Communities of University Teachers
as a basis for
professional development

Aster Minwyelet
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Aster Minwyelet,
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Dedicated to

my father, Minwyelet Addamu

&

my primary and secondary school teachers
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1. Introduction

Context of the study

Ethiopia lies in the Horn of Africa and has a population of more than eighty million people. According to a recent World Bank study (World Bank, 2009), only 2.4% of its adolescent population joins higher education. Compared to countries like Sudan (6.2%), South Africa (15.4%) and the Sub-Saharan Africa average (6.1%), the number of students in higher education in Ethiopia is low. Ethiopia has a long history of education in which the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has played a central part, while modern education started in the 1900s with the opening of Emperor Menelik II School. However, the introduction of higher education was considerably delayed. Secondary school graduates were sent to different countries for college and university education until the 1950s and the establishment of the University College of Addis Ababa (the current Addis Ababa University). Indeed, until 1999, Ethiopia had just two universities: Addis Ababa University and Alemaya (now called Haramaya) University. For decades access to the universities was limited to the male members of the Ethiopian elite. The participation of female students was very low: 11% in 1985/1986 (Library of Congress Country Studies, n.d.), 16% in 2001/2002 (World Bank, 2003), 26.5% in 2009/2010 (Ministry of Education, 2010b). This figure is still low in a country where the male/female ratio is close to the usual 1/1.

The government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia formulated a new education and training policy in 1994. Among other things, the policy describes the need to give special attention to females at all levels of the education system. This policy enables use of affirmative action for females in universities: both in student enrolment and staff recruitment. Though affirmative action initiatives have contributed to the increase in recruitment, gender disparity is still a challenge, not only in university student intake but also for university teachers (World Bank, 2003). Female university teachers are still few in numbers (less than 10%), hold junior positions and lack support for their professional development. Affirmative action practices focus on entry level, i.e. recruitment (Minwyelet, 2009). According to the Ministry of Education (2010), the number of academic staff increased rapidly from 4,847 in 2004/2005 to 11,238 in 2009/2010, but the number of female teachers remains at 10% and
1. Introduction

Ethiopian higher education is still extremely male-dominated. Female teachers are still found in the lower ranks only; there is only one female professor in the country.

An unprecedented expansion of Ethiopian higher education was implemented to rectify the low enrolment rates. Massification that took place in higher education in the Western world over more than sixty years was attempted in Ethiopia in little more than a decade from two to thirty-one public universities in the period 1999-2012. From 1999-2005, seven universities were founded, which together with the two older universities are now referred as the ‘established universities’, while between 2006 and 2007, twelve ‘new universities’ were established (Teshome, 2007). In 2010, ten additional new universities were launched, and started enrolling students; the country has now thirty-one public universities. Rapid increase in student intakes into existing universities and building new universities led to considerable staff and facility problems. By 2010 there were also 64 accredited private higher learning institutions which accounted for 18% of the total enrolment (Ministry of Education, 2010b).

The rapid expansion in the number of public universities and the private higher institutions resulted in an increase in student enrolment from 62,944 in the academic year 2002/2003 (Ministry of Education, 2008) to 434,659 in 2009/2010 (Ministry of Education, 2010b). Comparing these data shows that the enrolment in 2010 was almost seven times that of 2002.

Next to the limited resources (Ashcroft, 2006), shortage of well-prepared staff was one of the main problems facing the higher education sector (Fisher & Swindells, 1998). The donor community highlighted the challenges of the massive expansion of higher education requiring university teachers with academic degrees and knowledge and skills to teach at a high level (Saint, 2004; World Bank, 2003). The market could not provide adequate numbers of staff to cope with the uncompromising expansion of higher education. Even when Ethiopian university legislation stated that a master’s degree is the minimum requirement for university teachers, universities were forced to recruit under-qualified staff to cope with the increasing number of students (Wessenu, 2009).

Table 1.1 Ethiopian public university teachers by academic level & gender (Ministry of Education, 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Total</th>
<th>% Diploma</th>
<th>% Bachelor’s degree</th>
<th>% Master’s degree</th>
<th>% PhD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>89.7</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than half of the total university teachers in public universities in Ethiopia hold lower academic qualifications and are mostly inexperienced graduates with only a bachelor’s de-
gree; those with a PhD are below 10% (Table 1.1) (Ministry of Education, 2008). This contrasts with the national standards set by the Ministry of Education which dictate staff complements contain 30% PhD, 50% master’s and 20% bachelor’s degrees (Yohannes, 2009). Besides accepting minimum qualifications, recruitment of novice university teachers is based solely on subject matter ‘expertise’; pedagogical knowledge and skills are not included in the requirements. Similar to their colleagues in the Western world (Beaty, 1998), most novice university teachers in Ethiopia know little about teaching-learning and lack teaching experience (Fisher & Swindells, 1998; Saint, 2004). They have to struggle in isolation for their own professional growth as Ethiopian universities do not have a systematic strategy for beginners to receive support from experienced university teachers. These ill-prepared and unsupported university teachers have heavy teaching loads and are expected to teach large groups of 60-80 students. All this has to be accomplished in a context where there is very limited access to recent books, articles and other basic requirements. In addition, staff has very limited (and students even less) access to computers and online resources, which makes the teaching very difficult. The implication of all these challenges is the necessity of capacity building support, both for formal qualification upgrading as well as informal staff development (Saint, 2004; World Bank, 2003).

The Ethiopian government has long advocated that improving teaching quality is the core issue to upgrade the higher education sector and produce competitive graduates (Ministry of Education, 1997). The government has been working for qualification upgrading through expansion of master’s and PhD programmes in Ethiopian universities, sending university teachers to Indian universities for graduate studies, and collaborating in graduate programmes with other institutions like the University of South Africa. However, the attention given to improve the pedagogical knowledge, skills, and experience of university teachers is limited and not standard practice. The issue of staff development in relation to teaching skills development was addressed in 2003 with the launching of a national teaching upgrading scheme called the higher diploma programme (HDP). Aware that the planned expansion of higher education would result in a rapid increase in student numbers and recruitment of less qualified personnel, this was a timely intervention. At the same time, international developments in the science of teaching-learning which encouraged a shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred approaches and a world-wide emphasis on staff development, all contributed to making staff development an issue in the Ethiopian context.

In support of the implementation of a Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO), the HDP was only offered to teacher educators in Faculties of Education of public universities.
TESO was the educational reform initiative launched in 2003 to address educational problems of the Ethiopian education system (primary, secondary, and teacher education). It focused on reforming pre-service teacher education and continuous professional development of primary and secondary school teachers, professionalization of teacher educators (through the HDP), and the advancement of teacher education in general. A group of donors were supporting the activities related to these core areas (Mekonnen, 2008). As part of the TESO initiative, all the activities of the HDP programme were supported by donor funds. The main aim of the HDP, which continues to this day, is to support teacher educators in using learner-centred approaches, becoming reflective practitioners, applying continuous assessment strategies to evaluate the student-teachers’ learning and conducting action research. The HDP runs for ten months: upon completion of the requirements, participants are certified as ‘professional teacher educators’. It is a mandatory programme for every teacher educator.

As the HDP targets only teacher educators, there was a need to have staff development activities that addressed other university staff. In 2005, a NUFFIC-funded project (Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education) called EQUIP (Educational Quality Improvement Program) set up ADRCs (academic development and resource centres) in the nine established universities. The aim was to improve the quality of teaching-learning in a context experiencing rapid expansion. To achieve this, a number of activities were undertaken. For example, ADRC staff was able to gain experience from visits to the Netherlands and South Africa. Two ADRC staff members from each of the nine established universities undertook master’s degrees in the Netherlands in fields relevant to their work in the staff development centre (such as curriculum and instruction, assessment, and information communication technology in education). The project also provided teaching equipment (computers, laptops, LCDs, TVs, etc.) so that ADRCs could provide resources on loan across campus. With financial, technical and human resource support from the project, different short courses were designed with associated tutor and participant manuals (e.g., in instructional skills, gender awareness, programme design and review, and ICT in education) to enable ADRCs to provide training for the university staff.

Universities in their turn had to make physical space available, pay the salaries and allowances of ADRC staff, and cover training costs undertaken in the ADRCs. Of all the courses available, instructional skills for new staff (referred as “induction programme” in this dissertation) is one of the staff development initiatives which were implemented rigorously. At most of the established universities, it is offered for every beginning university teacher on a voluntary basis. Recognising the importance of this initiative for improving teaching-
learning, this induction programme is one of the focuses of this dissertation. Through studying the reactions, experiences and professional development wishes of induction programme participants, I explored the impact of this induction programme and ways to further enhance the professional development of staff to face current challenges in the Ethiopian higher education system.

Rationale of the study
Given that the Ethiopian Government is anxious to improve the quality of higher education despite an under-qualified and inexperienced workforce, several remedies suggest themselves. As a long term measure, improving the recruitment strategy would be an option, designing mechanisms of attracting high profile personnel would be one solution. In the short term, however, upgrading existing staff to achieve a higher level of teaching is the best possibility. The introduction of the HDP and the induction programme is a step in the right direction. Yet, in countries that started such programmes years ago, there is now a shift in thinking about more effective staff development. Although inductions or trainings are still offered, they are not considered sufficient on their own (Ramsden, 2003): it is argued that short trainings and workshops can only be the beginning and more has to be done to develop teaching knowledge and skills. Thus, initial training is followed up by different continuous learning strategies that fit the particular context; coaching and mentoring schemes, deliberate reflections on experiences, or discussions with colleagues in communities (Lieberman & Mace, 2008).

As staff development is a new agenda in the history of the Ethiopian university context, studying the implementation, impact and challenges of the university teacher upgrading initiatives is necessary to learn from the practice and to design improved programmes. Such studies can provide valuable insights to improve practice. They can also inform theory about the implementation of university teacher learning strategies in a different context since most of the literature is about the strategies used in the developed world.

This dissertation explores the experiences of staff development in the Ethiopian university context, focusing on the staff development programme supported by the NUFFIC-funded project, particularly how it can be enhanced in line with contemporary trends. The series of studies provides valuable insights which inform good practice and highlights the many challenges for staff development in the Ethiopian context which may have parallels in other developing countries.
This study was initiated for both academic and personal reasons. The EQUIP project made considerable investments in creating staff development courses – both in terms of staff training as well as curriculum and materials development. Of all the courses, the induction programme was the ‘flagship’ initiative and it was important to assess its suitability and impact. The project made available a PhD position to make a follow-up study about the implementation and sustainability of project activities. The author’s own experience provided additional motivation. She was involved in the EQUIP project from the start in the setup and coordination of the ADRC in Bahir Dar University (BDU) and had visited staff development centres in the Netherlands and South Africa in April 2005 and June 2006 to experience and learn how university teacher development was conducted. She also organized beginning university teacher inductions in BDU. These practical experiences were also supported with academic exposure to the issue of staff development while studying a Master’s of Science in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Twente, the Netherlands. The practical experience and the academic exposure to staff development were essential in understanding how far the issue of staff development had progressed in the Western world compared to Ethiopia which offered only short induction programmes for new university teachers. For the first time, the author realized the research possibilities as she witnessed how international researchers investigated the shift in strategies from training-focused to collaborative ways, from an emphasis on the role of an expert to learning from each other, from short programmes to continuous learning opportunities. The combined effect of all these exposures created a desire to work on the staff development experiences in Ethiopia focusing on ways to improve staff development in Ethiopian universities.

**Conceptual framework**

The twenty first century has significant impact on higher education student diversity. Easier access to higher education has become a worldwide experience. This creates increasing pressure on university teachers on satisfying various needs of diverse student populations (Ramsden, 2003). Teaching becomes more complex and demanding due to challenges of adapting instruction to diverse learners (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). Scholars argue that involvement in staff development activities is a tool to overcome the complex challenges (Beaty, 1998; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Hashweh, 2005). In the context of higher education, most university teachers are not trained to teach, know little about teaching-learning concepts, and lack teaching experience. The challenges faced by such less prepared university teachers are huge. The implication is that university teacher development is crucial.
Literature shows that university teacher development has become an agenda for policy makers, university managers, researchers, and practitioners. Governments require higher education institutes to implement some form of staff development programme (Gosling, 2009) that can enhance the teaching knowledge and skills of university teachers. Especially in the developed world, universities have now well-established induction programmes and support the continuous development of university teachers in various ways (Badley, 2000; Gibbs & Coffey, 2004; Hodkinson & Taylor, 2002). Staff development of university teachers became an important area of educational research as well; many positive outcomes about impact of involvement in staff development activities are reported such as creating a culture of continuous growth (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004), development of new knowledge, skills, and understand professional identities (Zhu & Baylen, 2005), easier access to intellectual, social and material resources for teacher learning that create opportunities for dialogue (Snow-Gerono, 2004).

Teachers learn in various ways: from individual study, staff development courses and workshops, their classrooms practices and activities they do to support a student with a problem, formal interactions (like mentoring) or spontaneous conversation with colleagues, observing colleagues’ teaching practices, or involvement in teacher communities (Guskey, 2000; Loucks-Horsley, Love, Stiles, Mundry, & Hewson, 2003). In most cases, staff development programmes are designed to foster teacher learning using one or more of these strategies. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) indicated that different staff development programmes emphasize different learning outcomes and employ different ways of teacher-learning depending on conceptions about teacher-learning. These authors identified three conceptions of teacher-learning: knowledge-for-practice, knowledge-in-practice and knowledge-of-practice. When teacher-learning targets knowledge-for-practice, staff development programmes focus on helping teachers receive the knowledge base (concepts and theories generated by university-based researchers) about learners, learning and teaching. Experts transfer the knowledge base to the teachers with the belief that mastery of the concepts and theories leads to effective teaching. When teacher-learning focuses on knowledge-in-practice, teachers are seen as generators of ‘practical knowledge’ embedded in their practical experience. It is assumed that an expert, competent teacher (usually one with more teaching experience) has accumulated lots of practical knowledge that should be shared and discussed with novice and less competent teachers. When novice teachers explore the knowledge embedded in the practices of an expert teacher, they learn better. In this case, staff development programmes focus on supporting teachers involve in deliberate reflection and inquiry into the practices of the expert teachers in order to articulate implicit knowledge. When teacher-learning focuses on knowledge-
of-practice, the emphasis of staff development programmes is on creating a learning environment in which teachers can reflect both on their own experiences, assumptions and practices as well as theories. This helps them to construct knowledge which is suitable to apply within their own specific situation and context. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) described this kind of learning environment as a place that gives

*the social and intellectual contexts in which teachers [...] can take critical perspectives on their own assumptions as well as the theory and research of others and also jointly construct local knowledge that connects their work in schools to larger social and political issues (p. 283).*

The three conceptions of teacher-learning can be related to the historical development of staff development. Since the 1970s, staff development is characterized mainly by provision of training courses (Laksov, Mann & Dahlgren, 2008); the aim of such training is usually associated with equipping teachers with the knowledge-base for teaching. The assumption is that mastery of the knowledge base leads to effective teaching; for example, if a teacher is trained about various active learning methods and acquires basic knowledge, it is assumed that she/he can implement active learning methods in practice.

Beginning in the 1990s, a consultancy approach has been emphasized where staff developers work with faculties and departments on how to enhance quality of teaching (Laksov, Mann & Dahlgren, 2008). This consultancy approach can be related to the second conception of teacher-learning (knowledge-in-practice) in which the expert-novice interaction is given much attention. The expert teacher provides advice and feedback to beginners. For this conception of teacher-learning, mentoring and coaching arrangements are made where an expert or a more experienced teacher is linked to a beginner or a less experienced teacher.

More recently, creating social environments in which teachers can interact with different teachers is considered as the context in which teachers learn best (Lieberman & Mace, 2008). It is argued that the “rich descriptive talk….make visible and accessible the day-to-day events, norms, and practices of teaching-learning and the ways different teachers … understand them” (Cochran-Smith, & Lytle, 1999, pp. 294-295). Here the emphasis is on the social nature of learning and the role of teachers in constructing their own knowledge that can enhance their practice in their own context. Thus, staff development is viewed as focusing on “dialogue, discussion or conversation” (Webb, 1996, p. 68) in which each university teacher contributes to the development of one another. This shift in thinking about teacher professional development strategies resulted from the wide spread attention given to the concept of communities of practice in different organizational settings (Lockhorst, Van der Pol,
Conceptually, communities of practice are considered as central environments for enhanced, lifelong and relevant learning. Passion (for something), interaction, experience (something to be shared) and active participation are central to the concept of communities of practice. Active interaction with each other in social contexts provides cognitive tools (experiences, problems, ideas and concepts) that help individuals process and construct meaning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Putnam & Borko, 2000; Wenger, 1998). These elements make learning in a community different from traditional methods of learning, such as short courses.

Participation in communities of practice fosters reflection on practice (Brancato, 2003; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) and enhances construction of professional knowledge, skills and attitudes (Warhurst, 2006). Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) argue that critical reflection on teaching experiences enables exploring inner levels (issue related to teacher beliefs, professional identity and mission in being a teacher) that might influence a situation (for example, behaviour of a teacher). This can be achieved by supporting teachers involve in environments that encourage making critical reflections on day to day teaching practices, experiences and challenges.

Various studies (A’vila de Lima, 2003; Schlichte, Yssel, & Merbler, 2005) indicate that teacher isolation is a common experience in primary and secondary schools. It affects teachers’ emotional being, and triggers teacher attrition. When teachers are deprived of emotional attachment with their colleagues and lack a supportive social environment for their professional development, they tend to quit their jobs. It is argued that creating a social environment is important where teachers interact freely with colleagues and get all kinds of support relevant for their professional development as well as social life. In this case, the concept of communities of practice has a significant role. Teacher communities are considered as contexts in which teachers get opportunities to interact with experienced members, understand local and professional norms, expectations, relationships and resources, and gain psychological support for unique career challenges. By doing so, it can minimize isolation. Thus, contemporary views on teacher-learning emphasize the need to stimulate and reinforce a real collaborative culture. Although a relatively unknown phenomenon in higher education, the author’s contention is that the same collaborative culture needs to be developed to improve the quality of instruction.

As the explanations in previous paragraphs show, there is thus a shift in strategies from short courses to creating environments that foster continuous collaborative learning (Boud, 1999), from having staff trainers to teacher-learning from each other’s experiences in com-
munities (Warhurst, 2006), and from knowledge acquisition to constructing knowledge in a lifelong basis (Hardy, 2010). This doesn’t mean that earlier forms of staff development (such as training) are abandoned. Training is still one mode of staff development, but it is not enough. It has to be skilfully integrated with other strategies that can guarantee ongoing learning and development. In view of these international trends, the present study explores staff development practices in Ethiopia and how they can be enhanced in line with contemporary strategies.

Outline of the study

First stage

The initial stage of the research focused on exploring the induction programme experiences of university teachers in Ethiopia. An evaluative study was conducted on how beginning university teachers experienced the induction programme offered in the ADRCs of two universities, BDU and Hawassa University (HU). Participants’ reactions, learning outcomes, challenges and wishes were studied (see Chapter 2). This study indicated that although participants appreciated the value of induction programmes in providing survival tips in a new profession, there was little improvement in teaching skills in such a short induction programme and the need for continuous learning opportunities was identified. This result led to the establishment of a community of university teachers (CoUT), the first of its kind in Ethiopian higher education.

Ethiopians have a long rooted culture of collaboration, helping and learning from each other in their social life which is depicted in a number of proverbs1. However, this culture is under-utilized in the academic arena. Amare (2009) concluded that the Ethiopian education system in general does not harmonize with Ethiopia’s traditional values of cooperation, communal responsibility, unity of the spiritual and intellect, and inseparability of the individual from the community. Given this concern and given the international trends, it was important to examine whether CoUTs could be an asset for staff development of university teachers in Ethiopia.

Loucks-Horsley et al. (2003) argue that planning for staff development requires to “have one foot planted firmly in theory and the other in reality” (p. 7) which indicates the

1 “dirbiabiranbesayasir” means “if threads collaborate, they can tie a lion”

“kandbirtuhuletmedanitu” means “two weak persons are better that one strong person”.
need to combine contemporary concepts on teacher-learning with the specific context in which a programme is to be launched. The current trend in teacher-learning promotes experience sharing, discussion, collaboration, and constructing own knowledge. Staff development programmes are expected to create an environment that facilitates involvement in such kinds of activities. In such environment, teachers are encouraged to learn continually. The Ethiopian tradition of cooperation and communal responsibility in various life circumstances is a good tradition that Ethiopian university teachers need to embrace. Currently these Ethiopian values are being neglected in the academic environment. Communities of practice could be a means to make use of these deep-rooted traditions as a tool to improve the practices of Ethiopian university teachers. Thus, in the CoUT, both were taken into account: (1) current trends in teacher-learning giving emphasis to collaborative learning, and (2) the Ethiopian tradition of cooperation and communal responsibility.

Implementation of the CoUT

While the first study was conducted in BDU and HU, for easier access to volunteer participants the follow-up study of the CoUT was undertaken in BDU only, where the author is a member of the staff. BDU was founded in 2000 as a merger of a teacher training college and a polytechnic institute which formed the faculty of education and the faculty of engineering respectively. Since its establishment, BDU has experienced massive expansions in its programmes, student enrolment and university teacher recruitment similar to other universities in the country. However, expansion could not be matched with well qualified teaching personnel: recruitment of less qualified personnel (both in subject matter and teaching-learning) was unavoidable. By 2006 its academic profile showed only 2.2% of the teaching staff had a PhD, 29.4% had a master’s degree, while 57% only had a bachelor’s degree (the rest, 11.4% had only finished a two years college training and served as technical assistants) (Bahir Dar University Academic Programmes Office, 2006). This, along with the lack of a teaching skills development program, had implications for the quality of university teachers. Thus, the author chose BDU as a research site, not only due to its ease of access to participants, but also because of major problems relating to staff development.

In addition to the outcomes of the study about induction experiences, results of another previous study the author conducted as part of her master’s programme at the University of Twente served as a basis to create a community of female teachers at BDU. This previous study concluded that female university teachers needed a community where they could share and discuss their teaching experiences for academic growth (Minwyelet, 2007). The author
invited female teachers of the University for discussion about establishing a CoUT in October 2008. More than 30 female university teachers attended and were asked if they were willing to participate in a community to discuss teaching-learning issues, practices and challenges with the aim of learning from each other. Two issues were identified: interest in English language improvement, as well as sharing the teaching-learning experience. The female university teachers proposed a bimonthly lunch meeting programme to improve English proficiency and a monthly meeting to share and discuss teaching-learning issues. The group agreed to start the English language improvement lunch meeting immediately. This was rescheduled as a weekly programme since it was thought that once a fortnight would not be sufficient for the intended purpose. The female university teachers thus met regularly once a week at lunchtime to discuss a host of issues in English. The monthly meeting on teaching-learning fared less well because they were busy with teaching tasks. The solution was to combine the two initiatives: discussing teaching-learning practices, experiences and challenges in the lunch meeting using English as medium. In so doing, members believed that they could kill ‘two birds with one stone’. Thus, the lunch meeting continued regularly in this new direction for two academic years.

In total thirty-two female university teachers participated in the CoUT of which nine participated for the whole two years, two participated for a year and a half, twelve participated for a year, and nine participated for half a year (see Table 1.2). Members were diverse in terms of their discipline (educational science, social science, natural science, agriculture and environmental science, business and economics, law, humanities, and computer science), their pedagogical orientation (some with no formal experience in teaching-learning concepts, some participated in induction programmes, and some teaching in the faculty of teacher education, i.e., passing through pre-service teacher education and the HDP), and teaching experience (ranging from 0-3 years). These diverse members had their own unique experiences, perceptions and ways of handling teaching-learning issues.

The CoUT was facilitated by the author, who has an academic background in educational science and five years of teaching experience in the university context. The facilitator

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2 This format was not totally abandoned and three months later, the group managed to have an effective off-campus monthly meeting where they could socialize, relax, and have fun while discussing matters relevant for their profession as well as social life. This monthly off campus meeting took almost 3-4 hours (including travel time) and gave female teachers an extended time to discuss and share their experience, problems, and feelings.
guided preparation of tasks, communicated with participants including regularly sending reminders, facilitated discussions, recorded individual participation and progress, motivated participants to be active in the meetings and attend regularly, and generally supported members to make more meaning out of the sharing and discussions by raising questions that encouraged them to think and reflect from different angles and perspectives. Questions to promote critical reflection were phrased as follows: Who has a similar or related experience? How did you manage to overcome or do it? What were your strategies? How do you evaluate your reactions to the problem? If you face a similar challenge, how will you handle it? What do you feel about it? What did you learn from the discussion? How can you use these new insights in your teaching? The author also became a participant giving comments, reflections, and feedback, as well as providing professional guidance and serving as a resource person.

Table 1.2 Number of CoUT members per semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Number of CoUT members</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1, Semester 1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9 left at the end of Semester 1, 14 passed to Semester 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1, Semester 2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14 from Semester 1 and 1 new member. 5 left at the end of Year 1, 10 passed to Year 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2, Semester 1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10 from Year 1 and 8 new members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2, Semester 2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Teacher learning in the context of the CoUT*

Three specific studies were conducted in the context of the CoUT. The first one was on how the group developed as a community of university teachers over the period of two years. The initial focus of the CoUT was sharing and discussing teaching-learning experiences, but the group also engaged in various other activities during the two years. The way the group developed into a community merited investigation since this impacted on what and how they learned, and how they made use of their learning outcome to improve their practice. This particular study was a prelude to subsequent research which dealt with the learning of university teachers from sharing and discussing teaching-learning experiences, and peer observation of teaching.

Secondly, the learning outcomes and learning strategies during involvement in sharing experiences and collegial discussions were explored: what and how the female teachers
learned from the collegial discussions within the CoUT. The third study focused on how peer observation, rooted in the CoUT, contributed to teacher-learning. After a year-long participation in the CoUT, members self-initiated a peer observation programme and observed each other’s teaching. They reflected on the observation experiences in the CoUT. The focus of this component of the study was thus on exploring how teacher community-based reflection on peer observation experiences influenced teacher-learning. By using the CoUT as a learning environment, it was possible to conduct three inter-related studies that have implications on how to enhance staff development initiatives, not only within this particularly community, but also in related contexts.

Research questions
The purpose of the study was to study experiences of participants in present staff development practices in Ethiopian universities by means of a community of university teachers with the aim of further enhancement of the quality of university staff. This translates into the general research question: How do female university teachers in an Ethiopian university develop by means of a community of university teachers?

The thesis addresses the following main research questions:
1. How do beginning university teachers experience an induction programme? (Chapter 2)
2. How does a group of female university teachers at an Ethiopian university develop as a community of university teachers? (Chapter 3)
3. What and how do female university teachers learn within their community? (Chapter 4)
4. How does reflection on peer observation experiences within the community support learning of female university teachers? (Chapter 5)

Methods
In the first study (Chapter 2), a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods were used to explore participants’ experiences in the induction programme. Participants’ reactions, learning and wishes were assessed using both open and closed questionnaires and interviews. Experiences in the use of new knowledge and skills in actual teaching were examined via a semi-structured interview. Hence, both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques were applied. The other three studies reported in Chapter 3, 4 and 5 used a case study approach and qualitative techniques. The study reported in Chapter 3 specifically fits with the characteristics of an ethnographical case study. Atkinson and Hammersley (2007) stated that in an
ethnographic study, the researcher participates in the day to day lives of the research participants for an extended period of time, listens to their talks, asks questions, and collects whatever data is important to elaborate and answer the research questions. Studying participants' action in a natural context, focusing on small scale, using participant observation data, and focusing on interpretation of the meanings of the human action are dominant features of an ethnographic approach. In the study reported in Chapter 3, interview and participant observation data was collected. The analysis of interviews and observation data aimed at discovering how the group of female university teachers developed as a community of practice. To this purpose a combination of the time-series analyses was used to trace changes in the development of the community over the specified time. Explanation building techniques explored causal links to explain the ‘how and why’ of the development of the community (Yin, 2009).

In the third study (Chapter 4), qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured individual interviews and small group interviews. The qualitative data was analysed using inductive thematic analysis in which recurrent themes are identified and thematically categorized for interpretation. In the fourth study (Chapter 5), peer observation discussion data and interviews with participants were the data sources. After identification of thematic categories from the qualitative data analysis, the pattern matching technique (Yin, 2009) was used, in which an empirically found theme is compared with a prediction based on theory.

**Significance of the study**

The main purpose of the study is to explore ways of enhancing university teacher development in Ethiopian universities. It explores empirically supported ways of staff development that can work in a context where staff development is just one of a number of pressing issues. It has both practical and theoretical implications. Given the pressing need to improve the quality of teaching-learning in the face of university expansion, the study must have practical outcomes. It does so in two ways: (1) by exploring modes of teacher learning and development (collegial discussion, peer observation and reflection in the context of the CoUT) and (2) by assessing the experiences of beginning university teachers in an induction programme and assessing the perceived impact of this programme on learning and practice. The lessons gained can contribute to enhancing the organization of university teacher learning programmes. The novel and innovative CoUT approach explores the possibilities, benefits and challenges of establishing university teacher communities. It provides empirically supported strategies to enhance learning in communities of teachers.
It is appropriate to give special attention to the needs of female university staff, given their under-representation amongst the staff and the challenges they face. Involvement of female university teachers in the CoUT, their professional growth, benefits gained and challenges faced can inform university management, faculties and departments how to organize and support female teachers. More generally it shows how a staff development programme (for either males or females) is enhanced by giving more autonomy to participants and the value of combining different strategies to enhance motivation. It also informs researchers and practitioners about the value of exploring the prior needs and wishes of university teachers to guide the design of staff development activities.

The study also has theoretical implications. It provides evidence about the problems of stand-alone inductions as a teacher development strategy and shows how to integrate these with other methods. It adds insights on how to organize teacher communities in the context of higher education and how to integrate different workplace learning strategies (observing others, reflecting on observation experiences, sharing and discussing experiences and giving and receiving peer feedback) for the development of knowledge and skills relevant to improve practice.

**Overview of the thesis**

The thesis is organized in six chapters including this first chapter. Chapter 2 is about experiences of beginning university teachers who participated in induction programmes at two Ethiopian universities. The purpose of the study was to find out the reactions, use of new knowledge and learning wishes of participants of the induction programme and to use the results to see if there are gaps that need to be addressed through further programmes. Chapter 3 focuses mainly on the development of the community of university teachers: how a group of female university teachers developed as a community of practice. Chapter 4 examines what and how members learned from the experience sharing and discussions within the CoUT. Chapter 5 deals with learning from group reflections on peer observation experiences. This chapter focuses on how, and to what depth, participants reflect on their peer observation experiences and how they perceived its effects on learning and practice. Chapter 6 presents a general discussion of results of the four studies. It also discusses limitations and implications of the study.
2. Induction of university teachers in Ethiopia³

Abstract
Massive expansion of higher education in contexts where there is very limited teaching personnel is a concern for developing countries. On the one hand, there is a need to improve access to higher education; on the other hand, there is a concern about the availability of qualified university teachers. In Ethiopia, massive expansion of higher education is triggering recruitment of less qualified personnel as university teachers and recruitment is done solely based on subject matter expertise; skills and knowledge about teaching-learning are not a requirement. In 2005, a NUFFIC (Netherlands Organisation for International Co-operation in Higher Education) funded project supported nine Ethiopian universities to set up academic development and resource centres (ADRCs) that primarily work on the professional development of university teachers. The ADRCs offer an instructional skills development programme for people starting as university teachers. This paper discusses the experiences and wishes of induction programme participants. A mixed method was used to collect data. Results indicate that, in general, participants experienced the induction programme positively and felt that they acquired valuable insights about their new career and developed confidence to teach; but participant disciplinary variation, the time they could invest, the depth of learning and transfer into practice were problematic. Implications for the continuous professional development of beginning university teachers are discussed.

