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SARE

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Preface by the guest editors

The decision to focus on Teacher Education in Africa in this special issue of SARE was taken to mark out a specific area of policy concern. Members of the editorial board and SACHES members in general have long been deeply concerned about the state of teacher education and teacher recruitment in the Southern African region. This problematic question centres on the neglect of initial teacher education (ITE) in a context where the political, social and economic future of the region depends fundamentally on the academic quality and the professional commitment of our teachers.

Understanding changes in teacher education in the South and Southern African context requires that they be seen in a wider global and regional policy context. To explain the nature of these changes that have beset education in the region – from Ethiopia to Namibia and Malawi to South Africa – it is important to review the international comparative history of higher education over the past 20 years. In this collection the nature of such educational changes in the context of neo-liberal policy reforms is examined in the contributions on the United Kingdom (Hulme and Menter), Germany (Ssentamu-Namubiru) and Chile (Avalos). This global policy reform characterized by cost-cutting with regard to social services has had radical implications for teacher education. It has had fundamental impacts on the quantity and quality of teachers in training, on the forms of assessment prioritized, on the nature and quality of pedagogy, on the nature of the curriculum, and on forms of management in schools.

Above all these changes seem to have impacted most significantly on the ethical rationality of schooling and education. In a world where 'human resources production' comes to replace 'education', the rationale of schooling and the nature of teacher education are called into question. The contributions by Menter and Hulme, Dahlström and Lemma, and Maistry give some indications of how teachers might 'talk back to power' on these issues.

As Paterson and Arends demonstrate, the drastic decline in recruits to the teaching profession in South Africa since the mid-nineties is indicated by the fact that enrolment in contact ITE programmes dropped from 70 731 in 1994 to 10 153 in 2000. 'Of the 6 000 new teachers graduating in 2006 fewer than 500 would be competent in an African language in the Foundation Phase'. (This figure needs to be balanced by the curious counter-intuitive phenomenon that nearly 60% of all teachers in the under-25 age group enrolled at universities for ITE between 2000 and 2004 were white.) Overall this points to an alarming situation with regard to teacher supply in the immediate future. It seems to imply serious social consequences of the closure of colleges and the

decline in the take-up of teacher bursaries, which was not halted when they did once again become available in 2004.

The point is that despite the widespread recognition of crisis in the area by politicians and bureaucrats, evidenced by the appointment of various commissions of enquiry and task teams to consider the issues, little had been done in South Africa to address them in a systematic manner by early 2008. The problem has been turned over to the universities, but they do not seem to have the capacity or the willingness to address it in a systematic manner.

Teacher education is a fundamental part of the nature of the overall developmental equation. Without sound teacher education strategies that draw motivated, energetic and intelligent young people to the profession there is little hope of building a new vision of a democratic society with skilled citizens capable of taking on the formidable challenges to be faced by Africans in the 21st century. We hope that this collection opens the door to further urgent investigation of these important issues.

Avalos, an academic, consultant and reformer working in Chile since the reconstruction years that started in the 1990s, provides an overview of the challenges of teacher education in Latin America that has significant relevance to understanding the African policy context. Although she points out the diversity of teacher education in the region, she is also keen to demonstrate the commonalities that lie in the historical base of the state-controlled normal schools, the great expansion of teacher education in the post-World War II phase with the beginnings of a secondary graduate profession, and the impact of IMF and World Bank policies in the last 20 years with a focus on quality, economy and efficiency. Her article suggests the need for changes in teacher education in the context of each of these phases of transition, and in particular a focus on the conditions of teachers within each of these changes.

As the report on educational progress in Latin America (PREAL) pointed out in 2005, there was a steady increase in the numbers of children attending school across the region, 'but despite the increase in the numbers of poor, rural and indigenous children who attend schools, they learn less, leave school earlier, than children from families with higher socio-economic levels'. In that context teachers are faced with radical challenges that stem from the development of single coordinating and regulatory systems for continuing and initial teacher education, competition for resources with other government departments and the development of quality-control mechanisms. The challenges of developing systems of teacher education to remedy years of neglect in countries that have been wracked by civil war and military government have many similarities to the situation in many African contexts.

Dahlström and Lemma focus on key aspects that structure the discourse of educational reforms of the neo-liberal era. They emphasise the way in which the language of education reform in a globalized world uses progressive and critical practices in education to legitimize its programme, but that this often masks a form of technical

rationality that undermines the traditional nature of teachers' work. This work engages with the implications of educational reform in Namibia and Ethiopia and suggests that critical practitioner inquiry (CPI) might provide a means of overcoming the limitations placed upon teachers by the formulas currently favoured by reformers. This is an approach to education based on critical pedagogy that 'broadens the base of what is recognized as common knowledge about education and develops a dynamic relationship between educational theory and practice'. The authors suggest that this provides a means for disturbing the templates for reform that are now so dominant and thus increasing the influence of teachers and teacher educators so they can control their own work.

In a review of teacher education policy in the UK in the devolution era since 1998 **Hulme and Menter** are concerned with investigating the balance between historically-based notions of teacher education and new policy directions. They pose questions about the conflict between teacher education as the imparting of skills supported by notions of *performativity*, technical rationalism, competency and standards, and historically-defined notions of teaching as an exercise in professionalism, professional standards and ethical process. The significant variations in the working out of policy in the devolved regions of the UK – England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland – reveal that there is considerable scope for diversity within seemingly rigid policy directions dictated by global trends. Such flexibility might allow for a significant degree of policy re-reading with regard to the recasting of teacher education policy in keeping with local professional needs and historical cultures that often seem to be denied by contemporary policy discourse. These findings seem to have significant implications for the adaptation of teacher education policy to the African context, which is taken up in various forms by other contributors.

In keeping with the comparative themes established above, **Ssentamu-Namubiru** reflects the real implications of global reform in ITE for the School of Education at Makerere University in Uganda. (This article complements the article in Volume 13(2) by Bidemi Carroll on the impact of the marketisation of higher education at Makerere.) On the one hand there is clearly a demand for change from the colonial models of schooling and teacher education that have so robustly defied progressive education since the sixties, and on the other there is a degree of apprehension with regard to the multiple initiatives that have characterized global discourses on teacher education in recent years. A detailed comparative examination of ITE in Uganda, the UK and Germany opens the way for a reassessment of these issues. As she points out, 'such an assessment cannot be separated from the specific historical, socio-economic and political spheres of influence' in each of these cases. In each instance there is a need to revisit the relationships between HE providers and the school in the training of teachers if we are to 'promote reflection and integration of theoretical knowledge with hands-on practical experience' and avoid top-down arrangements that neglect the value of local and professional knowledge.

The two pieces by **Kruss** and **Paterson and Arends** are drawn from a large Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) project conducted as part of the Teacher Education Research and Development Programme funded by the Royal Netherlands Embassy in South Africa during 2006-2007. They will undoubtedly provide the baseline for future policy debate in the area. Glenda Kruss attempts to capture some of the key findings of an extensive survey of the major providers in the context of major restructuring of teacher education (incorporations, amalgamations, mergers) in keeping with the reshaping of the higher education system. The study sets out to provide a detailed empirical analysis of the complex ways in which forms and processes of institutional restructuring remake the conditions for, and the nature of, initial teacher education approaches and programmes in distinct institutional contexts. Here she provides a sample of the findings, paying particular attention to what she calls 'the double dynamic' of teacher education reform. This is represented on the one hand by the impact of new forms of HE institutional restructuring as part of a global reform process and on the other by the nature of the internal institutional dynamic, where faculties/schools/departments of education are in competition for resources with other formidable challengers inside the institution. A particular aspect of this situation is the pressure on individual academics for research and publications in keeping with the demands of the new HE assessment system, without sufficient recognition of the needs and specificity of professional teacher education programmes. By studying the key elements of that situation – curriculum content, pedagogy, the tension between theory and practice, and the competing challenges of teaching and research – Kruss points to the necessity for 'coherent, systematic interventions across the board, based on strong relationships between provincial and national departments of education and the university providers' if the system is to best serve the interests of the profession.

The article by **Paterson and Arends** analyses the nature of teacher production in South Africa between 1995 and 2006 through an analysis of the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) data. It reviews the trends in enrolment and graduation patterns in initial teacher education (IPET) and in the continuing professional development of teachers (CPDT). This shows a general decline in the numbers of recruits coming into the system over this period, and in particular a specific decline in the number of African women – the core of the Foundation Phase teachers and African language teachers – enrolled in IPET programmes. It points as well to the high proportion of white women – nearly 50% of the total – in IPET programmes. In attempting to explain these counter-intuitive findings, the authors examine the effects of the closure of the colleges of education and the implications of social context for take-up of places in initial teacher education. They suggest that the potential role of HIV/Aids and the demands for care from young women in rural and marginal urban communities might provide one explanation. Even though the government took steps to stem the decline in numbers presenting themselves for IPET programmes by ring-fencing National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) bur-

saries for this purpose, it does not seem to have had the required outcomes. The data present an extremely alarming picture of a profession that is not renewing itself in quantitative terms without even addressing the question of quality. In a context where the extreme challenges of effective schooling are clear to everyone who is committed to equity in education, the dire consequences of not having sufficient good quality teachers in public schools are difficult to exaggerate.

One of the ways in which the challenges of the new situation have been addressed is through effective continuing professional development with regard to the in-service upgrading of subject knowledge suitable to the new curriculum and innovative pedagogy. **Maistry** makes a plea for sustained programmes over time aimed at enhancing teacher values and actions, rather than the plethora of short-term 'workshops' that have been so characteristic of interventions since 1996. He points to the possibilities of social practice theory in this regard, where 'mutual engagement' and the interaction between teachers and between teachers and trainers is placed in a central position. The idea of a 'community of practice' lies at the centre of these proposals and teacher voices and actions are highlighted. This affirmation of teachers' work and highlighting of 'authentic teacher practice' are seen as the keys to building trust and confidence, where teachers learn by doing rather than being passive recipients of departmental policy.

A team of researchers from the University of Stellenbosch **(Reddy, Menkveld and Bitzer)** explore the challenges of developing a more effective *practicum* (teaching practice system) at a variety of South African universities. They do this in the context of the development of new notions of competency-based assessment to support the policies for teacher education linked to the new legislation on higher education and the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (2006), the Norms and Standards for Teacher Education (2000) and the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (2004). They explore the perennial problems of policy reform in the field and the question of the balance between theory and practice, in addition to the inherently problematic nature of assessment in this context. The intrusion of state-mandated standards of assessment into an area that is widely agreed to present particular problems in this regard leads the authors to call for significant new research initiatives in the field if innovations are to be successfully supported and monitored.

In conclusion, **Pretorius** provides a broad overview of the problems considered above. He draws parallels between global trends and local issues. He notes that within the worldwide trends of educational reform since the 1980s there has been a call for renewal and quality review. There has been wide recognition that teacher education as an aspect of Education for All is inadequate to the demands of the 21st century and he points to an enduring crisis in relation to the role of the teacher, where we need to 'imagine the creation of institutions and social relationships that maximize outcomes for all individuals rather than the few' (Robertson 2005:167, cited by Kruss). Where

public or mass education systems are everywhere in crisis, the reshaping and reinvigoration of the teacher education sector should be awarded the highest priority by anyone seeking to build a just society.

The decline of the earlier ethos of teacher autonomy and teacher professionalism has led to a crisis in the role of the teacher in many societies in an era of relative affluence when alternative careers become available. In the South African context the transition from apartheid education to an inclusive mass education system has not succeeded in putting an end to a divided education system, and the endemic violence of schools, stressful conditions of work for teachers, and the challenges of new systems of curriculum and assessment have posed formidable hurdles for teachers.

With the shrinkage in the numbers of teachers available for public schools for the urban and rural poor (see Paterson & Arends above)and the ongoing concern about quality education in those schools, Pretorius argues for exploring free market alternatives that highlight partnerships between schools and HE providers, and urges a greater emphasis on practical experience in selecting future teachers. While these solutions, now being explored in the USA and elsewhere, might often be rejected out of hand by professional educators and professional teachers unions, the looming crisis in the sectors is now undeniable. The closure of the colleges of education, the lack of capacity or willingness of the HE sector to embrace teacher education given the limited financial rewards, and the general abdication of state responsibility for teacher education since the provincial departments of education lost their responsibility for planning and delivery in this sector, together with the general flight of experienced teachers from the profession, have left a multi-layered crisis that might require radical solutions.

We hope that this collection of research papers will provide a stimulus to a reassessment of policy and practice in a field that is of fundamental significance to the African future, whether seen from an economic viewpoint or in terms of the success of democracy, good governance and equity.

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Teacher education in the Latin American region: An unfinished businesss

Beatrice Avalos
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Abstract

This article will consider some of the issues faced by the teacher education systems of Latin America, from the perspective of the frames that affect their development. It begins with a description of the systems of teacher education: requirements, types, length of training and institutionalization. Then, using the concept of 'school grammars', it considers the lingering effect of the 'normal school' tradition versus the 'higher education' or university tradition on the modes in which teacher education is organized, delivered and valued. The article considers the match between the structures of the educational system and the structures of teacher education using some country examples, as well as the ways in which teacher education is regulated and monitored. Assuming that the condition of teachers does affect how the profession and teacher education are perceived, the article refers to how recent studies explore this condition. In the concluding section, the article considers some of the policy frameworks and their intended effects on the improvement of teacher education in the Latin American region.

Introduction

It would be presumptuous to write about teacher education in the Latin American region as if it were a single or largely similar system, located in contexts of equivalent cultures and levels of development. That is clearly not the case.

The region inherited from its colonial history a common language and culture, but this it not manifested in the same ways in different regions. Thus while Spanish is the official language in all countries except Brazil and Haiti, indigenous linguistic groups form a sizeable part of many populations, constituting a pressure group that is becoming ever more demanding in terms of recognition and educational opportunities. This has given rise to policies and reform efforts directed at bilingual-intercultural education. Bolivia, Mexico, Paraguay and Guatemala, among others, are supporting indigenous languages and culture in curricula, texts, schools and teacher education.

While there are differences of opinion on how democratic the current political systems are judged to be, the military regimes and conflict situations of the eighties that destroyed lives and opportunities in the Central American countries of Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua are now history. Yet it is true to say that the consequences of these conflicts still have an impact on the societies. Levels of economic development also differ (from around US$6000 GNP per capita in Mexico to $440 in Haiti). The southern cone countries (Argentina, Chile and Uruguay) are mostly urban, whereas around 60% of the population in El Salvador and Guatemala is still rural. In most countries there are large differences among the population in income, education and access to opportunities of the global society. These are reflected in educational results. Thus PREAL's (2005) report on educational progress in Latin America notes that despite the increase in the numbers of poor, rural and indigenous children who attend school, they learn less and leave school earlier than children from families at higher socio-economic levels.

In this context of sameness and differences, it is not surprising that teacher educational opportunities show the same traits. Despite their common origins in the normal school, we find today a variety of institutions (normal schools, universities, higher teaching education institutes) that prepare teachers for the different levels of the educational systems. These institutions differ in requirements, curricula, strategies, demands and regulatory frameworks.

This article will consider some of the issues faced by the teacher education systems of Latin America, from the perspective of the frames that affect their development. It begins with a description of the systems of teacher education: requirements, types, length of training, and institutionalization. Then, using the concept of 'school grammars' (Tyack & Cuban, 1995), it considers the lingering effect of the 'normal school' tradition versus the 'higher education' or university tradition on the modes in which teacher education is organized, delivered and valued. The article considers the match between the structures of the educational system and the structures of teacher education using some country examples, as well as the ways in which teacher education is regulated and monitored. Assuming that the condition of teachers does affect how the profession and teacher education are perceived, the article refers to how recent studies explore this condition. In the concluding section, the article considers some of the policy frameworks and their intended effects on the improvement of teacher education in the Latin American region.

The provision of teacher education in the Latin American region: From secondary to tertiary level

The institutionalization of public teacher education practically accompanied the emergence of the newly independent states in the 19th century. The first normal school charged with the preparation of primary teachers was established in Chile in 1842

(and the first female institution in 1854) through the influence of the Argentine educator Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, who also influenced the establishment of similar institutions in his country and in Uruguay. These institutions in turn served as models for others around the region. With assistance from German educators, secondary teacher education became a formal programme in Chile towards the end of the century and was entrusted to the University of Chile (1889).

The normal school as a non-tertiary primary teacher education institution continues to exist today in the Central American countries of Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras. In all other countries, normal schools have been transformed into tertiary institutions that coexist with university teacher education programmes. The variety of institutions charged with teacher education in Latin America is indicated in the table below. As can be seen, programmes vary in length and conception according to the structure of the educational systems within which they are located.

Levels of teacher education and types of institutions

		Type of teacher education institutions		
Level	**School type**	**Normal schools (non-tertiary)**	**Higher normal or teacher education institutes (tertiary)**	**Degree-level institutes and universities**
Primary	6-year primary school	Guatemala, Nicaragua	Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama	Costa Rica, Panama
	8 or 9-year basic school	Honduras*	Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay	Chile, El Salvador
Secondary	6-year middle or secondary school		Mexico, Panama	Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama, Guatemala, Nicaragua
	3 or 4-year middle or secondary school		Argentina	Chile, Bolivia, Honduras, Paraguay, El Salvador, Honduras

* In process of upgrading

Source: Author's synthesis from www.oei.org reports on Ibero-American educational systems

Teacher education frames

Teacher education in Latin America is perhaps more of a problem today than it was at the time of its establishment. While there are many reasons for this, I would like to explore in this paper the 'frames', limitations or constraining factors that influence many well-intentioned efforts to build modern, efficient and appropriate teacher education programmes. I define 'frames' as structures, processes and beliefs embedded in the education systems, their traditions and the teaching force that affect what is seen as desirable or even viewed as possible in change. Depending on where one stands, these frames can be described differently. However, I wish to consider three

instances that appear in many of the analyses of the change processes and their difficulties: the normal school tradition, the structures that regulate teacher education, and the relationship between teacher education, the school structures and the 'condition' of teachers, including how teachers perceive themselves and their work.

The normal school ethos and practice

Teacher education as a formal objective of governments was closely linked to the formation of the independent states in the 19th and early 20th century. This reflected the spread from Europe of liberal ideas supporting the notions of free, public, non-religious and compulsory education. Ideas and experiences borrowed from Europe and later from the United States contributed to shaping the new institutions and provided a specific seal to the teachers prepared in their classrooms. Normal schools began as boarding institutions that not only prepared students for the demands of school teaching (methods and basic content knowledge) but also instilled the importance of teaching as a mission. The best students who finished primary school (an elite in the first part of the 20th century) were offered a place in these normal schools and the opportunity of social mobility through education. Teachers were conceived in the liberal tradition as behavioural models and the 'normal' school as the institution that could form or mould these students. (Yapu 2003 in Barrera 2006). This provided future teachers with a sense of importance regarding their role in society, which sustained them throughout their years of teaching (no matter how unsatisfactory their working conditions).

