present democratic practices in different perspectives.[7] The 'interest' model

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[6] Republic of Botswana, *Education for Kagisano: Report of the national policy on education* (Gaborone: Government printer, 1977).

[7] Jane E Iloanya, "Basic Education and the Actualisation of Botswana's Philosophy of Education: Implementers' and Students' Perspectives*"* (PhD Thesis, University of Botswana, 2010).

positions the goal of democracy as a decision making process to decide what leaders, rules and policies will best serve the greatest number of people, where each person defines his or her own interests. The model of 'deliberative' democracy defines democracy as a process that allows the public to come together and talk about collective problems, goals, ideals and actions.[8] In deliberative democracy, participants do not rest until the "force of better argument "compels them to all accept a conclusion.[9] A third model of democracy called 'communicative' theory, encourages an equal priviledging of any forms of communicative interaction where people aim to reach an understanding without using argument to persuade others. These could be in the form of greeting, rhetoric and storytelling. Socrates, a well-known Greek Philosopher of ancient times, believed in the use of rhetorical tricks to capture the minds of his audience. The educational implication of the democratic principles is that the teachers should be aware of the different teaching –learning environments; to avoid a situation where students might be misconstrued for exercising what they feel is their civil right.

Democratisation of teaching and learning in higher education can take place through the amplification of students' voices, creating an open and cordial space for teaching and learning, working in partnership with students, faculty and teaching staff, dialogue between students and their teachers, empowerment of students in different facets of learning; including being involved in curriculum development and engaging students in actual teaching and learning.[10] By working in partnership with students, everyone is actively involved in, and will benefit either way from the teaching and learning processes. It is an effective way of developing students' engagement, enhancing teaching and learning, and promoting the relevant democratic principles in the teaching and learning environment.

Some schools of thought have described students as the 'university's unspent resource'. This takes us to the fact that, in the coming years, universities will rely on the active participation of students in the meaningful

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[8] Seyla Benhabib, *Democracy and difference: contesting the boundaries of the political* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 10-12.

[9] Robert E Young, *A Critical theory of education: Habermas and our children's future* (Sydney: Harvester Wheatsheat, 1989), 50.

[10] Alison Cook-Sather, "Amplifying Students Voices in Higher Education: Democratising Teaching and Learning through changing the Acoustic on College Campus," *Revista de Educacion* 359 (2012); Mick Healey, Abbi Flint, and Kathy Harrington, *Engagement through partnership: students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education* (York: The Higher Education Academy, 2014).

development of the higher education sector.[11] Various institutions and individuals are becoming more aware of the need to actively engage students in the teaching and learning processes. Students could be meaningfully engaged by allowing and encouraging them to choose and write their own essay titles, choosing their own textbooks, designing worksheets for themselves and other students, co-evaluating a course with their teachers, co-assessing their work with their lecturer and choosing assessment methods. The more students are engaged in the learning and teaching activities, the more democratic the higher education set up will be. Developing a partnership and democratic approach in higher education teaching and learning, allows students to be active participants in the learning process, rather than passive recipients of knowledge. Democratisation of teaching and learning equips students with the power, authority and courage to co-create knowledge, learning and teaching at the higher education institutions.[12]
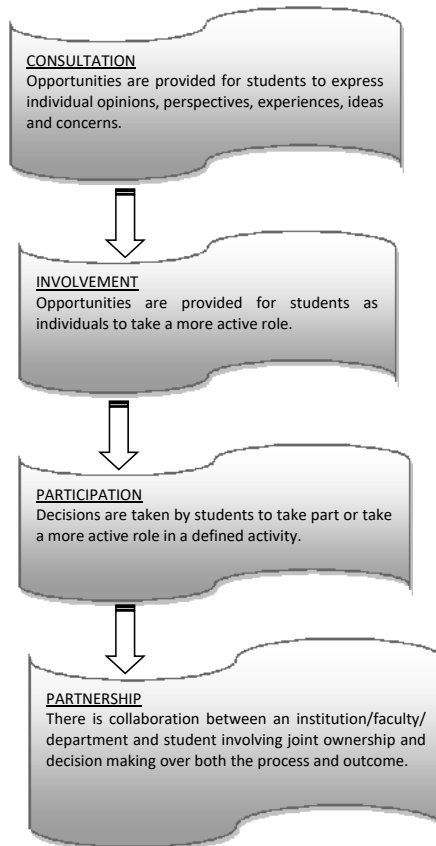
Research suggests that there is a very crucial difference between an institution that listens to students and responds accordingly, and an institution that gives students the opportunity to explore and discover areas they deem significant and needed solutions which will manifest in required and desirable changes.[13] Listening to students is important in its own ways, but, allowing students to be change agents acknowledges the view of students being active collaborators and co-producers, which in effect positions them as potential innovators. When Students and staff work and learn together, peer relationships are promoted, and students are engaged in areas where originally, in the traditional education setting, they are excluded from. Contemporary higher education gives credence to the fact that, democracy in teaching and learning is just not only about listening to the students' voices and allowing them take part in the decisions that affect them. Democratic relationship in teaching and learning involves creating an enabling environment where both students and teachers are involved in setting the priorities, content and direction of the learning experience.[14]