Keywords: induction, training, professional development, university teacher

³ Submitted for publication as: A. Minwyelet, A. Swennen & J.J. Beishuizen, Massive expansion and teacher induction: The case of higher education in Ethiopia.
Introduction

The context

Ethiopia is an East African country with a population of more than eighty million, in which only 2.4% of the adolescent population joins higher education (World Bank, 2009). Until 1999 Ethiopia had just two universities: Addis Ababa University and Alemaya (now called Haramaya) University. Following developments that took place in higher education in the Western world over more than sixty years, higher education in Ethiopia only changed from elite universities into higher education for larger groups of students during the 2000s (Teshome, 2007). From 1999-2005, seven universities were founded, which together with the two older universities are now referred to as the ‘established universities’. Between 2006 and 2007, twelve further new universities were established. After 2007, ten additional new universities were launched and the country now has thirty-one public universities. There are also sixty-four accredited private higher learning institutions which account for 18% of the total enrolment of the country (Ministry of Education, 2010b). The rapid expansion in the number of public universities and private higher education institutions resulted in an increased student enrolment, from 62,944 in the academic year 2002/2003 (Ministry of Education, 2008) to 434,659 in 2009/2010 (Ministry of Education, 2010). This data shows that the enrolment in 2010 was almost seven times that of 2002.

Stakeholders are very conscious of the challenges of the massive expansion of higher education which requires university teachers with academic degrees and knowledge and skills to teach at a high level (Saint, 2004; World Bank, 2003). Next to the limited resources (Ashcroft, 2006; Yohannes, 2009), a shortage of qualified academic staff is one of the main problems of Ethiopian higher education (Fisher & Swindells, 1998; Saint, 2004; Wessenu, 2009; World Bank, 2003). The market could not provide adequate numbers of academic staff to fit in with the aggressive expansion of higher education. Although Ethiopian university legislation states that a master’s degree is the minimum requirement, to cope with the increasing number of students, universities have been recruiting under-qualified academic staff (Wessenu, 2009). At the national level, the statistics (Ministry of Education, 2008) show that more than half of the total university teachers in public universities in Ethiopia are inexperienced graduates with bachelor’s degrees and university teachers with PhDs make up below 10% of the total. This contradicts the national standards of: 30% PhDs, 50% masters and 20% bachelor degrees (Yohannes, 2009).
Besides lower level qualification, recruitment of novice university teachers is solely based on subject matter expertise; pedagogical knowledge and skills are not included in the requirements. Similar to their colleagues in the Western world (Beaty, 1998), most novice university teachers in Ethiopia know little about teaching or learning and lack teaching experience. The majority teaches without proper preparation and experience of teaching (Fisher & Swindells, 1998; Saint, 2004). These ill-prepared university teachers are expected to teach large groups of students of up to a total of at least four sections, each having 60-80 students. All this has to be accomplished in a context where there is very limited access to recent books, articles and other basic requirements (Yohannes, 2009). University teachers have very limited, and students even less, access to computers and online resources, which makes the teaching job of the university teachers very difficult. The implication of all these challenges is the necessity of supporting university teachers for qualification upgrading as well as teaching skills development (Saint, 2004; World Bank, 2003).

The Ethiopian government has been working on qualification upgrading through the expansion of graduate programmes in Ethiopia and through collaboration with other countries (like India and South Africa) in graduate programmes. However, attention to teaching skills improvement programmes is a recent phenomenon. The establishment of the academic development and resource centres (ADRCs) was the vital initiative. In 2005, a NUFFIC (Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education) funded a project that supported the ‘established universities’ in setting up ADRCs that work on the professional development (PD) of university teachers. The aim was to improve the quality of teaching and learning. With financial and technical support from the project, staff development experience-sharing visits were made, ADRC members of staff were trained, equipment was made available to facilitate the functioning of ADRCs and training materials were developed. Universities, in their turn, had to make physical space available, pay the salaries and/or allowances of ADRC staff, and cover training costs undertaken in the ADRCs. Instructional skill training (referred as induction programme in this article) is the main staff development initiative implemented in the ADRCs.

The induction programme
The induction programme was developed by teams of Ethiopian educational experts and a facilitator from the Netherlands. It incorporated three booklets: a facilitator guide, a learner activity guide and a reader for further reading. The reader booklet contained a kind of lecture note prepared by the experts; it was not a collection of articles or book chapters. A course and
a lesson planning format (that highlighted how to describe a course or lesson objective, content, method, etc.) were also included to serve as a guide for participants during practice. It was believed that such an organized booklet could be used to easily train the rapidly growing workforce of novice university teachers. The aim of the induction programme was to provide basic knowledge and skills about teaching and learning. The contents include teaching methods (with active learning in focus), assessing student learning (with continuous assessment in focus), course and lesson planning and classroom management. The induction programme focused on expert-based training, mostly facilitated by teacher-educators. Universities offer the induction programme for five consecutive full days. In the academic year 2007/2008, a blended delivery mode was practiced in Bahir Dar University. The induction programme was offered for half a day twice a week, which extended the programme into ten weeks. This was initiated based on the previous year’s participant feedback. The induction programme was offered on a voluntary basis for free, and a certification of attendance was offered in the end.

The present study used mixed methods in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected from two Ethiopian universities to examine the experiences of induction programme participants in the two modes of delivery (the intensive and the blended) and to explore their PD wishes. Results and implications are discussed on how to organize induction, and how to improve the PD of beginning university teachers.

Teacher development in higher education

There is an increasing pressure on university teachers to satisfy the needs of various stakeholders and to maintain academic standards despite increasing student diversity. Universities are expected to enable students to develop lifelong learning skills to adequately respond to workplace requirements and societal developments (Ramsden, 2003). To this end, university teachers are expected to have adequate knowledge about strategies that enhance learning, interpersonal skills to efficiently interact with diverse students and provide relevant feedback and reflective skills to learn from practice (Beaty, 1998; Nicholls, 2004). However, in most cases, university teachers lack these qualities because recruitment is based on subject matter expertise only (Beaty, 1998; Brancato, 2003). Unlike primary or secondary school teachers, most beginning university teachers lack initial training about teaching or learning and usually have little or no experience in teaching. Although Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) argue that “in a job that is inherently complex and difficult, everyone needs help, not just the incompetent teacher or the novice” (p. 53), beginning university teachers need more attention (Brancato, 2003; Van Velzen, Van der Klink, Swennen, & Yaffe, 2010).
Many universities in the Western world now have well established practices to induct novice university teachers and to support their development (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004; Hodkinson & Taylor, 2002). Inductions were found to be supportive for the development of university teachers in many ways. For instance, a study (Stes, Clement, & Van Petegem, 2007) indicated that a one-year training course for novice university teachers positively influenced teachers’ learning and practices. In this programme participants met for a day monthly, took application assignments to practice and brought experiences to the monthly meetings for reflection. A four week (with a three-hour session per week) training programme that focused on the development of teaching and learning concepts positively influenced teachers’ teaching practices and student learning (Ho, Watkins, & Kelly, 2001). Programmes for teachers in higher education about teaching skills and the learning of students not only improve university teachers’ teaching skills, practices and the learning of their students but also create a cultural change that motivates teachers to continuously develop their teaching (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004).

There are concerns about the effectiveness of training-focused inductions. Short training courses are not enough and are less effective at enabling novice university teachers to develop teaching skills (Isaacs & Parker, 1997; Ramsden, 2003). McKeachie (1997) argues that programmes that focus on more enhanced knowledge about the goals of education, course planning, and nature of teaching and learning are not very helpful to beginners and should be kept for later stages. University teachers, in their first year, need and would like to be involved in programmes that help them get ‘practical tips’ on ‘how to do various things’; for example about how to appear in class, how to maintain discipline, how to lecture, how to lead discussions, how to provide feedback and how to respond to student questions (Isaacs & Parker, 1997; McKeachie, 1997). These aspects are best dealt with in experience-based collaborative learning contexts instead of concept-focused trainings. Teachers are motivated to be involved in further learning opportunities after having developed basic competencies on ‘how to do things’ (McKeachie, 1997).

A study (Murray, 2008) about the induction programme of teacher educators in higher education also indicated the need to design a structural context that promotes learning from both formal as well as informal opportunities. The study of Stes et al. (2007) also showed the influence of contextual factors on the impact training courses have on the practices of teachers. This implies that creating a system that facilitates continuous learning from practice and colleagues is becoming important (Viskovic, 2006) to foster lifelong learning and development (Brancato, 2003; Trevitt & Perera, 2009). Especially in the context of universities,
teachers get most of the knowledge and skills relevant to their teaching from experiential interactions with different groupings in which they are formally or informally involved (Viskovic, 2006). Communities of practice could be used to upgrade these kinds of groupings, creating an environment to share experiences and discuss the practicalities of teaching-learning concepts (Laksov, Mann, & Dahlgren, 2008; Shulman & Shulman, 2004). By providing a venue for reflection on practice and theoretical issues, such learning environments enhance the construction of professional knowledge, skills and attitudes (Warhurst, 2006). Unlike courses, communities provide teachers with on-going learning opportunities inside and outside the workplace that can influence how and what they learn, what they need to know (Lieberman & Mace, 2008), and help them to build a learning culture for continuous improvement in practice (Gartia & Roblin, 2008; McCotter, 2001).

The present study focused on examining the reactions of participants in a training-focused induction programme offered to beginning university teachers from a different context, the Ethiopian. The Ethiopian context is distinctive in many ways: the majority of novice university teachers have only a bachelor’s degree, have just graduated and have no teaching or other job experience. These novices have to work in an environment where resources are extremely scarce; they do not have easy access to online resources that can be used for self-study to improve their knowledge about teaching. They even do not have adequate time to prepare themselves for their new career. For example, a civil engineer who just graduated and was recruited as a beginning university teacher is required to start teaching immediately after recruitment. That means that, due to the scarcity of teaching staff, fresh graduates are carrying the burden of being a teacher immediately after graduation without getting proper preparation time.

Studying the reactions and wishes of such participants provides valuable insights in the preparation of induction programmes to related contexts and helps to think of possible strategies for enhancing beginning university teacher learning.

Research questions
The main research questions addressed in this paper are:

1. How do Ethiopian university teachers appreciate a teacher induction programme? Is there a difference in appreciation based on duration of the induction programme (blended and intensive mode)?
2. How do Ethiopian university teachers use their newly acquired knowledge and skills in their teaching?
3. What are the wishes of Ethiopian university teachers related to professional development?

Method
This study used mixed methods in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected to examine the experiences of induction programme participants and explore their professional development wishes.

Participants
Data were collected from two Ethiopian universities (Bahir Dar University - BDU and Hawasa University - HU), from two cohorts of participants (academic years 2006/2007 and 2007/2008), and two modes of deliveries (the blended and intensive). The 2007/2008 cohort of BDU (29 participants) took the induction programme in a blended mode for ten weeks (bi-weekly half a day meetings); the others took it intensively in five consecutive full days. In total, 97 participants (48 from BDU, 49 from HU) responded to the questionnaire. The total number of participants involved in the induction programme in the two years was around 200, and the intention was to include as many participants as possible. The questionnaire was distributed in the training rooms on the last day of the induction programme of the 2007/2008 academic year, from which 69 participants responded; from the 2006/2007 cohort, only 28 participants were traced down via a door-to-door search in their departments. Others were on study leave and were not available to participate. Participants were from various fields of study (22 agriculture, 21 engineering, 7 medical science, 12 natural science and 30 humanities and social science). They also had different levels of qualification (63 bachelors, 29 masters and 2 PhD degree holders). Nine volunteer participants from the 2006/2007 cohort (four from BDU, five from HU) were interviewed. Seven of them had only bachelor’s degrees and two had master’s degrees; four interviewees were from natural sciences, three from engineering and two from social sciences. Selecting participants from the 2006/2007 cohort for interviews was made purposely. This was mainly to get answers to research question 2 (use of new knowledge to improve practice). As these participants were involved in the induction a year ago, the researcher believed that they are appropriate to provide data that can show the how of using new knowledge in practice. Although participants of the blended mode took the induction for ten weeks, the researcher thought that they may not be able to provide reliable data (about how they are using their new knowledge in their practice) due to the limited time they had to practice what they learned during the induction.
Instruments
A semi-structured interview scheme and a questionnaire were developed to collect data about participants’ reactions, participants’ learning, participants’ use of new knowledge and skills and participant wishes. These instruments were based largely on the work of Guskey (2000). Slight adaptations were made by including items about participant’s reactions, learning and wishes in both the questionnaire (which contained both closed and open questions) and the semi-structured interview (research questions 1 and 3). Experiences in the use of new knowledge and skills in actual teaching were examined via a semi-structured interview only (research question 2). Interviews were conducted face-to-face by the author. Seven interviews were audio-recorded and two interviews were not recorded as the interviewees were not willing, and notes were taken.

The questionnaire had closed-ended and open-ended items. The closed-ended items used a five scale rating. The questionnaire had three parts. Part one was about the participant’s background (example: field of study, level of qualification). Part two incorporated questions on participant evaluation of reading materials (example: how sufficient are the reading materials?), the facilitator (example: how effective was the facilitator to model good teaching?), process issues (example: how sufficient was the time allocated to perform the activities?) and learning (example: to what extent did the training enable you to understand how to use the new teaching and assessment methods in your classrooms?). Part three was about participant’s PD wishes (example: how would you like to learn in the future?). The open-ended questionnaire items focused on the most interesting learning outcome, most useful to the job, worries, appreciations, suggestions and wishes on what and how to learn. The instruments were evaluated and commented by two questionnaire design experts and improvements were made. University teachers in Ethiopia on the whole do not have easy access to computers and the internet connection is weak, if electricity is available at all. For these reasons it was not possible to test the outline for the interviews and the questionnaire with the target group.

Reliability was calculated for the subscales of the questionnaire and showed a high level of consistency (Cronbach’s alpha=.80 for quality of reading material; Cronbach’s alpha=.89 for quality of facilitators; Cronbach’s alpha=.77 for quality of process issues; and Cronbach’s alpha=.87 for learning and usefulness). The questionnaire was intended to provide an overview of participant experiences and wishes, whereas the interview aimed at exploring experiences and wishes in-depth.
Data analysis procedure

The closed-ended items of the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics to see the overall reactions; in this case, the data gained from all the participants of the two universities were considered as a whole. However, because participants from one of the universities (BDU) took the induction in two modalities (intensive and blended), comparison between participants of the Blended mode and participants of the intensive mode was made using the independent samples t-test. As the blended delivery mode was practiced in BDU only and the number of participants was small as compared to those who were involved in the intensive mode, the author did not want to present the data separately. Instead, the author preferred to give small part for it so that comparison between blended and intensive modes can be made to make some implications about time factor. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994) was used to analyse the qualitative data. A list of themes was derived from the text that participants wrote in response to the open-ended items; related themes were grouped into broader thematic categories and quantification was made regarding percentages of respondents who mentioned an issue related to the broader thematic categories. Interview data were also analysed in a similar way. Interview and open questionnaire data were analysed separately. Repeated reading of transcriptions led to identification of key words, phrases and themes. Related themes were grouped together into broader thematic categories. Then, the transcriptions were read again to check whether the broader categories validly reflected what had been described by respondents and to identify quotations that best described the broader thematic categories. Major themes identified from the analysis of the open-ended questionnaire and interview data were used to illustrate the results of the quantitative data. There was no big contradiction between the qualitative and quantitative data. But issues that were not explained well in the statistical data were more clearly visible in the qualitative data.

Results

The organization of the results section is based on the research questions: the experience of the participants with the induction programme, the way the participants use their new knowledge and skills in their teaching and the wishes of novice university teachers related to professional development.
2. Induction of university teachers in Ethiopia

The experience of the participants with the induction programme

In this part, the participants’ reactions to the quality of facilitators, reading material, process issues and usefulness of the induction programme are described.

Quality of facilitators. The quality of the facilitators was perceived positively (computed $M=4.19$); the facilitators were perceived as knowledgeable ($M=4.30$), well prepared ($M=4.26$), and that they modelled good teaching ($M=4.16$), communicated with participants effectively ($M=4.46$), effectively answered participant questions ($M=4.34$), provided relevant feedback ($M=4.14$) and addressed specific needs and situations of participants ($M=3.74$) (See Table 2.1). Responses to the open-ended questionnaire supported these findings; for example, 26.6% of the respondents to the open-ended items described the facilitators as effective in the use of interactive approaches that enabled participants to discuss their feelings. Other qualities of facilitators identified in the responses to open-ended items included knowledgeable (20.0%), experienced in teaching (18.0%), modelled good teaching (16%), well prepared (12.8%), capable of communicating easily (10.6%), good at listening to everyone equally and with tolerance (8.6%), punctual (7.4%) and friendly, efficient in providing feedback and dedicated to help trainees get something relevant (6.4% for each).

Table 2.1 Quality of facilitators (N=95)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The facilitators were</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well prepared</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modelled good teaching</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectively communicated with participants</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answered questions of participants</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided relevant feedback</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capable in addressing specific needs of participants</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computed mean</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, participants felt that facilitators did not always effectively address context-specific subject issues, problems and challenges ($M=3.74$) which is a recurrent theme in the qualitative data as well. Participants believed that facilitators lacked the knowledge about context-specific issues and disciplinary differences, thereby being unable to use practical cases and examples from each discipline. A respondent wrote “The training should be given within a
faculty to address more specific problems with real faculty specific examples”. Responses like “Please prepare a separate training for engineering instructors” were recurrent. Some even suggested “If possible, it is better to give the training by trainers from a related field with the trainees”. Some also clearly state: “I want to learn about teaching in a medical faculty because it is different from others”.

In the interviews too, the problem of not effectively addressing context-specific subject issues, problems and challenges of the participants was mentioned. Interviewee T, for instance, commented:

*The trainers rarely show how a certain method of teaching or assessment technique can be applied in the engineering faculty [...] I think, it will be good if faculty-specific or department-specific issues are considered.*

Although disciplinary issues were not emphasised during data collection instrument development, the results revealed that participants were not happy with the lesser attention given to disciplinary variation.

**Quality of reading materials.** Although the reading materials were regarded as understandable ($M=4.03$), helpful for practice ($M=3.97$) and useful for future reading ($M=3.78$), they were rated lower in incorporating context-specific examples ($M=3.34$) and sufficiency ($M=3.50$) (See Table 2.2). In response to open-ended questions, 15.3% of the participants described the need to focus on relevant practical examples instead of paying too much attention to concepts; 7% suggested that the reading material should be improved considering the current situation of Ethiopian universities and faculty-specific problems. The Activity Guide (which contains activities, cases and examples, etc.) was also described as one of the most interesting items of material by 24.4% of the respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The reading materials are</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understandable</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextualised</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful for practice</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful for future reading</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computed mean</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quality of process issues. Participants’ reaction to process issues were rated below the good level (4). Only two issues were rated good (clarity of objectives, $M=4.09$ and the learning environment, $M=3.99$); others are rated below good (variety of learning activities, $M=3.78$; time allocated for each learning activity, $M=3.41$; time allocated for the induction, $M=3.28$; holding participant interest, $M=3.76$).

Table 2.3 Quality of process issues (N=97)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear objectives</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varied learning activities</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient time for activities</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient time for induction</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective in holding interest</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate learning environment</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate refreshment</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computed mean</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lowest rated issue in the process category is training time. Only about half of the respondents positively rated the time allocated for each activity (55.7%, $M=3.41$) and for the whole programme (48.4%, $M=3.28$) (See Table 2.3). In the open-ended questions the shortage of time was also a worry for 16% of the participants and 20% of them suggested extending the time. Explanations like “The time was short; trainers try to cover all aspects in five days, it is better to make the duration longer” were recurrent. As reflected in the responses to open-ended items, problems with the schedule were also a recurrent worry (10%) and a suggestion (20%). The interviewed participants also described time and schedule as basic problems that hindered learning:

Shortage of time was a problem. The content of the training was broad but we took it in five consecutive days. The schedule was also not convenient. Attending it throughout the day was tiresome. It also affected our work [...] After the training, we were too busy in our teaching to cover lessons that should have been covered in the week of the training. (Interviewee T).

The dissatisfaction with time matter can be elaborated with a comparison with the blended and intensive delivery which indicated significant differences in reaction to the quality of facilitators ($t=2.79$, $p<.01$), process issues ($t=2.53$, $p<.03$) and learning and usefulness ($t=2.67$, $p<.02$). That is, the average score of participants of the blended mode was more pos-
itive than the average score of participants of the intensive mode in respect of quality of facilitators (blended mode: $M=4.5$, $SD=0.41$; intensive mode: $M=4.0$, $SD=0.68$), process issue (blended mode: $M=4.1$, $SD=0.67$; intensive mode: $M=3.6$, $SD=0.64$), and learning and usefulness (blended mode: $M=3.9$, $SD=0.46$; intensive mode: $M=3.5$, $SD=0.61$). The participants from the blended mode were more positive towards these aspects than the participants in the intensive mode. The blended delivery (two half days a week) extended the induction programme to a period of ten weeks. This can have implications for the participants’ concerns (like shortage of time and quitting their teaching for a week in an intensive delivery); participants may also have a chance of trying their learning in their teaching just after each half day session, which can possibly engage them in thinking about theory and practice. These and other possible reasons can perhaps positively influence the participants’ reaction to the blended delivery.

Learning and usefulness of the induction. Participants perceived learning and usefulness positively ($M=3.9$). They showed a positive reaction to the overall value ($M=4.0$), usefulness ($M=4.1$) and contents ($M=4.1$) of the induction. Adequacy of learning activities ($M=3.8$), participant understanding of concepts ($M=3.9$) and how to apply it in practice ($M=3.9$) were also rated close to the good level (4). The treatment of specific needs of participants ($M=3.7$) and applicability of learning outcomes ($M=3.7$) were rated lower (see Table 2.4). In the open questions, participants were asked to indicate the most interesting, most useful and least useful aspects of the course. The response indicated that the most interesting issues are sequenced as active learning (44.4%), assessment of student learning (40%), planning courses (30%) and classroom management (25.5%). The most useful for the job are sequenced as assessment (31.8%), classroom management (19.7%), planning (16.5%) and active learning (13%).

Although making students active is most interesting, it is last in the list of most useful to the job. Analysis of the interview and open questionnaire data shows that participants believed that practical use of the new knowledge was a problem. A participant wrote in the open questionnaire:

*The training does not make us competent teachers. It does not give the required competency but it gives a direction and somehow a certain improvement [...] Some aspects of the training are difficult to use in the classroom condition, it seems to work only within the right context and conditions.*
2. Induction of university teachers in Ethiopia

Table 2.4 Learning and usefulness (N=88)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The contents of the induction programme were interesting</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate learning opportunity were created</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant understood the concepts</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant understood how to use new learning in practice</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant-specific needs were addressed</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The induction programme was useful</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The learning outcomes are applicable</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall value of the induction</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computed mean</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although usefulness was an issue to interviewees as well, they described their overall impression positively. Interviewee A said:

_It is obvious. You are going to teach. You know the subject matter but you have no idea about how to present it. So the training not only gives this knowledge but also the confidence to work in an environment you were not trained to work in._

Interviewee BK also had a related belief: _“I was afraid of teaching. When I thought about standing in front of students, I was afraid. But after I took the pedagogy training [the induction], I developed self-confidence. It helped me perform better.”_. All in all, it is clear that the induction programme helped participants gain orientation about how to teach and created confidence to work in an entirely new profession though their teaching competence is still less developed.

_The way the participants use their new knowledge and skills in their teaching_

To examine how participants transferred their learning into practice, interviewees were asked to describe how they plan courses and lessons, make students active, assess learning and give feedback. The responses indicated that all the participants used the course plan format provided, along with the induction programme readers, to plan their courses, but most of them did not prepare session plans. Interviewee B said:

_I use the course plan format as a guide to plan my course. I also make a plan on topics that I should cover in a week. But it doesn’t always go as planned. The nature of students affects it._
This respondent seems to focus on content coverage. If students easily understand contents, they can cover them within the planned schedule; otherwise, he has to spend more time to support student learning. On the other hand, hardly any of the interviewees used active learning methods efficiently. The phrases “as much as possible, I try to…but” were recurrent. Interviewee A, for instance, described students’ lack of interest as an obstacle:

Most students do not like active learning. I teach statistics courses, mostly you have to work on calculations and proofs. Students want every calculation to be done by me so that they can rehearse for exams.

Time pressure also hindered implementation of active learning strategies. Interviewee T described his experience as:

Sometimes, students work together on worksheets, sometimes they discuss together. Because I learned [in the induction] and believe that students understand a topic better and are interested when it is related to a real world situation, I try to connect each topic to its practical aspects. I give great attention to the question: do my students understand the topic? But I am not implementing the major active learning strategies [...] if I try to use active learning methods, I cannot finish the course.

Interviewee G (who was a secondary school teacher before he became an academic) has a different experience:

Especially for mature students [third year], I present some chapters and students present some of the chapters. I only give a summary after their presentation. In my teaching, I use jokes related to the topic. I ask students to discuss on the main point of the joke, and then about what they learn from the joke, finally I give a conclusion.

Interviewee G is also aware of the difficulty of using active learning methods with first and second year university students, as his practice focused on third years. In relation to the assessment of student learning, exams were the dominant way of doing so. The interviewees described the difficulty of using the various continuous assessment strategies they had learned because of large class sizes. Interviewee M described his practice as:

Sometimes, I use an assignment, a mid and a final exam. Mostly, I use a mid and a final exam only. I am not applying continuous assessment. I have more than fifty students in a class. How can I assess them continuously? [...] I never used self-assessment and peer-assessment. It is not being used. If you ask students to mark their own work, they will not be genuine.

An important thing observed from the responses to assessment issues is that interviewees did not differentiate assessment for learning and assessment for grades. That might also have had
implications on use of the different strategies. All the interviewees indicated that they did
give feedback to their students, but not as an intentional tool to improve student learning.
Interviewee A said:

*I cannot say I didn’t give feedback or students can’t give feedback to each other. It is
normal to give and take feedback. But I do not think I did it intentionally. When stu-
dents work on calculations, they share comments and I also give comments and sugges-
tions on their performances.*

In general, participants were not able to efficiently practice the new knowledge and skills
they had learned during the induction. They believed that the course content, the time allocat-
ed to it and student preferences were not in line with the demands of introducing active learn-
ing or continuous assessment. Participants attributed their failure to use new knowledge in
their teaching to external factors (such as course content, time and the students) and to their
opinion that the induction programme was insufficient to develop competence in teaching-
learning skills. They also felt that making a change was difficult:

*I can’t reduce the number of students in my class; I can’t reduce the contents of the
course. The only thing I did was compromise. For example, it would be good if I gave a
quiz for each chapter. But I gave only one. Something is better than nothing. (Inter-
viewee T)*

The wishes of novice university teachers related to professional development
Participants revealed a positive desire to learn from collaboration with colleagues (M=4.39,
SD=.77), felt that learning from each other is vital in improving teaching (M=4.67), and indi-
cated wishes to learn via strategies like professional networks (M=4.31, SD=.85) and study
groups (M=4.16, SD=.88). Interviewees were also very much interested in continuous discus-
sions about the experiences of induction programme trainees and how they are trying to im-
prove teaching. They particularly focused on providing follow-up PD programmes that deal
with everyday experiences and challenges.

Data from open questions showed a related result. Participants preferred training with longer
duration that can ensure better learning (20.6%) and they wanted to share, discuss and learn
from each other’s teaching-learning experiences (27.8%). They wanted to have opportunities
to reflect on their teaching (20.6%). Discipline-focused PD programmes were also wanted
(18.6%) to adequately address how to teach a specific discipline. Participants also believed
that PD programmes scheduled in a way that did not force participants to quit their teaching
sessions would be much welcomed (19.6%). The contents of the induction programme were
appreciated and a deeper understanding of them was wanted (64.0%); interest in research methods (8.2%) and curriculum development issues (6.2%) were also identified. In general, it is possible to infer that continuous PD programmes that help beginning university teachers develop their knowledge and skills about teaching-learning concepts and practices seem to be welcomed (Table 2.5).

Table 2.5 Participants’ professional development wishes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wishes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Respondents %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General issues (N=85)</td>
<td>Longer duration training</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PD programmes scheduled in free time</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discipline-specific PD programmes</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continuous learning opportunities</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method (N= 75)</td>
<td>Experience sharing discussion (learning from each other)</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practice and reflection on practice</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refresher training once or twice a year</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content (N=84)</td>
<td>Contents of the induction programme in depth</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research method</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curriculum development</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion and implications

This study examined the induction programme experiences and learning wishes of beginning university teachers. The results indicate that participants acquired valuable insights about their new career, developed confidence to teach and appreciated the access to experienced facilitators. However, there were concerns about the highly conceptual approach of the induction, the lack of practical tips, insufficient attention to disciplinary variations and shortage of time. The positive reaction towards the blended mode of the induction programme (two half days a week that continue for ten weeks) compared to the intensive delivery (five full consecutive days) supports the concern about shortage of time. Transfer of learning outcomes into practice was also problematic due to contextual factors and limited learning. Participants felt that the induction programme mainly focused on orienting about the concepts of good teaching, without addressing how those concepts can be transferred into practice in a specific (disciplinary) context. A desire to participate in a programme that provides a continuous learning opportunity, particularly experiential learning that may address specific situations and needs, was also identified.
The first research question was about how Ethiopian university teachers appreciate a teacher induction programme. The results focused on participants’ experiences and reactions to the quality of facilitators, reading material, implementation processes, and learning and the usefulness of the induction. Results show that beginning university teachers appreciated having facilitators with adequate knowledge about teaching-learning, skills to model what is preached, skills to communicate and readiness to provide feedback to questions, worries and misunderstandings. This indicates that in a context where beginning university teachers are less prepared for their new career, access to more experienced and role model university teachers in the form of facilitators of training courses was a great help. There was also a positive outcome about the conceptual reading materials offered, which were perceived as a good future reference. As the context caused participants to have very limited access to books, articles and online resources that can be used for self-study purposes, they need relevant literature about teaching-learning.