Towards the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century the normal schools looked abroad to Europe and the USA for pedagogic inspiration. For example, German and Belgian educators contributed to the development of Chilean and Bolivian primary and secondary teacher education. John Dewey's progressive ideas in the 1920s influenced the teaching ethos and approach in a number of these institutions. This was the 'golden era' of the normal school teacher education system.

The normal school system began to transform in the second half of the 20th century as demand increased for an educated population and for better quality education. From the late sixties onwards some countries began to upgrade their normal schools into tertiary-level institutions. Chile's education reform in 1965 stressed the association of normal schools with university faculties of education and later in the eighties teacher education was to become linked to a university qualification. However, not until the 1980s did policies in Latin America, in general, turn decisively towards upgrading normal schools to tertiary-level institutions. This was done in different ways (Messina, 1999). One was to establish new institutions (higher normal schools or institutes) on the basis of the old normal schools (Argentina, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Paraguay and Uruguay), another to allow the coexistence of upgraded normal schools and universities (Ecuador, El Salvador and Peru) and a third one to prefer

a mainly university teacher education system (Chile and Costa Rica). Bolivia and Colombia were latecomers in the process, as they only decided to upgrade their teacher education in the nineties and are just completing a gradual process of change. By 2007 Brazil should have replaced normal schools with higher teacher education institutes.

Modernization efforts, however, have had to contend with the ethos of the normal school and persistence of the 'organizational forms that governed its instruction' (Tyack and Cuban 2000: 5) in the course of building the new institutions. The emphasis on character development based on order, punctuality and obedience, and on instructional methods rather than content knowledge, inherited from the Hebartian influence (Cox & Gysling 1990) is still noticeable in the organization and climate of normal schools in some countries, such as Guatemala or Paraguay. The impact of behaviourism in the 1960-70s with its emphasis on structure, planning and specific forms of assessment has also left its mark on normal school teaching, making it appear 'closer to primary and secondary schools than to academic halls' (Alliaud & Davini in Aguerrondo 2006: 44).

To illustrate the complexity of changing normal schools into higher education institutions we take the case of Bolivia. As part of the educational reform that began in 1994, Bolivia decided to transform its teacher education into tertiary-level higher normal institutes. The key elements of the reform required changes in the organizational and management structure, in the curriculum and, most importantly, in the preparation and capacity of its teacher educators. The process took around five years (Contreras & Talavera 2005). The initial conviction that the institutions could reform themselves through internal self-evaluation and the preparation of change projects was not borne out in practice. There was not enough capacity or understanding amongst the staff of what was required and how to do it, and so they relied on the old vision and practices of the normal school. An awareness of the limitations of this situation led the Ministry of Education between 1999 and 2002 to use a different strategy to make the new institutions viable by placing them under university management. Eleven of the 23 normal schools were thus associated with universities that were invited to bid to become their managers and to organize the process of curricular change and renewal of the teaching staff. The process was enhanced through the conversion of the oldest and most prestigious normal school in Sucre into a pedagogical university. Under university monitoring, both the modernization of management and the renewal of teaching staff were organized. All existing staff had to reapply for their positions under more stringent requirements such as possession of a university first degree. However, pressure from the normal school establishment meant that most of the newly hired staff had to be graduates of former normal schools. To improve their capacity, the new staff was afforded upgrading opportunities in and outside of Bolivia (with donor agency funding). The curriculum also needed to be changed to bring it into line with the new school curriculum inspired by constructivist principles and with a strong emphasis on intercultural

bilingual education. Ministry of Education specialists wrote the curriculum framework for the new institutions and, though it was discussed with the staff, it posed difficulties as it was quite different from their former experience. Thus, there was a need for specific staff upgrading to enable its use.

One of the important effects of the teacher education reform in Bolivia was the establishment of new intercultural bilingual teacher education institutes in conformity with the reform's emphasis. The intercultural bilingual focus required children in indigenous populations to be taught in their home language in the first years of their education and then gently be introduced into Spanish, while Spanish-speakers were to be introduced to the languages and cultures of other linguistic groups. This meant having not only rural and urban teacher education institutes, but also institutes focused on the main languages of Quechua, Aymara and Guarani. However, a current assessment of the effects of the reform in Bolivia indicates that there may be problems with how well the intercultural-bilingual focus is blending with the overall system of teacher education (Contreras & Talavera 2005)

The transformation of teacher education in Bolivia is still in progress. The impact of the changes in the new higher normal institutes is moderate, however, and the tradition of the normal school system persists in many forms. In a subtle way it is embedded in the beliefs and allegiances of those who continue to teach in the new institutions. It is also present in the difficulties of marrying constructivist emphases on active teaching methods such as the use of 'project planning' with providing students with enough opportunity to acquire solid conceptual knowledge. Barrera's (2006) study of student teachers identified as 'innovators' at normal institutes illustrates the tensions between the 'new' and the 'old'. While recognizing novelty in the use of active methods, these students felt that the contents of subjects such as mathematics and technology were not sufficiently emphasized and nor was the attainment of meaningful learning. This relative emphasis on procedures more than on content knowledge could be viewed as an inheritance from the old 'normal school', but it could also be seen as a result of teacher educators not sufficiently 'owning' a curriculum that posed complex demands on them in terms of knowledge and approaches to teaching (Avalos 2001). Another factor is that Bolivian normal institutes (like most similar institutions in the region) continue to have a student teacher population with a more fragile cultural and educational background than their peers in other university careers. Teacher education continues to be a career for those who belong to the poorer sectors of the population or a second-choice career.

Regulatory structures: From strong control to complete autonomy

The current institutional diversity of teacher education institutions in Latin America also reflects diversity in the way they are regulated or, more exactly, how their quality is supported and monitored. It is suggested here that both strong control and complete

deregulation are 'frames' that affect the effectiveness of teacher education and the public perception of its quality. Without pretending to explore the implications of the regulatory status of teacher education arrangements in the Latin American countries fully, it must be acknowledged that the role of the state in the management of institutions, in the genesis and approval of the curriculum and in the monitoring of its quality is a key element.

The role of the state in furthering the preparation of teachers was never in doubt either in the early years of the independent states or for most of the 20th century. However, today, in the context of an increased presence of private teacher education institutions and universities that share in the function of preparing teachers for all levels of the education system, the role of the state is less visible. This situation probably reaches an extreme in the case of Chile, where the lingering effect of neo-liberal policies in the eighties, with their emphasis on minimal state intervention, explains the lack of regulatory control that the Ministry of Education has over teacher education.

To what extent should teacher education be regulated? From the standpoint of the role and responsibility of the state in relation to the education of its citizens it would seem that the state should be concerned with the quality of teacher preparation and performance. This means funding teacher education, ensuring an adequate number of teachers in all the specializations needed and monitoring the quality of the teacher education provided (Aguerrondo 2004). However, in practice this general rule is applied differently depending on the nature of the political system (i.e. federal versus non-federal governments), the state of institutional development of teacher preparation (university versus secondary-level normal schools) and the specific demands posed by reforms and improvements in the education systems since the nineties.

The educational reforms of the nineties all over Latin America included strong structural changes in teacher education. Besides Bolivia, government-led teacher education reform initiatives also took place in Peru, Argentina and Brazil, among other countries, and continue to be in progress in most of the Central American countries. In most cases, these changes have been aided with funds from external sources (World Bank, Interamerican Development Bank, and bilateral aid from European and Japanese donors). The focus of reforms affecting teacher education has been primarily on strengthening institutional capacity, moving the locus of control from national government to the provinces (as in the case of Argentina, where it influenced around 1 200 institutions), gradual wholesale improvement of 120 higher normal schools in Peru, and the closure of all secondary-level normal schools in Brazil in order to give way to higher education teacher preparation (Figuereido & Cowen 2004).

Despite the decentralized form of management of teacher institutes in Brazil and Argentina, the national governments of both countries initiated curricular reforms

that were sanctioned by changes in the legislation (The Federal Law of Education in Argentina in 1993 and the Law of Directives and Bases for National Education, 1996, in Brazil). A renewed curriculum for teacher education in Argentina was needed to fit a very drastic change in the structure of the system in the mid-nineties – pre-school for 4–5 year olds, a nine-year basic education structure (with three cycles) and an upper-secondary level (polimodal) of three years – while the Brazilian guidelines (*Referençiais para Formação de Professores*, 1999) were needed in the light of the upgrading of teacher education institutions. Both the Brazilian and Argentinian frameworks have only the power accorded them by the content of the documents generated, as states and provinces can re-interpret them or resist them by disregarding their recommendations. In her historical analysis of changes in the Argentinian teacher education curriculum, Davini (1998) concluded that the *basic common contents* that should have inspired the provincial governments and their institutions in the drafting of their programmes of instruction awakened resistance owing to the mode and language of their production. In Davini's view this language was framed as an 'experts' discourse couched in the international jargon, which justified education as production (of human resources) and diminished the socio-political importance of education, a subject dear to the hearts of Argentinian educators.

If nothing else it would seem that monitoring the quality of teacher education should be a key part of the brief of the state. The extent to which this occurs effectively depends on the structures at hand in the Ministries of Education and the instruments used for this purpose. The key issues are whether all teacher education programmes should be monitored or just those that are financed with public funds, how the monitoring function should be defined, and what it should cover. The answers to these questions are intertwined. Monitoring may involve providing a curricular frame (as in the case of Argentina and Brazil) and verifying that it is in operation; or setting conditions for the staffing of teacher education institutions, including direct recruitment and deployment of teacher educators; or setting conditions and examinations to gain teacher certification (based on an agreed system of standards or expected competencies). Monitoring may also be linked to accreditation of teacher education programmes or institutions, public or private. In order for teacher education monitoring to take place, there must be some form of institutional setting (a ministry, department or a semi-governmental body) that organizes and implements the process.

Most Latin American countries have a large public system of teacher education. In Uruguay, for example, the system is mostly public. This means that a number of monitoring activities are organized more or less effectively from the centre. In federal countries, such as Brazil and Argentina, this takes place at state level. Chile illustrates an extreme case of lack of monitoring mechanisms for teacher education. Owing to the restricted functions of the Ministry of Education that resulted from policies during the military government (1973–1990), there is no specific department charged with regulating teacher education, nor is there a legal mechanism for government to

take the initiative in this regard.

In order to exert some influence on improvements in the teacher education system, the Chilean government in the mid-nineties decided to use an economic weapon to produce change. Thus a substantial fund was set aside for improvement projects allocated on a competitive basis to 17 university teacher education programmes. The proviso was that investment would be monitored. A five-year programme was put in place, and a special coordinating office within the Ministry of Education was set up to organize and oversee the projects (see Avalos 2005). Yet upon the completion of what was acknowledged as a successful programme, the Ministry's monitoring influence over teacher education was to a great extent discontinued.

Accreditation of teacher education programmes is a powerful means of stimulating improvement from within the institutions themselves and of dealing with the diversity of programmes offered in the Latin American countries. It assumes agreement on a common set of expectations regarding new teacher knowledge and teaching performance, and if these expectations are generated with enough participation on the part of stakeholders this could usher teacher education into a new period. However, accreditation also represents a different way of influencing the quality of teacher education, which is attuned to international practices and in line with market notions of competitiveness.

Accreditation of teacher education programmes as a form of quality control has become a strong policy intention in the Latin American region. Several countries are committed to establishing accreditation systems. Chile has had an experimental system directed at undergraduate programmes including teacher education since 2001 (which is now sanctioned by law), Argentina has had one since 1997 and Colombia since 1998. Peru recently passed a law to establish a system of accreditation for teacher education.

Because of the state's weak involvement in regulating teacher education, Chile is relying perhaps excessively on the power of accreditation to push 'quality' into teacher education. In line with this, a recent law made accreditation obligatory for medical and teacher education. However, the law cannot be enforced in autonomous institutions that do not get funding from the state, do not wish to be accredited and have students (perhaps viewing themselves as future teachers in the private system) who do not object to being part of a non-accredited programme. In this sense, the precise nature of quality control over all teacher programmes remains unclear, especially as the accredited status of a programme reflects only how the programme appears to a peer outsider during a short visit by comparison with how the members of the programme see themselves (institutional self-assessment). Given these restrictions, Chile and other countries are considering some form of certification of teacher knowledge and capacity as a pre-requisite to being employed in the public school system.

If one considers the situations sketchily described above, there is reason to conclude that power over teacher education can be differently managed and with different intensity depending on historical conditions. Thus one observes ‘power switches’ or power displacements from the centre to the states or provinces, and at times back to centre from ministerial departments to its dependent institutions, as, for example, in the process of formulating and negotiating a new curriculum. A case in point was the sudden power switch in Peru from the ministerial bureaucracy to the newly elected president’s office, expressed in the decision to measure all teacher education applicants’ school knowledge through a specific entrance test. Besides the fact that only a very small percentage of applicants were successful, the application of the test generated overall malaise among teacher education institutions (owing to a loss of students) and among the young people and their families who a year before, under different conditions, would have been accepted.

Regulatory schemes and the use of power and control within these schemes can, as suggested above, produce different reactions and have different effects from what they perhaps propose to produce. Weak regulatory frames can lead to anarchy, to teachers unprepared for the educational needs of the population, to producing more or fewer teachers than are needed, to having few teachers in scarce fields (such as maths and science) and too many in already saturated areas. Strong regulatory frames used with erratic switches of control (triggered by sudden changes in government policies) can provoke resistance among teacher education institutions and staff, as well as among student teachers. But they can also stifle the capacity of the institutions and their teacher educator staff to generate the improvements that are needed, as well as to monitor their results.

The symbiosis between teacher education structures and the school system

The historic development of teacher education in most countries but particularly in Latin America has followed the development and particularities of schools, the school system and its curriculum. Thus, normal schools in the 19th century responded to the need for teachers in the context of developing a public primary school system; in the second half of the 20th century as international policies were recommending universal primary education and a longer compulsory period, normal schools reorganized to prepare teachers for eight or nine years of basic education. Similarly, education for secondary teachers grew in tune with the more elitist nature of the demands, linked to universities, as in the case of Chile, or to higher normal schools, as in Argentina, or to both, as in Peru, Brazil and Colombia, among other countries. The only area where specialized teacher education has not followed the nature of the school is technical vocational education, because technical knowledge acquired in specialized institutions has been considered sufficient for those who teach in technical vocational schools.

One of the consequences of the links of teacher education to the stages of the school

system is the development at times of a stereotyped image of what teachers at each stage should be like. Thus, the concept of a generalist teacher, able to teach all subjects to all grades, is at the basis of the preparation of primary teachers, while conversely the concept of secondary teaching with one or two specializations acquired, preferably at university, is the preferred view for that level of schooling. Specialization is also favoured for pre-school teachers, sometimes forgetting the fluid nature of the passage from pre-school to formal schooling. While there is a logic to this symbiotic relationship between teacher education and levels in the school system, the changing demands of educational systems and of the student body that forms part of them requires greater flexibility on the part of teacher education curricula and less dependence on specific structures as such.

Chile provides a good example of the complex effects of a teacher education system that follows the school structure and of a school structure that stands in need of change. The Organic Law passed in 1990 stated that teachers should be prepared at universities as pre-school, general basic education and secondary education (academic stream) teachers, in tune with the 8–4 school structure in place since the 1965 educational reform. This teacher education system today is considered anachronistic. It produces teachers who must know all the curriculum subjects and be prepared to teach most of these in any grade from first to eighth. The gap between a basic school teacher and a secondary teacher's preparation is enormous. This situation has been aptly characterized as an unwarranted stratification of primary and secondary teacher preparation. It favours pedagogical preparation over content knowledge for primary teachers and content knowledge over pedagogy for secondary teachers (Rego & Namo de Mello 2004). It is not surprising then that learning results of Chilean eighth-graders as evidenced in the TIMSS 2003 international test is poor, and that around half of the teachers questioned about their preparation to teach selected topics in mathematics and science confess their weakness in this respect (UCE – Ministerio de Educación 2004).

The structure of the education system in the Chilean case can be considered as a frame that has inhibited curricular change in teacher education institutions. While legally institutions could experiment with a more flexible curriculum to allow some levels of content specialization for primary teachers (in fact, certain programmes add on some form of specialization), the actual operation of the educational structure does not allow it. For example, teachers who might specialize in mathematics or language upon arrival in a school could be asked to teach other subjects. Teacher preparation programmes may not wish to risk the boomerang effect of a teacher not being prepared (even if superficially) to teach all eight grades. With this context in mind, one can conclude with the late Argentinian educator Cecilia Braslavsky (2002: 25) that the 'structural crisis of teachers is linked to the structural crisis of the school and of the modern educational system'. And only when that crisis is faced and the framing structures are renewed or more appropriate measures are put in place will teacher edu-

cation change.

The condition of teachers

Discussions on teacher education often tend to take place in a vacuum, ignoring the actual lives of teachers and how they perceive their profession. Yet would-be future teachers sit in classrooms and interact with teachers in hallways and breaks, not only inadvertently learning the 'grammar' of teaching but also picking up perceptions of teachers about their work and the conditions surrounding it. While students may face their teachers as subjects, friends or enemies, they are also able to explain their teachers' behaviour in broader political or social terms. Perhaps this accounts for the fact that when large numbers of secondary students took to the streets in Chile over two weeks in 2006 to protest about the condition of public secondary education as compared with private schools, they did not target their teachers but the policies and conditions governing the public school system, which they judged as limiting their opportunities.

Teacher education, whether knowingly or not, is affected by the condition of teachers. Who decides to apply for a teacher education programme, who remains in the profession and why, and what perceptions teachers have of their work are all important elements that sooner or later impact on the preparation of teachers. In this respect, there are a growing number of studies that look at the conditions of teachers in Latin America (Tenti Fanfani 2005; Vaillant & Rossel 2006: Microdatos 2006) and provide key information that should feed into the self-assessment of teacher education programmes.

Tenti Fanfani's (2005) study of teachers in Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay identified commonalities and differences. While most teachers in Peru come from low-income groups and perceive themselves as such, teachers in Brazil are largely recruited from middle and upper-middle groups. In Argentina and Uruguay teachers mostly belong to middle and lower-middle social groups. A third of Chilean teachers come from families without higher education (Microdatos 2006) and this continues to be the case with an important number of new teachers (Avalos & Aylwin 2007). Teachers in the Dominican Republic and El Salvador (Vaillant & Rossel 2006) also come from homes with low cultural-capital backgrounds. Regardless of educational level attained (non-university higher or university education), teachers in all of these countries earn salaries that are lower than those in other professions with similar education, often forcing them to take another job in teaching or some other enterprise. In some countries, such as Nicaragua, teachers perceive their salary conditions as extremely low and as the reason why they have to take two or three jobs at a time (Vaillant & Rossel 2006).

