

Course Code: EDC 637 (M) 2011

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND**FACULTY OF EDUCATION****(DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND TEACHING)****FINAL EXAMINATION PAPER, MAY 2011****TITLE OF PAPER : CURRICULUM STUDIES IN RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION****COURSE CODE : EDC 637****STUDENTS : BACHELOR OF EDUCATION****TIME : THREE (3) HOURS**

INSTRUCTIONS : 1. 1. This paper has a total of FIVE questions.
2. Answer QUESTION ONE and any three other questions
3. Marks are indicated against each question.

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THE INVIGILATOR**

QUESTION ONE - COMPULSORY

Using the research extract attached ‘The Teaching of Religious Education in the Secondary Schools in Swaziland’ (Shongwe, 2011)

- a) Identify the research area in the field of Religious Education from where it was focused
- b) Create a 21 words research topic
- c) Highlight the background to the study
- d) Construct a precise statement of the problem
- e) Construct research questions
- f) Construct an aim and objectives for the study
- g) Construct a rationale for the study
- h) Write the possible significance of the study [25]

QUESTION 2

What is meant by ‘religious tolerance’ in Religious Education? Using appropriate examples explain how a Religious Education teacher can ensure that religious tolerance is inculcated in his/her students. What factors influence religious intolerance in current Swaziland? [25]

QUESTION 3

The use of a variety of teaching resources is one of the hallmarks of effective teaching in the Religious Education classroom. It brings the world inside the classroom (Shongwe, 2010). Discuss the above statement and highlight the variety of resources that a Religious Education teacher can use and how they can be used.

QUESTION 4

Summarise and critique features of the ‘new’ multi-faith Religious Education Programme/Syllabus in the High School level in Swaziland. [25]

QUESTION 5

Discuss the major problems levelled against the SGCSE Religious Education programme in Swaziland. What possible steps can be taken to alleviate these problems? [25]

----- **END OF EXAMINATION PAPER** -----

The Government of Swaziland has recently introduced a new Religious Education curriculum-Religious Studies 0490 IGCSE (Ministry of Education, 2005:1) underpinned by the Multi-faith approach to replace the Christian-focused syllabus. The decision to replace the Christian-focused Religious Education Syllabus was taken by the Government in 2006. This decision envisaged the phasing in of the IGCSE examination approach.

This move was justified because prior to 2006, the country's 'constitution' recognised only Christianity as an official religion. The R.E curriculum had emphasised the rote learning of uncontested Christian-Bible knowledge. Education for Religious Education teachers had been poor. Bible knowledge teachers had little or no knowledge about strategies and methods that would bring out the best in learners. There were no books to use. Lecturers in the Teacher Training Institutions did not know how to handle Religious Education through the Multi-Faith Approach.

The Curriculum for Teacher Education Colleges did not encourage Religious Education pre-service teachers to focus on other religions other than Christianity because schools did not teach other religions. The Department of Education in the Norms and Standards for Teacher Education and Training (1997:13) in South Africa echoes the state of things in Swaziland's Teacher Education. It gave inadequacies identified by the Centre for Education Policy and Development (CEPD), about Teacher Education to include:

- A highly fragmented, diverse and overloaded system
- Poor prepared staff who still practiced unsuitable approaches to learning and consequently poor quality of delivery
- Lack of commitment of teachers in pursuing the teaching profession
- Inappropriate philosophies which underpinned prevailing practices
- Curriculum in colleges was dominated by old fashioned concepts, inappropriate philosophies, methodologies and modes of assessment, negative institutional cultures, lack of professionalism, limited subject knowledge, little school teaching experience for staff and disjunction between theory and practice (CEPD, 1995:83).

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These poorly trained teachers passed on their inadequacies to their learners in a vicious circle. The Bible-based education neglected the development of critical thinking and problem solving skills, and the individual's ability to select, adapt and apply skills and knowledge in unfamiliar situations. As it were, learners were given Christian education to make them follow one set of religious beliefs for life. All these factors mentioned above formed part of the concerns that led to the introduction of a new approach in the teaching of Religious Education in the country.

The introduction of the new Multi-Faith Approach to Religious Education was an attempt by the Government of Swaziland to develop a Religious Education system that would allow *“human powers of creative organisation and re-organisation of experience to be operative in an environment that maintains a healthy tension between the need to find closure and the desire to explore”* (Doll, 1993: x). This new approach suggests a move away from the transmission mode of teaching and learning to “the development of conceptual knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that would be developed from learner-centred education” (Kwayisi, 2005:5). The new Religious Education Syllabus had implications for curriculum development, content formulation, assessment and methodology. The implications for methodology include activity-based teaching and learning, independent as well as group and collaborative work, integrated as well as differentiated tasks, dynamics for heterogeneous learning and assessment practices. Such qualities were not there prior to 2005.