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[11] Johan Gardebo and Mattias Wiggberg, *Students the university's unspent resource: Revolutionising higher education through active student participation* (Upsala: Upsala University, 2013), 31- 40.

[12] "Student Engagement Toolkit," Higher Education Academy and National Union of Students, accessed October 10, 2016, www.nusconnect.org.uk/Student.

[13] Elisabeth Dunne et al, *Students as change agents – new ways of engaging with learning and teaching in higher education* (Bristol: Higher Education Academy Publication, 2011), 102- 116.

[14] "Policy Statement on higher education," Welsh Government, accessed October 06, 2016, http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/highereducationpolicystatement.

CONSULTATION
Opportunities are provided for students to express individual opinions, perspectives, experiences, ideas and concerns.

INVOLVEMENT
Opportunities are provided for students as individuals to take a more active role.

PARTICIPATION
Decisions are taken by students to take part or take a more active role in a defined activity.

PARTNERSHIP
There is collaboration between an institution/faculty/department and student involving joint ownership and decision making over both the process and outcome.

Stages of student engagement
in democratic teaching and learning context

Source: See Footnote.[15]

Partnership in teaching and learning should be viewed as a process of student engagement rather than an achieved state or result of engagement. It is necessary to allow students to put in enough time and efforts in their own learning. This of course demands that institutions and faculty members encourage and empower students to shape their own learning experiences. When students are given the opportunity to participate in the planning and

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[15] "Student Engagement Toolkit," Higher Education Academy and National Union of Students, accessed, October 06, 2016, www.nusconnect.org.uk/StudentEngagementtoolkitresources.

execution of their learning activities, they have that confidence and trust in themselves, which motivate them to aim higher to achieve and manufacture more knowledge in the realm of higher education. The essence of students actively engaging as partners in shaping the nature and quality of their learning experiences should be acknowledged by different stakeholders interested in improving students' democratic experiences in higher education.

IV. Benefits of democratisation of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

Democratisation of teaching and learning in higher education empowers students and gives them that sense of belonging and worth, that they are useful in the process of learning. Some scholars are of the idea that involving students actively in the learning process leads to enthusiasm for learning and increased passion for enhancement activities in the learning and teaching environment.[16] Staff -student relationship in learning and teaching has a laudable effect on learning and teaching, development and enhancement of learning, learning to learn, raising the profile of research into learning and teaching, and, the development and enhancement of employability skills and attributes. All these attributes are needed by contemporary higher education graduates to prosper both within and outside the work environment in the society.

As some scholars assert, partnership with students through democratisation of teaching and learning, can go a long way in empowering traditionally marginalised students and lead to sharing authority and responsibility with staff in the development of culturally sustainable pedagogy.[17] It tends to produce similar outcomes for both students and teachers, as engagement helps in enhancing motivation and learning, developing meta-cognitive awareness, strong sense of identity and improving teaching and learning experience in the classroom. Students have the confidence that they are seen as partners in the teaching and learning process. This sense of confidence and belonging in turn helps to create a conducive and peaceful learning environment for both

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[16] Suzanne SooHoo, "Students as partners in research and restructuring schools," *The Educational Forum* 57, no. 4 (1993): 387.

[17] Alison Cook-Sather and Praise Agu, "Student consultants of colour and faculty members working together toward culturally sustaining pedagogy," in *To improve the academy. Resources for faculty, instructional, and organisational development*, eds. James E. Groccia and Laura Cruz (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2013), 271- 85.

teachers and learners, where there is mutual understanding and trust for both parties.

