SARE

Southern African Review of Education

A Review of Comparative Education, History of Education and Educational Development

SACHES

THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN COMPARATIVE AND HISTORY OF EDUCATION SOCIETY

SARE

Southern African Review of Education

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Editoral notes: The poetics, politics and pragmatics of academic publishing on education

The Southern African Comparative and History of Education Society (SACHES) presented a panel discussion on academic publishing in education journals at its annual conference in November 2009. The session brought together a number of editors from accredited South African education journals. Yusef Waghid participated in his capacity as the editor of the *South African Journal of Higher Education*, which is owned by Higher Education South Africa (HESA). Wayne Hugo represented the *Journal of Education*, which is run from the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Maritzburg campus. Botswana-based Sheldon Weeks participated as the former editor of SACHES's journal, the *Southern African Review of Education* (*SARE*). Linda Chisholm, the then retiring editor of *SARE*, was represented on the panel by Mark Mason, a *SARE* editorial collective member. Beverley Thaver responded to the presentations from the vantage point of her research into the politics of knowledge in higher education.

SARE took a decision to dedicate a special section of one of its forthcoming editions to this discussion. We invited each of the participating panellists to submit written drafts of their presentations, which were put through the normal journal review process. We also invited the editor of the *International Journal of Educational Development* (IJED) to provide an article, which its editor, Simon McGrath, co-authored with Mark Mason, IJED's regional editor for Asia. This edition of *SARE* therefore consists of two sections: the first has six articles on the theme of academic publishing on education, and the second is a general section consisting of three articles, written by De Clercq, Grant and Fleisch respectively, followed by a review essay by Muthukrishna

The first section is framed by the brief for the panel discussion at the SACHES 2009 conference, titled 'The Poetics, Politics and Pragmatics of Education Academic Publishing on Education'. The brief reads as follows:

> Academic journal publishing is under the 'performative cosh'. Academics are pressurised to publish or perish. This had led to an article writing and publishing scramble, which arguably has had corrosive effects on academic work. Editors mediate and balance the various tensions that emanate from this performative imperative. Publishing quality work is paramount. Academic journals aim to be a forum for cutting-edge, incisive and meticulous debate. It is a focal area for the development of epistemological gain. Journals aim to showcase the most rigorous thinking currently being pursued in dedicated fields of academic work. The 'poetic' is a reference to scholarship in pursuit of intellectual integrity, rigour and conceptual illumination. The pursuit of the idea is its primary

organising principle. Edward Said (1996) commented on scholarship in the following way:

> This is not always a matter of being a critic of government policy, but rather thinking of the intellectual vocation as maintaining a state of constant alertness, of perpetual willingness not to let half truths or received ideas steer one along. That this involves a steady realism, an almost athletic rational energy, and a complicated struggle to balance the problems of one's own selfhood against the demands of publishing. (This) is what makes it an everlasting effort, constitutively unfinished and necessarily imperfect.

Editors are primarily motivated to publish the best scholarly work. They make careful choices about the intellectual debates they want to exposit and the scholarly angles they want to promote. Editors and their editorial boards are interested in evolving a specific kind of 'poetic culture' that draws in and exposits academic work of a specific type. Journals grow intellectual communities and vice versa.

Allied to such poetic motivations is the political dimension of publishing. Arguably, journal editors are interested in specific intellectual lines of argument, be they the subaltern focus of the *Third World Quarterly,* the southern developmental commitments of the *International Journal of Educational Development*, or the consciously sub-regional comparative slant of the *Southern African Review of Education*. Over and above the specific focus of a journal, editors are also interested in promoting certain debates. Note here the themed approach of *Perspectives in Education*. Some journals are more political than others. The *Journal of Progressive Education* is self-consciously interested in radical educational contributions. The politics of publishing is a referent for the conscious positioning of specific kinds of epistemologies. Put bluntly, journals determine the direction of a specific scholarly field. Editors decide whether they will focus on specific issues such as 'policy implementation', 'reform and restructuring' or 'leadership'. They are therefore central in shaping the direction of academic debate and scholarship.

The pragmatic dimension of academic publishing is an equally powerful factor in determining a journal's intellectual direction. This dimension goes to the heart of academic life. It refers to the 'techne' of writing and publishing. Article writing depends on prior existing academic communities at functioning universities. It is no exaggeration to say that the rejection rate of journals nationally and internationally is extremely high. Ball (2001) suggests that this is the result of academics sending in 'under-cooked' articles because of the pressure to meet performative requirements. This type of behaviour, he suggests, corrodes the academy and detracts from rigorous scholarship. Editors have observed that many articles that are submitted do not pass muster for the review process. They simply aren't good enough to be sent out for review. Many journals, however, have a developmental dimension. Some editors go out of their way to publish articles that conform to demographic or regional representivity. This is morally heroic but time-consuming. It involves generous reviewing processes that don't simply reject but ask for major revisions; shepherding of draft revisions; dealing with problematic email communication; and generally playing a supportive and enabling role. This dimension encumbers the work of journal editors.

The brief went on to request the panel of editors to discuss how they go about mediating among the competing demands that inform their editorial work, as suggested by the three dimensions outlined above. The six ensuing articles respond to the brief in interesting and suggestive ways, confirming the centrality and complexity of journal publishing in academic life.

Sheldon Weeks's article is a descriptive account of the difficult conditions under which the journal has functioned since its inception in 1995. His is a story of a journal

struggling to survive, kept together by a hardworking and loyal group of academics, first by academics in Cape Town, then by a group in Botswana, and after that under the editorship of Linda Chisholm, assisted by an editorial collective.

Elaborating on these challenges, Chisholm (2009, 5) explained in her last editorial for *SARE* that

> *SARE* also owes its existence to the effort by local anti-apartheid educationists to reconnect with the global community when the apartheid walls began to crumble through the creation of SACHES in 1995. ... The fact that the journal was edited by Sheldon Weeks from Botswana for many years and continues to maintain a strong link testifies to the cross-border relationships that do exist. He has played a vital role in keeping such links alive. The focus of *SARE* accordingly reflects its history and situation. The mission of the journal is to bring together contributions from and initiate dialogue among contributors whose approaches provide a critical examination of education and development. ... Its founders saw the need for a journal that would transcend the boundaries of the countries from which its members came and which would provide an opportunity for scholarship that would locate itself, simultaneously, in national, regional and global contexts.

Weeks's article and Chisholm's comments highlight the journal's onerous production challenges and the uneven terrain on which this takes place. They suggest that the journal's connectedness to a global mother body, through SACHES's affiliation to the World Congress of Comparative Education Societies, has done nothing to help the journal address its developmental shortcomings. The time has come to address the knowledge production assumptions underlying debates about the viability of journals produced in Southern contexts. It is not simply a matter of choosing whether or not to remain a locally produced journal that struggles to be inserted into global networks of influence and impact. As Chisholm (2009, 5) suggests, 'ultimately, as long as the national scholarly communities of southern Africa are linked to global performativity discourses, resolution of these issues needs to be arrived at through conscious and collective intellectual deliberation on what to do, for which SACHES is one very important forum'. It seems then that the future of *SARE* as a viable journal is tied up with the intellectual culture of which it is a part. It will depend on deliberation inside its mother organisation about the vitality of comparative education scholarship in the different constituent countries represented in SACHES and on the state of academic work in places where such work is produced, such as faculties of education, research programmes and postgraduate research training. Developing the next generation of academics is key in securing the long-term viability of the field.

There is an iterative relationship between the quality of the scholarship produced and the viability of a journal in a specific field. *SARE* can only flourish on the basis of a vibrant academic community that produces scholarship of a high quality. It is only then that a steady stream of quality journal articles can be procured. This is not simply a question of a choice between going for a globally networked production partner or remaining local, nor is it quite a matter of what makes more commercial or pragmatic sense in relation to the survival of a journal. It is about the health and vib-

rancy of the constitutive community of scholars that co-constitutes an academic field, and provides its intellectual muscle. Improving a journal is an ongoing struggle for editors and their boards, based on striking a balance between publishing good-quality articles and at the same time providing a developmental space and support for a new and diverse group of scholars to publish their work. This is an onerous task that requires careful mediation among competing tensions that define editorial work. The larger point is that journal publishing has to be informed, supported and sustained by developing quality scholarship via organisations like SACHES and other academic forums such as faculties of education.

The next two articles are pertinent analyses of the constitutive dynamics at play with regard to two journals, one national and the other international. They provide insight into the contingent intellectual and commercial economies out of which the journals have been produced over the last few decades. Harley, Wedekind and Hugo's article is an incisive account of the dynamics that informed the travails of the *Journal of Education* (JOE) throughout its more than 40-year history. They show how the substantive editorial focus of the journal and its technical production aspects played out in the light of South Africa's broader educational and political terrain. The article describes the journal's development as an in-house production cosseted in a liberal English academic environment in the 1960s. It also discusses JOE's shift to becoming a nationally recognised journal that publishes articles written from a wide variety of research orientations and theoretical perspectives by academics from universities all over South Africa.

McGrath and Mason discuss academic journal publishing within the context of the contemporary higher education economy. They explore the case of IJED, the leading international journal in the field of educational development. They build a compelling case for why journals such as *SARE* should seek a beneficial partnership with an established academic publishing house. They argue that journal publication should be based on a regular dialogue between the pragmatics of survival and the ongoing poetic and pragmatic considerations of editors. This has to be understood in the light of the performative culture of higher education and the prevailing context of international journal business in a wider system of global capitalism. Editorial integrity and independence should be counterbalanced by the quest for quality production and financial viability. They suggest that the ideological project of *SARE* needs to be interpreted in the context of the wider environment in which it operates and through a conscious practice of marrying politics, poetics and pragmatics.

The next two articles, by Waghid and Thaver respectively, consider the underlying conceptual tensions that inform journal publishing. Waghid's article is a call for reconstituting the place of reason as the cornerstone of academic work and journal publishing. From his vantage point as the editor of SAJHE, which is South Africa's only dedicated journal focusing on higher education, he bemoans the lack of critical scholarship in most of the articles that are submitted to his journal. This, he suggests,

is the result of academics' proclivity for producing articles based on technical reporting and compliant research. Academia has abandoned the quest for truth in favour of being technical agents of state bureaucracy. Waghid suggests that article writing should be informed by a type of thinking that demands that reasons are rendered, that encourages risk taking and that contributes to renewal. Critique, in the Derridean sense, is a form of dissonance and questioning that is not dominated by the power of performativity. Waghid argues that academics should respond courageously to the radical incommensurability of the language games that constitute our society and invite, through their published work, new possibilities to emerge.

Thaver's article is based on a response to the presentations made during the panel discussion at the SACHES 2009 conference. Her article addresses the contested nature of peer-review processes and the embedded academic socialisation processes in terms of which article and journals are produced. Thaver alerts us to the underlying knowledge traditions, ideologies and communities that make up academic work and publication. She discusses how academic socialisation affects the nature of published work and the potential bias inherent in the peer review process, which effectively silences certain lines of inquiry. The article goes on to question the objectivity of editorial decision-making, suggesting that this is steeped in politics, power and judgements based on certain knowledge traditions. Editors make political choices in the light of the specific knowledge with which they are confronted. Thaver ends her article suggestively by calling for a scholarship that problematises the appropriation of African/Southern African knowledge sensibilities in the light of critical theoretical traditions.

The second section of the journal is comprised of four 'open' submission articles, three research-based articles and a review essay. Grant, Jasson and Lawrence's article is based on an exploration of resilience in schools that operate in difficult social contexts and face challenging circumstances. It focuses on schools that succeeded in their core responsibility of teaching and learning. The authors wanted to understand better some of the features present in these schools that may have contributed towards their 'resilience'. The article is based on a study that explored why some schools succeeded despite the odds, while others, facing similar risk factors, failed. The study adopted a multiple-case-study approach and utilised individual interviews and formal observations to gather data from 18 schools perceived as resilient that serviced poor communities in KwaZulu-Natal. The study found that these schools focused on their core responsibility of teaching and learning, and attended to the fundamentals of teaching: they aspired to good attendance, punctuality, orderliness and the maintenance of basic systems and structures. They were able to achieve this through a range of protective factors. The article gives prominence to one of these factors – 'an ethics of care', which the authors suggest is an important dimension in contributing to resilience in disadvantaged South African schools.

De Clercq's article moves the spotlight to policy implementation at the provincial-

district interface. Her article is a discussion on how provincial and district education officials strategise to mediate education policies. It examines some positive mediation strategies by provincial education officials with sufficient policy expertise to appreciate policy tensions as well as to navigate through complex policy processes and to exploit the spaces created by the policy. Far from accepting policies as yet another add-on which over-extends them, the article shows how officials strategise to ensure that their mediation work enables various stakeholders and benefits more than a few groups with sectarian interests. The article explores the kind of knowledge of policy leadership as well as approaches and decisions needed to minimise contested areas and achieve the highest level of buy-in from stakeholders into the policy. What is decisive in determining policy success is the ability of officials to translate the complex, and at times ambiguous, policy needs into effective strategies and actions that gain the support of most stakeholders involved, in spite of the presence of divergent interests. De Clercq recommends that more effective policy leadership and strategies should be developed at departmental level to minimise the gap between policy intentions and practices, and contribute towards improving the opportunities for better teaching and learning in South Africa's schools.

Brahm Fleisch's article is an effort to theorise teacher militancy in South Africa in the context of strike action by the country's biggest and most influential teacher union. Using contemporary media sources, this article provides an account of the events associated with the two-week strike by the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) in June 2009. The article explores three possible theoretical interpretations of the labour action: the strike as an expression of a wider radical project; the strike as a moment in collective bargaining; and the strike as a manifestation of the politics of the governed. The three interpretations are not exhaustive or mutually exclusive. Fleisch points out that the strike was motivated by a set of very local and specific dynamics. The local union leaders tactically transgressed lines of legality, working within the framework when it suited their interests, ignoring it when it did not. SADTU made a range of connections outside the teaching fraternity with groups such as the Congress of South African Students and other local unions like NEHAWU, sympathetic supporters within the state and supporters within the African National Congress and the Communist Party. Fleisch argues for an interpretive approach that takes cognisance of the organisational culture of the education sector and unique dimensions of teachers' work. He suggests that such an approach would also reveal much about teachers as an elite stratum within the labour movement, about the relationship between elected leadership and rank and file members within the organised teacher movement, and about the potential role of patronage politics.

The edition concludes with Nithi Muthukrishna's review essay based on the book by Rhodes University academic Jean Baxen, entitled *Performative praxis: Teacher identity and teaching in the context of HIV/AIDS* (2010)**.** Muthukrishna's essay is a compelling critical discussion of the theoretical orientations, innovative research

approaches and conceptual conclusions drawn by Baxen based on her exploration of the lives of 20 teachers in the light of their attempts to educate learners about HIV/AIDS at their schools. According to Muthukrishna, the book unravels the complex dialectical relationship between subject positioning and teaching about sexuality and HIV/AIDS. The book raises renewed and invigorated questions for researchers, policy makers and educationists that need to be subjected to ongoing dialogue.

Aslam Fataar

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SACHES Annual Conference 2011

"Redrawing the boundaries of difference in the region: Regionalisation as a new space for educational change"

Monday 8 to Thursday 11 August 2011 – Mada Hotel Jinja Nile Resort, Uganda

Deadline for proposals: Thursday 30 June 2011

The **format** of the conference will include full length papers, workshops, panel discussions, symposia, round table discussions and poster presentations. Abstracts of papers (max. 350 words) can be submitted to the conference organizers, Dr Mary TK Ocheng, Dr Betty Akullo Ezati, Dr Proscovia Namubiru-Ssentamu and Jo-Anne Adams-Underhill.

Local and international scholars and agencies in the field of Comparative, International, Development Education, History and Sociology of Education are invited to attend and participate in this four-day workshop.

Abstracts should be submitted electronically (by e-mail), in RTF/MSWord format as file attachments (not as part of the message) to the conference organiser at the following e-mail address: joanne.adams@saches.co.za.

A set of conference proceedings with all the papers presented at the conference will be published after the conference.

Registration fees:
• R1 650-00 (This includes SACHES membership as well as one year's free subscription to its international journal, *SARE*)
• Registered students: R 950-00

Registration fees cover lunches and tea/coffee breaks for the duration of the conference. The conference dinner on Tuesday 9 August 2011 costs an extra R150,00 per person.

Any further queries can be addressed to:
• Jo-Anne Adams-Underhill [joanne.adams@saches.co.za; +27 84 929 0170]
• Dr Mary Ocheng [mocheng@educ.mak.ac.ug; +256 772 66 30 50]
• Dr Betty Ezati [bezati@educ.mak.ac.ug; +256 772 46 71 88]
• Dr Proscovia Namubiru [psnamubiru@umi.ac.ug; +256 774 12 06 07]

The full call for papers is available at http://www.saches.co.za/First Call for Papers.pdf.

For other information, consult the SACHES website: www.saches.co.za.

The complications and challenges of sustaining a new journal during its formative years

Sheldon G Weeks

Abstract

The initial stages of establishing a journal are difficult. They require a clear vision, a mission, values, strategies for success, a clear client base and recognition of the difficulties. When the *Southern African Review of Education* (*SARE*) commenced publishing, SACHES was only in its fourth year. Membership was small, but a niche existed that allowed for a journal on history of education and comparative education to serve Southern Africa. The initial two volumes of *SARE* (started as an annual) in 1995 and 1996 were well received, but the start-up could not be sustained. A hiatus followed that lasted more than two years. Following a successful world congress in Cape Town in 1998, it was decided to rejuvenate *SARE* and place it with a new editorial collaborative in Botswana. There the journal changed, becoming *SARE with EWP*, grew and survived through Volume 10, 2004, but it did not prosper. A base was set on which to build the journal for the future. This article covers some of the key challenges during those six years of problem-solving and seeking sustainability.

Key words: SARE with EWP, accreditation, collaboration, publishing constraints, recognition, reputation

Pragmatics

The *Southern African Review of Education* (*SARE*) was spearheaded in 1995 by Peter Kallaway. He, with a few others at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), edited, produced, had proofread, printed and distributed the first annual edition. It was in A5 format, tightly presented and cheaply produced for the SACHES membership. It was proofread by two people who are acknowledged, and on page 85 of the 86-page annual it was stated that the editorial board was at the Faculty of Education, UWC. The only other name provided to contact is Aslam Fataar, demonstrating his early commitment to *SARE*. There were only five articles and nothing else in the first volume.

These initial steps are significant for the foundation of the journal as they set a tone for the future: three of the articles were by South Africans, one by a Kenyan and one by the editor of the *International Journal of Educational Development* [IJED] in the UK and a leading scholar in comparative education. Keith Watson had already presented his paper at the 4th annual SACHES conference that was held in Gaborone in October 1994, as a keynote address on 'Who or what is shaping the agenda and influencing developments for the 21st century?' This is followed, in Volume 1, by a comparative study by Jonathan Jansen on social transition in Namibia and South Africa through the lens of curriculum policy between 1990 and 1994. The third article, by Okwach Abagi, analyses educational reform in Kenya in the context of its 8-4-4 education system. This paper was presented at a panel on educational reform held at the SACHES Conference in Botswana in 1994. Linda Chisholm provides a review of the literature in South Africa on teacher education policy and how efforts to develop policy outside government became official policy. Crain Soudien's contribution explores the implications of the personal experience of violence on student progression at UCT and its implications for peace-building in post-apartheid South Africa. Now, a decade and a half later, we can recognise the significance of this pioneering edition of *SARE* in relation to the content, its relevance, the authors, and their future roles.

Volume 2 of *SARE,* dated October 1996, is a 99-page volume and was produced by the editors at the University of Western Cape, but most of the work is credited to Andrew Paterson, who also wrote the editorial. The person involved in the nascent collaborative at UWC who was not recognised was Sean Morrow at Fort Hare (see page 98 of Volume 2). The A5 format was used again, but this time a company was paid to design the volume, so it is not so dense and the presentation was slightly improved. A similar balance in contributors to that established in the first volume was maintained in Volume 2. There are four contributions, one from Canada, one from Zambia and two by South Africans. A fifth article is the reprint of the presidential address at the WCCES Congress in Sydney, Australia, in July 1996 by Wolfgang Mitter of the German Institute for International Educational Research. There is also a research report from Namibia and a book review from Botswana.

In Volume 2 the two studies from South Africa are both historical in nature. Glenda Kruss reports on an African indigenous church's educational initiative in a case study of the Khanya Institute, and Sue Krige looks back at religion, missions and modernising and secularising influences between 1920 and 1930 in African education, including the role of the Phelps-Stokes Commission. Ivor Goodson, of the University of Western Ontario, contributed on 'the teacher's life and work', while Anne Sikwibele of the University of Zambia wrote about foreign aid, globalisation and the development of educational policy in post-colonial Africa.

I have taken some space to call attention to how *SARE* began because this history is important. The first two volumes set a foundation that has been followed and built on. I am sure those involved in the original production of the SACHES journal could add a

lot more about the dynamics of what happened there in 1995 and 1996. The two volumes produced at UWC were compiled there and not refereed. Then there was a hiatus for various reasons that resulted in no further issues of *SARE* being published for the next three years. The mantle was passed north to Botswana.

There were a number of key changes in SACHES that parallel changes made to its journal that are reflected in the SACHES Biennial General Meeting held at the University of Cape Town during WCCES in July 1998. These decisions created a new SACHES Executive that moved north from the Western Cape with an axis from Roma to Gauteng to Gaborone. Sheldon Weeks, who had been elected president of SACHES, also became the new editor of *SARE*. When *SARE with EWP* Volume 3 came out, it was dated October 1997, but was actually produced from Botswana in mid-1999 – this is acknowledged in the 'Notes from the Editor' (Weeks 1997: 4).

SARE with EWP Volume 4, October 1998, was also produced in mid-1999 and again this anomaly of backdating was acknowledged in the 'Notes from the Editor' (Weeks 1998: 4). *SARE with EWP* Volume 5, October 1999, was produced by September 2000. The production of *SARE* was still behind schedule by a year, but it was catching up. Volumes 3 and 4 continued to be compiled by the editor. With Volume 5 the journal became refereed and other scholars were co-opted to form an editorial collaborative.

There were many other changes in *SARE with EWP* that coincided with the move to the northern executive of SACHES and *SARE with EWP* being produced from Botswana. With Volume 3 and 4 a new size was introduced – the annual was now presented in B5 format, an international standard for books and journals. A new lay-out was introduced, derived from a number of the Kenton Association annual publications, with headings and the abstract in one column, followed by the articles laid out in two columns to promote ease of reading – it allows for minimal eye movements for the rapid scanning of an article by speed readers. The line spacing or leading was also increased to enhance this capacity.

All articles were now set to begin on an odd-numbered page. This often leaves the last even number of the previous article blank, but this is not a waste as it frees a page for notices, announcements and advertisements (both exchange and paid for – but these have been and are still an unexplored source of publicity and revenue for *SARE with EWP*). A footer at the bottom of the first page of each article allows for complete referencing and starting on an odd-numbered page permits off-printing.

The print run was increased to 400. This allowed for free complimentary and promotional copies, copies to authors, subscription copies (very few of these were recorded) and copies to paid-up members of SACHES. It also made available copies for the legal deposit libraries (three in Botswana and five in South Africa).

The three Ps (*Poetics, Politics and Pragmatics*) merge into these decisions that were being made about *SARE with EWP* in 1999. A number of others that crosscut the 3Ps relate to the guidelines for contributors and the policy on footnotes. For example, the

guidelines for contributors were moved to the inside/outside back cover (two pages long), later reduced to one page and put on the inside back cover, but, except for a new entry allowing for web references, followed the same 3Ps of past decisions. The guidelines to authors were organised with a different emphasis and an additional reference for books was added to show an edited book with two authors. What is surprising is how frequently potential contributors submit articles that totally ignore these guidelines. *SARE*'s referencing style is NOT that of Chicago (and their *Comparative Education Review* or *CER*), but what is called the Harvard style, which is also internationally accepted and closer to the UN style.

A new policy on footnotes was introduced. It declares that footnotes are obtuse, distracting and not required to enhance scholarly discourse. Therefore in *SARE with EWP* there will be *no footnotes*. This is based on the philosophy and poetics and is fundamentally a political decision: 'If it is worth saying, say it in the text. Or if not in text, don't say it at all.' This is still *SARE*'s policy. (The most substantive issue, Volume 14, No. 1 & 2, 2008 (191 pages), has 17 contributors who all embraced this policy – or was it imposed by the editors, as I sometimes had to do when I was editing *SARE with EWP*?)

Unfortunately, many contributors fail to read the style guide, even when sent to them. Some obviously regurgitate an article that has been rejected by another journal that employs a different style – or are they trying a shotgun method of application? The failure to master *SARE*'s streamlined style requirements should be grounds for returning the article to the author(s).

The journal was now organised into clear sections: Notes from the Editor –Articles – Research Notes – Book Reviews – Books Received – Advertisements – SACHES Notices – Notes to Contributors. It was called 'Notes from the Editor' (later changed to 'Editorial Notes') because it was not an editorial recommending a position to be taken by others, but a commentary on what was in the volume at hand. Research notes were to allow for the inclusion of short articles or reports on work in progress so that others might learn from them too.

Review essays and book reviews were encouraged, solicited and prayed for, but were not usually forthcoming. In Volumes 2 through 5 there was only one review in each, all by Sheldon Weeks. This changed with Volume 6, where there are two book reviews by others, but sadly both were reprints. Volume 7 had eleven book reviews by eight people and nine of the book reviews were 'original' to this volume. Peter Kallaway also produced a 'Books Noted' column (or 'Books Received', as publishers were encouraged to send new books to *SARE* for review – but this never took off either). Unfortunately, the momentum started in Volume 7 to have more book reviews was not sustained in future issues. The only review essay to appear was in Volume 3 and was a version of a keynote address given by Willy Wielemans at SACHES 1997 in Livingstone, Zambia. It was a detailed analysis of the Delors Commission Report, on 'Learning: The Treasure Within', a study that Unesco had requested in 1993.

Volume 4 was the only one (for those dated between 1997 and 2004) that was organised around a theme – for this volume it was 'Language and Literacy'. Leslie Limage of Unesco, Paris, France, chaired a symposium within the 10th World Congress of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES) in July 1998 in Cape Town. By 1999 she had produced a book, *Comparative Perspectives on Language and Literacy*, published by the Unesco Regional Office in Dakar. It was 626 pages long and contained 48 articles. *SARE*, with the support of Leslie Limage, selected four articles to reprint and added a fifth that was related to the theme of 'Language and Literacy' from the SACHES 1999 conference in Zambia.

Volume 5, still an annual, saw some major changes to *SARE*. An editorial collaborative with five members was established in Gaborone. In addition, a board of advisors was established that included Wim Hoppers, Ulla Kann, Simon McGrath, Elizabeth Mumba, Karen Mundy, Keith Watson, Allen Wieder and Willy Wielemans, and covered Belgium, Namibia, South Africa, the UK, the USA and Zambia. Some of these people later moved to Canada, Sweden and The Netherlands. Both the editorial collaborative and the board of advisors stayed the same through Volume 10, 2004. The editorial collaborative began work with enthusiasm, with meetings that were minuted, but over time a slow deterioration in commitment to the journal occurred, thus increasing the burden on the editor. At the same time the role of the international advisory board began to increase.

SARE with EWP was now fully refereed, with at least two academics being asked to review a submission, people with relevant prior experience to the article being evaluated. Each article might be vetted by the inner circle of the editorial collaborative or the board of advisors, and/or be sent to an external assessor. Guidelines for this task were established. In addition an ISSN or International Standard Serial Number was obtained. The ISSN helped to establish *SARE with EWP* as an international journal and helped to set its future status, as it enabled recognition as an accredited journal. When the journal, starting with Volume 11, was transferred to a new team in Pretoria, returning it to South Africa, the same ISSN was kept.

Another major change associated with the 'Botswana Days' of *SARE* is a change of name. The journal became *SARE with EWP* or *Southern African Review of Education with Education with Production: A Review of Comparative Education and History of Education from SACHES with The Journal of the Foundation for Education with Production*. All of this – a real mouthful – both fitted on the cover and was repeated on the inside front cover with subscription and contribution information (the inside front and both back covers of Volumes 1 ands 2 were blank).

This process, and all the associated changes, was permitted by the coincidence in timing that had occurred after 1996. Both *SARE* after the second volume produced in the Western Cape and *EWP* after Volume 12, No. 1, 1996, had entered a period of hiatus. The process to recover from this hibernation was facilitated by SACHES holding the 10th World Congress of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES) in July

1998 in Cape Town. At that gathering the election of a new Executive for SACHES and a new editor for *SARE* took place. The 'partnership' between *SARE* and *EWP* began in July 1998 (not 1996 as indicated in Chisholm 2007: 4). As both journals were now 'based' in Gaborone this also permitted the partnership to work … for at least the next few years.

In 1991, Patrick van Rensburg**,** the founder of *EWP*, was made an 'Honorary Member of SACHES' in recognition of his contribution to education and development in Southern Africa. The journal *Education with Production* began around 1985 as an organ of the Foundation for Education with Production. John Conradie from Harare, Zimbabwe, edited it. He was also a co-director of the Foundation for Education with Production. Conradie, who had been ill for some time, died in September 1998. His last issue of *EWP* was Volume 12, No. 1, October 1996. Writing in August 1999 in *SARE with EWP* Volume 4 (backdated to 1998), Van Rensburg thanked SACHES 'for the opportunity to revive *EWP* within a joint publication'. He also thanked Crain Soudien for this initiative (1998: 49-50).

The practical aspects of this 'merger' were many. In the beginning it brought additional copy to the combined journal and increased revenue, as the Foundation for Education with Production paid for the copies they took to distribute through their network. The pages for *EWP* were placed at the back of the journal and averaged an introduction and one or two articles from Volume 3 through Volume 9 and 10 (a combined issue). The merger effectively ceased with Volume 11 in 2005, as no further contributions were received from the Foundation for Education with Production – yet the name *SARE with EWP* continued through Volume 13, No. 1, 2007. With Volume 13, No. 2, 2007, the journal reverted to being simply *SARE*. Linda Chisholm (2007: 4) in her *Notes from the Editor* observed, 'Our interest in publishing research on education and the world of work is now incorporated into the mainstream of *SARE*'.

As *SARE with EWP* grew, it became evident by 2000 and with Volume 5 that though now a refereed journal it would not receive contributions from South African academics unless they were either presentations at a SACHES conference or mature scholars who no longer sought or required that what they publish be in journals that had been vetted, recognised and officially accredited by South Africa. In Volume 5 only one of the articles is by a South African (a keynote address at the SACHES Conference 1999). The other three are on Zimbabwe and by Zimbabwean authors. None of these contributions were in essence comparative.

Volume 6 had three articles on Botswana, two on South Africa by South Africans and one international and comparative article. The two selections used in the pages for *EWP* were reprints. The SACHES 2000 Conference was held in Namibia, but contributions from that conference were not submitted for publication. This was a problem that was to pose a severe constraint on the development of *SARE with EWP*. It appeared potential contributors were still seeking to publish in recognised journals outside Africa.

I wrote in the 'Notes from the Editor' to Volume 7, 'Unfortunately there is still not enough material reaching *SARE with EWP* to "catch up" (Volume 8 is still due for 2002) or to expand to two or more numbers a year.' To be able to produce Volume 7 two articles were reprinted, with permission, from IJED on Phillip Foster's 'vocational school fallacy revisited' (Weeks 2001: 3).

In the 'Notes from the Editor' for Volume 8, I explained that the 'key constraint to the development of *SARE with EWP* has been the number of articles submitted for consideration. For this issue an additional six articles were submitted for review. One was rejected and five are still in the assessment process or have been sent back to the authors for revision. If sufficient support for *SARE with EWP* flows from the annual conference 2003, then Volume 9, 2003, and Volume 10, 2004, should be published in 2004? Then in 2005 we can go on to two issues a year' (Weeks 2002: 3).

While Volumes 6 and 7 were 100 pages, Volume 8 in 2002 fell back to being only 80 pages. Harold Herman's keynote address at SACHES 2002 followed an article by Crain Soudien on 'Creolisation, education and identity'. Aslam Fataar and Alan Wider contributed an article on the teaching life of one teacher. A special issue on ICTs was announced for Volume 10. This was not to happen, as Volumes 9 and 10 were combined, after further delays in receiving, assessing and processing contributions. This combined issue was the last *SARE with EWP* to be produced by the editorial collaborative in Gaborone, Botswana.

Thanks to the hard work and drive of Aslam Fataar, *SARE with EWP* was recognised as an accredited journal in South Africa. Accreditation started with Volume 11 in 2005, following the move to Pretoria, under the editorship of Linda Chisholm and with a new collaborative composed, in addition to the editor, of Crain Soudien, Aslam Fataar, Sean Morrow and Peter Kallaway. *SARE with EWP* was now poised to take off. In the last five years it has, but as *SARE*.

Poetics and politics of publishing

Many of the innovations developed by the collaborative in Gaborone have been kept following the move back to South Africa, including the structure and basic layout of the journal. After Volume 11, the two-column format for the text of articles was dropped with Volume 12, as it required greater facility with desktop publishing and perhaps added to the costs? It is simpler in designing and laying out a journal to only have one column, unless more sophisticated programmes than Microsoft Word can be used. The goal of changing from an annual to one volume, with two or more numbers per year, was not achieved until Volume 12 in 2006 – it was the first volume with two numbers in one year.

A new journal has a development role as part of its commitment to its constituency. Each article must be peer reviewed and a decision made in relation to outright rejection versus requested revisions and resubmission. Until the journal became accred-

ited, it did not attract sufficient contributions for vetting and possible inclusion to justify more than one issue a year. This forced the editors to work hard with the authors of the few borderline articles that were then sent back for revision and resubmission. A few were sent back a second time (one even a third time) to bring them up to a standard and quality for inclusion in *SARE with EWP*. In other circumstances such articles would usually have been rejected.

The focus of *SARE* from the beginning was on publishing articles by and for the catchment of SACHES – i.e. Southern Africa. This policy was never adhered to closely. Volume 1 included the article by Keith Watson (it was, though, a keynote at a SACHES conference). Volume 2 has an article by Ivor Goodson. Volume 3 has one from Belgium on UNESCO and the Delors Commission. In Volume 4 there is one from Zimbabwe on 'Rereading Emile' (how French can you get?). Volume 5 has a piece on production units in Indonesia. Then come the comparative studies like the one on Botswana and the USA and one from Edinburgh on 'Globalisation'. In Volume 7 there is an article on Ghana, plus one on enterprise education in the United States and another on a philosophy of education, drawing on 'implications for international education'. And in the combined Volume 9 and 10, there is an article on research management in New Zealand. Perhaps only Volume 8 is one hundred per cent Southern African material. The fear that the journal might be dominated by contributions from South Africa did not materialise, partly because the incentive to publish in *SARE with EWP* did not fully exist until the journal was recognised and accredited in South Africa.

This evolving objective to become an international journal of repute has been embraced and extended by the current editors and associate editors in South Africa. But a post mortem of the volumes between 2005 and 2009 would reveal that the journal remains predominately a platform for scholars in and for Southern Africa. Now that the journal is officially accredited by South Africa, more contributions are being received from South African authors.