The study also showed that the diversity of induction programme participants in terms of discipline was not treated very well. Facilitators were not able to make the induction programme fit to every discipline’s specific situation, which created gaps; suggestions to prepare discipline-specific inductions were recurrent. This concern coincides with arguments about PD programmes’ insufficient focus on teaching culture differences across disciplines (Belcher, 1994; Malcolm & Zukav, 2001; McGuiness, 1997; Neumann, 2001). The need to concentrate on giving practical tips rather than focusing on theories and concepts was also a central issue. This supports studies of Isaacs and Parker (1997) and McKeachie (1997) which showed that university teachers in their first year of teaching prefer to get practical tips on how to do things. Providing a lot of concepts or theories cannot be valuable unless they are specifically related to their daily teaching practices (Guskey, 2002). Studies have indicated that exposing beginning teachers to situations that provide practical tips are relevant to encourage transfer (Brancato, 2003); this is related to the value of practical, experiential knowledge (Viskovic, 2006).

The second research question of the study targeted an examination of the transfer of learning outcomes from the induction programme into the practices of beginning teachers. The results showed that transfer is a problem even at perceptual level. For instance, when participants were asked to rank the most interesting things they learned, they picked active learning methods first; but they put it last in the list of the most useful topics for practice. This implies that participants have a positive view of the concepts of active learning, but they think they still miss the skills to apply these concepts or the context of the university makes it
impossible for them to implement active learning methods in their courses. The experiential results also indicated that transfer is problematic for two reasons: depth of learning and contextual factors. The concerns of the participants about the inadequacy of induction programme time have implications on their learning. Participants felt that broad contents were covered in a short period of time. That was not helpful in enabling them to adequately understand the concepts. Due to the time factor, participants were not able to practice the introduced methods, at least not during the induction programme. This has implications to the experienced transfer challenges. Previous studies (Ho et al., 2001; Stes et al., 2007) indicated that training events brought changes in the practices of novice university teachers. These studies, however, were organized in a blended form. Especially in the second study (Stes et al., 2007), for a year, face-to-face contact was made once a month and participants were given practical assignments that they could try in their teaching and on which they could reflect during the monthly session. This kind of arrangement has an impact on the depth of learning and contributes to transfer.

The present study also shows that contextual factors take the lion’s share in the transfer challenges. First, it was difficult to introduce new methods (like active learning or continuous assessment) in a context where traditional methods of teaching and assessment are customary. Students showed a lack of interest towards the new methods because they didn’t experience these methods. It would have been good to train senior staff about active learning and continuous assessment and start introducing the strategies to the students. For beginning teachers, it created dual challenges: they have to practice teaching and they have struggle with student disinterest in the new approaches. This negatively influenced the transfer of learning into practice. The second contextual factor was the dilemma between content coverage and teaching based on what had been preached (for example using active learning methods). The beginning teachers felt that the breadth of the course content did not go in line with the demands of using active learning in terms of time. Third, large class size was also a concern. For example, there were concerns about how one could continuously assess the learning of hundreds of students and how one could use active learning methods while teaching in large classes. The results showed that the induction programme mainly focused on orienting participants about the concepts of good teaching. Doing this without addressing how the concepts of good teaching can be transferred into practice in a specific context took the beginning teachers nowhere near to achieving the intended objectives, improving teaching. Thus, dealing with contextual factors that may hinder transfer needs to be part of the induction programme process. The study by Stes et al. (2007) also showed that transfer was influenced by
The third research question focused on identifying the learning wishes of beginning university teachers in Ethiopia. The results indicated that participants had positive desires to learn from experiences. It seems that because participants felt that the conceptual training was too much to be transferred into practice, they preferred to focus on experiential learning opportunities. This outcome indicated the need for programmes that go beyond short training to enhance on-going learning (Gartia & Roblin, 2008; McCotter, 2001). As discussed in much of the literature on teacher learning (for example, Beaty, 1998; Guskey, 2000), learning that leads to effective teaching is difficult to achieve in a short period of time. It requires continuous improvement of oneself (Brancato, 2003). The present study also indicated the need to focus on arranging learning opportunities that guarantee on-going development and bring a shift in the culture. The worries and challenges about the transfer of knowledge into actual teaching may indicate the need to provide continuous support to gradually minimise the problems of beginning university teachers. On-going collegial support, in which participants of the study wished to be involved in, could be a tool (Brancato, 2003; Trevitt & Perera, 2009).

In short, the study indicated that induction programmes are essential to orient beginning university teachers to their entirely new career. But such PD programmes cannot guarantee adequate development and change in practice. When contextual variables (like the ones experienced by Ethiopian beginning university teachers) are added, transfer will be a difficulty. Participants’ positive perception towards the blended mode of the induction programme has implications even on how to organize inductions. It can be predicted that in the intensive mode (five full days program), facilitators may rush to cover contents; participants could feel tired and the possibility of relating what they are learning to their classroom situation could be limited. However, in the blended mode (half a day meeting twice a week), facilitators could facilitate with less rush; participants could attend it without being tired, and could have more chance to try what they learnt in their own teaching and get better opportunities to discuss their classroom experiences. These could lead to better learning and enhance motivation to transfer. The literature encourages integration of short training events with a quality follow up via mentoring, a community of learners or other collaborative strategies (McKeachie, 1997; Ramsden, 2003) to bring efficient change in practice. This implies that, as Warhurst (2006) argued, creating a venue that enhances sharing and reflection on concepts, theories and their practicalities (based on experience) is an important next step to supporting on-going learning (Lieberman & Mace, 2008).
One of the limitations of the study was the sample size (data collected from two universities, out of the nine universities that implemented the induction). In addition, the fact that the questionnaire was administered to the participants of the 2007/2008 cohort on the last date of the induction might be problematic. The reactions of participants might have changed in the period after the induction. It might have been better to administer the questionnaire after some time to compare their views. However, within the tight schedule of the research programme, it was not possible to postpone or repeat the administration of the questionnaire to the participants of the 2007/2008 cohort. The researcher had to return to the Netherlands after collecting the data and online communication with participants was not a possibility in that particular context of the study. Another limitation was reliance on participant reports (researchers were unable to observe classroom practices). Collecting data from more universities and including classroom observation data could have enriched the study. The positive aspect is that participants were from various disciplines, which resulted in interesting outcomes (like the issue of disciplinary differences). Even with this limited scope, the study highlighted that the induction programme has had a positive impact in providing survival tips and the confidence to teach to novice university teachers. Concerns on the depth of learning, disciplinary differences, shortage of time and transfer issues were identified. Future research needs to closely examine what strategies would enhance beginning university teacher learning and the transfer of learning outcomes into practice. Taking into consideration the increased recruitment of less qualified academic staff due to higher education expansion in Ethiopia, mass training looks straightforward. But the mass training approach was not effective in achieving the objectives of staff development or improving the quality of teaching. This implies the need to devise another way. In Ethiopian society, where collaboration in social life is a prominent culture, collaborative PD strategies could be assets for university teacher development and need to be focus areas for research. This study led to the establishment of a community of university teachers in which teachers continuously learn from each other’s experiences. The development of the teacher community and teacher learning in this context are studied and results are reported in the subsequent chapter.
3. The development of a teacher community in higher education

Abstract
The present study describes how a group of women university teachers in Ethiopia developed as a community of practice during two years of continuous meetings. Using an ethnographic case study approach, data were gathered through participant observation and open interviews with core members. To describe the development of the community the data were analysed by applying time-series analysis and explanation building techniques. The results of the study showed that the early phase of teacher community development is the most challenging. The following factors positively influenced the community’s development: member identification and addressing members’ priority domain, the experience of a key incident that exhibited the practical relevance of participation and catalysed the evolution of a sense of identity, domain flexibility that led to involvement in diverse relevant tasks and a facilitator with adequate commitment, skill and time. Implications of the study are discussed.

Keywords: Teacher community, higher education, women university teachers

Introduction
Influenced by the concept of communities of practice in which ‘learning, thinking, and knowing’ are considered the results of active participation in the socio-cultural context (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), recent advances in teacher development have focused on collegial interactions (Hardy, 2010; Warhurst, 2006) in which practice and experience serve as learning resources (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). Research shows that by exchanging knowledge, members of a community of practice develop professional knowledge, skills, attitudes and rules that belong to the profession (Wubbels, 2007). While knowledge about

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what communities are is increasing, however, how teacher communities develop has not been well studied (Downer, Mandau, & Clifton, 2008).

The present research describes how a group of women in Ethiopia developed as a community of university teachers (CoUT) over a period of two years. This study is part of a larger research project that consists of four empirical studies. The first is a study of the participants’ views about an induction programme for beginning university teachers, the impact of this programme and the perceived learning needs of the participants. The main outcomes of this study (limited learning, transfer challenges and the need for follow up programmes) led to the establishment of the CoUT described in this article.

Table 3.1 A brief description of activities undertaken in the context of the Community of University Teachers (CoUT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly lunch meeting (at workplace for an hour)</td>
<td>Sharing and discussing teaching-learning experiences</td>
<td>Discussions carried out in English for language improvement, done for two years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection on peer observation experiences</td>
<td>Discussion on group research progress</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly off-campus meeting (for 3 hours)</td>
<td>Discussion of social and academic matters and practicing communicative English</td>
<td>Gathering to socialize, continued for two years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bimonthly secondary school meeting (for 3 hours)</td>
<td>Supporting secondary school girls (in English language improvement, study skills, confidence building)</td>
<td>Gave members more time to interact, done for 1.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled meetings</td>
<td>Doing group research</td>
<td>Plenty of opportunities for knowledge and skills development in research and teaching, year 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducting peer observations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social events like celebrating birthdays of members’ children</td>
<td>Enhanced opportunities for socialization, done for 1.5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The CoUT consisted of 32 female university teachers who volunteered to participate, and was facilitated by the author. The focus of the CoUT was to share and discuss teaching-learning experiences (see Chapter 4 for details about teacher learning from collegial discussion within the CoUT). As group interaction developed, the female university teachers engaged in various activities during the two years they were in contact (see Table 3.1). The present study examines how the female university teachers developed as a community of practice. This
study adds to the understanding of how teacher communities grow (Downer et al., 2008), as the development of teacher communities has not been well studied yet.

**Position of women university teachers**

Women university teachers work predominantly in lower positions, are less frequently promoted to higher positions, are hardly found in senior leadership positions, are less involved in teaching ‘hard sciences’ and are less involved in research than male university teachers (for experiences in the UK see Bagilhole, 1993; Forster, 2000; Mavin & Bryans, 2002; in Canada, see Acker & Feuerverger, 1996; and in Australia, see Lafferty & Fleming, 2000). The consequences of these characteristics are that women tend to work more individually, experience less support from their female and male senior colleagues and feel less confident about gaining success (Acker & Feuerverger, 1996; Bagilhole, 1993). Even more than their colleagues in the developed world, women university teachers in developing countries such as Ethiopia have a lower status in the university than their male counterparts. The present situation of women university teachers in Ethiopia is quite similar to that described in the Western world in the 1980s and 1990s: The proportion of women university teachers is less than 10%; moreover women occupy lower academic positions (Ministry of Education, 2008) and receive little support for academic development (Minwyelet, 2009).

Women university teachers participate less in formal and informal networks than their male colleagues (Bagilhole, 1993; Forster, 2000). Mavin and Bryans (2002) argued that the participation of women university teachers in networks (in the UK) reduces the challenges that women encounter at the beginning of their career and enhances career development. According to these authors, networks provide women university teachers with an environment that supports the exchange of information about work-related issues and helps in the development of confidence to take action. A study of Malaysian female university teachers by Ismail and Rasdi (2007) also revealed that networks facilitate exchange of information, professional support and encouragement and collaboration. Moreover, Quinlan (1999) argued that women university teachers’ networks are a means to connect with influential and experienced members, gain psychological support for unique career challenges and understand local and professional norms, expectations, relationships and resources.

**Characteristics and development of communities of practice**

In the literature, the terms network and community of practice are used interchangeably. Some scholars use network in its broader sense to include international linkages (Ismail &
networks are also associated with using social media to facilitate interaction and sharing. Other scholars use the concept *networks* to address institution-based collaborations, for example, women university teachers meeting on a regular basis to share experiences and solve problems in everyday academic life can be categorised as a network (Mavin & Bryans, 2002). This is equivalent to Wenger’s (1998) idea of *communities of practice*. According to Wenger (2011), a network is a “set of relationships, personal interactions, and connections among participants, viewed as a set of nodes and links, with its affordances for information flows and helpful linkages”, whereas a community of practice is the “development of a shared identity around a topic that represents a collective intention…to steward a domain of knowledge and to sustain learning about it” (paragraph 3). In both network and community, interaction and sharing of knowledge is important. However, communities of practice are different in that groups of people who have a common interest in an area interact regularly and make an intentional commitment to one another’s development; in sharing information, experiences, insights and tools, members of a community of practice develop collegiality, collaboration, dialogue and discussion that advance practice (Laksov, Mann, & Dahlgren, 2008; Warhurst, 2006; Wenger, 1998). The shared identity and intentional commitment to advancing practice is unique to communities. However, by creating flexible, innovative and collaborative learning environments, networks present the potential for establishing a community of practice (Lieberman, 2000; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). In the present study, the phrase teacher community is used to refer to a community of practice that involves university teachers.

Being together enables community members to know from whom and how to obtain support to solve problems quickly; communities provide “not only the golden eggs but also the goose that lays them” (Wenger & Snyder, 2000, p. 143); this has a stimulating power (Wubbels, 2007). Thus, scholars encourage embedding academic development into practices via communities of practice (Hardy, 2010; Warhurst, 2006). However, “because its primary “output”- knowledge - is intangible” (Wenger & Snyder, 2000, p. 140), it is difficult to easily recognise the immediate relevance of a community of practice.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) mention that the development and productivity of a community of practice depends on how members address “negotiating the agenda, sharing power and decision making, representing the work of the group, and dealing with the inevitable tensions of individual and collective purposes and viewpoints” (p. 295). According to Wenger et al. (2002), the development of a community of practice has three broad phases. The early phase includes looking for potential members, launching the community and work-
3. The development of a teacher community in higher education

ing towards developing member relations and valuing participation. The maturity phase focuses on identifying participants’ new learning needs, and working to sustain, institutionalize and link to external partners. The last phase is the dying phase, which sometimes involves the formal closure of the community; a community may also die slowly because of losing members or resources. Lockhorst, Van der Pol and Admiraal (2008) considered three stages: Beginning (the group is initiated and starts shaping), Evolving (being conscious, development of group activities) and Mature (shared and focused process). The development of communities of practice is elaborated in three key dimensions: shared domain (problems/interest/goals and commitment to the domain), group identity (trust, responsibility and social ties) and interactional repertoire (role taking, dynamic effort and regulations of interaction). These dimensions can be used to assess the development of a community of practice at the different stages (Lockhorst et al., 2008).

Becoming successful in the first two or three phases of a community of practice is a difficult task (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It is necessary to deal properly with basic success factors (Wenger et al., 2002). Based on the literature, the following critical success factors are identified. Member identification is crucial. The term implies bringing together people with shared challenges, who have a genuine interest in each other, value each other’s qualities and engage in real dialogue about the issue (Lave & Wenger, 1991; McDermott, 2000). Members do not all contribute equally to the community; those whose contribution have a large impact on the group are often referred to as the core group. The existence of a core group of active members contributes to the success of the community (Wenger et al., 2002). Topic relevance is another key issue, and refers to the importance of identifying timely, practical, and everyday experiences for sharing and discussion (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). Leadership is also vital: Having a facilitator, who is knowledgeable and passionate about the community’s topic, has enough time and exhibits good interpersonal skills contribute a lot to the group as a whole (Wenger et al., 2002). Lastly, social forums involve the creation of an environment in which members interact, think together and build connections (Lave & Wenger, 1991; McDermott, 2000), and these also enhance success. Integrating these factors efficiently can foster the development of communities of practice.

The present study

The present study focuses on examining the development of a teacher community in a university context. As discussed above, teacher communities of practice theoretically create rich learning environments. However, how teacher communities develop and how they can be
3. The development of a teacher community in higher education

supported has not been clearly evidenced. Although scholars (for example, Wenger et al., 2002) have developed a conceptual understanding of the development and cultivation of communities of practice, there is little empirical evidence that explains the development of teacher communities (Dooner et al., 2008; Lockhorst et al., 2008). In the present research, a particular case is used to further cultivate the idea of teacher community development. Female university teachers’ experience is used as a case to illustrate the development of a teacher community and factors that contribute to the development of a particular dimension (shared domain, group identity and interactional repertoire) at the three stages in the growth of a community of practice (Lockhorst et al., 2008).

The research questions that guide this study are as follows:
1. How does a group of Ethiopian females develop as a community of university teachers?
2. What factors contribute to the development of a particular dimension (shared domain, group identity and interactional repertoire) in a particular phase (early phase, evolving phase, maturity phase) of the community of university teachers?

This study can be characterised as an ethnographic case study (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007; Yin, 2009). A group of female teachers in an Ethiopian university participated in the CoUT for two years. Qualitative data (via participant observation and interviews with core members) were collected and analysed to describe the development of the community. The importance of the development of the three dimensions (domain, identity and interactional repertoire) in the context of Ethiopian female university teachers is explicated.

Method

General description of the methods of the three studies
In this section, a general description about participants of the studies (reported in chapters 3, 4, 5), the data collection instruments used, and the data analysis procedure is presented. Specific details are presented in each chapter.

Participants
The CoUT had 32 members, aged between 22 and 35. These members joined the CoUT at different times (see Table 1.2 of Chapter 1). Twenty-three of them joined the CoUT after attending the introductory workshop (as described in the introduction of this thesis), whereas 9 members joined because of invitations by existing members. All members decided to join
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The development of a teacher community in higher education on their own initiative. As described in chapter 1, in the first four months of the CoUT, nine members dropped out. Only a total of 20 members were able to stay in the CoUT for a year and above. Members who participated for half a year were excluded from the study on the assumption that valid data may not be gained as they may have left the CoUT too early. The data for the studies reported in this thesis were collected from twenty participants. All participants had 0-3 years teaching experience when they joined the CoUT. Except for engineering and medical sciences, participants from all academic disciplines were included. The CoUT originally had two members from the engineering department, but they dropped out too early; why they left is not known. Pseudonyms were used to identify participants. Nine participants (Kiki, Melat, Lily, Meti, Saron, Amsal, Kelem, Alem, Senay) were involved in the CoUT for the entire two years. In the second year of the CoUT, ten participants (Lily, Meti, Saron, Amsal, Kelem, Alem, Senay, Etsub, Serke and Wosen) were involved in peer observation of their teaching.

The author of this study served as facilitator of the community for the whole period. She studied Educational Science and worked at the same university as the participants for five years. In order to understand her role, some information is provided about the interaction between the facilitator and the community of university teachers. Possible consequences of the double role of the author as researcher and facilitator will be discussed later on. The facilitator guided the sharing and discussion processes. When someone brought a problem to the fore, the facilitator raised related questions, such as ‘Is there anyone who faced similar or related problems? How did you solve it? If you face a similar problem, how will you tackle it?’ After the discussions, questions like ‘What did you learn from the discussion? Did you get enough insights to solve the problem? How can you use it?’ were raised.

**Instruments**

Semi-structured interviews (chapters 3, 4, and 5), focus groups (chapter 4), participant observations (chapter 3), and audio records of peer observation based discussions (chapter 5) were used as data sources for the studies. Each interviewee was interviewed once. Interviews with four participants (Enat, Semira, Sewnet and Workie) were made at the end of year one because they had to drop out from the CoUT due to education leave. Other interviews were made around the end of year two. Questions related to learning from collegial discussions in the context of the CoUT were issues every interviewee was asked. Additional issues were addressed depending on the interviewee’s involvement. For example, for participants who were involved in the CoUT for the entire two years, questions related to the development of
the CoUT were included (the data along with the author’s experiential data as facilitator and participant observer in the CoUT was used to describe the development of the CoUT which is reported in this chapter). For participants who were involved in peer observations, questions related to peer observation were added and the outcome was used to supplement the analysis of the audio records of peer observation based discussions (chapter 5). All the interviews were made in Amharic, the Ethiopian lingua-franca. Small group interviews were used to elicit data about participant view, as a group, about learning in the context of the CoUT (elaborated in chapter 4). The author, who was also the facilitator of the CoUT, conducted the individual interviews as well as the interviews with the small groups. In general, the interviews lasted between thirty minutes and one and half hour. All but three interviews were audio-recorded. Three interviews were not recorded due to technical problems with the audio recorder. The interviewer took notes during all interviews.

Data analysis procedure

The specific procedure used to analyse the interview data is described because interview data were used in the three chapters (analysis of data gained from other sources is described in the specific chapters). The interview data were analysed using the inductive thematic analysis approach, which consists of identifying a list of themes in the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The audio interview data were transcribed. Transcripts were read repeatedly. In the first reading, responses of each participant for each question were identified and organized. The second reading led to identifying key words, phrases and themes raised in responses to each question. From this list, related themes were grouped together into broader thematic categories. Transcriptions were read again to check if the broader categories validly reflected what had been described by interviewees and to identify quotations that best described the broader thematic categories. This helped to rephrase and reorganize the thematic categories until a more convincing categorization was achieved. In thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), frequency may not be the only indicator of a theme; the researcher’s judgment is important; whether the issue “captures something important in relation to the overall research question” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.82) is also a criterion to make a decision. In this study, the three criteria were considered. Themes that were mentioned by a small number of participants were included when they were deemed crucial in relation to the research questions. The results of the interview data analysis were used in the three chapters depending on their focus. Results related to the development of the community were used in chapter 3, results that focus on learning in the context of the CoUT.
were used in chapter 4 and results that addressed participants’ views about peer observation are used in chapter 5.

Specific description of the method of chapter 3

Participants
As described above, interview questions that focus on the development of the community were raised during interviews with nine participants (see Table 3.2) who participated in the CoUT for the entire two years and can be considered the core group (Wenger et al., 2002).

Table 3.2 Participant characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Teaching experience</th>
<th>Discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kiki</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melat</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meti</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Language &amp; literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lily</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senay</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelem</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saron</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alem</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Language &amp; literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amsal</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Language &amp; literature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instruments
Wenger and Snyder (2000) argued that “listening to members’ stories” (p. 145) is a good strategy when it comes to understanding the complex development of a community. Thus, participants were asked about these issues:

- How did they join the group?
- What motivated them to join and to continue participating?
- What did they initially experience?
- What changes did they observe over time?
- What challenges did they face?
- What factors contributed to sustaining the group for two years?

In addition to the interview data, the author’s experiential data as facilitator and participant observer was also used. During the two years the author had close interaction with the participants, formally or informally, and was taking field notes. It should be noted that although these roles and occasions gave the author the opportunity to note members’ stories, experi-
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ences, feelings and concerns in a natural setting, it has also disadvantages in that the observer’s perspectives might have influenced the process of observation and how events are understood.

Data analysis procedure
The analysis of interviews and observation data aimed at discovering how the group of women university teachers developed as a community. To this end, a combination of time-series analysis - to trace changes in the development of the community over the specified time - and explanation building techniques - to explore causal links explaining the how and why of the development of the community (Yin, 2009) - was used. First, the reading of field notes enabled identification of key actions and incidents experienced during the two years. This helped to focus on major events that could be related to the stages of the community development model (Lockhorst et al., 2008): the early phase (looking for potentials and incubation), the evolving phase (a transitional period in which the community showed something new) and the mature phase (identifying new learning needs). Based on the field notes, a narrative account of what happened at each phase was generated (Latta & Kim, 2010) which led to identification of features of the development of the community at each stage and how and why those features were experienced.

As described in the previous subsection of the method part of this chapter, inductive thematic analysis of interview data enabled identification of themes about how participants perceived the development of the CoUT. Thus, major themes identified from the analyses of interviews and observation data were integrated and interpreted. Summaries of stories from the notes were also used to provide a context connecting interpretations and meanings to events. It is important to note that the author’s experience as facilitator and participant observer influenced the story discussed in this chapter because the interpretation of stories and events can be influenced by the authors understanding, perspective, and views. The transcription of the interview data and the subsequent thematic analysis has been conducted in a systematic and transparent way, which allows for replication. However, it was decided not to involve a second reviewer (on issues related to the development of the community) to verify the reliability of the data analysis. The author believed that understanding and interpretation of the interview data (related to development of the community) was influenced by the author’s experiential data gained because of her facilitator and participant observer role. It was believed that this would have made the conditions for a second judge completely different. Therefore, both a match and a mismatch in the categorization of the interview data would
have been difficult to interpret. Therefore, it was decided to value the joint evidence of both the description of the developments in the community and the interpretation of the interview data as a personal experience-based narrative, in which the described events in the group were considered more important whenever they were supported by interview data from key participants in the community of university teachers.

Results

In this section, features that demonstrate the development of the community in relation to the shared domain (problems/interest/goals and commitment to the domain), group identity (trust, responsibility, and social ties) and interactional repertoire (role taking, dynamic effort and interactional regulation) are discussed. The description addresses the issue of what contributes to the development of a particular dimension in a particular phase (the early, evolving and mature phases). Analysis of interviewees’ responses is intertwined with outcomes of observational data and the results are interpreted.

The early phase

Shared domain. An important aspect of the early phase of developing a community of practice is to recruit potential members. In the present study, the facilitator of the CoUT organized a half-day workshop to explain the CoUT, encourage participation and discuss participants’ wishes and preferences. According to interviewees, the introductory workshop provided an environment that created awareness about shared problems and wishes: ‘I was attracted to the lunch meeting for the first time due to the English language improvement agenda [raised during the introductory workshop]’ (Lily). Furthermore, it clarified the benefits of participation: ‘The idea [of establishing a CoUT] by itself was interesting. I thought I will get some role model colleagues’ (Kiki) and created the motivation to fulfil participants’ wishes: ‘I always wish to be strong [in] academics. I thought that the group [CoUT] might be a means to achieve my wishes’ (Saron). These experiences instigated participant motivation to join the CoUT. Ethiopians learn English as a foreign language. It is the language of instruction in secondary schools and universities. Using English outside of classrooms is rare. The English language problem was a reason for participants to come together.

In this case, participants were able to realize the shared domain. They developed increased awareness of shared problems and wishes, and identified shared problems (for example, English language proficiency); ultimately, they realized shared goal (for example, to be better teachers). They also gained opportunities to think about the benefits of participation in
the CoUT (for example, coming in contact with role models), and they liked the idea of sharing experiences and learning from each other, which elicited their interest in participating. This was realized due to the introductory workshop.

Although joining the CoUT went smoothly, the early phase was challenging. One of the challenges was that participants showed more interest in improving English proficiency (this was initiated by participants during the introductory workshop) and less in sharing teaching-learning issues (this was initiated by the facilitator of the CoUT based on the results of prior research). Some of the CoUT members were not very concerned about teaching-learning related activities at all. An interviewee made the following observation:

> If we don’t feel the immediate benefit, the commitment is less. We don’t do it seriously unless we get immediate outcome. I think, this was reflected in the earlier phase. (Lily)

Another challenge was that some members were more dominant than others. Some of the female university teachers who had more teaching experience contributed to the discussion, while some of the more novice university teachers felt that they had many challenges and were active in asking questions:

> I was asking about their first experience as a teacher [...] how to behave as a female teacher [...] how to interact with students [...] where to find what. As a beginner, it helped me a lot. The senior colleagues shared their experiences [...] gave me valuable advice. (Kiki)

Less comfort in participating and hesitation about the relevance of the meeting was also a challenge:

> I was afraid of talking. Some members were dominating. At that moment, I was thinking like ‘why am I coming?’. (Meti)

> In the first couple of months, we had difficulties to make people speak; we have to kind of beg them. (Alem)

This implies that although it initially seemed acceptable to identify a shared domain, disparities were experienced when it came to actively contributing to advance the shared domain. Members were not fully convinced about what to share and seemed to prefer conversing in English in a relaxed way, without spending too much time on serious teaching-learning related matters. Even if many members were not active participants, the weekly meeting created an environment where beginners like Kiki, who felt she had many challenges, were linked to
people who might have solutions. The English language improvement agenda catalysed the process of community development.

*Group identity.* Group identification was very important. Being female in a male-dominated environment was an issue for the participants:

*I do not think that a woman university teacher faces a serious challenge. But still, because you are a woman, people tend to put you in a certain category. That is the challenge.* (Kelem)

They also had a common feeling about the value of sharing and collaboration to fulfil their desires and overcome challenges:

*Being together makes us strong. It helps us contribute more.* (Lily)

However, the gender-based identification in itself does not bring an immediate shared identity. One of the challenges faced during the early phase was the shallowness of the interaction among members:

*We were not a close group in the beginning and our discussions were not very deep. I think this is a cultural influence [...] Ethiopian women are hesitant to express themselves freely. But over time, the members felt more at ease and we could discuss freely anything we wanted.* (Lily)

It is important at this point to consider the social position of women, including university teachers, in Ethiopia. As one of the participants vividly explained, she does not ask questions during faculty meetings:

*During faculty meetings, I usually write down my questions and comments. I wait till other participants raise my issues. When the issue is raised by someone, I mark it. If my issues are not raised, I ask a male colleague who sits beside me to ask my questions.* (Lily)

In addition to the normal time required to develop trust and belongingness, the participants of the CoUT had to face their lack of experience in speaking for themselves. This can also be related to the challenges of a lack of shared identity. Even if CoUT members were female university teachers facing similar challenges in a male-dominated university context, they were not able to develop an identity that allowed them to feel free to share and discuss. This was reflected in the superficial relationships they created.
3. The development of a teacher community in higher education

**Interactional repertoire.** The need to exert a great deal of effort to encourage participation is one of the features of the early phase. The facilitator’s reminders through email, text messaging, telephone calls and face-to-face encounters, as well as peer encouragement mechanisms like ‘Let’s go to our meeting’ or ‘Why did you miss today’s meeting?’ were found to be sources of inspiration for continuous participation. Some members of the CoUT went on a campus-wide tour to communicate with missing members and encourage them to return. The interviewees recognised the impact of encouragement activities:

*It showed members’ commitment. We could have continued without those missing colleagues. But we wanted them to be with us.* (Alem)

*The way members are treated when they miss a certain meeting is not blaming, but trying to understand what happened. That has implications. It makes you responsible, self-motivated and dedicated not to miss a single meeting as much as possible.* (Lily)

Encouragement activities not only provided information, but also showed members commit to each other’s development; thus, they had motivational value. Interviewees also believed that the facilitator contributed to the sustained efforts of members:

*One reason for the success is you [the facilitator]. You are always there. You always send reminders. Your commitment helps others to be more committed.* (Senay)

*I would say your leadership skill, your persistence, reminding people all the time and being able to keep the group focused and move forward [contributed to the success of the community].* (Alem)

Although different encouragement mechanisms were used, in the early phase, eight participants (of 31) dropped out after attending fewer than five meetings; 10 (43.5%) were occasional attendants (attending less than two meetings per month). After the fourth month, on average, only 16.6% were occasional attendants. Therefore, the need for more external encouragement and the irregular attendance suggest that the CoUT members were able to develop only a limited interactional repertoire.