Engagement outcomes for students lead to enhanced confidence, motivation and enthusiasm in learning. Students are motivated to actively get involved in the process and outcomes of learning. They are ready to claim responsibility for and ownership of their own learning, thereby, having a deepened understanding of, and contributions to the entire academic community. The faculty members also have a lot to benefit from democratisation of teaching and learning. Teachers, who are exposed to the democratic principles in teaching and learning, have the opportunity of experiencing transformed thinking about, and for the practice of teaching. They have a changed understanding of learning and teaching through experiencing different viewpoints from their students and having a re-conceptualisation of learning and teaching as collaborative processes.[18] The idea of making students' voices heard leads to transformation in learning for both teachers and students, thereby challenging in a very constructive manner, the constraints and hurdles which the traditional form of teaching encounters. A situation where teachers act as the sole custodians of knowledge which they regurgitate, and students are there to receive without questioning the authenticity of certain practices, does not engender democracy in the teaching and learning process.

V. **Challenges of democratising Teaching and Learning**

Democratic education is characterised fundamentally by dialogue, which is the principal vehicle for discussion, deliberation, reconsideration and transformation. Dialogue is a participatory endeavour where people speak with the possibility of being heard, touching hearts and changing minds. In dialogue, one listens and respects other people's views.[19] The burning issue is, how easy is it to work with higher education students and allow them to participate actively and freely in class, taking full control and responsibility in listening and taking care of teaching and learning processes? We talk about students and teachers partnering in the design of the curricular, students being involved in the assessments design and marking; how possible is it?

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[18] Alison Cook-Sather, Catherine Bovil, and Peter Felten, *Engaging students as partners in teaching and learning*: *A guide for faculty* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2014), 55-57.

[19] Alfred J. Ayer, "The problem of knowledge, and probability and evidence," *British Journal for the philosophy of science* 49, no. 1 (2004): 89-121.

Critics believe that students are neither disciplinary nor pedagogical experts. Rather, their experience and expertise typically is in being a student –something that many faculty members have not been for many years. They understand where they and their peers are coming from, and often, where they think they are going. Can students be very useful in planning teaching and learning when they bring no concrete experience of doing such to the table? Would the students know when and where to draw the line as they democratically plan and work with their teachers? These are some of the challenges of democratisation of teaching and learning in higher education.

Partnership in teaching and learning is not easily attainable and sustainable, nonetheless. The development of a co-learning, co-enquiring, co-developing, co-designing and co-creating approaches in higher education teaching and learning, challenges the traditional status quo relationships. It involves a cultural change of how the traditional higher education system was instituted and ran, and this cultural change will be difficult for some to adopt and adapt to.[20] None the less, if all parties involved work very hard, with positive attitude and determination to make it work; the challenges associated with democratisation of teaching and learning will not be insurmountable.

VI. **The Tuning Approach to Teaching and Learning**

The Tuning approach to teaching and learning in higher education develops a reference point for common curricular in higher education, based on the development of competencies in the students, which will make them useful not only as graduates but, as future employees in the world of work. It is basically a change of paradigm in higher education teaching and learning, where learning has shifted from staff oriented to student -centred teaching and learning.[21] It is geared towards helping higher education to develop programmes which are based on learning outcomes and credits, to improve the recognition of qualifications and all kinds of prior learning. Some key factors at the forefront of the Tuning approach include: a greater focus on competencies to prepare students for employability and citizenship, international recognition of different

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[20] Alison Cook-Sather, Catherine Bovil, Peter Felten, *Engaging students as partners in teaching and learning*; Mick Healey, Abbi Flint, and Kathy Harrington, *Engagement through partnership: students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education*.

[21] Robert Wagenaar, "Learning outcomes. A fair way to Measure Performance in Higher Education: The Tuning Approach" (Programme on Institutional Mangement in Higher Education, 2008), http://www.oecd.org/site/eduimhe08/41203784.pdf.

degree programmes and the accompanying periods of study and a more precise method, aimed at the recognition of prior learning and periods of study.

The Tuning methodology lays emphasis on the development of competencies in the higher education students. Through the learning outcomes approach to teaching and learning, students become the centre of the instructional process. Learning outcomes, according to the Tuning methodology should be formulated in terms of competencies which should be obtained by the students. Competencies represent a dynamic combination of knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities which are formulated in various course units and are assessed at different stages. It is the object of educational programmes to foster competencies in the students. The fostering of competencies according to the Tuning methodology can only materialise through the desirable learning outcomes constructively formulated by the academic staff in higher education. It is pertinent to note that the tuning methodology is based on desired learning outcome not on minimum requirement. The Tuning approach allows specialists in the subject area/ discipline to formulate the learning outcomes after a productive consultation with the required stakeholders.