Research Notes, Book Reviews and Books Noted have remained among the weakest parts of *SARE*. As noted, only Volume 7 had a variety of book reviews, and these were written mainly by the editors (old and new), which is not how it should be. It was hoped that *SARE* could become a platform for young scholars to publish, particularly book reviews, and to use the section Research Notes to report on work in progress. During the first decade of *SARE* this vision never became a reality. The problem, though, was greater than *SARE.* SACHES set up, following the successful WCCES 1998 in Cape Town, an annual SACHES Research Award and Publications Scheme (SRAPS). It was worth, at the start, R10 000 and was for young scholars (but not to support graduate studies). It was never effective because hardly anyone applied.

Volume 15, No. 1, 2009, on pages 119 to 125 reprints the contents pages of *SARE* from Volumes 9 through 14(3). All of *SARE* deserves an index by author and subject cover-

ing Volumes 1 through 15. SACHES is unique in embracing history as a fundamental approach in comparative education research. An index would help us to discern the role that history has had in the journal. A content analysis of articles would also be required.

Other issues in producing a journal

Volumes 3 through 10 were highly subsidised by the collaborative in Botswana, who did all the work as unpaid volunteers, including editing, layout, design and desktop publishing, all at no cost to SACHES. The only cost was the actual printing and distribution, which was done in Pretoria. Since *SARE* moved back to South Africa, and editors and editorial boards lead busy lives, to get the journal out, to increase to at least two numbers each year and to respond to the growing interest in the journal following accreditation, most of the above tasks involved in producing a journal have had to be paid for. The Human Sciences Research Council in Pretoria has provided significant institutional support.

Conclusion

The story of *SARE* over the decade from 1995 through 2004 is the story of a journal struggling to get established, to become recognised and respected and to win the support of both the members of SACHES and other academics. The ideal of what a journal should be was always present, but the realities have tended to complicate the perspective and limit the passion. The pool of available articles to select from remained low during these years. This required the editors to work even harder to achieve standards by detailed referral back to authors and to insist on competent resubmissions before publishing. The backdating of volumes is an expediency that should be avoided: it has also been a source of confusion. Combined issues should also be avoided, if at all possible.

It was a real struggle to become a 'journal of international repute'. It has been a rough road, with many milestones transferred. As with most institutional efforts, the key query guiding our endeavours was 'who benefits?'. In the case of *SARE with EWP* it was first and foremost the members of SACHES and then the wider intellectual community of students, teachers, scholars and researchers interested in the history of education and comparative and international education in Southern Africa. The recognition and accreditation of *SARE* has helped to bring about further transformations. The marriage with the Foundation for Education with Production and the creation of an effective *SARE with EWP* during the Botswana years of the combined journal was a significant innovation that ran its course all too quickly.

SACHES is a full member of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies and a number people from Southern Africa have played key roles in this international body over the years. *SARE* now takes its place with over 30 other journals on com-

parative and international education published worldwide. The next stage is for *SARE* to be properly indexed along with these journals, so that its content receives the wider readership and usage that it deserves.

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Notes on the author
Sheldon G. Weeks became involved with issues related to educational development in the majority world when a doctoral student at Harvard University in the early 1960s. He taught at Harvard, Makerere and the University of Dar es Salaam, was research professor and director of the Educational Research Unit in Papua New Guinea (1974-1991) and was foundation Dean of Graduate Studies (1996-2002) at the University of Botswana. He was president of SACHES (1998-2002) and editor of *SARE with EWP* (1996-2004). Currently he produces the *Saches eNEWS*.

Address for correspondence
gudrun@info.bw

A periodical of its time: A brief history of the *Journal of Education* 1969–2009

Ken Harley, Wayne Hugo and Volker Wedekind
University of KwaZulu-Natal

Abstract

This article tracks the history of the *Journal of Education* over the last 40 years by focusing on four periods of its existence: establishment (1979-1973); consolidation, academic formalism and disappearance (1974-1985); re-establishment in a democratic South Africa (1993-1997); and development as an open, SAPSE-accredited journal (1998-2009). It explores the identities of distinct editorial regimes, its location in politicised time/space frameworks, and some of the controversies it has faced over its long history. It is an insider account, written by three of the journal's editors and drawing on interviews with past editors as well as the existing documentation of the journal. It is not a qualitative analysis of the actual articles of the journal, preferring rather in this article to foreground the history, networks, personalities and shifting identities of the journal and its carriers.

Key words: Journal of Education, editorial regimes, intellectual power, administrative power, academic networks, SAPSE-accredited, Pietermaritzburg, Kenton

Introduction: The focus of this study

The *Journal of Education* is the longest-running academic journal published in the field of education in South Africa. It first appeared in 1969 and, with the exception of a few years in the 1980s, has been published continuously.

How might one understand the *Journal of Education*? In this article we focus on the following:

- The preferred identity of the journal: How did successive editorial regimes perceive and present *JoE*'s distinctive role in the education/academic community? And how was choice of identity related to the journal's home base in relation to the very different political and educational contexts through which the journal passed?

• Symbols and substance in editions of JoE from inception to 2009.

In short, we review what *JoE* was intended to be, and what it actually was. We identify four stages in the growth and development of *JoE*:

1. Establishment
2. Consolidation, academic formalism – and disappearance
3. Re-establishment and reorientation in a new political and educational era
4. Development as an open – and 'SAPSE-accredited' – journal

The article draws on the available records of the journal, interviews with past editors and the authors' personal recollections. All of us have been centrally involved over the last two stages mentioned above. This is an insider account. However, in mapping out the history, we have attempted to be critical of both our predecessors and our own role in the development of the journal. Drawing inspiration from Randall Collins (2000), we have attempted to locate the history of the journal in its context as well as in the networks of people associated with the journal.

Four stages in *JoE*'s growth and development

Establishment, 1969–1973

The foreword to the inaugural issue contributed by RG MacMillan, Professor and Head of the University of Natal Department of Education, reads:

> It is with very great pleasure that I present a foreword to the first issue of the *Journal of Education.*
>
> With few exceptions, there are practically no outlets in South Africa for the publication of the views of those engaged in the close study of education. It has therefore been my hope, for some time, that the Department of Education of the University of Natal should make a contribution towards improving this unsatisfactory situation. It is hoped that the appearance of the Journal on an annual basis will help towards better communication in the field of education thought.

The Editorial of Volume 3(1), 1971, confirms MacMillan's founding role by paying tribute to him as its 'promoter' who was 'conscious of the need to provide a journal for communicating research and ideas … Through his planning and enthusiasm this journal was launched …'. MacMillan's foreword provides clear pointers that, despite its spectacularly expansive title, *Journal of Education* was not intended to be an all-encompassing leviathan subsuming all other education titles with their specialist niche codings. A more plausible interpretation is that the breadth implied by the title was attractively vague and sufficiently inclusive to get the journal off the ground. The foreword in Volume 1 was unaccompanied by editorial comment or reference to the scope of the journal. It is the editorial in Volume 2 (1970) that reinforces the view that the title was a suitable 'catch-all' for whatever was submitted:

> [The journal] … is a means of communicating ideas in a variety of fields of education, primarily to depict pertinent problems in perspective or to indicate samples of research

being carried out. There is therefore no clear theme in this volume.

Indeed, the six articles in this issue drew on a wide range of disciplines in covering 'pertinent problems' from levels of education across primary to higher education.

Although early issues listed an Editorial Committee comprising AM Barrett, Chairman (Pietermaritzburg), and TC Shippey (Durban), there was no guidance for potential contributors. In fact, there was no invitation for the submission of articles. It was thus, in the words of a former editor, a journal for 'University of Natal and friends' (Prof. RK Muir, interviewed 15/2/2010). This judgment is borne out by 18 of the first 27 articles in the first five issues being completely 'in-house'. The nine contributors from other institutions included a number of academics identifiable as 'friends'. For example, Michael Ashley (Rhodes, and later UCT) had a background in Natal; Leslie Behr's association with HOD Ronnie MacMillan can be traced back to their time at the Johannesburg College of Education, and they were co-authors of a well-known book. Two of the nine articles from outside UN were from the 'University of Rhodesia', with which the department at this time appears to have had strong links. The 'in-house' nature of early issues would seem to be reflective of a situation in which editors had to 'scrounge' for articles (interview, 15/2/2010).

Apart from being largely 'in-house', articles in the first five issues have other notable features. A reader's first impression is of their slightness in terms of length. The first five issues had a total of 242 pages carrying 27 articles. The average length of each article – less than nine pages – would be even further reduced if pages carrying advertisements were subtracted from the overall total of 242. Early issues were certainly well endowed with advertisements. Volume 1 had eight advertisements and seven articles, two of which were of fewer than three pages; and Volume 2 carried two articles each of three and three-and-a-half pages. Each of Volumes 4 and 5 comprised 39 and 48 pages respectively.

A second impression of the early articles is of academic slightness. Articles reveal limited sense of rigour and debate. A reading of the articles supports the view that they were indeed 'the ramblings of luminaries' (interview, 15/2/2010). Such articles were supplemented by those of the 'some thoughts' genre contributed by lesser luminaries (e.g. 'Some thoughts on the teaching of English to English-speaking pupils in Natal (Hoskins 1969: 53-53); 'Some thoughts on overload' (Buys 1970: 37-40); '"Natural" Education: Some thoughts' (Barrett 1971)). Lecturers' articles were essentially about what they were teaching. A strong utilitarian aim of promoting better teaching in a particular subject field was also evident. But this did not extend to better teaching in all schools: the Hoskins title (above) was symptomatic of a strong focus on white schools.

In the context of the times, none of these features is really surprising. There was no powerful imperative for academic publication, and although it may have been 'nice' for educationists to do so, publications that offered the promise of yielding royalties would

probably have been more attractive in cost-benefit analyses. In addition, the UN Department of Education was essentially in the business not of higher degree studies, but of offering the one-year postgraduate diploma for those wishing to qualify as high school teachers. Little wonder, then, that the UN Department of Education was, at this time, 'very good friends with the Natal Education Department' (interview, 15/2/2010), which provided the white students with loans. 'Black' education does not appear to have been high on the teacher educator's priority list. Even in the Behr and MacMillan book *Education in South Africa* (1966), 'black' education featured as no more than a general, statistical systemic issue and is a powerful representation of the racist context in which JoE was conceived and embedded. Within this period JoE did not rise above the ideological normativity of apartheid and participated in it through its blindness to the educational conditions of the overwhelming majority of learners in the country.

Paucity of debate and the dominance of white male experts pronouncing or 'communicating' (MacMillan 1969) their views was the dominant style of the journal. Faith in 'certain' knowledge was by and large extended to faith in the pronouncements of experts (with an accompanying lack of incentive for debate). The journal was a forum for 'the publication of the views of those engaged in the close study of education' (Foreword, 1969). This was also the new age of human capital theory (see Schultz 1961). Amongst the advertisers in Volume 1 was Lever Brothers, whose financial connection with education was a belief in its importance for distributing skills necessary to enable progress.

Moving towards academic respectability and greater inclusivity, 1974–1985

Volume 6(1), 1974, signalled the beginnings of a shift in JoE's 'preferred identity' towards greater academic respectability and inclusivity. At best, the results of such a change might gradually become evident over a passage of time, but would initially become evident in the way in which the journal was constituted and presented.

The Department of Education in Durban had now been recognised as an 'independent department'. In explaining this in an editorial, the new HOD, Prof. Jack Niven, expressed the wish that the two departments would work together in matters of common interest. JoE was one such common interest. From this time on, however, even though the names of two of its staff appeared on the now enlarged editorial committee, there is little evidence of active involvement on the part of the Durban department. But for the first time there was outside representation on the editorial committee: PT Pienaar (UDW). More significantly, the person who assumed the role of editor was a 'recent' outsider: Robert Muir had arrived from Wits in July 1972.

With production work being localised in Pietermaritzburg, decision-making was concentrated in fewer hands. If those now responsible for *JoE* believed in (or supported) changes, then change could be more easily achieved. Emeritus Prof. Muir's memories

of this period are instructive (Interview 15/2/2010). While he recollects some co-operation with Durban, the task of 'scrounging for the material' and then proofreading the journal was his. In all of this work, Paddy Kearney, a former Fullbright scholar and now a junior lecturer at Pietermaritzburg (PMB), was of 'immense help', although he never published in *JoE*. Muir's own stated ambition was to give the journal more academic respectability by –

- insisting on standardised formatting and abstracts for articles
- instituting a refereeing process for the selection of articles
- making the journal more research-based

The impulse towards greater inclusivity was less obviously visible. Its background is the now almost forgotten SPROCAS (Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society). Working within the broad-based South African Council of Churches, this investigation carried out by a wide range of prominent scholars concluded that living with apartheid was incompatible with the acceptance of various aspects of the Christian faith. The *SPROCAS Reports* (1972) were edited by Peter Randall, who had been assistant director of the South African Institute of Race Relations and was later to become co-founder of Ravan Press. When at Wits, Muir had served as secretary to Peter Randall and had assisted him in writing the education report.

In part this might explain Muir's intent to promote the scholarly side of *JoE*, and to open the journal to a wider community. Similarly, his SPROCAS work, together with his close working relationship with Kearney, might help explain the publicly un-declared shift to greater inclusivity. Kearney's stance was progressive: he subsequently left PMB to head the staff team at Diakonia, an ecumenical social justice agency founded by Archbishop Denis Hurley to help Durban churches respond to the socio-political challenges of the area.

Those who worked with Robert Muir remember him as a dogged custodian of academic integrity and as a pragmatist who recognised the need for political change. In the 1970s Black education was, literally, a burning issue that did not exist only in education statistics or on organisational flow charts.

How successful was Muir in advancing his own 'preferred identity' of the journal? In respect of the academic profile of *JoE*, there was some success. Editorials were introduced, both specifying the scope of the journal and inviting submissions, e.g.

> The Editor invites the contribution of articles concerned with the interdisciplinary study of education, evaluating methods of teaching, research in education and education policies generally. Articles which focus on education in South Africa and which report research in education in South Africa are particularly sought after. (*JoE*, 1981, Vol. 13)

The new emphasis on research is clear. In addition to an editorial committee, there was now an editorial board. Although the eight members of the board were all members of the Faculty of Education, *JoE* was nevertheless now presenting itself as a more scholarly journal. Also, notwithstanding the fact that it now had a 'business manager'

on the editorial committee, the commercial imprint was softened with a reduced number of advertisements – four, all related to publications – compared with the original eight in 1969 (and the red and gold stripes had also disappeared from the cover).

The 1984 editorial was the same as that for 1983, except that it concluded with a new addition: 'This is a refereed journal and all contributions will be referred to two referees.' Institutional homes of those listed on the panel of referees were UCT, UDW, Wits, UZULU (M Ashley, AL Behr, M Skuy and AJ Thembela respectively) and King's College, London (Professor Emeritus E King). Five of the six articles in the 1985 issue were from outside *JoE*'s institutional home – Rhodes, University of Durban-Westville, University of Zululand and two from Edgewood College of Education.

In regard to the wider range of contributors, though, caution is needed in interpreting what seems to be the straightforward indicator of contributors being 'insiders' or 'outsiders'. With a growing number of academics (notably those from other institutions) serving on the panel of referees, the notion of 'insider' and 'outsider' becomes blurred when members of the panel were themselves contributing articles to the journal. And indeed they were. Statistics on who was publishing in *JoE* between 1969 and 1985 show that the journal in fact remained resolutely 'in-house'. The 17 issues across this timespan yielded 114 articles. Members of the editorial committee (seven, in total) contributed 26 articles (22,8% of all published articles). Despite their brief existence, the panel of referees contributed seven articles (6,1%). Heads of department, of whom there were four across the two centres between 1969 and 1985, were prolific in contributing 19 articles (16,7%). Especially in the first part of this period, when the journal was the responsibility of relatively junior staff, and prior to the panel of referees, the impulse for article acceptance must surely have been more compelling than that of rejection as far as HODs' submissions were concerned. HODs' articles were very much of a kind: descriptions of the 'education system' and management.

Turning to the more substantive issue of the academic nature of the journal, it is to be expected that some years would pass before published articles reflected a measure of alignment with new directions in editorial policy. Thus, the old-style article lingered into the mid and late 1970s, e.g.:

- Colussi, M. (1975) Practical work in school science teaching. 7: 55-68.
- Macintosh, J. (1976) The case study method of teaching taxation. 8: 43-49.
- Jenkins, E. (1978) A model for the secondary school English syllabus. 10: 31-39.
- Scholtz, A.H. (1980) An estimate of the optimal length for a cloze test. 12: 11-20.

There were also still some rambling narrative descriptions such as the article '"English in the Eighties": An overview':

> It was, however, with some excitement that I set off for 'English in the Eighties,' an international conference on the teaching of English, held at the University of Sydney in August 1980. When, while dazedly waiting at three in the morning at Perth Airport …..
> (Dobie, 1981: 13).

But things were beginning to change. The best example of a shift to research-based articles is *JoE*, 1983, Volume 15. This issue comprised:

- 'Education in the context of (under) development' (Mark Orkin, Wits) [a theoretically sophisticated article]
- 'Intelligence' (Paul Beard) [rather old-style 'rambling of luminary']
- Five articles based on empirical research (Ian Gaitskell, Alan Simon, Michael Thurlow, Jack Niven and Costas Criticos) [all solid pieces]
- Book reviews

It is notable that book reviews were becoming a regular feature in the early 1980s. There was now even some debate. Margetson's (1979) 'The absurdity of "practicism"' was followed by Clarke's (1980) 'Theory as beacon: A reply to Don Margetson'.

In contrast with the marked focus on white education and 'Englishness' that we have seen in the 'Establishment' phase of the journal, articles in the second phase also provide an indication of at least something of a shift in focus towards a broader view of education in South Africa, and a grappling with issues rooted in black education. The following titles in chronological order reflect this trend:

- Michau, JMZ. (1975) An evaluation of English Through Activity as a method of second language teaching in Black primary schools. 7: 25-39.
- Michau, JMZ. (1978) Problem areas in the acquisition of mathematical concepts by Black children in South Africa. 10: 21-29.
- Lawrance, DM. (1984) Review of P Kallaway (ed.) *Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans.* 16: 52-54.
- Harley, K. (1984) Occupational opportunities for Black matriculants in the industrial labour market of Pietermaritzburg: Implications for separate schooling. 16: 3-12.
- Gray, B. (1985) Teacher development programmes in an African context: Principles for effective implementation: A case study of the Science Education Project in KwaZulu. 17: 58-68.
- Harley, K. (1985) Aspirations and opportunities: Perspectives of Black pupils and matriculated school leavers. 17: 47-57.

In this sense a similarity of the 1974–1985 phase of the journal's history to the earlier 1969–1973 phase lies in its resonance with the broader political context. The early part of Muir's editorship overlapped with a watershed in South African politics. The 16 June 1976 Soweto uprising led to widespread reassessments of the political landscape – and black schooling was at its epicentre. But Muir himself was also a pioneer. In 1980, while the dominant debates were being framed by an emergent Marxist school based mainly at Wits, Muir published an extended piece entitled 'Culture and the curriculum', which is arguably the first introduction to a South African audience of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and the writers loosely associated with the New Sociology of Education, including Basil Bernstein. Clearly the article was ahead of its

time. It is never cited, but it should have laid a foundation for the emergent focus on curriculum and the introduction of theorists who would become highly influential 15 years later.

An overview of this period suggests that a combination of new editorship and a changing political environment led most notably to the journal's falling into line with the refereeing and academic conventions of scholarly publication; and an increasing number of articles were research-based. Increasingly, too, articles were beginning to reflect more broadly on education in South Africa. The 'in-house' characteristic of the journal was undergoing modification, as a more extended range of 'friends' were now contributing articles and serving as referees. Several were in nearby geographic proximity; but from farther afield Rhodes, UCT and Wits were emerging as new friends.

With good progress having thus been made, there was an early manifestation of a hard truth. Sustainability was dependent on a champion or small number of champions. Robert Muir became Dean of the Education Faculty in 1984, and Paddy Kearney had already left some years earlier. In 1986, *JoE* simply disappeared.

JoE *in the era of progressivism and the reconstruction of South African education, 1993–1997*

JoE's re-emergence in 1993 is attributable to a convergence of factors in the local and national contexts. An overlay of 'newness' covered both.

Individuals behind this resuscitation in the then Department of Education on the Pietermaritzburg campus were Stephen Appel, Ken Harley and Volker Wedekind. Appel and Harley were very recent appointments. Appel's recently completed PhD had been supervised by Philip Wexler at Rochester University. As a former UN higher degrees student supervised by Muir, Harley had had two articles published in *JoE* in the 1980s (and had had an article accepted for the ill-fated 1986 issue which never materialised). Wedekind had been a student leader and was now a postgraduate student working concurrently in an NGO within the Department.

The pre-dawn of democracy was indeed a time for thinking afresh. Suddenly and remarkably, after years of critique of apartheid education, scholarly work was now framed by the imminence of a legitimate system of education that would require massive reconstruction. From across the country academics had commenced with the National Education Policy Investigation charged with responsibility for providing the government-in-waiting with policy options. At a time when uniquely South African education issues were being vigorously debated, liberal or leftist scholars probably viewed only the respected *Perspectives in Education* with favour.

In the sense of a dearth of 'suitable' vehicles for publication, *Journal of Education* was thus resurrected for the same reason it had been founded in 1969. Somewhat unaware

of the full scope of what was being taken on, the three new members of the Department presented a proposal for its revival to the Faculty Board in mid-1992. The motion was duly approved. Dean Muir sanctioned funding from the Grieve Bequest. This was not unfitting, as CS Grieve had contributed 'A research project on student teachers in Natal' in Volume 1, 1969: 57-59. It was one of very few research-based articles in that era, albeit a strikingly sparse account.

The 71-page Volume 18 was distributed in 1993. In terms of its A5 dimensions, it reflected some continuity with its predecessors, but its presentation was rather more humble in that it comprised A4 pages folded in half and stapled – rather than professionally bound, as before – into a light blue cover. Modest appearance notwithstanding, the longer-term aim was to establish the journal as rather more than an 'in-house' initiative. The 1993 issue was branded ISSN 0259 and distributed to holding libraries throughout Southern Africa from 1994 onwards. Its editorial articulated a 'preferred' new identity that came to be consolidated and elaborated in the 1993–1997 period. The rationale was based on a situation in which '... progressive academic educationists and post-graduate students engaged in research have very few vehicles for their work' (Editorial, 1993). With reference to the articles in this issue, the editorial declared that: 'All of these articles exemplify the creativity with which progressive educationists have begun to assume the role of curriculum theorists and implementers as opposed to educational critics.' The need for 'bold ideas' was coupled with the need for 'critical debate', the first time that such a feature had been stressed at editorial level.

Scholarly rigour and debate, which the journal came to emphasise editorially from this time on, was inextricably linked to the focus of the journal. Volume 18, 1993, referred to the journal's 'tradition of diversity' and hoped that this would continue. Now, however, the journal 'is to have as a general feature the curriculum', covering 'curriculum theory, history, policy, and development from multi-disciplinary per-spectives'. Choice of curriculum had logical connections with the same local and national factors that provided an impulse for the rebirth of the journal. There was some curriculum expertise in the department, and in the seminal moment of national reconstruction, curriculum had an appealing relevance. It could be argued that it also had a strategic appeal. Like the title of the journal in 1969, interpretation of 'curriculum' can be broad enough to accommodate a variety of perspectives – not an insignificant factor when a journal faces at least an initial struggle to elicit quality articles while still establishing itself.

Volume 20 (1995) sought editorially to 'reiterate and strengthen' the 1993 statement on curriculum as a focus. First, 'curriculum' was viewed as a promising field for relating 'substantive and methodological issues unique to the field of study'. Second, while the passing of the 'old South Africa' was unlamented, there was a danger that the critical debate it had generated could be in jeopardy in a new context in which 'the necessary search for policy options potentially stifles debate ...' and as individuals

strive for 'relevance' and the achievement of 'something practical and worthwhile'. The editorial quoted Westbury:

> A vision can slide so easily into meliorism and, unfortunately, the consequences of such a meliorist perspective have long beset our field: too often and for too much of our history we have not been able, because of our commitment to what should be, to look at what is (Westbury 1973, cited in Goodson 1990: 153).

A critical view of 'what is' became central to editorial policy over the following years. Empiricism was acceptable as long as it was not 'divorced from theoretical under-standing' (Editorial, 1995). In 1997, *JoE* further developed this foundation in des-cribing itself as '… an interdisciplinary publication of research and writing on education which seeks to promote scholarly understanding of developments in the field of education …. Contributions from disciplines in the fields of sociology, philosophy, psychology, history, policy and educational administration as well as subject-specific articles are most welcome.'

Using editorial processes and published content as a yardstick, how successful was the new editorial policy? Not at all in the initial stages, when some continuity with the original journal is apparent. The refereeing process actually took a step back in that for the first two issues (1993 and 1994) it was accomplished internally by the editorial committee (Appel, Harley and Wedekind) together with other staff in the Faculty. Compiling articles was initially also reminiscent of the earlier period when an editor 'scrounged' articles'. As in the early history of the journal, networks were critically important; in this iteration, however, the committee's network extended further than that of its predecessors. This helped to impart a less parochial persona. Showpiece articles from other universities were contributed by Pam Christie and Johan Muller in 1993; Penny Enslin in 1994; Jonathan Jansen in 1995; Christie again in 1996, together with David Bensusan and Yael Shalem; and in 1997 by Irene Broekman and Steven Segel. Apart from Jansen (UDW) and Muller (UCT), all were from Wits. The common factor, which was no coincidence, is that Appel had a Wits background and had worked with Muller, who came to hold the Chair of Curriculum at UCT; and Harley had worked with Christie and Jansen on the Curriculum Project in the National Education Policy Initiative in 1992.

Networks were also reflected in the editorial board in place by 1995. Membership was weighted in favour of staff within the School of Education, as it was now known, and individuals and institutions with whom there were close working relationships, such as the Natal College of Education. Themba Ndlovu from nearby Indumiso College of Education was there not because of the profile of his institution but because he was a UN master's student and activist working with Wedekind. Jewels in the editorial board crown were Christie and Muller, and Appel's doctoral supervisor, Philip Wexler (University of Rochester). Two further international staff from the Graduate School of Education of Rutgers State University were added in 1997 as a result of Wedekind's now expanding personal network.

Although the board's role was largely symbolic, and in the case of the 'big names' almost that of patrons prepared to lend their names as a contribution to the journal's credibility, an external refereeing process was in place by 1995. By the end of the period the editorial could report that 'All articles and review essays are reviewed by anonymous external referees' (Vol. 22, 1997).

The nature of the original problem with submissions had changed from one of very few to that of a 'pleasing number of submissions' (1995) – but with a high percentage of rejections from referees. The low quality of many submissions led to a depressing amount of editorial time being spent on the painful labour of writing letters of rejection to aspirant authors who may have been beguiled by the journal's modest cladding. It is a problem that has not gone away and is currently exacerbated by the pressure to 'publish or perish'.

In line with the editorial expectation of length, now a maximum of 6 000 words instead of the earlier 4 000, articles were certainly longer than previously. Collectively, the five issues carried 21 articles, four 'research notes', two book reviews, one 'debate', and two 'discussions'. One third of the 21 published articles were from universities other than UN. This feature now made the journal appear rather less 'in-house' than previously, but if it was indeed still a publication 'for NU and friends', the friends were now relatively more numerous and somewhat farther afield, albeit concentrated at Wits. Five of the seven 'outside' articles came from Wits (the other two being from UDW and UCT).

Overall, compared with the previous cycle in *JoE's* development, published articles give the impression of being more substantive, more theoretically grounded and more solidly framed by debate within a broader community of scholars. Appel (1995) exemplifies this point in 'Notes on nation-building as an educational aim'. His theoretical debate with Enslin (1994) is structured on debate: 'On the question of the possible place of nation-building in South African schools two responses have been made. One is that …. The other is that …..' (1995: 9). This style of debate contrasts markedly with 'Some thoughts on educational change in South Africa today' (MacMillan 1981), which is structured on purely personal observations: 'I have selected a few areas which I consider to be worthy of remark, coinciding, as they do, with developments in South Africa at the present time' (1981: 3).

In general, articles of this period reflect a focus on the critical issues of transformation, for example:

- 'Equality and curriculum policy in post-apartheid South Africa' (Christie 1993)
- 'Making a difference: Commonality, difference and curriculum differentiation' (Muller 1993)
- 'Should nation-building be an aim of education?' (Enslin 1994)
- 'Notes on nation-building as an educational aim' (Appel 1995)
- 'Composing the lyrical out chaos' (Broekman and Segal 1997).

Although targeted at 'relevance', a common feature of these articles is that they provided theoretically grounded options rather than 'solutions' in the form of expert pronouncement. At the end of this phase in *JoE*'s development, there was a stirring of realisation that change would not come easily:

- 'Why is it so hard to change the educational world?' (Appel 1996)
- 'Challenges to teachers as schools in South Africa become more integrated' (Akhurst 1997).

Technical production of the journal was also taking strain. Since 1993 the journal had been distributed free of charge to individuals and libraries of academic organisations. This policy was probably more one of default than design – the journal simply did not have the administrative structure for managing subscriptions. In any event, as a little-known journal, it was extremely unlikely to attract subscribers. After funding from the Faculty Conference Fund secured the 1994 issue, the journal was thrown increasingly on its own resources and the capacity of the editorial committee to contribute from their personal research funds.

The host Department of Education was itself in a parlous state in the mid-nineties. Some academics in more powerful faculties were beginning to question the need and justification for teacher education on the campus. Appel had left for the University of Auckland, Harley had inherited the burden of HOD, and the School of Education was located in the Faculty of Humanities, the old Faculty of Education having been a casualty of restructuring. Although in the vulnerable position of not yet being on the permanent staff and being in the early stages of establishing an academic career, Wedekind remained on the editorial committee. In addition to being heavily involved in the university's restructuring, both remaining members of the editorial committee were central to the School's initial foray into 'distance' teaching. Classified by the university as an 'income-generating project', the distance venture at least provided the potential for an additional source of funding for the journal.

Journal of Education was not alone in facing production/financial challenges. *Perspectives in Education* (*PiE*) was moving from its Wits base to UDW, where Jonathan Jansen had secured funding for its continuance. In his typically inclusive way, Jansen called a meeting of interested parties from Wits and UDW to discuss the implications of *PiE*'s relocation and the state of education journals generally. In comparison with the professional appearance of *PiE*, *Journal of Education* was very much the poor cousin at the meeting. At one point Harley was asked to comment on how it was put together. The answer was something like: 'We photostat the pages and then borrow the long-arm stapler from Suds (the AV technician).' Michael Cross (Wits), who appeared to be subdued and sombre about the future of *PiE*, found this hilarious. It was, however, quite true. Many meetings of the editorial committee took place literally on the hoof when its members chanced to meet in the corridor, and they were responsible for all editorial, production and distribution processes.

When things became too difficult, funding from the 'distance' venture led to some outsourcing, which brought short-term relief but longer-term grief. A former student with an interest in writing was recruited as a production editor for Volume 21, 1996. He even wrote the editorial, giving his address as a nearby high school. Gloom descended on the editorial committee when the consignment of finished products was delivered. In the table of contents on the darkish yellow cover, the first article by Luckett appeared as 'The *relective* practitioner'; an article by Bensusan and Shalem as 'The reflective teacher *revisted*'; and the article 'The RDP's culture of learning programme' was mortifyingly attributed to 'Pam *Chrisite*' (our emphasis). The less prominent 'Research Note' by Jessop was titled 'From privileged discourse to public *knowlege* ….' Having received warm praise from the University Press publisher for the quality of proofreading for previous issues, all copies of Volume 21 were dismantled by the Editorial Committee and repackaged with a cover sheet on which the offending typos had been corrected. Follow-up work with Suds' long-arm stapler called for greater skill if small holes left by the previous stapling exercise were not to be too prominent.

A further casualty of outsourcing was Volume 22, 1997. Having affiliated to the Pietermaritzburg School of Education (SoE), the South African College of Teacher Education (SACTE) in Pretoria was eager to demonstrate its technical capacity and state-of-the-art printing facilities. SACTE offered to print the journal. A hiatus ensued when SACTE reported that the copies had 'got lost'. When they were eventually located, Volume 22 was the worst-looking issue in its history. A ghastly yellow-orange cover enclosed the only A4-sized issue ever produced. Unhappily, it is this issue that literally stands out on library shelves.

Development as an open – and 'SAPSE-accredited' – journal (1998–)

This period is not demarcated by any change in editorial policy and focus articulated on the 'Journal of Education' page at the back of the journal. The focus statement in Number 46, 2009, is identical to that of Number 23, 1998. The journal was 'interdisciplinary'; provided a 'forum for the scholarly understanding' of education; had a general focus on curriculum 'understood in a wide and interdisciplinary sense' and welcomed contributions that spanned 'the divide between theory and practice'.

However, at the beginning of this phase, a time of mounting gloom about the direction and impact of national educational reconstruction as well as on the production front of the journal, some relief arrived – in the latter, at least.

Two key developments were to profoundly change the journal's trajectory. The first was the granting of SAPSE-accreditation status in 1997. The reaction of the editorial committee was one of gratified surprise, as the university itself had not supported the application. Support had come from Wits, and in particular from Pam Christie. The most immediate effect was that soon after its being added to the official list of SAPSE-

accredited journals, John Aitchison wandered over from the Centre for Adult Education (a constituent of the SoE) asking if the journal on this list was *our Journal of Education*. Because of his interest and the volunteering of his services, he was on the editorial committee for the 1998 issue. This issue bore his imprint as the unacknowledged production editor. Following the embarrassing 1997 Volume 22 issue, the 1998 issue appeared as Number 23. (While the very first *JoE* of 1969 had optimistically been Volume 1, Number 1, by 1981 realism had overtaken the hope of more than one publication per year: that issue was simply Volume 13.) Layout and type styles were changed, and Aitchison, privileging readability, firmly resisted justifying text. It had a humble white cover with plain black typeface. All in all, the journal appeared to be simpler and more pragmatically business-like. But Aitchison's most significant contribution was much more far-reaching – quite literally – than the style and appearance of the journal. Early issues had been modestly priced until the price of the journal rocketed from R1 to R3 a copy in 1984. For the possible reasons alluded to above, it had been issued free to interested individuals since 1993. A true academic activist, Aitchison now transformed *JoE* into a genuine open education resource (OER) before these became fashionable. The 'Journal of Education' page (1998, 23: 117) recorded that:

> The *Journal of Education* is intended to serve as a resource and readers are free to make a limited number of copies of articles for non-profit educational purposes. Editorial Policy is to make the journal freely available on the World Wide Web at http://www.unpress. co.za.

At the same time, the policy of printing limited numbers of hard copies for authors, interested parties and holding libraries continued.

Layout and open-source policy established in 1998 were to remain unchanged. Occasional discussions on a possible name change never got far, and gradually died out. This is possibly because the journal was acquiring a persona: by 2004, the editor's personal email address as the official point of contact had been replaced by the somewhat homely and personified joe@ukzn.ac.za.

Viewed overall, the mild radicalism of *JoE*'s openness on the web contrasts with a certain conservatism in style and appearance. Also, possibly because of the ongoing imperative of being self-sufficient and reliant on its own resources, *JoE* never moved seriously in the direction of seeking recognition in the Social Sciences Citation Index (ISI) and International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS).

As academics became increasingly aware of *JoE*'s SAPSE status – and with the corporatisation of universities now making academic life uncomfortable for those adjudged to be lacking in research 'productivity' – submissions increased exponentially: from 33 in 2001, to 57 in 2002, to 71 in 2003. 'SAPSE status' had an immediate effect of lessening *JoE*'s 'in-house' appearance. Of the five articles in Number 23 (1998), two were from the University of Cape Town (Helen Maree & Alixe Lowenhurz, and David Gilmour & Crain Soudien); and there was one each from the University of

Durban-Westville and University of the Western Cape (Jonathan Jansen and Mignonne Breier respectively). Only the article by Fred Barasa (a Kenyan doctoral student in the SoE) and Liz Mattson was 'in-house'. The changing authorial profile as reflected in the 1998 Number 23 issue was soon consolidated by the second of the two circumstances that significantly changed *JoE*'s career.