In the early phase, participants were convinced of the goal, but were less committed to the domain. They showed limited effort and roles in realizing the goal (insufficient interactional repertoire). Although (gender-based) member identification was an important step, the group showed less trust, did not take a great deal of responsibility and did not create strong social ties (weak group identity).
The evolving phase

Shared domain. Four months after the CoUT came into existence, a major change took place. One of the members had been harassed by a student who had failed a test, and the member shared this experience during one of the meetings. In the next meetings, the members shared their harassment experiences, discussing the social and psychological impact of harassment and strategies to minimize the damage. These discussions brought an issue in front of the group that was strongly relevant to all of them, so that they developed a great sense of commitment to each other. The members decided to conduct a small-scale survey about harassment experiences of university teachers. They arranged extra time to collect data from 80 university teachers (male and female), and formed pairs or small groups to work on collecting and analysing data. This activity was the first self-initiated task that the group undertook. In order to try to find out why they were vulnerable to harassment, the women teachers previously asked themselves: ‘Am I the only one? Am I too polite? What about my behaviour encouraged the students to do this?’ The discussions with their colleagues and the survey provided means to cope with the problems caused by harassment, as well as awareness that other teachers had had the same experiences.

Group identity. The harassment incident was a tool to promote the development of a sense of group identity. Interviewees explained the relevance of discussions about harassment as follows:

In sharing a story like harassment, even if we cannot change the situation immediately, it makes you feel better. Understanding that others have the same problem makes you feel better. (Alem)

When we were trying to support the victim colleague during that difficult time, our interaction became more meaningful. You feel that you have some people who care about your wellbeing. (Saron)

Participants were able to develop a feeling that ‘I am not the only one who has experienced this’. In addition, the victim obtained support from the group, making her feel better and suggesting that it was good to be with this group. Witnessing this, members started to appreciate being together as they came to understand the group’s practical relevance in their academic life. This had implications for the development of a group identity.
Interational repertoire. The harassment experience also opened the door for active participation, real dialogue, collaboration and enhanced bonding. One member’s experience initiated sharing of the harassment experiences of other members; they discussed the social and psychological impact of harassment and coping mechanisms that they could use to decrease its harm. As the CoUT members shared their harassment experience openly, a real dialogue about a shared challenge was facilitated. This also initiated a small-scale survey, which the group members conducted to obtain a broader view of the problem. This means that the practice shifted from simple sharing to organizing knowledge. Therefore, at this stage, some changes occurred in the interactional repertoire of the group. This was reflected in active participation, involvement in real dialogue about a shared problem and contribution in doing a collaborative task. All of these elements enhanced the bonding among members. The interviewees reported that talking about harassment opened the door to be more active in bringing up their teaching-learning experiences and challenges in subsequent meetings.

In the evolving phase, better commitment to the domain was reflected in that participants took roles in sharing harassment experiences and actively participated in the discussions (development of interactional repertoire). This led to the development of a sense of trust, reflected in sharing personal harassment experiences to the group and creating social ties in an attempt to support the victim (development of a sense of group identity).

The mature phase

Shared domain. The community’s mature phase was reflected in the identification of new needs and roles: The participants did research in groups, conducted peer observation and reflection in the CoUT and engaged in a social activity to support school girls. The members of the CoUT conducted a survey about factors contributing to student misbehaviour. This research project created an environment in which collaboration became more intense because the members worked on the research in small groups of three or four. They shared tasks among the members of the small groups, discussed the progress of their study in the CoUT, and presented the outcomes at an annual seminar of their university. Interviewees considered this to be one of the more visible outcomes of the CoUT. They also reported improvement in their classroom practices and behaviour based on the knowledge they gained from carrying out research on what makes students misbehave (according to the interviewees, they tried to minimize teacher-related factors). Other than progress reports, tasks related to the research project were carried out during scheduled meetings (except for the weekly lunchtime meeting).
Members also observed each other’s teaching (spending at least an hour observing a lesson) and discussed their observational experiences in the CoUT (see Chapter 5 for details about learning from peer observation). Members were also involved in a bimonthly project to support secondary school girls. The support focused on English language improvement, study skills, confidence building and moral development (the girls were orphans or from impoverished families). On average, members spent six hours per month supporting the girls. They were also involved in a fun monthly get-together with the aim of strengthening socialization among CoUT members. The social ties created as a result of the get-together reinforced additional social events (like inviting each other for birthdays, and visiting each other during illness, celebrations or other occasions). All of these tasks and roles enabled members to spend more time interacting with each other. Interviewees explained that the diversity of benefits of the CoUT motivated them to be continuously involved:

*The activities are very attractive. When we discuss about teaching-learning experiences, it may look less relevant. But research has visible outcomes…presenting it, the written report […] this attracted many members so much. (Kelem)*

*Due to the openness of the program, we were able to include what we wanted. (Saron)*

Members not only joined the programme as a result of their own interest, but also had roles in changing the intended programme in a way that fitted with their own priorities. Thus, as opposed to programmes whose content and process are predetermined, flexibility in adjusting the programme based on participants’ wishes created a feeling of ownership. Interviewees believed that it would have been boring if they had discussed teaching methods every week for two years. The broadness of teaching-learning issues being discussed gave more variety. The contribution of activities of the community in terms of development in teaching, research and socialization skills were considered as an important element for the continuous active involvement of members:

*Doing the tasks in groups makes things easier. Ideas flow easily. I think some members had more burdens […] Tasks cannot be delayed even if some members are missing or contributing less. When you miss a meeting, you lose the benefit that you should gain. (Kelem)*

*Group identity. During the maturity stage, one of the developments observed and experienced was the development of self-confidence. Interviewees explained this as follows:*

*I reflect my feelings freely. I have the confidence. (Lily)*
At the beginning, I didn’t feel comfortable being seen with groups of females. Now I do not care about that […] It [participation in the CoUT] gave me a feeling of confidence (Amsal).

There is no fear about how others perceive what I say […] We all know that we are here to share experiences and develop ourselves. That gives you confidence […] We developed very good interaction […] Now socialization is part of our networking. You feel connected. (Saron)

The fact that members were discussing their personal life stories gave them the opportunity to trust each other. This is believed to have created confidence among the participants so that they felt safe in the CoUT environment. Working together over a longer period of time also resulted in the development of trust. Gradually, members were able to see the relevance of the CoUT. In particular, sharing their personal stories of harassment helped them to develop a group identity. This was a crucial starting point for the development of trust, and was enhanced through continuous interaction among the group members. The social forums and relations helped members to build connections and served as an environment to share and discuss different social and academic matters. Due to their strengthened bonding and trust, members felt safe in sharing and discussing any issue relevant for their development.

*Interactional repertoire.* During the maturity phase, members of the CoUT became more willing to participate in multidimensional learning and development activities, take diverse roles and investing a lot of time in activities related to academic development. The time the group spent interacting increased, and this made their bonding stronger.

The mature phase is characterized by involvement in diverse tasks (varied goals) and high commitment to the achievement of the domains. The interactional repertoire was enhanced, which was reflected in members’ role taking in various tasks, the dynamic effort they put into accomplishing the tasks and the agreed-upon interactional setup. An example of a well-developed interactional set up includes CoUT members’ commitment to use the one hour lunch meeting to reflect on peer observation experiences and to discuss progress reports about their research project, while making separate schedules for other tasks and activities undertaken within the CoUT. Group identity was also exhibited through enhanced trust among members (freely sharing experiences), taking responsibilities to achieve group goals (learning from each other by active involvement in diverse tasks) and enhanced social ties that went beyond work-related collaborations (for example, giving more time for socialization).
3. Discussion and conclusion

Using a case study approach, this research examined the development of a teacher community in higher education. The results showed that the early phase of teacher community development is the most challenging. Member identification and the development of group identity, the experience of a key incident that exhibited the practical relevance of participation, flexibility that led to involvement in diverse tasks and a facilitator with adequate time and commitment all had a positive effect on the development of the community of practice.

This study indicated that it is beneficial to identify the right people for teacher community membership. All members in the CoUT group were female university teachers facing common challenges that hampered their career aspirations (for example, harassment), and felt that the challenges they faced might not be overcome easily on an individual basis. This shared identity was important to bring the group together, which accords with previous studies and theories (Ismail & Rasdi, 2007; Lave & Wenger, 1991; McDermott, 2000; Wenger & Snyder, 2000). However, this identification did not create an immediate shared identity that motivated the active participation of members. This was clearly visible in the challenges faced in the early phase.

The literature indicates the need to demonstrate how important it is to participate in a community of practice (Wenger et al., 2002). The present study, however, indicates that it takes time and effort to make members of the CoUT active, trust each other, feel comfortable and value sharing. It is even more difficult, and therefore takes more time, to challenge members’ previous perceptions, experiences and established traditions, especially in the context of this study, in which the position of women is very low and collaborative learning is not a tradition. In a culture where women are passive recipients of information, members need time to develop confidence to speak out. In this case, it was only through continued interaction among members of the CoUT in the weekly meetings, as well as other scheduled meetings, that a shared identity began to evolve and develop. This is why facilitator reminders and peer encouragement activities were continuously required in the early phase.

Lave and Wenger (1991) argued that members of a community of practice organize themselves and choose someone to keep things on track from week to week. However, unlike workers in other organizations, higher education teachers exhibit ample differences in their pedagogical knowledge, skills and attitude. When they become involved in a community to share and discuss their practice, with the aim of improvement, they need someone who can effectively guide their action and interaction. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) stated that
‘learning from each other as well as being guided by an insightful facilitator’ (p. 271) is influential. In the present study, the facilitator’s expertise in educational sciences was an important input. Facilitating the CoUT and collecting data for the research project were full-time jobs for the facilitator. As a result, CoUT members had easy access when it came to asking for any kind of support. For instance, in saying ‘You are always there’ (Senay), the interviewee was referring to the adequate time the facilitator had to interact with members. This finding amplifies concern about administrative structures that do not allow staff developers to spend enough time with teachers (Putnam & Borko, 2000). In a situation where a staff developer has to put one leg in a certain department and the other in staff development units, the desired changes may not be feasible. The facilitator’s commitment and heartfelt interest in the development of the community, which was primarily motivated by the external benefit of doing the research, was an important issue. Especially in the early stages of establishing a community of practice, there should be something that pushes the facilitator to continue doing the hard work.

The study also highlighted the importance of realizing core shared problems of members (the shared domain). As described in the results section, the CoUT initially had two domains: English language improvement and teaching skills development. In the early phase, members were not fully convinced of the need to pursue discussions about teaching-learning issues (which were initiated by the researcher), but they were more interested in English language improvement–focused activities (which they initiated). However, the integration of their prior problem (the English language) served as a catalyst to sustain the group, even if it was fragile and less connected. English language improvement was identified as a problem by participants themselves, and this was what attracted many of them to the group. Experiencing the opportunities to use English in a relaxed environment was a tool to sustain the group. This finding has implications for starting teacher communities, as participant priorities can be used as a catalyst to strengthen the group as a whole.

The study also revealed the value of exploiting critical incidents that create opportunities to demonstrate the significance of participation in a CoUT. Knowledge gained due to participation in communities of practice is ‘intangible’ and members may not easily recognise it (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). Occasions that display the practical relevance of the community are important when it comes to influencing such perceptions. In the present study, the discussion about harassment was the key incident that convinced members to value their meetings. The fact that the incident was raised by members had an added value. The discussion about harassment provided unique psychological support (Quinlan, 1999). Members
were able to express their harassment experience, discuss its impact on the psychology and social life of the victim and share coping mechanisms they had used. The sharing and discussions were sources of empowerment for members; they were able to develop a sense that ‘I am not the only one’. This led to the evolution of a sense of a shared identity, an improved relationship and a feeling of comfort in participation. This was when members started to develop better commitment to the domain and a shared interactional repertoire in actively sharing and reflecting. This study suggests that in male-dominated environments, where female university teachers have less voice and power, it is fruitful to create separate male and female communities of teachers. This helps them deal with their unique problems more freely.

The features that evolved due to the discussion on the harassment experience developed over time, enabling members to become involved in new tasks, take diverse roles and continuously identify new needs. On-going interaction among members led to the identification of new learning needs (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Members’ active involvement in the group research project, peer observation of teaching and socialization activities can be taken as indications of the diverse role they took. Such a development can be related to what Wenger and Snyder (2000) call participation in different relevant tasks and roles that enhance members’ knowledge and skills related to the domains (in this case, teaching, research, socialization). Such flexibility in accommodating various needs of members is what makes participation meaningful (Lieberman, 2000). It enables members to make decisions about their own learning based on specific needs and desires. This creates a feeling of ownership. Unlike training-focused programmes whose content and process are predetermined by somebody else, members of the CoUT made their own choice, guided by collaborative endeavours. Such an opportunity was relevant in creating a feeling of responsibility that contributed to success.

This study suggests that multidimensional as opposed to restrictive involvement should be encouraged. Besides the benefits gained with regard to teaching, research and language improvement, the interactions gave members the opportunity to access networks to which women university teachers could not previously gain entrance. Members enjoyed the opportunity for socialization, which developed as a result of their regular meetings. In this case, participation in the CoUT was identified as a tool to reduce social isolation, which is one of the main challenges for academic women (Bagilhole, 1993; Forster, 2000). Shared identity developed in the form of a social atmosphere, where the Ethiopian female university teachers were able to interact within the group.
This study has limitations in that it was based in a single context (an Ethiopian university), a single case (female university teachers) and the personal interpretations of a researcher who also was a facilitator of the CoUT. It was impossible to disentangle the perspectives of the researcher and the facilitator. Thus, further research on the development of teacher communities in higher education in different contexts, using multiple cases and with different research perspectives can provide more insights. In general, however, this study has revealed that choosing teachers who have shared problems and an initial shared identity (gender in this context) does not guarantee the development of a teacher community. It is necessary to work hard to facilitate a shared identity. This can be enhanced through exploiting key incidents that can exhibit the importance of being in that particular community, having a facilitator with adequate commitment, skill and time, understanding member priorities and giving them a decision making role. It is important to have a starting idea to create a teacher community, but it is also necessary to take flexibility into account. Communities with multiple objectives or that continuously shape their domain will most likely go further than those with limited scope.
Abstract
The purpose of this study is to explore perceived learning outcomes and learning strategies used by a community of university educators in Ethiopia. A case study approach was used; qualitative data were collected through interviews and focus groups. Inductive thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The results showed three broad categories of learning outcomes: 1) Changes in teaching related issues, which includes the gaining of new insights, change in perception, new problem solving skills, change in practice, change in emotion, and understanding of the concept of learning by sharing; 2) Changes in interaction and collaboration; and 3) Language improvement. Four types of learning strategies were identified; learning from stories, active involvement, peer feedback, and individual reflection. The study highlights evidence concerning the multidimensional advantages of participation in teacher communities in relation to improvements in teaching knowledge, perception, skills and practice, minimizing teacher isolation, language improvement, and possibilities for continuous learning. The implications of the study for both further research and pedagogical practice are discussed.

Keywords: teacher community, teacher learning outcomes, learning strategies, higher education

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Introduction

The present article concerns teacher learning in a community of university teachers (CoUT) in Ethiopia. The professional development of university teachers is a rare practice in Ethiopia. There is only an induction programme for novice university teachers on a voluntary basis. The results of a prior study concerning the participants’ views about the induction programme, including the impact of the programme and participant learning wishes, led to the establishment of a CoUT in which teachers are able to share and discuss teaching experiences and learn from each other (see Chapter 2). Female teachers from Bahir Dar University volunteered to participate in the CoUT. The female university teachers identified a shared interest in English language improvement, as well as sharing the teaching-learning experience. The female university teachers thus met weekly for an hour at lunchtime to discuss teaching-learning practices, experiences, and challenges, using English as medium. This lunch meeting continued regularly for two years, with the author serving as the facilitator of the program. Ethiopians learn English as a foreign language. It is the language of instruction in secondary schools and universities. Using English outside of the classroom is rare. Many people believe that the English language proficiency of teachers is low—even at the university level. Difficulty with the English language was one reason for participants to come together and catalysed the process of the development of the community (see Chapter 3 for details about the development of this community).

The interactional procedure in the CoUT was as follows. A member tells her personal teaching related stories (experiences, challenges, problems, and emotions) to the CoUT members, and asks for help on how to tackle the problem. Members usually ask clarification questions and/or bring a related personal experience and/or relate to their own practice. This initiates discussions to find solutions for a problem or to learn from the shared experience. The CoUT members have a group identity (female, university teachers in an extremely male-dominated environment); they have shared domain—shared problems and shared goals (improving their teaching skills and English proficiency); and they have developed an interactional repertoire (weekly meeting to share and discuss experiences). The CoUT is considered a community of practice in which a group of teachers who have a shared passion for professional development interact on an ongoing basis to deepen their knowledge and expertise about teaching, while simultaneously improving their English (Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002).

In the present study, the perceived learning outcomes and learning strategies of CoUT members are examined. The study is conducted for two main reasons 1) there is no
knowledge about Ethiopian university teacher learning, 2) there is lack of evidence about learning in university teacher communities (Laksov, Mann, & Dahlgren, 2008; Warhurst, 2006), although theoretically teacher communities are considered to be one of the best learning environments. Teacher communities are used as learning environments at schools and a considerable amount of research has been done concerning their contribution to teacher learning (Lieberman & Mace, 2008; Shulman & Shulman, 2004). However, there is little research about learning in university teacher communities (Laksov et al., 2008; Warhurst, 2006). According to Wilson and Berne (1999), teachers learn ‘something’ from participation in communities, but what they learn is yet to be clearly “identified, conceptualized, and assessed.” Conceptualization of teacher learning is difficult, as it is not quantified using test or exam scores (Bakkenes, Vermunt, & Wubbels, 2010). The study therefore adds to the understanding of what and how university teachers learn in the context of their communities (Bakkenes et al., 2010; Borko, 2004; Wilson & Berne, 1999).

The learning of teachers in communities
Due to the influence of socio-cultural theories, learning is now understood differently. According to socio-cultural theories learning is social as opposed to individualized; learning is contextual, meaning it is influenced by social, cultural, organizational factors; learning is embodied in which a range of human activities are integrated (Hager, 2012). The perspective on learning and knowing as “situated, social, and distributed” (Putnam & Borko, 2000) has influenced theories of the organization of learning environments. Conceptually, communities of practice are considered as central environments for enhanced, lifelong, and relevant learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Putnam & Borko, 2000; Wenger, 1998). Passion (for something), interaction, experience (something to be shared), and active participation are central to the concept of communities of practice. These elements make learning in a community different from traditional methods of learning, such as short courses. Putnam and Borko (2000) argue that interactions among people in a learning environment determine what and how a person learns. Active interaction among members of the community provides cognitive tools (experiences, problems, ideas, and concepts) that help individuals process and construct meaning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Given these experiences, it is not strange that also for teacher learning communities of practice were initiated (Warhurst, 2006). It is argued that quality learning is the result of interaction among teachers who share a set of common goals (Borko, 2004; Lieberman & Mace, 2008). The “rich descriptive talk” in teacher communities enables members to clearly notice the daily practices and norms of teaching-learning, as well as how dif-
ferent teachers understand them (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). This situates their learning in their experiences (Putnam & Borko, 2000). A variety of experiences of how teaching-learning concepts are transferred into practice encourage teacher collaboration and reflection to enhance learning (Lieberman & Mace, 2008). Sharing and reflecting on experiences broadens the understanding of concepts and the opportunity for the application of knowledge in different circumstances (Brancato, 2003).

Scholars argue that university teachers need to learn not only theories about quality teaching-learning, but that they also have to experience practicalities of theories in different contexts and recognise the reasons for inconsistencies between theory and practice (Ramsden, 2003, 2008). This can be achieved by creating environments in which teachers can share and discuss their teaching experiences. Narratives of lived experiences create dialogue among teachers, in turn promoting the creation of a connection between teachers’ teaching identity, the lived theory, and the social context of teaching. The resulting change in collective, as well as individual, thinking is essential to the development of a learning culture and the improvement of practice (Beattie, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Latta & Kim, 2010).

According to Ramsden (2003), providing courses about teaching-learning in higher education cannot guarantee effective change in the practice of university teachers, as changing one’s teaching is a long-term process that requires university teachers to observe, experience, share, and discuss the practicalities of teaching-learning concepts in a continuous manner (Laksov et al., 2008). Unlike courses, communities provide teachers with ongoing learning opportunities in and outside the workplace that shape how and what they learn, and influence their thinking about their learning objectives (Lieberman & Mace, 2008). Especially in the context of universities, teachers learn (acquire) most of the knowledge and skills relevant for their teaching from interactions with different groupings they formally or informally involve themselves in (Viskovic, 2006). These groupings are considered as a good starting point for the establishment of communities of practice, and should likewise be supported to enhance learning (Wenger et al., 2002). Putnam and Borko (2000) described the relevance of communities, stating that “when diverse groups of teachers with different types of knowledge and expertise come together in discourse communities, community members can draw upon and incorporate each other’s expertise to create rich conversations and new insights into teaching and learning” (p. 8). Participation in communities fosters reflection on practice (Brancato, 2003; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) and enhances the construction of professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Warhurst, 2006). As a result, teacher communities are seen as good learning environments (Lieberman & Mace, 2010; Shulman & Shulman, 2004).
While learning in communities has the potential to be beneficial, positive results are not a given, and both participants and facilitators have to address the challenges that come with learning in communities. First, as Putnam and Borko (2000) argue, communities of teachers need to be facilitated by people who have both knowledge and expertise in teaching-learning within groups. Such facilitators can bring research-based concepts and a critical and reflective stance, while teachers can in turn bring knowledge of their craft through the sharing of their day-to-day classroom experiences. Especially in universities, teachers lack a theoretical background in pedagogy, because they are usually recruited based on subject matter knowledge, and never receive any sort of pre-service teacher education or rarely participate in professional development about teaching-learning (Viskovic, 2006). Involving these teachers in communities requires facilitators that can fill the academic knowledge gap regarding pedagogy. Secondly, there is tension between collegial and critical discussion (Prestridge, 2009; Putnam & Borko, 2000). According to Prestridge, face-to-face teacher communities are more interested in the development of human relationships than enabling critical discussions. Criticality needs to be integrated with respect to individual experiences and the proper use of communal competences (Wenger, 1998). Third, identifying learning outcomes is problematic. Wilson and Berne (1999) argue that common themes recognised in teacher learning research tend to be general (for example, creating collegial interaction, development of critical reflection on practice, articulation of tacitly held knowledge), rather than specific. Another problematic issue is the identification of acquired group knowledge verses individual knowledge.

Teacher learning outcomes

As previously discussed, the conceptualization of teacher learning outcomes is problematic. The literature shows some of the problems associated with measuring teacher learning outcomes. Unlike student learning outcomes, tests/exams are not used as indicators of teacher learning outcomes (Bakkenes et al., 2010). Various learning outcomes are discussed in the literature. For example, Eraut (2004) described a theoretical framework that can be used to investigate the what and how of informal learning in the workplace. He includes eight categories of learning outcomes:1) Task performance (involvement in collaborative work, communication with different people), 2) awareness and understanding (concerning other people, context, strategic issues), 3) personal development (building relationships, motive to continue to learn), 4) teamwork (shared planning to solve problems), 5) Role performance (supporting colleagues attempts to improve), 6) academic knowledge and skill (knowing what you lack,
learning how to put theory into practice), 7) decision making and problem solving (problem analysis along with options), 8) judgment (value issues). Four learning strategies were also described: participation in group activities, working with others, working with clients (like students), and engaging in a difficult task. Lord (1994) cited in Wilson and Berne (1999) lists the learning outcomes of critical collegial support as: enhancing on-going self-reflection and collegial dialogue, increasing understanding of a colleague's dilemma in the terms he or she understands it, developing negotiation and communication, increasing teachers' comfort with high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty, enhancing collective productivity, and preparing members to learn and experiment with new ideas. Bakkenes et al. (2010) also studied workplace learning outcomes and the learning activities of experienced secondary school teachers; the learning outcomes included changes in knowledge and beliefs, intentions for practice, change in practices, and change in emotions (feelings of satisfaction, doubt, surprise); and the learning activities identified included experimenting, reflecting on one’s own practice, experiencing friction (between expectations and actual experience), struggling not to revert to old ways, and getting ideas from others.

According to Hager (2012), informal workplace learning differs from formal on-the-job training: informal workplace learning is opportunistic (unplanned), highly contextualized, holistic (as opposed to learning the theory, and how to apply theory), has no prescribed learning outcome, results in implicit learning (learner unaware of it), and emphasizes on collaboration and collegial interaction—that is, on learning and learners instead of content. These features affect both the method and the content of learning in the workplace. It is obvious that teachers learn something when they participate in a certain teacher learning program. When specific objectives are set and participants achieve them, the learning outcomes are clear and can be assessed. In informal learning environments (such as when sharing and reflecting on experiences in communities), learning outcomes are not planned and learners are not always aware of them. Due to this, studying exactly what and how teachers learn is encouraged to illuminate insights about informal workplace learning outcomes (Borko, 2004; Wilson & Berne, 1999). The present study adds insights into the learning outcomes and learning strategies identified from learning in a university teacher community, which can contribute to the conceptualization dilemma.

The following research questions guided the study:
1. What do Ethiopian female university teachers learn within their teacher community? (learning outcomes).

Method
This study used a case study approach. A group of female teachers in an Ethiopian university participated in the CoUT for two years. Qualitative data was collected to examine the female teachers’ perceptions regarding their learning outcomes and the learning strategies they used. Inductive thematic analysis, in which repeated reading of qualitative data leads to the detection of a list of themes, was used to answer the research questions.

Table 4.1 Overview of participants’ background data when they joined the CoUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants’ pseudonyms</th>
<th>Number of years teaching experience</th>
<th>Domain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alem</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Language &amp; Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amsal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Language &amp; Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuchu</td>
<td>Returned from master degree studies*</td>
<td>Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enat</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etsub</td>
<td>Returned from master degree studies*</td>
<td>Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelem</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiki</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lily</td>
<td>Returned from master degree studies*</td>
<td>Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maritu</td>
<td>Returned from master degree studies*</td>
<td>Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melat</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meron</td>
<td>Returned from master degree studies*</td>
<td>Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meti</td>
<td>Returned from master degree studies*</td>
<td>Language &amp; Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saron</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semira</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senay</td>
<td>Returned from master degree studies*</td>
<td>Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serke</td>
<td>Returned from master degree studies*</td>
<td>Journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewnet</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Business and Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sofiya</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workie</td>
<td>Returned from master degree studies*</td>
<td>Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wosen</td>
<td>Returned from master degree studies*</td>
<td>Linguistics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Those who just finished their master’s degrees had one year teaching experience before their study.
Participants
The CoUT had 32 members, aged between 22 and 35. These members joined it at different times (see Table 1.2 of Chapter 1). Twenty-three of them joined the CoUT after attending the introductory workshop (as described in the introduction of this thesis), whereas nine members joined because of existing member invitations. All members decided to join the CoUT on their own initiative. Twenty participants participated in the CoUT for at least a year and were purposively selected as data sources for the study. They volunteered to provide information for the study. Members who participated for half a year (first four months) were excluded from the study on the assumption that valid data may not be gained as they may have left the CoUT too early. Nine of the participants had previously participated in a teacher learning programme and eleven were doing so for the first time. All participants had 0-3 years teaching experience at the beginning of the CoUT. Except for engineering and medical sciences, participants from all academic disciplines were included (see Table 4.1). The CoUT originally had two members from the engineering department, but they dropped out in the early phase; why they left is not known. Pseudonyms were used when quoting participants.

Instruments
Data were gathered through semi-structured individual interviews and small groups. The author, who was also the facilitator of the CoUT, conducted the individual interviews as well as the interviews with the small groups. Both the individual interviews and the interviews with the small groups centred upon what participants learned (about teaching, socialization, English language improvement); how their teaching was influenced as a result of their participation in the CoUT (changes in their views, practices); and how they learned (learning strategies). Interviews with four small groups (each having three to five participants) were conducted to have reasonably small number of group participants; it is also difficult to get everyone at the same time. The small group was intended to provide an overview of participant views (as a group) about what and how they learned, whereas the individual interview focused on in-depth examination of individual perceptions on learning outcomes and strategies. All the small group interviews were conducted around the end of year two whereas four interviews (Enat, Semira, Sewnet, & Workie) were conducted at the end of year one and the other sixteen interviews were made around end of year two. The individual interviews were conducted before the small groups to avoid influence of the small group on individual perceptions. Like the individual interviews, the group interviews were made in Amharic. All but
three interviews were audio-recorded. Three interviews were not recorded due to technical problems with the audio recorder. The interviewer took notes during all interviews.

**Data analysis procedure**

Interview data were transcribed and analysed using an inductive thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994), which led to identification of thematic categories through repeated reading of transcripts (for details see chapter 3, method section). Organizing interviewees’ responses based each question, identifying key word/phrases and themes, categorising themes into broader thematic categories, and rereading transcripts to ensure that thematic categories adequately reflect responses of interviews were the major activities undertaken in the analysis process. Analysis of small group interview data placed emphasis on identifying themes that the group has agreed on collectively (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009). The audio records of the focus groups were listened to repeatedly. This resulted in the recognition of a list of issues participants agreed upon in terms of learning outcomes and strategies. The major themes identified from the analysis of individual and small group interview were integrated and interpreted. The themes were described and elaborated using selected quotes from the interviews.

The quality of the data analysis was checked using an inter-rater reliability test in which a second rater analysed a sample of the data following the procedures used by the primary rater. The second rater was given three interview transcripts (15%), one small group interview audio data (25%). The rater was asked to repeatedly read the transcripts and listen to the audio data, identify key words and phrases that indicate the themes interviewees addressed. He was also informed to make broader thematic categories from the identified list of themes and to organize the broader thematic categories in relation to what the interviews learned and how they learned. All the themes identified by the second rater were also found in the themes identified by the primary rater. But there was variation on categorization of themes which led to engaging in discussions until the raters arrive at consensus. For example, in relation to reported learning strategies, the second rater listed five strategies. One of which (learning by comparing and contrasting one’s practice with others) was considered as a feature of reflection by the primary rater. Thus, the two raters discussed on whether this issue can be seen as different from learning through reflection or not. In the end, agreement was made to take it as a way of engaging in reflective thinking. In relation to reported learning outcomes, the second rater also categorized issue related to learning something new about teaching-learning and learning about new problem solving strategies in one category (getting
new insights). But the primary rater treated these issues separately. Themes related to gaining new insights about teaching-learning concepts and gaining new insights on how to solve problems were considered as two different thematic categories by the primary rater. Explanations on why the primary rater did this enabled the second rater to agree with making two categories.