VII. **Methodology**

VII.1. *Context of the study*

This research was carried out in Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana. There are about ten institutions of higher learning in Gaborone which are both public and privately owned. Two higher institutions of learning were used for this study and both are members of the Tuning Africa Project two. One of the institutions used is a public university, while one, is a private university. I decided to use these two institutions because being members of the Tuning project, it is necessary to find out if they are implementing the Tuning approach of student –centred learning. It is also necessary to determine how the Tuning methodology is being applied in a public and private higher education institution respectively.

VII.2. *Selection of the participants*

A qualitative research approach was used for this study. Participants were purposefully selected at course level from the Faculties of Education of

both universities used for the case study. Qualitative approach was appropriate for this study because, in qualitative research, the researcher carries out studies about people's experiences in their natural settings and humans are the focus of the research.[22] The phenomenon of democratisation of teaching and learning can best be studied through a qualitative research approach which allows the researcher to interact with the participants in the study and draw out meanings from their experiences on the issue being researched about. Six lecturers were purposefully selected at course level from the Faculties of Education of the two universities used for the study, making it a total of twelve lecturers for the study. A phenomenological research should not necessarily require more than six participants.[23] Often times, ten participants would be ideal for a qualitative study.[24] Drawing the participants of this study from the faculties of education of the universities used as the case study was appropriate because, the Faculty of Education of any university should be at the forefront of the methodology of instruction's implementation realities. Ten final year students from the Faculties of Education of both universities were purposefully selected for the study. The choice to include final year students in the study was inspired by the fact that, students are the recipients of the teaching and learning processes. It was therefore necessary to find out from the students how they experience teaching and learning at their universities. Final year students were selected for the study because, they have spent almost four years in the university and would be in a better position to relay their experiences on how teaching in learning take place in their institutions.

VII.3. *Data collection instruments and procedure*

Qualitative research approach allows the use of a variety of techniques such as interviews, observations and focus group discussions and the findings are recorded mainly in words rather than in numbers.[25] In this study, semi-

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[22] Bagele Chilisa and Julia Preece, *Research methods for adult educators in Africa* (Cape Town: CTP book printers, 2005) 120- 130; Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guba, *Naturalistic inquiry* (Beverly Hills, C.A: Sage Publications. Inc, 1986) 45-47.

[23] Terrence H and Mclaughlin, "Philosophy and educational policy: possibilities, tensions and tasks," *Journal of Education Policy* 15, no. 4 (2000): 441-457.

[24] John Creswell, *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions* (Thousands Oaks, California: Sage, 2013).

[25] William Wiersma and Stephen Jurs, *Research Methods in Education: An Introduction* (University of Virginia: Pearson Publication, 2005).

structured interview questions were used to collect information from six lecturers in each of the two universities used for the study. Semi- structured interviews in qualitative studies allow the participants to freely express their feelings and experiences in the phenomenon under study. The use of interviews allows the data to speak for themselves and through a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of the participants; important themes emerge from the study.[26] Focus group discussions were used to elicit information from ten students, from each of the two universities used for the study. The use of focus group discussions allowed the students to speak extensively about their perceptions on the approaches to teaching and learning in their universities. Focus group discussions served the same purpose as the use of interviews in this study; the only difference is that, it was like a group discussion.

The interviews and focus group discussions were designed to speak to the research objectives and research questions of the study. Descriptive questions were designed to explore the lived experiences of the participants on democratisation of teaching and learning in higher education. The questions centred around the engagement of students in the teaching and learning processes, students' involvement in curriculum design and the use of student –centred learning outcome approach in lesson planning. Documentary sources were used to discuss the rationale behind democratisation of teaching and learning in higher education, and the Tuning approach on outcome-based learning and the need for infusing the development of competences in our curriculum design and instruction. The use of interview methods, focus group discussions and documentary sources allowed data triangulation which is a basic requirement in qualitative research approach, to ensure validity and reliability of the research data collected.

VIII. **Major findings**

The findings of the study addressed the three research questions used for data collection. Themes emerged from the study based on the interview questions used to collect data from lecturers and students who formed participants of the study. The interview questions spoke directly to the research objectives and research questions.

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[26] Trsih A. Hatch, *Professional challenges in school counselling: organization, institutional and political (*San Diego State University, 2002); Herbet J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearning data*, 2nded. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005).