In early 2000 the journal was approached by the Kenton Education Association with a view to possible publication of selected papers from its annual conference (in the 1980s Kenton had produced its own proceedings, but this practice subsequently lapsed). Maureen Robinson had been delegated to meet the editorial committee. The committee deemed possible gains as sufficient justification for drawing on its paltry budget to fund Robinson's flight from Cape Town. Denyse Webbstock, a new member of the committee, joined Harley in the meeting with Robinson in Durban. A reflection of *JoE*'s standing at this time is that Robinson, an active researcher, had never actually seen *JoE* and appeared disappointed when she was shown a hard copy of the 1998 issue. Although this was the first of the new Aitchison style, the printing had been outsourced to Brevitas cc and it had a somewhat inconsistent typeface and a slightly smudgy cover. But the articles had several well-known and respected authors (see above). *JoE* assured Robinson that future issues would look better.

The most immediate outcome of the ensuing 'year-by-year' agreement that papers from the annual Kenton Conference could be submitted for a special guest edition of *JoE* was the first landmark Kenton Special Issue (*JoE* No. 25). This bumper issue consolidated the upturn in *JoE*'s fortunes and maturing academic persona: with six articles in Part One (Globalisation and Education), and four in Part Two (Theory and Practice in Teaching and Learning), it totalled 266 pages. For the first time, an issue had external guest editors (Linda Chisholm, newly arrived on the Howard College campus from Wits, and Maureen Robinson from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology). Compilation and layout – within the *JoE* stylesheet – was the work of Lesley Hudson, who had been the stalwart full-time production editor of *PiE* when it was still based at Wits. Publications from outside the University of Natal were in the majority. Against the three publications from UN, there were three from the University of Cape Town (Mastin Prinsloo, Paula Ensor, Rochelle Kapp); two from Wits (Karin Brodie, Jill Adler & Yvonne Reed); one from the University of Fort Hare (Fhulu Nekwhevha) and one from the University of London (Elaine Unterhalter).

Successive annual editions of the 'Kenton Special Issue' managed by editors appointed at each conference undoubtedly contributed to *JoE*'s exposure to a broader academic community, and some of the credibility of that community may well have rubbed off onto the stature of the journal. By 2007 the Kenton/*JoE* association had firmed to the point at which the 'Kenton Special Issue' had given way to the statement 'Periodical of the Kenton Education Association' on the cover of all issues.

In addition to 'normal' issues and the Kenton Special, other special issues with guest editors were forthcoming:

- No. 29 (2003): Adult Education in South Africa (Editor: Edward French)
- No. 35 (2005): Early Childhood Education (Editors: Nithi Muthukrishna, Kathy Hall and Hasina Ebrahim)
- No. 38 (2006): HIV/AIDS Special Issue (Editors: Nithi Muthukrishna and Claudia Mitchell)
- No. 39 (2006): Adult Education Special Focus Edition (Editor: Robin Mackie)
- No. 40 (2006): Poetics of Pedagogy (Editors: Wayne Hugo and Johan Muller)
- No. 44 (2008): Educational Leadership (Editors: Thandi Ncgobo and Kholeka Moloi)

In assembling some of these special issues the policy was to await the submission of a viable number of suitable articles rather than the timeous production of skimpy editions or fuller issues with some suspect 'fillers'. Some delays resulted because, in adult education, for example, government and institutional policies had shrunk the national pool of researchers, and the field of educational leadership is neither large nor conspicuously scholarly. Delays led to some awkwardness for both contributors whose articles had been accepted and for the journal itself. Nevertheless, there was steady production during this period and the clearest indication of trajectory is provided by the increasing number of annual issues. The years 1998–2001 each yielded a single issue; in 2002, for the first time, two issues appeared; and from 2002 to 2008 there were three issues per year (with the exception of 2007, when there were two). The flow of high quality articles led to generally bulkier issues: *JoE*'s length averaged 155 pages across issues No. 23–46. 'Research notes', which had previously been useful 'fillers' in the event of an issue being a little short on length, disappeared after No. 28. Apart from regular but not frequent book reviews, *JoE* now featured only 'full' articles.

One unfortunate side-effect casualty of the increasing number of annual issues was the earlier *JoE* policy of publishing critiques and responses within the same issue. The editorial in *JoE* No. 30 noted:

> Our gratitude to Philip Higgs for his contribution is augmented by his permission for a response to appear in this same edition of the journal. This follows a number of precedents which were well received: *Journal of Education* 23 featured both Jonathan Jansen's article on the 'Grove' controversy, and a response from Helen Maree (now Zille) and Elizabeth Lowenherz; and more recently, No. 28 carried in the same issue a response from Laurence Piper to Penny Enslin and Veerle Dietliens' argument against participatory democracy in school governance. In both cases, in the interests of a readily accessible debate for readers, authors of the original submissions permitted responses in the same edition. This is a practice we hope to see continued. (*JoE* 2003: 1).

It did not continue. As intervals between issues diminished, this policy simply became unsustainable, and this became evident as early *JoE* No. 32, 2004. Elana Michelson's critique 'On trust, desire, and the sacred: A response to Johan Muller's *Reclaiming knowledge'* was unaccompanied by a response simply because publishing timeframes did not allow it. It was not until No. 36 (2005) that it was possible to publish two

responses to Michelson, by Michael Young and Wayne Hugo. The forced abandonment of earlier policy was unhappy: response from a party under critique in the same issue had seemed more democratic (perhaps even more just?) and of more immediate interest to readers.

With respect to the profile of the journal, statistics on the institutional homes of submitting authors are less useful for this period in the life of the journal than for earlier phases simply because this period was one of unprecedented institutional change embodied in institutional mergers in higher education, shifting identities and academic staff mobility. Some examples to illustrate: Jonathan Jansen published articles from both UDW and UP during this period (*JoE* 1998, No. 23 and 2004, No. 34). In successive issues, No. 26 and No. 27, Ian Moll published from SAIDE and the University of Geneva; and Jean Gamble did likewise in No. 28 and No. 29 from the HSRC and UCT. Despite these limitations on the value of statistics, patterns of authorship for this period reflect broad features that are closely in keeping with the seminal No. 25 Kenton Special Issue and it is worth reflecting on these. We begin with an overall picture as a basis for discussion (see the table overleaf).

At first glance, bare statistics do not suggest much advance on the previous cycle, when *JoE* still appeared to be somewhat housebound, but with a number of key influential friends from farther afield. After all, in the present phase, 29,2% of all articles were from UN/UKZN; with a further 25,5% coming from UCT and Wits. With this trio thus contributing just over half of all articles, it could be claimed, by appropriating adjectives used by Hoyle (1980) to describe professionalism, that *JoE* was still a 'restricted' rather than 'extended' journal.

A more holistic view might judge the journal more kindly. First, in mitigation, it could be pointed out that the 'in-house' base was now relatively much larger because the merged UKZN included the former Edgewood College (with more Education staff than on the original two UN campuses) as well as the University of Durban-Westville. As for 'friends', it would be no surprise to find UCT and Wits prominent in any research league table or publishing forum.

But it could equally be held that these arguments are defensive. In any event, it is more useful to turn to more substantive indicators of a shift from 'UN and friends' to a national journal. The most significant of these is the process of editorial selection. If sound refereeing processes are in place, the institutional homes of authors is a secondary issue. Capable, credible referees are the lifeblood of any journal, and their services are voluntary. *JoE*'s association with Kenton not only brought meaningful numbers of new potential referees into consideration. It is possible that the nature of the relationship led to Kenton members feeling some degree of moral obligation to accept a refereeing assignment. An indicator of robust refereeing is, for example, the number of well-respected researchers on the list of the 57 referees acknowledged for their contribution in the 2009 (No. 46) issue.

The institutional home of publishing authors and numbers of articles published in *JoE* from No. 23 (1998) to No. 46 (2009)

1. Authors and co-authors from a single institution		Total
UKZN (including former UN prior to 2003)		47
UCT		21
Wits		20
NMMU & UWC	8 each	16
SU		6
CPUT & RU	4 each	8
UP		3
UDW (prior to merger with UN) & UFH	2 each	4
NWU (VTC campus), UJ, UNISA, VUT	1 each	4
	Total	**129**
2. Collaborative authorship across institutional boundaries		
Within SA, e.g. UCT, UKZN & Wits		8
A local HEI with an overseas collaborator, e.g. NMMU & St Mary's University College, London		5
	Total	**13**
3. Author from a foreign university		
e.g. University of London (3), Universities of Geneva, Sydney, Warwick		**11**
4. Author from an NGO or parastatal		
HSRC 4, SAIDE 2, National Business Institute 1, JET 1		**8**
Total number of articles		**161**

Account should also be taken of the authorial homes of the remaining 45,3% of all articles. Although the spread is not even, 12 South African HEIs are represented in addition to the UKZN/UCT/Wits triumvirate. The list of South African HEIs *not* represented includes three universities of technology (CUT, DUT, TUT) and four formerly 'disadvantaged' HEIs (UL, UNIZULU, Venda and WSU). Of the former 'advantaged' universities, only UFS has not published in the journal.

A spread into new constituencies is also apparent in the form of authors from NGOs and the HSRC. Although for the first time there are also 'international' authors, not too much can be made of this in the sense that these are invariably academics who have visited and/or worked in South Africa. Some, like Nelly Stromquist (*JoE*, 2005, No. 37), had been invited to deliver the Kenton keynote address; for others, like Michael Young (*JoE*, 2005, No. 36) South Africa is almost a second home. In some cases the foreign institution was where a South African was studying at the time (e.g. Ian Moll, University of Geneva, *JoE* , 2002, No. 27). In others, like Barasa (Egerton

University, Kenya) and Mattson (UN) in *JoE*, 1998, No. 23, the authors were students in the local School of Education.

Nevertheless, there is some evidence that *JoE* had become, at least, something of a *national* figure. Worrying factors for the journal would remain the very limited representation from the former 'disadvantaged' universities in South Africa and indeed from universities in other African countries. As for possible charges that *JoE* still had a residual 'in-house' appearance, WI Thomas' classic would be a worry: 'If men (*sic*) define situations as real, they are real in their consequences' (Thomas & Thomas 1929: 572). For submitting authors, there are deep sensitivities in matters of the rejection of articles, and perceptions are powerful.

However, at the same time as becoming more national, *JoE* began to assume a broader, more multi-faceted character. The focus of published articles had begun to move far beyond teacher training. Taking UKZN as an example, within the Faculty of Education there was now a powerful publishing presence of adult education and training, and 13 of the 47 articles with UKZN authors did not originate in the Faculty of Education at all. Authorial homes included Psychology, Philosophy and Ethics, the School of Medicine, Social Work and Community Development, Sociology and Social Studies, the Unilever Ethics Centre, the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor's office, and so on. Higher education had become prominent as had new issues impacting power-fully on all sectors of education, such as HIV/AIDS. The broadening of *JoE*'s character, in this sense, was much less of a 'Kenton' factor than a response to a changing national landscape, as in earlier phases of its existence. In the sense of breadth of coverage, rather than extent of geographic reach, *Journal of Education* was moving modestly in the direction of living up to its name.

Given the number of articles and their range of foci from 1998 to the present, a careful analysis of the research problems with which authors were grappling is way beyond the scope of the present article. However, a general overview provides a clear view of researchers having moved beyond the 1993–1997 focus on the reconstruction and transformation of national systems. With the revival of the journal in 1993, a 'curriculum' focus had been a useful 'catch-all' focus, and one that was relevant to educational reconstruction; now, ironically, it was failures in national educational reconstruction that reinforced this focus. As the realisation grew that policy failures were not simply failures of implementation, an increasing number of submitting authors began to turn to more in-depth disciplinary ways of understanding and practising education in a particular context – South Africa. Curriculum represented a convergence of concerns that academics experienced as both citizens and members of the academy. A new set of contextual circumstances thus reinforced *JoE*'s focus on curriculum.

A different factor contributing to a more scholarly focus on curriculum is that a group of academics from UKZN, UCT and Wits (the institutions contributing more prolif-ically to *JoE*) met annually at the 'Bernstein' seminars held at UCT in the mid/late

1990s. These were run by Bernstein himself, arguably the foremost curriculum theorist. Bernstein's footprint runs across many *JoE* articles in this period.

These features of the character the journal has come to assume are exemplified in the 'Poetics of Pedagogy' special issue (*JoE* No. 40, 2006). Hugo and Muller's editorial opens with a view of classical Greek tragedy. 'Rather than offering an eventual bright future as does romance, tragedy lifts the veil and provides an insight into the world as it ought not to be, but is' (2006: 8). Against this well developed backdrop:

> 'It is clear that the possibility for tragedy increased in South Africa after independence. In the romantic naiveté that suffused the initial phases of our educational reform after 1994 this condition found receptive ground. We are in the new millennium currently stirring to the consequences of our own policies on our own learners that were enacted with the best of intentions' (2006:8).

Rationale for this issue was rooted in Aristotle's disagreement with his master, Plato, and the insertion of '... poetics back within the heart of education. Such is Aristotle's *Poetics* and it is in discussing this foundational work that we will make a start to clarify what a poetics of pedagogy is and could be, and how the contributions to this special edition can be seen to fall within this tradition.' Since *JoE*'s original inception as a vehicle for the communication of expert *pronouncement*, a special issue of the journal had now moved to a well theorised *poetics of pedagogy*. Two of the most powerful articles in this issue, by Ursula Hoadley and Heidi Bolton, were grounded, respectively, in Bernstein's theory on pedagogy and knowledge. Both had been students of Muller, who had been central in organising the 'Bernstein seminars'.

The key development in the fortunes of the journal had thus been SAPSE accreditation, without which a subsequent association with Kenton would never have even been on the agenda. In combination, these two factors led directly to a third key factor. Joan Osborne was appointed as a part-time administrator in April 2004. This was possible only because the personal benefits accruing to authors of SAPSE publications now made it possible for the journal, for the first time since its resuscitation, to recoup a measure of its production costs.

> As from 1 July 2004, a per page fee of R75 will be levied on authors. This is now increasingly common practice, and institutional Research Offices usually pay this fee. This revised policy is outlined in the section "Notes for contributors" (Editorial, No. 32, 2004: 1).

Now having the necessary means, *JoE* was fortunate to secure the services of someone who, in her own words, was 'a bit of a perfectionist and a stickler for detail' (personal communication, 19/4/2010). Beginning with basic administrative work, Osborne was soon responsible for assembling final copy.

As in other *JoE* matters, the appointment of someone tailor-made for the job was a mixture of luck and opportunism. Recently returned from the UK, Osborne had taken up a part-time position in the School, covering for someone on maternity leave. Wedekind, now Head of School and aware of her publishing experience acquired

through many years as a typesetter with the University Press, was in a position to interest Osborne in working for *JoE* and to secure the appointment. Six years after her appointment Osborne comments: 'I feel I've built up a good relationship, even though it is only via email, with many academics throughout the country. They are always such a pleasure to deal with.' The contribution of such a person to a journal is immeasurable. No longer did the editors have to struggle with the long-arm stapler: editors could give free rein to editing, and the editorial committee to recommending referees and contributing to final decisions after receiving review reports. Editorship had always been shared. Hugo, who assumed major editorial responsibility in 2007, had scope for exercising his role in a more free-flowing style. Gone were the editorials in which the anxieties of 'housekeeping' issues were almost a dominant feature. In its place are attempts to provide more of a critical line and position that speaks to the articles and generates debate around them.

It needs to be noted that *JoE* needed the SAPSE break. The university itself had provided no support with regard to the application for SAPSE accreditation (see above), but Harley subsequently made an appointment to seek the assistance of the flourishing Research Office in keeping the journal going. The then DVC (Research) expressed no interest in 'journals published in the backyard'. In any event, the Research Office's seminal contribution came at 11h01 on 30 January 2003 in the form of an email from the Director of the Research Office:

> I attended a DOE meeting on 28 January 2003 at which the Report on the review of SA Journals was presented. I am pleased to inform you that Journal of Education met all the criteria relating to peer review, editorial board, distribution and frequency.
>
> We wish the Journal every success in the future and that it will grow from strength to strength.

JoE was duly gratified by this show of solidarity.

Notwithstanding the role of the Research Office, *JoE* appeared to be in relatively healthy shape by 2009.

Conclusions

What does *JoE*'s history show? The first and most saddening observation is that it did not rise above the ideological conditions of its time, mostly tracking already existing developments on a political and social level. We note with some discomfort, genetic fallacy aside, that the three authors, who between them have carried the journal over the last 18 years, are white men. There are difficult and painful collusions between the academic project and racism and sexism in South Africa that *JoE* partly expresses.

JoE also reveals a context in which nationally, and more surprisingly at broader institutional levels, there is simply not much support for journals, although this is beginning to change with the increased importance of publication. There are grossly discrepant reward systems in place for authors who produce accredited work and for

those who run journals. Nevertheless, being editor of a journal does carry academic status, influence and reward, even if most of the work goes unnoticed and much of the rest involves risking alienation. A complex logic shows itself here, as the editors of *JoE* have also been the Head of School in Pietermaritzburg. Indeed, all of the journal editors went on to become Head of School after taking up editorial responsibility. There is a strong correlation between white male editors of the journal and white male heads of school in UN and UKZN, especially in Pietermaritzburg. On the one hand it has meant that the journal has had a protected space where, even though *JoE* work is not overtly rewarded, it has been protected within the micro-climate of Pieter-maritzburg's School of Education and Development. This concentration of intellectual and administrative power has also resulted in an overloading, where it becomes impossible to hold it all together. Something has to give, and it was often the journal that suffered as Head of School duties pressed down. Put differently, *JoE* needed an internal champion(s) – somebody to do the busy work – and this work often came under threat with academic promotion of the 'champion' into management positions.

It was not only internal champions that were needed, but a set of networks and good friends of (inter)national standing. In the pre-SAPSE period, Pam Christie, Johan Muller and Jonathan Jansen in particular contributed when they could have published in prestigious journals. Consistently, from the very early axis of UN and UDW, *JoE* has reflected networks with individuals that led to strong ties with UCT and Wits. The irony is that good friends and networks, a condition necessary to put *JoE* on the map, also provide fuel for perceptions of a cosy old boys' club, one that *JoE* has not yet fully shaken.

Finally, SAPSE accreditation and the increasing focus on research publication have resulted in a massive expansion of *JoE*'s submission base. The current climate of bean-counting papers means that *JoE* is under pressure to publish more, not less. It has also resulted in an increasing workload for the editor, the committee and the stalwart referees, who all feel the very real need to publish in a journal rather than work for one. It has also meant an increase of articles that take either a piecemeal approach where larger projects are cut up into smaller papers or the half-baked approach where papers are sent off half-cooked because of pressure to perform. Nevertheless, *JoE* continues to hold by its current brief to publish articles that are well researched, theorised pieces of general and critical interest to South African education.

Postscript on the numbering of *JoE*
There are 47 issues of *JoE* from 1969 to 2009. Unfortunately, there are three different ways it has been numbered over this 40-year period. From 1969 to 1980 there was only one issue per year and each one appeared as a separate volume. Nevertheless, another number was included to indicate how many volumes were published a year (*JoE* Volume 1, Number 1 up to *JoE* Volume 12, Number 1). The decision was then made in 1981 to drop the second number as it was redundant and this logic held up to 1997 (*JoE* Volumes 13 to 22). Those of you who like proof-

reading might note that this 17-year period has only 10 volumes, but then you will also have noted that the journal was inactive from 1986 to 1992. As the number of submissions rose, *JoE* needed to reinstate the second number in 1998 owing to more than one volume being published per year (*JoE* Volume 23, Number 1 to present)

We would like to note that we will have reached the half-century volume mark by the end of 2010.

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Notes on the authors

As Emeritus Professor of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Ken Harley's research interests have shifted with successive roles in the Council on Higher Education (Manager: National Teacher Education Review); Higher Education South Africa (Team Leader: HIV pilot project); and the South African Institute for Distance Education (convening teacher education open education resources on www.oerafrica.org and evaluating the Health OER Project).

Wayne Hugo is an associate professor of education currently on a year's sabbatical after serving a three-year term as head of the School of Education and Development at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. His research interests currently revolve around developing a coherent, detailed and nuanced theoretical framework that accurately captures the wide varieties of educational experience.

Volker Wedekind is Deputy Dean and Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. His recent research and publications focus on education policy and vocational education and training. He is a member of the editorial committee of the *Journal of Education* and is on the editorial boards of *Pedagogy Culture and Society* and *Power and Education.*

Address for correspondence

hugow@ukzn.ac.za

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The pragmatics of education journals: The case of the *International Journal of Educational Development*

Simon McGrath and Mark Mason
University of Nottingham and Hong Kong Institute of Education

Abstract

This article discusses some of the pragmatics and politics of academic journal publishing within the context of the contemporary higher education and publishing political economy. The case of the *International Journal of Educational Development* (*IJED*) is considered, and some implications drawn for the *Southern African Review of Education* (*SARE*), given that the latter shares a focus on educational development with the former. The authors, who are editors and board members of both journals, conclude that *SARE* would probably benefit in many ways by seeking a partnership, such as *IJED* has, with an established and highly regarded international academic publishing house.

Key words: *International Journal of Educational Development*, *Southern African Review of Education*, academic publishing, journal editing, higher education and publishing political economy

Introduction

This special issue of the *Southern African Review of Education* (*SARE*) is an unusual and welcome one, providing a series of largely Southern African perspectives on the poetics, politics and pragmatics of the production of education journals. In this article, we provide a different perspective on these issues from our vantage points as Editor-in-Chief and Regional Editor (Asia and Pacific) for a journal, the *International Journal of Educational Development* (*IJED*), that has a focus on the South but is published and managed in the North. From those perspectives, we argue that the poetics and politics of journals discussed elsewhere in this special issue may be of less practical importance than the pragmatics of journal writing, editing and publishing. We shall suggest furthermore that these pragmatics in turn are strongly shaped by the

broader political economy of academic knowledge production. We go on to advocate the cultivation of an 'art of the possible' that draws on a better understanding of what is required for performativity alongside personal commitments to advance particular ideological stances.

As noted above, we write this article from our particular positions, but also on the basis of certain claims to knowledge and authority that arise from those positions. In the case of Simon McGrath, these claims are two-fold: derived from knowledge gained as Editor-in-Chief of the journal for the past four years, i.e. as someone based in an English university and editing a Dutch-owned but largely English-run journal; and from more than 20 years of professional engagement with education in Southern Africa, including a position on *SARE*'s International Advisory Board. In the case of Mark Mason, these claims are based on 25 years in the field of education, about half of them in South Africa and the balance abroad, and for the past decade as editor, associate editor or editorial board member of up to 10 journals and book series, including Regional Editor (Asia and Pacific) of *IJED* and Associate Editor of *SARE*.

The rest of the article outlines the case of *IJED*. This leads to a consideration of the poetics and politics of *IJED*'s ambitions, which are contrasted with a consideration of how this is constrained by the broader political economy of academic knowledge production both in the journals business and in higher education. Throughout these sections we offer a critical analysis of how these conflicting tendencies are resolved, albeit imperfectly, in the pragmatics of editing the journal. The implications of this case for the wider discussion of this special issue are then considered in a concluding section.

The case of the *International Journal of Educational Development*

This is a particularly opportune moment to be writing this article, as 2010 marked the 30th volume of *IJED* and prompted an article that sought to review the experiences of that period and to look forward to future challenges and opportunities for both the journal and the field of international and comparative education (McGrath 2010). Moreover, we are fortunate in that this account was not the first published reflection on *IJED*, having been preceded by Vulliamy (1988) and Watson (1990), who considered the journal's first decade.

The term 'international' in a journal's title often denotes little more than a claim to status, and many such claims seem rather hollow given either the poor quality of the journal (particularly many of the new online, pay-to-publish offerings) or a parochialism that suggests that 'international' means, for example, British *and* American. However, for *IJED* we are confident that international does mean more than this in two crucial ways. First, the focus of the journal is on international education and development. To quote from our statement of aims and scope:

> The purpose of the *International Journal of Educational Development* is to foster critical

debate about the role that education plays in development. *IJED* seeks both to develop new theoretical insights into the education-development relationship and new understandings of the extent and nature of educational change in diverse settings. It stresses the importance of understanding the interplay of local, national, regional and global contexts and dynamics in shaping education and development.

Second, *IJED* is international in practice in that the 30th volume, for instance, featured authors in 20 countries (largely non-OECD) and contained papers focusing on 25 countries as well as regionally focused papers on Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

However, although these points stress the Southern focus of *IJED*, it is important to reiterate that this is a journal that is published by Elsevier, one of the world's largest publishing houses. Elsevier was originally Dutch but is now global, with education journal management being based in England. Moreover, *IJED* has always been run by a group of executive editors based in Britain, albeit with regional editors in Asia and North America and a widely dispersed International Advisory Board. Furthermore, the journal is published solely in English. As we shall argue subsequently, the facts that the journal is published by a large transnational corporation, led by British-based academics and available only in English are of great importance to the way that the journal operates. Whilst located within a global political economy of academic knowledge production, *IJED* is profoundly shaped by these matters of context.

The editorial board sees *IJED* as the leading international journal in the field of international education and development. As McGrath (2010) notes, this relatively small academic field can be seen as the offspring of two somewhat larger fields of study: development studies and comparative education. From these, it inherited a belief that education was a central element of modernisation and industrialisation and imbibed a largely positivist and technicist view of the natures of both knowledge production and national development. McGrath suggests that

> This strand has remained powerful over the past 50 years, reflecting commonsense views of the education-development relationship; the perceived moral imperative to 'make poverty history'; and the dominance of the international development industry over the kind of work that international educationalists do. (McGrath 2010: 537)

However, like both of its progenitors, the field of international education and development has been transformed by broader trends in the social sciences such as the emergence of the post-modern and interpretivist traditions. These have resulted in a reshaping of debates about the core relationship between education and development in a significant section of *IJED* submissions that stands rather uncomfortably with a continuation of submissions that reflect the earlier orthodoxy.

Notwithstanding the particular beliefs of the editor-in-chief and the editorial board, it is in the nature of *IJED* to try to avoid taking a sectional paradigmatic position on the relative merits of different approaches to the education-development relationship. This is reflected too in a stance of methodological agnosticism in which the intention is that each paper should be judged on the merits of its methodological approach rather than being required to fit a house view of appropriate approaches and techniques.

Poetics and politics

IJED's mission is avowedly developmental in a multi-faceted way. Its statement of
aims and scope makes clear its broad view about the way in which it wants to foster
critical reflection on the relationship between education and development:

> Orthodox notions of development as being about growth, industrialisation or poverty
> reduction are increasingly questioned. There are competing accounts that stress the
> human dimensions of development. The notion of development itself is highly contested,
> both as a theoretical construct and in its policy and programme manifestations. Edu-
> ation is prominent in approaches to and critiques of development. Here too perspectives
> vary. Education is expected to promote competitiveness and productivity; reduce in-
> equality, poverty and disease; mitigate conflict and crisis; and promote human capability
> and achieve social justice. At the same time, education is also criticised for fostering
> hostility; entrenching difference; jeopardising local values and culture; and for its own
> use of control and violence.

It also has interdisciplinary ambitions in seeking to act as a bridge between education
and development studies. It is clearly about 'developing countries' and the aims and
scope statement explicitly welcomes submissions from 'scholars who come from low
and middle income countries'. Indeed, there is also a desire to develop emerging
authors from these countries, reflected in the past in a variety of activities, including
recent writing workshops in South Africa and Turkey.

The political economy of the *International Journal of Educational Development*

However, *IJED*'s vision, much of which goes back to its founding 30 years ago, con-
stantly needs interpreting and actualising in the context of both the wider political
economy of academic knowledge production and the specific context of the journal's
own production.

At the broadest level, what happens in *IJED* is influenced by the workings of global
capitalism. This includes, inter alia, the rise at both discursive and material levels of
globalisation, service industries and the knowledge economy, which are partially
manifested in the increased commodification of knowledge. This is linked to the rise of
transnational corporations and the particular process of agglomeration that has taken
place in the academic publishing field.

The political economy of journals

In the case of journals, this has resulted in the domination of the field by a small
number of very large publishers. As early as 2002, it was estimated that Elsevier,
Springer and Wiley accounted for 42% of all published journal articles (Morgan
Stanley 2002). Although the emergence of open access online journals may have
dented this dominance, this needs to be balanced with further acquisitions by these
large publishing houses, including that of Kluwer by Springer in 2004 and of Black-
well Publishing by Wiley in 2007. Recent years have also seen the rapid expansion of

Taylor & Francis, which now publishes approximately 1 500 journals. As one of 2 000 Elsevier journals, IJED is thus enmeshed in a wide-ranging net of relationships and dynamics within the academic publishing industry.

As only one of 2 000 Elsevier journals, *IJED* is also not in a strong position to shape Elsevier's ways of working and so decisions about such things as the move to wholly electronic submission, the structure of the refereeing interface or the layout of the journal's website and hard copy are not matters over which the editorial board have significant influence. However, in spite of some concerns about these matters on the part of some members of the editorial board, it is not clear that they have had any discernible effect on how the journal is engaged with by Southern colleagues. Although Elsevier's decisions regarding formatting may offend the aesthetic sensibilities of some educationalists, this is likely to make no real difference to how the majority of readers read and otherwise use the journal. Although costs of purchasing are high, *IJED* is part of the HINARI scheme offering free access to several thousand journals for Southern institutions (www.who.int/hinari). Although an Internet connection is needed to submit a paper, it is hard to see how anyone can participate successfully in the global academic community without at least occasional access to the Internet.

More significant, but also ranging far beyond the confines of *IJED*, may be issues of language. Although only two of this new 'big four' of journal publishing (Wiley-Blackwell and Taylor & Francis) have their headquarters in an Anglophone country, the predominant language of publication for all of these houses, and for journals more generally, is English. This reflects, of course, the dominant role that English plays in international communication and the commodification of knowledge in the present phase of global capitalism.

This existence of a dominant language of journal production inevitably shapes what knowledge is codified into published articles and by whom, thus shaping what counts as academic knowledge. Although the journal is ideologically internationalist, the majority of papers published in *IJED* are at least co-authored by writers based in Anglophone countries: 72% in 2010 (if Hong Kong is included within the Anglophone category; 69% if not). Of those papers published in 2010 that had a specific geographic focus, 57% were on Commonwealth countries.

Any move to linguistic pluralism would require significant resourcing. From an editorial perspective, one would want to know that the editors had a team of colleagues on whose judgment of the academic merits of a paper in another language they could rely absolutely. This would be a cost to the publishers, as would the need to employ typesetters and proofreaders in multiple languages. Such work is already done in India to minimise costs, but there might well be significant challenges in finding enough suitable proofreaders in that country or elsewhere for all the required languages, thus further inflating costs. Even having abstracts in multiple languages, as in some UNESCO-sponsored international education journals, would bring addit-ional costs. Whilst it can be argued that major publishers are making large enough

profits to absorb such costs, one would need to ask why they would want to, particularly if the demand for this were to come from a relatively small number of journals in fields that do not generate overly impressive revenues for publishers, such as international and comparative education. Moreover, whilst an ideological case can be made for publication in more languages, this would inevitably come into tension with pragmatics very quickly. It is worth noting in this regard that journals that offer some form of multilingualism are most likely to be English-French, with a smattering of Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Chinese also to be found. This choice of languages does little to change broader patterns of linguistic imperialism.

Narrow considerations of linguistic competence may well be bound up with more complex matters regarding the nature of acceptable ways of writing academically. Whilst *IJED* eschews the scientistic mode of reporting empirical research that is still prominent in some parts of the social sciences, with its standard set of introduction, literature, methods, data, analysis and conclusions, one can justifiably ask whether there are certain ways of writing that are considered to be correct and others that are not. Moreover, one can inquire further whether what is and is not 'correct' may be laden with cultural assumptions.

In looking at the evidence of what gets rejected by *IJED*, it is possible to discern three principal categories of papers that are rejected at the first filtering stage in the editorial office, which accounts for approximately 40% of all submissions. It may be useful to distinguish these from papers rejected on the advice of referees. As the journal relies on over 750 referees from 70 countries, it would be difficult to do an analysis of the extent to which these referees have absorbed any hidden editorial position on which forms of writing are acceptable and which not.

The three 'classic' types of rejected papers are as follows:

1. Opinion pieces in which the author is highly discursive but provides little or no empirical data and often makes only rather elusive references to existing literature or theories. Many such papers in the case of *IJED* come from Southern and Eastern Europe.
2. Highly empirical papers with respectable sample sizes that often borrow an American research instrument without discussion in order to test quite a small question of psychology and which avoid any criticality, particularly about policy. Such papers are particularly likely to come from Iran, Turkey, Arabia and Taiwan.
3. Professionally constrained papers that typically consider an inadequate sample (e.g. the researcher's undergraduate class) and engage with a very partial and/or outdated review of the literature before going on to offer recommendations to national policy-makers. India and Nigeria are currently the main sources of such papers.
   There seem to be potentially different factors operating in the decision to reject in each of these three cases. In the first, this may well be a matter of different cultural approaches to writing. This seems also to be partially true in the second case,

here the problem is exacerbated by the conflict engendered with one of the strong editorial beliefs that does operate in *IJED*, and in international and comparative education more widely: that it is not acceptable to borrow a social science research instrument from another context without a serious discussion of the challenges of so doing and, preferably, some attempt at contextualisation. The third case seems to be more straightforwardly one of quality. However, in countries such as Nigeria, if less so for India, it is far from easy to separate such failings of quality from the issue of limited resources, with its links back to wider questions of global political economy. This clearly contributes to the additional factor of the relative absence of a culture of writing for international journals – something that may itself be further shaped by the presence of a number of national journals, as is the case in larger countries such as India, Nigeria and Turkey.

Whether the Anglophone way of constructing an article (in the broad sense that there is a generalisably single approach) is superior to others or simply a cultural preference may of course be debated, but it is clear that this is the dominant mode of writing in the dominant form of high status academic production. It is clear, furthermore, that this dominance is grounded in the position enjoyed by English in the commodification of knowledge in current forms of globalisation. This is then further reinforced by the location of the journal's editorial office in an English university.

However, it appears that the forms of cultural and social capital that are required to write in this way can be acquired in other settings. In the case of *IJED*, Turkey stands out as an interesting example. Although it is one of the countries with the highest level of rejections annually from *IJED*, it is also one of the countries with the highest level of acceptances. These acceptances are largely concentrated in a small number of elite (both public and private) English-medium institutions where staff are encouraged and expected to publish in international journals. However, Turkey is also striking on account of the recent appearance of three Turkish-medium journals on the ISI-accredited list of education journals.

After Britain and the USA, the three main sources of accepted *IJED* articles in recent years have been China, South Africa and Turkey. It seems likely that the relatively high level of national income and resourcing for higher education in these countries has been significant in this. However, in the Turkish case, it is noteworthy that high quality papers are far less forthcoming from many of its neighbours on either the European or Middle Eastern sides, a number of which are wealthier than Turkey. Further explanatory factors, therefore, might have to be found, such as the legacy of the Turkish Republican tradition, which has long privileged elements of Westernisation and modernisation, or more recent attempts at integration into the European Union and the manner in which these have shaped Turkish practices of higher education performativity.