**Results**

In this section, the participants’ perceived learning outcomes and learning strategies are described.

**Learning outcomes**

The first research question “What do university teachers learn within communities?” concerned the learning outcomes of participants based on collegial discussions in a community. The learning outcomes are presented in three broad categories: changes in teaching related issues, changes in interaction and collaboration and language improvement (see Table 4.2). In the proceeding subsections, each learning outcome is elaborated.

**Changes in teaching related issues**

The learning outcomes in this category include gaining new insights, changes in perception, new problem solving skills, changes in teaching practices, changes in emotions and recognition of learning by sharing.

**New insights.** Though some participants recognised the difficulty of listing what specific insights were gained, new insights were a major theme identified in the interviews and focus groups. Some participants, who had no prior teaching experience and didn’t take part in any teacher learning initiative, believed that everything was new for them.

*I didn’t have any prior experience in teaching. Everything was new to me. I learned a lot about teaching [...] I was not teaching for a year [while participating in the CoUT] and I am very happy that I was not teaching [...] Now I can teach, I learned many things about good teaching.* (Melat)

Most of the participants’ explanations focused how their new insights were related to clarity about how and in what situation one can use a certain teaching-learning method.

*We discuss it [teaching-learning methods] together; most of us share on feasibility, challenges and possibilities. That makes things clear. You have a clear idea about how, when, at what situation to practice a certain strategy.* (Lily)
**Change in perception.** Changes in perception about teaching, teacher-student relations, teacher and student roles, and teacher learning were identified. In this context, changes in perception refer to participants’ reporting a shift in how they understood something.

*I thought that teaching is telling students about what I read. I thought that a good teacher is one who fluently talks about the lesson of the topic and then leaves the class seriously, without making interactions with students. All these are changed because of my participation in the meetings [CoUT]. I learned a lot about good teaching that makes students learn not teacher talk. I learned a lot about how teacher-student interactions be managed. (Kiki)*

*When I come to the lunch meeting [CoUT], I always see myself as a student. And I enjoy the relaxed, free environment; I enjoy the active role I have, I enjoy the shared responsibilities and the benefits of bringing experiences of each of us. Then I compare this with my teaching. Usually, I am active in lecturing and my students passively listen. That must be boring for them. I realized this after I critically compared my practice with what we experience in the lunch meeting. (Senay)*

There were also reports of how participation in the CoUT influenced perceptions about teacher learning. This issue was raised by a small number of participants, but was deemed highly relevant.

*I consider myself as well equipped with professional knowledge and skills because I had teacher education background. But that was wrong. I already forgot most of the lessons I learned about teaching-learning [...] Our discussions refreshed me. (Enat)*

*I had negative feeling about teaching. Now I am convinced that teaching is a good profession, you always have to update yourself to be a good teacher. That is very interesting. (Melat)*

**New problem solving skills.** Problem solving starts with understanding the situation. Participants believed that the CoUT helped them better understand the problems and situations, and come up with alternatives to tackle the problem.

*I remember the discussions on lecture notes. I didn’t give lecture notes assuming that students can read references [...] I didn’t give attention to contextual factors like shortage of references, students English language problem [...] After the discussion, I began to evaluate my actions. (Etsub)*

*We got solutions for teaching-learning related problems. The suggestions were not simple and spontaneous, they were practice-based. They were critically examined by all of us [...] The outcomes were more relevant than solutions an individual can have. (Kelem)*
Participants were not confronted with readymade solutions, but were supported and encouraged to understand the problem and the context of the problem. Suggestions from other members, reflections and discussions were made on each suggestion, and the group recommended the solution they thought best. Participants appreciated this kind of problem solving and considered it highly useful.

**Changes in teaching practices.** Changes in the practices of participants were reported in terms of the use of new methods, the systematic use of an existing method, and improved interpersonal relations. A majority of participants reported that their teaching (in using new methods) had changed in some way. Some reported significant changes and some only a few improvements.

*I usually give reading assignments to students. I give them case analysis tasks. After a lecture about a certain theory, I ask students to analyse the application of that theory in our context; I have never used such strategies before. I knew the methods but I thought that it cannot be implemented in our context.* (Saron)

Some participants also reported that they were encouraged to practice methods they were forced to quit due to student resistance.

*Previously, I was discouraged to use active learning methods because of students’ resistance […] Based on my experience, we discussed about how to make a balance between teacher-centred and student-centred methods, how to familiarize students slowly, and what kind of active method could reduce student resistance […] That motivated me to use active learning methods again, in a more systematic way of course.* (Kelem)

Changes in the teacher-student relationship were another issue. Participants reported that participation in the CoUT encouraged them to develop interactional relations with their students.

*Before I join the group, my approach was totally blocked. I was very serious. I did not interact with students. That is changed now. The experiences I got from my colleagues helped me improve my approaches.* (Saron)

*The issues that were discussed during the lunch meetings helped me to build good relations with my students.* (Semira)

**Changes in emotion.** One of the issues identified was getting support in times of stress and anxiety. Participants believed that sharing their teaching-learning experiences and challenges to the group, and listening the reactions and feedback of CoUT members, helped them to get psychological backup and reduce anxieties.
During one of the lunch meetings I asked the group to tell me their experience in their first weeks of teaching. One of them said ‘my heart beat was faster, I was afraid to look at students.’ Several members informed me that these feelings are normal. When I experienced them while I was teaching, I didn’t worry too much. (Kiki)

Sharing your challenges gives you relief. The group gives ideas on how to tackle the challenges. And that make us less stressed. (Chuchu)

Participants also reported that they developed the confidence to teach. This might be associated with their improved insights regarding teaching, their improved skills, and improved interpersonal relations with students.

Previously, I was nervous when I go to class. I think I had fears which I do not know the source. Now, I am more relaxed while teaching. (Etsub)

Recognition of learning by sharing. A new appreciation of the value of sharing and discussing daily routines was reported. Participants stressed the relevance of just sharing; creating access to a venue to express their experiences and challenges.

Sharing experiences by itself is very crucial. (Meti)

I got a venue to exchange ideas. (Serke)

Talking about teaching-learning experiences and practices by itself is nice. Sharing makes you get insights. (Kelem)

Many of the issues were our day to day problems and that was interesting. (Sewnet)

Changes in interaction and collaboration
One of the learning outcomes reported was the opportunity to interact with colleagues and the collaborative skills and habits developed due to this interaction. This learning outcome was also associated with becoming free to share personal issues with others.

The lunch meeting helped me to have very good interaction with female colleagues. This is wonderful. You know men are better than us in having good interaction with their colleagues. I was jealous of this […] Now things are changed. (Semira)

I was afraid of interacting with people. I didn’t have the exposure and I preferred to keep quiet and isolated. But in the meetings, I developed the skill of expressing my feelings easily. (Melat)

I was a kind of person who struggles alone. Even I feel shame to ask simple things like borrowing a book from a colleague […] Through participation in the lunch meeting, I
4. Learning in a community of university teachers: An Ethiopian case study

learned how to work with people with varied background and character. Now I am more collaborative. (Saron)

Language improvement
Language improvement was one of the frequently raised issues. Although participants were not able to identify improvements specifically, they appreciated the opportunity to use English outside of a classroom and the opportunity to speak in English freely, without fear of making mistakes. This was associated with the learning focused organization of the CoUT and the collegiality developed among CoUT members that enhanced speaking in English freely.

Speaking in English without switching to our own language is one thing. We had the opportunity to use English. Members who were afraid to talk in the beginning are now free to explain their ideas in English. (Kelem)

This group gives a lot of opportunities to use English. Because of that members developed social skills and confidence and the language is improved. The ability to speak in front of colleagues freely has changed a lot. (Alem)

Learning strategies
The second research question focuses on the learning strategies used in a community-based collegial discussion. Four major types of learning strategies were identified: learning from stories, active involvement in discussions, peer feedback, and individual reflection. These are elaborated in the proceeding subsections.

Listening to stories
Members usually bring challenges and problems to the CoUT; they narrate what has happened in their teaching, emphasise the problem and seek help from the group. These were considered as stories—the personal teaching-learning experiences of each member of the CoUT. Listening to these stories was reported as a learning strategy.

The group learned by listening to stories and experiences. (Alem)

I developed the habit of sharing my stories and learning from others’ stories. (Amsal)

I liked the stories so much. Every one of us has different experiences and sharing those stories gives a lot of insights. And I always listen to colleagues’ stories seriously. (Sofiya)
Table 4.2 Frequency of learning outcomes and learning strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad categories</th>
<th>Specific categories of learning outcomes</th>
<th>Frequency (max=20)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changes in teaching related issues</td>
<td>New insights</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change in perception about teaching</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- teacher-student relation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- teacher and student roles</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- teacher learning</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New problem solving skills</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change in practice use new methods</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>systematic use of a previous method</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>improved interpersonal relations</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change in emotion psychological support confidence in teaching</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change in recognition about learning by sharing</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in interaction and collaboration</td>
<td>Free to express feelings, ask for help/good interaction with colleagues/reduced isolation</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language improvement</td>
<td>Exposure to practice English or free to communicate in English</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to stories</td>
<td>Listening to or sharing personal experiences/challenges/stories</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active involvement</td>
<td>Participated actively</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer feedback</td>
<td>Comments/feedback/suggestions/ colleagues ideas</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Compare one’s own practice with others’/thinking about one’s own teaching/making critical reflections</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Active involvement**

Participants believed that the active roles they took in sharing and discussion were relevant learning tools. Active involvement not only refers to one’s participation in sharing one’s own experiences and problems, reflecting on one’s own and others’ experiences, asking questions, and responding to questions, but also refers to decision making concerning the what and how aspects of the CoUT. The participants felt that these active roles influenced their learning.
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We frame our agenda for discussion and we discuss freely. The issues were of our interest and we participate actively. That was helpful. (Sewnet)

We ask ourselves, explain our ideas and beliefs, we listen, evaluate and reflect on colleagues’ practices and experience. We have more active role [...] All these had impact on our learning and thinking. (Senay)

Peer feedback

Peer feedback refers to the suggestions made regarding a problem one shares. It includes individual suggestions and the cumulative product of reflections and discussions among CoUT members.

I learned a lot from the peer feedback. Whether the issue is my experience or not, we share and discuss it, every member forwards ideas and solutions, these were very relevant. (Saron)

Often times, we pose problems or somebody has a problem and members can suggest on how to solve that problem. From reflections and suggestion valuable feedback comes out. (Alem)

Individual reflection

Reports indicated that individual reflection on one’s own practice was triggered by the experiences of others or the reflections made during sharing and discussion. Participants reported that making comparisons and reflections became a dominant learning strategy.

I compare my practice with my colleagues’ practice. I critically think about how I am doing and whether I am in a good track [...] I developed the habit of critically evaluating my behaviour, my practice, my perception. That made me more critical about teaching. (Saron)

I began to compare myself with colleagues. It makes you think about yourself, question about your practice. I question myself ‘Do I do this?’ [...] I think it very much helped us to make critical reflection about our practices. (Kelem)

Discussion and implications

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceived learning outcomes and learning strategies used by members of a teacher community of practice in the context of an Ethiopian university. Changes in three broad categories were reported: 1) Changes in teaching related issues, which includes gaining new insights, changes in perception, new problem solving skills, changes in practice, changes in emotion, and recognition of learning by sharing; 2) Changes in interaction and collaboration, which is reflected in participants being free to interact, ex-
press feelings and ask for help; this in turn led to reduced feelings of isolation; and 3) Language improvement, which in this case refers to participants’ freedom to communicate in English, due to increased exposure to the language. Four types of learning strategies were also identified: learning from stories, active involvement in discussions, peer feedback, and individual reflection. From teaching related outcomes, all but two (new problem solving skills and recognition of learning by sharing) were found in a previous study (Bakkenes et al., 2010). Interaction/collaboration and language improvement are new learning outcomes. This can be associated with the nature of the learning context. The previous study (Bakkenes et al., 2010) focused on any informal workplace learning, but the present study targeted a CoUT in which groups of teachers continuously interacted to learn from each other’s teaching experiences and improve their English. The results therefore highlight the multidimensional advantages of participation in teacher communities. First, the teachers’ perception, knowledge, and practices were changed. Second, teachers got psychological support in times of difficulties, and developed skills of interaction and collaboration; this led to reduced teacher isolation. Third, teachers experienced improvements in their communicative skills due to the relaxed environment that facilitated freely talking in English. Fourth, the CoUT established a ground for continuous learning; the reflective skills participants developed, the habit of sharing, the network created, and the values participants built about sharing and updating oneself are indicators of possibilities for continuous learning.

The aim of the first research question was to identify learning outcomes with the aim of gaining insight into the conceptualization of teacher (workplace) learning outcomes (Bakkenes et al., 2010; Borko, 2004; Eraut, 2004; Wilson & Berne, 1999). In terms of teaching, different learning outcomes were identified. First, there is a shift in perception from traditional views to modern views of teaching: for example; from lecturer to learning facilitator; from seeing teachers as a source of knowledge to using student experiences as learning resources; from authority-focused interaction to interactional approaches to students; and the recognition of the need to continuously update oneself to be an effective teacher.

Second, change was noted in regard to knowledge that emphasizes the ‘how’ aspect of teaching concepts. In explaining the new insights gained, the “how” issue was emphasized. ‘How and in what situation’ a certain method is used; ‘how to motivate students’; ‘how to prepare appealing student activities’; ‘how to create good interpersonal relations,’ etc., were the focus points. This could be related to participant’s increased understanding of the applications of concepts (Brancato, 2003). This is what university teachers require in order to bring about an effective change in practices (Ramsden, 2003). The issue of ‘how’ was also reflect-
ed in the learning outcome related to problem solving. Participants appreciated not just solving problems but the ‘ways problems are solved.’ Emphasis was placed on how to understand a problem, how to look for solutions, how to evaluate feedback gained from different individuals, and how to construct relevant solution that fits with specific situations. Participation in the CoUT provided cognitive tools that supported dealing with such ‘how’ questions (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Third, instances of changes in teaching practices were also identified. All participants reported some changes in their practices. Some experienced few and/or small changes while others experienced more and more radical changes. The changes in practice are reflected in the use of new methods of teaching, the reusing methods that a teacher previously gave up due to student resistance, and improved interpersonal relations with students. Changes in teaching practices require time and continuous learning (Ramsden, 2003). In the present study, although the data did not explain why the changes happened, implications can be drawn. Participants’ involvement in the CoUT for at least a year likely contributed to the changes. The practice-focused approach in which participants share their classroom experiences and problems could also be an important factor. The insights on ‘how to do things’ can motivate changes in practice. Having people around who can help when participants face challenges can motivate them to try new methods. All these factors can influence changes in the practices of participants.

Fourth, there was also emotional change as a result of the psychological support of peers and increased confidence in teaching. Getting ideas on how to tackle problems was a source of strength when participants experienced stressful circumstances. Participants felt secure when they had colleagues who can help solve the problems, or when they had developed the skills to deal with the problems on their own. Participants had limited teaching experience (0-3 years) and limited involvement in any teacher development program. This implies limited teaching skills, which can lead to confidence problems. Being female in a male dominated environment can also create confidence problems. The improved confidence in teaching can be related to improvements in teaching knowledge and skill, the available emotional support of CoUT members, and improvements in language skills. Thus, increased confidence can be considered as a collective effect of all the learning outcomes. Fifth, increased recognition of the value of learning by sharing is another outcome. This can also be related to the overall benefits gained.

The results of the present study therefore show that participation in the CoUT not only positively influences learning about teaching, but also contributes to improving interaction
and collaboration skills. Participants’ experiences of isolation, being quiet and reserved, changed due to their involvement in the CoUT. Especially in a context like Ethiopia, where women are often voiceless to talk about themselves, the CoUT had an added relevance. Literature indicated that social isolation is the experience of academic women; they have less access to informal/formal networks (Bagilhole, 1993; Forster, 2000). This is a huge problem in the Ethiopian university context, where females account for less than 10% of the academic population. The CoUT is an important environment that gives females access to groups of colleagues to promote interaction and engage in collaborative tasks. This confirms the results of previous studies (Lieberman & Mace, 2008). In the context of the present study, improved interaction and collaboration is an important learning outcome, as it has significant implications to the career aspirations of female university teachers in Ethiopia. Thus a CoUT can go beyond improving teaching skills.

Improvement in the participants’ English is another learning outcome. In the Ethiopian context where English is a classroom language, opportunities to use English outside the classroom are rare. The CoUT filled this gap by creating an opportunity to use English outside of a classroom context, and participants valued this highly. The significance of this learning outcome goes beyond just improving English. It is a core issue in catalysing the development of the group. It was identified as a problem by participants themselves. Participants were attracted to the idea of the CoUT mainly because of the English language improvement agenda. The opportunity to use English in a relaxed environment was a tool to sustain the group. Their experience therefore has implications for the establishment of teacher communities, emphasising the use of participant priorities as a catalyst.

The purpose of the second research question was to identify reported learning strategies used in the CoUT. Stories, active participation, feedback and reflection were reported as the primary learning strategies. In the study of Bakkenes et al. (2010), learning from experimenting is reported; however, the present study didn’t show evidence to suggest participants learned from such a practice. The reported learning strategies mainly focused on activities and experiences taking place mostly within the CoUT, except for individual reflection (which can be done in and outside of the CoUT). Even though changes in practice were one of the learning outcomes, how participants learned from practice is not clear and needs to be a focus in future studies. A new learning strategy (at least with respect to Bakkenes et al., 2010; Eraut, 2004) is learning from stories. This study indicates that listening to the experiential narratives of CoUT members was a way of learning. However, it can be argued that, in listening to stories, other learning strategies may be integrated, because story telling is an interac-
4. Learning in a community of university teachers: An Ethiopian case study

...active approach. The listeners cannot be quiet; they participate in the story telling process. For example, while listening to stories, participants may think about their practice. In the present study, the story teller usually gets clarification questions from CoUT members. Stories are also discussed in depth within the CoUT. Thus, stories stimulate other learning strategies (active participation, feedback, reflection, etc.) and the cumulative effect is significant. It seems that stories shared in the CoUT remained in participants’ minds for long periods of time. Participants might not be able to retrieve all the learning strategies triggered by the stories, but they may not easily forget the stories. That is why listening to stories comes out as a dominant learning strategy. The present study supports previous studies that argue that stories of lived experiences serve as a catalyst to think about the past and the future (Beattie, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Latta & Kim, 2010)

In conclusion, although teacher communities theoretically make the best workplace learning environments, there is limited practical evidence, especially in the higher education context. The present study provides evidence about the different advantages of participation in teacher community and fills some practical knowledge gaps. However, the study reflects the views of a limited number of participants in a single context. The participant-specific context also has implications. The fact that participants are female university teachers struggling to be successful in an extremely male dominated environment has implications on their continuous involvement in the CoUT, and in turn influenced their learning. Thus, future research in different contexts and concerning multiple cases can provide new insights. However, the study has significant practical implications. In the Ethiopian university context, teacher learning specifically emphasizes providing induction programme for novices on a voluntary basis. There is no system for continuous professional development. The present study shows that teachers benefit from learning environments like the CoUT in terms of the development of their profession knowledge, skills and practices. Participants’ experiences are the main sources of learning, while expert support is limited. This suits the realities of contexts such as Ethiopia, in which staff development is an emerging issue and getting adequately qualified staff developers and other material resources is a great challenge. The CoUT still exists (with another facilitator), but its focus changed from improving teaching skills to developing research skills. The English language improvement focus is still there. A successful CoUT requires making space available, and encouraging experienced teachers to serve as facilitators who can lead the group, guide discussions, and reinforce voluntary participation.
5. Teacher learning from peer observation: Reflection as a key

Abstract
In higher education, peer observation in the context of professional development of teachers is relatively new. Reflection on observed teacher activities is crucial. However, critical analysis on the process of reflection and how it promotes learning especially in the higher education context is lacking. Using a case study approach, this paper explores the process underlying a community-based reflection on peer observation experiences and participant views about its effects on their learning. The study showed that deeper levels of reflection can be reached by the outer levels of observation. Implications for human resource development are discussed.

Key words: peer observation, reflective learning, community of practice, teachers, human resource development

Introduction
Workplace learning is receiving attention in various organizational contexts (Ellinger & Cseh, 2007). Crouse, Doyle and Young (2011) reviewed the literature and summarized workplace learning strategies as taking courses, doing work, working with others, E-learning, observing others, trial and error, reading, reflecting on action, and feedback. Such learning strategies are predominant learning methods in organizations, but how they support learning has been scarcely studied (Lohman, 2005). In the context of teacher development, peer observation is an activity in which an observer watches a peer’s teaching, provides feedback, and initiates reflection (Martin & Double, 1998). In this case, it incorporates four types of workplace learning strategies: observing others, reflection on the observed actions, giving

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and receiving feedback, and interacting with others while discussing the observed experiences. Literature on human resource development indicates that learning with and from others is highly influential when it comes to the learning of teachers (Crouse et al., 2011). The extent to which individuals reflect on informal learning affects their learning outcomes (Ellinger, 2005). However, reflective learning has been given less attention in the area of human resource development (Holden & Griggs, 2011). As a staff development strategy, peer observation has been used for a long time in teacher education for primary and secondary education, but is a relatively new development in higher education (Blackwell, 1996). In literature on peer observation, it is argued that the process of reflection is a key element (Lomas & Kinchin, 2006), but critical analysis of the process of reflection and its influence on learning is lacking (Peel, 2005).

The present study
The present study focused on a community-based discussion of peer observation experiences (Laksov, Mann, & Dahlgren, 2008) in an Ethiopian university. In Ethiopia, professional development of university teachers is a rare practice. The only programme available is an induction programme for novice university teachers on a voluntary basis. As part of a larger research project that aimed at exploring feasible and efficient ways of professional development of university teachers in Ethiopia, participant views about the induction phase of beginning teachers, its impact and learning needs were studied. The findings of the study led to the establishment of a Community of University Teachers (CoUT) (see Chapter 2). Thirty-two female university teachers of Bahir Dar University were willing to participate in this CoUT. Beginning from October 2008, the female university teachers met weekly for an hour at lunchtime to share and discuss teaching-learning experiences and challenges to develop their professional knowledge and skills (see Chapter 4). After a yearlong interaction in the CoUT, the members decided to engage in peer observation. This concurs with the peer review model of Gosling (Gosling, 2002; see below) because CoUT members have equal status and the purpose is professional development. The female teachers’ decision to engage in peer observation was taken in a phase, within the development process of the CoUT period, which can be characterized as the mature phase. At this phase, the CoUT members have already developed shared goals, trust, and social ties (see Chapter 3).

In the CoUT, pre-observation discussions took place to clarify the rationale behind the peer observation, to focus the observation and reflection (Donnelly, 2007) and to ensure ownership (Cosh, 1998). During observation, the observers recorded their observations by
taking brief notes or descriptions of core aspects and the overall context (Martin & Double, 1998). This strategy is better for development purposes (Gosling, 2002) than using checklists which “constrain the observer into recording what the institution suggests is observed, rather than what would benefit the person being observed” (Shorthand, 2010, p. 296). The peer observations were conducted in undergraduate classrooms having more than 50 students per section, with chalk and blackboard as the only teaching materials. During reflection in the CoUT weekly meeting, observers provided brief reports about their observation experiences, gave feedback to the observee and initiated discussions about their concern in the observed lessons.

The focus of the present study, thus, is exploring how community-based reflection on peer observation experiences influences the learning of university teachers. The study provides insights into the process of reflection and about how community-based reflection on peer observation experiences influences university teachers’ learning. This is important as the significance of reflective learning is not extensively examined in the staff development literature (Brown, McCracken, & O’Hare, 2011). The results indicate strategies that create and support reflective learning as a staff development tool in different organizations (Holden & Griggs, 2011).

**Peer observation models**

Gosling (2002) described three models of peer observation: the first is the *evaluation model*: experienced university teachers observe other teachers, make judgments about performance quality and report to a manager who makes decisions. Due to its focus on administrative relevance and lack of control and ownership, observees may be uncomfortable or reluctant to cooperate (Bell, 2001; Bell & Mladenovic, 2008; Donnelly, 2007) which makes the peer observation ‘meaningless’ with regard to teacher development (Cosh, 1998). The second model is the *developmental model*: experts observe other teachers to assess teaching competency, diagnose problems and suggest improvement. However, there are concerns on how comments help improve teaching and whether observed lessons represent general teaching practice (Cosh, 1998). Though observees can benefit from expert feedback, shared ownership is lacking (Gosling, 2002). Cosh (1998) stated that relying on expert-novice relations that focus on correcting bad practices rather than encouraging mutual support mechanisms contributes little to improve teaching. Weller (2009) also noted that peers need to own “a necessary sameness ("mutuality") between the beliefs, values, and experiences” (p. 27) as this creates a feeling of contributing equally to the learning of one another and eliminates tensions that may
occur in expert-novice relationships. In the third model, the peer review model, university teachers with mutual status observe each other’s teaching and engage in reflection for learning purposes. This creates a forum to share good practices, receive non-judgmental feedback, and discuss feelings and insights that can benefit both parties.

Unlike in the evaluation and developmental models, in the peer review model, there is no official reporting; observation experiences are analysed and discussed, not judged, which gives a feeling of trust and confidentiality (Gosling, 2002; Hatzipanagos & Lygo-Baker, 2006). However, this model may create the risk of ‘complacency, conservatism, unfocused’ observation (Gosling, 2002). Skills to observe, provide feedback and support reflection, and appropriate views about teaching-learning for those involved in the peer observation are essential (Blackwell, 1996). Feedback needs to be honest and constructive (Martin & Double, 1998), given in a systematic way and aiming at learning (Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2004). Encouraging open communication strategies which support peers to freely share and reflect on knowledge, skills and experiences is a key for effective workplace learning (Jeon & Kim, 2012). In addition, the peer review model raises concerns on whether peers are qualified to give valid comments to each other, and on how to build teams of university teachers who trust each other (Cosh, 1998). However, such concerns cannot devalue the use of peer observation for learning purpose; rather it shows the need to be systematic and to properly address these concerns.

Peer observation in communities of practice
Current trends recognise learning and knowing as ‘situated, social, and distributed’ (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Learning requires being situated within an authentic activity, context and culture. It requires interaction among people. It is not located in the brain of a single individual but distributed among people, activities and environments. Creating socially rich environments that enhance learning is applauded. Communities of practice are considered as environments that can fulfil such requirements (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). According to Wenger (1998), members of a community of practice have shared interests in a certain practice. They build relationships that help them easily interact and learn together and they develop shared experiences, stories, tools and mechanisms of handling problems. These aspects help them to know what is relevant and how to communicate during interaction among members. Korthagen (2010) argued for community-based reflection on practical experiences for development of concepts and skills that transform practice. It can be concluded that members of a community of practice have different perspectives, experiences and beliefs
which enable them to elaborate and interpret observation experience in different ways. This creates a rich social environment that enhances opportunities for better learning.

Reflection and peer observation

One of the benefits of peer observation is promoting reflective practice (Blackwell, 1996). According to Donnelly (2007), reflection requires examining one’s knowledge, experiences, skills, and attitudes to identify strengths and aspects that need improvement. Reflective practice is seen as a learning strategy that encourages deep learning (Stewart, Keegan, & Stevens, 2008). Brown et al. (2011) argued that reflection is also an important instrument to facilitate transfer of knowledge and skills acquired through staff development focused trainings. To be involved in reflective communication and giving and receiving constructive feedback encourages learning (Doornbos, Bolhuis, & Simons, 2004).

Korthagen (2001) provided a model of the reflection process, the ALACT (Action, Looking back, Awareness, Creating alternatives, and Try) which can be used to guide the reflection process during discussions on observation experience as well as to understand the process itself. The model helps identify actions performed in an observed lesson, provides tools to look back into actions, assesses development of awareness, shows mechanisms of creating alternative solutions to solve identified problems, and provides tools to try alternatives. This process of reflection leads to exploration of new possibilities that can improve practice.

Korthagen and Vasalos (2005), based on the work of Bateson, developed the so called Onion Model (see Figure 5.1), which encompasses six levels that can be revealed in the process of reflection on teaching experiences. From more outer to inner levels, the contents include: issue related to the Environment in which teaching-learning takes place (outsider aspects that influence the teacher, for example students, the classroom, resources); Behaviour (what the teacher does, exhibits); Competences (knowledge and skill for handling teaching-learning issues); teacher’s Beliefs about teaching, learning and students; teacher’s Professional Identity (how the teacher sees herself or himself as a teacher, see Swennen, Jones, & Volman, 2011), Mission (why the teacher is teaching?). These levels influence the practice of teachers, but it is difficult to clearly recognise how this happens unless teachers involve in critical reflection. Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) argued that the process of reflection is an approach that enables teachers to explore the levels and understand the impact on teaching practices. Engaging in reflection about teaching experiences helps teachers to touch upon issues related to the levels of the Onion Model. When teachers are able to reflect upon the
levels of identity and mission, they are practicing core reflection. In core reflection, emphasis is given to creating links between outer and inner levels. For example, if reflection on a problem a teacher experiences (for example, student misconduct) leads to exploring the inner aspect of teacher identity and mission that might trigger student misconduct, core reflection is practiced. Instead of taking much time trying to analyse the problematic situation, core reflection emphasizes on exploring inner levels (issue related to teachers identity and mission) that might influence the problematic situation. This way, core reflection leads to identification of new opportunities to tackle the problem in a better way.

Figure 5.1 The onion model describing different levels of reflection (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005, p. 54)

Apart from fostering the process of reflection the benefit of peer observation is associated with the product of reflection: understanding and confidence. Peer observation enhances understanding of teaching-learning through increased awareness about the views and practices of others’ (Byrne, Brown, & Challen, 2010). It encourages assessing and improving one’s own teaching practices as a result of reflection on the practices of others (Cosh, 1998; Donnelly, 2007). Peel (2005) argued that peer observation combines ‘theory, action and reflection’. This creates interplay among theoretical concepts, experiential knowledge and social and personal knowledge which leads to better conception of teaching that can transform practice. Such experience-based reflection (Nicholls, 2000; Peel, 2005) helps teachers to clearly recognise the “process of teaching and the thinking behind it” (Donnelly, 2007, p. 124). In this case, the process of teaching can be related to the outer levels of the Onion Model (for example what the teacher does, the impact of the learning environment) and the thinking behind it can be related to inner levels (of the teacher’s belief, identity and mission). By under-
standing these processes, teachers develop personal knowledge that allows them to generate alternative strategies suitable for specific context of their learning environments (Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2005).

Recognizing the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching of peers helps to develop new insights and peer support enhances confidence to practice new teaching methods (Donnelly, 2007). Peer observation reduces anxiety and supports development of confidence to teach and talk about teaching. Due to these benefits of peer observation, scholars like Brown et al. (2011) argued for incorporating reflective learning trajectories in staff development initiatives in workplace contexts. This is because reflection promotes transfer, shows what hampers and facilitates transfer, helps participants reflect on their personal characteristics and think in-depth about their strengths and weakness and promotes a learning climate in organizations.