Research question 1, addressed the issue of learning –outcomes being used for lesson planning by the university lecturers. Lecturers interviewed in both universities used for the study, admitted that they are familiar with Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives and that they do apply the different domains of the taxonomy in their lesson planning. They admitted that a paradigm shift is expected in the current higher education system with regard to courses that are taught and learned. These should no longer be teacher centred, but, should be geared towards preparing students not only, for the world of work but, also, for their future role in the society. The issue of lecturers knowing about the existence of the learner -centred approach to learning is not enough in the context of democratisation of teaching and learning in higher education. The issue here is, lecturers knowing the importance of applying the student-centred approach in their lesson planning and being honest to implement the approach in their day to day academic engagements with the students. While preparing a learner-centred curriculum, lecturers should bear in mind a few areas to develop and implement a learning-centred curriculum needed to improve students' learning outcomes.[27] Such areas include: 1) being prepared to rethink students' learning processes, and regard them as active participants rather than passive recipients; 2) being prepared to implement new teaching and learning activities that could affect and change already established institutional practices; 3) assigning new roles to students, teachers, and faculties; 4) being prepared to assess from several dimensions whether learning has actually taken place. It is pertinent for institutions of higher learning to create an awareness of the need for faculty members not only to apply the learner- centred approach to lesson planning, but, to encourage them to positively implement it in their lesson delivery processes. This approach will benefit the students, teachers, the higher institutions of learning and the society at large. This is what democratisation of teaching and learning involves. The Tuning methodology recognises the importance of student –centred learning and the development of competences in the learners. The development of these competencies at both generic and subject specific levels encompasses the ability and willingness of our teachers and institutions to take implementation seriously. One of the lecturers interviewed clearly stated that "we need training and workshops to help new faculty members who do not have teaching qualifications understand more about the use of the learning –outcomes approach in lesson planning and teaching". Students interviewed in the two institutions used as case study, admitted that, their lecturers do use

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[27] Claus Nygaard and Clive Holtham, *Understanding Learning-Centred Higher Education* (Denmark: Narayana Press, 2008).

learning –outcomes approach for planning their lessons. This is evidenced by the manner in which the lecturers present their learning and teaching resources to the students. One of the students interviewed in the focus groups actually stated that "our lecturers usually read out the learning outcomes to us before facilitating classes, and they make sure we flow with the learning outcomes". Quite impressive to learn from the students, that, this aspect of the Tuning methodology is being executed in the teaching and learning processes at their institutions.

Research question 2, explored the engagement of the students in the teaching and learning processes. The lecturers interviewed in both institutions expressed their views on different methods used to engage students in teaching and learning activities. One of the universities, which is more of a university of technology, has modern ways of engaging students through the use of technology. Apart from teaching students face-to-face, where they are actively engaged through group discussions in class and classroom presentations, to and with fellow students, students are also engaged through the use of technologies in instructions. Students are provided with Tablets to enable them engage with their lecturers both within and outside the university premises. They use networks, blogs and Wikis to have academic conversations with their lecturers and fellow students. Through the use of the blackboard as a teaching and learning tool, lecturers set tests for the students, upload relevant academic material to be accessible to their students wherever they are. There is the blackboard discussion forum where lecturers upload academic topics and students actively engage by contributing to the discussion forums. In order to make sure that all students are engaged in the discussions, there are some graded discussion topics and marks are awarded which contribute to the final grade of the students. The use of technology for instructions is proving to be very productive in students' engagement and helping students construct and connect knowledge from social experience.[28] The students interviewed in this institution admitted that, they are fully engaged with various activities aimed at effective facilitation of teaching and learning. In the words of one of the students, "thanks to the use of technology in instruction; we can engage with our lecturers and fellow students even outside the confines of the classroom".

The other university used for the study, is more of a conventional university. The lecturers interviewed admitted that while there are many

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[28] Dwi Sulisworo, "Designing the online collaboration learning using the wikispaces," *International Journal of emerging Technologies in learning* 7, no. 1 (2012): 58-61; George Siemens, "Connectivism: A learning theory for the Digital Age, 2005," http://www.itdl.org/journal/jan_05/article01.htm.

ways of engaging students in the teaching and learning process, they use more of the traditional face to face contact sessions. Students are engaged through class work activities, group discussions, questions and answer forums, tutorials, group and individual presentations in class. There is also the use of technology for instructions because lecturers use Moodle to post assignments and announcements to students, the use of emails and test messages to facilitate active engagements. Democratisation of teaching and learning is evidenced by the way students at the university freely express themselves in class. Students sometimes remind lecturers that Botswana is a democratic country and one is free to air one's views. It is though, unfortunate that sometimes, students misinterpret the concept of democracy in teaching. Responses from the students interviewed in this institution indicated that, democratic principles are being implemented in the teaching and learning processes. Students confirmed that, they are actively engaged through classroom presentations, questions and answers sessions and communications with their lecturers through emails, test messages and face to face contacts. In the words of one of the students who was interviewed, "there are free tutorial sessions for students who require these services and our lecturers keep us engaged with various activities to enhance teaching and learning".