Whilst China is clearly a very large country that enjoys high levels of both intellectual tradition and current dynamism in some of its universities, it is also noteworthy that it

is a far more fertile source of papers for *IJED* than, say, India or Japan. Again, this may say something about conscious national and institutional strategies for participation in the global academic industry. Moreover, the presence of Hong Kong as a partially Anglophone special autonomous region with world-class English-medium universities does appear to have an effect on Chinese scholarship in English, sometimes through joint authorship of papers.

It appears, furthermore, that there are aid effects regarding what gets published in *IJED*. There is a proud tradition of senior agency staff publishing papers in the journal that reflect on their time at these agencies or in development work more generally (e.g. Frederiksen 1981; Heyneman 2003; Psacharopoulos 2006; Castro 2011), but the journal also values being a site for robust critiquing of agency policies and influences (e.g. Bennell 1996; Klees 2002; Mundy 2002; Cassity 2010). More significantly for the concerns of this paper, a large number of *IJED* papers arise directly from work funded by donors. For instance, in 2010 and 2011, at least a quarter of all articles in IJED, including two special issues, will have come from three research programme consortia funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DfID). As has long been realised in the field, the work of the DfID and other agencies has important impacts on what is and is not researched in the South and what of this finds its way into academic journals.

Consultancy work for international agencies has long been a vital source of income for university education departments, schools and faculties, North and South (Arthur et al. 1996; McGrath 2001). Gmelin, then of the German Foundation for International Development, warned 15 years ago that consultancy already dominated research and that it 'places a premium on the qualities required for contract work: speed [and] confidentiality – qualities inimical to scholarly values' (Gmelin 1995: 2). Moreover, as Preston and Arthur (1995) and Pirrie (1997) argued at around the same time, the fragmented experiences common to consultancy constitute a weaker base for systemic understanding and reflective practice than might a continuum of experience. It seems inevitable that the pressures towards and effects of consultancy work have intensified since these concerns were stated more than a decade ago.

More seriously, as that literature argued, consultancy tends to reinforce a particular world view, methodology and developmental discourse (Preston & Arthur 1995, 1997; Samoff 1995, 1996; Preston 1996; McGrath 2001). Furthermore, its impacts are likely to be greatest on Southern scholars, operating in resource-poor environments. Thus, Mwiria (now a Minister in the Kenyan government) has argued that research in many countries is effectively dominated by agency needs (Mwiria 1995). Similarly, a number of writers who have spent considerable parts of their careers outside Africa have pointed to an intellectual as well as spatial nomadism and a lack of rootedness of researchers in the needs of their own societies as a result of the domination of research by aid (e.g. Namuddu 1983; Kajese 1991; Mamdani 1993).

Being thus highly dependent on external funding, educational research in the South is

prone to following trends set by others: this can be discerned in the various waves of research that *IJED* has seen over the past 30 years on themes such as vocational education and training, access to primary education, quality, etc. (McGrath 2010). The papers emanating from the three DfID consortia – on access to education, the quality of education, and educational outcomes – are thus part of a wider tradition.

The political economy of higher education

The interplay of the poetics, politics and pragmatics of academic journal production cannot be understood independently of the dynamics of higher education, given that the vast majority of journal authors, referees and editors are employed within the higher education sector. We have touched on the rise of performativity in higher education in some countries. Globally, the rise of international league tables of universities is linked to wider processes of increased competition for students and funding. In many developing countries, there has been a fundamental shift in the past 20 years from a single national, public university to a more diverse system of public and private providers. Developed countries too have seen a significant rise in the number of providers, whilst the past decade has seen the rapid development of the internationalisation of higher education, both through the technologically-facilitated increase of full and partial distance modes and the rise of both student migration to attend university and the emergence of offshore campuses. For instance, at the time of writing, the University of Nottingham was celebrating the tenth anniversary of its programmes in Malaysia, since added to by a further campus in China.

With all of this has come increased pressure on public providers to be more business-like and the widespread introduction across many public sectors internationally of a discourse and practice of performativity. Crucially for our discussion, one key metric of academic performance has become the production of journal articles. To be appointed today to an academic post at a 'respectable' university in England, a candidate must be 'REF ready': either already having four articles of sufficient quality published since 2009 or under consideration, or a clear and plausible plan for completing this set of articles in the next two years – this for their submission as part of the Research Excellence Framework, which provides an important element of university funding and the clearest available indication of a university's research standing. For existing staff, the development of their REF portfolio is a central element of their performance management. Different variants of this performativity culture pertain elsewhere. In Turkey, for instance, academic promotions are closely linked to publication in international journals. In South Africa, publishing in an accredited journal brings income to the university and to the academic and is also clearly important to decisions regarding promotion.

These systems of assessment tend to value journal articles over books, in part because of the dominance of academic performance models by science and the comparative economics of producing academic articles and books, but also because articles are seen

as allowing easier judgement of quality. Moreover, they contain within them views of which journals matter. This may be as crude as is an 'international journal' in some countries, but more sophisticated systems identify which journals count through having an approved list, a ranking model, rejection rates or reference to the journal's impact factor. Authors are increasingly encouraged to focus their efforts, and often now do this through self-regulation, on journals that matter. In the British system, for instance, the emphasis on 'excellence' in the new performance system appears to be beginning to have the effect of sending more powerful messages that quality rather than quantity of output matters, which may reduce the overall flow of British papers over time and direct it more narrowly to high impact factor journals. All of this, of course, means that a key performance management task of an editor is to ensure that his/her journal performs well against the important indicators of journal quality. Thus, in *IJED*'s case, being on the approved South African list, being accredited by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), getting an A ranking in the draft European system, having a high rejection rate (a common question in tenure applications in the USA), and, above all, having a rising impact factor have been major editorial concerns and are indicators of continuing success.

However, for an editor the challenges of managing journal performance have to be balanced against managing personal performance in core academic tasks such as teaching/supervising increasing numbers of students, raising more income through funded projects and consultancies, and, of course, one's own research and publications. In the case of *IJED*, this has to be done in the face of a rapidly increasing number of submissions, which have doubled in three years to approximately 350 for 2010.

This leads to the further challenge of managing the pressure on referees, who often themselves are also feeling wider performativity pressures that make refereeing an increasingly unattractive element of their work. This increased volume of submissions and the decline of referee availability have the significant effect of necessitating more editorial filtering of papers so that referees are not lost through their frustration at receipt of too many poor quality papers. Thus, at *IJED*, it is part of the editor-in-chief's role to read each paper before deciding whether it merits being sent to referees. This results in some 40% of papers being rejected at this point after what is inevitably a very quick reading.

Of course, many of these papers come from scholars in developing countries and a tension arises with the journal's original concern with promoting papers from such countries. However, with an overall rejection rate of above 80% and almost a paper aday being submitted, there is no realistic prospect for working developmentally with more than a handful of authors, particularly as journal editing time is typically not included in increasingly closely monitored workload calculations. Thus, what little that can be done in this regard involves identifying papers on countries and/or topics that are under-represented in the journal and the wider literature, and which have some academic quality. This could then justify a request to a senior, typically retired,

colleague that they referee this paper in a consciously developmental way and be prepared to see more iterations of the paper than would be normal. In this way it is possible to do something towards continuing the journal's initial mission, but it is necessarily governed by a strong sense of the pragmatic possibilities. Indeed, the process can sometimes feel rather like triage in a battlefield medical unit: a quick assessment of which papers need to be left to die whilst resources are directed at those that could pull through.

The way that national and institutional systems of performance management deal with interdisciplinarity is also of considerable significance to how *IJED* works. If a system rewards publication simply in journals of sufficient quality, then there is scope for academics to explore work across disciplinary boundaries, confident that quality matters more than focus. However, with a unit of assessment (quasi-disciplinary) approach such as operates in Britain, there is a tendency for research managers to question the desirability of publishing outside disciplinary mainstreams and, even more so, across disciplinary boundaries. Such a system does little to facilitate *IJED*'s ambition to promote a dialogue between international and comparative education and development studies.

Towards an art of the possible: the *Southern African Review of Education*

The political motivations behind the establishment of both *IJED* and *SARE* should not be forgotten. Nor should the fact that writing and editing in the field of international and comparative education is often born of a wider commitment to social justice and a belief in education's potentially positive role therein. One would want to continue to ensure that a journal such as *IJED* seeks to do everything possible to promote Southern voices and perspectives as well as Northern accounts that seek to 'speak truth to power'. Nonetheless, it is in neither the editors' interest or capacity to seek to isolate *IJED* from the context of the international journal business, from the performativity culture of higher education or from the wider system of global capitalism.

Rather, it is important to maintain a regular dialogue between the pragmatics of survival and success in such environments and the ongoing poetic and political ambitions of the journal. For *IJED*, part of the regular review process undertaken through reporting to the board continues to be a focus on questions of where papers come from, who accesses them and what topics and countries they address. This is reflected too in the decision-making about potential special issues. It is also seen in a commitment to a day-to-day editorial practice in which some effort is made to support emerging authors, particularly from the South, and to direct limited personal, editorial and referee resources of time to those who seem to have a real potential to make a valuable contribution to the journal and the field. However, this continued commitment will always have to be balanced with the twin imperatives of maintaining journal performance against the dominant quality standards and protecting the well-

being of editors and referees through managing the demands the journal makes on their commitment and collegiality. This itself needs to be seen as an ethical act, rather than simply a pragmatic abandonment of political engagement.

Although these points are made specifically about *IJED* and are written from the point of view of enmeshment in developed systems of performativity, they have salience for others seeking to edit journals in other settings such as Southern Africa. Several leading Southern African journals across the social sciences have taken the decision to work with major publishers and will find themselves increasingly shaped by the ways in which these large publishing houses operate. It is clear that these moves bring very significant advantages, not least in terms of quality and timeliness of production, on the one hand, and shifting much of the technical and financial burden of publication to large companies and away from academics and universities, on the other. This shifting of production concerns away from academics may do much to free them up to do more intellectual work, and should accordingly be welcomed.

More generally, as the processes of international competition and performativity in academia are likely to continue for the foreseeable future, a more thorough engagement with the international business of journals, including availability online and participation in ISI, may be essential if Southern journals are not to become increasingly marginal. There is a real danger that such journals become places for either the less academically important papers of established authors, salving their consciences with the occasional Southern-published paper once their quota of high status 'international' papers is filled, or for authors who cannot (yet) get their papers into higher status journals. With the increasing availability of international journals (both of high quality and poorer pay-to-publish but free-to-read varieties), this could spell the slow demise of traditional Southern journals, as they are unlikely to be able to attract sufficient readers and, hence, income.

It is accordingly our view that the editors and board of *SARE*, and the Southern African Comparative and History of Education Society (SACHES), which owns the journal, would do well to consider very seriously the advantages of seeking a partnership, such as *IJED* has, with an established and highly regarded international academic publishing house. These advantages are many, and we have discussed some of them above. Some of the more salient ones might, again, be that the journal attracts more high quality submissions from a wider pool of established researchers in the field because of its publication by a respected academic publisher; that the journal is more widely marketed and distributed globally, and hence more widely read and its authors more frequently cited; and that it is more efficiently managed, given the effectiveness of the online manuscript management systems used by most major international academic publishers today, with the ensuing advantage of more timely publication of the papers submitted by researchers.

Some potential counter-arguments to such a partnership might be that editorial control and independence are lost to the interests of wealthy, powerful and business-

and profit-oriented media conglomerates whose first responsibility is to the interests of their shareholders; that ownership and control of one's academic research and intellectual property are transferred to the journal's publisher; and that a focus on indigenous knowledge is forsaken or at least lost in the dominance of Western ways of knowing or Northern research interests and foci.

We suggest that the first counter-argument is a red herring. The control of television news channels, for example, by large media conglomerates is not analogous with regard to questions of editorial control and independence. There are clear political agendas behind the control of the likes of Fox News by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, the control of much of the Italian media by Silvio Berlusconi and, at the other end of the political spectrum, the efforts of Hugo Chavez to gain control of Venezuela's media. Certainly, Reed Elsevier have publishing interests wider than just the academic (their corporate website claims, for example, that 'Reed Business Information is a leading provider of business information, online data and marketing solutions'), and these wider publishing interests may come with their own sets of political issues, but it is surely safe to say that any good businessman or -woman involved in academic publishing knows that the best and most credible – and there-fore, at least potentially, the most profitable – academic publishing is that in which the academic editors enjoy absolute editorial independence. Were there any political interference by the publisher in the academic content of any respectable academic journal, the editors would surely be the first to let their board, their readers, their research community and the professional society with which they might be associated know, and the board of that journal would surely be very quick to dissociate that journal from that publishing house. In short, large international and profit-oriented academic publishing houses have far more to gain from the editorial independence of their journals than otherwise.

The second counter-argument, that ownership and control of authors' academic research and intellectual property are transferred to the journal's publisher, might both be and not be an issue (more than it already is). It might not be more of an issue than it already is because *SARE*'s current policy is to take ownership of the articles it publishes: 'Papers that are accepted become the copyright of *SARE*, unless otherwise specifically agreed,' its Notes to Contributors clearly state. Would it be more of a problem that copyright of one's paper transfers on publication to the likes of Elsevier or Taylor & Francis rather than to *SARE*? Possibly, yes, in that, should it become necessary for whatever reason to negotiate the return of copyright to the author, one might perhaps enjoy more success in negotiations with one's research community colleagues than with the royalties department of a profit-oriented media conglom-erate. In this sense it is perhaps more of an issue that copyright transfers to a large academic publisher, but this is part of a larger question that cuts across almost the entire domain of the contemporary academic publishing industry: why should these large publishers take copyright of the products of our blood and sweat as researchers? Should a small academic publisher in a developing country wish to translate and re-

publish our work so that it is accessible to the research and policy community in that country, why should royalties, which can often be quite steep, be payable to the original publishers – particularly when no royalties were paid to the author in the first place? One of the authors of this article has for many years edited a leading book series in this field, co-published by the university-based research centre of which he has been the director and by a huge and highly regarded academic publisher and media conglomerate. The research centre jealously held onto the copyright for every book, so that when researchers in other countries sought to translate and arrange publication of any of the books in the series, permission was readily given without charge by the research centre, not least because the centre is not profit-oriented but focused instead on making high quality research available to the research community globally. One of its volumes has, for example, been published in seven languages: English, French, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, Japanese and Farsi. In truth, however, for that research centre to be not profit-oriented, seeking only to sell enough books to cover the cost of employing a senior research assistant who works mainly as a production editor, demands hours and hours of the time of the three academics who serve as the editor and associate editors of the book series.

We have two responses to the third counter-argument that, should a Southern journal be published by a large Northern publishing house, its apparent focus on indigenous knowledge might be forsaken or at least lost in the dominance of Western ways of knowing or Northern research interests and foci. The first is that, from *IJED*'s perspective, this would simply not be true. As described earlier in this article, *IJED* is expressly committed to seeking out knowledge and experience in educational development that are indigenously generated, and to making that knowledge and experience available, through its publication by the author in the pages of the journal, to the global research community in the field. We have acknowledged that many of the articles published in *IJED* are indeed the result of research funded by Northern agencies; and we have acknowledged some of the problems associated with this – not least that research problems in developing world contexts tend all too often to be conceptualised in terms of Northern frameworks and priorities. But in these acknowledgements we have also made it clear that *IJED* seeks more perspectives from researchers in developing countries, and does what it can, obviously within the constraints (mostly of time) operating on its editors, board members and referees, to nurture such perspectives towards publication.

That said, our second response to this issue of the potential loss of indigenous knowledge raises the question of the very definition and nature of indigenous knowledge. This is, again, an issue that runs much wider than *SARE*'s possible concerns in this regard. We would suggest that the way the term tends to be used in these arguments frequently trivialises its real meaning, and hence undermines the efforts of those communities seeking to protect the intellectual property associated with their genuinely indigenous knowledge. In discussions as part of a forum

organised at the last conference of SACHES around this broad question of the poetics, politics and pragmatics of journal publication, one of the authors heard claims being made that the construction for launch into orbit of a satellite by researchers at a South African university constituted an example of indigenous knowledge. We would have thought that this was rather an example of the employment of theories developed by the likes of Newton, Planck and Einstein. By analogy, to suggest that research findings in educational development in the Southern African context constitute indigenous knowledge is, in our view, to trivialise what might be genuinely indigenous knowledge and seriously in need of protection of its associated intellectual property. And, again, to suggest that Southern research findings in educational development would be marginalised or otherwise abused by a publishing process such as that followed by *IJED* and Elsevier simply does not, in terms of *IJED*'s ideological commitments and Elsevier's obvious awareness that journal profits come, first and last, from respect for the integrity of the research, make sense.

Even for Southern journals like *SARE*, which are tied to professional associations, there is accordingly an important debate to be had as to how the journal reflects both the needs of its members and the mission of its organisation, on the one hand, and the challenges of being a quality and financially viable journal attractive to other readers and authors, on the other. Thus, the ideological project of *SARE* needs to be understood and interpreted, like that of *IJED*, in the context of the wider environment in which it operates and through a clear and conscious practice of marrying poetics, politics and pragmatics.

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Notes on the authors
Simon McGrath is Professor in International Education and Development in the Centre for Research in Higher, Adult and Vocational Education. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal of Educational Development*.

Mark Mason is Professor and Associate Dean (Research) at the Hong Kong Institute of Education, working in the field of comparative and international education and development. He is Regional Editor (Asia & the Pacific) of the *International Journal of Educational Development*.

Addresses for correspondence
Simon.McGrath@nottingham.ac.uk
mmason@ied.edu.hk

The decline of educational research in South Africa: Reconstituting the place of reason

Yusef Waghid
Stellenbosch University

Abstract

Drawing on Jacques Derrida's (2004: 148) compelling work on what constitutes the university, specifically his idea that the university is 'the responsibility of a community of thinking', I shall attempt to show that educational research in South Africa is limping. After having been appointed editor-in-chief of Higher Education South Africa's (HESA's) *South African Journal of Higher Education* in November 2005, I have witnessed the systematic decline of educational research with reference to several of the articles submitted for consideration for publication in the journal over the past five years. Simply put, educational researchers seem to have abandoned their responsibility of advocating for reason and have instead chosen (so it seems) the path of producing only publications for technical compliance and utility – that is, publishing numerous articles to increase their research outputs in accordance with institutional and national demands. If educational research in South Africa were to break with its current objective of attending to mostly utilitarian demands (in service of the democratic government) and reconstitute the place of reason, then it has a real chance of walking on two feet as responsible research without external controls and concerns for utility in the 21st century. One way of reconstituting the place of reason, I argue, is through the production of publications constituted by the practice of 'critique'.

Key words: Educational research, reason, critique, community of thinking

Utilitarian educational research in South Africa

From the outset I want to acknowledge my personal paralytic complicity in the production of educational research since having joined the university sector two years after the establishment of the new government. I witnessed without the freedom to speak out how the newly elected African National Congress (ANC) government legis-

lated a higher education funding policy text to encourage institutions to increase their research outputs through publications, student enrolments and postgraduate student throughputs. At the core of the higher education funding policy initiatives has been the Department of Education's funding formula, which determines an institution's subsidy allocation through its research outputs. That is, the more outputs an institution produces the larger will be its subsidy income from state funds. In a way, the university in South Africa has been coerced to produce educational research that can mostly be quantified and counted, and educational researchers have emerged as 'technicians' intent on increasing their productivity through publications in 'accredited journals'. A faculty's funding is secured primarily through its technical compliance of student input and output, and publication output. Often rigorous scholarship seems to be exchanged for increased student throughput and publications and, subsequently, impending state subsidy.

From my conversations with colleagues it does seem that academic rigour and caring supervision are waning and that research in the university has been 'pledged in advance to some utilitarian purpose' (Derrida 2004: 111). Too often I hear the country requires so many doctorates to be economically competitive. The cliché 'publish or perish' has assumed a monetary priority in lieu of technical and fiscal demand. How oddly we are continuously reminded that the university cannot survive if throughputs are not sustained. Such instrumental utilitarianism implicates the university in South Africa as an institution without autonomy. And a university without autonomy cannot be a university. For Derrida (2004: 104-105), a university that is autonomous 'must be able, according to Kant, to teach freely whatever it wishes without conferring with anyone, letting itself be guided by its sole interest in truth'.

Contrary to such an idea of the university, the South African university in most cases has abandoned its internal quest for truth to being a technical agent of state bureaucracy. Annually, the subsidy gains of the university are determined by the quantity of research outputs, student enrolments and throughputs as part of the government's control of the imperatives of technological production. Recently, the vice-chancellor of a prominent university in the country was reminded by the government's spokesperson that his institution should transform, considering the state subsidy the institution receives. Such a not-so-unusual response from the government confirms its concern in guiding the university towards its own interests. Of course I am not suggesting that the university in South Africa should not have ends. But if ends are the only outputs of the university system, then the university has lost its soul. This implies that the university in the first place through its educational research, for instance, 'is there *to tell the truth*, to judge, to criticise in the most rigorous sense of the term, namely to discern and decide between the true and the false; and if it is also entitled to decide between the just and the unjust, the moral and the immoral, this is so in so far as reason and freedom of judgement are implicated in it as well' (Derrida 2004: 97).

At the level of educational research, the university is in even more trouble. Increasingly, the university can be seen as dancing to the tune of large business corporations that invest enormous sums of money in research that can be applied for some or other utilitarian purpose. As Derrida (2004: 143) confirms, 'the end-orientation of research [I would add in South Africa as well] is limitless'. For instance, my institution has made the pursuit of research to achieve some of the nation's millennium development goals (MDGs) an overarching strategic priority. This means that research should be aimed at achieving the following goals: combating pandemic poverty, promoting human security (from food security to peace initiatives), maintaining and promoting human dignity, promoting democracy, and promoting and maintaining environmental sustainability. If the university (with reference to my institution here) endeavours to pledge in advance the use of research for some techno-scientific purpose, then the possibility that fundamental or basic research might be neglected is a stark reality. Does agricultural research in poor farming communities contribute to eradicating poverty when the produce is still under the control of the rich farmers who now become more entrepreneurial? Does research in violent communities secure peace if some people are challenged to deal with choices of engaging in drug trafficking often in the face of unemployment? Does research about democracy necessarily ensure that societies behave according to the ideals of democratic action? What I am wondering about is whether this kind of envisaged 'end-oriented' research actually achieves its desired or intended consequences. The fact of the matter is that the university in my country has been pursuing this kind of instrumentalist research for some while and very few if any substantive societal changes have ensued. By far the majority of people remain poor, and joblessness escalates. But maybe this is not what the university is supposed to be doing? It is for this reason that I now focus my attention on what the university ought to be doing.

In the context of the aforementioned state of malaise in and about research at the South African university, educational research (as is evident from many of the contributions submitted for publication in *SAJHE*) did not escape a much maligned mediocrity. This brings me to a discussion of educational research in relation to submissions to *SAJHE*. Since I have a snapshot of higher educational research in South Africa over the past three decades with reference to work published in the *South African Journal of Higher Education* (*SAJHE*), I acknowledge that any mapping of higher education research would be impoverished if one focused on one specific journal only, because there are other educational journals in the country such as *Perspectives in Education, Journal of Education, Southern African Review of Education, South African Journal of Education, African Education Review* and *Education as Change* that might also reflect what has been researched in or about higher education in the country. Similarly, there are subject-specific journals associated with professional educational organisations that might also reflect some of the themes associated with research on higher education. However, my own reading of issues of *SAJHE* published over three decades suggests that research has evolved minimally beyond those kinds of acritical

approaches to research characteristic of a community of scholars[1] who preferred to publish their work in a particular academic journal. In some ways *SAJHE* could reasonably provide some yardstick as to how higher education research has unfolded over three decades, more specifically during the last few years of apartheid education, to our current system of transformative education. In my analysis of higher education research in *SAJHE* I have identified the following trends: conservative research (non-rigorous work that lacks critical engagement with current issues), compliant research (work that overwhelmingly reports on the status quo without critically engaging with issues) and radical research (work that invokes issues of democracy and equity).

Since the inception of the journal in 1987, 24 issues have been published. Before 2005, two to three issues appeared in an academic year. Over the past three years the journal has produced six issues per year. In other words, for this research project 72 issues comprising almost 1 000 articles were evaluated. For this project I have classified the articles published in the 1980s and early 1990s as conservative, because not a single article ever mentioned the concepts of democracy and transformation. This is so despite the fact that apartheid education was highly uneducational, dogmatic and segregationist. If higher education considers academic freedom and institutional autonomy as sacrosanct to academic life, then authors ought to have challenged the uneducative implications of apartheid (higher) education. Instead, it seems as if a thematic approach was followed, whereby articles related to specific themes were published. Strydom and Fourie (1999: 156) claim that during this period higher education had a strong tradition of institutional or systemic (thematic) research, with little agreement on recommendations for change because of the political situation. Some of these themes included academic achievement, academic programmes, assessment techniques, bridging programmes, business education, cognitive development, communication studies, curriculum development and planning, educational systems, educational management, educational research and philosophy, educational technology, adult education, career education, cooperative education, didactics, distance education, geography education, medical education, technical education, examination evaluation, funding, language and learning. By far the majority of these articles reflected a bias towards empirical/positivistic research, with an emphasis on thematic reports based on statistical analyses. Not a single article ventured into a discussion contesting the apartheid (higher) education system, neither was an exploration of democratic practices pursued. In a way it seemed as if

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1. Broadly speaking, four associations shape higher education research in South Africa: the Kenton Education Association of South Africa (KENTON), the Education Association of South Africa (EASA), the South African Comparative Education Society (SACHES) and the South African Association for Research and Development in Higher Education (SAARDHE). These organisations have been responsible for initiating four of the major journals: *Perspectives in Education, Southern African Review of Education, South African Journal of Education* and *SAJHE.* Because the subscriber base of the latter exceeds that of all the other journals, and since many members of the other organisations also publish their work in *SAJHE,* I thought it feasible to focus on *SAJHE.*

authors/researchers 'played it safe' through avoiding research on democratic theory, which might have jeopardised their appointments at universities – during the apartheid years there was a high and intense level of state interference (as an example, a colleague from Salzburg University told me that when he visited South Africa in the 1980s, he was questioned by the customs official at Johannesburg airport about the possibility that he might be importing Marxist literature into the country from Austria) and academics seemed not to want to 'risk' their professional careers.

One of the reasons why I think research on democratic theories was not published, or perhaps not forthcoming, was the excessive level of state interference in higher education. In fact, books written by critical scholars, such as Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Henry Giroux's *Education under Siege,* were banned in the country, with the copies that were available usually in the hands of a few political/educational activists – but these texts were mostly ignored at the majority of universities. Research during this period furthermore generally took the form of uncritical and non-rigorous thematic reports that probably did not elicit much response from academic communities in the country. With the exception perhaps of a few individuals, it does not seem to have been possible for academics (almost exclusively white in the 1980s) to seriously contest the undemocratic education system in the country.[2] Hence, research on democratic education theory seemed to have been notably absent. In fact, as is evident from the journal articles in the 1980s, research was conspicuously non-theoretical (with notable exceptions), with strong positivistic leanings as a consequence of the hegemonic tradition of Christian National Education engineered by the apartheid government, especially the Ministry of Education. Annually universities submitted reports on completed research to the Department of Education for subsidy purposes. Government also used many academics to perform commissioned research on preserving the apartheid education system. In fact, one of the previous editors of the *South African Journal of Higher Education* was an outspoken proponent of Fundamental Pedagogics – a philosophical framework that enveloped and perpetuated the apartheid education system. This approach to higher education discouraged critical engagement with academic work and entailed that students should be 'told' what to do without taking ideas into systematic controversy. Elsewhere I have argued that this type of research was mostly informed by encyclopaedic inquiry – that is, modes of inquiry that seem to look for absolute, universal generalisations without allowing space for challenging and questioning (Waghid, 2004). In line with this view, most of the research was couched in phenomenological and hermeneutic terms as is evident from the methods proposed in the form of verbs

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2   As a student in the 1980s I was privileged to have been exposed to critical theory on education. But then the university I attended was renowned for producing some of the most radical political minds in the country. Many of the students who studied at this institution became prominent politicians in the ANC (African National Congress)-led government. This type of education, however, was the exception rather than the norm.

such as analyses, compares, describes, discusses, draws attention to, elaborates on, evaluates, explains, looks at, highlights, offers, outlines, points out, proposes, suggests, defines, assesses, focuses, offers, surveys and reports. Notably absent was the phrase 'critically evaluate'. By far the overwhelming majority of the articles seemed to have ignored issues of higher education transformation. In line with this view, Strydom and Fourie (1999: 157) argue that research during this period tended to centre on the inputs into the system mostly from a quantitative perspective, i.e. plotting the rate of growth, the effect of demographic expansion and the demand for higher education upon the overall extent of provision. Engagement with critical inquiry was omitted.

Although some research published in the 1990s related to issues of higher education transformation, it was still predominantly of a descriptive nature. It seems as if the empiricist approaches of the 1980s were extended to problem-centred approaches, mostly action research. At least issues of transformation surfaced, in particular regarding disadvantaged communities, black education, critical praxis and post-apartheid education. Central to research during the 1990s was an engagement with policy about the new education system such as the 1995 White Paper on Higher Education Transformation, the National Commission on Higher Education's Report of 1996 and the Higher Education Act of 1997. However, most of the published and reported research involved embracing the new policy texts without critically evaluating them. It seemed as if academics (perhaps with the exception of a few) were very cautious about challenging the new education policies, not wanting to be branded as people who resist transformation, as if everything about the transformation of education should remain unchallenged. Compliant research, as if research implied embracing the new changes, therefore became the order of the day. This research was often published as success stories that could possibly be applied in universities; with notable exceptions, research assumed a somewhat critical dimension biased towards evidence-based practice – in other words, what worked at one institution should generally be considered as evidence that it can work at another. Many aspects of higher education research still revolved around aspects of student learning, methods and techniques of teaching, and what could be called the micro-management aspects of knowledge transmission and staff development (Strydom & Fourie, 1999: 159). In addition, research appeared to lean towards action and participatory research, and case studies – these seemed to have been published to confirm that change can only be brought about through critical action. However, research on democratic theories and the potential they hold for transformation in higher education was not visibly attended to, yet several new developments in the higher education sector unfolded. In this regard Strydom and Fourie (1999: 161-162) assert that higher education research demonstrated its inability to attend to the moral, political, social and economic demands of South Africa, in particular its failure to contribute to reconstruction and development in the country.

In the 2000s research in higher education shifted primarily from the hermeneutical and action research approaches towards some limited connections with post-structuralist work. In other words, post-critical approaches to higher education research seemed to have gained currency in the 2000s as academics endeavoured to ground their work more explicitly in issues of globalisation, internationalisation, indigenisation of knowledge, democratic education, equitable redress and quality assurance – these issues were foregrounded in critical and post-critical research paradigms. Higher education themes in which such critical and post-critical work became manifested included democratic inclusion, democratic governance, democratic transformation and deliberative democracy. It does appear as if disparate research traditions from philosophy to political theory, cognitive psychology, sociology and business science have been synthesised to frame higher education research. Although empirical studies, surveys and 'randomised field trials' were employed, some of these studies, unlike those that appeared in the 1980s, seem to have acquired a critical and post-critical dimension. The study of higher education became more dominant than in previous years, particularly regarding institutional mergers, governance, policy, managerialism, quality assurance, transformation, internationalisation, perform-ativity and privatisation. Unlike in the 1980s and 1990s, research on gender issues, sexual harassment and the empowerment of women gained some momentum. Also, research about Africanisation and the university was also foregrounded, with at least two special issues of the journal being devoted to work done in this area.

Although the case study methods and quantitative studies were still prominent, these works in many cases assumed a somewhat critical and post-critical dimension. However, this does not mean that the articles submitted and published in the later issues (from 2005-2010) have all been critical. From a cursory reading of many of the articles published during the latter period I gain a sense of theoretical 'softness' and haste in getting the articles ready for publication. Often rigorous contributions have not been overwhelmingly forthcoming. To my mind, even the twinkling of papers published have not always ventured into a reasoned mode, which I attribute to a lack of commitment to produce credible educational research on the part of many univer-sity academics. In the main, educational research did not escape a kind of technical utilitarianism that seems to dominate the publications industry. For this reason, I shall make an argument in defence of reconstituting the place of reason in educational research.

Reconstituting the place of reason in educational research

Some critics might take issue with me for arguing that the university in South Africa produces mostly technically utilitarian educational research. Let me illustrate my point further with an example from another salient development in the restructuring of higher education in the country. The recent upgrade of several technikons (poly-technics) to universities of technology means that these former technikons with their

overwhelming emphasis on experiential learning are now compelled to perform at the level of research. In other words, these institutions should now produce master's and doctoral candidates and research publications, and their academics should be in possession of at least a master's qualification. Most staff members at the universities of technology cannot cope with the demands of research outputs and some even publicly express their dissatisfaction at what they perceive to be their new academic roles that are incommensurate with their task of preparing students for the world of work – that is, producing technicians of learning. Many staff members now expected to supervise advanced postgraduate students themselves do not possess an advanced qualification or are currently enrolled for such a qualification. Now how does one expect these academics to provide research leadership and to produce outputs at their respective institutions if they themselves are not adequately trained to do so? To my mind, these academics will perpetuate and exacerbate the university's crisis, which axiomatically seems to be connected to the production of technicians of learning.

Although some universities (at least four to five) are highly productive in terms of research outputs and student throughputs, it would not be unfair to claim that one reason for the university's under-performance is a lack of credible scholarship at most South African universities. If one wants to go the performative route (and this would not always be my line of argument), not a single university features in the top hundred institutions listed on any ranking index. Of course I am not denying individual pockets of excellence at some universities, but overall the university in this country is in serious trouble. Furthermore, by far the majority of South African universities have appointed many staff members who do not hold a doctoral qualification. These staff members are therefore not as research-productive early in their careers as they should be, because they spend much of their time finishing their doctoral qualification.

So what does reconstituting the place of reason mean? Put another way, what constitutes a Derridian notion of a 'community of thinking'? Firstly, thinking holds that 'reason must be rendered' (Derrida 2004: 136). Literally, thinking means to explain or account for something, i.e. to ground, justify, motivate, authorise. Only then is reason said to be rendered. So, if a university's academic staff can justify their association with a particular action, it does the work of a community of thinking because it renders a reason for action. For instance, if a university can justify why it aligns itself with a 'pedagogy of hope' (as is the case in the institution where I work), such a university can be associated with a community of thinking because it renders a reason (by which others might be persuaded or not) in defence of the project upon which it embarks.

Following such an account of thinking, if a university does not pledge in advance its association with a pedagogy of hope for some utilitarian purpose, but rather renders a reason or reasons for its epistemological journey, it functions within the parameters of a community of thinking – i.e. it leaves open the possibility of grounding an institution's course of action. Often universities in South Africa too readily reveal their

strategic plans for action to indicate their public good orientation. Yet they seldom justify and hence render reasons as to why they prefer to embark on a particular form of action. Put differently, such a university too often displays its intended utilitarian ends without rendering a justifiable reason for its actions. If the Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University could motivate the institution's commitment to a pedagogy of hope on the grounds that such a pedagogy would establish opportunities for deliberative engagement, unhindered academic freedom and equitable change, then such a university can be associated with a community of thinking. On the contrary, if the aims for this strategy of hope are geared towards excessive fundraising for the institution's future plans, then such an institution cannot be said to align itself with the work of a community of thinking that always programmes its actions in view of utility. In the words of Derrida (2004: 148, 150), 'this thinking must … prepare students to take new analyses' and 'to transform the modes of writing, the pedagogic scene, the procedures of academic exchange, the relation to languages, to other disciplines, to the institution in general, to its inside and its outside'. Certainly, for the plausible pursuit of educational research in South African universities this makes a lot of sense, considering that many of the theses produced at postgraduate level are uncritical and mediocre pieces of writing that reflect a serious lack of conceptual clarity and epistemological authority. Many of the theses I have examined in my short academic career have been characterised by a lack of professional rigour and competence. Generally these theses have been soft on theoretical knowledge – they have not 'rendered a reason'.