To benefit from peer observation to the fullest, observees need to honestly analyse and accept feedback. Cosh (1998) argues that peer observation should influence teachers to be inquisitive and ready to accept new ideas. This can be achieved when “concerns and anxieties… dominant behaviours, beliefs, values and basic assumptions” of university teachers are taken into consideration in the implementation of peer observation initiatives (Lomas & Kinchin, 2006, p. 212). It is also important to look for mechanisms of tackling concerns related to the capability of peers to give valid and constructive feedback (Cosh, 1998; Gosling, 2002). One possible way can be to provide observation and reflective skills development training or to have an expert facilitator (with expertise in teaching-learning) who can promote a critical and reflective attitude in teachers. Putnam and Borko (2000) encourage using an expert facilitator in reflections conducted in the context of teachers communities.

In the present study, a case in an Ethiopian university, the process of community-based reflection on peer observation experiences and how this impacted teacher learning were explored. The following research questions guided the study:

1. How does community-based reflection on peer observation experiences influence teacher learning in an Ethiopian community of female university teachers?
2. Does Korthagen’s Onion Model help to understand community based reflection?
3. What are the views of participants about effects of peer observation and community-based reflection in an Ethiopian community of female university teachers?
To answer these research questions, peer observation discussions in the CoUT were recorded and analysed to identify themes that were initiated and explored during the discussions on the peer observation experiences – and to explore links among themes. The outcome of analysis of the discussion data was supplemented with interview data.

Method

Participants and data sources
Out of the total twenty of the participants of the study (see Chapter 3), in year two of the CoUT, ten participants observed each other’s teaching. Seven of them (Lily, Meti, Saron, Amsal, Kelem, Alem, and Senay) were CoUT members from the beginning; three of them (Etsub, Serke and Wosen) joined the CoUT in its second year. The long membership contributed to mutual respect and trust which enhanced the benefit from peer observation (Gosling, 2002; Shorthand, 2010). To create a more conducive working relationship (Byrne et al., 2010), participants chose whom to observe and by whom they were to be observed. Each participant took both an observer and observee role with the same peer (except Serke, observee only).

The total of nine peer observation discussions was audio recorded. The peer observation discussions were conducted in the context of the CoUT. The nine audio record discussions were named with each observee’s fictitious name. Each discussion incorporated two major parts: (1) observer’s report of the observation experience and received feedback, and (2) discussions made based on the research questions that guided this study. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with the participants to answer research question 2. The interviews focused on participant views about the benefits of watching other’s teaching, benefits of making community-based discussions on observation experiences, and experiences in giving and receiving feedback. During interviews, issues raised in the peer observation based reflection and discussion were addressed to help interviewees retrieve their experiences.

Data analysis procedure
The audio recordings of the peer observation discussions were repeatedly listened to in order to understand the data. Then, a preliminary analysis on the data was made using the ALACT model of Korthagen & Vasalos (2005). The preliminary analysis focused on exploring actions performed in the observed lesson (for example, what the observee does, what her students do), concretization of (looking back on) the observation experience (for example, identifying questions and comments raised during the group-based discussion, and observee reac-
5. Teacher learning from peer observation: Reflection as a key

...tions to the questions and comments) and participants learning, awareness (looking for indicators about what participants learned in the discussions; for example, when a member says “I realized.....”, “this is new issue”, “I learned about...”). After that an inventory of instances related to the contents of the reflection was made (see Table 5.1). The pattern matching technique (Yin 2009), in which an empirically found theme is compared with a prediction based on theory (in this case, the contents in the Onion Model), was used to see if the contents addressed in the nine cases match with contents of the Onion Model (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). The explanation building technique (Yin 2009) in which data is analysed to explore causal links among events (how and why something happened) was used to examine how the reflection process created links between the outer and deeper levels (belief, identity and mission). The explanations were anchored in key incidents occurring in the exemplary cases. The exemplary cases were chosen based on the extent in which the richness of the case gave access to most layers in the Onion Model. In this way, an answer was sought to research question 3.

Analysis of interview data was used to search for views and experiences of participants about peer observation, reflection and their effects. As described in chapter 3 (method section), inductive thematic analysis approach was used to arrive at categories of themes about participants’ views on issue related to their peer observation experiences. The identified thematic categories were explained and interpreted using exemplary quotations. This along with the analysis of the discussion data was used to answer the research questions and draw conclusions. The quality of the data analysis was checked using an inter-rater reliability test in which a second rater analysed a sample of the data (three interview transcripts which is 30% of the total, and one peer observation based discussion audio data which is 11% of the total). The second rater was asked to repeatedly read the transcripts, identify key words and phrases that indicate themes, make broader thematic categories, and organize the broader thematic categories in relation to participants’ views about peer observation, its benefits (learning outcomes and impact) and challenges in involving in peer observations. For the audio data, the rater was asked to follow three main steps to make a preliminary analysis: identify the reported action that happened in the observed lesson, identify major issues raised during the discussion (like questions asked, comments given, and observee reactions), identify issue that show participants’ learning. All the themes identified by the primary rater were also identified by the second rater. But one theme identified by the second rater (reflection skills development) helped the primary rater to re-examine the whole set of data to see if the new theme was re-
flected across the data. This helped the primary rater to recognise reflective skill development as one of the learning outcomes.

Results

In this section, outcomes of the analysis of peer observation discussion data and interview data are presented. The first part focuses on answering the first research question based on analysis of the peer observation discussion data.

*How does community-based discussion on peer observation experiences influence teacher learning in an Ethiopian community of female university teachers? Does Korthagen’s Onion Model help to understand community based reflection?*

In Table 5.1, a summary of actions performed in the observed lessons, main issues discussed while members of the CoUT share and reflect on peer observation experiences, and contents of the discussions as related to the contents of the Onion Model are briefly presented.

**Table 5.1 Description of the nine cases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Actions performed in the observed lessons</th>
<th>Main issues (raised during reflection in the CoUT)</th>
<th>Contents (of the Onion Model) addressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wosen</td>
<td>Students failed to make a presentation; students were unable to tell the reason. The teacher was annoyed and decided to lecture again.</td>
<td>Why was the teacher annoyed and made a quick decision? How to understand student problems?</td>
<td>Environment, Behaviour, Competency, Belief, Identity, Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amsal</td>
<td>Brainstorming, discussion and lecture were used. Students were active; but they were wondering how to find notes written on the blackboard. Teacher integrated real life examples with concepts, created smooth relations with students, but didn’t clean the blackboard and wrote in an unorganized way.</td>
<td>How to integrate real life situations into the teaching-learning? Blackboard utilization and its effect on learning</td>
<td>Environment, Behaviour, Competency, Belief, Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelem</td>
<td>Brainstorming, discussion, question and answer were used; students were very active. Teacher integrated students’ prior experiences with lesson contents; created relaxed atmosphere; had good relations with students.</td>
<td>How to plan tasks related to students’ prior experience? How to create a pleasant classroom atmosphere?</td>
<td>Environment, Behaviour, Competency, Belief, Identity, Mission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 5. Teacher learning from peer observation: Reflection as a key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
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<th>Main issues (raised during reflection in the CoUT)</th>
<th>Contents (of the Onion Model) addressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meti</td>
<td>Students presented an assignment; but they complained about lack of resources; students attending the presentation were active (commenting, asking questions). Teacher was asking questions, giving feedback, facilitating.</td>
<td>How to prepare &amp; supervise student assignments?</td>
<td>Behaviour, Competency, Belief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senay</td>
<td>Groups of students made presentations of a reading assignment; Students attending the presentation were passive listeners. Teacher gave summaries but not feedback.</td>
<td>How to give feedback? How to make all students active?</td>
<td>Behaviour, Competency, Belief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etsub</td>
<td>Students were not very active (mostly listening to the lecture and taking notes). Teacher didn’t give enough opportunities to students to be active; she didn’t give lecture notes, only informed about books to be read.</td>
<td>How to make students active during lectures? Can students make their own notes? (barriers and alternatives)</td>
<td>Environment, Competency, Belief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alem</td>
<td>Students practiced communication skills via role play, gave peer feedback to each other. Teacher facilitated role play.</td>
<td>In what situation role play could work best?</td>
<td>Competency, Belief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serke</td>
<td>Students were writing a piece of an article individually. Teacher tried to give feedback to each individual student.</td>
<td>Challenges of giving individual feedback in large classes. How to make giving feedback effective and easier?</td>
<td>Competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saron</td>
<td>Students were not very active; few students were responding to the questions; mostly listening to the lecture and taking notes. Teacher lectured and raised questions in between, but heard responses of few students and rushed back to lecturing.</td>
<td>How lecture can be combined with other active learning methods?</td>
<td>Competency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Table 5.1, Environment and Behaviour related issues were raised almost in half of the cases; Competency related issues were addressed in all the nine cases; issues related to Belief were discussed in more than half of the cases (seven cases); and Identity and Mission were touched upon in one-third of the cases. How these contents were addressed is discussed using three exemplary cases which were selected based on richness.
The first exemplary case is a reflection on Wosen’s lesson. Her students were expected to give a presentation of a summary of the content that was presented in the previous lessons, but they couldn’t do it, and kept quiet when asked why (Environment). This annoyed Wosen and she immediately decided to lecture again (Behaviour). During the discussion, after describing these scenes to CoUT members, the observer asked why Wosen was annoyed. Wosen explained:

_They did not understand my lectures. All my efforts were useless [...] This group is the worst of all the students [...] I have to lecture again._

Wosen quickly decided to lecture again thinking that students were unable to present because they didn’t understand the content. She was not annoyed because students had problems to present but because she was under the impression her previous lectures were useless. That means she blamed the students. During reflection, CoUT members raised different questions. For example,

_Did your students understand what was expected from them? Did you give enough instructions on what and how? [A question which can be related to Behaviour, Competency, Mission]_

_I kept them informed. It was not as such a difficult task. It is simply summarizing what I lectured. They were asked to focus only on two chapters. I think they are not motivated. [Wosen’s response]_

Wosen’s response exposed her Beliefs. She believed that making a presentation (summarizing a chapter) is an easy task and she simply associated students’ failure with lack of motivation - though students didn’t say anything. It seems that her unverified Belief about her students’ behaviour resulted in her experienced Behaviour (being offended). Interactions initiated other questions, concerns and suggestions. For example,

_Do you think that your students fear you? I am a bit confused why any of them didn’t say anything [...] I think maybe they fear you or maybe they don’t want to tell the reason in front of their classmates [...] It is better to ask about these things privately. [Question and concern of a CoUT member – can be related to Identity issues like the extent to which the teacher feels to be perceived as an authority by the students]_

Members of the CoUT were concerned about why students kept quiet, why Wosen was annoyed and rushed to decide to lecture again. They raised questions and comments that triggered examining reasons behind her behaviour which helped Wosen to think about the inci-
dent. She said “I was a bit hot-tempered. I rushed for decision. I shouldn’t have made that decision. I am thinking of my behaviour. I will reflect more on it”. The discussions helped the observee to reflect on her own practice. It seems that Wosen was motivated to continue to reflect on herself. Thus, in Wosen’s case, the observation report was directed at two levels of analysis, Environment (students who are unable to give a presentation and unable to explain why) and Behaviour (teacher was annoyed and decided to lecture again). Reflection on these levels led to critically explore the inner levels of the Onion Model.

A second example is taken from a reflection on Amsal’s lesson. The report on Amsal’s lesson focused on effective use of brainstorming, group discussion and lecturing (Competency, behaviour, belief, mission), smooth relationships with students reflected in smiling faces, relaxed atmosphere (Behaviour), and ineffective blackboard utilization (Behaviour and Competency). During the reflection process, the observer commented as follows:

> You didn’t clean the blackboard, you were writing here and there […] Students were wondering where to get what you wrote […] while searching for what you wrote, they may miss other things […] you lose their attention.

In this comment, issues related to Behaviour (teacher not cleaning the blackboard and writing in unorganized way), Environment (students wondering where to find what the teacher wrote), Belief (cleaning a blackboard is essential; one of the essences of teaching is getting students’ attention) are reflected. Amsal responded to the comment:

> I always clean the blackboard [I used] […] But I hate to clean for others. Whenever I get it unclean, I try to clean a small portion and write on that.

From Amsal’s reaction, it is clear to understand how much her Belief (cleaning own ‘dirt’) and Identity (unpleased to clean somebody’s ‘dirt’) has influenced her Behaviour. As a less experienced teacher, her own Identity is a matter of concern. She is not there to clean for other university teachers. She didn’t seem to realize the pedagogical aspect of not cleaning the blackboard (Competency). She only gave attention to her self-esteem (Identity).

The interaction between observer and observee initiated the discussion on blackboard utilization, and CoUT members shared their experiences. They agreed that not cleaning the blackboard is ‘becoming a tradition’ and associated it with poor time management. University teachers write notes on the blackboard till the last minute of their session and leave without cleaning. A CoUT member summarized the relevance of the discussion as:
It is a good lesson for all of us. On the one hand, we have to manage our time properly and clean the blackboard we used. On the other hand, whenever we get a dirty blackboard, we have to clean it because it diverts students’ attention.

In this case, the reflection process created opportunities to experience issues that the observee never thought of before. Amsal seemed to have never thought of the destructive effect of inappropriate blackboard usage. After the reflection and discussion she realized that she was doing it wrong. She said:

I shouldn’t allow my students to read a certain biology concept while I am teaching linguistics. I realized that not cleaning the blackboard is putting a distracter in your classroom to negatively affect student learning.

Basing on observee’s Behaviour (not cleaning the blackboard), CoUT members were able to touch upon deep levels (Belief, Identity) and helped participants critically look into their practice that they had never thought and discussing the outer levels of the Onion Model lead to discussing deeper levels.

A third example is taken from reflection on Kelem’s lesson. During reflection on Kelem’s lesson, one of the issues that CoUT members appreciated was the good relationship she had with her students. The observer commented on Kelem’s Behaviour as:

I was amazed by the way she interacts with students. Her facial expression [smiling, relaxed] and gesture was very amazing. Students felt free to forward their ideas. It was one of the best classroom sessions I ever saw. [which can be related to Behaviour, Environment and Belief]

When asked to reflect on how she managed to create a smooth and productive classroom atmosphere, Kelem replied:

I think I am friendly... I usually encourage students to interact. That makes them feel safe or relaxed.

The observer-observee interaction created an environment in which other CoUT members expressed their frustration (which is related to Belief and Identity) in creating interactional relations with students. One of the CoUT members explained:

I am serious when I teach. I feel that if I am relaxed, smiling, students will not respect me; they will be motivated to disturb. But that is a different perception; I realized that it is possible to help students learn better by making them relaxed.
CoUT members had the feeling that there should be a distance between teacher and students (Belief); they preferred to be strict and authoritative (Identity or Belief). These reinforce their Behaviour; they distanced themselves from their students. But the discussion revealed that teacher-student relationships need to be interactional and collaborative (Mission or Belief). The reflection process brought the tension between Belief/Identity and Mission visible and increased participant awareness. In Kelem’s case also, the observer’s reflection on outer levels (Behaviour and Environment) led to exploring the deep levels.

As the preceding descriptions and interpretations showed, the reflection process usually began with exploring outer levels (Environment and Behaviour). Through questions and concerns forwarded, reactions of observees, and interactions among CoUT members, deep levels were touched and reflected upon. The interesting thing is that deeper levels of reflection can be reached via the outer levels of observation, and that the reflection on the observation may clash with the observer’s beliefs on teaching which gives rise to new reflections. In general, reflections are better when a conflict between expectations and experience shows up. In the three cases discussed above, there was a conflict between expectations of the observer/observee/other CoUT and the experiences faced while observing or reflecting or discussing in the CoUT. The conflicts triggered different clarification questions, comments, and discussion topics which led to exploring various aspects deeply. Thus, using the onion model can be a good strategy to understand reflection processes as well as to explore dominant reflection patterns which can help design relevant interventions to enhance benefiting from peer observation based reflections. As the summaries in Table 5.1 indicate, deeper levels of the onion model were addressed in few cases; whereas in all the cases, the outer levels were addressed. Understanding such patterns can be helpful to design strategies that can enable exploration of deeper levels.

What are the views of participants about effects of peer observation and community-based reflection in an Ethiopian community of female university teachers?

Analysis of interview data indicated that partaking in peer observation and consequent reflection helped participants experience a variety of teaching methods, get relevant feedback and enhance motivation to change behaviour and practice (see Table 5.2). Yet, participants believed that it requires time and that it was demanding.
5. Teacher learning from peer observation: Reflection as a key

Experience different teaching-learning strategies
Participants experienced use of different teaching-learning methods, and reflected on strengths and concerns. Interviewees recognised the relevance as follows.

*You may not feel the full classroom atmosphere; but [...] we always had hot discussions. That gives opportunities to experience how different people teach, what assumptions they follow while using a certain method [...] I learned a lot. (Alem)*

*Even discussions about lessons that other colleagues observed give new insights. Things that you didn’t emphasize while observing a colleague’s classroom might be important for other observers [...] Because we have different ways of looking at things, the group reflection was enriching. (Kelem)*

Table 5.2 Summary of participant views (N=10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience different teaching-learning strategies</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting genuine feedback</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation for self-reflection</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to change practice</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement for better preparation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of reflection skills</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time investment</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Watching, sharing and reflecting gave participants ample opportunities to experience different approaches, to share their views and to provide feedbacks which were relevant in creating a rich environment and to construct their own meaning. It also helped them to assess their own practice in the light of others’ practices. Explanations like “You can compare and assess your teaching with the strengths and weakness of colleagues” (Lily) were recurrent in interviews. When asked what they learned from observing others’ teaching, participants also tended to compare.

*I do ask questions, and randomly ask two or three students to provide answer [...] I never gave enough time for students to think about the questions. But in Kelem’s lesson, I saw her giving more time for students, she didn’t rush. (Saron)*

Here, Saron tried to review her own practice in light of what she observed. Her observation not only enabled her to experience how her colleague teaches but also initiated re-examining her own teaching.
Getting genuine feedback

When asked about what they learned from CoUT based reflections on their lessons, all the participants tended to describe specific feedback they received. For example, Etsub reflected on the relevance of discussions on how to give lecture notes as follows:

I didn’t think about contextual challenges [...] [from the feedback] I realized that students are dependent on lecture notes. Even if you indicate reference book, students may not go to the library [...] they may have difficulties understanding the English...there are not enough books for the large number of students [...] So if my concern is students learning, giving lecture notes is important [she learned these issues from the feedback].

In describing their experiences about giving and receiving feedback, participants focused on explaining their expectations and actual experiences. For example Saron said

I had the feeling that giving feedback might be difficult. You don’t want to make your colleague feel bad [...] may hesitate to talk about weaknesses. But in my experience [...] I didn’t feel that we had problems in giving feedback about things to improve.

Only one participant felt that providing negative feedback was a challenge. Participants felt that expected challenges in feedback provision were not significantly experienced due to its purpose and trust among peers.

There is nothing to put on paper for evaluation purposes. The objective is learning from each other [...] Observees also accepted it [both positive and negative feedback] without fear of any consequences [...] We knew each other very well; I think that made things easier. (Lily)

I think we felt that the female teachers group is the right one to tell our weaknesses. (Saron)

Thus, the collegial and trustful relationships among participants contributed to successful reflection on both strengths and weaknesses. It seemed that the fact that only female teachers met in the CoUT was relevant for the success of this particular community.

Motivation for self-reflection

Participants believed that the discussions about the observed lessons and the feedback gained encouraged them to self-reflect on their own teaching. For example:

When the observation experiences were discussed, I started to check my practice. It makes you think about yourself, ask about your practice. I started to ask ‘did I do like this?’ It helped me to make critical reflections about what I do in my lessons. (Kelem)
5. Teacher learning from peer observation: Reflection as a key

*It helped me to be critical [...] Reflect about what I did, what went well, what went wrong, how it should be done in future. (Saron)*

**Motivation to change practice**

One of the benefits interviewees explained were motivation to try new methods. Experiencing the teaching of others helped them to develop the motivation to try what others are practicing.

*For example, after reflection on Kelem’s lesson, I focused on looking for students’ prior knowledge and ways of incorporating it in my lesson. (Lily)*

Lily, for example, experienced how Kelem integrated students’ prior knowledge into her teaching. The experience had effect on Lily’s understanding about how and why to use students’ prior knowledge which enhanced her motivation to use it in her own teaching.

**Encouraging better preparation**

The impact of preparation for a lesson that was to be observed was recurrently raised in interviews.

*No one on earth wants to show bad things to others; so you make good preparation [...] If peer observation is done continuously, better preparations will be made consistently and may make that a habit. (Kelem)*

All participants felt that knowing that someone is coming to watch their teaching forced them to prepare well for the lecture. They believed that if this is done regularly, it could have a great influence on their overall teaching practice.

**Development of reflection skills**

In the interviews, participants felt that they lacked the skills to carry out good peer observations. They associated lack of skill with the variations in the areas observers focused on while reflecting: suggestions like “we need to develop observation skills” (Kelem) were recurrent in the interviews. However, there was also evidence that showed participants’ increased awareness about peer observation and enhanced skills in providing feedback.

*I compared my practice with others [...] I tried to give attention to the focal issues colleagues focused on during reporting and discussing on observation experiences and compare it with mine [...] All these things made me more critical about my practice. (Kelem)*

In general, participants perceived peer observation and reflection positively. They believed that it created an environment that promotes use of different teaching-learning methods in
different situations, development of new insights into teaching-learning, self-reflection skill, and motivation to try new teaching-learning methods.

**Time investment**
Participants recognised problems of time investment; observing each other’s teaching is time consuming. For example, Saron said “it requires giving time to observe and share feedback”. However, experiencing the benefits, all the participants believed that peer observation should be encouraged and ideas related to “It should be incorporated in the system of our university” (Lily) were recurrently mentioned in the interviews.

**Discussion and conclusion**
Analysis of the process and contents of reflection indicated that discussions on easily observable aspects (like teacher behaviour or the environment) led to exploring deeper levels of teacher belief, identity and mission and resulted in deep learning and development of reflective skills. These developments were possible due to the group dynamics which created a rich learning situation that encouraged exposition and interplay of each individual’s beliefs and experiences. As the peer observation-reflection trajectory was implemented in a mature CoUT, the well-developed collegiality and trust among members was also an important contributor to the open discussions and critical reflections made on observation experiences. The analysis of interview data also supported these outcomes; it showed that peer observation and reflection in the CoUT gave participants ample opportunities to learn about different teaching-learning approaches, to get relevant feedback, to improve their lesson preparation (before the observation), to be motivated to make self-reflections and change practice.

Analysis of the process and contents of reflection showed that though initial observer report and feedback focused more on outer levels (Environment, Behaviour, Competency), touching inner levels (Belief, Identity, Mission) was also possible. Through the discussion and reflection process, concrete observation experiences (Nicholls, 2000) on outer levels were elaborated, interpreted, and served as a base to explore inner levels. The reflection in the CoUT enabled observers and other CoUT members to raise clarification questions that concretize experiences (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005); observees were able to clarify why they do a certain activity, and got plenty of opportunities to examine feedback from the observers and other CoUT members. Participant interactions in the CoUT created opportunities and insights that helped teachers to examine and question their assumptions, views and prac-
tices. These were relevant in illuminating the thinking behind observed behaviours (Donnelly, 2007) and led to exploration of inner levels of teacher Belief, Identity and Mission.

The community-based reflection also created a resourceful learning environment in which the university teachers were exposed to different teaching-learning strategies used in each observed lesson, and a variety of views were brought together. This enhanced awareness about views and practices of others (Byrne et al., 2010). Different people have different experiences, ways of doing things, perspectives, and beliefs. Such group dynamics influenced ways of seeing, analysing and interpreting concrete experiences. Even the same situation elicits different thoughts on different people (Korthagen, 2010). When this variety is shared and reflected on in a community, it creates broader outlooks. Exposure to broader cohorts of ideas and interpretations creates a resourceful environment that enhances questioning, comparing and contrasting, which can lead to more meaningful conceptualizations. Thus, the reflection process in the CoUT was an enriching social environment where participant university teachers looked at concrete observation experiences from different perspectives and gained opportunities to develop their knowledge about teaching-learning.

It also enabled the members to reassess their own practice not only in ‘light of the teaching of others’ (Cosh, 1998), but also taking into account the views and perspectives of others. Such constructive peer feedback encourages workplace learning (Doornbos et al., 2004) which is reflected in participants’ motivation to continue to self-reflect and practice new teaching methods in their teaching. The results match with the results of studies that show the significance of reflection in facilitating transfer of knowledge and skill into practice (Brown et al., 2011).

The results also relate with the significance of reflective learning in encouraging deep learning rather than surface learning (Stewart et al., 2008). In this study, the peer observation trajectory incorporated four kinds of workplace learning strategies: learning through observation (Lohman, 2005), giving and receiving feedback (Gosling, 2002), reflecting (Ellinger, 2005), and discussing with others (Crouse et al., 2011). This combination was powerful in enhancing learning; participants were exposed to a variety of experiences, perspectives, and learning opportunities that contributed to deep learning.

Weller (2009) noted that peers need to own ‘a necessary sameness (“mutuality”)’ between their beliefs, values, and experiences’. In the present study, differences in teaching experience, beliefs and values were not as such distractive; rather, they were sources of learning. For instance, some participants believed that teacher-student relationships need to be interactional and collaborative; others were against this because of fear of being disrespected.
This difference in appreciation was a source of deep discussions about the pedagogical consequences of interpersonal relationships and it helped participants to challenge their beliefs and to develop new insights. Thus, the most important thing with peer relations is the extent to which peers are collegial, have mutual trust and a feeling of helping each other (Byrne et al., 2010). Mutual trust enhances confidentiality; for instance in saying “I think we felt that the female university teachers group is the right one to tell our weaknesses (Saron)”, participants were indicating that their personal stories need to be kept confidential with people whom they trust. This suggests that the fact that only female teachers meeting in the CoUT was relevant for all the successes. There was no reporting (Gosling, 2002), the emphasis was on analysing and interpreting observation experiences to learn from each other. Yet meeting with trustful peers was most valued. That means participants’ interaction in the CoUT for more than a year was a good grounding to help them develop mutual trust and collegial relations. This was essential to minimize feeling of being judged (Lomas & Kinchin, 2006) and enhance realistic reflection on observation experiences. So, there are three necessary conditions for fruitful peer observation discussion in the context of the CoUT: (1) no reporting outside the group, (2) strong emphasis on analysing and interpreting, (3) having groups of teachers who really trust each other.

This study has limitations; one of them is its focus on observer reports of observation experiences. The observers made their own decisions on what to report and not to report. It would have been interesting to see the reflection process when observer report is supported with video records of observed lessons. Another limitation is a lack of mechanism to enhance peer observation skills of participants. Thus, preparing a prior programme that empowers participants with peer observation skills could also increase the benefits. The researcher’s role as facilitator of the CoUT is also a limitation. As indicated in Chapter 3, it was impossible to disentangle the perspectives of the researcher and the facilitator. It will be interesting to see results from studies in which researchers play only the researcher role. Researcher’s personal interpretation of peer observation discussion data can also be considered as a limitation. Lastly, as this study focused on a single case and context, further research in multiple cases in different contexts can provide richer insights.

In conclusion, for less experienced university teachers who are open and eager to learn, whose professional identity is focal and not yet settled, peer observation-based reflection in a community is found to be a very powerful tool for professional development. It created a social forum in which concrete observation experiences were examined, elaborated, and interpreted from different perspectives as each individual has unique experiences, views and
5. Teacher learning from peer observation: Reflection as a key

assumptions about teaching-learning. Such an environment enhances touching contents related to inner levels (Beliefs, Identities and Mission) as the interplay among the views, experiences and assumptions of different people leads to exploring inner qualities. The onion model (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005) was helpful to explore and understand the reflection process as well as dominant reflection patterns exhibited in community based reflections. This can motivate and lead to looking for strategies that can promote utilizing peer observation based reflections in a way that addresses all the levels proportionally. However, group-based reflection on observation experiences needs to be implemented in an environment of well-developed collegiality and trust among members. Scholars argue that less attention is given to reflective learning in human resource development (Holden & Griggs, 2011) and recommendation is given to incorporate it (Brown et al., 2011). The implications of the present study also support the recommendations as observation-reflection trajectory undertaken in the context of community of practice is found to be a key to promote deep learning, but also to encourage a genuine learning culture.
6. General discussion

The main aim of this research was to explore the professional development of university teachers in Ethiopia within a community of teachers. The project consisted of four empirical studies. The first investigated the experiences of beginning university teachers with an existing induction programme, while the other three focused on learning in the context of teacher communities and the development of a teacher community. The following main research questions guided the studies:

2. How and why does a group of female university teachers at an Ethiopian university develop as a community of university teachers? (Chapter 3).
3. What and how do female Ethiopian university teachers learn within their community? (Chapter 4).
4. How does reflection on peer observation experiences within the community support the learning of female Ethiopian university teachers? (Chapter 5).

The experience with an induction programme (research question 1) was studied using mixed research methods, collecting qualitative (9 participants) and quantitative data (97 participants) at two Ethiopian universities. Teacher community development (research question 2) and learning within a teacher community (research question 3 and 4) were studied using qualitative methods in a case study approach which included observations, interviews and group discussion data. Thirty-two female university teachers at Bahir Dar University volunteered to participate in the teacher community, of which 20 were involved in the interviews, peer observations and/or group discussions for the studies reported in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. In the following sections, the results and implications of the four studies are discussed.

Main findings

Novice university teachers’ experience with the induction programme

Teaching in a university is a demanding and complex task. Novice university teachers possess sufficient subject matter knowledge, but as most of them are not educated to teach, they lack the necessary knowledge and skills to support students to learn (Beaty, 1998; Brancato,
6. General discussion

2003). Previous studies in higher education about teacher induction programmes have reported positive outcomes of the impact of induction programmes on teacher learning and teaching practices (for example Ho, Watkins, & Kelly, 2001; Stes, Clement, & Van Petegem, 2007). However, there have also been concerns about the adequacy of induction programmes. Scholars argue that short courses are inadequate to effectively change teachers’ practices and can only serve as a starting point for professional development (Isaacs & Parker, 2010). To change their teaching practice, university teachers have to be involved in on-going teacher learning trajectories throughout their careers. Research also indicates that induction programmes should not focus on providing theories of teaching and learning, but rather should enable teachers to improve their teaching practice and enhance the learning of their students (Isaacs & Parker, 2010; McKeachie, 1997). Short induction programmes are believed to have a significant role in influencing teachers’ desire for on-going learning. Providing practical tips that can ease adaptation to the new career can be a tool to influence practice and to motivate teachers for further learning. More advanced concepts can be dealt with later, rather than during the stressful induction period.