An important theme which emerged from research question 2, is the issue of the use of students feedback in both universities. Both students and lecturers interviewed expressed their views on the usefulness of using feedback as a form of engagement and the exercise of democratic element in teaching and learning. At the middle of the semester and towards the end, students are given the feedback forms to tick and rate the performance of their lecturers in a given module or modules. At one of the universities, students' feedback is filled online while at the other university, the feedback is administered manually. While this could be considered as a very good avenue for students to exercise their democratic rights and freedom, some lecturers in these institutions expressed the fear that the students may not be fair enough due to one reason or the other, to give their lecturers a fair rating. So, the question is, is student feedback enough to judge the real performance of lecturers? One of the Lecturers interviewed lamented that "I do not know what wrong I have done to my students; I have never received favourable feedback from them since I started teaching in this institution". Perhaps, this could be seen as a reflection of how some teachers feel about democratisation of teaching and learning which involves amplification of students' voices in different aspects of the teaching and learning process. As evidence for institutional democracy implementation, the institutions used for the study indicated that students' feedback are

usually analysed and corrective measures are taken to address matters that need special attention. In some cases, lecturers are invited by their Heads of Departments to be advised on how to improve in any area of concerns raised by the students in the feedback.

Research question 3 addressed the issue of how curriculum is planned in the universities used for the study. To be precise, are students involved in planning the curriculum? Do students know how the workloads in their Institutions are determined? Lecturers and students from both institutions admitted that students are not fully involved in planning the curriculum. In one of the institutions used for the study, student representatives are consulted during curriculum planning at the course level. The extent to which their input is utilised in the actual planning was not established. If the tuning methodology is anything to go by, learner –centred approach demands that the learners should be the central focus of teaching and learning. The Tuning process was launched for a number of reasons, one of which was transparency and comparability of higher education programmes, to facilitate prior learning in the learner centred context, and to raise awareness about the role of employability and citizenship when setting up and implementing degree programmes.[29] The Tuning method emphasises on basing degree programmes on clear professional and academic profiles which would serve as a basis for identifying the appropriate set of competencies to be attained in the framework of the educational process. This is all about students and producing the right set of students for the right job market and to serve the suitable societal purposes. It is unfortunate that students' voices are not properly heard in the area of curriculum planning and determination of students' workload in our institutions of higher learning in Botswana. Democratisation of teaching and learning in higher education cannot be fully implemented, if we do not have a rethink of how curriculum planning and determination of students' workload, should involve elements of students' voices. Although we engage students in various ways to exhibit the democratic touch, more is yet to be done by making sure that students' voices are amplified in planning the curriculum that concerns them.

IX. **Conclusion**

The main objective of this study was to find out if democratisation of teaching and learning could serve as a useful tool for the implementation of

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[29] Robert Wagenaar, "Learning outcomes. A fair way to Measure Performance in Higher Education: The Tuning Approach."

the Tuning approach in higher education institutions in Botswana. Two institutions of higher learning in Botswana were used as case studies. Findings from the study indicate that, the lecturers in these two higher institutions of learning use the learning –outcomes approach in planning their lessons. The learning-outcomes approach of lesson planning places the learner at the forefront of the teaching and learning processes. The idea is to lead the learners to discover learning themselves and be able to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills needed for the world of work. The study also revealed that lecturers from these institutions actively engage students in the learning process through discussions in class, group and individual presentations and the use of modern technology in instructions.

Findings from the study point out to the fact that, lecturers from both institutions used for the study, do not fully engage students in planning the curriculum and the workload that inform their learning. Although student representatives from one of the institutions are consulted at the course level when planning the curriculum, that is not the case with the other institution. This is one area in which democratisation of teaching and learning is not positively manifested in the two institutions used for the study. If the Tuning approach is to be promoted through democratisation of teaching and learning, students' voices should be heard both at the level of planning and implementation of the curriculum. This study has shed some light on the implementation realities of the principle of democracy enshrined in Botswana's Education philosophy of 1977. Although democracy is being implemented in certain aspects of the institutions' academic activities, more is needed in the area of students' voices in curriculum planning and workload.

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