What follows from the aforementioned argument is that in preparing academics to author an article for consideration in a refereed journal, they should be encouraged to make analytical summaries of the major theoretical ideas they would encounter in the topic under investigation. In other words, an author wishing to contribute to the debates in and about democratic citizenship education should at least familiarise himself or herself with the main theoretical arguments in defence of or against democratic citizenship education. Then the author ought to begin to recognise how his or her potential contribution links up with the existing theories – i.e. he or she begins to identify how the boundaries of the theories could at least be confirmed, extended and/or troubled. Any person who intends writing an article and does not even begin to investigate the theories that inform a particular educational research topic would invariably produce work 'soft' on or about theory.

Secondly, a 'community of thinking' would go beyond the 'profound and the radical' (Derrida 2004: 153). The enactment of such thinking is 'always risky; it always risks the worst' (Derrida 2004: 153). A community of thinking that goes 'beyond' with the intention of taking more risks would become more attentive to unimagined possibilities, unexpected encounters and perhaps the lucky find. Nothing is impossible because it opens the university not only 'to the outside and the bottomless, but also … to any sort of interest' (Derrida 2004: 153). And, if authors of journal articles are

prepared to take more risks, what seems to be unattainable could well easily be achieved. Certainly in South Africa, where the moral fabric of post-apartheid society is withering away, universities require thoughtful, highly inspired and risky educational research contributions that can address issues of racism, gender inequality, patriarchy, domestic violence and the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Risky efforts would enhance the possibility of highly contemplative and theoretical contributions that go beyond practical usefulness and provide us with more to know than any other (Derrida 2004: 130). I am thinking particularly of the need for risky intellectual contributions in cosmopolitanism, which might address the sporadic xenophobic outbursts in South Africa. Nowadays, too few authors are prepared to take risks and to move beyond what already exists. Here, I propose that authors learn to substantiate claims and propositions. Only in doing so can they begin to think of taking more risks. The point is, they don't consider taking risks because they seem to be obsessed with producing pieces of writing aimed at what works mechanically.

Thirdly, I agree with Derrida that the university was 'supposed to *represent* society. And in a certain way it has done so: it has reproduced society's scenography, its views, conflicts, contradictions, its play and its differences, and also its desire for organic union in a total body' (Derrida 2004: 154). In Derridian fashion, the 'organic language' that used to be associated with the institution where I work happened to *reflect* apartheid society – hegemonic white academics, a majority white student population and the use of the Afrikaans language to shape academic conversations. In fact, the university produced apartheid politicians who advocated for racial segregation and the oppression of a disenfranchised black majority. That is, its discourses countenanced pluralism and democracy. But when a university *represents* society, then reflection is also given to another form of thinking – one that is provocative and that guides the university to act accountably and responsibly (Derrida 2004: 154). Derrida refers to this form of thinking as an 'etymological wink' or 'twinkling of thinking' which calls on the university to act with 'renewal' during a period of decadence. This implies that the university has an instantaneous 'desire for memory and exposure to the future'. Put differently, the university uses its knowledge discourses to pursue truth(s), yet at the same time uses its truthful knowledges to contribute towards a 'renewal' of society's decadent situations – whether physical, moral, cultural, political and/or economic.

This form of thinking opens up a university to 'chance', i.e. what a society does not have and what is not yet. Fifteen years after the first democratic elections in South Africa, the university where I work has embarked upon a 'hope project' in order to create opportunities for previously disadvantaged communities in particular to share in and gain from the academic successes of the institution. This implies that the university has initiated a thinking that could contribute towards 'what is not yet'; for instance, by using its knowledge truths to the benefit of the socio-economic development of the broader South African society. An implication of this kind of reasoning is

that academic writing should not just be about getting an article out for publication. In educational research, authors should begin to connect their work with what is relevant to the renewal of society. If this does not happen, how credible are the pieces that will hopefully appear in academic journals in and about educational research? Here editors have to be vigilant in guarding what is produced in not just a per-petuation of some mediocre and frivolous story. In a way, authors ought to connect their writing to the educational research agendas they have committed themselves to embark upon. Article writing is a form of life that ought to be connected to one's very being. For instance, one writes about cosmopolitanism not just because it is the flavour of the month. Rather, it forms part of a broader intellectual project that requires thoughtful attention. Hence, reconstituting the place of reason is in fact to make a cogent case for critique to feature in our academic work.

In essence, a thinking that demands that reasons are rendered, encourages risk taking and contributes towards renewal is most appropriately referred to by Derrida as 'critique' (Derrida 2004: 162). As for Derrida, so for me critique is a form of dissonance and questioning that is not dominated and intimidated by the power of performativity: 'This thinking must also unmask – an infinite task – all the ruses of end-orienting reason, the paths by which apparently disinterested research can find itself indirectly reappropriated, reinvested by programs of all sorts' (Derrida 2004: 148). This is basically always asking: 'What is at stake (in technology, the sciences, production and productivity)?' It is a kind of critique that allows us to take more risks, to deal openly with the radical incommensurability of the language games that constitute our society, and invites new possibilities to emerge. Critique is a matter of enhancing the possibility of dissent and diversity of interpretations (Burik 2009: 301); of complicating what is taken for granted, pointing to what has been overlooked in establishing identities (Burik 2009: 302); an active opening up of one's own thought structures that is necessary for other ways to find an entrance (Burik 2009: 304). In a different way, it is performing a kind of thinking innately concerned with creating possibilities for dissent, diversity of interpretations, complicating the taken-for-granted and opening up to the other. If academic articles were to be informed by critique, we could begin to produce far more credible pieces of writing than those that have appeared in *SAJHE* for almost the past 30 years.

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Notes on the author
Yusef Waghid is professor of Philosophy of Education and dean of the Faculty of Education at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. His research focuses on higher education transformation, democratic citizenship education and ethics.

Address for correspondence
yw@sun.ac.za

The politics and culture of education research publishing in South Africa: A brief commentary

Beverley Thaver
University of the Western Cape

Abstract

In the past decade research into education has come under a great deal of pressure from national research agencies, and recently from a panel of editors who reflected on the content of articles submitted to their respective journals. This article responds to some of the matters raised by this panel of editors at the Kenton Conference in 2009. In so doing, it foregrounds both the contested nature of peer-review processes and the academic socialisation process.

Key words: Education research, publications, peer review, scholarly traditions, academic socialisation, academic culture.

Introduction

This article addresses certain judgements made by sections of the educational intellectual community on how the institutional pressures of publishing in journals simultaneously generate a set of concerns around standards of scholarship. This 'scramble for publication' in the context of subsidy/funding imperatives is arguably having a corrosive effect on academic work in that the pursuit of rigorous and critical scholarship is being compromised in the rush for publication (Fataar 2009). This 'publish or perish' syndrome among researchers in education overlays another set of tensions, this time among those who teach, where workload pressures and institutional cultures place constraints on the production of publications. The combination of these factors has created several challenges in the field of education as far as knowledge innovation in South Africa is concerned. This takes on significant meaning in a country with a legacy such as ours, where the education system provided the ideolog-

ical ground for the design of racialised knowledge hierarchies. The challenge is thus Herculean. Consequently, educational research is faced with the challenge of both dislodging a deeply embedded system and disentangling the ideological threads that have sutured the system. This is the primary (although not exclusive) backdrop that informs the current debate on publications in the field of education. In the light of this, I offer a few contributions to the debate, in a somewhat tentative way, working with the intellectual platforms provided by the participants on the panel organised by Aslam Fataar on 'The poetics, politics and pragmatics of education academic journal publishing' at the Kenton Conference in Stellenbosch in November 2009. To frame the discussion, I refer the reader to three presentations made on the panel, and here it will suffice to briefly outline some of the key questions posed by the respective editors.

Following the acknowledgment of the racial shape of knowledge producers in the *Journal of Education*, Wayne Hugo (2009) poses his primary question about *impact,* including the extent to which articles from this journal have only an immediate use-value or could serve a purpose in the longer term. In addressing this question he provides a four-part framework: a) vertical/horizontal knowledge structures; b) knowledge/knower distinction; c) intellectual communities with their related practices; and d) the conditions of abstraction/ formalisation pertaining to research.

In another vein Yusuf Waghid (2009) highlights the lack of critique in the submission of articles to the *South African Journal of Higher Education*, most of which he says focus on institution-based case studies and responses to systemic reforms of varying nature. He identifies two common threads, namely a discursive compliance with state practices and what he terms an 'obsession with praxis, *sans* theory'. He further notes that he seldom encounters authors taking positions or what Derrida refers to as 'the freedom to speak out on *that which is*, through essentially theoretical judgments' (Derrida 2004, cited in Waghid 2009).

Finally, there are the views of a third set of journal editors, namely Sheldon Weeks (2009), who provides an insight into the radical political tradition that led to the establishment of the *Southern African Review of Education*, and Linda Chisholm, who raises the challenge of contributions that come across 'either as an uncritical acceptance of development constructs and approaches or as being devoid of any sense of context or theory and debate in the area of development studies and comparative education' (Chisholm 2009: 15). In reading through the presentations, it becomes clear that the editors are all working from different disciplinary vantage points, seeking to create and harness networks of intellectual communities that cohere around the field of education, ranging from philosophy, a new sociology and critical social development theory. These approaches fall within two broad methodological baskets, namely critical theory with class and development as the paradigmatic truth centres, and post-structuralism, which decentres notions of truth. Furthermore, each has specific political projects that it seeks to advance: at a baseline, each of them has a redemptive project in mind for education in South Africa, travelling different routes, of course.

In summing up the presentations, it seems to me that the substantive (and somewhat broad-ranging) questions being posed by the editors, while relevant to each suite of journal publications, also have cross-cutting themes. These themes range from knowledge viewed in instrumental terms, a general lack of critique of state practices, an over-emphasis on empirically-based knowledge, and a decontextualisation of knowledge through to an absence of a critical theoretical tradition. This is an extensive and challenging list which does not fall within the scope of this discussion, but could be the basis for a future research agenda. However, not to lose sight of these issues and as a way to stimulate further debate, I wish to put forward some entry-level statements, assertions and questions that could possibly intersect with these substantive concerns.

Socialisation into scholarly traditions

The expansion and massification of higher education generate discourses that straddle issues of standards and quality, phenomena that also impact on academic publishing in so far as editors are confronted with more articles and more especially articles from newer entrants. In the light of this, the reflexive response from editors may invariably suggest a lower standard. However, the key question that I wish to ask is whether the contributions are not about being 'more of the same' discursive tradition. It is the latter, arguably, that is under what could be termed epistemic pressure. Let me expand this point, keeping in mind a caveat about generalisation.

The social shape of knowledge production in South Africa with its traditional carriers of meanings (as alluded to by Wayne Hugo) is the ground for the socialisation of all entrants into academic cultures. This socialisation occurs at the levels of postgraduate training as well as research production teams. In the light of this, newer entrants are being inducted into academic cultures and are in effect coming under the discursive influence of their legacy mentors. In seeking to understand the issue of 'lower standards', the question is whether this refers to language and/or conceptual, theoretical or methodological weaknesses. Currently, the language (read English) aspect is being addressed through the requirement by several journals for certified evidence of language (read English) editing. Having clarified the possible critique on language, we are then left with the more substantive areas. To return to my earlier point on academic acculturation, the question then arises as to the extent to which the newer entrants may potentially be reproducing the conceptual/methodological approaches of their legacy mentors. Effectively, could it be that editors are receiving 'more of the same' articles? Having cleared the ground around language usage, the question that I am pondering refers to the more substantive aspects of the contributions such as scholarly traditions, including methods of inquiry. Inadvertently, what could underlie the issue of 'lower standards' may be about the epistemic value of particular discursive traditions. However, this is subject to greater debate. For now, my interest is about how editors engage with the content of the contributions

In this respect, editors have the power to exercise their prerogative, not necessarily without bias. This brings me to the politics of the peer-review process.

Politics of the peer-review process

A brief perusal of the literature on peer reviewing provides interesting insights into a process premised on peers attaching value to certain scholarly works, while rejecting those that are 'not valuable' (Weller 2001; also see Motala 2009). While acknowledging the bias of reviewers, Weller (2001) adds that the system is at times also based on the good faith that the reviewers bring to the process. Yet the dilemma that confronts me is how pragmatic decisions regarding the publication-worthiness of an article are being made and whether these are value-free? In other words, what informs a decision of this nature? As scholars we are well aware of the reams of judgements made on articles by reviewers: to name but a few well-rehearsed ones, 'it is too splintered', 'language is too obtuse', 'methods are unscientific', 'it is empirically weak' and 'it lacks theoretical weight'. At this point, I cannot help but invoke the views of Gitanjali (2007, cited in Motala 2009) who offers a critique of the system as being 'subjective, offensive and prejudicial'. He adds that while 'editors may be acting in a high-handed fashion and arbitrarily rejecting manuscripts', 'peer-reviewers also find it difficult to accept views that are in contrast to those of the time' (Gitanjali 2007, cited in Motala 2009), effectively then silencing certain intellectual lines of inquiry. For the knowledge-production process, this means that only certain forms of knowledge are validated.

Pragmatic decisions and market-oriented behaviour

The question as to what informs a decision around the publication-worthiness of an article is therefore up for discussion. In the light of this, pragmatism on the part of editors and peer reviewers is mediated not only by political subjectivities but also by market-oriented behaviour. In other words, there are also economics involved in the pragmatic decisions about publishing. In this regard, the traditional literatures on academic collegialism, drawing on the work of Max Weber, place emphasis on the fact that an 'important aspect of an academic vocation is about a "cosmos of truth" based on discursive reasoning' (Oakes 2003: 601). Currently, this ideal is being challenged by the logic of market practices in which academics seek to 'maximise their competitive advantage by mobilising their resources in a competitive manner' (Oakes 2003: 601). Here one need think merely of the cutthroat practices around securing postgraduate students and, of course, the scramble to get published. It is this 'unforgiving market' (Oakes 2003: 601) mobilised by none other than the subsidy formulas around accredited articles that forms the context for 'the publish or perish' syndrome, culminating in the corrosion of rigorous scholarly work (Fataar 2009).

To rephrase the question: can editors and peer reviewers break out of the prison-house of their personal meaning-making projects and interpretative frameworks in order to

see potential for innovation? After all, knowledge generation requires discourses that go against the grain of traditional and conventional views. In as much as the peer-review process is an important dimension of the overall knowledge system, its highly politically charged nature could potentially constrain knowledge innovation.

Objective truth telling or scholarly patronage?

To present the notion of publishing as a conflict-free phenomenon, i.e. that editors make decisions purely on the basis of merit, that peer reviewers engage in what could be defined as 'objective truth telling' about the worthiness of an article for print, that the process is unbiased, is to imply that academics are not carriers of political and social meanings and do not dance to the tune of the various patrons of knowledge. Yet in reflecting on academics as a social group within the context of patronage, Mannheim (1992) reminds us that while in the early days it was religious institutions that were the patrons, today it is the state. Editors therefore make political choices and of course the big challenge is how they match this decision-making power with the potential knowledge project with which they are confronted. In this regard, the panel of editors identified that the corpus of articles being submitted to their respective journals tends to reveal an over-emphasis on compliance with the state, as well as an 'uncritical acceptance of development constructs' (Chisholm 2009). While these are significant critiques raised by the editors, I would like to posit another angle in addressing this phenomenon, one which has to do with the conditions that shape article production: article writing reflects a moment in time, and scholars are pre-occupied with the current social moment in South Africa. These are the current conditions for the production of our writing; in other words, we write with and for the moment. There needs to be openness here. To return to my earlier point, scholars are carriers of history and our meaning-making is very much steeped in emotional relationships with the texts that we are writing. The production of articles bordering on compliance with the state may be a discursive echo of scholars asserting their moral right to dance to the tune of the present patron, i.e. the state. The question, of course, is whether the content of the articles can go, in the words of Wayne Hugo, beyond the 'fire of time'. This is a complex question that I shall circumvent with the oft-quoted phrase that history will judge!

Methodological and theoretical traditions

I now return to another key point raised by the editors, namely that the majority of articles presented for publication are crafted within the methodological framework of single case-study research, a trend that has recently been identified by the National Research Foundation. This foregrounds a point about the empiricist nature of knowledge, with editors being confronted with what could be defined as 'first-order sensory data' (Singer 1983) encapsulating the technique of perceptions/experiences.

This is clearly a highly contested domain with less value being accorded to this technique by peer reviewers, despite its being a recognised instrument for the gleaning of specific data within a particular research tradition. Notwithstanding methodological claims especially in terms of replicability and generalisations, due cognisance should be given to the critique that much of the discussion and analysis of this first-order data in educational articles is not taken to higher levels of abstraction and/or theorisation.

It is partly the above-mentioned pattern that leads all three panel editors to the general consensus that there is a paucity of theoretical frameworks in the content of articles submitted for publication to their respective journals. As identified at the start of this paper, the panel of editors is seeking to harness specific intellectual communities, yet these efforts are being thwarted by the paucity of acknowledged theoretical traditions evident in the substantive content of the articles. This could be explained partly by the unstable disciplinary base on which the field of educational scholarship is built. This argument could also explain what could be currently perceived as a fixation on methods over and above substantive theoretical content. There may be a signal here about the nature of postgraduate training programmes in education and the imperative for future research and training initiatives to integrate in a more coherent and substantive way theoretical forms of knowledge, or call them foundational readings. In fact, there may be an opportunity for twinning arrangements with scholars in cognate disciplines in order to provide some theoretical meat to article writing. The editors are making an appeal for this and so I begin to draw this paper to a close with a response to the theoretical challenge emanating from the presentations.

Working within a sociology of knowledge framework, one of the theoretical missions of the *Journal of Education* is to 'increase the number of horizontal languages of description and simultaneously strengthen the grammar of knowledge production' (Hugo 2009: 12). This approach is important in so far as it opens up the potential for disaggregating the complexity associated with the strategies and enactments of/in pedagogic practices in classrooms, lecture halls, community centres and workplaces. In other words, the pedagogical engagement can be strengthened. On the other hand, the *South African Journal of Higher Education*, in a Derridian turn, is advancing a more critical and non-instrumental approach to the reading and writing of texts in ways that will dislodge it from the discourses of policy and compliance. It may be worthwhile to note that the latter emphasis has the effect of foregrounding the power-based side of Foucault's power/knowledge nexus (Foucault 1980). However, my question is whether being pro or anti-state is a defining feature of a non-critical and critical scholar respectively? In the light of this, there are alternative ways of analysing the South African state's relationship to society. For example, there is an opportunity to move beyond the bifurcation that is normally set up between the two conceptual elements towards one that views the state and society as being mutually constitutive and relational (see Thaver & Thaver 2009).

In line with the call of the editors, I wish to reinforce a theoretical point, namely that there is a wealth of theoretical frameworks to shape the intellectual project of education research. In other words, scholars should occupy the theoretical laboratory and work towards developing the field in ways that recontextualise scientific problems germane to the South African environment. This contrasts with what seems to be an emerging trend in higher education scholarship, which is to decontextualise (i.e. abstract) educational institutions from the national context. To cite another example, this time from the domain of schooling, there is much potential for rethinking the relationship between education and society. In this respect, while I am aware of the significance of classical scholars such as Durkheim, the question I have is whether the traditional frameworks of the relationship between schooling and the family still hold, given the conditions under which schooling takes place in South/Southern Africa. Here two examples could be cited, namely the conflict-ravaged conditions of the region and the disintegration of the nuclear family, among others. I raise this not to suggest that we throw out the baby with the bath water, but to suggest that we do have to factor in the different contextual conditions and perhaps this could move us into thinking more creatively about local options/solutions/theory. To concur with the call made by Yusuf Waghid in his presentation, there is an urgent need for curiosity and imagination on the part of scholars in educational research. We need to analyse in an engaged manner the pastiche of African, and specifically South/Southern African, knowledge sensibilities and at the same time not lose sight of critical theoretical traditions.

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Notes on the author

Beverley Thaver is Associate Professor in the Education Faculty, University of the Western Cape, researching the field of Higher Education Studies. Her focus is the transformation of higher education institutions in South Africa, with specific reference to changes in the academic profession. Her publications are on the transition to equity, race and diversity as these manifest in the everyday practices of academics. In addition, she publishes in private higher education, affirmative action and the developmental state in education.

Address for correspondence

bthaver@uwc.ac.za

Resilient KwaZulu-Natal schools: An ethics of care

Callie Grant, Alphonso Jasson and Gael Lawrence

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Forest Hills Primary School, Longmarket Girls' Primary School

Abstract

The resilience of a school is defined as its ability to survive and develop in contexts of extreme adversity (Christie 2001) and is determined largely by its culture and how it responds to the associated challenges. The term resilience suggests two actions: the action of 'bending' caused by 'risk' factors and the action of 'springing back' owing to 'protective' factors. This article is drawn from a study that explored why some schools succeeded despite the odds, while others, facing similar risk factors, failed. The study adopted a multiple-case study approach and utilised individual interviews and formal observations to gather data from 18 schools, perceived as resilient, which serviced poor communities in KwaZulu-Natal. The study found that these schools focused on their core responsibility of teaching and learning and attended to the fundamentals of teaching: they aspired to good attendance, punctuality, orderliness and the maintenance of basic systems and structures. They were able to achieve this through a range of protective factors, but this article engages with just one – 'an ethics of care'. We discuss and theorise around an ethics of care and argue its incredible importance as it contributes to resilience in disadvantaged South African schools.

Key words: resilience, risk factors, protective factors, teaching and learning, pedagogical care, welfare care

Introduction and background to the study

South Africa became a democracy in 1994 and with democracy came hope for a better future for all. However, the new government inherited a 'fragmented, racially polarised, profoundly unequal system of education' (Harley, Barasa, Bertram, Mattson & Pillay 2000: 287). At this historic moment 'most disadvantaged secondary schools,

particularly in urban areas, were on the brink of collapse' (Fleisch 2002: 100). The reality of the situation was that apartheid with its dysfunctional schooling system for the large majority of black South Africans had 'not simply disappeared with the replacement of the apartheid government with a new government' (Christie 1998: 284). Instead, this inheritance 'continues to be determinative in shaping, and accounting for the character of current social behaviour in the country, including the performance of children in schools' (Soudien 2007: 183).

Let us emphasise, it is the majority, rather than the minority, of South African schools that have inherited this legacy of dysfunction. Christie, Butler & Potterton (2007) refer to this numeric norm of schools as 'the mainstream' and, in so doing, challenge us to recognise that privileged schools in South Africa are not the mainstream. Instead, the mainstream schools are the disadvantaged black schools of our apartheid legacy, which need to be valued because they are 'important in finding strategies to achieve equity and quality for all' (2007: 100). These schools are strikingly similar to what MacBeath, Gray, Cullen, Frost, Steward & Swaffield (2007) in the United Kingdom term 'schools on the edge', schools which 'face a constant struggle to forge a closer alignment between home and school, parents and teachers, and between the formal world of school and the informal world of neighbourhood and peer group' (2007: 1). However, in South Africa these schools are not on the edge of the social mainstream, the periphery of the education system. By virtue of their majority, they are the social mainstream and yet they are peripheral in the way they are implicitly taken as the exception.

As a consequence, this social mainstream remains central to issues of school improvement in South Africa because deprivation continues in many disadvantaged communities and these 'distinctive social conditions precede and accompany the child on his or her way to school' (Soudien 2007: 190). Furthermore, the restoration of a culture of teaching and learning which is simply to 'bring the conditions and disciplines of compulsory schooling to bear on teachers and students: regular attendance, punctuality and acceptance of authority' (Chisolm and Vally 1996: 3) has been a difficult journey in many schools because of their 'complex relationships shaped by conscious and unconscious processes, rational and irrational' (Christie 1998: 284). However, there are schools in these disadvantaged communities that have succeeded despite the overwhelming odds and offer quality education to learners. It is schools like these – resilient schools – that were the focus of the research underpinning this article. It is to a discussion of the notion of resilience that we now turn.

Resilience within a school improvement framing
The study from which this article is drawn was loosely located within a school improvement framing. We did not work from a checklist approach, which, for Levin and Lockheed (1993), characterises the school effectiveness tradition but which is

generally unsuccessful in developing countries because of inadequate provisioning in terms of the minimum requirements for teaching. Instead we agree with Gray and Wilcox that good teaching and learning 'can't be captured by a checklist or a calculator' (1995: 30). Our study therefore concentrated on 'the internal dynamics of schools, and of school change' (Christie, Butler & Potterton 2007: 25), the focus of school improvement research. Within a 'whole school development' framing, we understand schools as complex 'systems' that are not easy to change because they 'interact with and shape and are shaped by their context in ways that are complex and variable' (Christie 2001: 40). The type of change within the school is paramount and the role of the individual as catalyst in the change process is crucial. Harris and Lambert suggest that 'by placing people at the centre of change and development there is greater opportunity for organisational growth' (2003: 47). For Dalin (1993), systemic change involves fundamental cultural change. Here the culture of a school is taken to mean the values and norms that constitute the ethos of the school.

Davidoff and Lazarus (2002) offer an organisational development framework for South African schools to use to improve themselves. In their framework, made up of interrelated elements, culture is placed at the centre, because, as Davidoff and Lazarus argue, 'it both determines and reflects how the elements of school life develop' (2002: 21). School culture is powerful because it is determined by people and it is 'the people in schools who make a difference, and without people changing, shifting attitudes and behaviours, very little change can be anticipated (Davidoff & Lazarus 2002: xviii).

Against this backdrop of the power of school culture in the pursuit of school improvement, we were interested in the concept of resilience – why do some schools manage to survive, if not thrive, in adverse contexts where neighbouring schools remain in crisis. Quoting Rutter (1987), Floyd explains that resilience is concerned with 'individual variations in response to risk' (1996: 182). For Bryan, resilience is 'the capacity of an individual to overcome difficult and challenging life circumstances and risk factors' (2005: 220). Extending this idea, Frieberg defines resilience as 'a multifaceted process by which individuals or groups exhibit the ability to draw the best from the environment in which they find themselves' (1993: 365). This process of resilience, Vaillant (1993) argues, conveys 'both the capacity to be bent without breaking and the capacity, once bent, to spring back' (in Christie 2001: 268).

These definitions of resilience suggest two common actions to an understanding of the concept: the action of 'bending' caused by 'risk' factors and the action of 'springing back' owing to 'protective' factors. The risk factors for school learners include but are not limited to macro factors such as 'poverty; homelessness; neighbourhoods characterised by crime, violence, and drugs; and sociocultural factors such as discrimination and racial and language barriers' (Bryan 2005: 219). At a school level, they include 'minimal teacher expectations and inadequate representation of their (the learners') successes' (Floyd 1996: 181). The protective factors reduce the negative

effects of the risk factors and include 'caring and supportive adult relationships, opportunities for meaningful student participation in their schools and communities, and high parent and teacher expectations regarding student performance and future success' (Bryan 2005: 220). In addition, Floyd suggests the following protective factors: 'a supportive family that facilitates coping efforts; a warm, supportive social environment that reinforces coping attempts; high self-esteem and self-control; an internal locus of control; and the presence of educational and occupational opportunities' (1996: 182). Sagor explains that it is this 'set of attributes that provides people with the strength and fortitude to confront the overwhelming obstacles they are bound to face in life' (1996: 38).

In the context of research into school resilience in South Africa, the seminal study by Christie & Potterton (1997) found that the risk factors included poverty, unemployment, political violence, faction fighting, gang warfare and social problems. This resulted in traumatised and sometimes suicidal students as well as students who presented with learning difficulties. The protective factors of resilience that emerged in the Christie & Potterton (1997) study included the schools' sense of responsibility and concern, the central place they gave to teaching and learning, their strong management and leadership, the demarcation of a safe and orderly space for teachers and students as well as the importance of authority and discipline in relation to educational purposes. Christie & Potterton (1997: 19) had further anticipated that school governance, parental involvement and relationships with the education departments would feature as characteristics of resilience but these did not feature strongly in their study. With this understanding of resilience in mind, we now move on to outline our study and its design.

Research design and methodology

Aim and research questions

We set out to explore the presence of resilience in schools that operated in difficult social contexts and faced challenging circumstances. We were interested in schools that succeeded in their core responsibility of teaching and learning and we wanted to understand better some of the features present in these schools that may have contributed to their 'resilience'.

The following specific research questions, adapted slightly from the Christie & Potterton (1997) study, underpinned our study:

1. Why do some schools succeed despite the odds while others, facing similar difficulties, fail?
2. What are some of the features that characterise the resilience of these successful schools?

Research orientation and design

Our project was underpinned by an interpretive research orientation. We were interested in 'understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world, and the experiences they have in the world' (Merriam 1998: 6). Specifically, we were interested to explore the notion of school resilience and to identify some of its features. We were aware of the seminal work of Christie & Potterton (1997) on the topic and elected to replicate their 1997 study in an effort to establish, a decade on and in a different geographical space, whether the characteristics of school resilience that emerged in our study were similar to or different from the findings of the original study.

In line with the original study, we opted for a case study approach, which allowed us to focus on the school as our unit of analysis. Within the case study approach, our project adopted a multiple-case design which, as Yin (2003) argues, is more robust than a single-case design. Our multiple-case design called for qualitative data to provide a rich description of the features that contributed to school resilience. Our purpose, as in the original study, was to develop a brief 'sketch', rather than an in-depth 'portrait' (after Lightfoot 1983: 19), of each of the case-study schools in order to illustrate some of the school dynamics and then to analyse across schools for themes and patterns. To this end, semi-structured individual interviews were the primary data gathering technique. Observations, which included how the school was organised, what curriculum was offered and how the teaching and learning happened, were recorded using a structured observation schedule during the two-day school visits. As with all case-study research, we made no attempt at generalisation, acknowledging that our small sample was purposive, rather than random.

Research schools and participants

In the original study, Christie & Potterton (1997) worked with 32 schools, selected purposively, across seven provinces in South Africa. While their sample was larger than ours, it had a Catholic school bias. Our sample's distinguishing feature was that it included 18 mainstream schools, non-Catholic, selected purposively, from one province in South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). The schools were selected because they were perceived as reputable by the community, and because of their accessibility to the team of researchers. Our selection of schools was similar to the selection process used in the Christie & Potterton study as well as Lightfoot's study of good high schools in America where schools were chosen 'because of their reputation among school people, the high opinion of them shared by their inhabitants and surrounding communities, and because they offered easy and generous entry' (Lightfoot 1983: 11). Indicators of a good school reputation in our project included, but were not limited to, the payment of school fees, parental involvement in the life of the school, minimal absenteeism and punctuality, a good pass rate (particularly in high schools), neat buildings and premises with learners in uniform and appropriately behaved.

Of the 18 KZN schools in our project, 13 were primary schools, four were secondary and one combined. Half of the schools (nine) were classified as rural, five were urban, while four were peri-urban. To give a sense of the socio-economic status of these schools, all charged annual school fees of R880 or less. Of the sample, there were three no-fee schools, while seven charged schools fees of R100 or less. This gives an indication that the project schools serviced extremely poor communities. Of the sample, four schools had a learner enrolment of below 500, eight schools had a learner enrolment of 500 to 1 000, and six schools had a learner enrolment of above 1 000. In addition, half of the schools (nine) had between 11 and 20 educators on the staff, while a further eight had between 21 and 30 educators. Only one school in the sample had fewer than 10 educators on its staff.

At each of the 18 case study schools, three research participants were identified, in line with the original study. Participants included the principal, a member of the school management team (other than the principal) and a teacher, selected on the basis of their availability and willingness to participate in the research. Thus a limitation of the project was that the sample was not representative of the whole educator population.

Ethical issues

Permission to undertake the research was granted from the principals of the 18 schools involved in the project and written consent was received from each of the educators who participated in the study. Participants were guaranteed anonymity and were also advised that they were free to withdraw from the project at any time, should the need arise. Ethical clearance to proceed with the research was received from the Department of Education and the higher education institution under whose auspices the project was conducted.

Data analysis

The data analysis process involved two phases. The first phase involved working both inductively and deductively with the data from each case-study school. Initially the data were allowed to 'speak' and concepts from the raw data were generated and coded. Following this, and in an iterative process, the themes, generated from the Christie & Potterton (1997) study, were applied to the individual school data. A school sketch was then developed for each school. The second phase of analysis involved a comparison of the 18 school sketches in a search for common themes.

Validity issues

As with the original study, ours was an explorative study that relied, to some degree,

on community and educator perceptions. To overcome this limitation, observation was included as a data collection tool but we acknowledge that our claims in relation to our findings are tentative. A longitudinal study is needed to excavate further the unique and complex nature of school resilience.

Unlike the original study, ours involved 18 novice researchers. To overcome this limitation and to ensure the trustworthiness of the research process, all researchers were involved in the planning and research design process. In addition, the original loosely structured interview schedule was reworked to provide the novice researcher with a scaffolded approach to the interview process. Thereafter, researchers were afforded learning opportunities to develop their interview and observation skills. On completion of the research and as a further validity measure, the individual school sketches were taken back to the schools for comment.

In concluding this section, we wish to emphasise that the purpose of this article is not to present the school sketches and neither is it to present the comparative findings. Instead its purpose is to focus on the core work of teaching and learning in the study schools and to foreground an ethics of care as a critical protective factor in the complex mix of school resilience. It is to this discussion that we now turn.

Presentation and discussion of findings

We begin this section by sketching a picture of the social context within which the schools were located to indicate some of the risk factors that contributed to these schools 'bending'. Next, we explore how the schools went about their core responsibility of teaching and learning. We then move on to describe and theorise one of the main themes that emerged in the study and which operated as a protective factor that led to school resilience. In presenting the data, we reference it as follows: observation data (Observation) and interview data (Interview).

The risk factors

Social context, we argue, remains central to issues of school improvement and so it is imperative that we heed the advice of MacBeath et al. (2007) that failure to grasp the complexity of the contextual layers of learners' life experiences is a fundamental weakness of any research or policy initiative. Supporting this stance and quoting a major finding of the 1966 Coleman Report to the US Congress on 'Equality of Educational Opportunity'*,* Christie et al. reiterate the point that the over-riding influence on learners' life chances is the influence of social context and home background rather than school qualities (2007: 24).

The social context of all 18 school communities in our study was, to varying degrees, one of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and sometimes violence. In this regard, the social context of our sample was similar to that of the sample schools in the HSRC/

EPC rural communities' research (Nelson Mandela Foundation 2005). The following excerpts from our study vividly depict this social context. For example, a participant described how, in her school, 'most parents are unemployed and they rely on state grants' (Interview). Another concurred: 'People are struggling. People are poor. There is no food to eat and there is no work' (Interview). In addition, one of the researchers described how a particular school was 'located in a community wracked by poverty and has a high rate of unemployment and has been devastated by faction fights … the parents are destitute and cannot make ends meet' (Observation). Levels of poverty were further exacerbated by the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In relation to the pandemic, a participant described how 'many children are heading families because their parents have passed on or are too sick. Many parents are illiterate and uneducated about the disease' (Interview). Another participant referred to the effects of HIV/AIDS on the families and explained how some of the learners in her school had 'an added responsibility of having to look after their sick parents' (Interview).