In the case of candidates coming from lower socio-economic groups, teacher preparation may be their only opportunity to access higher education and be sure of employ-

ment. For example, in the countries studied by Tenti Fanfani (2005) teachers do not have difficulties finding their first job, and this so even in Peru, with its apparent over-production of primary-level teachers (Rivero 2003).

How teachers perceive their work is also an important factor in teacher education. Teachers in Latin America maintain both the 'vocational' sense of their task as teachers (inherited from the normal school tradition) and the notion of themselves as professionals, which also comes from 19th century influences (Tenti Fanfani 2005). While they may seem antagonistic, both views are equally embraced by teachers and not seen as contradictory. Many teacher education institutions consciously instil this sense of 'mission' and reserve a place in their courses for the discussion of teacher identity (Avalos 2002). But is this emphasis provided at the expense of professional expertise? Tenti Fanfani's study (2005) found that from a list of usually stated education goals over half of the teachers in the four countries studied considered as primordial the 'development of creativity and critical spirit', while less than a third felt it important to convey 'up-to-date and relevant knowledge'. Mexican teacher educators in a study by Tatto (2004) stated similar opinions regarding the main focus of in-service teacher education activities. Both Tenti and Tatto attribute this seeming disregard for the importance of solid content knowledge to approaches contained in educational reform discourse and documents favouring the active role of learners (Tatto 2004) as well as to the theoretical discourse of pedagogy courses in teacher education institutions (Tenti Fanfani 2005). Both authors, while acknowledging the importance of constructivist and non-banking education approaches, show concern for the lack of appreciation of the content of knowledge:

> It could be said that this emphasis on the development of complex capabilities when accompanied by a devaluing of education as appropriation (not memorization) of contents and cultural capital can, in general, have negative consequences … In other words, creativity and critical consciousness are empty concepts if they are not accompanied by a strong emphasis on the mastering of the tools of thought and action that have been coded and accumulated throughout history. (Tenti Fanfani 2005: 115-116).

These brief examples of the 'condition' of teachers are used to illustrate how who teachers are, how they are valued in society or how they see themselves and their work can permeate teacher education processes both positively and negatively. In many institutions in Latin America, the teacher educators are former teachers who share the condition described. Future teachers, especially those who enter teacher education institutions, with inadequate prior schooling experiences or cultural capital may not find sufficient opportunities to grow much beyond their entry status. On the other hand, the strong sense of vocation and of being important in the broader context of social development that accompanies many teachers throughout their professional lives should form a solid component of the ethos and practices of teacher education and not let themselves be overrun by policies that attempt to convert teachers into technocrats (Tenti Fanfani 2005).

Towards changing teacher education: Policies and possibilities

In the concluding section of this article, I wish to outline some of the existing initiatives to improve teacher education as represented in policy formulations and as judged according to their possibilities of implementation. These cover the broader policies to implement integrated systems of teacher education (initial and continuing teacher professional development), institutional building as exemplified in the remaining efforts to upgrade normal schools and to improve the teacher education curriculum, intercultural teacher education opportunities and the new mechanisms for quality control such as accreditation and certification of new teachers.

A single coordinating and regulating system for initial and continuing teacher education

The governments of Peru, Paraguay and Argentina (among others) have policies or are having policy discussions to improve the coordination of their systems of teacher education and thereby improve what they judge to be an inadequate offering of teacher education opportunities. Peru has gone through a donor-assisted programme to improve all 120 teacher education institutions and a centrally organized programme for continuing professional development known as PLANCAD (1996–2001). Under the former government a plan was discussed to improve both systems and strengthen the role of the Ministry of Education as a coordinating and regulating body, while at the same time decentralizing professional development opportunities to regional centres linked to university and teacher education institutions. It is unclear, under the present new government, how this central coordination will operate, as it has been put under the Higher Education Division of the Ministry of Education. The government of Paraguay has been involved in a similar effort to coordinate teacher education (pre- and in-service) through reorganizing the system at ministerial level. It has also revised the curricula of teacher education and is working on a system of standards to guide the education of future teachers. While there has been a substantial amount of groundwork on this, it is unclear to what extent the various recommendations from external consultants and the internal reviews will become firm reforms in the future. Argentina is moving ahead on a proposal to strengthen the coordination and improvement of teacher education and has appointed a Federal Commission to review initial and continuing teacher education. Despite the existence of a federal network of teacher education institutions, there is dissatisfaction with the current fragmentation of teacher education institutes, given that they are under provincial government management. A recent and very important initiative is the establishment by law of a National Institute of Teacher Education to provide the provincial institutions with academic guidance and possibly act more strongly to coordinate and streamline the current programmes. The law specifically indicates that the Institute will promote the development of national policies for teacher education (both initial and continuing), provide orientations for its curriculum, strengthen curriculum development and

research, and set regulations as needed by the management of the system.

Depending on how the Institute is organized and eventually operates, there may be resistance from the provincial institutes, especially if some of them are asked to limit their offerings or are required to close.

Completion of the building of teacher education as a tertiary-level system

There is much awareness in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua that current primary teacher preparation offered as upper-secondary education must be upgraded. However, only Honduras has begun to develop a new curriculum for existing normal schools undergoing a process of restructuring. Recent information, however, notes that there is political resistance to the process and that it may be called to a halt. Despite governmental understanding of the need to upgrade their primary teacher training, it has not been possible to move ahead in either Nicaragua or Guatemala. Resistance from staff at the institutes and from prospective students and their families who do not want a lengthening of their studies is delaying decisions. In Guatemala, some private universities are trying out experimental programmes to prepare teachers and one of the options is to get the involvement of the national university in offering support to those normal schools able and interested in upgrading themselves and deciding on the change of their programmes. This may be a wise move, rather than attempting to impose, at this moment of resistance, a new institution for teacher education.

Strengthening bilingual-intercultural teacher education institutions

Bolivia, Peru and Guatemala and other countries in the region such as Ecuador and Mexico have policies and institutions that focus on the preparation of teachers for indigenous-speaking areas. Bolivia, however, is one of the first to centre its educational reform on the provision of bilingual-intercultural education for Aymara, Quechua and Guaraní populations and has been described as ‘by far the most advanced of all being offered in the Andean countries’ (Kuper in Contreras & Talavera 2005). This has meant strengthening the normal institutes that provide such education, especially by ensuring that the curriculum is appropriate and that future teachers who speak the languages are enrolled. In Bolivia, as in Peru and Guatemala, there has been important assistance from the German aid agency GTZ to build up these institutions. The main challenge ahead, in the context of intercultural policies, is how to ensure that future teachers learn not only to teach in the language but also to produce the shift to Spanish learning in the primary school. This, at present, remains a challenge for the entire Bolivian education system (Contreras & Talavera 2005).

Mechanisms of quality control for teacher education

As noted, quality control has clearly marked the policies of the nineties in Peru, Chile,

Colombia and other countries in the region. These countries have or are in the process of establishing systems of accreditation for higher education undergraduate programmes that make it obligatory for teacher education. Colombia has such a system in place and Chile has already accredited around a third of existing teacher education programmes.

Furthermore, accreditation policies are moving towards requiring some form of evaluation of both knowledge and teaching competencies of future teachers at the end of their studies. Thus, Colombia performed the first application of a national examination for its future teachers in 1994, and Peru is considering a similar examination. There are discussions and views in Chile that some form of examination of content knowledge should be taken at university level, but as yet there are no legal ways of making this compulsory. The provision of teacher performance evaluation for teachers in their second year of teaching will provide information on the quality of their preparation.

A conclusion

In closing this paper, one may well ask: how does the analysis of change in Latin American teacher education reflect or help one understand the issues faced by developing countries such as South Africa? There are perhaps three ways in which the links may at least be outlined: the pressure for quality in education and the pressure for equity in its provision; the intermingling of pressures to be part of an international globalized society and the resistance offered by historical and institutional frames; and, finally, how teacher education deals with 'those left behind' in the educational system.

The pressure for quality in the educational systems is part of the demands of all countries, and particularly of poor countries, in the world. In the eyes of policy-makers and to a certain extent of the public at large, there is an intimate, almost direct link between student learning and what teachers do in classrooms and schools. This explains, up to a point, why some reforms in Latin America initially focused on providing schools with materials and teachers with instructional guides, rather than examining the nature of teacher education. Only at a second stage did policy-makers direct their attention to teacher education institutions, either by converting them into higher education institutions and/or by exerting external pressure through curriculum frameworks, economic incentives for change, regulatory standards, etc. In itself, this attention to teacher education on the part of governments exemplifies a positive move to deal with poor school quality as opposed to taking on the neo-conservatives' discourse that blames 'teachers' bad faith' or the public management of schools. In this respect, the efforts to improve teacher education in South Africa, Latin America and other developing and developed countries are welcome. The problem is that the available evidence shows that the changes are either slow or not working.

This paper has tried to show the effect of 'frame' factors on change and thereby stimulate thinking and hopefully research into how these frame factors operate in the context of reforms and change. In today's globalized world the direction of change is not the result of each country working out a unique solution in isolation. Influences from international organizations such as UNESCO and the OECD and from donor and lending agencies, as well from the many meetings attended by educational authorities around the world, affect the development of home policies and reforms. Solutions to problems tend to be global not only because they may be imposed (as a condition for aid) but also because they are agreed upon by policy-makers and often by academics. South Africa, Botswana and Chile have participated (at their own cost) in the TIMSS international assessments of student learning to gauge how they compare with those in countries considered as models for economic and social development. The application of global solutions, however, requires attention to contextual factors, and in turn to frame factors that may affect change. The 'normal school' frame is 'invisible' to policy-makers in many Latin American countries, except when their ex-graduates come to the offices of a new Minister to suggest that the solution to education lies in restoring these schools (as happens regularly in Chile). Yet unless the frame is made visible, and the proposed or enacted changes take its restrictions into account, these changes may turn out to be superficial or fictitious. Restrictions posed by an inadequate school structure were totally invisible to reformers in Chile in the nineties and to an extent still are. Although unsatisfactory student learning results have been attributed to inadequate teacher preparation, the solutions offered, such as accreditation and certification, do not solve the problem. As long as teacher education continues to follow the requirements of an inadequate school structure and curriculum, teachers simply will not be able to respond to what it takes to prepare students for success on national assessments, and much less on the TIMSS assessments (except for those who benefit from exclusive private education).

This article has not been able to deal with any detail on the effect of teacher preparation on the educational results of the poor and more marginalized groups in Latin American countries, such as their indigenous people. Yet it is perhaps here where policies of some countries can be of use to others. Bolivia and Guatemala have moved far ahead with their intercultural-bilingual policies, the production of new curricula and the establishment of teacher education programmes directed at the indigenous cultures. In general, the Andean countries have assisted each other in the field of bilingual and multicultural education through the influence of the Programme of Intercultural Bilingual Education supported among other organizations by the German GTZ (López 2000). But these policies mean more than teaching Aymara or Maya children in their language; they also mean the building of bridges between the Spanish and the indigenous cultures. And this is a far more difficult endeavour that requires uncovering and dealing with 'frame' factors. One of these, at a micro level, is what Samuel (2005) calls the 'biographical forces' that act as a residual force when

teachers have to face calls for change of direction, such as understanding a different culture or being asked to alter their views on teaching. Teachers' working conditions as noted in this paper also pose other frames. As long as only the teachers of the affluent work in educationally appropriate conditions, are offered better in-service opportunities, do not have to teach in more than one school and specialize in their subject of teaching, the distance between the rich and the poor will remain difficult to bridge.

Change is a complex process and there are many ways of analysing how it works or does not work. The examples offered in this paper may perhaps help to assess the conditions for change and the frame factors that affect countries such as South Africa.

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Critical perspectives on teacher education in neo-liberal times: Experiences from Ethiopia and Namibia

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Abstract

This article combines analysis from teacher education in Ethiopia and Namibia with recent examples of neo-liberal influences on national education sectors. The article describes the national teacher education reforms and analyses the forces of and damage caused by the 'liberal virus' by looking at the plasma teacher phenomenon in Ethiopia and critical practitioner inquiry in Namibia. Our findings show how neo-liberalism when entering the education arena reduces teachers to technical caretakers and transforms what was once introduced as progressive and critical practices of education into separated entities following technical rationalities. Teacher education is also silently transformed to develop students and teachers alike into consumers in the educational marketplace through the neo-liberal governmentality that turns people into tightly controlled individuals who insist on claiming to be free in a globalized world. This article not only illustrates the damage inflicted by the liberal virus, but recommends the practice of contextualized critical thinking at all levels of education as proposed in critical practitioner inquiry practices.

Public education systems worldwide have since the early 1990s more than ever been threatened by neo-liberalism. In essence, neo-liberalism looks at public activities, such as education and social welfare, first and foremost as costly commodities that should be put to a test in an 'open' market just like any other commodity. As such, neo-liberalism also threatens the humanistic democratic rights and value systems behind publicly financed systems. As critical scholars in these difficult days of neo-liberalism, we have the responsibility to question the neo-liberal hegemony. Our present inquiry into teacher education and related issues in Ethiopia and Namibia has been undertaken as part of this responsibility and our outlook departs from a global

perspective encompassing the metaphor of an 'infection' or 'virus.'

The liberal virus

> Towards the end of the twentieth century a sickness struck the world. Not everyone died, but all suffered from it. The virus which caused the epidemic was called the 'liberal virus'. (Amin, 2004: 6)

The liberal virus continues to influence our experiences in the 21st century to the extent that we today can consider it a pandemic and part of common sense, as defined by Gramsci (1971). Neo-liberalism, the cause of the liberal virus, turns human activities and endeavours into commodities following the discourses of free trade and freedom of choice. With this commoditization process being coupled with positive concepts like 'free' and 'freedom', it easily becomes accepted as a token for liberal democracy and taken for granted by many as a normal and positive ingredient of all aspects of life, including education.

However, behind the scenes in the Western core countries the welfare state and public education are about to be dismantled. Public education was introduced around half a century ago as a humanitarian project of solidarity and part of the historical compromise between labour and capital after World War II. Public education systems are undermined through the introduction of measures like voucher systems, in which the public costs of educating a child follow the child even where the child's parents prefer private schooling. The consequence is that public funds are turned into the private profits of educational enterprises. Emphasis on competition, testing and efficiency demands further undermine public education following the leading trends in the US, which Zeichner (2006) has characterized as a reintroduction of apartheid education. A similar erosion of the public education system is taking place in other core capitalist countries like Sweden, through a combination of a voucher system and so-called independent schools, i.e. private schools. It is estimated on the basis of data from the Swedish National Agency for Education (2007) that from 2008 around 50% of all secondary schools in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, will be run by private enterprises. The effects of neo-liberal policies on education in Australia and New Zealand were thoroughly analysed in a recent issue of the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* (Volume 20, No. 3). In it Davies & Bansel (2007: 249) confirm the trends in Western core countries of the 'largely invisible installation of neo-liberal technologies and practices' of surveillance and end-product-driven teaching. Such installations are supposed to turn individuals into free competitors in an 'open' market. Education is expected to work as one of the invisible forces to create the new market-adjusted individuals through these measures.

Meanwhile, development in peripheral countries in the South continues to be marketed as a repetition of the Western development paradigm. This is done not least by measures installed by their own governments, with the effect that development is

understood as becoming part of the global system of trade, production and profit. Less is said about the unspoken systemic humanitarian side-effects that are reduced to individual dysfunctions when the neo-liberal promises are not fulfilled. Even though education in the mainstream is today part of the neo-liberal disease, it can also be turned into the cure, in both core and peripheral countries, provided we challenge the present mainstream practices in all their forms and develop educative alternatives.

Global trends on national grounds

The above references to educational developments in the US, Sweden, Australia and New Zealand show that the general trends of neo-liberal expansions are played out differently in the social and cultural fields of different national arenas owing to the dynamic interplay between power structures and cultural traditions (Steensen 2006). This also happens in countries like Ethiopia and Namibia, when claims for commod-itization and privatization, management and efficiency, as well as learner or student-centred education enter the field of education as integral parts of the neo-liberal agenda in peripheral countries. The following analysis starts with teacher education reforms and moves into recent areas of neo-liberal influences that have already begun to endanger the humanitarian aspects of national teacher education policies and programmes.

The Ethiopian experiences

The present system of teacher education in Ethiopia goes back to the objectives and strategies of the 1994 Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia. Some years later a task force was created to develop the Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO), a policy programme that was initiated in 2003. One of the tasks of TESO was to do away with the perceived unprofessionalism of teachers, who demanded salary increases, let the quality of education fall and were considered to be elitists denying room for the motto of 'education for all'. The TESO policy represented a paradigm shift –according to its own writings (MOE 2003) – that officially followed the international trends of active learner-focused education operationally installed through a neo-liberal filter. The implementation of such a strategy included changes in both the structure and content of school curricula, through reductions of programmes from four to three years at the universities and by moving away from subject to vocational emphasis, including a practicum for teacher education. New areas like action research, civics and ethics, English communication skills and ICT were also included, all being reduced to packages to be applied for specific professions.

Furthermore, teacher education institutions, which are meant to be centres of know-ledge production through critical thinking and to establish 'quality education', have since 2003 started to become institutions controlled by centrally planned and stand-ardized curricula produced at the Education Ministry for all schools and universities

in the country. This is happening despite the differences in experience and resources at institutional level. However, observations and findings from interviews with teacher educators who are expected to implement the new policies show gaps between the rhetoric of policy documents and what the state-owned media preach on the one hand and what is practised on the ground on the other (Engida 2006; Kassahun 2006).

Critical scholars who are familiar with the situation in Ethiopia worry about educational development in the country. Negash (2006: 48) claims 'the Ethiopian experience is that of mistaking modernization for Westernization, that is, a process whereby the borrowing of Western technology and rationality meant the progressive dissolution of the Ethiopian mentality'. Hussein (2006: 13) examines the value conflicts in teacher education practices in Ethiopia and concludes 'the practice of pedagogy as a process of transferring and learning as a process of consuming knowledge are what neo-liberals reinforce' and 'our education is under a battering influence of neo-liberalism of variegated local manifestations'. One of these manifestations is discussed in greater detail below together with the far-reaching consequences it might have for teacher education in the country.