The challenges that now faces the education system includes the availability of teachers trained and adept in the new syllabus, educators who will use a variety of methods/strategies for learner-centred approach to achieve the outcomes of the new Religious Education syllabus. This syllabus requires an educator who would help learners to:

- “Develop appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes and an understanding of the principles and processes of a multi-faith Religious Education
- Enable learners to make sense of their ‘world’

- Contribute to the development of responsible, sensitive and religiously tolerant literate citizens who can critically debate religious issues and participate in an informed way in democratic decision making processes
- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions represented in Swaziland
- Develop an understanding of the influences of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures;
- Develop the ability to form reasoned opinions leading to informed judgements about religious and moral issues, with reference to the teachings of the principal religions represented in Swaziland
- Enhance their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development by;
 - developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experiences, and how religious teachings can relate to them;
 - responding to such questions with references to the teachings and practices of religions, and to their understanding and experience; and
 - reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study;
- Develop a positive attitude towards other people, respecting their right to hold different beliefs from their own, and towards living in a society of diverse religions” (Ministry of Education, 2005: iv).

The rationale for the new syllabus views Religious Education as possessing the potential to improve the quality of life. For this reason, the Religious Education subject is to be made available to all citizens of the country. To achieve the aims of the Religious Education Programme (MoE, 2006), Religious Education educators are expected to help learners to develop the ability to:

- Present and communicate religious issues effectively in diverse cultural learning context
- Grow in the moral and spiritual dimension

- Carry out research in Religious Education on issues in their own context
- Develop a sense understanding of the role played by religion to an individual, community and the world
- Understand major concepts used in Religious Education
- Have a clear understanding of contemporary social, economic and environmental issues locally, regionally and globally, and
- Have a deeper understanding of cultures and beliefs of different communities in Swaziland and the world.

The role of the Religious Education teacher in the attainment of the outcomes of the new syllabus could therefore be to change their teaching to accommodate the changes envisaged. Although educators were calling for change, they did not anticipate the dedication and hard work that would be required of them. Many have been caught by surprise. The Government has however made an effort to help R.E teachers to cope with the new development. There have been in-service courses and workshops for teachers on approaches for teaching the new syllabus. Factors that militated against these efforts included: the enormous volume of new terminology; lack of the required trained, qualified and experienced personnel to serve as mentors; lack of proper supervision; lack of teaching resources; and/or simply the lack of commitment and interest on the part of the teachers. However, amidst all these challenges, the Government continues to make attempts to better the situation.

The introduction of the new Religious Education curriculum has justification based on the country's constitution which recognises the multi-faith community of Swaziland. This has provided the basis for curriculum transformation and development. The new approach to Religious Education is in line with Governments efforts to improve education. The utmost objective was to enable all learners doing the subject to achieve their maximum ability and potential.

According to the Ministry of Education (2006:i) the Religious Education Programme seeks to produce an all-round developed learner; provides the learner with skills needed for economic, scientific and technological advancement; helps the learner's development

of cultural and national identity and inculcates attitudes and values that nurture respect for oneself and others. Religious Education educators are expected through their teaching, to help learners achieve such noble outcomes. The learners can only achieve these qualities envisioned from teachers who are qualified, competent, dedicated and caring. These are teachers who should know and use different teaching strategies and methods to help develop the expected qualities in their learners. This is even more crucial at the foundation stages of child development and intermediate levels of education because it is at these stages that the foundations of developing religious skills and knowledge are better nurtured.

It is a known fact that the teachers who were in the schools when the new Religious Education curriculum was introduced did not receive any further education nor were they given adequate preparation to handle the new syllabus save for semblance of in-service training through workshops. From such workshops, the teachers were expected to master the principles, methodologies, and to enable them to implement the syllabus. It is these teachers who continue to be in the schools. To worsen the situation, the department of the Ministry of Education responsible has not been able to provide relevant resources like books and other supplies of quality learning support materials.

It is hoped that this study will suggest among other things; changes in the way teachers teach Religious Education in schools. The Multi-faith syllabus advocates for a child-centred approach to teaching which involves a variety of strategies in achieving envisaged outcomes of the syllabus. It is a fact that teachers who have been used to the teacher-centred Bible transmission approach will find it difficult to adapt and change. This new syllabus requires that the teachers should have the ability to vary their methods and strategies to succeed in imparting to the learner the substance of the subject (Killen, 2000:16). Methods and strategies suggested for the Multi-faith approach include individual, pairing, small group as well as whole class learning activities. The successful teacher is the one who help learners to develop knowledge, skills and disposition that will enable them to ultimately achieve expected outcomes. The successful teacher is the one

who would be able to use assessment to bring about the formative development of learners.