School fee payment was another poverty indicator. As mentioned earlier, of the 18 schools in the study, three were no-fee schools, seven charged annual schools fees of R100 or less while the balance charged annual fees between R100 and R880. Despite these low figures, many parents were still unable to afford the school fees, as the following excerpt suggests: 'Those parents who just cannot be able to pay school fees are exempted from doing so, after the school has satisfied itself that they deserve to be exempted' (Interview). In another school, where less than half of the parents managed to pay school fees, those that were unable to pay were 'required to bring proof of their financial status' (Interview). However, the stigma attached to this application process sometimes prevented parents from coming forward to claim the exemption: 'The school is trying to contact [financially] struggling parents to come to the school and do something for the school so that they will not pay the school fees, but they do not want to come to us' (Interview). In relation to this issue in another school, the following arrangement was made: 'Learners that are not able to pay school fees, their parents pay by working in the school garden' (Interview).

In 15 of the study schools, the level of poverty was further evident in the simplicity of school buildings and the lack of infrastructure. One school was described in the following way by a researcher: 'I came upon what looked like a school with three rows of prefabricated classes and about six mud buildings' (Observation). Another researcher described his case study school as follows: 'The school was built out of blocks with one principal's office which acted as an administrative nerve centre of the school; there was no staff room for the educators and no laboratory' (Observation).

In nine sketches there was reference to the central (and essential) role the school feeding scheme, as part of the National School Nutrition Programme, played in the lives of the learners – another indicator of poverty. The following excerpt illustrated how the feeding occurred in one school: 'Inside the school premises there is a big pot placed on a fire and it is still cooking. Next to it there is a lady who is looking after the

pot' (Observation). As a further example, another participant described how her school 'has a feeding scheme. For many learners this is the only nutritious meal for the day. There is always leftover food that is given to families that are battling' (Interview). The stark impact of the effects of poverty on learners was evident in the story of another participant:

> It happens sometimes that you receive a letter reporting that the child is unable to come to school because she is ill. But during lunch time you see that learner in the (food) line and disappear after that. The attendance is good because of the nutrition programme (Interview).

In this context of poverty, unemployment and HIV/AIDS, the schools were sometimes viewed by the learners as a place of escape from their domestic challenges, despite the fact that many of these schools were under-resourced with no electricity, running water or proper toilets, and with limited access to telephones, computers and duplicating machines. As one participant explained, 'They see the school as a safe haven. For some it provides them with an unspoken sense of hope" (Observation). This was often despite the fact that, in some instances, 'the children are very tired because their day starts early then they walk a tremendous distance' (Interview). However, despite these adverse contextual factors, schools were regarded as secure places where learners could belong and learn and it is to a discussion of the core responsibility of teaching and learning that we now turn.

The core responsibility of teaching and learning

Doing the basics well: All 18 study schools were purposeful and attended to the fundamentals of teaching. For one participant this was evident because the school was 'fully-functional, it functions every day … the children are engaged in school work every day and they are progressing every day' (Interview). Another participant engaged with this point as follows: 'Learners like the fact that teachers do go to class. They teach, unlike in other schools where learners are left unattended' (Interview). Another participant put it in the following way: 'Teachers make sure they teach and the learners do what their teachers tell them to do' (Interview). Yet another participant responded that 'teachers are committed although there are frustrations from the department at times, but the teachers try harder to minimise those so that the learners are not affected' (Interview). Attending to the basics resulted in the achievement of 'the smooth running of the school and just being able to continue the day-to-day activities despite the problems our learners face' (Interview). This finding is in line with the original study, where the resilient schools "showed the regular routines of functioning social institutions" (Christie 2001: 51).

Orderliness and systems: Extending this idea further, 15 of the sketches made reference to schools that prided themselves on their general neatness and tidiness: 'It was very neat with no signs of litter. A neat flower garden had been started which was

carefully bordered with old bottles' (Observation). Schools were orderly; learners were in class under teacher supervision and 'there were no learners loitering' (Observation). Learners were neatly dressed in uniform and 'with books which were covered' (Observation). During break times, 'the grounds were abuzz with children's voices as they played with friends or simply chatted with each other' (Observation). Systems, together with school rules and regulations, were deemed essential in holding the schools intact and ensuring resilience during rough times. Systems were viewed as important at a macro school level: 'Our administration controls the movement of the people and the organisation of the school. Major decisions revolve around our administration' (Interview). However, poor time management sometimes interfered with the daily routine, as the following excerpt indicates: 'The school day was set to begin at 8:20 am, but this did not go as planned' (Observation). Our findings support the view of Christie, who, in her study of dysfunctional schools, argues that for a culture of teaching and learning to operate, it is necessary to 'establish proper and effective management systems and structures with clear procedures and clear lines of authority, powers, responsibility and accountability' (1998: 291).

In addition, systems were also viewed as imperative at a classroom level: 'Teachers have registers for learners; everything must be planned. Registers, school calendars and timetables, all these are part of administration, so they are very important' (Interview). Some teachers developed a set of rules to keep order in their classrooms, as the following participant explained: 'These rules were formulated by me, as the class educator, together with the learners, so that it will be easy to refer to them when learners behave badly in class' (Interview). This is in line with Freiberg's view that another factor in the pursuit for school resilience is that 'students are involved in the development of school and classroom rules and in the management of classroom activities' (1993: 375). In addition, Sagor is of the firm view that 'infusing the classroom and the curriculum with resiliency-building experiences can have a profound impact on our students' self-images' (1996: 42). It was noticeably the case that effective management systems and structures enabled a culture of teaching and learning in our study.

The importance of good attendance and punctuality: Reference was made to good attendance and punctuality in 14 of the sketches. A participant articulated this stance as follows: 'We try by all means to promote good educational values like regular attendance by the staff and the learners, punctuality, discipline and serious teaching' (Interview). This view was endorsed by another participant: 'Being punctual for school is of great importance to the educators and the learners. It sets the tone for the day' (Interview). Punctuality of teachers was, for the most, good across all schools in the project and deemed a crucial factor in school resilience. A participant explained that they had no problem with educator attendance as 'teachers are punctual so as to ensure that they make the necessary preparations for the day' (Interview). Another

participant described how 'we stick to timetables and spend the correct contact time with learners. Teachers and learners are punctual; there are very few cases of late coming' (Interview). One participant did acknowledge though that 'some (staff members) are very committed to work, some have to be dragged' (Interview).

At a classroom level, this commitment to good attendance and punctuality was also in evidence, as the following excerpt describes: 'We strongly discourage bunking of classes, absenteeism, late-coming and failure to complete the given homework, tasks and assignments' (Interview). As a result, learners understood the imperative to attend school, as a participant explained: 'The learners at this school are highly motivated because they see a need of coming to school. The educators are trying their best to instil the educational values and explain the worth of being an educated person in society' (Interview). Another participant explained that 'learners enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is good. Even when there are taxi strikes they find their way to school' (Interview).

However, one of the researchers did comment that 'learner attendance is fairly regular in summer but poor in winter' (Observation). Another participant acknowledged that there were times when 'learners are late, some just dawdle on their way to school, or some first have to complete chores before coming to school' (Interview). Thus, in line with the finding of Freiberg, our study found that a factor in the pursuit of school resilience is that 'higher teacher and student attendance are promoted and honoured' (1993: 375). The importance of good attendance and punctuality in school resilience is also in line with the Christie & Potterton (1997) study, where the importance of authority and discipline in relation to the educational purposes of the resilient schools was evident, as Christie explains: 'disciplinary actions against late-coming, absentee-ism, substance abuse and generally "going out of hand" were linked to educational purposes, rather than being seen as ends in themselves' (2001: 52).

Thus it can be seen that the study schools demonstrated a culture of teaching and learning that was simply to bring the fundamentals of compulsory schooling to bear on teachers and students (Chisolm and Vally 1996). It may be argued that the conditions and disciplines of compulsory schooling should be a taken-for-granted and common sense feature of all schools. However, given the historical legacy of disadvantage and dysfunction in the majority of mainstream schools in our country, the centrality of teaching and learning is not a common sense feature. Thus, to find 'mainstream' schools that are succeeding despite the odds stacked against them is rare, although Fleisch describes how the last five years have shown that 'many schools with meagre resources, serving poor learners, can deliver quality' (2002: 199).

To conclude this section, we want to emphasise the point that these resilient schools had no greater amounts of time or resources than their neighbouring schools that were failing. The difference was how time, focus and structure (after Glickman 2002: 2) were used in these resilient schools. We now move on to foreground a significant

feature that emerged in relation to resilience in our study. In doing so, we argue the critical importance of an ethics of care as a protective factor in the complex mix of resilience in South African schools. It is to this discussion that we now turn.

An ethics of care

The importance of caring in relation to education and schooling is integral to the work of Hall (1996), Shields (2003) and Christie (2005). Building on the work of Starratt (1991) and Noddings (1999), Shields explains that caring involves a 'commitment of the will to enter into a relationship' (2003: 77) in which we act out of a sense of compassion rather than out of a concern for efficiency. Hall describes how care in her study 'was manifest in actions that were supportive and nurturing, aimed at making someone feel good about what he or she was doing, as well as securing his or her support, commitment and trust' (1996: 123). Christie (2005) calls for an ethics of care in schools – a concern not only for the intellectual development of the learners but also a concern for what it is to be a human being. This requires that schools become places where 'being human – with all its possibilities and failings – means caring for each other, even those who are not the same as ourselves' (Christie 2005: 246). Extending this idea, Donaldson calls for 'active caring', which addresses 'our willingness to accept our school's challenges and our current working conditions and relationships and, despite the odds, to act on them' (2006: 172).

In the South African policy context, this notion of care is endorsed in the government's *Norms and Standards for Educators* (Republic of South Africa 2000) and highlighted within one of the seven teacher roles, namely the 'community, citizenship and pastoral role'. The pastoral aspect of this role is described as follows:

> Within the school, the educator will demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learner and respond to the educational and other needs of learners and fellow educators. Furthermore, the educator will develop supportive relations with parents and other key persons and organisations based on a critical understanding of community and environmental development issues. One critical dimension of this role is HIV/AIDS education (Republic of South Africa 2000: 14).

The pastoral role emerged as a strong feature of resilience in the study and, in line with the excerpt above, we have elected to characterise an ethics of care in two ways: caring in relation to the educational needs of learners (what we refer to as 'pedagogical care') and caring in relation to the other needs of learners (what we refer to as 'welfare care').

Pedagogical care: There was reference to pedagogical care, our first characterisation of care, in 16 sketches. In particular, there was evidence of care in the space of the classroom. Despite meagre resources at their disposal, educators were described as doing their best to provide a positive learning environment for their learners and creating what Baker, working with poor, urban, African-American children, calls a

'classroom community' (1999: 66). The following response from a principal illustrates the point being made: 'As you can see, they try to make the classroom as pleasant as possible for the learners so as to provide that culture of teaching and learning. The teachers are very eager to try out new things. They see it as a challenge' (Interview). In her study, Baker found that 'a caring, psychologically safe classroom environment predicted children's satisfaction with school' (1999: 65).

However, pedagogical care was also evident in the space of the school. Here, as the following excerpt suggests, educators did not work in isolation: 'Our commitment, since we always work as partners in education, doing what we can in order to improve the educational climate of our school' (Interview). This necessitated 'the staff functioning and working as a team, which I think leads to teachers achieving their learning outcomes' (Observation). It was suggested that team work among educators depended on 'a collegial work ethic and, despite their differences, they share mutual respect' (Observation). Both the sense of collegial care and pedagogical care inspired the educators to continue in their endeavours despite the risk factors they faced. In fact, it was a principal who was observed describing 'the passion his teachers have for teaching and the fact that they take ownership of the school' (Observation). Ownership of the school was tangibly illustrated in one of the sketches: '… some of the teachers are helping out with the painting of the admin block' (Observation).

Educators also appeared willing to 'work beyond the demands of conventional timetables' (Christie et al. 2007: 98), as another sketch portrayed: 'The teachers are very committed in such a way that if work is not finished during school hours, they finish off late or even come back during weekends' (Interview). But it was not only teachers who 'went the extra mile'. One teacher described how her principal 'went the extra mile' and demonstrated pedagogic care: 'We hand in our worksheets to the principal and she takes them home and rolls them off. Yes, she is very good at that' (Interview). This resulted in a sense of pride by the teachers 'when the children are presented with good quality worksheets so that they will want to work at their best. It also makes us want to work and do our best' (Interview). This feature of resilience is in line with the thinking of Christie et al., who contend that the sense of inner agency, and mustering resources to solve problems, should be viewed as a strength in schools' (2007: 101 – 102).

It was due to this sense of inner agency that educators were not broken by the risk factors they experienced, as one participant explained of the teachers at his school: 'Teachers haven't given up. They haven't burnt out. Their coping skills are excellent' (Interview). In fact, another participant explained how 'we use our problems now to achieve, to do better. That is our learning curve' (Interview). The schools clearly did not run away from their problems but instead interrogated them and used them as a springboard from which to learn and improve, confirming the view of Hopkins et al., who argue that 'school improvement, like the human condition, is largely about problem solving' (1994: 4).

Welfare care: Welfare care and the pastoral role, our second characterisation of care, was evident in the space of the school and concretely captured in eight sketches. In the words of one of the participants: 'Pastoral care is something that stands out. You can't beat our teachers for pastoral care. I think it's the years experience in this environment… in this community. They look after each other and provide pastoral care to the learners' (Interview). A tangible example of this welfare care work was given by one participant who explained that 'some of the learners do not bring lunch to school and the teachers have to help out' (Interview), while in another school, 'school tracksuits are donated to the very needy learners by teachers' (Interview). From these excerpts it can be seen that eight of the study schools operated as 'welfare institutions for the young' (Morrow 2007: 103), with educators working as active caregivers in response to the contextual risk factors their learners faced.

Morrow, reflecting on the expansion of this pastoral care function of educators in mainstream South African schools, warns of the possibility that 'teachers are so overwhelmed by these caregiving functions that they have precious little time and energy to devote to teaching' (2007: 103). In our study, the resilience of the educators was evidenced in the fact that they were able, as part of their work, to hold in balance and offer both pedagogic care and welfare care. However, we argue that Morrow's (2007) question for us as a society still remains pertinent, especially in relation to non-resilient schools. Should teachers' work include the caregiving of the young and, if so given our context, how do we support educators to 'organise systematic learning in this context and these conditions?' (Morrow 2007: 105).

However, not only did educators draw on their own resources but, in 16 of the study schools, they also drew on the social capital of their community networks (Spillane 2006) to provide for the welfare needs of their learners. As one participant explained, much use was made of 'networking resources outside of the school context for the benefit of the school in general' (Interview). In another illustration, a participant underscored the critical importance of teacher agency in the accessing of economic capital, including money and other material resources (Spillane 2006): 'If our teachers find out about a free donation, like a feeding scheme other than that offered by the department [of education], we act on it' (Interview). Welfare providers, such as Gift of the Givers, were also approached 'to sponsor blankets to the needy learners' (Interview).

In addition, educators also drew on the social capital of their community networks with public service-providers such as 'the community police forum' (Interview), the 'South African Police Services (SAPS)' (Interview) along with the 'Department of Health, local clinics as well as community non-governmental organisations' (Interview). One of the sketches revealed that 'the principal is a member of the Disciplinary Safety and Security Committee (DSSC) in which the [Department of] Health, SAPS, unions, community leaders and others take part" (Observation). Specifically in relation to HIV/AIDS, one participant in another school commented on

the importance of the school's relationship with the health department: 'We invite people from the health department to give talks to the school … how important it is to have themselves tested. To go for treatment, and the importance of taking their medication daily' (Interview). In other words, schools took the initiative and drew assistance and resources through 'networks of external support' (Freiberg 1993: 371) and 'networks of social capital' (Christie, Butler & Potterton 2007: 101). It was these social networks that ensured an ethics of care, thereby preventing schools from succumbing to the risk factors and enabling them to 'spring back'.

Welfare care in the form of the various types of capital located in the school governing body (SGB) and the parent body was experienced variously across the study schools. In 13 of the schools, educators were of the view that SGBs contributed positively to the welfare needs of the school: 'We are very pleased with the contribution made by the SGB' (Interview). Another participant alluded to the economic capital of a few of the parents who assisted 'by sponsoring uniforms and preparing meals' (Interview). Many of the participants described their SGB members as active people with appropriate human and social capital (Spillane, 2006) who were 'always up to date with the new changes in the school' (Interview) and who 'work hard when it comes to fundraising and securing sponsorships from outside organisations and businesses for the school' (Interview). One participant explained how social capital in the form of collaboration and a sense of obligation were evident in his school: 'The school relies on having a working relationship with the community for its protection against vandalism and theft' (Interview). In a similar instance, a history of burglaries was the norm in one school but this stopped because 'the school worked with the Ward Councillor and the community and this helps to instil a sense of ownership in the community' (Interview). In direct contrast, for three of the study schools, the perceived lack of human and social capital of the SGBs contributed to their being unable to offer any welfare care. For example, one participant described the parent representatives on the SGB as 'uneducated, under-empowered and illiterate' (Interview). In another school, it was felt that 'many [SGB members] do not have the necessary skills to hold that position. Therefore, deliverance is poor' (Interview).

From the discussion it can be concluded that healthy and vibrant social networks, whether with local and public organisations or with the SGB assisted the majority of the case-study schools and contributed to their resilience. This is in keeping with the view of Bryan, who asserts that 'partnerships among the school, home, and community increase students' chances of success by removing some of the stressors and systemic barriers to academic and personal success, especially for poor and minority students' (2005: 225). Said slightly differently, if learners 'get everyday care and support from caregivers, friends, community members and teachers, they will develop a sense of hope and belonging that helps them deal with hardships in their lives' (Media in Education Trust 2009: 114).

Conclusion

Mainstream schools – the numeric norm in South Africa – are located in historically disadvantaged communities and have, in many cases, inherited a legacy of dysfunction. As a direct consequence, there is little alignment between the formal world of the school (including the curriculum and the educators) and the informal world of the family and community. The dysfunction in many of the schools, post-1994, has continued despite government attempts to restore a culture of teaching and learning in its schools. However, there are some mainstream schools in disadvantaged communities that have succeeded in achieving their core responsibility of teaching and learning, despite the overwhelming odds and it is schools like these that were the focus of the research underpinning this article.

These schools – like their neighbouring schools – were bent under the pressure of the harshness of their social context and the consequent school challenges they faced. However, they were unique in that they did not break under the pressure but instead sprang back and continued to operate and, in some cases, thrive. These schools succeeded, where others failed, because they attended to the rudiments of teaching and learning. These fundamentals included a sense of pride in the neatness and tidiness of the school, good attendance and punctuality on the part of the educators and the learners as well as the efficient use, by educators, of time and the meagre resources at their disposal. In addition, these fundamentals included the importance of an educational vision to guide the school as it moved forward while at the same time ensuring that systems, structures and procedures were in place to hold the school steady and maintain its functioning on a daily basis. Thus our findings confirmed, to a large extent, the findings of the original study. However, in contrast to the original study, our study signalled that school governance as an emerging feature of resilience had strengthened over the last decade. Thus we agree with Christie et al. that for these resilient mainstream schools, the achievement of 'the rhythms and practices of "ordinary schooling" is an extraordinary feat' (2007: 58).

Our study further demonstrated that 'an ethics of care' can be considered one of the many protective factors that enable school resilience. However, to characterise the nature of the care, we adopted the terms pedagogical care and welfare care. Pedagogical care is the term we use to capture the connection between feeling and cognition and is summed up in the following quotation:

> What is to be thought and hoped of me as a teacher if I am not steeped in that other type of knowing that requires that I be open to caring for the well-being of my students and of the educative experience in which I participate? ... What it does mean is that I am not afraid of my feelings and that I know how to express myself effectively in an appropriate and affirming way. It also means that I know how to fulfil authentically my commitment to my students in the context of a specifically human mode of action. In truth, I feel it is necessary to overcome the false separation between serious teaching and the expression of feeling ... Affectivity is not necessarily an enemy of knowledge or of the process of knowing (Freire 1998: 125).

Thus, pedagogical care ought to be the norm for all educators, regardless of the context of the school in which they work. It is a non-negotiable that a teacher's work is caring work. However, what differentiates mainstream educators from those working in schools on the periphery of this mainstream is the degree of their obligation of care – the degree of sacrifice (after Thomson 2009). The sacrifice for mainstream teachers is that their care is required to extend beyond the boundaries of pedagogic care into the realm of welfare care. In the more privileged South African schools, the welfare needs of learners are met by the parent body and in these contexts, as Morrow rightly argues, 'the caregiving functions of schools can be secondary relative to their teaching functions; the need for caregiving is likely to be limited to relatively rare cases' (2007: 103). In contrast, in mainstream schools, the social context dictates that educators spend much of their time on welfare care and draw from their social networks as they see to the survival needs of their learners. In this regard, the demands on mainstream educators are far greater than their non-mainstream counterparts – theirs is a much greater sacrifice.

In closing, we signal the incredible importance of these extraordinary mainstream schools and contend that they need to be nurtured and researched because they offer us insight into the notion of school resilience and improvement, so critical in South Africa today. In addition, we believe that these extraordinary schools offer us hope for the future because they help us understand just how resilient schools 'break free of the constraints imposed by society' (MacBeath et al. 2007: 11).

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Notes on the authors

Carolyn (Callie) Grant is a lecturer in the Honours and Masters programmes in Education Leadership and Management in the Faculty of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Her research interests lie within the area of teacher leadership as one manifestation of a distributed perspective on leadership. Her recently completed PhD is entitled 'Distributed teacher leadership in South African schools: Troubling the terrain.

Alphonso Jasson is a deputy principal at Forest Hills Primary School in Pietermaritzburg. He has been teaching for 35 years. He is currently teaching Computer Sciences to Grade 4 to 7 pupils. His recently completed dissertation for the Masters Degree in Education Leadership and Management is entitled 'It's about normal teachers like me: A case study of three teacher leaders in an urban primary school'. He is especially interested in research on teacher leadership, with distributed leadership being a departure point.

Gael Lawrence is a deputy principal at Longmarket Girls' Primary School in Pietermaritzburg. She has been teaching for 24 years. She is currently teaching Mathematics and English to Grade 4 to 7 pupils. Her recently completed dissertation for the Masters Degree in Education Leadership and Management is entitled 'The enactment of teacher leadership in an urban primary school: A negative case study in an urban primary school'. Her research interests lie in the area of teacher leadership within the context of distributed leadership.

Addresses for correspondence
grantc@ukzn.ac.za
alpjass@yahoo.com
gaellaw@yahoo.com

Policy mediation and leadership: Insights from provincial implementers of South African school evaluation policies

Francine de Clercq
University of the Witwatersrand

Abstract

This article explores an aspect of education policy-making that is seldom researched in any depth in South African policy analysis, namely how provincial and district education officials strategise to mediate education policies. Strategic policy leadership exists in pockets of education departments and requires officials to be knowledgeable of policy contexts, texts and their enabling and constraining aspects as well as have an ability to use discretionary powers to take strategic decisions which can make the policy enabling for various stakeholders as well as close to their vision. This article examines some positive mediation strategies by provincial education officials with sufficient policy expertise and leadership to appreciate policy tensions as well as navigate through the complex policy processes to exploit the space created by the policy. Far from accepting policies as yet another add-on which overextend them, these officials strategise to ensure that their mediation work enables various stakeholders and benefits more than a few groups with sectarian interests.

Key words: Policy mediation; policy implementation; school evaluation policies; provincial-district mediation; strategic policy leadership

There has been a flurry of new education policies in South Africa that have been introduced and dropped at the doors of districts and schools for implementation. Many policy scholars have analysed how the post-1994 policy overload stretched and often demoralised schools and districts because their work is made near-impossible, as they struggle also with resources and capacity constraints (Kgobe 2001, 2003; Narsee 2006). However, some department policy implementers managed to survive and even

thrive on some education policies because they are policy-knowledgeable and strategic enough to treat these policies as enabling social constructions with some space within which they can operate and reinforce their on-going work for better quality education. This article examines positive mediation practices used by education officials who know how to navigate strategically through policy implementation challenges.

Policy analyses and implementation studies

Implementation studies are linked to three different conceptual approaches to policy and policy analysis. The *liberal pluralist* approach is interested in the rational nature and coherence of policies and relies on a normative conception of policy and policy implementation that views policy-making as a separate activity from policy administration. For this approach, policy is developed and put into effect through rational prescriptions in a 'top down' manner by the state bureaucracy, which needs to be made accountable for policy implementation. Its approach to implementation studies is broadly interested in the reasons for the gap between policy intentions and outcomes or practices on the ground. The first generation (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973) uses organisational theory and studies of intergovernmental relations to understand policy implementation and trace the 'top down' policy process to identify the main factors contributing to the policy gap (Sabatier 1986). They single out a lack of clarity in policy objectives; implementers' inadequate skills, competences and resources; poor communication/coordination given the multiplicity of actors at implementation level; and poor administrative control over implementers who enjoy a semi-autonomous discretion (Jones 1992: 240).

The second, *interpretive* policy analysis approach conceives of policy as socially experienced and interpreted by various policy actors. It cannot therefore be fully rational and coherent in its inner logic. This approach, Yanow (2000) argues, has to understand the intended meanings of specific policies and how these are communicated and interpreted by different groups involved in the policy process, also called 'policy communities'. Spillane et al. (2002: 387) urge policy analysts to focus on the interaction between implementers' policy knowledge, values and beliefs, as well as their situation and reading of the policy signals. Thus, such 'interpretist' policy analysts focus on social understanding, interaction and mediation.

Their implementation studies reject the idea of implementation as a separate process from policy-making and argue rather that implementation is about policy clarification or further policy-making, or part of a policy-action continuum (Barrett and Fudge 1981). They study how policy actors — including those who are targeted by the policy — respond to and interpret and implement policies. In the famous Rand Change Agent study, McLaughlin (1990: 12) shows how policy implementation in schools is a process of bargaining or mutual adaptation between policies and the local context as well as between various concerned policy actors as they negotiate and bargain over the

interpretation of these policies. McLaughlin (1990) mentions that district strategies and leadership capacity are key factors in mediating the policy effectively in local contexts.

The third, *political* approach to policy analysis, developed in opposition to this inter-pretive approach, emphasises power, interests and influences as key to policies that aim at effecting change. For this approach, policies have to be analysed for the role and impact they have in the various policy processes (Ball 1994). Taylor et al. (1997: 37) argue that this analytical approach aims to unmask polices as dominant ideologies, structures and social practices that function to reproduce the status quo. It investigates the ongoing political conflicts and bargaining between different parties over the policy discourse and text and the fragile and temporary policy settlements they lead to. They do so by unravelling policy assumptions and values and investi-gating the interests, agendas and relative power of different policy interest groups or communities. Protagonists of this approach conceive of policy as both discourse and text which are framed within, and are subjected to, certain power dynamics and interests (Bowe et al. 1992: 13-15). The discourse frames the policy and acts as a structure with possibilities and impossibilities, while the text creates circumstances in which different agents, however unequal in terms of their power and authority, mediate, accept or contest the policy.

Their implementation studies show how policy interpretations and negotiations are socially constructed as well as politically contested. Therefore, they propose to unravel the contextual and underlying forces and interest groups as well as trace whose interests are reflected and promoted in the policy process (Taylor et al. 1997: 37).

This article relies on aspects of both the political and interpretive approach to policy and policy analysis to explain the policy-making process and the influence of context, power relationship and negotiation between policy actors. It derives from a broader trajectory analysis study of South African school evaluation policies in the last 12 years that emphasises the power dynamics and contestations that led to the many tensions in the policies' content and their implementation, as well as the way in which some policy actors with leadership mediation strategies manage to exploit the policy opportunities to implement the policies for the good of the school system. It follows Gale's (2001) recommendation that policy analysis should examine the historical and current context, negotiations (and their outcomes) by relevant stakeholders, and the meaning-making and mediation strategies of different policy implementation actors.

The article focuses on one dimension of a broader research into school and teacher evaluation policies (de Clercq 2010) and deals with the implementation role and work of department officials at provincial level. It analyses what Gale (2001) calls the enabling agency of policy implementation actors with policy leadership and mediation strategies. As Schofield (2004) argues, policies do not implement themselves, but implementers need the knowledge and competences to translate policy intentions into operational strategies and actions. This article argues that policy leadership or

enabling agency requires a deep political and educational knowledge of the policy context and content to navigate various power dynamics in exploiting the opportunities created by the policies' tensions. After winning the buy-in of the main stakeholders, it needs to develop mediation implementation strategies that can promote the good of the education system. In that sense, this article shows how a focus on policy leadership and agency can improve policy analysis knowledge.

More specifically, the article examines enabling policy leadership to understand what knowledge and assets/resources implementers need to take strategic decisions to minimise some political, educational and resource tensions and achieve a win-win solution with most stakeholders. It concludes that such leadership is one of the most important reasons why policies implemented in comparable sites, with similar combinations of resources and political and educational interest groups, have such different dynamics and impacts on the ground.

The case study of provincial mediation of quality assurance school policies

In the past 12 years, many evaluation policies in South African education have been formulated, implemented and revised with only few examples of success or buy-in on the ground. A few policy analysts have studied the content and tensions of the 1998 Development Appraisal System (DAS) (Gallie 2007), of the 2001 Whole-School Evaluation (WSE) policy (Silbert 2007) and the 2003 Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) (de Clercq 2008). Others have researched the complex implementation challenges of these policies at school level (Naidoo 2006; Risimati 2007; Class Act 2007; Gallie 2007). However, these policy analyses have rarely examined why the policies have serious educational and political tensions that create space for education departments, the latter having some discretionary powers with which they can strategise to implement these policies. Yet few policy analyses explore how these implementing actors are influenced, in the implementation process, by their policy constructions and mediations.

The focus of the study was on the Gauteng Education Department (GDE)'s quality assurance (QA) division and one of its districts. These were purposefully chosen because of their reputation for having generated pockets of positive experiences regarding WSE and IQMS implementation. The main sources of data are critical readings of the contexts, texts and associated documents of the WSE and IQMS policies to locate the different views and decisions of key actors involved in these policies. The study also uses empirical data gathered through semi-structured discussions and interviews conducted in 2009 with senior education officials, selected because of their work with school and teacher evaluation policies: two Department of Education (DoE) senior officials, four GDE officials in the Quality Assurance (QA) division, two senior district officials from a GDE district and a former South African Democratic Teachers

Union (SADTU) and then South African Council of Educators' (SACE) official who spearheaded the development of DAS. These participants were asked about their reading of the tensions and politics around the WSE and IQMS policies; their under-standing and position towards these policies as well as their enabling and restricting nature; and their own mediation and implementation decisions and strategies, as well as how these policies impacted on their work and organisational politics.

The study is therefore based mainly on perceptual data that were not verified with schools or other staff working with these senior officials. In that sense, the findings can only be used to highlight interesting policy implementation decisions, strategies and practices and how these were conceptualised and managed by people in leadership positions, but not how effective they were on the ground. This is valuable in itself because the study aims to explore how and why certain mediation decisions were made and how strategic and enabling these were for various policy actors in the implementation phase. However, this study calls for further research into how strategic and enabling these were for those working with these policy leaders.

WSE and IQMS policy provincial challenges

After the signing of the 1998 Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) Develop-mental Appraisal System (DAS) agreement, which focused mainly on teacher appraisal for development, the DoE looked to the setting up of a quality assurance system with standardised monitoring mechanisms to ascertain educational standards across the country and promote greater school control and accountability. The DoE introduced the 2001 WSE policy, without any consultation or negotiation with teacher unions. By 2002, two school-based evaluation systems (the WSE and Performance Measurement or PM) were also introduced but, because of unnecessary duplication of these various evaluation mechanisms, the teacher unions and departments decided in the ELRC to streamline and integrate them in one system, the 2003 IQMS (ELRC 2003).

By the time the IQMS was introduced in schools, the DoE and other provincial edu-cation departments (PEDs) did not have implementation plans, strategies or budget lines for the policy coordination, implementation and monitoring. There were no dedicated units/divisions within their structures and already scarce human, financial and material resources had to be mobilised from within existing units/ divisions (DoE chief director, in de Clercq 2010). The DoE set up a Quality Assurance (QA) directorate in charge of all school evaluation coordination, and its Human Resources and Planning (HRD) directorate was given the extra responsibilities of coordination and management of the IQMS educator component.

At provincial level, as Mathula (2004) notes, the lack of professional evaluation and support capacity and expertise at provincial and district level remained problematic. Most provincial departments lacked material and human resources to carry out school

evaluation policies and were constrained by poor organisational capacity. These capacity problems, which were widespread in the public sector, made Southall (2007) refer to the post-1994 state as having weak implementational and technical capacities in most sectors.

GDE WSE leadership mediation strategies

PEDs were aware of the serious challenges in providing meaningful policy monitoring and support to often dysfunctional schools and teachers. Unlike other provincial departments, the GDE had established a quality assurance division as early as 2000. This division, the then Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), emerged after the introduction of a targeted school intervention programme initiated by the then Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Education for poorly performing schools, an intervention otherwise known as the Education Action Zones (EAZ) intervention. Adopting the slogan of 'Good Practice for Public Confidence', the OFSTED division was eventually reorganised as the QA division, in line with subsequent evaluation policies. Its primary task was to monitor and evaluate educational standards across the province, including benchmarking organisational performance and levels of learner achievement as well as facilitating a systemic approach to the development and implementation of education policies (GDE 2001).

This GDE QA division was dynamic and wanted to ensure that the WSE and IQMS implementation was enabling by strategising accordingly. It was aware of the political and educational tensions in the WSE policy and engaged seriously with the problems existing in the selected performance areas, in the balance between accountability and support, and in the relationship between internal and external evaluation. But what were its mediation strategies to ensure that these policies achieved their intentions of facilitating or contributing to school and teacher improvement?

The QA division welcomed the WSE policy for strengthening school and district accountability and the challenge was to develop mediation strategies that ensured that these policies achieved the intentions of school and teacher monitoring for improvement. In 2002, SADTU called for a departmental moratorium on the WSE implementation, urging its members to boycott the WSE process and refuse supervisors access to their schools (SADTU 2002). The QA chief director, Mr Mzwai, decided to turn this boycott, which prevented his division from doing their work, into an opportunity to strengthen the division's work on the WSE policy. He wanted to infuse his staff with his vision of greater school accountability for improvement and asked them to work on translating the QA vision of school accountability for development into their future WSE work. He enabled the WSE supervisors with greater policy literacy by making them use their 'free' time (since they could not visit most schools) to develop implementation strategies that would maximise the chance of the school monitoring exercise to contribute to school development.

The division held internal workshops, and divided its staff into nine sub-groups to examine one WSE performance area each to educate the division about the issues involved in this performance area and how to strategise to mediate this area in schools as well as to propose ways in which WSE reports could be designed to assist future school improvement interventions. This work enabled the division's staff members to think creatively and in a non-technical manner about the WSE implementation work. Out of this process, a detailed provincial handbook was produced, specifying steps to be followed in the assessment of the performance areas in schools. This handbook became very popular and inspired a few other provincial departments to use it (GDE QA director in de Clercq 2010). The current director of the GDE QA division, Mrs Mokgosi, mentioned proudly that the planning work done to guide the WSE policy work also inspired the WSE supervisors in the province as well as those in other provinces that now use their handbook (GDE QA director in de Clercq 2010).