The plasma teacher phenomenon

This phenomenon is officially called 'educational satellite television programmes' but is commonly known as 'plasma' or 'surrogate' teachers (Lemma 2006a). All students in grades 9 to 12 watch lessons in natural sciences, mathematics, English and civics that are presented on plasma television sets. In principle, the role of the ordinary teacher in the classroom is to unlock the cage where the screen is placed and to slide the screen in front of the class and eventually to introduce 'the topic' by writing it on the board. The teacher has five minutes for this task before the transmission starts, following a nationally directed time schedule. During the entire lesson the teacher is then reduced to a spectator just like the students, until the plasma television programme ends. This is followed by an eight to ten-minute summary by the teacher on the lesson just transmitted. After that, students rush to next lesson, where they meet another subject and another teacher but the same 'media oracle', and the whole cycle resumes. Throughout these 'plasma lessons', 80 to 90 students remain seated in a room designed for 35 students. This summarized description of the situation is based on classroom observations and discussions with teachers on two occasions separated by six months and is further analysed below (Lemma 2006b; Dahlström 2006).

The general impression is one of passivity and uni-directional lectures, contrary to the officially proclaimed student-centred policy. Actually, as stated in the policy documents referred to above, teachers have been evaluated as 'useless' and are therefore replaced so that the 'teaching media' can speak directly to the students without interruption from an intermediate 'obstacle'. Teachers have nothing to do during the lectures of the plasma teacher and students try to follow the speedy lesson tempo at the

beginning of each lesson. Eventually, many students lose interest and turn into passive spectators of the plasma teachers as the TV lectures progress. Occasionally, students are asked to carry out tasks that are framed by a ticking clock on the screen indicating the 20 or 40 seconds allocated per task. Most students do not cope with this situation and are not able to finish the tasks on time. After all, it does not matter if students attempt to carry out the tasks or not; the answers will appear on the screen at the end of the allotted time. To this we can add the following observations: The plasma teachers are not Ethiopians but foreigners, and the lessons are carried out in perfect English, but with a foreign accent alien to students in Ethiopian secondary classrooms. Many lessons are culturally framed within alien contexts. For example, an observed civics lesson referred to what happens among the audience in the darkness of a cinema in South Africa. The whole classroom situation is such that the classroom teachers are dehumanized and deskilled.

The introduction of plasma teachers has been very successful, if the intention was to bypass what has been evaluated as inefficient classroom teachers. Teachers claim that their job has become much easier, as they do no longer need to prepare lesson plans and do not have to execute the lessons in class. Instead, the ready-made plasma lessons that are uniform for all students in all parts of the country enter the classroom despite the contextual differences of students. Furthermore, the policy of continuous assessment has been turned into one multiple-choice final examination per subject given at the end of each semester, since the whole semester is taken up by plasma teacher lectures.

Our observations pose many contextual questions related to the future role of teacher education, the status of the teaching profession and the vulnerability of high-tech solutions as the remedy to educational problems in remote African situations. We also leave it to readers of this article to put themselves in the shoes of the Ethiopian students who must watch TV sets for hours, five days a week, and over four years of high school education. During these years of high school education students are up against an inanimate object, the plasma TV, that does not have any feelings or that never interacts with them. They have neither the time nor place to form study groups to help each other, nor to approach their teachers for discussions on concepts they are unable to grasp, as no time is made available for these purposes.

What is the future of teacher education when plasma teachers perform the lessons? On one occasion we found a school totally deserted by teachers and the administration (Lemma 2006a). We were told that they had gone for a meeting and the caretakers or guards of the school, as they are called in Ethiopia, had been instructed to open the classrooms for the students, who then arranged their own lessons with the plasma teacher. It has also been observed that eventually, out of frustration over the lack of opportunity to exercise their responsibilities, teachers start to arrive at school late or even to be absent for petty reasons. This makes very little difference to the students, since the surrogate plasma teachers replace the classroom teachers. Teachers are

systematically pushed out of their profession, where they are paid meagre salaries for 'doing nothing', let alone instilling critical thinking in the growing minds of students. What kind of teacher education is needed in such situations? Can caretakers or technical TV operators replace qualified teachers in the classroom? Parents are worried about the teachers' responsibilities in school as they do not know who is accountable for the education of their children. Purely out of concern and professional commitment, many teachers developed their own schemes for tutoring students during evenings and over weekends to compensate for the lack of learning during plasma lessons. At times even this became contradictory to its purpose, as further questions arose amongst parents about teachers' activities during ordinary school hours, as students and teachers were engaged in education seven days a week. These extra efforts eventually died out, since they were not remunerated or officially acknowledged as part of career development for teachers. In fact they were indirectly discouraged, since they undermined the efforts put into the plasma teachers by the government. Total media solutions to educational issues are hence questionable mainly because of educational concerns, not to mention their technical vulnerability, especially in the case of rural schools. These schools are affected by the uncontrolled power of nature, manifested in the inconsistency and unpredictability of electrical power supply and repeated failures to receive satellite images, as well as a shortage of petrol for generators. Unprepared and deprofessionalized teachers and students simply sit idle until 'the show' is put on stage again.

It is difficult to refrain from commenting when one realizes the damage the plasma teachers do to students, teachers and education in general. Outrage arises when one understands that this is systematically planned and installed through neo-liberal common sense under the official banners of development and improvement through efficiency and transparency for the good of the citizenry. This centralization of curricula and lesson development operates to create external control and ultimate profits for some, because plasma screens and pre-recorded media lessons are expensive and require the involvement of World Bank loans for countries like Ethiopia. This is occurring while the meagre local government revenues are used to pay teachers who are reduced to plasma television operators and who are nicknamed DJs (disc-jockeys) by students.

Most importantly, plasma teachers remove critical thinking from the teaching and learning process and introduce the delivery of packages as the qualifying entity to success. The lessons from the Ethiopian scenario clearly show that education is a commodity available on the global market, whether in Ethiopia or in South Africa, where the plasma lessons are developed.

The Namibian experience

Promising counter-actions to the model described above have been developed in Namibia. The teacher education reform process in Namibia started at a national level in

1993 with strong support from international donor agencies like DfID (UK), NORAD (Norway), Sida (Sweden) and USAID (USA). The national teacher education reform was both an attempt to continue what had been developed in exile as part of the liberation struggle and an attempt to disrupt the second-tier legacy of apartheid education. This scenario was complicated by the new marketplace for international actors that Namibia's independence created, seen by some donors as a testing ground and springboard for future support in a 'new' South Africa (Dahlström, 2002).

The Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) was developed as a national programme during the 1990s when the neo-liberal tendencies in the education sector were not as aggravating and aggressive as today. Rather, the most significant influence came from the changes in the East-West dichotomy that had started to be dissolved and was replaced by the discourses of globalization, which from a subaltern perspective initially was discursively recognized as an indication of inclusion, but with obvious displacements not least in the political arena. At that time, the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) was transformed from a liberation movement into a political party with governmental power and related long-term effects also on educational influences and outlooks, mainly pressurized by external political forces.

Dahlström (2002) identified three major areas for the war of position over the preferential right of interpretation in the teacher education reform process. These were (1) the creation of an imperative reform framework, (2) the altering of programme imprints and (3) the shaping of institutional agency. The two power blocs in this war of position included both international and national identities. These identities operated strategically together at times and at other times followed their own agendas. What came out of this process was a transposed reform in a layered society. The transposed reform was moulded through a prolonged reform process and an intellectual war of position. This war of position was framed by two dichotomized positions. One was a conceptual basis of a visionary society carried through from the liberation struggle through critical pedagogy and the other was a structural basis of a layered society with roots in the previous apartheid system through neo-liberal and neo-behaviourist educational ideas. The question posed today is what has happened with some of the traits that had their background in the 'visionary society-critical pedagogy' bloc of counter-hegemonic ideas and practices? To look into possible answers to this question we will analyse developments within the conceptions and practices of critical practitioner inquiry (CPI).

Critical practitioner inquiry in the South

CPI belongs to the critical action research camp that emphasises contextual studies as a basis for practical interventions. An early description of CPI reads: 'CPI is an educational approach based on a critical pedagogy, which addresses unconventional education issues, broadens the base for what is recognized as common knowledge

about education and develops a more dynamic relationship between education theory and practice. It also goes beyond conventional research methodologies in an attempt to develop tacit educational knowledge into professional educational repertoires' (Dahlström 1999). The background to CPI is found in educational initiatives in Botswana and Angola in the 1980s. At that time local school-based alternatives that followed a critical tradition of learner-centred education were developed as joint activities with teachers and students in village primary schools in northern Botswana. These efforts were different from the activities analysed by Tabulawa (2003) as part of the spread of neo-liberal capitalism and learner-centred education through a contemporary USAID-sponsored project, which eventually gained a hegemonic position in Botswana during the 1980s. The localized efforts to establish a critical alternative developed into a series of reading materials in both Setswana (the national language in Botswana) and English. This material was based on contributions from teachers and students, and printed by the Teaching Aid Production Unit (TAPU) in Francistown, under titles such as *Makaleng – our village*, *Mr Molobe's minibus and other stories* and *Voices from children in Cape Town, South Africa*, the last example based on an exchange cooperation with a children's magazine, *Molo Songololo*, in Cape Town.

The initiatives in Angola were carried out as part of a teacher education programme called the Integrated Teacher Training Programme (ITTP) for untrained and exiled Namibian teachers working in a refugee camp organized by SWAPO during the liberation struggle. The school projects that these teachers carried out as part of their training were embryonic versions of future CPI reports dealing with issues related to the teachers' daily activities in the classrooms, integrated with contextual and theoretical perspectives. When independence came in 1990 the ITTP continued as an alternative programme for the training of primary school teachers in the northern part of Namibia until the national reform process started in 1993. During the period 1990–1992 the CPI approach was further developed through school support projects, a teachers' magazine called *The Frontline Teacher* and other publications as integrated parts of the training programme. The ambition was to further the community-related and critical pedagogical practices that had started in exile and to show examples of alternative developments before the national reform process started.

CPI became a concept in the new BETD programme in Namibia, developed jointly by the then two ministries of education, namely the Ministry of Higher Education, Vocational Training, Science and Technology (MHEVTST) and the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (MBEC), organized under the National Institute of Educational Development (NIED), where many of the international donor agencies were also housed. The general steering document for the programme, the BETD Broad Curriculum, identifies eight professional themes. These themes are the central focus around which the programme is organized throughout the three years of studies. One of these themes is 'developing a critical inquiry approach into one's own practice and context (MHEVTST & MBEC 1998: 6). This theme relates mainly to the students'

school-based studies and studies in Education Theory and Practice, two central parts of the programme. CPI originates from critical pedagogy and its introduction into the BETD represented ideas that according to Dahlström (2002: 186-187) –

- attempted to break with the common reductionist view that educational practice was applied theory;
- challenged the preferential right of interpretation, which academics had assigned to themselves over educational practice;
- acknowledged the development of theories *about* practice as an academic area in its own right, but did not recognize the reduction of these theories to technical dogma that practitioners were expected to follow;
- supported the development of a theory *of* practice based on practitioner inquiry;
- supported the documentation of accounts of educational change, which collectively contributed to a written knowledge base of education.

The report on the impact of CPI in the BETD programme published as an Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) document (ADEA 2005) shows that there are inherent potentials in the CPI approach but also problems with its application in the BETD programme. Van Graan (2005: 63) concludes her assessment of the impact of CPI in three points:

- Being critical and critical reflection do not happen automatically, although all educators interviewed are aware that it is good practice and realize the need for it to happen more continuously.
- A CPI model cannot be adopted if teacher educators feel unsure of the model. To get more confidence in the model is to have at least a thorough understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of critical theory and constructivism that inform this model.
- Critical reflection is not going to happen overnight; those committed to its implementation need to keep the vision alive. However, this can only happen within a clearly defined policy framework for Educator Development and Support.

A review by Carneal (2001: 1) of a publication with selected CPI reports written by Namibian educators (edited by Dahlström (2000)), including teacher educators and teachers, states

> … instead of scholars passing down knowledge, the practitioners in this book are creating it on their own by accessing and reflecting on academic literature and their personal experiences. It is a book about people involved in education and the daily life of a classroom practicing what they preach through the use of “practitioner inquiry” and “action research” to improve their teaching techniques, get messages across, and ameliorate the educational environment.

The need for teacher educators to experience CPI in their role as practitioners was soon realized. Therefore, all teacher educators at the four colleges were offered the opportunity to attend courses with the aim of carrying out inquiries into their own situation as teacher educators. This opportunity was used by a total of 78 teacher edu-

cators during the period 1992–2000, i.e. around 50% of all teacher educators from the four colleges of education, even though the large majority came from the three traditionally black colleges in the northern parts of the country. The executive summary of the ADEA (2005: 15-16) document reports that 'teacher educators value critical reflection as a strategy for solving problems and changing practice', but also that many teacher educators 'have a shallow and poor understanding of CPI, in that it operates on the technical rather than the critical level'. The ADEA report also concludes that some BETD graduates continue to use CPI in their teaching after training.

As Dahlström (2002) notes following a Gramscian analysis of the reform process, a core group of organic intellectuals, grounded in conceptions about liberation that was engraved through the opportunities in the reform process, carried the reform further through individual and institutional agencies. However, a combination of new career opportunities amongst the organic intellectuals, thus leaving the colleges or moving to administrative posts, and the recruitment of teacher educators from the traditional intellectual camp (read: University of Namibia) undermined the reform inscriptions and created transposed practices also in the area of CPI. Thus, CPI moved closer to a technical rationality, in line with neo-liberal ideas. In addition, the introduction of the BETD programme was an uphill struggle for those who believed in its philosophical, political and educational intentions in line with CPI. The uphill struggle was created by the historical imprints in the minds of those who had served the previous 'regime of truth' that had created an educational tradition based on 'religious metaphysics and Anglo-Saxon empiricism' according to Callewaert (1999: 228). Powerful donor representatives who carried with them neo-behaviourist or neo-liberal preferences of modernization supported these imprints. The third 'problem' was the foreign academic scholars (sometimes named 'suitcase academics') riding high on their powerful positions, who were all sceptical of CPI and similar 'progressive' ideas. This led to a situation where the philosophical, political and educational basis for the new reform was soon left behind at the drawing table, i.e. as promises in steering documents. Meanwhile, the invisible crafts of the liberal virus surfaced as worries about efficiency, control, competencies and observable outcomes. These worries were soon transformed to implants of more neo-liberal managerial aspects, teacher-proof control mechanisms, reductionist views on curricula and syllabi issues, a return to a focus on testing, and the transformation of programmatic initiatives like the CPI into technical rationalities.

Although the challenge of neo-liberalism is eminent to the education system in the South, the CPI is still a critical counter-hegemonic force in Namibia and elsewhere, like Ethiopia, as indicated in the works of teacher educators like Hussein (2006) and others. Ali (2005: 4) concludes his reflection on a Masters course in Ethiopia for university lecturers that followed the CPI approach as follows: 'I would now argue that unlike the age-old assimilative philosophies of the north, CPI is open for assimilation and contextualization. CPI can be systematically adapted to fit the current African

context and the need to transform unjust institutional and societal structures. I strongly believe that CPI is indeed a pedagogy of hope for Africa – a pedagogy that could serve as a vehicle for dialogue among cultures and civilizations by paralyzing hegemonism, monopolism, and other stumbling blocks to such a dialogue'.

We have learned the following about the hegemony of neo-liberalism in education systems of the South from the two scenarios of Ethiopia and Namibia:

1. In the former Ethiopian case, the education system was already exposed to the colonial capitalist movement in Africa, particularly during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie in the 1970s (Zeleza 2004). That exposure has made the Ethiopian system highly vulnerable to the neo-liberal virus, as its transformation into the globalization system by way of plasma teachers was quite easy and rapid.
2. The latter Namibian scenario saw CPI founded in refugee areas during the struggle for independence. Semi-liberated Namibians, detached from the hegemony of the North, had only each other and the trees under which they were learning. Critical thinking emerged from their own contextual experiences. It is this development that is now falling prey to globalization and commoditization of education through the conditional donations of the World Bank. This might drive the Namibian education system further away from its critical and contextual approach. However, thanks to the resilience of the Namibian education system it is still thriving and overcoming the commoditization of education and the suppression of contextual and critical development of education by furthering the humanistic ideas on which the post-independence educational policies and CPI rest.

Transformative characteristics of the liberal virus

In general, the liberal virus has a tendency to transform what have been introduced as critical pedagogical alternatives like action research (including its 'progressive' branches like CPI) and learner-centred education (LCE) into technical rationalities that fits the commoditization of education. Thus, CPI is stripped to a device for more efficient classroom management and LCE becomes a way for teachers to escape their educational responsibilities either through meaningless group work that recycles ignorance or through the replacement of teachers by an image on a screen telling alien 'truths'.

The transformative character of neo-liberalism is played out through its invisibility. This invisibility creates an imaginary consensus that gives the impression that we are all talking the same language and that we in principle also want the same things to be accomplished. For example, who can question learner-centred education if by that we discursively mean that the learner is at the centre of education? This consensus gets under our skin as common sense and becomes taken for granted. When the consensus has entered this docile stage the road is open to reduce educational practices into technical formulae easy to measure and manage to create the desired efficiency and

control. This process, following in the footsteps of Thatcherism, will wash away all tendencies towards critical pedagogical perspectives and practices. Tendencies that scholars and practitioners might want to bring into the educational arena as signs of 'education' in its sense of *Bildung*, i.e. something broader and deeper than common formal education and schooling aiming at the production of 'useful' consumers, will eventually be considered redundant.

Neo-liberal processes in transition are difficult to detect. They have a treacherous face validity that is often coupled to the 'freedom' discourse, which can be theoretically analysed through the concept of governmentality. The neo-liberal governmentality reconfigures people as productive economic entrepreneurs of their own lives and the education system is an efficient institution for such reconfigurations to create the 'docile subjects who are tightly governed and who, at the same time, define themselves as free' (Davies & Bansel 2007: 249).

For the sake of preserving the right to be critical and remain on top of solving contextual problems of one's own community using any and all available resources, further investigations are necessary. It suffices to suggest the following:

1. Investigate the various approaches of the liberal virus that overwhelm the education systems of the South in the name of 'free' trade and 'freedom' of choice.
2. Develop strategies for counteracting such aggressions in national and local community arenas and sustaining the right to be critical in order to learn from one's own contextual practices.
3. Investigate mechanisms to mobilize democratic forces from both the North and the South to protect the principles of CPI and other critical aspects of education systems of the South from being engulfed by the liberal virus.

