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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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of Air Force College using Nadeosa Criteria and codes allocated

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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

ID:	Instructional Design
IM:	Instant Messaging
IMM:	interactive multimedia
IS:	Individual Study
IT:	information technology
JSCSP:	Joint Senior Command and Staff Programme
LAN:	local area networks
LMS:	learning management software
LMS:	Learning Management System
Lt Col:	Lieutenant Colonel
Maj:	Major
MDU:	Maharshi Dayanand University
MK:	Military Knowledge
MOD:	Minister of Defence (Ministry of Defence)
NADEOSA:	National Association of Distance Education of South Africa
[n.d.]:	This refers to a reference where publication date is not provided by the author or publisher
NQF:	National Qualifications Framework
OC:	Officer Commanding
OBE:	outcomes-based education
OEF:	Open Education Faculty
Par:	Paragraph (refers to a particular paragraph in the text)
PCP:	Personal Contact Programme
PSO:	Peace Support Operations
PSS:	Personnel Service School
RPL:	Recognition of Prior Learning
RSA:	Republic of South Africa
SA:	South Africa
SAA:	South African Army
SAAF:	South African Air Force
SAIDE:	South African Institute of Distance Education
SAMHS:	South African Military Health Services
SAN:	South African Navy
SANDC:	South African National Defence College
SANDF:	South African National Defence Force

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

ABBREVIATION MEANING ON CODE ALLOCATION TO INTERVIEWS RESPONSES

IP:	Individual or personal interviews
IP1:	School for Military Health Training individual or personal interview
IP2:	Army College individual or personal interview
IP3:	Air Force College individual or personal interview
RFG:	Respondent focus group
RFG1:	Army College respondent focus group
RFG2:	Air Force College respondent focus group
RFG3:	School for Military Training respondent focus group
ACSR	Army College student reports
AFCSR	Air Force College student reports
SMHTSR	School for Military Health Training student reports