The nine performance areas were presented in the WSE policy as a menu of different school variables, including various school inputs, processes and outcomes:

- Basic functionality
- Leadership/management and communication
- Governance and relationships
- Quality of teaching and educator development
- Curriculum provision and resources
- Learners' achievements
- School safety, security and discipline
- School infrastructure
- Links with parents and the community (DoE 2001: 5)

The QA division felt that this schedule omitted some key aspects of schooling, such as learners' learning experiences and teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, which are central indicators of school performance, according to inspection scholars (Matthews and Sammons 2004). These areas were crucial for South African schools, with many research studies (Taylor and Vinjevold 1999) exposing teachers' poor subject and pedagogical knowledge, which made district support work with teachers so heavy and time-consuming, if done properly (Narsee 2006). Even though bound by national policy guidelines, the QA division decided to add an explicit reference to teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge to the performance area 'quality of teaching'.

The division also felt that the nine performance areas were not all equally important, but that they should be prioritised according to their influences on learners' achievement (GDE WSE supervisors in de Clercq 2010). It decided to privilege the quality of teaching and educator development, curriculum provisioning and school infrastructure over the others. This meant that the provincial WSE handbook re-garded some performance areas as more directly influential on learners' achieve-

ments, while the other areas were seen as more peripheral or indirectly influential. The handbook specified that school reports should be informed mainly by the WSE supervisors' assessment of the performance areas with a stronger relationship with learners' achievement (GDE 2004), an important conceptual addition, which shows how knowledgeable the division had become about school improvement factors.

On the issue of district school support, the QA division was aware of the poor district support capacity and performance. WSE supervisors mentioned that a GDE head office capacity audit revealed that many of the newly appointed district Institutional Development Support Officers (IDSOs) and curriculum advisers were not sufficiently qualified for their positions (GDE QA director in de Clercq 2010).

WSE supervisors mentioned that the poor impact of district school support had to be contextualised in the discriminatory context of *apartheid* teacher education, which was responsible for not providing a strong academic foundation from which black teachers could be upgraded and re-skilled. Many black teachers suffered from teacher under-qualification and/or did not have sufficient subject and pedagogical knowledge to teach at the level they taught. In addition, the curriculum and assessment policies were over-demanding on district officials and teachers alike, as none of them had been properly educated and trained in the new curriculum.

This QA division understood the need for districts to find partners to assist with in-service teacher training and support. Asked about non-governmental teacher development providers, WSE supervisors said they did not believe that universities were the appropriate institutions to work with districts in this area. They argued that some teacher colleges should have been retained as they did a much better job than universities at training student teachers (GDE WSE supervisors in de Clercq 2010). A former SACE official also criticised universities for teaching student teachers in too generic a manner, and for assuming that most student teachers would find work in well resourced school environments, leaving those who were to work in poor schools with less relevant practical skills and competences (SACE former official in de Clercq 2010). Instead, WSE supervisors argued that the best form of in-service teacher support consisted of quality short courses (organised or quality-assured by districts), targeted at specific school work issues and offered by providers with a strong teaching background (GDE WSE supervisors in de Clercq 2010).

The QA division's sophisticated understanding of districts' challenges for teacher support shows its political and educational knowledge of the problems and challenges of various teacher training organisations and providers. These issues concerned the WSE supervisors, not because they were directly involved in teacher or school support but because they realised the importance of getting teacher support right if their job of school monitoring was to be effective and developmental.

The QA director agreed, however, that district accountability was also important to enforce. In 2008, the GDE launched yet another school intervention programme tar-

geted at some of the worst performing schools in the province (a sample of 35 schools and their districts was retained). In pushing for district accountability, these districts were asked to start with a focus evaluation audit of these schools and formulate specific outcomes for their school support programme. The QA division motivated then for the district schools' audit to use the WSE reports and, in particular, to focus on what these had identified as the three most urgent school performance areas. District directors had to develop performance targets and indicators in these three performance areas, making them account on these as part of their annual performance contract agreement (GDE WSE supervisors in de Clercq 2010). In this sense, the QA division managed to integrate its WSE work with district school support work.

On the issue of tensions between internal and external evaluators, WSE supervisors explained that their division developed some strategies to improve the reliability and complementarity of these two evaluations and minimise their discrepancies. The provincial handbook was another strategy to minimise the gap between the two reports. However, when it transpired that school scores were not backed up with evidence in the reports, the QA director demanded that WSE supervisors and school principals justified their assessment ratings with substantial evidence (such as learners' books, assessment tasks and scores). The WSE supervisors were also asked to compare the WSE scores with learner results produced by the GDE systemic evaluation, something that revealed a frequently poor correlation between the two (GDE WSE supervisors in de Clercq 2010).

Finally, on the main tension of the IQMS combining appraisal for development and for performance management, the QA division explained that they undertook international visits to learn from other inspection systems in the UK and Australia about what could assist with effective school monitoring for development. They learnt that the legitimacy of WSE evaluations was dependent on its developmental impact (GDE WSE supervisors in de Clercq 2010). This was felt to be particularly important for South African black schools, with their long experience of previous oppressive controlling inspection practices (Chetty et al. 1993). The then QA chief director insisted that his division had to avoid making school monitoring appear to schools like a surveillance and control exercise, but rather a developmental and redress exercise (GDE 2001). The WSE supervisors recognised the problem of district officials acting as both referees and players (as teacher monitors and development actors), but they argued that it did not happen with school monitoring as the WSE supervisors were school monitors and districts officials were in charge of school support work.

This vignette of the QA division work on the WSE reveals how this divisional leadership exercised its 'enabling agency' in ensuring that school monitoring was a developmental exercise for schools. It revealed that it possessed the political and educational knowledge to understand the WSE context and different interest groups as well as the educational tensions of the policy. This proactive QA leadership developed mediation strategies and activities that supported its vision of school monitoring for development

and led to more buy-in from various stakeholders involved around school support (districts, schools and service providers). It enabled its staff to improve their work performance by allowing them to experience new ways of working together and developing creative mediation strategies for their WSE policy work in the hope that the policy could benefit more than a few groups with sectarian interests. Acknowledging the potential and limitations of various institutions involved in school support, the leadership ensured that the supervisors' work was used by the districts involved in school support.

Thus, strong policy leadership needs vision, knowledge of various enabling and constraining policy aspects, and an understanding of the main policy tensions and school needs to make strategic decisions that exploit the opportunities created by the policy, such as improving its staff work performance and its impact on schools. In that sense, the leadership hoped to improve the chances that the policy of school monitoring for development would be effectively implemented.

District challenges: Leadership and resources

Policy leadership also exists at district level and this study identified it in an average-sized district in the south of Gauteng. The district was known for its effective director and dynamically run Educator Development Centre (EDC) (former Teacher Development Centre) and for its positive strategies for its IQMS implementation work (this was the only district praised for its IQMS work by some of its teachers at the Teacher Development Summit in July 2009). The director and senior HR manager in charge of the EDC were interviewed on their views and actions regarding the IQMS tensions and impact. The district director, appointed in 2007, is an experienced change agent, known to work effectively by inspiring his staff and mobilising different resources and capacity to improve the district performance. In the first district he headed from 1995, he managed to unite his staff around a clear vision and priority goals as well as pioneering partnerships with community structures, service providers and/or NGOs to meet the district's goals.

The district director and HR manager were strategists determined to mobilise and harness resources and capacity to improve organisational performance. They understood what constituted the main conditions for districts to perform better – management systems and self-driven competent staff (district director in de Clercq 2010) – while the HR manager emphasised the value of data management systems in capturing schools' profiles and processing their development priority and needs. This data system was also useful to make EDC managers account for what they had to do. The staff were initially wary, but gradually experienced the positive link between this data management system and the improvement of organisational performance (district HR manager in de Clercq 2010).

The district director and HR manager also mentioned that passionate, committed and

professional staff were crucial for district performance. They realised that staff had to have some autonomy or freedom to take initiatives (and risks) and devise creative strategies to improve their unit's or their own performance (district HR manager in de Clercq 2010). The director was careful not to restrict his staff by pushing his own views and tended to adopt a facilitative and empowering leadership style. When asked in 2007 to act as chief director at the provincial head office, he agreed for a while because he said he could manage his district by remote control (district director in de Clercq 2010). Beyond the staff being encouraged to use their discretionary powers, managers were expected to plan as a team and work with the other education stakeholders, such as unions, community structures, councils and political parties.

Thus, it is clear that these senior district managers had the expert knowledge to create a working environment for their staff conducive to working responsibly and creatively to solve problems. But how did this knowledge translate into decisions and strategies that exploited the opportunities provided by the IQMS to drive school monitoring for development?

District IQMS planning and mediation work

With the IQMS implementation, districts were expected to play an advocacy role to generate large-scale 'buy-in' from schools (DoE 2004). IQMS research commissioned by the DoE reveals that most districts and schools did not properly understand some of the IQMS processes and procedures, such as how to develop professional growth plans (PGPs), incorporate them into school improvement plans (SIPs), or feed SIPS into a district improvement plan (DIP) (Class Act 2007). The IQMS training document (DoE 2004), which details steps to be followed by school and district personnel for IQMS appraisal forms, was said to be poorly written, cumbersome and difficult to use on the ground (SACE former official in de Clercq 2010). The cascade-type district training offered to schools was often inappropriate (not practical) and ineffective (often of a short duration of two to three days with no impact on teachers) and so was the district ability in relation to quality assurance of other service-providers involved (Class Act 2007: 54-68). In addition, many districts lacked an efficient data system for capturing the training needs of their schools to guide their support work.

This district mediated the IQMS policy by negotiating its various tensions at the level of performance areas, the balance between accountability and support and the combination of appraisal for development and for performance management.

The district leadership understood the worthwhile intentions of the IQMS document and preferred this policy to other policies such as curriculum and assessment policies, because these expected teachers to behave as autonomous professionals, even though they needed serious support interventions before they could do this. It complained that teachers struggled to implement these demanding policies and that districts were not resourced and capacitated to bridge the gap between what most teachers did and

what the policies expected them to do (district director in de Clercq 2010).

Often, according to the director, interventions by the district were resisted by teachers, who used the policy language of professionalism to prevent district officials from intervening or monitoring their problematic curriculum practices and learning programme. The HR manager was aware of the poor district school support capacity as district curriculum workshops were not intensive or practical enough to provide teachers with the knowledge and competences needed to implement the new policies (district HR manager in de Clercq 2010). In that sense, the district understood the political and resource constraints of the district in implementing the policy of monitoring for development.

The district felt that the IQMS content was slightly problematic. The instrument was not user-friendly and performance standards did not touch on some major teaching shortcomings of teachers. This was concluded by the district because its officials, who reported back from their teacher monitoring work, often pointed to the lack of teachers' content knowledge, such as phonics, reading and numeracy, which needed priority attention by the district before implementation of the new curriculum could even be considered in these schools. Yet no IQMS returns mentioned this crucial aspect of teacher performance. Furthermore, of all the courses organised by the EDC, those on these topics had always been the most in demand by teachers (district HR manager in de Clercq 2010).

On the purpose of teacher monitoring, the director mentions how important it was for the district to monitor teachers for better support interventions. Prior to the 2003 IQMS, his officials were not allowed by unions to do classroom monitoring on the grounds that it was too punitive and was never followed up by meaningful support. Thus, the only chance to break this deadlock was for the district not only to provide meaningful teacher support, but also to be allowed to do classroom visits. This is why the director welcomed the opportunity created by the IQMS agreement to improve the district monitoring of teachers for development, even though the WSE reports were also good at providing some information to inform school improvement programmes (district director in de Clercq 2010).

The director mentioned that the challenge was to enhance district capacity to deliver effective teacher support. If a win-win situation needed to emerge between unions and district, the latter had to ensure that teachers received meaningful support. Using his previous district experience, the director looked for extra funding and outside partners, such as NGOs, to supplement the district resources and capacity to deliver school and teacher support. Although districts have a budget for their school activities, extra funds and outside partners would provide them with greater flexibility in their work because these extras were not subjected to bureaucratic rules and regulations, which often delayed district initiatives (district director in de Clercq 2010). In that sense, the district has what Yosso (2005) calls 'navigational capital' to manoeuvre

around bureaucratic rules and procedures and exercise agency within institutional constraints.

The director was aware of dangers associated with partnering with NGOs and other service-providers that had their own agendas and priorities and accounted first to their donors and not their partners or beneficiaries. Hence, he argued, districts need their own work plans and priorities before entering into any partnership with outsiders, to ensure their work was not hijacked (district director in de Clercq 2010). As Fleisch (2003) explains, successful district partnerships are those negotiated on districts' terms.

The HR manager valued the flexibility and choice secured from funds sourced outside the district to enable the EDC to organise and deliver quality teacher development courses/workshops. She explained that the EDC asks teachers for a modest financial contribution for their courses (though according to the Public Finance Management Act districts are not allowed to raise funds or put a levy on courses offered to schools) to secure better quality facilitators, with educator expertise and teaching experience in the particular area needed. This, together with the information management system on schools' profiles and teachers' needs, allowed the EDC to organise effective, well-targeted, high-quality professional development courses related to teachers' priority needs (district HR manager in de Clercq 2010).

Thus, this district leadership used a form of 'social capital' to compensate for what it did not have to win greater credibility from its schools. Putnam (2001) argues that today's institutions have to augment or enhance what he calls 'social capital' by networking and linking up with partner organisations with the capacity to provide the expertise and resources they themselves do not have. Social capital for schools takes the form of partnerships with NGOs and other accredited service-providers or teacher clusters with effective teachers leading curriculum, assessment, teacher or management development workshops.

On the IQMS combination of developmental appraisal and performance management appraisal, the HR manager did not see any conflict of interests. She argued that the 1% increase was too small to sidetrack teachers when identifying their professional development (PD) needs and that most teachers would produce a genuine appraisal of their needs for the EDC *if* they were provided with well-targeted, effective support (district HR manager in de Clercq 2010).

When it came to implementation in schools, the director signalled to his officials and schools that the IQMS was a key priority for identifying teachers' and schools' development needs, which were to be followed by relevant support. He also urged schools and IDSOs to produce authentic IQMS returns. However, it became evident that some teachers continued to manipulate their scores, which often bore little correlation with their learners' results. Here again, the district director understood the pressure on teachers to account for their learners' results as there were other

factors contributing to these poor results but decided purposefully to avoid an unnecessary polarisation between the district and teachers. He initiated stakeholder dialogue between teachers and parent communities, where he asked schools to explain to parents why the high IQMS scores of their teachers did not correlate with their learners' results and made parents hear about teachers' hard work challenges, partly caused by difficult learners and poor work environments. The director thought that such dialogue, based on a kind of teacher public accountability, would lead to a win-win situation between teachers and parent communities while also putting some pressure on teachers to think twice before manipulating their IQMS scores.

On the prioritisation of teachers' PD needs, the EDC manager explained that the data management system captured schools' PGPs and SIPs efficiently. With this information, the HR manager allocated various PD needs to different teams. One of the priorities was to focus on HoDs and principals through courses designed to improve their in-school monitoring and evaluation competences. It was seen as more strategic to build the capacity of HoDs and principals so they could act as school instructional leaders to monitor their staff, act as mentors/coaches and support their staff development (district HR manager in de Clercq 2010).

Curriculum advisers, IDSOs, Education Auxiliary Services (EAS) or labour relations district officials were asked to provide on-site support on school-specific needs. Schools with similar needs were clustered together to receive support from expert teachers or specialists in a particular field. The EDC was responsible for organising generic courses requested by teachers, the most popular being around assessment, discipline, learners with cognitive barriers, financial management and planning. All these were strategies that the district thought could deliver better teacher support and this research did not verify, through interviews with schools and teachers, whether this was the case. However, the HR manager mentioned positive post-course evaluations, done over three or four months, asking participants what they had managed to use in their work environment, so that follow-up workshops could be organised. Another proof of success, according to the HR manager, was that every year more teachers requested and attended these EDC courses, never objecting to the monetary contributions, as they believed these courses were relevant and helpful (district HR manager in de Clercq 2010).

It is clear that the district leadership had an understanding of the difficult political and educational context and different interest groups involved when it came to teacher monitoring and support work. They also understood the best IQMS policy intentions and saw some opportunities for working towards a form of teacher monitoring for development. In addition, they worked through the tensions and challenges of the IQMS content and of its implementation, as well as working out how to overcome their own constraints of poor support capacity and resources. On this basis, the district leadership took some strategic decisions in the hope of delivering more effective support to schools and winning teachers over, not only to the IQMS policy, but also to a

better relationship with parents and the district. In this way, the district hoped that the IQMS exercise would enable its officials and partners, as well as schools and parents, irrespective of some of their specific interest differences.

Thus, one can see how a district leadership, with a good political knowledge of context, policy tensions and contested areas, departmental and school needs, took some strategic decisions in the hope of making the best of the opportunities created by the IQMS. The district leadership wanted to bridge certain gaps and achieve a win-win situation for most stakeholders involved: district, NGOs, schools and teachers. The thinking, decisions and strategies of this policy leadership at provincial level points to the space the policy created for their strategic mediation. But assessing the impact of such policy leadership and mediation strategies and understanding whether the IQMS did produce some of the intentions the district hoped to achieve requires further empirical research work at school level.

Conclusion

Implementation studies are often located in one analytical policy approach or another to identify the reasons for the policy-practice gap, whether these have to do with better goals and implementation loyalty or with the need to negotiate around the different power relationships and dynamics between interest groups contesting various policy processes. This study chose to rely on the political and interpretive approaches to policy analysis as these supplement one another's insights to establish the important policy mediation role of implementers in attempting to reduce the policy-practice gap.

It explored the kind of policy leadership knowledge, approach and decisions needed to minimise contested areas and achieve most stakeholders' buy-in into the policy. This leadership had a vision of what it wanted to achieve with the policy; it understood the political and education context, the various contestations with aspects of the policy and the priorities of schools and teachers. On the basis of this, it took certain strategic decisions to exploit the space created by the policy and make it enabling for various stakeholders. It concludes that 'enabling policy agencies' or leadership are those that attempt to translate the complex, and at times ambiguous, various PD needs, intentions of the WSE and IQMS policies into more effective strategies and actions that gain the support of the largest section of the stakeholders involved, irrespective of some of their divergent interests.

This study therefore points towards the recommendation of developing more effective policy leadership and strategies at departmental level to minimise the gap between policy intentions and practices and contribute to improving the chances for better teaching and learning in South Africa's schools.

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Notes on the author
Francine de Clercq lectures in the Division of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies of the Wits School of Education. She has just completed her PhD on teacher appraisal reforms in South Africa. Her teaching expertise and research/publication interests cover areas of education policy and policy implementation, education governance, district and school change, teacher accountability and development. She has served on various ministerial education committees and consults for the national and Gauteng departments of education.

Address for correspondence
Francine.Declercq@wits.ac.za

The politics of the governed: South African Democratic Teachers' Union Soweto Strike, June 2009

Brahm Fleisch
University of the Witwatersrand

Abstract

In the first two weeks of June 2009, a regional structure of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) went on an illegal strike. The union leaders claimed that the reason for the illegal strike was a grievance against the local district office of the provincial department of education. In addition to withholding labour in schools in the greater Soweto area, there is evidence of intimidation and use of violence. Using contemporaneous media sources, this article provides a systematic account of the events associated with this strike. The article explores three possible theoretical interpretations of the labour action: the strike as an expression of a wider radical project, the strike as a moment in collective bargaining, and the strike as a manifestation of the politics of the governed.

Key words: Teacher unions, politics, politics of the governed

Introduction

In the first two weeks of June 2009, the Soweto Branch of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) embarked on an illegal strike/stay-away to protest against a district office of the Gauteng Department of Education appointment of certain school managers in Soweto. By the time the strike action came to an end, hundreds of teachers had missed more than two weeks of work, thousands of school children, including learners in the final years of secondary school, had missed their mid-year examinations, and a number of principals and teachers had been assaulted and intimidated. Like any similar event, the strike received extensive press coverage, but quickly faded from public memory. While the SADTU Soweto June 2009 strike was neither the longest, biggest nor even the most violent such strike, a careful study of the events associated with the strike can provide important insights into the nature,

origins and implications of teacher militancy. The purpose of this paper, however, is not so much to assess the impact of the strike *per se* but to interpret these events with a view to contributing to the theorisation of teacher militancy in South Africa.

Literature on teacher militancy

In Hyslop's (1990) early research on teacher militancy, he opened the field by showing the historical relationship between teacher militancy and the wider political terrain. The rise of the first generation of militant teachers was linked to the prominence of the political movements of the 1950s and their subsequent decline was similarly linked to the apartheid state's smashing of the liberation movements in the 1960s. Hyslop's work shows that the resurgence of teacher activism and emerging militancy amongst teachers coincided with the anti-apartheid struggles of the 1980s. Lekgoathi (2007) extends this insight by demonstrating that this was not simply an urban phenomenon, but extended to deep rural areas of South Africa. Following a trend in the literature, Lekgoathi found that the teacher militancy can be explained by two related processes, a response to the 'proletarianisation' of the teaching profession and the influence of the broad socio-political context.

The nature of teacher unionism and militancy would undergo a fundamental shift with the political and social transformation after apartheid. The first major change was the process associated with teacher unity. Moll's (1991) study of the politics of teacher unity, however, suggested the complexity and the inherited contradictions within the ranks of the new union federation at its inception. The seminal work on teacher unions in the post-apartheid era shifted the focus away from grassroots activism to an exploration of the relationship between the new unions and the state in the policy process. Govender (2004) convincingly demonstrates that the new political dispensation opened up space for union activism not simply on bread-and-butter issues, but at the negotiating table around substantial education policy issues. In Govender's view, the new political space created the potential for a new form of unionism, what he refers to as 'professional unionism'. While Govender's work focused on the shift of union activism to the terrain of education policy, Vally and Tleane's (2001) research demonstrates the conditions that gave rise to a new terrain of teacher struggle, activism that was animated by a critique of government's macro-economic policies and austerity measures in the education system in particular. This contestation of what the union referred to as government's neo-liberal economic policies took on very real political overtones in Mbeki's 1998 SADTU Congress address, in which he characterised the union membership as a 'bunch of drunken and ill-disciplined teachers', 'militant fighters for a better pay cheque' and 'excellent tacticians as to when to disrupt the school programme' (quoted in Saul 2002). There can be little doubt that the polarisation within the dominant party between Mbeki and the union movement has had an enduring effect on teacher political mobilisation within the ANC. To what extent the ideological differences have driven militancy and activism at

the local level is still to be researched.

The nature of teachers work and how it links to teacher militancy has recently been explored by Jansen (2004) and Shalem & Hoadley (2009). Jansen (2004) in his analysis of school-wide evaluation policies, for example, shows the deep suspicion with which teachers viewed the state, a suspicion that is the residue of the previous government's inspection practices. Contestation then, in this context, is not the outcome of divergent perspectives on macro-economic policy, but rather has a very specific historical origin. Shalem and Hoadley's (2009) analysis suggests that contemporary education policies themselves may be implicated as a cause of teacher distrust and low morale and by extension teacher militancy. In their analysis, the pressure that gives rise to renewed grassroots activism is not simply the response to macro-economic policies of fiscal austerity or residual suspicion, but is the outcome of poorly conceived curriculum policies and the increasing bureaucratisation of teacher work.

Chisholm (1999) in her analysis of the politics of teachers' work in the period between the late 1980s and mid-1990s makes an important observation. Understanding the relationship between mass mobilisation and institutional militancy, Chisholm notes that initial mass protest action in 1989 in the form of stay-aways, 'chalk-downs', marches on regional offices and sit-ins at circuit offices, shifted to direct action at the school level against inspectors and other departmental officials who were 'barred' from entering school grounds. This 'defiance campaign' was followed at institutional level, with principals beginning to be 'frog-marched' out of schools. These internal power struggles both strengthened the hand of union activists at the institutional level and consolidated the union's strength at a national level. Chisholm suggests that by the late 1990s the union had attempted to shift conflict from the school level and codify a new organisation of work at a policy level.

Little is known about the internal tension and contradictions within the union movement itself and how these tensions get played out at school level. While Moll (1991) addresses the tensions between trade unions versus professional consciousness within various actors at the point of teacher unity in 1990, little is known about subsequent stress lines. Mannah (2008) argues that gender oppression is reinforced within SADTU, whose membership is disproportionately female but leadership overwhelmingly male. She explores the patriarchal patterns in the organisation and how women leaders tend to reinforce these. Zengele and Coetser's (2009) work makes an important contribution to understanding the internal tensions within the organisation. This study of the teachers' perceptions of union involvement in the filling of posts suggests that rank-and-file members are hostile, if apathetic, in the face of the union's cadre deployment strategy for school leadership positions.

Research approach
The data that forms the core of this study is an artefact collection, newspaper and

electronic media stories that appeared in local and national newspapers and reports aired on radio and television in the weeks preceding, during and immediately after the strike action. This section describes the location of the artefact collection, how the artefacts have been selected, and the nature of the analysis and criticism of the artefacts and interpretation (McMillan 2006). The collection was sourced using an Internet search engine, Google News (http://news.google.co.za), during the period 8 to 17 June 2009. The key words used to identify entries were 'SADTU' and 'Soweto'. One hundred and fifty entries emerged in a variety of newspaper and electronic media sources. The majority of these were print stories that appeared in the following newspapers: *The Sowetan*, *The Times*, *The Star*, *The Independent*, *The Mail & Guardian*, *Pretoria News* and *Business Day*. Some of the articles are attributed to wire services such as the South African Press Association (SAPA) and Independent Online. In a number of instances, electronic stories from radio and television were identified. In addition, newspaper articles from earlier periods were also sourced to place the events in an historical context. Again the Google News search engine was used, modified by date-specific criterion. The artefacts were classified by date, from earliest to most recent.

To check the veracity of 'information' contained in the article, a system of cross-checking was used. Information in one news source was checked against information in a second independent news source. Cross-checking included both between newspaper franchises and between print and electronic media sources. A number of inconsistencies, misrepresentations and inaccuracies were identified. For instance, a number of sources intimated that protests occurred at 12 district offices rather than the actual situation in which protest was concentrated at the District 12 offices in Soweto, Roodepoort and Lenasia. The stories contained in the media artefacts are often limited to reporting on public statements made by union leaders, departmental spokespersons, politicians and police officials and to a far lesser extent additional interviews and eyewitness accounts at the schools. There are, however, a number of important exceptions, such as a telephone survey that one of the newspapers undertook towards the end of the strike.

As sources, the media artefacts have serious limitations. Very few of the stories provide insights into the personal and organisational motivation of the key actors. To address this limitation, it would have been advantageous to undertake field interviews. This was not done because of time constraints and the potential danger to the researcher (illustrated by the apparent assault and theft of a camera experienced by a newspaper journalist covering the story and reported on in *The Sowetan*, 12 June 2009). Given the evidence of intimidation, the stories contain little insight into the experiences of non-elite actors, i.e. ordinary rank-and-file union teachers and those who were affected but were not affiliated with the union. Only anecdotal evidence is presented on the views of learners and ordinary parents.

The media stories were used as the basis for a chronological reconstruction of the

events from the conflict immediately prior to the strike to the days immediately following the agreement to return to work. Much of the analysis is thematic, although some attention was paid to discourse, albeit discourse refracted through the media stories. As such, the conclusions from the discourse analysis are very tentative. Interpretative perspectives are developed by relating the emerging themes to the extant literature on strike action and debates about popular politics.

The events

The SADTU Soweto June 2009 illegal strike occurred soon after the April 2009 elections. Arguably the most significant feature of the election victory was the extensive support of organised labour for the president of the African National Congress. Following the appointment of cabinet and provincial executives, the country entered a new labour relations space. The first major strike was undertaken by Metrobus workers in Johannesburg. After a protracted conflict with the city bus company on very significant pay increase demands, the provincial premier intervened to settle the strike in the workers' favour. At the time, SADTU spokesperson Ronald Nyathi threatened that had the bus company not settled, 10 000 SADTU Johannesburg teachers would have participated in a sympathy strike (*The Star*, 27 May 2009).

Labour relations conflict in the education sector had been simmering for a few years. In the previous year, the key point of contestation had been the final settlement on the occupation-specific dispensation (OSD). Negotiations that began in 2007 had not been concluded by the April 2009 elections. By the end of May 2009, it appeared that there was a stalemate in negotiations, with one of the other large teacher union presidents indicating that there were a range of issues that still separated the employers and employees, among them the inclusion of the controversial provision for teacher evaluation linked to learner performance. Ronald Nyathi, who was identified in a *Pretoria News* story (28 May 2009) as a SADTU spokesperson, was quoted as blaming the employer for stalling negotiations. In contrast, the national Department of Education in the same article attributed the unions' unwillingness to agree to performance-based adjustments as the real stumbling block in the negotiations.

With the heightened tensions around a critical labour relations agreement and with collective bargaining over annual salary increases in the public service only months away, the issue that served as the catalyst for the major illegal strike/work stoppage in Johannesburg was unexpected – the appointment of school managers. In terms of the Gauteng Department of Education (2009) vacancy list circular, school governing bodies would interview prospective teachers for promotion posts –heads of department, deputy principal and principal posts – and rank applicants in order of preference. In light of the provisions of the Employment of Educators Act (1998), the head of the Gauteng Department of Education was required to consider the recommendations made by school governing bodies and ensure that the recommendations met the Department's administrative requirements. The circular also

noted that '*[d]espite the order of preference in Form C the Head of Department via the District Director may appoint a suitable candidate (to ensure that the principle of equity, redress and representativity are complied with) on the list of interviewed candidates*' [italics in original]. What is significant in this section of the circular is that the district director's discretion is clearly circumscribed; he or she may only make alternative appointments in cases where the school had not met the equity, redress and representativity criteria. No mention is made of the authority of the district director in making professional judgements about the relative competence of the list of recommended candidates. The circular stated the preferred date of appointment was to be 1 April 2009. A close reading of the circular suggests that SADTU had substantial legitimate concerns about both the appointment procedures in the district office and the delays in issuing letters of appointment. These concerns had been raised on numerous occasions with the district office, but until the beginning of June the matter had received little public attention.

Events began to come to a head on Thursday 4 June. *The Sowetan* (4 June 2009) reported that SADTU Soweto was threatening militant action in Soweto if vacant posts that had been advertised in the *Government Gazette* were not filled. In the first week of June, the union had met with the Soweto district office staff to press home their demands that the school governing bodies' (SGBs) recommendations be implemented. Specifically, the union raised concern about 16 specific vacant posts. Of the 16 posts, nine were for principals and seven for deputy principals. According to the union (cited in *The Sowetan* article), the district office had rejected the schools' lists, and 'chose instead to appoint their own people'. The article quotes the SADTU spokesperson Ronald Nyathi as saying 5 700 SADTU members in the region would join the SADTU leaders in a 'defiance campaign' if the district office did not appoint the individuals that had been recommended by the SGBs.

What is signalled by the choice of phrase, 'defiance campaign'? The first time the phrase entered popular parlance was the 1952 ANC-led Defiance Campaign. As a key tactic against the imposition of new apartheid laws, the 1952 'Defiance Campaign Against Unjust Laws' (its official title) was part of the Ghandian civil disobedience strategy that involved the mobilisation of 8 500 volunteers or 'defiers' who were imprisoned for peaceful refusal to obey apartheid laws (Lodge 1984). The campaign was successful in mobilising thousands of new recruits for renewed political activism. Lodge (1984) has suggested that the 1952 Defiance Campaign actually transformed the ANC from a small middle-class party to a mass multi-class political movement. The more recent historical reference to a 'defiance campaign' was in the period immediate prior to the white-only elections in 1989. At the time the United Democratic Front and the Congress of South African Trade Unions organised a national campaign, what they strategically referred to as a 'defiance campaign', to protest in a 'day of rage' against detentions, banning of marches and meetings of all anti-apartheid organisations. At the height of the final stages of the anti-apartheid strug-

gle, the 1989 'defiance campaign', like its 1952 predecessor, successfully broadened the popular mass movement against the state. Given the specific history of the phase, how can SADTU Soweto's use of it be interpreted? Did the use of the language of mass mobilisation signal that the strike was to be more than a localised contestation around who would fill school principal posts?

The following day, Friday 5 June, *The Sowetan* (5 June 2009) reported that SADTU Soweto had acted on its threats to bring Soweto schooling to a standstill. SADTU organised a picket outside the District Office demanding that the district director, Margaret Sandlana, appoint the SADTU teachers. *The Sowetan* article reported that SADTU militants had 'instructed' GDE employees in the District Office to go home and not return until SADTU's demands had been met. Ronald Nyathi was quoted as saying to government employees, 'We demand total disengagement from you until we advise you otherwise.'

While the focus of much of the 'defiance campaign' was at the District Office, a separate site of conflict was emerging at a neighbouring high school. While the exact nature of the events that took place on Thursday 4 June at Die Burger High School remain contested, according to *The Sowetan,* SADTU members went to Die Burger High School to disrupt examinations on the grounds that the school was unfairly excluding some learners from writing examinations on the basis that they had not paid school fees. *The Sowetan* quotes Nyathi on the incident saying, 'We, as SADTU, support the disruption of examinations.' *The Times* (8 June 2009) reported that SADTU militants were facing theft and damage to property charges as a result of the incident. The school alleged that in addition to the disruption of the examinations, the SADTU teachers stole a laptop, assaulted a female security guard, hit a learner on the head with a chair and slapped a teacher in the face.

A number of themes were evident in the protest action both at the district office and at the high school. First, SADTU members were willing to use intimidation and threats as tactics with departmental officials and schools and SADTU militants assumed *de facto* authority in relation to departmental functions such as district officials' work and disciplinary action against a school that had barred learners from writing examinations.

The strike/stay-away reached its peak in the second week of June. The week began with a mass meeting at the District Office, which had become the meeting place of the union leaders and their rank-and-file members. Using the media, particularly *The Sowetan* (8 June 2009), Nyathi communicated a simple message to the Soweto community. *The Sowetan* reported his warning that schools found operating on Tuesday 9 June would be 'disciplined'. He was quoted as saying, 'Tell us if there is a principal at a school and we will remove them.' He was further reported to say, 'We won't go and do anything but something dramatic will happen to them. Some people will lose their cars. Some people will be admitted to hospital.' SADTU militants were

to be involved in spot checks at schools between 08:00 and 10:00 on 9 June to ensure that schools did not defy the call for closure. Nyathi was careful to communicate with teachers, addressing their anxiety about the possibility that their salaries would be docked for their failure to work. The SADTU leaders reassured the teachers at the meeting that they need not worry about the loss of pay with the implementation of the 'no work no pay' rule, as department directors responsible for monitoring strikes and reporting teachers were themselves in the crowd.

Immediately following the threats at the meeting, Nyathi was quoted as having said, 'It is not worth fighting against this revolution.' Another story in a later edition of this newspaper reported him saying, 'We told everyone in South Africa that we are not in a strike – we are in a revolutionary protest action to defend the dignity of the process' (*The Sowetan*, 9 June 2009). On the same day, another story reported Nyathi referring to managing the strike in a 'political scientific manner.' What can be made of these references to managing a strike in a 'scientific' manner, revolution and revolutionary protest, and 'South Africa' as their audience? Nyathi's comments suggest that the protests over the principals' appointments was a ruse for something far larger and more far-reaching, a step towards building a radical social movement. While the rhetoric was hot revolutionary, a more modest motive for the strike was suggested by one of SADTUs allies, spokesperson for the National Education and Health Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) , Sivuyile Mabaca, who suggested that this industrial action was part of the momentum building towards the teachers' wage negotiations *(The Star*, 10 June 2009). Mabaca indicated that there was to be a big push for a substantial above-inflation wage increase, as they were aiming at a 15% increase across the public service.