In this dissertation, the first study (Chapter 2) examined the experiences of 97 university teachers who participated in an induction programme. This programme was offered in two formats: three cohorts attended the induction programme for five consecutive days and one cohort attended the induction programme in a blended mode for 10 weeks (biweekly meetings for half a day). The main research questions addressed in this study were: How did participants experience the induction programme? How did they use their new knowledge and skills in their teaching? What were their professional development wishes?

Guskey’s (2000) professional development evaluation model was used as a framework to study participant reactions and learning wishes. The outcomes of the study provided evidence about the importance of induction programmes for novice university teachers and identified problems with short induction programmes. The novice Ethiopian university teachers who took part in the induction programme gained insight into teaching methods and developed confidence to teach. In line with the theory, the induction programme proved to be a good starting point for further professional development. However, the participants expressed concerns about time limitations, the depths of learning, the lack of practical tips, insignificant attention to subject (disciplinary) variations and a tension between theory and context during transfer. The participants in the blended mode showed more positive reactions than those in the intensive mode.
Unlike the induction programmes studied in previous research, which involved an extended duration that gave participants ample opportunities to practice and reflect on the use of teaching and learning concepts in actual teaching (for example, Stes et al., 2007), the induction programme studied and reported in this dissertation used an intensive mode that did not give sufficient opportunities for practice and reflection. This negatively affected the learning of the participants. The focus of the intensive induction programme mainly had to do with orienting participants on the concepts of good teaching, but it did not give time to apply the concepts in actual teaching or support participants to share and reflect on their experiences within the induction programme. The emphasis on touching every aspect of teaching instead of providing practical tips created transfer problems. The programme was quite theoretical and did not create an environment where inductees gained adequate insight and skills into how they could change their teaching. The result supports previous studies which demonstrated the inadequacy of short induction programmes when it comes to bringing about changes in the practices of teachers (Isaacs & Parker, 2010; McKeachie, 1997).

Another result of this study is related to participants’ concerns about the attention given to specific subject variations. Novice university teachers from different faculties participated in the same induction programme. This one-size-fits-all induction programme was considered problematic. There was little possibility or effort to adapt general teaching and learning concepts for specific disciplinary contexts. This did not help inductees to acquire knowledge and skills which could be used in a specific disciplinary context. This result coincides with arguments in several studies about an insufficient focus given to teaching culture differences across disciplines in professional development programmes (Becher, 1994; Malcolm & Zukas, 2001; McGuinnes, 1997; Neumann, 2001).

The study concluded that short induction programmes cannot bring about change in the practices of university teachers, and alternatives approaches have to be designed if teaching practice is to be influenced. Previous studies showing the insufficiency of induction programmes in positively influencing teacher learning and practices have focused on the inability of short induction programmes to provide adequate opportunities to practice the concepts of good teaching-learning (Isaacs & Parker, 2010). In studies that reported a positive impact of induction programmes, the programmes had relatively extended durations. For example, the study by Stes et al. (2007) examined an induction programme that was offered over a year, in which teachers met once a month to reflect on their experiences with the use of particular methods in actual teaching. The significance of this extended duration is that it gives teachers opportunities to see how a certain method can be used in their specific situation, as
well as to obtain relevant feedback and insights as they share and reflect on their experience; this supports improving the learning and practices of teachers. Such induction differs from short induction programmes (such as the Ethiopian case), which mainly focus on introducing the concepts of good teaching-learning. Thus, longer duration and practice-oriented induction were lacking in the Ethiopian university context, and this had negative consequences for teachers’ learning and transfer of learning into practice.

Especially in contexts like Ethiopia, in which induction programmes are seen as a good option for teacher development, this study provides valuable insights into finding alternative ways of supporting the professional development of novice university teachers. It can help policymakers, researchers and practitioners to reconsider their policies, conduct research to evaluate their practices and explore other possible ways of teacher development that can positively influence practice. The study has also implications for the organization of induction programmes; for example, programme designers should focus on extended durations, make induction programmes practice-oriented and pay adequate attention to discipline-specific concerns.

For the last issue, preparing discipline-specific inductions is an option. Another strategy would be creating small, discipline-specific groups that can discuss and reflect on how to translate general teaching-learning concepts into a discipline-specific context. Using the expertise of experienced teachers from each discipline to coach or mentor inductees during and after induction programmes could also be helpful. Furthermore, involving teachers in communities where they can share and reflect on their specific problems can help to address discipline-specific problems. The study also implies the need to create additional learning opportunities to influence the teaching practices of university teachers.

Having concluded that induction programmes did not bring effective change in the practice of teachers, as a next step, teacher communities were considered as a good alternative for the professional development of university teachers. Although the traditional Ethiopian values of cooperation and communal responsibility are not often recognised in the academic arena, they are still important in contemporary Ethiopia (Amare, 2009). Adding this to the international trend which emphasises collaborative learning in communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) or communities of learning (Beishuizen, 2008), it is important to examine what and how university teachers can learn in a teacher community. The author created a community of university teachers (CoUT) in which female teachers of Bahir Dar University volunteered to participate after attending an initial workshop that aimed at introducing the intended CoUT and giving opportunities to teachers to reflect on their preferences and opin-
ions concerning the what and how of the CoUT. The development of the CoUT (Chapter 3), and its impact on university teachers’ learning (Chapter 4 and 5) were studied. In the following sections, the results of these three studies are discussed.

**Development of the CoUT**

After the introduction of Wenger’s (1998) concept of communities of practice, teacher communities – at least in theory – became prominent learning environments. Much has been said about the characteristics of teacher communities in terms of how they can contribute to the learning of university teachers and how they develop, but there is still little empirical evidence concerning the development of teacher communities (Dooner, Mandzuk, & Clifton, 2008). In the present study, evidence was collected on this development (Chapter 3). The main research questions of this study were: How and why does a group of female university teachers at an Ethiopian university develop as a community of university teachers? What contributes to the development of a particular dimension (shared domain, shared identity and interactional repertoire) in a particular phase of the teacher community development? An ethnographic case study approach (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007; Yin, 2009) was used in which participant observation and interviews with core members of the CoUT were conducted to collect data about the development of the community. The data were analysed using three dimensions that are important in the development of teacher communities, specifically domain, identity and interactional repertoire (Lockhorst, Van der Pol, & Admiraal, 2008).

Teacher communities do not evolve spontaneously, and group identity and collaborative learning goals are important (Lockhorst et al., 2008). In the present study, it was found to be important to select female university teachers with an initial shared identity. Being female in an extremely male-dominated university context is challenging. The intention in the CoUT was to discuss teaching-learning experiences with the aim that participants would learn from each other in order to improve their practice. In the introductory workshop, however, the female teachers identified a different priority: improving their English language skills; thus, they wanted to be involved in activities that supported the improvement of their English proficiency so that they could teach in English more easily. In the CoUT, both issues (teaching skills development and improvement of English language skills) had to be considered. Inclusion of the participant preference to improve English language skills gave the female teachers a decision-making role. This was relevant in sustaining the group in the early phase, when participants did not seem to realize the benefits of being involved in the CoUT.
6. General discussion

Even if it was not productive in terms of discussing teaching-learning issues, the opportunity to converse in English attracted members and kept the fragile group together. Thus, the teachers’ desire to improve their English language proficiency was an important catalyst. The conclusions of this study were that in creating a teacher community, the following elements were important: (a) providing some orientation to develop awareness about the aims and characteristics of teacher communities, (b) identifying common concerns (like the issue of improving English language skills) of potential teacher community members and (c) considering a start-up identity (like gender). Integrating the common concern with the primarily intended domain (sharing teaching-learning experiences) is an important condition for creating and sustaining a CoUT in the challenging early phase. These conclusions confirm the view of Lockhorst et al. (2008), who argue that teacher communities do not develop spontaneously. Rather, creating a teacher community needs to be a deliberate and planned task.

Even with a shared domain and a start-up identity, the teacher community may not develop smoothly. The present study indicated that the early phase of teacher community development was more demanding than the other phases. The biggest challenges in the early phase were to develop members’ commitment to the shared domain and to build up a shared identity and interactional repertoire. The early phase of the CoUT was characterized by more members leaving the community than in later phases, less comfort in sharing and reflecting (there was less responsibility and less trust among members), less commitment to the main domain of teaching-learning experience and limited interaction. The literature indicates the need to quickly demonstrate the importance of participating in the community of practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). The present study indicated that for members of the CoUT to become active, trust each other, feel comfortable and value sharing experiences, sufficient time, effort (for example, continuous encouragement by some committed peers and the facilitator) and incidents that displayed the relevance of participation were required. It was found to be even more difficult, and therefore took more time, to challenge members’ previous perceptions, experiences and established traditions. This was especially the case in the context of this study, an Ethiopian university in which the position of women is low and collaborative learning is not a tradition. In a culture where women are usually passive recipients of information, members needed time to develop the confidence to actively engage in the CoUT.

Outcomes of informal workplace learning (e.g. within teacher communities) are not easily recognised by the learners (Wenger & Snyder, 2000; Wilson & Berne, 1999). Because of this, members of a teacher community may not comprehend the benefits of spending time
in such informal learning contexts. A situation that can display the significance of participation in a particular group is important when it comes to making the benefits visible. In the present study, the harassment experience of a CoUT member by her student functioned as a key incident. The sharing and discussion of the harassment experience was an eye opener for members of the CoUT, where they came to realize the importance of being in such a community. As it turned out, harassment was a problem that had been experienced by every member (shared domain). Members were thus encouraged to be active in sharing and reflecting on the issue of harassment (i.e., an interactional repertoire began to evolve). This enhanced the attachment amongst members as they related to one another in providing encouragement for the victim; a feeling of ‘I am not the only one’ began to develop. In this way, the teachers started to sense the importance of being in that particular group and a feeling of shared identity emerged.

This identification of a shared topic turned out to be essential in cultivating the development of the CoUT. It paved the way to the mature phase of the CoUT, in which members became involved in various relevant tasks (shared domains), developing feelings of safety, trust, responsibility and social ties (shared identity) and creating more dynamic roles and organized ways of communicating (interactional repertoire). Thus, in this case, domain flexibility that allowed members to become involved in diverse relevant tasks was important. Flexibility was addressed even in the early phase through the inclusion of participant preference to improve English language skills. It continued to be addressed during the evolution phase in which members shared and discussed their harassment experiences. Finally, it was addressed in the mature phase, in which members conducted peer observations and group research, and became involved in more social activities. Flexibility remained important when members were enabled to shape the shared domain depending on their priorities.

As previous studies indicate, female university teachers tend to be socially isolated, as they have less involvement in formal and informal networks (Bagilhole, 1993; Forster, 2000). This isolation was challenged due to the social network created in the CoUT, and the flexibility of the CoUT helped to involve members in diverse tasks; these elements were important for the development of the CoUT. Thus, having participated in the CoUT, members benefited not only in their academic work (for example, teaching), but also in various other aspects of their life (for example, having fun while celebrating birthdays, sharing social problems and accessing emotional support), which added value to the strength of the group.

The final conclusion in this part of the project focused on the role of the facilitator. The facilitator was the researcher and a colleague of the participants, as she worked at the same
university. Her research role contributed to her passion, commitment and time in facilitating the group activities. These characteristics were especially important in the early phase of community development. The facilitator’s reminders and encouragement activities, the time she spent interacting with members and her skills in guiding the experience sharing and discussions contributed to the success of the community. This accords with the idea that having a motivated, insightful facilitator is important for the development of a community (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

In general, it can be stated that the development of a teacher community is difficult in the early phase. At this time, apart from using a specific group identity as a context, two important conditions for creating a teacher community are (1) starting from teachers’ own problems and (2) setting a group goal. However, commitment to the shared domain, an interactional repertoire that facilitates interaction and the development of trust and comfort when it comes to sharing and discussion are rarely experienced. In the early phase, members of a teacher community do not realize the relevance of being in their community. Properly utilizing experiences that make the relevance of being in the community visible as well as being flexible in shaping the initial shared domain(s), promotes the development of a teacher community. This implies that sharing teaching experiences is not enough; rather, it is important to have a mix of goals. By giving participants the chance to define a problem they want to tackle (a decision-making role) and to shape the shared domain based on their specific needs, it is possible to create intrinsic motivation in members so that they will continue to participate in the community. Having an insightful facilitator is also a basic condition for cultivating a teacher community.

Learning within the CoUT

From the perspective of socio-cultural learning theory learning is seen as social rather than individual and contextual rather than generic; moreover, the process is considered more central than the product (Hager, 2012; Putnam & Borko, 2000). In particular, Wenger’s (1998) concept of communities of practice has implications for the organization of learning environments. Learning from experience through ongoing collegial interactions and collaboration is promoted and encouraged. In this way, teacher-learning is firmly rooted in the participants’ experiences and the specific context in which teachers work. In general, at least theoretically, teacher communities are considered good learning environments; practically, however, little evidence is available and the results of learning in a community of practice are rarely evaluated (Laksov, Mann, & Dahlgren, 2008; Warhurst, 2006). The present study has
provided evidence on the positive contributions of learning within a teacher community. Two kinds of learning situations were studied in the context of the teacher community: (a) learning from sharing and discussing teaching-learning experiences (Chapter 4) and (b) learning through reflection on peer observation experiences (Chapter 5). The two studies provided evidence on the benefits of teacher communities.

The main research question addressed in Chapter 4 is as follows: What and how do female Ethiopian university teachers learn within their community? Interviews with individual CoUT members and with small focus groups were conducted and the data were thematically analysed to identify perceived learning outcomes (what) and learning strategies (how). As discussed in Chapter 4, one of the reported learning outcomes is change in the perception of teachers about different teaching issues; this includes changes in the knowledge, skills and practice of teaching. Teachers reported alterations in their views on teaching, for example, from seeing oneself as a lecturer to adopting a facilitator role, from teaching to emphasizing student learning, from seeing teachers as sources of knowledge to using student experiences as learning resources and from authority-focused interaction to interactional approaches to students. Teachers were also able to construct knowledge about the ‘how’ aspect of teaching concepts, for example, ‘how and in what situation’ a certain method is used; ‘how to motivate students’, ‘how to create good interpersonal relations’ and ‘how to solve problems’.

The changes in perception and knowledge were accompanied by some form of modification in teaching practices. Teachers were able to use new teaching methods, reuse methods that they had given up due to student resistance and improve their interpersonal relations with students. This indicated the value of sharing and discussing experiences in enabling teachers to understand how to use teaching-learning concepts in practice and to encourage the transfer of concepts into practice (Brancato, 2003; Laksov et al., 2008).

The study also indicated that participation in the teacher community positively influenced female teachers’ interaction with students and colleagues (mostly within, but sometimes outside the CoUT). It also helped them in that they received emotional support and were able to develop collaboration and social skills. As a result, female teachers’ experiences of isolation were reduced. In a context like Ethiopia, where women are minorities in the university context and are voiceless when it comes to talking about themselves, the CoUT had an added relevance in reducing social isolation (Bagilhole, 1993; Forster, 2000). Thus, the CoUT was an important environment that gave females access to groups of colleagues who could provide ideas on how to tackle problems and handle stressful circumstances. Participant teachers had little teaching experience (0–3 years) and limited involvement in teacher
development programmes. These factors imply that they had restricted teaching skills, which could lead to confidence problems. Being females in a male-dominated environment could also create such problems. The improvements in teaching knowledge and skills, however, as well as the emotional support from other CoUT members, led to improved confidence in teaching.

Another outcome of this study was improvement of English language skills. The CoUT meetings gave members the opportunity to speak freely in English, which led to increased confidence to communicate in English and improvement in perceived communication skills. In the Ethiopian context, where English is a classroom language, opportunities to use English outside the classroom are rare. The CoUT created an environment that filled the gap and participants valued this greatly. The significance of this learning outcome went beyond just improving English. As discussed earlier, this was a core issue when it came to catalysing the group’s development. Experiencing opportunities to use English in a relaxed environment was a tool which sustained the group. Participants reported the relevance of stories, reflections, peer feedback and active involvement in sharing and discussions in promoting teachers’ learning.

The main research questions addressed in Chapter 5 were as follows: How does reflection on peer observation experiences within the community support the learning of female Ethiopian university teachers? What are the views of participants about the effects of peer observation and community-based reflection? Peer observation–based discussions in the CoUT were recorded; furthermore, members of the CoUT who were involved in the peer observations were interviewed. The results illustrated the importance of CoUT-based discussion in promoting deep reflection which addressed teachers’ beliefs, identity and mission (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). The CoUT created a social forum in which concrete observation experiences on the outer level (such as teacher behaviour, the environment in which the teacher teaches) were examined, elaborated and interpreted from different perspectives. This was relevant to bringing together individuals’ unique experiences, views and assumptions about teaching and learning.

The interaction, group reflection and discussion on observation experiences also related to the inner levels of teacher beliefs, identity and mission. For example, in one case, the observed teacher was able to create a relaxed classroom atmosphere that made her students feel free to participate actively. CoUT members were interested in determining how this was possible, and raised questions and comments on this topic. From this examination, ideas related to the teacher’s beliefs, identities and/or missions in becoming a teacher were exposed. In this
way, the study highlighted how group-based reflection promoted the creation of links between the outer (for example creating relaxed classroom atmosphere) and inner levels (for example teacher belief) of the Onion Model (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005)

The CoUT served as an environment that integrated the concepts of situated, social and distributed learning (Putnam & Borko, 2000). CoUT members’ day-to-day teaching experiences (identified during peer observation) were used to situate learning in members’ practice; the experiences were discussed in the CoUT such that every member contributed her ideas, feelings and beliefs. This created a rich learning situation that allowed for reflection on a deeper level. In this way, deep learning was facilitated (Brown, McCracken, & O’Kane, 2011; Stewart, Keegan, & Stevens 2008). This was achieved through the exchange of views, experiences and assumptions amongst CoUT members, as well as their well-developed collegiality and trust, which enabled them to reflect on both strengths and aspects that needed to be improved.

The conclusion garnered from this study was that, if we want teachers to learn a lot from peer observations, it is crucial to encourage them to become involved in community-based reflection. Observers need to be encouraged to focus on descriptions of the core aspects and overall context of the lesson observed, to provide brief reports about their observation experiences, to give feedback, to observe and to initiate discussions on major concerns in the observed lessons. Accomplishing these tasks requires an understanding of the value of sharing and discussing experiences. Moreover, it requires confidence to share both positive and negative experiences, to accept feedback, to actively engage in discussions and to promote learning from reflective practice. Thus, it is important to wait until a teacher community reaches the mature phase, at which point members have developed sufficient mutual trust; this, in turn, equips them with the confidence to interact and put forward their feelings and ideas.

In general, the studies reported in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 highlighted the many advantages of active participation in teacher communities. Communities of practice facilitate changes in the perceptions, knowledge, skills and practices of teachers, as well as enabling deep-level learning that allows one’s own beliefs, identities and missions to be re-examined. Moreover, participation in communities boosts teacher socialization and supports members in sharing— and solving – social problems. Lastly, participation in communities of practice enhances the development of a collegial culture that promotes on-going learning. The development of social ties and links between the members, as well as the reflective skills and positive
attitudes they learned by sharing, indicates that the participants found a safe working and learning environment in the CoUT.

This improved interaction and collaboration is an important outcome and has significant implications for the career aspirations of female university teachers in Ethiopia. It can go beyond improving teaching skills. As noted in this dissertation’s introduction, the CoUT members are still meeting, with their current focus on improving their research skills. The continuation of the CoUT and its emphasis on research can be taken as an example of the long-term impact of the interaction and collaboration developed in the CoUT.

**Theoretical significance**

This study gives insight into the positioning of university teacher communities in relation to the concepts of communities of practice and communities of learners. In communities of practice, participation is the central issue, whereas in learning communities, understanding is emphasized (Beishuizen, 2008; Volman & Ten Dam, 2010). In the present research, the CoUT is a concept that is between a community of learning and a community of practice. Novice university teachers who have no prior training about teaching and learning concepts tried to understand the notions of good teaching and learning. CoUT members also focused on sharing and discussing their practices to advance their teaching. Thus, the concept of communities of practice as explained by Wenger (1998) does not exactly fit with the CoUT because the female teachers did not only focus on their role as professional teachers in a university (the participation perspective), but were also concerned with understanding the various issues raised in the CoUT, particularly teaching and learning.

Wenger’s (1998) focus is people in large companies who want to improve their practice. In the present study, however, what is at issue is a complex culture. We are talking about young and novice female university teachers who are minorities in many respects; these individuals are peripheral to the university’s main positions (like leadership, management, research), and must fit into a male-dominated culture. Given these characteristics, the teacher community created an opportunity for the teachers to strengthen their own identity value. It gave more confidence and a feeling of optimism; it made them stronger as a teacher, where they performed better as lecturers and started doing their own research. We are not advocating separating the female teachers from the male teachers of the university; however, the women’s distinct identity in terms of being minorities in numbers, in their academic ranks and in their involvement in the key affairs of the university like leadership, management and research, as well as their unique experiences in being raised and educated in a culture full of
inequality, means that they must build their own identity value before becoming effective teachers. How to engage female teachers in the university in more relevant positions is a question for further research.

University teaching is often an isolated task. University teachers mostly work alone. If a mechanism is not specifically designed to do so, university teacher communities may not evolve. CoUT may help teachers to break through this culture of isolated teaching. Although Wenger’s concept of communities of practice is often used for communities of practice in contexts that differ from the university, it is relevant in the context of university teaching. In the specific case of engaging female teachers in the university it may be worthwhile to use CoUT to create a safe environment for female teachers to develop confidence and strengthen their professional identity. This is a new and important function of communities of practice which was not originally recognised by Lave and Wenger (1991) or Wenger (1998).

The other theoretical contribution of the present study is affirmation of the significance of creating learning environments that facilitate core reflection. Teachers should be encouraged to look deeper into their beliefs, professional identities and missions in being a teacher and examine the impact of their reflection on their practices (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). Especially in the higher education context where peer observation is used as a judgement tool, the present study signals the need to shift from peer observation as a judgement tool to peer observation as an instrument to encourage deep reflection. It indicates that peer observation–based discussions, undertaken in groups of teachers who have developed a shared identity and a shared interactional repertoire, is an efficient way of promoting teacher learning and advance teaching practices. Recognizing the value of CoUT for developing and strengthening the professional identity of university teachers extends the relevance of the concept of core reflection.

**Practical implications**

Due to the massive growth of higher education in Ethiopia, the need for university teachers has increased considerably and led to the recruitment of less qualified academic staff. The solution to educating university teachers seem to be mass training in the form of short and uniform induction programmes. Yet, as this research demonstrates, this mass training approach has not been effective in improving the quality of teaching, and there is a need for innovative methods of induction.

This study shows that beginning university teachers do not need to be introduced to the sophisticated science of teaching-learning. Rather, induction programmes need to be orga-
nized in such a way that the ‘how to teach’ aspect is given more attention than the theoretical aspect of good teaching. Rather than providing intensive induction programmes in a short period of consecutive days, it is better to arrange short weekly or biweekly face-to-face meetings, followed by some kind of assignment. The assignment needs to be one that can support the needs of novice teachers, for example, for the teacher to observe senior staff or practice a certain method and share his/her experience with colleagues. After observing the teachings of other teachers, preparing a reflection session in small groups could be a useful mechanism to induct novice teachers into their new career. Such arrangements can reduce the tension between theory and practice. Moreover, the reflection on practical experiences can trigger discussion about the theories and assumptions behind a particular practice and facilitate learning and thinking about how to learn from individual practice and the practices of others; this can in turn encourage novices to use their knowledge in practice.

Besides reorganizing induction programmes, additional learning opportunities are necessary. Teaching is a complex profession for experienced teachers, let alone those with little knowledge and experience of good teaching (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). The profession requires lifelong learning from practice, personal readings and the experience of others. To improve the quality of university teaching, an environment that encourages teachers’ continuous learning needs to be put in place. In the present study, the teacher community based on teacher learning trajectories (sharing and discussion experience, peer observation-based reflections) showed a positive impact on participant teachers’ perceptions, knowledge, skills and practices, and influenced their interaction and views about teacher-learning. The strategies were relevant in helping participants to become involved in activities that promote deep learning and develop skills and habits for continuous learning.

In the Ethiopian context, where collaboration is a custom in different aspects of social life, creating teacher communities should be an important step towards enhancing the professional development of university teachers. The reported experiences of isolation in the academic environment show that educated Ethiopians are losing their powerful tradition of collaboration and communal responsibility. The academic environment needs to be reshaped to benefit from the collaborative culture of Ethiopian society. Collaborative learning through the establishment of teacher communities should be encouraged. For this, it is important to create awareness about communities of practice and their relevance. Interest groups need to be supported, and experienced teachers of universities need to be empowered to serve as facilitators and role models (for example in reducing their teaching loads) to make use of teacher communities as learning environments.
Limitations of the research
The studies reported in this dissertation have both practical and design limitations. The first is related to the scope of the study in terms of its context and number of participants. The results of the first study – on participants’ experiences with the induction programme – were based on data from only two universities out of the nine Ethiopian universities that offer induction programmes to novice university teachers. Including data from more universities could have increased the representativeness of the study and made the outcome richer; however, practical problems like the long distances between universities, limited means of transportation and lack of digital communication made it impossible to include more than the two universities selected. In addition, the fact that the questionnaire was administered to the participants of the 2007/2008 cohort in the last date of the induction might be problematic. The reactions of participants might have changed in the period after the induction. It might have been good to administer the questionnaire after some time to compare their views. However, within the tight schedule of the research programme, it was not possible to postpone or repeat the administration of the questionnaire to the participants of the 2007/2008 cohort. The researcher had to return to the Netherlands after collecting the data and online communication with participants was not a possibility in that particular context of the study.

The study of learning in a community of practice focused on just one community and 20 female university teachers participated. Although including a limited number of subjects enabled the research issues to be explored in depth and in detail, it is difficult – if not impossible – to generalize the findings. The gender of participants can also be considered as a limitation, because all of the participants were female university teachers struggling to be successful in a male-dominated environment. As discussed earlier, their unique desires and experiences (for example, that of social isolation) may have triggered involvement in the CoUT, and might have influenced their continuous involvement in it.

Another limitation is related to the nature of the data collected. The study focused mostly on examining perceived learning experiences of participants in teacher development programmes (in both the induction programme and the CoUT). It did not make use of other ways of exploring the impact of participation in the professional development programmes (like incorporating data from the teaching practices of the teachers, experiences of the students and the impact on student learning). These are important areas for future research on the professional development of university teachers in Ethiopia.

The last limitation has to do with the author’s combined role of researcher and facilitator of the CoUT. In the CoUT, the author of this thesis was both facilitator and researcher.
6. General discussion

(participant observer and interviewer). One the one hand, this double role provided advantages, as the author was present as a participant observer without having a large impact on the group process. On the other hand, the author’s involvement may have coloured what was observed, registered, analysed and interpreted. It will be interesting to see results from studies in which researchers play only the role of researcher. Finally, qualitative studies are dependent on the skill of the researcher.

Suggestion for future research

This research raised a number of issues relating to teaching communities in higher education. It is not yet clear whether the findings can be generalized. Thus, future research should implement teacher communities in different contexts and situations and investigate how they develop, what challenges are experienced, what kinds of learning opportunities are encouraged and how teacher learning and practice are influenced. Previous research concluded that the way in which teacher communities support learning has not been well studied; the authors advocated further research to unravel the impacts of teacher communities on teacher learning (Dooner et al., 2008; Laksov et al., 2008; Lockhorst et al., 2008; Warhurst, 2006; Wilson & Berne, 1999). As the present study focused on one specific group of participants (female university teachers in a male-dominated environment), it will be beneficial to examine the development of teacher communities and learning within teacher communities, for example, of male, mixed or department- or discipline-specific groups in different contexts. This can add to our understanding of the development of teacher communities in groups with various characteristics, as well as our comprehension of the way in which these characteristics influence the development of teacher communities and affect teacher learning and practice.

The roles of the researcher as participant observer, interviewer and initiator and facilitator of the CoUT were considered as limitations of the present study. This suggests that research on teacher learning in teacher communities should be initiated by teachers themselves, with a different role for researchers. As described in the limitations section, future research can also focus on studying the effect on practice of learning in teacher communities by collecting data from the actual teaching of participant teachers and from students, as well as by investigating student learning outcomes. In general, large-scale studies that can fill the gaps left by the present study –by addressing different contexts, using multiple cases and adopting different research perspectives – are recommended.
Final conclusion

The present study showed that the development of a community of practice around teaching is not an easy task. The early phase is the most demanding and frustrating. A facilitator who continuously reminds and encourages participants, who has adequate time, who has a passion to push forward and a focus on members’ prioritization problems can sustain the members of a teacher community even if no significant benefits are experienced during the first couple of months. The experience of key incidents (comparable to the discussion on harassment in this study) is vital so that participants can come to understand what the community offers them. The facilitator needs to be able to utilize key incidents properly to help members realize the importance of being in the group. Domain flexibility is also very important. In the present study, sharing teaching experiences was not enough; a mix of goals was an important aspect. Eventually, if members manage to get through all the ups and downs of the early phase, teacher communities provide diverse, relevant learning opportunities (from stories, reflections, feedback and active involvement) that lead to important changes in teacher beliefs, knowledge, skills, practices, interactions, collaborations and learning traditions.

When peer observation–based reflections are incorporated in teacher communities, it is important to note that the group dynamics and the shared identity of a mature group are prerequisites for deeper reflection that links the outer levels (for example, the teaching environment, teacher behaviour) to the inner levels of teacher beliefs, identity and mission in being a teacher. A mature teacher community will provide enough opportunities and tools so that participants can reflect on both strengths and aspects that need improvement. This will lead to an understanding of the thinking behind actions, the developed reflective skills and the enhancement of deep learning.

In general, the studies reported in this dissertation show the value of CoUTs in the professional development of university staff, particularly female university teachers. Teacher communities support women teachers’ development by creating a safe environment that enables them to understand their shared identity and challenges, and engages them in joint activities that address various aspects of their life as academic women.

Ultimately, such communities contribute to both their professional and social development. CoUTs can be efficiently and effectively to help new university teachers to develop their knowledge, skills and professional identity. Communities will contribute to the general increase in the quality of higher education. Not only in Ethiopian universities, but in all universities that take their mission as education institutes seriously.
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Summary

This study was conducted to explore Ethiopian university teachers’ experiences with their induction programme and determine how university teacher learning in Ethiopia can be enhanced in line with contemporary trends through participation in a teacher community. In Chapter 1, the contextual and conceptual background of the study was provided. In the last decade, Ethiopia has experienced massive expansion in the higher education sector. Through the upgrading of former training institutes and colleges and the establishment of new universities, there are now 31 public universities in the country. Student enrolment in 2010 was nearly seven times that of 2002. Having only two universities until 1999, the expansion of higher education in Ethiopia was an essential measure. This massive expansion, however, has brought with it a number of challenges; one of the main challenges finding academic staff with adequate teaching knowledge, skills and experience (Fisher & Swindells, 1998; Saint, 2004; World Bank, 2003).