It is only when we are faced with examples of the 'ultimate solutions' of the neo-liberal processes of transformation of educational practices, like the plasma teacher, that we realize the enormous damage it causes to students, teachers, teacher education and the populace at large. However, there is still hope that critical practitioner inquirers and other dedicated educators, who continue to subscribe to their responsibilities as organic intellectuals, can make a difference and use the degrees of freedom available in hegemonic times, and remain optimistic as suggested by the title of a book by the oral historian Studs Terkel (2003): *Hope Dies Last: Keeping the Faith in Difficult Times*.

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Learning to teach in post-devolution UK: A technical or an ethical process?

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Abstract

The early stages of professional development for teachers have been the subject of considerable policy change throughout the UK in recent years. While there have always been some differences in approach between the four countries of the UK, there have been many similarities. The end of the 20th century saw the most significant devolution of power, including powers for education policy-making, from the UK government based in England to the three smaller countries of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

This article reports from a scoping study that compares policy on initial teacher education and early professional development in the four countries of the UK in the post-devolution context. While there is much evidence of similarities in attempting to define teaching through written statements in the form of competences or standards, there is also evidence that the particular national contexts have an influence. This is found when the more value-based aspects of teaching are examined and there is a variation in the ways in which the ethical dimensions of teaching are adumbrated in policy documents.

Introduction

Early professional learning is a critical stage in teacher formation. It is during this period that beginning teachers make the challenging transition from focusing on teaching as a personal 'performance' to a concern with student learning and an appreciation of their wider professional role. During the transition from initial teacher education, through induction to early professional development (EPD), new teachers develop their command of pedagogic, curriculum and school knowledge and become 'insiders' within 'communities of practice' that encompass an increasingly wide range of partners. Early experiences of teaching shape practitioners' commitment to reflective practice, collegiality and lifelong learning. Policies to support professional learning

in the early years of practice have an important contribution to make in improving teaching quality and learning outcomes in schools, as well as improving retention and professional well-being.

In the South African context Sayed (2004) makes a similar point in suggesting that recent reforms in teacher education there signify a conceptual recasting of teaching as ‘education’, rather than a narrow form of ‘schooling’. He suggests that the moves to unify the formerly segregated teacher education institutions within higher education institutions are part of a ‘substantive and fundamental change’ (Sayed 2004: 261), rather than being the superficial reform that some have suggested. In this article we examine a context that is very different but that may nevertheless shed some light on the current processes of change in Africa. In the United Kingdom, recent moves to devolve responsibility for education policy (including teacher education policy) away from the Westminster government to new national assemblies or parliaments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, have created an opportunity for greater divergence. For example, as in South Africa, Scotland had already been moving to relocate all teacher education within the university sector, whereas in England, in part owing to problems of teacher supply, teacher *training* (as it is called there) was increasingly taking place away from the academic sphere, in the workplace. Similarly, there appears to be greater divergence in the definitions of teaching expressed in the regulatory documents governing entry to the profession. This is the main concern of this article.

A concern with improving professional development for teachers has been a feature of recent education policy-making across all four parts of the United Kingdom. Cross-national variation in response to this policy area is to be expected, given both the contrasting histories and traditions of the four nations but also the devolution of legislative powers from the UK Parliament that has occurred since 1998. A separate Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive were established following The Scotland Act of 1998. The Government of Wales Act 1998 set up a separate assembly with devolved powers in Wales, albeit without the tax-varying powers afforded to the Scottish Parliament. The Belfast Agreement 1998 established the Northern Irish Assembly, suspended on 12 October 2002 and restored on 8 May 2007 following The Northern Ireland (St Andrews Agreement) Act 2007. Political devolution has opened up new spaces for ‘local’ inflection of trans-national policy agendas in education. In Scotland, devolution has ‘enabled the continuation of Scottish distinctiveness in education, while simultaneously beginning to open up some of its more traditional aspects’ (Ozga & Jones 2006: 9). National strategies to promote early professional learning include the ‘Made in Wales’ framework for continuous development for teachers (GTCW 2005), a revised framework of National Professional Standards in England (TDA 2006), the integrated teacher partnership model for initial, induction and early professional development (EPD) in Northern Ireland (DENI 1998), and the construction of ‘benchmarks’ and distinctive professional development pathways in

Scotland (QAA 2000).

This article draws on a scoping study of the structures and processes in place to support initial teacher education (ITE), induction and early professional development in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The project was called *Learning to Teach in Post-Devolution UK,* lasted for one year (August 2006 to August 2007) and was funded by the Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) of the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The study was carried out by a cross-national team of researchers, who led a series of seminars in each of the four countries of the UK. Each seminar provided an in-country analysis of the current system for early professional development. The objectives of the scoping study were as follows:

1. To provide a descriptive map of current policy and practice in each context in relation to:
   a) The performance-based *'standards'* or *'benchmarks'* that map the underpinning knowledge required by beginning teachers
   b) Policies for the *assessment* of professional learning
   c) *Partnership arrangements* in initial teacher preparation
   d) Form and focus of *induction arrangements* for newly qualified teachers (NQTs)
   e) Pathways for *continuing professional development* in the early career phase
2. To identify trans-national policy trends by close mapping of similarities and differences in policy and practice in each national context; to produce a diagram of early professional formation in the four countries of the United Kingdom.
3. To interrogate teaching and learning policy in each context to consider what this tells us about becoming a teacher in the four parts of the United Kingdom today and how this might inform the development of models of early professional learning.

The purpose of this article is to provide an indication of the major similarities and differences that the study has identified and to provide some insight into possible explanations for the patterns that have been identified. It is important to emphasize at the outset that this is very much a study of policy rather than of practice.

There was a move across the whole of the United Kingdom towards performance-based professional standards for teacher education in the 1990s. However, the conceptions of professional knowledge and professional learning that frame these standards bear the inflection of each national context (McKie et al. 2005). In order to explicate emerging points of divergence and similarity, an analysis of key policy texts shaping teacher education in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales was conducted. The approach was based on earlier work on policy and practice in England and Scotland (Menter et al. 2006b). Policy texts outlining the statutory requirements of the national framework for teacher education in each of the four devolved contexts were analysed. Key policy documents were drawn from the English Training and

Development Agency (TDA), the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS, formed April 2006) of the National Assembly for Wales (NAfW), the General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) and Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED), and the Department of Education, Northern Ireland (DENI). Policies for the governance and quality assurance of provision were also considered in order to reveal patterns of accountability across the UK. The quality of initial teacher education programmes is inspected by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) in England, Estyn in Wales (the office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) in Scotland and the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) in Northern Ireland.

Overview of current provision

Before addressing the influences on teacher education policy in the UK, some of the key demographics of pupil and teacher numbers and an indication of local administrative arrangements in each of the four component parts of the UK are set out.

These figures clearly demonstrate how, numerically at least, the UK consists of one very dominant part and three much smaller parts.

Table 1: UK population (mid-2005)

England	50 431 700	83,8%
Wales	2 958 600	4,9%
Scotland	5 094 800	8,5%
Northern Ireland	1 724 400	2,9%
Total United Kingdom	60 209 500	

Source: National Statistics

Table 2: Local administration of education in the four parts of the UK, 2007

England	150 local authorities
Wales	22 local authorities
Scotland	32 local authorities
Northern Ireland	5 regional Education and Library Boards (ELBs) (to be replaced by a new single Education and Skills Authority (ESA) in April 2008)

Table 3: Pupil numbers and number of schools in the four parts of the UK, 2006

	Pupils	**Schools (primary and secondary publicly funded schools)**
England	8,2 million	25 335
Wales	489 570	1 785
Scotland	702 737	5 781
Northern Ireland	312 983	1 124

Table 4: FTE teachers employed by local authorities/ELBs in the four parts of the UK

	Number of full-time equivalent teachers	
England	434 900	2007
Wales	29 397	2004
Scotland	47 561	2004
Northern Ireland	19 702	2006

Arrangements for teacher education in the UK do vary but at least at the present time remain predominantly university-based. In England, 76 higher education institutions provide pre-service teacher education through a variety of routes. These institutions include 'old' and 'new' universities as well as a number of smaller university colleges. The new universities are largely former polytechnics that were awarded a university charter in 1992 (or subsequently). Many of the polytechnics were themselves the result of mergers between former 'monotechnic' colleges. However, since the 1980s there has been a growing number of teachers entering the profession by routes in which higher education institutions play little or even no part. This provision is described in more detail below. In Wales, school teacher education is currently provided by eight institutions: the University of Wales Institute Cardiff, the University of Wales at Aberystwyth, Bangor and Newport, North East Wales Institute, Swansea Institute of Higher Education, Trinity College Carmarthen and the Open University (through distance learning). The Furlong review (Furlong, Hagger & Butcher 2006) highlighted the over-supply of newly qualified teachers in Wales. A significant downturn in demand is forecast over the next five to ten years. Among the 17 recommendations of the Furlong review is the rationalization of provision from seven (excluding the Open University, which was exempt from the review) to three main Schools of Education: North and Central, South West and South East. The employment rate for newly qualified primary teachers was never higher than 41% in the four years preceding the review and the employment rate for newly qualified secondary teachers was 56% on average over the same period. The review team recommended reducing the intake of students to primary education courses by 50% over five years and reducing the secondary intake by 25% over five years. A ministerial decision is awaited in response to the review.

Northern Ireland also shares a concern with the problems of over-supply. Whilst there are up to five times more applicants than places on courses for initial teacher education, only 37% of newly qualified teachers obtain a permanent post in their first year of teaching (Osler 2005). A similar decline in the pupil numbers is predicted over the next 15 years; primary-age pupil numbers are predicted to fall by 10% and post-primary by 15% (Taylor & Usher 2004; Davison 2007). A reduction in class sizes is one strategy that is helping to alleviate current levels of over-capacity. Five higher education institutions currently deliver teacher education in Northern Ireland: St Mary's University College, Stranmillis University College, the Queen's University, Belfast, the University of Ulster and the Open University. One recommendation of the report by Taylor & Usher (2004) is to rationalize provision by bringing the two university colleges under the governance of the Queen's University. In Scotland, there are just seven providers of initial teacher education: the universities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley, Stirling and Strathclyde. Six of the seven education departments in these universities are the result of mergers with former freestanding colleges of education (see Kirk 2003). Here, a much closer match has been

achieved between supply and demand in teacher education, arguably as a result of more effective teacher workforce planning. The seven providers were able to accommodate significant increases in student intake between 2004 to 2006, partly to facilitate a planned reduction in class size, followed by a period of managed downturn in demand. There are no recruitment incentives offered to individuals to train as teachers in Scotland or Northern Ireland. There is, however, continuing concern over widening access to the teaching profession in all four parts of the UK (Hartshorn et al. 2005; Menter 2002; Montgomery & Smith 2007).

‘Travelling’ and ‘embedded’ policy in teacher education in the UK

The following section, drawing on Raffe’s (2005) ‘home internationals’ framework, considers the *administrative systems* of teacher education in the four parts of the United Kingdom. On initial reading there are clear areas of similarity and this should not be surprising given the close proximity of the countries, pre-devolution local histories, a shared labour market and common (supra-national) challenges in preparing teachers to meet the challenges of the knowledge society. However, an interrogation of *policy discourses and strategies* reveals significant differences in terms of accountability and control over teacher preparation, the involvement of the profession in policy formation and the role and standing of teaching as a profession. Of central significance here are the differences between regulatory or developmental approaches to professional learning (Mahony & Hextall 2000; Menter et al. 2004) and between policy processes that might be described as ‘democratic’ or consultative, rather than imposed (Mahony and Hextall 2000; Furlong 2007). Whilst all four parts of the UK draw on a teacher competencies framework in assessing the performance of beginning teachers, an examination of revised standards for Qualified Teacher Status or ‘eligibility to teach’ reveals differences between dominant conceptions of teaching as a *technical craft* and broader conceptions of teaching as an *ethical profession*.

Whilst all four countries in the UK share a strong focus on the development of practical teaching skills, the extent to which they also encourage critical reflection – thinking as well as ‘doing’, ethics and values as well as ‘performance’ – varies between England and the smaller countries that constitute the UK. These differences are masked by evident surface similarities in curricula, qualifications and patterns of governance but remain fundamental to what it means to be a teacher in each distinct national context. Evidence from the scoping study reported here suggests that whilst there is some convergence in administrative systems, the differing political values and ‘shaping myths’ informing policy post-devolution are likely to continue to support ‘constrained divergence’, especially with regard to relative influence of technical-practical or values-based approaches to professional education.

These similarities and differences appear to reflect the contrast between what has been described as ‘travelling policy’ and ‘embedded policy’ (Jones and Alexiadou 2001; Ozga & Jones 2006)

Towards integrated frameworks for professional development: Travelling policy

All four parts of the UK are moving towards professional development frameworks that integrate initial teacher education, induction, and early and continuing professional learning. There is widespread recognition that initial 'qualification' (or accreditation) is an insufficient basis for lifelong professional learning. Whilst the UK is not yet moving towards the re-licensing of practising teachers that is established practice in the USA and elsewhere, there is an acceptance that qualifying to teach needs to be connected to learning pathways that support continuing professional growth. This position is strengthened by greater access to other professions in the related fields of health and social care through the integrated children's service or 'edu-care' agenda. Service integration has been advanced through Every Child Matters: Change for Children (DfES 2004) in England, the development of Integrated Community Schools (ICS) in Scotland and Extended School initiatives in Northern Ireland. Many professions in the UK are considering mandatory periodic revalidation of practitioners (Department of Health 2007). Revalidation would require practitioners to demonstrate a commitment to professional learning and skills development and to demonstrate that they remain competent to practise throughout the career cycle. The regulation of individuals as professionals is thus both a reflection of demands for public accountability and an awareness of the value of continuing learning for personal satisfaction and employee effectiveness across the career span.

Teacher education policy within the UK is inextricably bound to movements in the global policy arena (Newby 2005). The European Commission (2005) has offered four Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications: (1) a well-qualified profession; (2) a profession placed within the context of lifelong learning; (3) a mobile profession; and (4) a profession based on partnership. Significant developments have included a shift towards masters-level credits for teacher education courses and, increasingly, opportunities to achieve masters awards at an earlier stage in an individual's teaching career. Engagement with educational research and the writing of a masters thesis has long been integral to initial teacher education in Finland (Niemi 2000). The Common European principles recommend an integrated progression route through bachelor, masters and doctorate (as understood in the Bologna Process). Labour mobility is also encouraged across national borders, between sectors of education and between teaching and other education-related or 'caring' professions. To support increased levels of mobility the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) has constructed a hierarchy of eight common reference points that accommodates and orders the range of qualification across Europe. The General Teaching Councils' Five Nations Group (including the Teaching Council of the Republic of Ireland) recently commissioned a report on cross-nation recognition of mutual qualifications to inform future developments in the United Kingdom (Filmer-Sankey 2006).

In addition to the development of formal mechanisms for enhancing mobility across states and sectors of education, globalizing influences have been associated with local demands to 'transform' education. Critics have pointed to the ways in which 'strong' versions of globalization – as inevitable and irresistible – have been used in support of demands to 'modernize' the teaching profession (Gewirtz 2001; Maguire 2006). In England this has found expression in the policy texts *Teachers: Meeting the Challenge of Change* (DfEE 1998), *Schools: Achieving Success* (DfEE 2001) and *Higher Standards: Better Schools for All* (DfES 2005) and in the speech made by David Miliband, then Minister of State for School Standards, to the DfES Conference on Training Schools, *Workforce Reform: No Turning Back* (Miliband 2003). The imperative of maintaining economic competitiveness within a global market and preparing workers for the 'knowledge society' are recurrent themes within policy texts across the UK. However, responses to generic (economic) themes are mediated in local contexts. Whilst New Labour policy in England has embraced marketization, pre-privatization and diversification of school type, a commitment to comprehensive, non-selective school provision has endured in Wales and Scotland. This is not to say that influential policy documents such as *The Learning Country* (NAfW 2001a) and *Ambitious, Excellent Schools* (SEED 2004a) are not informed by economistic versions of globalization. However, how the policy community elects to respond to these challenges reflects a different values frame and different processes of policy formation. Thus how elements of generic travelling policy become embedded within particular national contexts reflects the history, political culture and professional voice of the mediating community.

Professionalism and professional standards in teacher education in the UK: Embedded policy

The following section explores points of convergence and divergence within teacher education policy in the UK. A review of traditional entry routes into teaching, entrance requirements, course structure and eligibility to teach post-qualification reveals a degree of consistency across the four component parts of the UK. For many the initial stage of learning to teach in post-devolution UK continues to involve a three-year or four-year Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree course, or a Bachelor's degree followed by an intensive one-year full-time Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in England and Wales or Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) in Scotland. The undergraduate route is most common for intending primary teachers (4 to 11 years) and the postgraduate route is more common in the preparation of teachers for the secondary sector (12 to 16 or 18 years). All applicants must possess qualifications in English, Maths and (for primary courses) Science and are subject to Criminal Records Bureau checks (established 2002). England is the only part of the UK where entrants to the profession are required to pass controversial skills tests in literacy, numeracy and ICT (Mahony et al. 2001). The period of school-based teaching

experience on BEd and PGCE/PGDE courses is broadly similar across the four countries: between 30 and 32 weeks and between 18 and 24 weeks respectively. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland qualified teachers are eligible to teach across primary and post-primary phases. Scotland, where there is a greater emphasis on preparation to teach subjects, has recently developed a Framework for Professional Recognition/Registration that will enable teachers to move between sectors (GTCS 2006a).

Across the UK competence-based models of 'professional standards' (England and Wales), 'benchmarks' (Scotland) or 'competence statements' (Northern Ireland) are in operation. The NFER (Filmer-Sankey 2006: iii) cross-nation study summarizes the differences between professional standards in the four nations as follows: 'In England and Wales, the standards are outcome statements of what is required of trainee teachers; in Scotland, the standards are statements of what courses should address, and in Northern Ireland, the standards are described as developing competences.' In all four countries the standards broadly address the following: (1) professional values and practice; (2) professional knowledge and understanding; and (3) professional skills and abilities. These umbrella terms, however, fail to capture the local history of struggle over what constitutes 'professionalism' or 'professionalization' in each country. If one takes a policy sociology approach to professional formation, it is necessary to interrogate teacher education policy in each country for its underpinning rationale and the political values that inform deliberation on policy matters (Ball 1990, 1997). From this perspective the standards are more than descriptions of roles and responsibilities; they are also the product of deliberation on 'what matters' in relation to teaching, and also in relation to learning, in each country.