The SADTU national office appeared to distance itself from the localised industrial action. SADTU's national spokesperson Tseliso Ledimo, warned Soweto teachers that the strike was illegal (IOL web 2009-06-09). According to a report published on Wednesday 10 June 2009 in *The Times*, the Union's provincial committee was to meet to discuss the behaviour of the SADTU Soweto leadership. John Maluleke, the general secretary of SADTU national, was reported as having said that the Union's national leadership did not condone what was happening in schools in Soweto (*The Star*, 10 June 2009).[1]

How successful was the call for a comprehensive school stay-away? Nyathi indicated that 7 900 teachers were taking part in the stay-away in schools as far afield as

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1. One of the critical issues in the strike was the handing down of a Superior Court of Appeals judgement which found in favour of a Kimberley school governing body that had made a recommendation which had been ignored by the provincial department. In the case involving the Kimberley school, the acting principal had not been appointed in favour of a less qualified person. This may have added substantially to SADTU's resolve on the issues (*The Times*, 9 June 2009) [The Supreme Court of Appeals, Case Number 278/ Kimberley Junior School and the Head of the Northern Cape Education Department. Judgment Delivered 28 May 2009.]

Lenasia, Eldorado Park, Alexandra, Ennerdale, Randburg, Midrand and Benoni (*The Star*, 10 June, 2009). *The Sowetan* (9 June 2009) offered only anecdotal evidence of its impact, publishing a story about learners being turned away at Winnie Ngwekazi Primary School in Pimville. A *Star* reporter on a visit to schools in Soweto on Wednesday found classrooms empty and schools with locked gates (*The Star*, 11 June 2009). The police riot squad was called to a school in Cosmo City after striking teachers pulled learners out of classrooms (*The Star*, 11 June 2009). The principal of Cosmo City Junior Secondary School was quoted as saying that 'protesters gathered outside the gates of the school after they chased away people from the school next door with sticks'. *The Star* article indicates that the teachers were in 'fear of their lives'. Grade 12 learners at Meadowlands High School on Thursday 11 June indicated that they had had no schooling since 4 June: 'We go to school every day, but there are no teachers, which leaves us to depend on our existing study groups for learning' (*The Star*, 11 June 2009).

While the illegal strike was happening on Tuesday, the Gauteng Department of Education approached the Labour Court to grant it a restraining order against SADTU. The Labour Court issued a judgment indicating that the strike was illegal. The order included a clause that restrained SADTU from preventing department officials from carrying out their duties. The union's response was 'restraining order or not, we are continuing our protest action' (*The Sowetan*, 10 June 2009). *The Mail & Guardian* (10 June 2009) reported Nyathi's response: "The interdict is a display of the MEC's [Barbara Creecy] immaturity. If people of Soweto managed to fight against apartheid, what is this document?"

In addition to the Labour Court's restraining order, a new voice of dissent against SADTU Soweto emerged. A representative from the National Association of Parents in School Governance (NAPSG) issued a statement condemning the strike (*The Sowetan*, 10 June 2009). Mahlomola Kenana, the chairperson of NAPSG, noted that the issue was really one involving school governing bodies and not members of SADTU, as parent governors constituted the interview panels and made the recommendation (Independent Online, 10 June 2009). The Democratic Alliance spokesperson described the illegal strike as 'questionable' (*The Times*, 10 June 2009).

Following the restraining order, Soweto SADTU had a meeting with the MEC for Education on Wednesday 10 June at the Gauteng Department of Education head office in Johannesburg. At a press conference at the end of the meeting, the MEC declared that the mid-year examinations in Soweto would continue without disruption following an agreement reached with the union representatives. SADTU Soweto undertook to ensure that all work would be completed by the end of the term. Nyathi dismissed the protest as having been a minor disruption, suggesting that 'only two days were lost; it won't be hard to recover them' (Independent Online, 10 June 2009). In return for a commitment to go back to work, the MEC agreed to remove the district director, Margaret Sandlana, from the District Office 'with immediate effect' and

undertook to find a 'different way of advertising, recruiting and appointing teachers and principals to remove long delays'.

Despite the appearance of an agreement to return to teaching, Nyathi was reported the very next day to have said that there would be no schooling, as the SADTU Soweto leaders would need to discuss the outcome of the discussion with the MEC with rank-and-file members. In the same interview, he indicated that the union was pleased that the district director had been removed, but that 'they would not rest until she had been fired' (*The Star*, 11 June 2009). On the same day a journalist from *The Sowetan* was robbed of her camera while recording strike events at Thaba Jabula Secondary school in Jabulani. It was reported that militant teachers smashed the window of the car and removed the journalist's camera (*The Sowetan*, 12 June 2009).

On Friday 12 June, there was a new development. About 600 to 800 parents and learners from Senoane High School embarked on a march to the old Soweto College of Education to protest against the teachers' assault on the principal of the school on 10 June. Subsequent to the assault, two teachers were arrested (*The Times*, 12 June 2009; *The Star*, 12 June 2009). The captain at the local police station indicated that the police were 'searching for other people' involved in the matter (*The Times, 12* June 2009). Other than this event, things began to return to normal, with SADTU's regional spokesperson indicating that the union would not be stopping teachers and learners from going back to school.

The union's call for teachers to return to work was not universally complied with on Friday, and was restated in the newspapers on Sunday 14 June: 'All members of SADTU who did not report for duty should go back to work on Wednesday 17 June.' Sounding a different tone, the statement also contained a comment that the union supported the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign as well as President Zuma's call for teachers to be at work on time (Independent Online, 14 June 2009).

While the Union was speaking the language of reconciliation, the MEC's tone was very different in a local meeting for parents. In the speech to parents on Sunday in Soweto, the MEC vowed to employ the services of the police to enforce the Labour Court's interdict. 'On Friday, I met with the national leadership of SADTU and told them that our agreement had not been met and they needed to intervene. So now we are going to enforce the court interdict and on Wednesday, if anyone tries to stop schooling, they will be met with the police' (*The Star*, 15 June 2009). At the same time, she conceded that the processes associated with appointments had been flawed, "officials of the department … district officials participated in this flawed process, not governing bodies. We are now setting up a new team to conduct these interviews' (Independent Online, 14 June 2009)

According to one former senior department official, who requested anonymity, SADTU's Soweto leadership was little more than a collection of individuals bound together by a system of patronage. The union leadership had developed the capacity to

manipulate the appointment processes (similar pointed has been raised in Zengele and Coetser 2009). In order to maintain discipline within union ranks, it used militant actions and revolutionary rhetoric.

Four points can be derived from the media stories of the early June 2009 strike. The first relates to the discourse used by the strike leaders. The SADTU Soweto leaders described the stay-away as part of a 'defiance campaign', 'revolution', and 'revolutionary protest'. The most probable explanation is that the words were little more than empty rhetoric. It is unlikely that the stay-away was part of a planned strategy to mobilise a wider constituency either as a prelude to greater labour action or for clandestine political ends. The second insight relates to the use of violence and intimidation. There can be little doubt that SADTU Soweto militants made use of violence as a tool to consolidate control over the strike. In addition to actual incidents of violence, the strike was marked by the use of intimidation. The head of SADTU Soweto comments, which are a matter of public record, clearly demonstrate his willingness to make veiled and at times direct threats against department officials, school principals and teachers who stood in the way of the strike.[2] Von Holdt's (2010) recent work on other public sector strikes has shown that this particular set of practices is not unique to SADTU, but rather they are common in the labour movement at large.

The third point relates to SADTU Soweto's ambivalent relationship to the principle of lawfulness and legalities. While union leaders appeared to pay considerable attention to the procedural fairness associated with the educator appointment processes, they showed little concern about compliance with many other aspects of the legal framework. The union representative dismissed the no-work-no-pay rule and disregarded the various explicit provisions related to teacher misconduct in the *Employment of Educators Act*. Regional union leaders did not condemn criminal actions such as damage to state property, prejudicing the administration, discipline or efficiency of the employer, absence from work without good reason, assaulting or threatening to assault another employees, intimidating fellow employees and learners, preventing other employees from exercising their rights, and refusing to obey security regulations (a legal restraining order). The finally point is linked. The illegal strike also demonstrated SADTU Soweto's leadership's disdain for formal agreements with government. The regional leadership did not or could not comply with their side of the agreement. Soweto teachers only resumed their duties a full week after the date established for the resumption of teaching.

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2. This was not the first illegal SADTU strike marked by use of incendiary and intimidation. In 2008, during the Alexandra strike over the suspension of teachers at Kwabhekilanga Secondary School, Nyathi was reported to have threatened 'extreme violence' should learners attend school (*Business Day*, 26 June 2008). Early in 2009, SADTU Gauteng threatened to disrupt schooling in the province until the ANC president became South Africa's president (*Business Day*, 23 January 2009).

Conclusion

How is the 2009 SADTU Soweto teacher strike to be interpreted? One version, which is suggested by the leadership's language, is that the strike was political. Given the significant role that organised labour played at Polokwane, the labour action could be seen as part of a mass mobilisation of the working class for a fundamental realignment of power in post-2008 South Africa. The political settlement of 1994, what Bond (2000) called the 'elite transition', was the first phase of political reform, and is now giving way to a socialist transformation of South African society. Within this interpretation, the Soweto teacher leaders are in the vanguard of an emerging radical social movement. The central problem with this interpretation would be suggested by an insight that Von Holdt (2010) recently made about radical political language in and around strikes. He suggests South African workers routinely recruit residual ideas about the moral order to justify their conduct during strikes. The conception of an oppressive state and a socialist future are carried over from the 1980s, and continue to inform workers' (and teachers') rationalisation for the less acceptable aspects of strike action.

A second interpretation focuses more narrowly on the gap in the labour environment. Since 1995, organised labour represented by COSATU has undergone a dramatic adjustment from being a federation representing rural semi-skilled and unskilled industrial workers to a federation that is increasingly dominated by professional public service unions (Buhlungu, 2008). Adam Habib (*Business Day*, 18 June 2009) has argued that during the period of fiscal austerity in the late 1990s and early 2000s, public service employees, particularly professionals such as nurses, doctors and teachers, saw their real wages decline with the downturn in public expenditure on social services. Although public spending on social services did recover after 2003, the wages of public servants has not kept pace with their counterparts in the private sector. The labour federation's support of the new political leadership has created space for organised labour to struggle to make substantial real gains in salaries and benefits for public service workers. The illegal strike then would be seen as a prelude to a period of intense labour conflict, in particular with public sector unions.

The third interpretation would suggest that something local and narrow was at play in the June 2009 Soweto teachers' strike. Rather than an overture to a radical uprising or a tactical opening in a decisive collective bargaining season, these events are an expression of something akin to Chatterjee's (2004) popular politics of the governed. Employing the latest governmental technologies, particularly the restrictions on school governing bodies, the state was attempting to 'look after' and control teachers and parents as a 'population'. The June 2009 events then were a response by the 'population', who were contesting technologies of governmentality.

Using Chatterjee's analysis, the leadership of SADTU Soweto was not an extension of the national organisation, but had an identity and set of interests that were local and specific. Working around the technologies of governmentality, the union leaders

tactically transgressed lines of legality, working within the framework when it suited their interests, ignoring it when it did not. The union made a range of connections outside the teaching fraternity, with groups such as the Congress of South African Students and other local unions like NEHAWU, sympathetic supporters within the state, and supporters within the African National Congress and the Communist Party. The state, expressed in the MEC, the Gauteng Department of Education and the local District Office, in spite of its seeming in control of the instruments of governance, found itself in a position of having to negotiate with groupings in political society over conduct that is illegal and certainly contrary to good civic behaviour. What makes this interpretation particularly compelling is Von Holdt's (2010) insight about the limited reach and authority of the state and how this allows violence to continue within the labour relations field. The politics of the governed, particularly the practices of using violence, threats of violence and general intimidation, are given scope by virtue of South Africa having a low-capacity state.

The three interpretations of the strike are certainly not exhaustive or mutually exclusive. If, and when, interview data is collected that provides insights into the experiences of rank-and-file members, alternative explanations may surface. Such interpretations would take cognisance of the organisational culture of the education sector (Chisholm 1999) and unique dimensions of teachers' work (Shalem & Hoadley 2009). They would also reveal much about teachers as an elite stratum within the labour movement, about the relationship between elected leadership and rank-and-file members within the organised teacher movement (Mannah 2008; Zengele & Coetser 2009), and the potential role of patronage politics.

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Notes on the author

Brahm Fleisch is Professor of Education Policy in the School of Education, University of the

Witwatersrand. His research interests include education effectiveness/improvement, education law and school access. His recent books include *Primary Education in Crisis* (Juta) and *Constitution in the Classroom* (University of Pretoria Law Press).

Address for correspondence
Brahm.Fleisch@wits.ac.za

Performing teaching in the context of HIV/AIDS: A critical review of Jean Baxen's *Performative Praxis: Teacher Identity and Teaching in the Context of HIV/AIDS*

Nithi Muthukrishna

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Abstract

This essay reviews a recently published research text, *Performative Praxis: Teacher Identity and Teaching in the Context of HIV/AIDS* by Jean Baxen. The basis of the book is the author's PhD study, which examined social, political and cultural factors shaping Lifeskills teachers' understanding, experience and teaching about sexuality and HIV/AIDS in selected schools in the Western Cape and Mpumalanga, South Africa. The key question related to who the teachers are and what it is about themselves that they bring into the classroom. The lives of 20 teachers were explored through semi-structured interviews and participant classroom observations. Baxen drew on the work of social theorists Bourdieu, Giddens and Butler to develop a conceptual framework to explain teacher subject formation and subjectivity. In explicating her key findings, Baxen argues that Lifeskills classrooms are discursive sites for the production of contradictory and often fragile teacher identities. Hence the curriculum content that is mediated is often open to multiple interpretations as the public and private lives of the teachers intersect in dynamic ways. The book unravels the complex dialectical relationship between subject positioning and teaching about sexuality and HIV/AIDS.

Key words: HIV/AIDS, education, teacher identity, life skills curriculum, life histories

Introduction

It was estimated that there were 33,4 million people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide

as of December 2008 (UNAIDS/World Health Organisation 2009). The total number of people living with the virus in 2008 was more than 20% higher than the number in 2000. HIV/AIDS took the lives of more than two million people in 2008, and in the same year an estimated 2,7 million new HIV infections occurred. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the most heavily affected region, accounting for 71% of all new HIV infections in 2008 (UNAIDS/World Health Organisation 2009).

Many experts and researchers hold the view that education is the critical force in combating the pandemic of HIV and AIDS (e.g. De Walque 2004; Kelly, Parker & Oyosi 2002). Schools and the formal curriculum are seen as key sites for educating children about sexuality and HIV/AIDS and for stemming the further spread of the HIV infection. In the last decade or so, there has been a fair volume of research on HIV/AIDS and education emanating from the African context (Govender & Edwards 2009; Jacob, Stacey, Hite, Morisky & Nsubuga 2007; Jansen, van Nistelrooij, Olislagers, van Sambeek & de Stadler 2010; Khau & Pithouse 2008; Mathews, Boon, Flisher & Schaalma 2006; Ngoshi & Pasi 2007; Obasi, Cleophas, Ross, Chima, Mmassy, Gavyole, et al. 2006; Torstensson & Brundrett 2009; Van Dyk 2008; Van Rooyen & van den Berg 2009; Wood, 2009). Much of this research has focused on issues of knowledge, attitudes and behaviours; effectiveness of HIV/AIDS education programmes; teacher development programmes; and the devastating impact of the pandemic on the lives of teachers and learners.

Research emanating from Africa suggests that intervention strategies are not having the intended behaviour-changing impact (e.g. Plummer, Wight, Obasi, Wamoyi, Mshana et al. 2007; Ross, Changalucha, Obasi, Todd, Plummer et al. 2007). It is now acknowledged that a key threat to such interventions comes from the situated contexts of delivery and constraints embedded in them (Jewkes 2010; Wood 2009). There has been a growing body of research that attempts to understand why HIV programmes in schools have been ineffective. Much of this work draws attention to the importance of transforming school policies and cultures, for example around gender, violence and HIV/AIDS (Bhana 2007; Morrell, Epstein, Unterhalter, Bhana, Moletsane 2009; Seckinelgin 2009). However, there is limited research that interrogates the conditions that shape the teaching of HIV/AIDS and sexuality in the context of schools and their classrooms.

Baxen's book is an excellent contribution to literature in the field of HIV/AIDS and education, as it tries to addresses this critical gap in the literature. More specifically, Baxen explores who mediates sexuality and HIV/AIDS knowledge in the curriculum, and how teachers position themselves in this mediation process. Through narratives drawn from the life histories of 20 teachers from two provinces in South Africa, Baxen lends a voice to the individual representations of the experience of teaching the Lifeskills curriculum in the context of broader interconnected social, cultural and political realities.

The book offers a deep sociological and contextualised analysis of how the discursive space of the Lifeskills classroom becomes a site of production for particular teacher identities. It examines the dynamic nature of identity construction, in particular how, in the act of teaching, particular subject positions are invoked and sustained. Baxen explains that this study is therefore about productions of the 'self' in a complex HIV/AIDS hermeneutic space (p. 16). Baxen is of the view that identity is situated and constructed in constantly changing cultural-historical contexts and is formed in the web of social relationships. In other words, self-identity becomes a reflexive project and a person's own reflexive understanding of their biography.

Structurally, the book is divided into five parts. Part I describes the empirical study that forms the basis of the book. Part II, comprising chapters 2 to 5, provides insight into the journey Baxen followed in developing the theoretical framework for the study. Part III, which includes chapters 6, 7 and 8, each with a specific focus, comprises a review of literature on the teacher and teacher work, and HIV/AIDS research. Part IV presents the findings of the empirical study in chapters 9, 10 and 11. Part V comprises the final chapter, which calls on the reader to reflect on what it means to apply an alternative epistemological lens when researching teachers and teaching in an HIV/AIDS context.

Epistemological design choices

Chapter 1 provides insight into the methodological orientation of the empirical study and the epistemological design choices Baxen made in researching the complexity of factors shaping teachers' understanding, experience and teaching about sexuality and HIV/AIDS. Baxen adopted a qualitative case study approach to the study, with a group of teachers as the unit of analysis. She accessed multiple data sources, as they offered a space that acknowledged multiple ways of knowing and acting, particularly given the complexity of the issue under investigation. The approach to data collection included participant observation, classroom observations and life histories. Through a life history method Baxen and her participants co-constructed their stories, which she argues enabled an insider perspective of how various socio-cultural and historical contexts were played out in the lives of each participant.

In this chapter, Baxen alludes to the issue of her own positionality in the study. It is a pity that she does not provide a more detailed analysis, as this is integral to ethical research. Kobayashi (2003) explains that it is important to reflect on how one is inserted in networks of power relations and how that influences methods, inter-pretations and knowledge production. In reading the book, there is little doubt that Baxen was simultaneously an insider, outsider, both and neither (Mullings 1999). There were most likely to have been spaces of discomfort, tensions, ambivalences and dilemmas arising from her own subjective positions (Sultana 2007). Luttrell (2000: 12) explains that in her own research as she listened to women's stories she became aware

of 'how mutually engaging and intersubjective the process of fieldwork is, and how her own subjectivity shaped the research.

The journey to a theoretical and analytical framework

In Part II of the book, Baxen provides a compelling discussion of her journey to the theoretical frameworks that informed her study. The strength of this chapter and the book as a whole is her adoption of a deeply reflexive process to ensure research rigour. As one engages with the book, it becomes evident that Baxen was clearly involved in an active process of scrutiny, reflection and interrogation at all stages of the research. She shows us that reflexivity in research is a process – an active, ongoing process that permeates every stage of the research. Guillemin & Gillam (2004) argue that as researchers our social and political locations affect our research. A researcher's choice of research design, the research methodology and the theoretical framework that informs the research are governed by the researcher's values and in turn help to shape these values.

Baxen began her study with the belief that what teachers do in the classroom is not neutral. The assumption she makes is that teachers teach from particular subject positions influenced by how they understand themselves as individuals, as teachers, as members of a social group, community and society. Baxen worked from the basis that the curriculum and teacher identity are complexly intertwined and that each operates reflexively to produce the other. Furthermore, knowledge production and mediation processes often produce and reproduce competing identities. With this as her focus, she engaged in a search for theoretical frameworks to explain, firstly, how teachers come to know and understand themselves, then what shapes this knowing and, finally, the extent to which these influences are reproduced in social action. Baxen drew on social theory and argues that it offered a useful account of subject formation and subjectivity.

To foreground the main discussion, in *Chapter 2* she provides a brief description of dominant epistemological orientations in social theory. The aim of her discussion is to locate her selected theorists epistemologically and offer a rationale for the theoretical orientations she uses in her study. Baxen traces the way that in the last few decades significant shifts in thinking have occurred within discourses on social theory. The main shift has been to analytical frameworks that avoid the reductionism present in grounding social action as a primary effect of structure or as a primary effect of agency. More recent analyses emphasise the ongoing, dynamic relationship between human agency and social structure as they are interactive, reciprocal and intertwined. In her own research, Baxen turns to more recent explanations of structures as fluid, unstable and open to change, and as produced and reproduced in human action. In this theoretical journey, she draws together the work of three theorists – Bourdieu's– theory of practice, Giddens' theory of structuration and Butler's theory of performativity – to explain subject formation and subjectivity.

In *Chapter 3,* Baxen argues that Bourdieu's theory offers a useful explanation of subject formation. Through his theory of practice, Bourdieu provides an explanation of the structures that act as dominant frames of reference shaping social action. Three key concepts that form the basis of Bourdieu's theory, namely capital, field and *habitus*, enabled Baxen to describe the material and social conditions of and to trace the dominant influences on teachers' lives.

However, Baxen found that Bourdieu's explanation of subject formation and social life underplays the role of power and the fact that, within each field, individuals and groups struggle to transform or preserve the configuration of power. Furthermore, in Bourdieu theory agents are constrained by the *habitus*. In other words, subjects are portrayed as passive and already determined through the *habitus* they inhabit. In the context of her research, Baxen explains that Bourdieu's theory positions teachers as those who have little control over their actions in the classroom, the curriculum material and learning outcomes beyond that which is formally laid down by those who hold power. Thus teachers generally act in compliance to maintain rather than transform their position in the field.

For Baxen, Bourdieu's theory was unable to offer a perspective not only on how teachers produced identity in relations of power, but also how they rely on power in productions of 'self.' Furthermore, choice in his theory is only possible within the confines of particular structures. In contrast, Baxen's assumption is that social structures both enable and constrain rather than merely compel or prohibit social practices. The limitations in Bourdieu's theory led her to Giddens' theory of structuration. Giddens contributed to explaining human action beyond Bourdieu's limited framework.

In *Chapter 4,* she argues persuasively that Giddens offers a language to account for the ways in which teachers are sometimes constrained and at other times enabled in and through structures. Thus, Giddens breaks down the structure and agency divide. Giddens argues that structures provide the resources for social action, and that they are only realised through the agentic interactions of social actors. So while Bourdieu offers tools to describe and reveal the conditions and broader context in which the self is constructed, Giddens offers tools to explain how this construction occurs through a dialectic relationship between structures and agency.

However, Baxen found that the theories of Bourdieu and Giddens do not fully explain the way in which subjects 'take up' different subject positions outside the normative script. Thus in her journey Baxen turned to aspects of psychoanalysis and feminist theory, which enabled her to analyse the subject positions teachers take up in their everyday enactments in the classroom.

In *Chapter 5,* Baxen explains that she turned to Butler's theory of performativity. She also drew on Foucault's notion of power and discourse, and Lacan's and Althusser's emphasis on the role of language in subject formation. Butler's theory of performativ-

ity, therefore, helped Baxen explain the complexity of teacher positions as well as how teachers are not only produced in relations of power, but that they use power to produce particular subject positions in teaching sexuality and HIV/AIDS. In other words, a teacher as an agent is able to exercise power and has the capacity to act otherwise.

Research on teachers and their work: Troubling dominant epistemological orientations

What is laudable in this book is Baxen's approach to her literature review. She builds powerful, deep-vein arguments to illuminate the limitations of dominant epistemological orientations that act as interpretive lenses in research examining teachers and their work. Using the framework she developed in Part II, Baxen critiques research on teachers and their work.

In *Chapter 6* selected literature on teachers and teaching is reviewed. The chapter draws attention to ways in which dominant epistemological orientations in research about teachers and teaching often limit interpretations of teachers' subject positions in the act of teaching. This critique is important in that it not only highlights how particular epistemological orientations offer limited understandings of the nexus between structure and agency and its articulation in teaching practice, but also provides the rationale for the theoretical, methodological and conceptual focus of Baxen's own study.

Baxen provides examples of how in the research she has reviewed dominant orientations limit understandings of teacher agency and offer perspectives of a teacher as a passive subject who is produced by predetermined structures. Baxen argues for a more nuanced approach to researching teachers and their work that accounts for a dialectic, rather than dualistic, relationship between structure and agency. She explains that part of this complexity revolves around understanding power as both an imposition and constitutive of self. Baxen also argues that these dominant epistemological and methodological orientations in research do not focus on the situated contexts in which teachers live and work. Teachers are positioned and embedded within social and cultural spaces in and through which they construct, reconstruct, negotiate and reproduce meaning in complex ways. In the analysis, Baxen foregrounds the performative nature of teaching which is missing from many research studies.

In *Chapter 7,* Baxen engages in an in-depth critique of the dominant epistemological frameworks from and through which meanings associated with HIV/AIDS are conveyed in research. In an attempt to understand factors shaping teachers' understanding, experiences and teaching of sexuality and HIV/AIDS, Baxen provides a brief review, firstly, of sexuality discourses that shape particularly Western constructions of sexuality; secondly, of historical and modernist discourses of HIV/AIDS as a disease

and, finally, of political discourses in South Africa surrounding HIV/AIDS as a key discursive space.

Baxen explains that evident in research are moral and religious discourses on sex. Heterosexuality is privileged and constructed as 'normal' and 'natural' as opposed to homosexuality, which is defined as 'deviant' and 'unnatural'. There is also evidence of biological deterministic constructions of sex, gender and sexuality. In contrast, Baxen explains that discourses that have emerged from post-structuralism, feminist theory, critical theory and feminism do not accept such binaries, but challenge unitary conceptions of sexual identity and recognise multiplicities of sexualities shaped by relations of power. Baxen explains that this critique of constructions of sexuality informed her study in that it highlights the intricate interrelationship between sexuality, subjectivity and subject positioning. It was also useful for understanding the different interpretive lenses through which HIV/AIDS discourses are constructed and re-constructed.

In her analysis of historical and modernist discourses of HIV/AIDS as a disease, Baxen highlights the complexity of meanings associated with the pandemic. She stresses that common to all diseases is their social, political and ethical situatedness. Of critical importance, therefore, are the meanings and interpretations people give to diseases. Disease can become a signifier of diverse meanings associated with the identity of an individual. Baxen explains that unlike other diseases, HIV/AIDS has become the symbolic bearer of identity.

In the final sections of the chapter, Baxen locates the discussion more firmly within a South African context by providing an account of the political discourses surrounding HIV/AIDS as a key discursive space. The discourses become interpretive frameworks influencing research, pedagogical content of programmes as well as teacher behaviour in and outside pedagogical contexts. In her analysis, Baxen argues that dominant orientations limit questions about the dynamic interplay between discourses, structures and agents and do not offer insight into this network of influences on teachers' lives.

In *Chapter 8*, Baxen critiques research on HIV/AIDS. She makes a number of salient points that have important implications for researching HIV/AIDS and education. Her key contention is that research embedded in particular epistemological orientations and particular discourses, often seeks to find out *what* is known about the disease rather than *how* and *where* knowledge is produced and how we come to know. Baxen's view is that dominant discourses of sexuality and disease continue to frame HIV/AIDS research. These are embedded in positivistic frames of reference that embed conceptions of a medicalised and/or moralised body without any recognition of the nuanced interplay of context and agency. Baxen supports her arguments with a brief overview of research conducted in Africa in general and South Africa in particular.

In her review of research on HIV/AIDS in educational contexts, Baxen shows that

most studies result in recommendations of what *should* be done in classrooms or how different methodologies could be applied to improve the knowledge base of learners. She found that there are essentialist links made between teachers, learners and knowledge. Baxen makes a key point that none of the studies she reviewed constructed teachers positioned in complex classroom spaces who can exercise agency, resist, modify and transform discourses in dynamic ways.

Teachers' lives, subjective experiences and performative acts

In Part IV, Chapters 9, 10 and 11, Baxen presents the empirical findings of her study. She provides the reader with a wealth of empirical data in the form of contextual narratives as a foundation for understanding the social and political embeddedness of HIV/AIDS and the influences on social identity. The first two chapters offer a vivid portrayal of the different layers of influence shaping teachers' understanding of themselves as individuals and in the context of their respective communities. These chapters are contextual in nature, and help the reader to understand context as discursively constituted by structures and discourses.

In *Chapter 9*, Baxen argues that HIV/AIDS is contextual. Through applying Bourdieu's tools of capital, cultural field and *habitus* as broad frames of references, she provides a situated portrait of the social and material conditions of teachers' lives and the influences that shape their histories. The chapter provides a window for the reader to view who these teachers are and what it is about themselves that they bring into Lifeskills classrooms. Rather than presenting their experiences as fixed and thus deterministic, she presents them as structuring properties that teachers draw on in making 'the self'.

Using primarily interview data, Baxen in *Chapter 10* provides an analysis of the early and current experiences shaping teachers' social identities. This chapter provides vivid descriptions of the sources and resources that teachers draw on to produce an identity. The influences emerge as multiple and they develop a complex set of practices invoked from various and often conflictual subject positions.

Chapters 9 and 10 create a picture of the complex discursive space from and through which these teachers take up positions. At the end of chapter 10, Baxen presents a diagram illustrating the multi-layered factors that influence teachers' understanding, experiences and subsequent teaching about sexuality and HIV/AIDS. Four patterns of teacher subject positions, which Baxen refers to as 'teacherliness', are portrayed in this chapter (p. 261). These patterns highlight the performative nature of teacher behaviour.

Chapter 11 brings together what has been the main focus in this work, namely understanding the nexus between teacher identity and classroom behaviour. Drawing on classroom observations, Baxen examines what happens in the classroom when teachers mediate sexuality and HIV/AIDS. Through an examination of the practices of some

teachers who typify distinct 'teacherly' behaviours, Baxen brings together what has been a central feature of this work, namely examining the dialectic relationship between structure and agency. The classroom observations data provides evidence of how teachers draw on the repertoire of attitudes, beliefs and 'teacherly' behaviours accumulated over time to take up various subject positions. Baxen shows how teachers often reposition themselves in ways that subvert intended outcomes of their teaching and that teachers display agency and are active in making the pedagogical script.

Baxen provides the reader with insight into complexity in the relationship between structure and agency, and the struggle teachers endure in their endeavours to reproduce a different script. The key point raised in this chapter is that the final outcome of teaching can never be predicted. Baxen revisits the four patterns of teacher subject positions, which she conceptualises as either exaggerated, framed, normalised or bound discourses. She describes them as patterns of 'being-ness', and explains they cut across categories of religion, race, ethnicity, class or gender. Baxen shows how teachers invoked various subject positions at different 'moments in time', depending on what was being enacted (p. 298). Thus, they invoked aspects of teacher identities that were complex and often contradictory. Often, in this process, teachers normalised the discourse in the classroom, but in different ways with varying unintended outcomes.

Although Baxen does concede that the categories of teacher positions she identified are arbitrary and fluid, she does not engage with this further. My view is that these categories are by no means definitive or even discrete. There may be affinities between individuals who were constructed as located in different categories. The point I make is that the interplay of these dimensions of identity deserves closer examination.

Performing teaching: A reflexive analysis

In *Chapter 12*, Baxen skilfully through a deeply reflexive process examines what she refers to as 'unintended consequences' (p. 302) of performing teaching, and the implications this holds for teaching about sexuality and HIV/AIDS.

At the ideological core of the book is Baxen's epistemological argument that 'one cannot use reductionist, scientific, rational orientations to understand what happens in the discursive space of a Lifeskills classroom where the public and private collide and animate the fragility of teacher identities' (p. 309). Similarly, scholars and researchers cannot make simplistic links between knowledge and practice or between teaching and learning outcomes. Baxen's work demonstrates that the Lifeskills classrooms are discursive sites for the production of 'troubling rather than stable' (p. 309) teacher identities. Baxen's work suggests that teachers do resist being positioned by structures and can re-position themselves in alternate ways. Interweaving and, sometimes, intersecting discourses allow teachers to take up positions that may also seem contradictory. On a similar note, Weedon (1987) argued that contrary to humanist

notions of knowing, knowable and rational subjects, subjectivity needs to be theorised as a site of disunity and conflict.

Baxen's research highlights that teachers often leave the outcome of teaching and learning open to multiple and contradictory interpretations rather than what was intended. She is able to illustrate this powerfully through the four types of teacherly behaviour that emerged in her study. For example, Baxen shows that teachers normalised the curriculum in a way that often neutralised or 'sanitised' (p. 304) the impact of the message when a body in its sexual form was invoked in the classroom. Through the rich observation data, Baxen is able to demonstrate how teachers in exercising their agency 'turned on themselves' to obscure or make less visible aspects of their identities (p. 305).

Conclusion

To articulate generalised conclusions about the book would be to contradict the complexity and dynamism that Baxen captures in her writing. Baxen herself suggests in the final chapter that her work is incomplete and should be subject to ongoing inquiry.

As a practitioner of performative inquiry, Baxen would agree that the focus of her research lies not in finding answers, but in realising possible spaces for exploration where new ways of engaging become possible. However, there is little doubt that Baxen's work has extended the boundaries of social science thinking about teacher identity and teaching in the context of HIV/AIDS.

A strength of the book is that researcher reflexivity is woven through all the chapters as a delicate, intricate thread. Baxen skilfully uses reflexivity as a methodological tool that serves to contextualise her own political context as a key factor in research, and to build a nuanced understanding of the political identities of the teachers in the study.

Baxen's study raises renewed and invigorated questions for researchers, policy-makers and educationists and these need to be subjected to ongoing dialogue: Are schools the best places for the mediation of messages about sexuality and HIV/AIDS? Can curriculum outcomes ever be guaranteed given the fact that classrooms are discursive, political, situated spaces where multiple teacher identities intersect and collide in complex ways? How can professional development interventions create spaces to make the performative acts of teachers transformative, i.e. help teachers understand the fractured nature of their own identities and develop strategies to work productively across seemingly contradictory or incoherent spaces? How can interventions create spaces for ongoing dialogue with and between teachers who teach such sensitive subjects to help them develop their own levels of comfort?

Performative Praxis: Teacher Identity and Teaching in the Context of HIV/AIDS is a valuable, much-needed contribution to the field of educational and interdisciplinary

studies. It offers teachers, social science researchers, socio-medical researchers, policymakers and health professionals an alternate lens through which to examine teacher identities and teaching in the context of HIV/AIDS.

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Notes on the author

Nithi Muthukrishna is a professor in the School of Education and Development, University of KwaZulu-Natal. Her research interests are in the areas of childhood studies, HIV/AIDS and education, and social justice education. She is editor of the book *Educating for Social Justice and Inclusion in an African context: Pathways and Transitions.*

Address for correspondence

muthukri@ukzn.ac.za

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All correspondence should be directed to the SARE Editor, Aslam Fataar, at afataar@sun.ac.za.

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