There is no systematic mechanism in place to help teachers improve their teaching, except a short induction programme offered to novice university teachers on a voluntary basis. This programme was made possible after the establishment of academic development and resource centres (ADRCs) in 2005. In the Western world, professional development of university teachers has been an issue since the 1970s. Since then, staff development strategies have changed continuously. There has been a shift from training-focused strategies to more collaborative, on-going learning-oriented approaches (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Laksov et al., 2008). Governments require universities to implement some form of staff development to enhance quality of teaching (Gosling, 2009).

In this research, four interrelated studies were conducted. The first (reported in Chapter 2) focused on examining the experiences of induction programme participants and exploring their wishes for professional development. The results indicated that induction programme participants acquired valuable insights about the new career, developed confidence to teach and appreciated the access to experienced facilitators. However, there were concerns about the highly conceptual approach of the induction, lack of practical tips, insufficient attention to disciplinary variations, shortage of time and transfer challenges due to contextual factors and limited learning. The induction focused on orienting teachers in relation to the concepts
of good teaching, but did not address how those concepts could be transferred into practice in a specific (disciplinary) context. Thus, participants showed their desire for continuous learning from experiences. This outcome led to the establishment of a community of university teachers (CoUT) in which female university teachers of Bahir Dar University volunteered to participate.

Three studies were conducted in the context of the CoUT. One of these (reported in Chapter 3) examined the development of a group of female university teachers as a community of practice. The results indicated that the early phase of the development of the community is the most challenging. In this phase, it was found that although using a specific group identity, starting from teachers’ own problems and setting a group goal are important conditions for initiating a teacher community, in reality, commitment to the domain, development of a shared identity and an interactional repertoire that facilitates interaction are rarely experienced. In the early phase, members of the CoUT did not realize the relevance of being in their community. Properly utilizing experiences that made such relevance visible and maintaining flexibility in shaping the initial domain(s) promoted the development of the community. By giving participants the chance to define a problem they wanted to tackle (a decision-making role) and shaping the domain based on their specific needs, it was possible to create intrinsic motivation in members to continue to participate in the community. Having an insightful facilitator with the time, commitment and skills to guide the group was also a basic condition for cultivating the CoUT.

The study reported in Chapter 4, conducted in the context of the CoUT, examined teacher learning and strategies. The results indicated changes in teachers’ perceptions related to different teaching issues, as well as changes in the knowledge, skills and practice of teaching. Teachers reported alterations in their views on teaching, for example, from seeing oneself as a lecturer to adopting a facilitator role. Teachers were also able to construct knowledge about the ‘how’ aspect of teaching concepts, for example, ‘how and in what situation’ a certain method is used. The changes in perception and knowledge were also accompanied by some form of modification in the teaching practices.

The study also indicated how participation in the teacher community positively influenced female teachers’ interaction with colleagues; through such interaction, they received emotional support and developed collaboration and social skills. Thus, female teachers’ experiences of isolation were reduced. Especially in a context like Ethiopia, where women are minorities in the university context and voiceless when it comes to talking about themselves, the CoUT had an added relevance in reducing social isolation. The CoUT also gave female
teachers opportunities to speak freely in English, which led to increased confidence in terms of communicating in English and better perceived communication skills.

The last study (reported in Chapter 5) focused on how community-based reflection on peer observation experiences influence teacher learning. The results showed the importance of CoUT-based discussion in promoting deep reflection that created links between and among outer levels (like teacher behaviour, the environment in which teaching takes place) as opposed to inner levels (like teacher beliefs, identity and mission). The CoUT created a social forum in which concrete observational experiences (relatively easily observable outer levels like what the teacher did in the class) were examined, elaborated on and interpreted from different perspectives, allowing each CoUT member to bring together her unique experiences, views and assumptions. This kind of interaction exposed participants’ different teaching-learning strategies, enabled feedback provision and promoted deeper reflection that addressed issues related to teacher beliefs, identity and mission. In doing so, deep learning was facilitated, reflective skills were developed and participants were positively motivated to improve their practice. Overall, this confirmed the findings in the literature on the value of using critical reflection in communities of practice. Ultimately, the results showed that if we want teachers to learn a lot from peer observations, it is crucial to encourage them to become involved in community-based reflection. At the same time, it is important to wait until the group reaches the mature phase, in which members develop adequate mutual trust that enables critical reflection on both strengths and aspects that need to be improved.

In Chapter 6, the conclusions related to the four empirical studies and the implications and limitations of the project as a whole were discussed. The first study led to the conclusion that short induction programmes are not sufficient when it comes to influencing the teaching practices of novice university teachers. Two implications were drawn from this. First, induction programmes need to be expanded, integrating theoretical orientation with opportunities to practice concepts and reflect on experiences. Second, if we want to improve the practices of university teachers who have no prior preparation or experience as a teacher, other strategies that can promote on-going learning opportunities need to be devised in order to develop the teaching skills of teachers.

The conclusion drawn from the second study was that developing a community of teachers is a demanding task. It requires an initial shared identity that allows people to come together and create the group; a shared goal that addresses members prior preferences; a facilitator with adequate time, commitment and skill to go through all the ups and downs of creating the group; a key incident that can make the relevance of being in the community
visible to members; and flexibility that allows members to shape the shared domain in a way that fits their immediate priorities.

From the third study, it was concluded that participation in teacher communities creates different learning opportunities that lead to different learning outcomes. Learning from stories, active involvement in discussions, peer feedback and individual reflection were all promoted through participation in the community. The teachers experienced changes in their perceptions, knowledge, skills and practices. Teacher socialization was enhanced, thereby encouraging members to share and solve social and academic problems. Furthermore, teachers had ample opportunities to talk freely in English, which gave them the confidence to use the language for communication purposes. All of these aspects enhanced the development of a collegial culture to promote on-going learning.

The fourth study showed that the mature phase of a teacher community is an ideal context in which to undertake peer observation-based discussion. This kind of discussion and reflection promotes deep learning by creating a rich social context which provides different tools (experiences, assumptions, views) to create links between observable aspects (what the teacher does, the type of teaching environment, etc.) and inner aspects (teacher beliefs, teacher professional identity and teacher mission). The interaction among members of a teacher community was found to promote deeper reflection that highlights the influence of the inner levels on the outer levels.

This study had limitations in terms of its size, the characteristics of the participants and the researcher’s role. Specifically, only one teacher community was studied. Furthermore, the participants were female university teachers who were struggling to be successful in an extremely male-dominated environment. Finally, the researcher was both the initiator and facilitator of the teacher community and the data collector, which may have influenced the results. These aspects have to be taken into consideration in trying to generalize the results.

In relation to these limitations, suggestions for future research were indicated. It is important to conduct large-scale studies on the development of teacher communities and learning within teacher communities in different contexts, different arrangements (initiated by external parties or by teachers themselves) and different group compositions (male groups, mixed groups or department- or discipline-specific groups).
Samenvatting

Dit onderzoek werd uitgevoerd om de ervaringen van docenten aan Ethiopische universiteiten met hun inductieprogramma's te onderzoeken en om na te gaan hoe, overeenkomstig hedendaagse wetenschappelijke inzichten, de opleiding van docenten aan universiteiten kan worden versterkt door docenten te laten deelnemen aan communities. Hoofdstuk 1 bevat de contextuele en conceptuele achtergrond van de studie. In de afgelopen tien jaar is het hoger onderwijs in Ethiopië enorm toegenomen. De omvang van de groei van het hoger onderwijs in Ethiopië wordt duidelijk als men bedenkt dat er in 1999 nog maar twee universiteiten waren. Door opwaardering van voormalige opleidingsinstituten en colleges en door het stichten van nieuwe universiteiten zijn er nu 31 openbare universiteiten in het land. Het aantal studenten was in 2010 bijna zevenmaal zo groot als in 2002. Deze enorme groei heeft ook een aantal uitdagingen met zich meegebracht. Een van de belangrijkste daarvan was het vinden van academische staf met adequate kennis, vaardigheden en ervaring op het terrein van doceren in het hoger onderwijs (Fisher & Swindells, 1998; Saint, 2004; World Bank, 2003).

In de Westerse wereld staat al vanaf de zeventiger jaren van de vorige eeuw de professionele ontwikkeling van docenten in het hoger onderwijs op de agenda. Sindsdien is het denken over en de praktijk van de professionele ontwikkeling van wetenschappelijk personeel voortdurende veranderd. Er heeft een overgang plaatsgevonden van strategieën met de nadruk op training naar benaderingen die meer gericht zijn op samenwerking en geleidelijk leren (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Laksov et al., 2008). Overheden eisen van universiteiten dat ze enige vorm van stafontwikkeling implementeren om de kwaliteit van het universitaire onderwijs te verhogen (Gosling, 2009). Aan de Ethiopische universiteiten is echter nauwelijks sprake van een systematische aanpak om docenten te helpen de kwaliteit van hun onderwijs te verbeteren. De enige mogelijkheid is een kort inductieprogramma dat op vrijwillige basis wordt aangeboden aan beginnende docenten in het hoger onderwijs. Dit programma werd ontwikkeld na de inrichting van Academic Development and Resource Centres (ADRC's) in 2005.

In dit onderzoek werden vier samenhangende studies uitgevoerd. De eerste studie (zie Hoofdstuk 2) was gericht op het onderzoeken van de ervaringen van deelnemers aan het in-
ductieprogramma van de ADRC's en op het in kaart brengen van de wensen van de deelnemers voor hun professionele ontwikkeling. De resultaten lieten zien dat deelnemers aan het ductieprogramma waardevolle inzichten in hun nieuwe loopbaan verwierven, vertrouwen opbouwden in het geven van onderwijs en de toegang tot ervaren begeleiders op prijs stelden. Maar er waren zorgen over het hoge abstracte gehalte van het ductieprogramma, over het gebrek aan praktische tips, over onvoldoende aandacht voor verschillen tussen disciplines, over gebrek aan tijd en geringe transfer als gevolg van verschillen in context tussen cursus en praktijk en beperkte leeropbrengst. Het ductieprogramma was gericht op het oriënteren van docenten op beginselen van goed onderwijs geven, zonder aan de orde te stellen hoe deze beginselen van een bepaalde (disciplinaire) context in de praktijk konden worden gebracht. Deelnemers gaven dan ook blijk van hun verlangen naar voortzetting van de mogelijkheid om te leren van ervaring. Deze uitkomst leidde ertoe dat aan de Universiteit van Bahir Dar een community of University Teachers (CoUT) werd gevormd waaraan vrouwelijke docenten vrijwillig deelnamen.

Drie studies werden uitgevoerd naar de CoUT. Een van deze drie (zie Hoofdstuk 3) onderzocht de ontwikkeling van een groep van vrouwelijke docenten aan de universiteit als een community of practice. De resultaten lieten zien dat de vroege fase van de ontwikkeling van de community de meest uitdagende is. Uit het onderzoek bleek dat het ontwikkelen van een eigen groepsidentiteit, vertrekkend vanuit de eigen problemen van de docenten, en het kiezen van een groepsdoel belangrijke voorwaarden zijn voor het succesvol op gang brengen van een community voor docenten, maar dat de docenten weinig betrokkenheid bij een gemeenschappelijk doel ontwikkelden. Evenmin ontstond er een gedeelde identiteit en een gedeeld interactierepertoire. In deze vroege fase van de community realiseerden de deelnemers aan de CoUT zich niet hoe relevant het was om actief deel te nemen aan de community. Door gebruik te maken van ervaringen die die relevantie zichtbaar maakten en door flexibiliteit in het vormgeven van de initiële doelen werd de community gaandeweg sterker. Door deelnemers de kans te geven om te bepalen welk probleem ze wilden aanpakken (een rol van de facilitator) en door het doel vorm te geven op basis van de specifieke behoeften van de deelnemers was het mogelijk om intrinsieke motivatie te creëren bij de deelnemers om te blijven participeren in de community. De beschikbaarheid van een inhoudelijk ingevoerde facilitator met tijd, betrokkenheid en vaardigheden om de groep te begeleiden bleek een basisconditie voor het verder tot bloei brengen van de CoUT.
De studie die in Hoofdstuk 4 wordt beschreven, eveneens uitgevoerd in de context van de CoUT, besteedde aandacht aan het leren door docenten en aan de strategieën van docenten om hun onderwijs te verbeteren. Uit de resultaten blijkt dat de opvattingen van docenten over onderwijs geven in het hoger onderwijs te maken hebben veranderd. De docenten rapporteerden veranderingen in hun perspectief op onderwijs geven, bijvoorbeeld een verschuiving in het beeld van de docent als iemand die college geeft naar het beeld van de docent die vooral faciliteert. Daarnaast veranderden ook hun kennis, vaardigheden en de praktijk van het doceren. De docenten waren bijvoorbeeld in staat om kennis te construeren over het hoe van onderwijs geven, bijvoorbeeld, over hoe en in welke situatie een bepaalde onderwijsmethode wordt gebruikt. Kortom, de veranderingen in opvattingen en kennis gingen gepaard met veranderingen in de praktijk van onderwijs geven.

Deze studie gaf ook inzicht in de wijze waarop deelname aan een CoUT op een positieve manier de interactie tussen de vrouwelijke deelnemers en hun collega's beïnvloedde. De deelnemende docenten verkregen door deze interactie emotionele steun en ontwikkelden vaardigheden in samenwerken en sociale vaardigheden. Zo werd het isolement van vrouwelijke docenten aan de universiteit verminderd. Zeker in de Ethiopische context, waar vrouwelijke docenten een minderheid vormen aan de universiteit en nauwelijks de mogelijkheid hebben om over hun eigen positie te spreken, was de CoUT belangrijk voor het reduceren van sociaal isolement. De CoUT bood aan de vrouwelijke docenten ook de gelegenheid om vrijuit in het Engels te spreken (de voertaal op de Ethiopische universiteiten), wat bijdroeg aan hun vertrouwen om Engels te spreken en waardoor hun communicatievaardigheden in het algemeen verbeterden.

De laatste studie (zie Hoofdstuk 5) was gericht op de manier waarop binnen de community reflectie op de ervaringen opgedaan bij peer observatie van invloed was op het leren van de docenten. De resultaten lieten het belang zien van discussie voor het bevorderen van diepe reflectie. In termen van Korthagen en Vasalos' (2005) model ontstonden door diepe reflectie verbindingen tussen de buitenlagen (zoals het gedrag van de docent, de omgeving waarin onderwijs wordt gegeven) en de meer naar binnen gelegen lagen (zoals de opvattingen van de docent, diens identiteit en missie). De CoUT gaf een sociaal klankbord voor het onderzoeken van concrete observatiegegevens (zoals wat de docent deed in de klas) en voor de duiding van deze observatiegegevens vanuit verschillende perspectieven. Op deze manier werd elk lid van de CoUT in de gelegenheid gesteld haar eigen unieke ervaringen, opvattingen en aannames met elkaar te verbinden en daarvan te leren. De interactie binnen de CoUT maakte de uiteenlopende onderwijsstrategieën van de deelnemers zichtbaar, maakte mogelijk
Samenvatting
dat deelnemers elkaar feedback gaven en bevorderde diepe reflectie over de opvattingen, identiteit en missie van de deelnemers. Langs deze weg werd diep leren bevorderd, werden reflectieve vaardigheden ontwikkeld en werden deelnemers op positieve wijze gemotiveerd om hun onderwijspraktijk te verbeteren. Deze bevindingen bevestigen wat in de literatuur wordt gerapporteerd over de waarde van kritische reflectie in communities of practice. Uiteindelijk bevestigden de resultaten van dit onderzoek dat, als we willen dat docenten veel leren van peer observatie, het cruciaal is hen aan te moedigen te participeren en te reflecteren in een community. Tegelijkertijd is het belangrijk om te wachten tot de groep het stadium van rijping heeft bereikt, waarin de leden een adequaat niveau van onderling vertrouwen hebben ontwikkeld dat het mogelijk maakt om in kritische reflectie aandacht te besteden aan zowel sterke kanten als aan aspecten die moeten worden verbeterd.

In Hoofdstuk 6 worden de conclusies beschreven die voortvloeien uit de vier studies en worden de implicaties en beperkingen van het project als geheel besproken. De eerste studie leidde tot de conclusie dat kort durende inductieprogramma's niet toereikend zijn om de onderwijspraktijken van startende docenten aan de universiteit positief te beïnvloeden. Hieruit werden twee implicaties afgeleid. In de eerste plaats moeten inductieprogramma's worden uitgebreid, waarbij een theoretische benadering wordt geïntegreerd met de gelegenheid om concepten in de praktijk te brengen en te reflecteren op ervaringen als docent. In de tweede plaats de gevolgtrekking dat als we de onderwijspraktijk van docenten in het hoger onderwijs willen verbeteren die geen eerdere ervaring als docent hebben, andere strategieën moeten worden gekozen om de vaardigheden van docenten te verhogen.

De conclusie uit de tweede studie was dat het ontwikkelen van een community van docenten in het hoger onderwijs een veelomvattende taak is. Het vereist een initiële gedeelde identiteit die ertoe leidt dat docenten samenkomen en een groep vormen, een gedeeld doel dat aansluit bij de bestaande voorkeuren van de deelnemers, een facilitator met voldoende tijd, betrokkenheid en vaardigheid om door alle ups en downs van het creëren van een groep heen te komen, een sleutelincident waardoor de relevantie van het behoren tot een community zichtbaar wordt voor de deelnemers en flexibiliteit die de leden van de community in staat stelt om een gedeelde domein te vormen dat aansluit bij de voorkeuren van de deelnemers.

Uit de derde studie werd geconcludeerd dat het deelnemen aan communities van docenten in het hoger onderwijs verscheidene gelegenheden tot leren creëert die leiden tot uiteenlopende leeruitkomsten. Leren van verhalen, actieve betrokkenheid in discussies, peer feedback en individuele reflectie werden bevorderd door participatie in de community. De docen-
Samenvatting
ten ervoeren veranderingen in hun percepties, kennis, vaardigheden en praktijken. De socialisa-
tie van de docenten werd versterkt, waardoor de leden werden aangemoedigd hun sociale
en academische problemen te delen en op te lossen. Verder kregen de docenten ruime gele-
genheid om vrijuit in het Engels te spreken, wat vertrouwen gaf in het gebruik van de Engels-
se taal voor communicatiedoeleinden. Al deze factoren droegen bij aan de ontwikkeling van
een collegiale cultuur die voortgaand leren bevorderde.

De vierde studie liet zien dat de rijpe fase van een community van docenten in het hoger
onderwijs een goede context vormt voor het voeren van discussies op basis van peer observa-
ties. Deze vorm van discussies en reflectie bevordert diep leren door het creëren van een rijke
sociale context met verschillende tools (ervaringen, assumpties, gezichtspunten) om verbin-
dingen te creëren tussen waarneembare aspecten (wat de docent doet, de leeromgeving, etc.)
en innerlijke aspecten (de opvattingen van de docent, diens professionele identiteit en mis-
sie). De interactie tussen de leden van de community van docenten bleek diepe reflectie te
bevorderen die de invloed van de innerlijke niveaus op de uitwendige niveaus zichtbaar
maakte.

Dit onderzoek kent zijn beperkingen in termen van de omvang, de kenmerken van de deel-
nemers en de rol van de onderzoeker. Slechts één community van docenten in het hoger on-
derwijs werd onderzocht. Alle deelnemers waren vrouwelijke docenten aan een universiteit
die streefden naar succes in een door mannen gedomineerde omgeving. Tenslotte was de on-
derzoeker zowel de initiator als de facilitator van de community van docenten, alsook degene
die de data verzamelde. Deze combinatie van rollen kan de resultaten hebben beïnvloed. De-
ze beperkingen moeten in ogenschouw worden genomen bij pogingen om de resultaten te
generaliseren.

In hoofdstuk 6 zijn suggesties gedaan voor toekomstig onderzoek. Het is belangrijk
grootschalige studies uit te voeren naar de ontwikkeling van communities van docenten in het
hoger onderwijs en naar leerprocessen in dergelijke communities van docenten onder uiteen-
lopende omstandigheden, met uiteenlopende arrangementen (geïnitieerd door externe partijen
of door de docenten zelf) en uiteenlopende groepssamenstellingen (mannelijke groepen, ge-
mengde groepen, of facultaire of discipline-specifieke groepen).
Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire experiences of induction participants (Chapter 1)

This is a translation of the original Amharic questionnaire

Dear participants,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather data about the induction experiences and learning wishes of beginning university teachers. In Part I of the questionnaire, you are asked to provide background information. In Part II, you are asked about your perception and experiences with the induction offered for newly recruited academic staffs in the ADRC. In Part III, you are asked to provide information about your learning wishes. The information you provide will be used confidentially and only for research purposes. So, feel free to forward your feelings and experiences.

Thank you for your precious time.
Appendices

Part I: Background information

Please indicate the choice that describes you or fill the blank space when it requires doing so.
1. Your Faculty/department: _______________________
2. Your Academic Qualification: A) Bachelor B) Master C) PhD
3. Did you take a pedagogy course before you started your teaching job? A) Yes B) No
4. Why did you participate in the training offered by the ADRC?
5. How many training sessions did you attend? A) all the sessions B) about 75% C) < 75%

Part II: Your perception and experiences of the Training offered by the ADRC

A. The following questions focus on the quality of the reading materials provided to you during the induction. Please put ✓ for your choice. The abbreviation stands as follows: P=Poor F=Fair A=Average G=Good E=Excellent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Rating Scales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 How well did you understand the reading materials given to you?</td>
<td>P F A G E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 How sufficient are the reading materials?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 How effective are the reading materials in including examples related to your context? (cases related to your field, class size, types of students etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 How helpful are the reading materials to your classroom practice?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 How useful are the reading materials for future reading or referencing?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. What aspects of the reading materials are most interesting?
2. What aspects of the reading materials need improvement?

B. The next questions focus on the effectiveness of the facilitators of the induction. Please put ✓ for your choice. The abbreviation stands as follows: P=Poor F=Fair A=Average G=Good E=Excellent
### Items and Rating Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Rating Scales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How knowledgeable was the facilitator?</td>
<td>P F A G E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How prepared was the facilitator?</td>
<td>P F A G E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How effective was the facilitator to model good teaching?</td>
<td>P F A G E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How effective was the facilitator to communicate with you?</td>
<td>P F A G E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How effective was the facilitator to answer your questions?</td>
<td>P F A G E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How effective was the facilitator to provide feedback?</td>
<td>P F A G E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How effective was the facilitator to address your context (for example, faculty-/department- specific issues)?</td>
<td>P F A G E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. In your opinion, what were the good qualities of the facilitator who offered the training?
2. In your opinion, what were the weaknesses of the facilitator who offered the training?

C. The next questions focus on the effectiveness of process-related issues. Please put \( \checkmark \) for your choice. The abbreviation stands as follows: P=Poor F=Fair A=Average G=Good E=Excellent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Rating Scales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How clearly were objectives of the training indicated at the begin-</td>
<td>P F A G E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ning?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How varied were the learning activities of the training?</td>
<td>P F A G E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How sufficient was the time allocated to perform the activities?</td>
<td>P F A G E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How sufficient was the time allocated for the whole training?</td>
<td>P F A G E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How effective was the training in holding your interest?</td>
<td>P F A G E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How adequate was the learning environment (room, chair, etc.)?</td>
<td>P F A G E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How adequate were the refreshments (coffee, tea services)?</td>
<td>P F A G E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. The next questions focus on the value of the content/topics and on what you learned from the pedagogical training offered by the ADRC. Please put \( \checkmark \) for your choice. The abbreviation stands as follows: P=Poor F=Fair A=Average G=Good E=Excellent.
### Items & Rating Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Rating Scales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To what extent were the contents of the induction interesting to you?</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To what extent were adequate learning opportunities created?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To what extent did you understand the theories and concepts?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To what extent did the training enable you to understand how to use the new teaching and assessment methods in your classrooms?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To what extent did the topics of the training address your specific situations and needs?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. To what extent is what you learned useful for your teaching?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. To what extent will you be able to apply what you learned in your classrooms?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How would you rate the overall value of the training?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part III: Your learning wishes

A. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements. Put √ for your choice under the rating scale. The abbreviations stand as follows: SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; N=Neutral; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborative activities</th>
<th>Rating scales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I want to discuss my classroom problems and experiences with colleagues and find solutions together.</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I want to ask my colleagues for help on teaching related problems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I want to share teaching materials, books, articles, ideas, opinions and teaching methods with my colleagues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I want to work with my colleagues on course planning, exam questions preparations, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I want to receive feedback and comments on my teaching from colleagues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I want to be observed while teaching my students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Collaborative activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rating scales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I want to observe my colleagues’ classroom practices to discuss and learn from it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I want to have scheduled consultation hours to share professional issues with colleagues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I believe collaboration with colleagues helps to improve teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I want to engage in collaborative learning to improve my teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Opportunities to learn from colleagues are adequate in my university.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. In the next section, you find ways in which teachers may learn and possible time schedules for professional development activities. Please, rate your preferences for each of the strategies by putting √ for your choice. The abbreviation stands as follows: Vl=Very little, L=Little, A=Average, M=Much, Vm=Very much.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I like to involve in</th>
<th>Rating Scales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Study groups (discussing classroom experiences and educational issues with your colleagues to solve problems)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Professional networks (creating links among teachers of similar interests, in your university or other universities, to improve teaching)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Trainings (an expert presents and shares pedagogical topics, with some practice and feedback during the training)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other options you like, please write &amp; rate</td>
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</table>

I prefer teacher learning programmes conducted during

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I prefer teacher learning programmes conducted during</th>
<th>Rating Scales</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Lunch meetings (conducting teacher learning activities in lunch hours)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Vacations &amp; Holidays (conducting teacher learning activities when universities are closed for vacation or other holidays)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Working hours (conducting teacher learning activities in working hours by making teachers free from their teaching)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 After work (conducting teacher learning activities after working hours, in evenings, weekends)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other time options, please write &amp; rate</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
C. In the next two open questions you are asked about your ideas and wishes on what and how you would like to learn in future.

1. About what topics would you like to learn to develop as a university teacher in future?
2. How would you like to learn during training or professional development in future?
Appendix B: Interview scheme for induction participants (Chapter 1)

Reflections to the induction programme
1. What did you learn from the induction programme?
2. What topics were most important for your teaching?
3. What were the qualities and weaknesses of the facilitator of the training?
4. What aspects of the training should be improved (in relation to content, presentation, facilitator, reading materials etc.)?
5. What is your overall impression of the training?

Use of the new knowledge and skills in the actual teaching
1. How do you describe the value of the training in improving your teaching? In terms of course and lesson planning, lesson presentation, using active learning methods, feedback provision to students, and assessment of students learning.
2. What are your challenges?

Needs for future professional development
1. What are your main pedagogy related problems? What topics should a teacher development programme include to develop you as a university teacher?
2. How would you like to learn?
Appendices

Appendix C: Interview/focus group scheme (Chapter 3, 4, 5)

Development of the community (interview scheme)
1. What motivated you to involve in the lunch meeting (in the CoUT)?
2. How do you evaluate the development of the group? Tell me your experience in the beginning (like the first four months), in the middle (second half of year one) and in its second year.
3. What challenges did you experience during your involvement in the CoUT?
4. What hindered you or others from regularly attending the lunch meeting (the CoUT)?
5. What is the reason for the sustainability of this group for two years?

Learning in the community (interview and focus group scheme)
The following major questions (issues) were used in both the individual interviews and small group interviews. During interviews, the purpose was communicated to participants. In the individual interviews, the questions were raised one by one. In the small group interviews, however, the interviewer gave an overview of the issues that were going to be discussed (learning from participation in the CoUT, the strategies used to learn, the impact of participation in the CoUT, overall reflection) and participants were informed to feel free to speak and forward their ideas whenever it came into their mind.
1. What did you learn from involving in the lunch meeting (the CoUT) weekly experience sharing and discussions (about teaching and learning, socialization, English language improvement)?
2. How did you learn in the lunch meeting (the CoUT)? What are the learning strategies you were using?
3. How the meetings (in the CoUT) do influence your teaching, interaction, social life, English proficiency? Describe changes in your views and practices.
4. What is your overall impression about the lunch meeting (the CoUT)?

Learning in the context of peer observation and reflection (interview scheme)
1. What are the benefits of peer observation?
2. What is the benefit of discussing peer observation experiences in the lunch meeting?
3. What did you learn from classroom observation and reflection?
4. What did you experience about giving feedback to your colleague after observing her lesson?
5. What is the impact of involving in peer observation in your teaching?
Appendix D: Data Analysis scheme

For observation and experiential data (Chapter 3)
1. What are the key actions the group performed in the two years?
2. How do these actions relate to the developmental phases of a teacher community?
   - Which actions relate to the early phase
   - Which actions relate to the evolving phase
   - Which actions relate to the mature phase?
3. What are the dominant experiences of each phase?
4. How do group identity, shared goal and interactional repertoire developed at each phase?
   - What are the indicators of development of each dimension?
   - What hinders/fosters the development of the dimension?

For peer observation discussion data (Chapter 5)
1. What were the actions performed in the observed lesson? What did the teacher do? What did the students do? What are the teaching methods used?
2. How did the CoUT members concretize the experience? What are the questions they asked? What are the comments they provided? How did the observee react to the questions and comments? What are the dominant issues discussed?
3. What did participants learn (looking for indicators that show development of awareness)?
4. Which contents of the onion model are addressed in each peer observation based discussion?
5. How were the contents of the onion model addressed in the discussions on peer observation experiences?
Curriculum Vitae

Aster Minwyelet was born in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia, on September 23, 1978. In 1996, she completed secondary school at Abrhawo Atsibha senior secondary school, located in a small town called Mertule Mariam. From 1996 to 2000, she pursued a Bachelor’s of Education degree at Bahir Dar University. After graduation, she worked as a graduate assistant for two years at the same university. She then pursued her master’s degree in Literature at the Institute of Foreign Languages and Literature, Addis Ababa University (2002–2004). Having received this degree, she worked at Bahir Dar University for two years as a lecturer and coordinator of the Academic Development and Resource Centre (ADRC). She was involved in setting up the ADRC, which was established through a NUFFIC-funded project called EQUIP that supported nine Ethiopian universities. Aster received a second master’s degree in Educational Science and Technology (Curriculum and Instruction track) at the University of Twente, The Netherlands, and graduated with honours (cum laude) in August 2007.

Aster started her PhD at the VU University Amsterdam in September 2007. Her dissertation focused on determining if and how the professional development of university teachers in Ethiopia could be enhanced using strategies in line with contemporary trends, of which teacher communities is the most significant. During her work on this PhD project, she participated in the ICO master’s programme on teaching and teacher education. She also presented papers at international conferences in Brussels and Barcelona (ATEE and ICED), and in Ethiopia (at Bahir Dar University’s annual May Seminar).

Currently, Aster works as a teacher and researcher at Bahir Dar University. Her research interests are teacher learning, staff development, the quality of higher education, gender and higher education.