DIALOGUE OR DISCIPLINE: DISTANCE EDUCATION SUPPORT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

by

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DECLARATION

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I declare that this thesis:

“Dialogue or Discipline: Distance Education Support in the Department of Defence

is my own work, being submitted as a requirement for the degree PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR (PhD) by the University of Pretoria and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references and it has not previously been submitted for a degree or any examination at this or any other institution

____________________________________            ___________________________
SIGNATURE                                                         DATE

Llewellyn Mxolisi Xabanisa
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late father Ebenezer Sipho Barnabas, a school teacher and choir conductor who had a good ear for music especially when sung by his pupils. To my entire family and my in-laws for their support and having confidence in me and being proud of what I was doing, especially my mother, Florence, who sacrificed a lot so that I could keep up with my studies during the difficult times. A special dedication to my wife, Iris, my sons, Simphiwe and Lethabo, and daughter, Nomathamsanqa (Malebo) for believing in me; without their loyalty, love, support, sacrifice and understanding, this work would not have been possible.

Ndiyabulela Bo Radebe, Bo Bhungane, Bo Mafuz’afulele, Bo Ndleb’entle zombini, Bo Zulu; nditsho nakuni BoDlomo, Bo Shubela, Bo Vel’ababhensele – Ndithi Makube-Cosi kube-Hele

(simply means I am thankful to my ancestors and singing their praises)
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ABSTRACT

The first key to wisdom is this – constant and frequent questioning, for by doubting, we are led to question and by questioning we arrive at the truth (Pierre Peter Aberlard).

The aim of this study was to identify what were the requirements placed on the design of distance education programmes as regards discipline or dialogue and how did these factors impact on student-support in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF).

Education in general is used to classical behavioural objective that outlines precisely for the student what has to be done and is one way of structuring the learning materials. The South African National Defence Force (SANDF), by its very nature, is very familiar with this formal structure and style of doing things. It prescribes the way teaching has to happen and how the outcomes have to be achieved and at times in a very formal way.

Opposed to the above is dialogue that calls for a move away from the prescriptiveness of doing something. Doing and thinking now becomes more open through dialogue. Education stakeholders now debate the value of certain content, since content is no more fixed, the admission of students into the programme is not fixed any more and the way examinations are set is also not fixed or prescriptive. There is now a move away from the disciplinary way of thinking, that is, thinking in terms of fixed boundaries or discipline any longer – dialogue has opened up options and opportunities.

This research is based on the belief that distance education problems in the Department of Defence (DoD) are as result of outdated and inadequate instructional or programme design methods or approaches, and thus lack student-support.

The four sub-research questions that emanate from the main research question as posed in this research are summarized as follows: (1) What is the distance learning teaching and learning character of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF)? (2) What is the role dialogue in the design of teaching and learning? (3) How are ‘outcomes’ in transactional distance or dialogue achieved? (4) What is the role of dialogue in student empowerment or student support?
The design of this research was based on qualitative approach. The feasibility of the research was assured by focusing on distance learning institutions and practitioners. Literature study and document analysis was utilized as data-collection method. Face-to-face interviews with focused groups and individual interviews utilizing unstructured, open-ended questions on interview schedules were also conducted. In addition, anonymous student reports collected by programme managers at the end of a programme replaced the unavailability of student interviews were utilised.

The findings of the study were that the character of structural design of distance learning programmes in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) resembles that of the disciplinary approach, and is thus prescriptive. Structure, in terms of the teaching and learning strategies and the substance of the content is largely the mode of practice in the SANDF’s distance education system. Communication finds its way into the distance learning system of the Department of Defence as authoritative power source.

The main function of dialogue in the system is to vest the interest of this organization as programme directors and instructors are not fully emancipated. Students and instructors find it difficult to engage constructively academically. Learner-to-learner interaction and freedom of academic discourse is hampered as the result of authoritarian and prescriptive doctrine of a structured curriculum. It is then concluded that student-support in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) distance education settings does not address requirements of dialogue.
KEY WORDS

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
DIALECTIC
DIALOGUE
DISCIPLINE
DISTANCE EDUCATION (DE)
DISTANCE LEARNING (DL)
DROP-OUT
EDUCATION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT (ETD)
ETD PROCESS
INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN (ID)
PROGRAMME DESIGN
STUDENT-SUPPORT
TRANSACTIONAL DIALOGUE
TRANSACTIONAL DISTANCE
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b. Management of learning  
c. Interactivity  
d. Perception  

e. Learning design  
f. Student-support  
g. Organisational commitment  
h. Learning outcomes  
i. Technology  

From whose perspective is effectiveness judged  
The domain of activity  
The level of analysis being used to measure effectiveness  
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APPENDIX L: Original Air Force College added individual responses and codes allocated

APPENDIX M: Original information gathered from the student reports of Army College using Nadeosa Criteria and codes allocated

APPENDIX N: Original information gathered from the student reports
APPENDIX O: Original information gathered from the student reports of the School for Military Health Training using Nadeosa Criteria and codes allocated

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AoS: Arm of Service
- AOT: Administrative, Operational and Technical
- Brig Gen: Brigadier General
- CAL: computer assisted learning
- CMC: computer-mediated communication
- CML: computer managed learning
- CoD: Council on Defence
- Col: Colonel
- COLET: College of Educational Technology
- CSANDF: Chief of the South African National Defence Force
- CSW: Conventions of Service Writing
- DDE: Directorate of Distance Education
- DE: Distance Education
- Def Sec: Defence Secretariat (Secretary of Defence)
- DEM: Distance Education Module
- DIDTETA: Defence and Trade and Industry Education Training Authority
- DOD: Department of Defence
- DSC: Defence Staff Council
- DMOD: Deputy Minister of Defence
- DMOD: Deputy Minister of Defence
- Dir: Director
- DL: Distance Learning
- DTR: Defence Training Review
- E-learning: Electronic learning
- ETD: Education, Training and Development
- ENSP: Executive National Security Programme
- ESOL: English as Second Language
- F SGT: Flight Sergeant
- ICT: information communication technology
SANWC: South African National War College  
SAPS: South African Police Service  
SAQA: South African Qualifications Authority  
SETAs: Sector Education Training Authorities  
SIM: Self-Instructional Module  
SO: Staff Officer  
[s.p.]: This refers to a reference where page numbers were not provided by the author or publisher  
SWOT Analysis: strength, weakness, opportunity and threat analysis  
Technikon S.A: Technikon South Africa  
Trg Comnd Fmn: Training Command Formation  
UNISA: University of South Africa  
URLs: universal remote links  
WAN: wide area networks  
WO: Warrant Officer  
WWW: World Wide Web  

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABBREVIATION MEANING ON CODE ALLOCATION TO INTERVIEWS RESPONSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IP: Individual or personal interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>IP1: School for Military Health Training individual or personal interview</td>
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<td>IP2: Army College individual or personal interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>IP3: Air Force College individual or personal interview</td>
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<td>RFG: Respondent focus group</td>
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<td>RFG1: Army College respondent focus group</td>
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<td>RFG2: Air Force College respondent focus group</td>
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<tr>
<td>RFG3: School for Military Training respondent focus group</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACSR Army College student reports</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFCSR Air Force College student reports</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMHTSR School for Military Health Training student reports</td>
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