One of the key differences between the four countries is the extent to which the profession itself has been able to shape 'professional' standards. Professionalism is widely acknowledged to be a shifting and fiercely contested concept. There is little consensus on what constitutes professionalism in teachers' work. Hargreaves & Goodson (1996: 4) assert, 'What it means to be professional, to show professionalism or to pursue professionalization is not universally agreed or understood … what counts as professional knowledge and professional action in teaching is open to many interpretations.' What we have are discourses of professionalism, a 'politics of professionalism' (McCulloch et al. 2000). This struggle over meaning is important. There are clear implications for the future of teaching, which will be shaped by those constituencies that have the power and authority to name professional knowledge and action. Current policy in the UK can be seen as a hybrid of 'traditional' and 'new' versions of professionalism, which reflect the diverse traditions, 'assumptive worlds' and 'collective narratives' of the policy-making communities in the different parts of the UK (Raffe 2005; Jones & Alexiadou 2001; Ozga 2003).

England

There is considerable divergence in the degree to which educationists and other stake-

stakeholders have been involved in processes of collaboration and consultation in constructing the standards through which teachers are to be assessed. In England the professional standards for teachers are not owned by the profession, but are regulated by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), an executive non-departmental public body of the Department for Education and Skills. The TDA changed its title from the Teacher Training Agency (established in 1994) in September 2005 to reflect an extension of its role beyond pre-service and in-service provision for teachers to having a responsibility for the wider school workforce, including teaching assistants. The TDA, which has always had a more limited role in Wales than in England, recently reviewed the professional standards for ITE, induction, post-threshold and Advanced Skills Teachers (AST) for England (TDA 2006). An integrated framework of Professional Standards for Teachers, including draft standards for the Excellent Teacher scheme, was published in May 2006 and submitted to ministers in autumn 2006. In March 2007 ministerial approval was given to the TDA's recommendation to develop a coherent framework linking revised professional standards and continuing professional development (CPD) with new performance management arrangements. The creation of 'pay standards' – by linking performance with the consistent achievement of specified (and demonstrable) professional standards – strengthens the performative dimensions of being a teacher in England, where performance tables on pupil attainment continue to be published as part of New Labour's commitment to extending parental choice and strengthening regimes of accountability in the public sector.

The draft standards framework published in 2006 not only addresses the future of the profession but may also be seen as the outcome of a prolonged contestation over teacher professionalism in England. There was certainly a greater appearance of consultation during this process than there had been in the late 1990s when 'public consultation' was a process that was strongly controlled and even manipulated by TTA officers (Mahony & Hextall 2000). From the mid-1980s and into the 1990s, the knowledge and skills base of teaching in England and Wales was subject to continuous legislative change in an attempt to tackle the 'producer capture' that was alleged by Conservative governments, influenced by a range of right-wing think tanks (Gilroy 1992). Furlong (2005: 121) has commented, 'In the course of just 15 years, the system had been moved from one of diversity and autonomy to a "command economy" with unanimity and central control'. A movement 'back to the schools', encouraged by a spirit of 'anti-intellectualism' (Eraut 1994: 157), sought to restrict the role of universities in teacher preparation to accreditation and validation (Goodson 2003; McCulloch et al. 2000). Although informed by a different set of values, support for this approach was found in the internship model of initial teacher education at the University of Oxford, which stressed the role of partnership with schools. Only serving schoolteachers, it was argued, could provide 'contextualized knowledge' of practice (McIntyre 1991).

The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) first developed the framework for national standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) between 1994 and 1998, drawing on management standards produced by the Management Charter Initiative (MCI 1997): a series of detailed, numerous and sharply-focused statements that set out the standards to be met by 'trainee teachers' in a 'common framework of expectations'. Intervention was justified by claims that the formation of professional standards would enhance the professional status of teachers and teaching. The re-professionalizing agenda proceeded against a backdrop of established 'discourses of derision' (Ball 1990: 22) aimed at teachers and the 'education establishment'. A national curriculum for primary English and mathematics ITT was published with the standards document in 1997, followed in 1998 by curricula for primary and secondary science, secondary English, mathematics and ICT. These documents provided checklists of the baseline knowledge and understanding of subjects needed by teachers. The limitations of this prescriptive approach were perhaps partially acknowledged with the publication of revised guidelines in *Qualifying to Teach* (TTA 2002), revised again (as noted above) in 2006.

There have been numerous and sustained criticisms of the 'practical turn' in initial teacher training evidenced in England and elsewhere. It is not the intention here to revisit these discussions in detail, only to signal that these debates were played out under the interested scrutiny of England's close neighbours. Critics suggested that the specificity of the standards (and the associated development of standardized pedagogies) represented 'pedagogical deskilling' (Robertson 1996), a form of 'practical fundamentalism' (Goodson 2003: 21). Lawn (1996: 71) argued that the reforms of the 1990s were responsible for 'reducing training to subjects and substituting school teaching apprenticeships for pedagogical and educational studies'. Hegarty (2000: 456) warned against an 'excessive focus on competences' that would stifle creativity. Similarly, Reynolds (1999: 253) argued, 'Because of their specificity the standards, rather than providing insight into teaching, can be interpreted as an attempt to formularize classroom practice or to "standardize" it in the narrowest sense.'

The influence of teacher education institutions (TEIs) in England and Wales was further eroded through the creation of alternative routes to accreditation, which have involved the introduction of graduate apprenticeships where 'trainees' receive a salary as unqualified teachers during school-based training. The TDA oversees three employment-based routes (EBR): the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP), the Registered Teacher Programme (RTP) (for trainees completing a degree whilst in training) and the Overseas Trained Teacher Programme (OTTP). In addition, a network of designated training schools (DfEE 1998) has been established to further promote school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT). Schools have been given greater influence over ITE through changes in funding, prescriptions on how partnerships are to be formed, increasing the period 'trainees' spend in schools, and affording a greater role for school-based mentors. However, as Furlong et al. (2000: 163) note, 'Schools and

teachers may be "empowered" to develop their own ways of training teachers, and compete with one another over the process, but only within a very narrow frame.' The 'school experience' (or practicum) can become the place where schoolteacher mentors fulfil the administrative task of 'checking off' standards rather than engaging in an educative process. Wright & Bottery (1997) have pointed out that schoolteacher mentors have a tendency to encourage compliance with narrow versions of professionalism that focus on classroom techniques, rather than encouraging critical reflection through 'assumption hunting' (Brookfield 1995). Assessment processes can dominate mentoring relationships where time is restricted by the 'busyness' of an intensified school day. In school-led programmes there is the danger that occupational standards may substitute for course design. Increased responsibilities for school-based provision has been resisted by teachers in other component parts of the UK. The extended roles and responsibilities involved in delivering initial teacher education in England were rejected by teachers in Northern Ireland and Scotland owing to concerns about workload, available support and the extension of accountability (Smith et al. 2006; Menter et al. 2004).

The creation of alternative, flexible and part-time routes into teaching reflects enduring problems of supply in England (Ross & Hutchings 2003). Gilroy (2005: 275) has predicted that '[t]he three "R"s of teacher education in the twenty-first century will be the need to recruit, retain and retrain teachers'. In restructuring teachers' career pathways, pay has been used to scaffold recruitment, retention and progression. In September 2000 a recruitment 'crisis' received media attention when teacher shortages in England temporarily forced some secondary schools to introduce a four-day week for some of their pupils (Judd 2000: 7). Training bursaries and 'golden hellos' were introduced to tackle recruitment issues in designated shortage subjects. Workforce remodelling has increased the number of (retrained) classroom assistants working as partners in the classroom. Teach First, a two-year employment-based programme for 'top graduates' from 'elite universities' was introduced in London in 2003 and subsequently extended to Manchester from September 2006 and Birmingham and Nottingham from September 2007 (Hutchings 2007). Based on Teach for America, 200 new teachers from 1 000 applicants were recruited to the scheme in September 2004 and participants placed in 'challenging' secondary schools. However, whilst the use of financial incentives has proved reasonably successful in attracting individuals into teaching, 50% of all entrants leave the profession in England within five years of qualifying (Horne 2001). Of those entering initial teacher education, mature entrants, males (especially within the primary phase) and minority ethnic groups continue to be under-represented.

Wales

Professional standards for teachers in Wales have been strongly influenced by practice

in England. Strong administrative ties between England and Wales have been established since the Act of Union between the two countries in 1536. With the creation of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) in 1999 and the GTC Wales in 2000, greater differences are appearing. Wales moved to scrap tests for seven-year-olds following *The Learning Country* consultation document (NAfW 2001a), followed later by England in 2004. The Government of Wales Act of 2006, which extended the legislative powers of the Assembly, opened up further possibilities for divergence. Guidance Circular 21-06 (DELLS 2006a) introduced voluntary revised standards in Wales in September 2006, which became mandatory from September 2007. Wales has not followed Scotland and England in embedding pay standards within its proposed professional development framework. Beginning teachers and teacher educators in Wales now need to prepare for a range of distinctive elements in Welsh education policy post-devolution. These include a revised National Curriculum and the introduction of a new Foundation Phase (3-7 years) from 2008, the pilot of a Welsh Baccalaureate (2003) in 31 schools and colleges rolled out to all post-16 providers from September 2007, a distinctive 14-19 strategy *Learning Pathways 14-19* (NAfW 2001b), and a ten-year strategy for higher education, *Reaching Higher* (NAfW 2002). Every Local Authority now provides Welsh medium and bi-lingual education. In 2004/05 Welsh was the sole or main medium in 29% of primary schools (52 800 pupils in 455 schools) and 14,8% of secondary schools (WAG 2006). *The Learning Country: Vision into Action* (DELLS 2006b) sets out the progress made in achieving strategic change in education and lifelong learning in Wales from 2001. One of the brakes on further divergence is the issue of mutual recognition of qualifications across borders and sectors. The pilot of the Welsh Baccalaureate revealed that students opted to take the 'Welsh Bac' alongside rather than in place of more traditional (A-level) qualifications that are easily recognized by UK universities and employers. Similarly, the future development of 14-19 provision in Wales will be influenced by decisions taken at the cross-national level.

Scotland

Although responsibility for education and training was formally devolved from the UK Government and Westminster Parliament to the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive in July 1999, Scotland's education system has long enjoyed relative autonomy from England. Scotland's General Teaching Council was established in 1966, some 35 years ahead of the other three countries, and education occupies a special place in Scottish history and culture. The administrative (but not the political) autonomy of Scotland's educational framework was guaranteed in the Act of Union of 1707. Education, along with the law and the Church, continues to be regarded as one of the key institutions in Scottish social and cultural life (Humes & Bryce 2003). The powerful shaping 'myth' that informs education policy in (an increasingly diverse) Scotland is summarized below:

> Scottish society is relatively egalitarian and meritocratic; that ability and achievement, not rank, should determine success in the world; that public (rather than private) institutions should be the means of trying to bring about the good society; and that, even where merit does justify differential rewards, there are certain basic respects – arising from the common humanity of men and women – in which human beings deserve equal consideration and treatment. (Humes & Bryce 2003: 109)

Prior to political devolution, Scotland resisted the move to standardized tests implemented in England and Wales and developed national guidelines for its own broadly-based 5-14 Curriculum through processes of consultation and gradual implementation. A stable policy community has mediated external influences on policy and commentators have suggested that the dissonance between the profession and central government evident in England is not a feature of policy-making in Scotland. Nixon et al. (2006: 279) suggest that Scotland was able to resist the powerful centralizing tendencies experienced in England and Wales because 'the deep "codes" of teacher professionalism north of the border reinforce many of the priorities and myths of central government.' Certainly the Scottish model of education policy-making claims to be more consultative and collaborative than the top-down approach south of the border. The 24 benchmarks that comprise the benchmark *Standard for Initial Teacher Education* (SITE) (QAA 2000) (revised 2007) were generated by a benchmarking group that contained a representative from each of the teacher education institutions (TEIs), two representatives from the General Teaching Council, a primary headteacher, a secondary headteacher, a representative from the local authorities, a member of the schools' inspectorate (HMIE) and an observer from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) (Christie 2003). Following deliberation of the benchmarking group, all local authorities and other stakeholders were consulted and a national seminar convened. Professional and public dialogue has been a feature of education reform in Scotland. This has included a national debate on education in 2002 and the formation of a Curriculum Review Group in the development of a revised *Curriculum for Excellence* (SEED 2004b). The values, purposes and principles underpinning *A Curriculum for Excellence* were discussed by national organizations (SEED, HMIE, Learning and Teaching Scotland and the Scottish Qualifications Authority) working in partnership with local authorities and schools (HMIE 2006). Devolution has to some extent opened up opportunities for stakeholders to be more proactive in relation to education policy, and new partnerships are developing between policy makers, universities and schools. One example of this is the *Schools of Ambition* programme, which brings together senior advisers within SEED, university faculties of education and teacher-researchers in the collaborative evaluation of school-led improvement efforts.

Northern Ireland

Stakeholder consultation has also featured more strongly in recent education policy-making in Northern Ireland. A move away from top-down models of curriculum change is evidenced in the introduction of a revised national curriculum from Sep-

tember 2007. A more flexible, less prescriptive post-primary curriculum was developed following consultation with teachers, principals, community groups, charities, political parties, ELBs and other educational bodies. The review of teacher competences conducted by the GTCNI (2005), which resulted in a reduction in the number of competence statements for initial teacher education from 92 to 27, gave the profession direct involvement for the first time in defining the competences and attributes required of teachers in Northern Ireland. A professional model of teacher competences was first developed in Northern Ireland in 1996, followed by a university-led partnership model in 1998. Of the four parts of the UK, Northern Ireland led the way in the formation of integrated competences for the three stages of professional preparation (the three 'I's): initial, induction and in-service. Initial teacher education (led by higher education institutions) is followed by a one-year induction period (led by Education and Library Boards (equivalent to LEAs) and Curriculum Advisory and Support Services (CASS), in turn followed by a further two years of Early Professional Development (led by schools). However, there are a number of differences between provision in Northern Ireland and other parts of the UK. Induction is not statutory and (unlike Wales) Early Professional Learning is not an entitlement. Partnerships arrangements in ITE are voluntary and there is no transfer of funds to schools (Moran 2007). School-based 'tutor teachers' (referred to as mentors in England and regents in Scotland) are not funded for mentoring beginning teachers in school and there is no protected time for mentoring activities (unlike England). Tutor teachers are not required to participate in training for this role, although higher education institutions do provide training courses.

Convergence at the level of administrative systems

From this review of learning to teach in post-devolution UK, it is clear that in terms of administrative systems points of convergence are discernible. In all four countries initial teacher education (or training) draws on a competence framework. There are similar minimum entrance qualifications, school placement periods and requirements for career entry and development profiles. There is a general (international) movement towards integrated professional development frameworks. In all four countries there is a concern with extending professional learning into the first years of practice. The induction year was introduced in England in 1999 and became mandatory in Wales in 2003. In Scotland, the *Standard for Full Registration* (SFR) was published in 2002, supported by a guaranteed one-year 'training post'. Arrangements for Early Professional Development have been in place in Northern Ireland from 1998. The problem of widening access to the teaching profession is a recurrent theme and is associated with the development of part-time and flexible entry routes.

There is a shared concern with promoting lifelong learning and tackling the problem of 'reactive' and 'episodic' CPD provision (GTCNI 2005). Qualified teachers in all four

jurisdictions are encouraged to maintain a professional portfolio recording continuing professional learning, with moves towards e-portfolios likely. In Scotland, the national framework for teachers' continuing professional development introduced the qualification-based Chartered Teacher grade in 2002 and a contractual commitment to 35 hours of CPD each year for serving teachers. The Professional Development Framework in Northern Ireland has tried to forge closer links between five developmental 'milestones': initial teacher education, induction, early professional development, Chartered Teacher and Advanced Chartered Teacher (GTCNI 2005). GTC Wales has also recommended a Professional Development Framework with five milestones: Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), Induction, Middle Leader, Chartered Teacher, Senior Leader/Headship. In England the draft framework for professional standards for teachers similarly identifies five career stages: award of QTS, induction, post-threshold teachers, Excellent Teachers and Advanced Skills Teachers (DfES 2006). The 'Chartered London Teacher' (CLT) was introduced from September 2004 and the 'Excellent Teacher Scheme' (ETS) was introduced in England from September 2006.

Learning to teach in post-devolution in the UK in the future is likely to involve greater collaboration between sectors of education and between professionals in education-related work. The travelling agenda of 'edu-care' has clear implications for teacher education. In Scotland, Christie & Menmuir (2003) have proposed a common standards framework for initial teacher education, health and social care. The second-stage review of teacher education (SEED 2005) also indicated moves towards 'an integrated public sector career network'. The model of teacher education in the Scottish Teachers for a New Era (STNE) programme at Aberdeen University (based on the Carnegie-sponsored Teachers for a New Era programme across the USA) has moved closest towards consideration of 'communities for learning' beyond school. Developments in Northern Ireland and Scotland are moving towards the inclusion of opportunities for shared modules with social work and community education programmes in teacher preparation courses (Forbes 2007). *Every Child Matters* (DfES 2004) has implications for all education workers in England and Wales.

Divergence in values: A practical-technical and ethical profession?

Phillips (2003) has warned against the production of over-generalized accounts in cross-national studies. In mapping current policy and practice from secondary sources, similarities in administrative systems come to the fore. Areas of contestation are submerged in the production of coherent texts, which have the purpose of persuading their audience of the rationality of a chosen position. Ideological frameworks may be (unintentionally) concealed in policy documents. Crossley & Watson (2003), among others, have highlighted the need for 'context sensitivity' when conducting cross-national comparisons and the seminar series supporting this scoping study was useful in explicating points of difference as well as areas of surface similarity. For example, Moran (2007: 4) argues, 'Nowhere is context more relevant

than it is in NI, where the education system is characterized by distinctive levels of religious and academic segregation, a large though declining degree of gender segregation and a marked level of social segregation, as well as the enduring legacy from the conflict situation.'

Among the more significant differences embedded within the professional standards documents in the four jurisdictions is the relative attention afforded to social and moral values and the level of 'educational literacy' expected of the teacher (Scott 2000). Mahony (2007) considers the need for intervention to develop ethical literacy for teaching in England. The TDA documents offer a more 'restricted' version of professionalism than is evident in the documents of the devolved countries. The English standards do not make explicit reference to the wider community and place an emphasis on beginning teachers' capacity to interpret and apply the statutory requirements of the national curriculum. Indeed, the professional associations (trade unions) were successful in keeping an explicit values statement out of the recently revised standards. In contrast with the narrow frame provided by the TDA standards, all three neighbouring countries make explicit reference to the 'wider community' (Wales), 'community' (Northern Ireland) or the 'community served by the school' (Scotland) and require critical consideration of the nature and purposes of education. The Scottish and Northern Irish benchmarks/competences make reference to engagement with educational research, whilst the English standards for ITE refer to a 'constructively critical approach towards innovation' and only Excellent and Advanced Skills Teachers are expected to 'research and evaluate innovative curricular practices and draw on research outcomes … to inform their own practice and that of colleagues' (DfES 2006: 11; see also Menter et al. 2006a).

Moran (2007) also draws attention to value statements in the various documents:

> The Standard for ITE in Scotland (SITE) is more explicit about the spiritual, moral, social and ethical dimensions of teacher education, including specific reference to social justice, anti-discriminatory practices and social inclusion. The remaining three, while they include statements around equality and inclusion, tend to diminish some of the subtleties and complexities surrounding the personal challenges they involve. (p. 5)

However, she goes on to point out that what really matters is not what documents such as these state; rather it is 'the way that teacher educators, student teachers and teachers in schools choose to use the specified framework' that is significant.

Conclusion

From this scoping study of policy in relation to the early stages of development for beginning teachers across the four parts of the UK what has emerged is some evidence of the influence of national contexts, of national histories, cultures and traditions, as well as evidence of different contemporary responses to economic and other forces. Nevertheless, there is considerable evidence of supranational influence as well, with clear indications of the impact of globalizing tendencies that are indeed similar to

developments elsewhere. Teaching, at least in the UK, has indubitably been influenced by discourses of performativity and by ideologies of technical rationalism over recent years, in all four countries. However, it is within the national variations in the ways in which these broader trends have impacted that it is possible to detect significantly different 'versions'. While there is evidence of concern about the ethical dimensions of teaching in all of the countries, the ways in which these concerns interact with the performative and technical rational elements do appear to differ. It is these variations that demonstrate that at the level of policy, differing values may have some real influence. Future articles from this project are expected to look in more detail at the differing configurations of the policy-making communities in each country in order to ascertain how these may (or may not) facilitate the manifestations of differing values, as well as beginning to explore how it may be possible to assess the significance of some of these differences in policy in their 'translation' into the practices of teaching and learning.

No doubt there is a different balance of supranational forces and historical and cultural traditions drawn from within the nation in the context of South Africa and indeed other African countries. Indeed, in many countries this may be further complicated by the existence of lingering colonial influences and resistance to these. Nevertheless it may be that the contrasts we have been able to identify between the four parts of the UK do indicate the range of possibilities – the scope for agency – in the development of teacher education. Furthermore, these differences demonstrate that there is a connection between forms of governance, policy processes, institutional structures and the way in which teaching is defined and circumscribed through teacher education. It is essential that teacher education is researched critically as a key area of education policy within societies that are undergoing major transitions.

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A comparison of Ugandan, English and German teacher education models

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Abstract

Teacher education is affected by changes in priorities regarding the requirements and expectations associated with education and upbringing. Such changes have as much to do with teacher professional efficiency and government policies for teacher preparation as with the historical, socio-economical and political climate. Drawing from a rich resource of primary and secondary literature, the Ugandan, English and German teacher education models are compared in light of these contexts.

Initial teacher education (ITE) is organized and structured in a variety of ways. For instance, in the concurrent model the various components of teacher education (TE) are studied parallel to one another. By contrast, in the consecutive model teachers first study academic disciplines and sometimes the 'science' of teaching followed by professional studies and teaching practice. Most training for teachers at secondary level in the circumstances examined here is based on the consecutive model. ITE may also be organized as an integrated model, in which professionally relevant themes are integrated simultaneously within the theoretical and practical studies. Furthermore, ITE may be offered in clearly defined modules giving opportunity to prospective teachers to decide the study sequence. Yet another structural distinction in ITE is one based on phases. For instance, in a one-phased model successful completion of ITE permits prospective teachers to apply for a teaching post. In a two-phased model prospective teachers first complete (mainly) theoretical studies at teacher training institutions before embarking on practical studies in schools. A training programme may combine one or more of these models.

One-phased concurrent ITE model – School of Education, Makerere University (Uganda)

The major route into teacher training in Uganda is the one-phased concurrent study of

specialized and professional studies leading to a Bachelor of Arts or Science with Education (BA/BSc Ed). At the School of Education this three-year programme consists of five major components, namely education foundation disciplines; professional disciplines to assist prospective teachers in the development of classroom competences such as curriculum studies, educational technology, educational administration and management; specialized academic discipline knowledge of two subjects that prospective teachers will teach in school; special and general methods of teaching; and the practicum, where prospective teachers practically demonstrate their ability to teach in schools. School practice is carried out in two blocks at the end of the second and third year of university training and each block usually lasts four to six weeks.

In Uganda the training of secondary school teachers has not been given adequate attention since independence, leading to public outcry regarding the quality of teachers in terms of skills and professionalism. According to Abidi (1991), Namubiru (2000) and MISR (2001), the university has been criticized for producing 'theoretically' trained graduates who can neither solve on-the-job problems nor meet the practical needs of the country. This is because there seems to be no clear relationship between educational theory derived from disciplines such as psychology and sociology and the challenges met in schools. Yet, according to Mortimore (1997: 31),

> the contribution of theory to the study of education is vital if we are to solve any of the difficult issues we face: why do children vary in their learning skills? Why are there such differences in the effectiveness of so many schools and departments? Why do girls and boys differ so much in their behaviour and achievement? … only theory can suggest … and indicate the potential value of further research into … plausible explanations.

Educational theory nurtures the development of subject matter knowledge as well as knowledge and skills demonstrated within and beyond the school curriculum. Ideally, the study of educational theory subjects teachers' views and actions to criticism and discussion, and thus leads to new perspectives and self-understanding. This provides an environment that cultivates a vibrant university-school partnership engaged in ITE. Consequently, in 2001 the School of Education designed a project to engage cooperating teachers in a number of schools with professional and academic support during school practice. However, the project is faced with a number of challenges, including the short duration of school practice; poor information flow between institutions and prospective teachers; lack of role clarity for cooperating teachers; the fact that cooperating teachers' assessment does not contribute to the final grade attained; and financial constraints, which limit the participation of more schools in this partnership.

The challenge to address these issues in the Ugandan situation is partly the result of pressure from international agencies since 1990 to provide 'Education for All', but there has yet to be an assessment of the impact of these reforms for the relationship between teacher education and higher education. What is recognized by the Ugandan government is the necessity to train quality teachers if these ends are to be achieved. The *Government White Paper on Education* (Ugandan Government 1992: 152) states:

> [No] education system can be better than the quality of its teachers, nor can a country be better than the quality of its education. Hence, it is the quality of teachers which ultimately determines the lot of the nation.

Despite recognition of the importance that must be attached to the quality of teachers and their key role of leadership and service in implementing education policies and programmes, there has been little effort to ensure that the quality of training, especially with regard to secondary school teachers, is improved. Generally, it has been documented that the current tertiary curriculum structure is no longer relevant to Ugandan society as most of its features and structures have not been updated since 1970 (Uganda Government 2003: 12). Consequently, it is still valid to argue that many aspects in the training of secondary school teachers in Uganda still largely reflect the old British model four and a half decades after independence. On the other hand, ITE in England has undergone massive changes over time and been replaced by new models which emphasize notions of 'competency' in teacher training (Gardner 1995). (See the papers by Menter & Hulme in this collection.)

These institutional challenges arising from Uganda's historical, socio-economic and political contexts have in turn influenced the design and implementation of ITE. For instance, at the School of Education there are a number of challenges met in ITE including the emphasis on educational theory during teacher training; the lack of integration between theoretical and practical training; the presentation of educational theory in a rather generalized fashion using the lecture approach and from a historical rather than a contemporary viewpoint; the absence of peer teaching/demonstration sessions during university-based training; and a generally negative perception of educational theory and practice in light of summative examinations. The teacher curriculum is also composed of a list of many subjects, which are not coordinated and synchronized with the school curriculum. During school practice, there are limited opportunities for prospective teachers to reflect on their experiences, since there is a rigid lesson plan and scheme of work format to follow, as well as a specific assessment form that lecturers/supervisors have to follow during lesson observation.

While it is widely agreed that educational theory is a valid and relevant aspect of the training of teachers, when there is an inadequate linkage between theory and practice teachers cannot gain the benefit of this interaction. The link between content knowledge and pedagogy, i.e. pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman 1987), is still a problematic one in such a one-phased concurrent ITE model. The Ugandan case not only portrays the influence of historical, socio-economic and political factors on ITE, but also demonstrates a lack of response on the part of teacher education institutions in meeting current challenges in education and the design of programmes tailored to the needs of contemporary society.

One-phased concurrent and integrated ITE model – England

Unlike the former colony Uganda, England has undergone changes categorized into

three broad phases. According to Bell (1981), these three broad phases are indicated by their changing nomenclature: teacher training, college of education and institute of higher education. At each stage and in each institution the structure, culture, organization of knowledge and typical modes of social interaction were different. Bell further observes that these changes correspond with Weber's three ideal types of education: charismatic education (which aimed at producing the good teacher), education of the cultivated person (which aimed at producing the educated person) and specialized expert training.

However, from the 1980s onwards, the role of the 'specialized expert' was challenged because universities were seen as elitist and remote from practice. The claim was that standards in schools had fallen and teacher educators were to blame for failing to prepare teachers for real classroom situations (Ball 1995). It was also argued that too much time was devoted to theoretical studies, often based upon 'dubious' sociological and philosophical premises (Alastair & Humes 1998), and that such studies were ideologically biased towards the 'left' (Adams & Tulasiewicz 1994), giving insufficient attention to the primary task of helping children to learn 'the basics'. Through a string of reforms government suppressed the 'expert' and through the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) successfully controlled teacher training. This move led to proposals that schools should play an influential role in close partnership with university education departments, and that university-based parts of teacher training should be fully relevant to classroom practice.

Such a move is evident in the nine-month Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme at the University of London. Its curriculum includes subject studies concerned with the knowledge, understanding and teaching of particular subjects. It also includes professional studies, which are concerned with teachers' professional roles and cover key issues in education including cross-subject aspects of classroom teaching, individual learning differences and provision for special educational needs, classroom management, ICT, language and learning, equalities issues in education, assessment issues and the national curriculum. Educational theory is perceived in light of the attainment of specified competences and skills needed in schools, as well as issues concerning the broader educational role of universities with education departments (University of London 1999). The third curriculum component is the practical teaching experience, which aims at developing prospective teachers' classroom competences to a standard prescribed in national legislation and ensuring that these are equipped to contribute effectively to worthwhile learning.

The theory-practice relationship can be construed through what is termed the 'partnership-in-training' scheme, in which the university works in close partnership with schools to provide

> an effective link between learning communities in … school … and in higher education. For the schools and the Institute of Education, the Partnership opens up a wide range of

> possibilities for … collaboration in research and development projects, continuity between initial training and induction programmes for new teachers, the continuing professional development of individual teachers and whole-school strategies for school development. (University of London 1999: 7.)

During the practical teaching experience prospective teachers spend nearly two-thirds of their training at school practising in two schools in two blocks. Earlier in the course they are based in School One for four days a week and later on for five days a week in School Two. The remaining time is spent at the university studying subject and professional studies. Among the advantages of a partnership in training are a strong professional ethos, the whole-school context, the notion of reflective practice among teachers, tutors and students, and the congruence of work carried out on university and school sites (McCulloch & Fidler 1994). Theory combines a study of particular forms of knowledge with matters relating to pedagogy and classroom application. School practice provides the practical opportunity to apply insights gained at university in real settings. Hence, there is an attempt to avoid fragmentation in training by linking theoretical knowledge with school practice and testing the appropriateness of prospective teachers' practices (Alastair & Humes 1998).

Because of changes in the structure of ITE education foundation disciplines are no longer taught at university under their respective names as is still the case in Uganda. Rather, these have been replaced by professional methods studies, which are considered more directly related to classroom teaching. This is what could be termed as pedagogical content knowledge, in which disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge are integrated. These studies are taught either at university prior to teaching experience or in school during actual teaching practice (Adams & Tulasiewicz 1994). The use of the term 'theory' to describe the latter is less common, however. The Anglo-American tradition of close links between higher-education institutions and practice schools, including the exchange of personnel, has blurred the theory-practice distinction.

Despite such developments, the English model is criticized for its over-concentration on the teaching of subject matter to the neglect of the context in which teaching takes place; reduction of university responsibility in teacher training to that of validation, accreditation and arrangement of students' placements, since the responsibility to train teachers has been shifted to schools; as well as the increased move towards standards and performance indicators (Adams & Tulasiewicz 1994). According to Jones (2000: 20), the criterion for assessment is a catalogue of 70 discrete, narrowly-defined standards, which are intended to provide a reliable means to assess teacher competence. This is not only daunting to the assessors and the assessed, but also defeats the aim of holistic teacher development.

In addition, there is incompatibility between the structures of the education system maintained by the state and the views of professional associations and teachers' trade unions, resulting in a crisis. Regarding the 'partnership-in-training' scheme, the school mentor role is considered that of managing the training and information pro-

cessing with the focus on learning new skills rather than the preparation of professionals (Jones 2000). Elsewhere, English mentors are described as 'craft masters' of old who usually produced replicas of themselves rather than independent and reflective practitioners (Adams & Tulasiewicz 1994; Buchberger 1996). Further still, an inadequate professional relationship between universities and partner schools engaged in the training of teachers has been reported (Verall 1995). In the same study there is reference to the varying differences in the way universities and schools construe and implement teacher training owing to their different stages of development, value systems, arrangement of courses and pedagogy and assessment practices. Similarly, inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) have found the work of many experienced teachers less than satisfactory, which raises questions about their ability to carry out teacher training. Such criticisms are indicative of the far-reaching implications too much political influence can have on an education system.

Two-phased consecutive ITE model – Germany

By the 19th century in Germany the state had already started playing a major role in teacher education. With the state licensure conferred to all German professions in the second part of the century, teachers obtained autonomy to practise within the state's legal and administrative framework. According to Westbury (1995), *Didaktik* emerged to provide languages within which professional teachers could discuss and defend the appropriateness of their interpretation of the syllabus as the authoritative administrative framework for teaching. To date, *Didaktik* is presented as a scientific discipline in Phase One and as a type of craft in Phase Two of German teacher training. Modern German *Didaktik* is premised on the teacher as a professional practitioner who works within but is not directed by the framework provided by the syllabus and the 'objective' content of the classroom curriculum.

Westbury further observes that such a tradition of educational and pedagogical thought addresses questions and problems that have no analogue in the English-speaking countries. For instance, while curriculum development aims at the construction of ordered sequences of learning experiences related to the intended objectives, *Didaktik* does not begin with how students learn or what they should be able to do or know. Instead, as observed by Künzli (1994, in Westbury 1995), the teacher first reflects on the significance of learning particular content, asks what it can and should signify to students and how they can experience this significance. Cited in Westbury (1995: 257) Künzli further points out that within *Didaktik*

> practice itself [is] the starting point and the referential framework for theory (*réflexion engagée*) and the mediation of both theory and practice [is transposed] into the educated (*gebildet*) individual [teacher] … The concept of education (*Bildung*) has proved to be a stable source of orientation for this approach.

Therefore, in *Didaktik* teaching is at its core an interpretative process, and the teacher

by engaging in reflection is the theorist and maker of the classroom curriculum.

Drawing upon this background, German ITE provides a unique example of a two-phased consecutive model where Phase One at university is fully autonomous, while school and professional education (Phase Two) is controlled by government agencies. Depending on the federal state, prospective teachers are exposed early to school practice in what is called orientation practicum, a requirement before they join university. At university they study three major components: at least two subjects or subject areas; basic educational science (general and school pedagogy and psychology), plus possible options (philosophy and sociology/political science or theology) and some practical work in school. The practical work is organized by university teacher educators and experienced schoolteachers in four blocks spread across semester two to semester five in the three- to five-year teacher education programme. In the first two blocks prospective teachers are orientated to school pedagogy and subject methods for a particular school type or level. In the third and fourth blocks they have accompanied in-school experiences particularly in their subject methods as well as in the *Didaktik* of the various school types or levels.

Generally, block practicum is aimed at enabling prospective teachers to familiarize themselves with subject-specific tasks and objectives of the respective syllabi, the instruction process in relation to the learning situation, how individual learning can be promoted, how different experiences can lead to the attainment of instructional objectives, how instructional media works and how to control successfully the instruction processes. ITE is guided by two official teacher examination syllabi, which provide the structural framework of the curriculum. Upon successful completion of Phase One examinations the prospective teachers can enrol for Phase Two.

Phase Two of teacher training is interdependent since it is conducted in accordance with government guidelines making it subject to state supervision. It is a two-year practical training run by the school administration in special teacher study seminaries. It is regarded as a probation period in that it is ideally a mixture of pre- and in-service teacher training aimed at enabling prospective teachers to acquire practical pedagogical habits in a real school situation. Prospective teachers are paid a trainee's salary and have to conduct school lessons, which are partly guided and directed but increasingly independent. Following the second state examination syllabus prospective teachers have to demonstrate their planning and performing abilities in a real classroom setting; and through the local teacher seminary courses acquaint themselves with the curriculum for their subjects, obtain instructions on how to plan lessons and reflect on their teaching practice experience. They also engage in discussions about professional and ethical problems, as well as the social context of teaching. It is upon successful fulfilment of the requirements of the second state examination that they are given teaching jobs. Three years after their second state examination and upon having passed a short assessment, these new teachers get the status of civil servants with tenure.

Despite this arrangement, there are a number of criticisms of the way teachers are trained using this model. According to Fuchs (2001:257), Phase One university training inadequately responds to the more pragmatic job-specific concerns, while Phase Two does not progressively build on Phase One training. Similar to Uganda, many of the university subjects are fragmented and not connected to job requirements. And, as in England and Uganda, in Germany the component of educational studies in comparison to the entire teacher programme is disappearing or narrowing and it consequently contributes a very small percentage to the entire examination grade. However, unlike in England where the Teacher Training Authority (TTA) is entirely accountable to initial teacher education (ITE), in Germany there are different ministries and departments concerned with ITE and within them a bureaucratic culture (Herrmann 2001; Terhart 2000). Apart from the structural challenges confronting ITE in Germany studies report a transition shock or *Praxisschock*, which prospective teachers are confronted with as they move from Phase One into Phase Two of teacher growth and development (Seibert 2001; Furlong et al. 2000; Sander 1999). Prospective teachers view this distinct attitudinal shift from recent scientific insights into learning and teaching to current practices in schools with uncertainty, especially during their first year of teaching.

As a reinforcement of the separation between the two phases, Wunder (1999: 47) quotes Phase Two seminar teacher educators who tell prospective teachers to '… forget what you have learned at university, we do not need it now'. Herrmann (2001: 573) has cited similar instances where prospective teachers, upon entering teacher seminaries, are told to forget their subject identification and orient themselves to school knowledge and to teaching. During school practice mentors tell them to forget what the seminary teachers told them about 'classic examples and solutions' and after the second state examination they can forget everything. From then onwards, newly-trained teachers learn to survive on their own, a situation not different from the one in Uganda. Therefore, each phase seeks to handle its own challenges independently of the other.

However, the ITE situation in Germany has not been stable for quite some time. Being a European Union (EU) member state, Germany's education system is affected by various reforms sweeping across the European continent. This is against the background that education in the EU countries is characterized by diverse and complex systems in terms of goals, contents, curricula and structures of organization. Consequently, in the wake of the process initiated by the 1998 Sorbonne Declaration and last advanced by the Prague Communiqué, the structure of studies and degrees in the European Higher Education Area have been reshaped into two main cycles: the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes. These developments led to the Bologna Declaration (1999), in which the European Ministry of Education recommended the harmonization of the existing study structures in order to advance and secure student and graduate mobility; promote international quality standards with science and education sub-

stantially sharing responsibility in this field; as well as improve consumer protection for employers and employees in terms of the supply of and demand for an international labour market. Summed up, the restructuring of higher education in the EU is aimed at promoting mobility, competitiveness and employment.

With the amendment to the 1998 German Framework Act for Higher Education, institutions were given the opportunity to carry out a Bachelor's and Master's degree course trial. A year later, the *Kultureministerkonferenz* (KMK – the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, 1999) released the structure for the introduction of these degree programmes, which are currently running parallel to the existing study programmes and have similar final assessments at universities and in colleges. With time, the old higher education programmes will be phased out.

In order to be able to provide institutions of higher education with the necessary freedom and competence required for implementing higher education reforms, the past system of detailed state control of higher education was revoked by the KMK of the various federal states. Instead, an accreditation council affiliated to the KMK was mandated to accredit universities, which will in turn accredit degree courses. The result of accreditation is recognition and the award of legal status by the state. Formal consequences attached to institutional accreditation are study grants for students, the underwriting of the number of students for funding and the awarding of degrees with legal status.

Another prerequisite for accreditation is that the new degree programmes are offered in modules based on the credit-point-system (CPS) (Bologna Process Committee Newsletter 2001). The advantage of the CPS is its flexibility in that the earned credit points can be transferred to relevant study programmes in other institutions. Its disadvantage, especially when linked to modularization of study programmes, is the danger of segmented and fragmented training. For the university professors the CPS certainly means more work, which with the overwhelming number of students is daunting.

Generally, a number of fears arise out of this major shift in German ITE, including a move to subject-oriented training with no professional input at Bachelor's level, reactivating the age-old conflict between polyvalence and professionalism. A move towards teacher and pupil competences has also been documented and, according to Oelkers (2003), is contrary to the *Didaktik* tradition in ITE. This is because competences lay emphasis on the performance of given tasks based on certain standards that are too general to respond to specific cases, consequently undermining the aims of education and upbringing. In addition, by giving more power to universities to run ITE programmes, there is the likelihood that the role of the state will be reduced to that of providing key features in line with national and EU standards. This could imply that teacher training is no longer licensed by the state, thus generating fears about the

future of teachers as civil servants with tenure.

It is true that this structural reform has innovative elements, which should not be overlooked in ITE. Its aims of improving students' job market chances, contributing to international mobility and shortening study time are indeed plausible. However, considering the high degree of academic excellence plus professional training of suitable length, rigor and practical quality retained in the German educational system (Norman 1995), this reform should not be counterproductive but a stepping stone on which improvement in education could be spearheaded. The central discussions tied to this reform might be how these programmes might respond to the standardization of job-related competences and teacher professionalism, while at the same time accommodating the diversity of the rich European cultural heritage.

Conclusion

Different countries perceive and implement ITE differently, with many internal and external factors playing a part. The development and progress of ITE cannot be separated from a country's historical, socio-economic and political spheres of influence. It is also true that there is a clear distinction between state and institutional interests in ITE, often resulting in crisis. Therefore, solutions to the question concerning how teacher education ought to be organized are varied, rendering such a programme vulnerable to various interests.

ITE is moving towards standardization through the introduction of modules and credit point transfer, a move that is most likely to give more power to the state control of ITE in the three countries. As a result, professional teacher education disciplines are disappearing or narrowing in favour of subject-based competences. With this, teacher-qualifying examinations constitute a major part of the requirement. Similar to other African countries with European colonial roots, there has been a tendency in Uganda to model ITE in line with the experience of the former colonial master. In addition, where the need to reform ITE programmes arises, there is a tendency to borrow current ideologies and practices from the same masters. Such programmes are often short-lived owing to inadequate funding and other support structures. Consequently, the renaissance of African education is still far from reality.

There has been a long tradition of collaboration between university and school in the training of teachers. However, current reform in ITE emphasizes the need for a university-school partnership that promotes reflection and integration of theoretical knowledge with hands-on practical experience. A top-down 'forced, quasi-contractual partnership with schools' (Harland & Lambert 1997: 4), as is the case in England, seems detrimental to such efforts. Instead, a partnership borne out of a mutual understanding between the two teacher service institutions is more likely to be beneficial (Namubiru 2000). Any major institutional restructuring also increasingly necessitates regular dialogue among the state, university and other interest bodies

having a stake in ITE. Such dialogue could enable the various stakeholders to work toward possible solutions to the challenges encountered in the provision of ITE. This implies that universities cease to be the sole players in the provision of ITE.

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Trajectories of restructuring: The changing context for initial teacher education in South Africa

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Abstract

The article aims to illustrate the complexity of institutional restructuring dynamics in distinct South African university contexts, in order to highlight the challenges posed for the initial teacher education system. It focuses on education faculties and schools that have undergone successive waves of internally and externally mandated change over the last ten years. The first section demonstrates that there is a simple and a complex form of merger, characterized by varying degrees of integration, subordination or cessation of the former institutional configurations. This means that at the micro-level, in planning and implementing their initial teacher education programmes, some institutions are faced with reconciling diverse groups of academics with distinct histories, expertise and commitments. The second section of the article attempts to delineate the impact on initial teacher education programmes and curriculum. The article concludes with a consideration of the challenges for the relationship of teacher education providers with the National Department of Education, with institutional leadership and within faculties or schools.

Introduction

The recent release of the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (2007) emphasized that 'decisive measures' are required to increase the supply of new teachers in South Africa. This requirement is supported by the fact that, while there has been a marked decline in the number of students enrolling in initial teacher education programmes, demand trends suggest a growing shortage of teachers, particularly for the primary school phase (Peltzer et al. 2005, Hall et al. 2005, Crouch & Perry 2003). The task of initial teacher education is now the primary responsibility of 22 universities faced with multiple demands – from a new higher education qualification structure to new programme and curriculum frameworks, from shifting student demographic profiles to new funding and financing models, from

new educational approaches to new higher education challenges. Perhaps the greatest challenge is that they face these demands shaped by the experience of a decade of institutional restructuring, both internally driven and externally mandated. Their engagement with new policy frameworks, with qualifications and curriculum change, with the professional development of new teachers and of serving teachers all occurs on a base of profound institutional change and considerable organizational instability.

Hence, as part of the Teacher Education Research and Development programme funded by the Royal Netherlands Embassy, we initiated a study of the restructuring processes evident at public teacher education providers and the ways in which these shape the conditions for and approaches to initial teacher education.

An initial analysis of the policy and legislative context suggested that restructuring had four main trajectories in distinct periods. First, in the mid to late 1990s many of the then 35 universities restructured internally in response to changing higher education imperatives. In many cases the status and position of education faculties was considerably diminished within the institution. Second, in 2001 colleges of education were legislatively incorporated into higher education, driven by state concerns about the cost, efficiency and quality of colleges. Third, from 2004 a process of mergers and partial incorporations was initiated to restructure the higher education landscape, impacting in distinct ways on education faculties and schools. Fourth, some institutions experienced these multiple waves of restructuring cumulatively in rapid succession, over an extremely short period of five years. Once the study was completed a fifth trajectory was evident, in that over the past two years some institutions once again have restructured internally to deal with the effects of incorporation or merger more effectively.

These institutional changes in South Africa were driven in complex ways by a double dynamic that is operating globally to re-shape teacher education.

Teacher policy, standing at the heart of the education system, is being reformed, remodelled and transformed in a range of developed and developing countries. Debate about the most appropriate policy and mechanisms for producing and distributing educational services, about a new relationship between government, schools and teacher educators, has become vigorous globally (Butt & Gunter 2005, Stuart & Tatto 2000, Sandy 2006, Avalos 2000). Such changes in teacher policy soon impact on teacher education.

At the same time, teacher education has typically been shifted from the specialized college sector into the university sector, in both developed and developing countries. Hence, teacher education internationally has also become subject to the multiple new demands of globalization and the knowledge economy as they are played out on the higher education terrain, particularly in the form of new funding and managerial models.

For teacher education providers in South Africa, as across the world, institutional

change is thus inevitable, driven both by shifting education policies and relationships (in South Africa, the shift to an outcomes-based education system and national qualifications framework, for example) and by shifting policies and relationships within their new higher education location (see Parker 2003, Kotecha & Harman 2001, Hall, Symes & Luescher 2004). However, as Robertson (2005) cautions, the form of change is not inevitable and always brings with it the legacy of the past – and the challenge to ensure that change 'maximizes outcomes' for all South Africans:

> Futures are not inevitable. They are imagined and created, but always with the legacy of the past bound into their very fabric. The important task we have is to be willing to imagine the creation of institutions and social relationships that maximize outcomes for all individuals rather than for a few. (Robertson 2005:167)

In particular the form of change is not inevitable – or the same – for different institutions.

Universities in South Africa have distinct historical legacies, which continue to shape their response as they reorganize in the face of the multiple challenges set in motion by new policy and regulatory frameworks since 1994. In the present they experience the trajectories of restructuring in different combinations (Lewin et al. 2003; Sayed 2002; Jansen 2002). So, while the policy intention is to create a single teacher education system, institutional mediation leads to complex outcomes. The outcome is that schools, departments and faculties of education are positioned differently within their institutions and in relation to the national teacher education system, and face the challenge of integrating diverse bodies of academics from merged and incorporated institutions in different ways.

The study thus aimed to provide a detailed empirical analysis of the complex ways in which forms and processes of institutional restructuring shape the conditions for and nature of initial teacher education approaches and programmes in distinct institutional contexts. The following section describes the empirical study conducted, in order to situate the analysis offered in this article.

Researching change in teacher education

This section briefly describes the research design of the study and the selection of a sample.

A multiple case study design

A multiple, comparative case study design was developed to facilitate a 'thick description' of the nature of institutional restructuring at the macro-, meso- and micro-levels, focusing respectively on responses to national policy directives, institutional strategic dynamics and micro-dynamics within departments or faculties. The following specific focus and techniques have been applied to each case study:

- An institutional history with a focus since 1994, constructed from an analysis of official institutional policy and documents, interviews with current managers or former heads of colleges or merging entities and analysis of HEMIS data and secondary research reports
- Analysis of (the range of) mediations of the new national teacher education policy framework and the experience of restructuring teacher educators within the newly-restructured institutions, drawn from individual interviews with senior and long-serving staff members and focus group interviews with teacher educators, to represent all the ‘constituent’ institutions
- An overview of the current institutional governance structures that have developed, focusing on the relative power and contribution of ‘constituent institutions’, drawn from interviews with current managers as well as former heads of colleges or merging entities
- An overview of the recent history of and current positioning of teacher education within the higher education institution, drawn from interviews with current managers within the institution in general and in the teacher education school, department or faculty, as well as with former heads of colleges or merging entities
- Analysis of the effects of restructuring on the core business of teacher education, exploring consensus or conflict and tension around pedagogical approaches and discourses of initial teacher education, through interviews with senior academics and focus group interviews with teacher educators

Selection matrix

A matrix was devised for the selection of cases that would reflect the full range of experience nationally. The key differentiating dimensions identified were the four trajectories of restructuring outlined above and the shift observed in the internal organizational form, from an education faculty with direct access to institutional resources and power to an education school or department that has to compete for access within a larger and more general faculty.

The table overleaf reflects the selection matrix, summarizing the main forms of institutional restructuring experienced by all 22 universities in 2006. The 11 universities selected for case study are highlighted in italics.

The article

It is only possible in the scope of this article to focus on a single trajectory for illustrative purposes. The fourth, most complex trajectory, of successive waves of internal restructuring, college incorporation and higher education merger over an intense period, has been chosen. The analysis is thus based on trends evident at seven universities: Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), North-West University (NWU), Cape Peninsula University

A matrix of trajectories of restructuring

	Education faculty	**School or department of education**
	Direct access to institutional managerial and financial power	*Indirect access to institutional managerial and financial power*
Internal higher education institutional reorganization in response to shifting context	*Rhodes University* University of Stellenbosch University of the Western Cape	Vaal University of Technology University of Cape Town
Incorporation of teacher education colleges externally imposed	University of Pretoria *University of Zululand*	*University of the Witwatersrand* University of Venda
Higher education institutional mergers externally imposed	University of Johannesburg Tshwane University of Technology *Fort Hare University*	Central University of Technology, Free State
Internal restructuring, college incorporation and institutional merger externally imposed	*Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University* *University of KwaZulu-Natal* *North-West University* *Cape Peninsula University of Technology* Walter Sisulu University of Technology Durban Institute of Technology	*University of South Africa* *University of Limpopo* *University of the Free State*

of Technology (CPUT), University of South Africa (Unisa), University of Limpopo and University of the Free State.

The article aims to illustrate the complexity of dynamics in specific institutional contexts and to highlight the challenges posed for managers and academics involved with initial teacher education programmes. It is divided into two sections. The first demonstrates that there is a simple and a complex form of merger, characterized by varying degrees of integration, subordination or cessation of the former institutional configurations. This means that at the micro-level, in planning and implementing their initial teacher education programmes, some institutions are faced with reconciling diverse groups of academics with distinct histories, expertise and commitments. The second section of the article attempts to delineate the impact on initial teacher education. It shows that over the period of restructuring higher education dynamics, particularly new financial imperatives, are increasingly shaping education faculties and schools and that consequently initial teacher education has diminished in significance across the system. Restructuring impacts on curriculum reform and development directly or less directly, depending on the extent to which incorporated colleges and merged universities retained strong leadership, a significant group of staff with valued expertise and complementary programmes. Finally,

this section identifies key issues of contestation or potential synergy. In conclusion, the article considers the challenges for the relationship of teacher education providers with the National Department of Education, with institutional leadership and within faculties or schools, to aid the task of 'maximizing outcomes'.

Section One: The dynamics of externally-mandated change: Mergers and complexity

It is not possible to describe the fascinating history and complex dynamics of each university in detail but only to identify broad patterns and trends, with pen sketches of individual cases as illustration.

Jansen's South African taxonomy (2002) was useful to illuminate the form of incorporation and merger. Mergers and incorporations have led in some cases to 'institutional obliteration' where little remains of the structures and programmes of one partner, or to 'protected enclosure' where the incorporated institution continues to operate as usual but formally within the new institution, or to 'subsumed integration' where the one partner is integrated but in a subordinate manner, retaining only parts of their former identity or programmes, and finally 'equal partnership' where integration occurs on a more equitable basis.

Each of these forms was evident to varying degrees, distinguishing two distinct institutional patterns, with different consequences and potential impact.

Simple and complementary mergers

First, there is a simple pattern. These institutions experienced relatively simple higher education mergers in that they are either partial incorporations of a single campus of a university or totally complementary institutional mergers. These mergers occurred on the basis of a form of college incorporation that led to the effective 'institutional obliteration' of the college in that no programmes or staff were retained and only 'pipeline' students were catered for.

In the Free State case, for example, the merger interaction is effectively one of legal incorporation of a single campus of two other institutions. This means that the terms of interaction, of incorporation into existing structures and practices, were more clear-cut – although the resultant dynamic is not a foregone conclusion. For the School of Education at Free State it would appear that the primary concern was education's academic standing and survival within a Faculty of Humanities, but that neither the incorporation of the Qwa Qwa and Bloemfontein Vista campuses nor the earlier college incorporation was seen as a strategic asset to this process.

In the case of Limpopo, the institutional merger with Medunsa did not directly affect the School of Education, except in a general manner, as Medunsa's medical niche was

strongly complementary to its existing areas of focus. Although there are those who would argue that there are strategic opportunities to be mined, there was not evidence at the time of research of a proactive response from the school.

For education faculties and schools at these universities, despite institutional restructuring through mergers and college incorporation, it was largely possible to continue with 'business as usual'. As will be discussed below, the challenge remains to integrate the small number of new staff from the incorporated campuses, at Free State for example.

Complex successive waves of restructuring, then mergers

The second pattern is of successive waves with complex institutional mergers and which involves two institutions with education faculties or schools that have recently incorporated colleges, typically but not solely in a process of 'subsumed integration' or 'protected enclosure'. This means that they have retained some of the college staff, typically using their expertise to develop the new BEd programmes, particularly for the Foundation Phase (see Becker et al. 2004, Sehoole 2005, Van der Westhuizen 2004). They involve the externally-mandated merger of entire universities with considerable structural and procedural reorganization for all academic staff and they may involve the merger of institutions with potentially competing teacher education programmes. What adds to the complexity is that there are multiple parties to the merger – one or more former colleges, two or more universities or technikons – and the relations and balance between these differ within the same new university.

In turn, two patterns of such complex institutional mergers may be discerned. In the first, the form of merger is characterized by a degree of equal partnership, veering towards subsumed integration – evident in the cases of CPUT and UKZN. Typically here a strong leadership was able to promote the interests of staff from each party to the merger. So at CPUT, for example, the former Cape Technikon strategically recruited two colleges, one traditionally English and the other Afrikaans, that could expand their niche from FET to all phases of teacher education. The incorporation in 2001 was understood by the colleges to be a merger and there was considerable resentment that Cape Technikon dominated the new relationship de facto, gaining valuable real estate and considerable student numbers. Then in 2006 Cape Technikon merged with Peninsula Technikon, where the Education Department had been part of the science faculty. It chose to join the Cape Technikon Education Faculty in the merged institution. Time and the balance of relationships will determine which scenario will prevail – whether the relationship will be one of equal partnership or become a subsumed integration into the larger faculty, following the pattern of college incorporation.

In the second pattern the form of merger is largely institutional cessation, with subsumed integration of complementary parts of one or more parties to the merger –

evident in the cases of NMMU and Unisa. For example, Port Elizabeth University (UPE) incorporated colleges in such a way that they did not retain any staff or programmes, resulting effectively in 'institutional obliteration' of the college, while the university benefited in the form of a considerable injection of funds to cover the fees of 'pipeline' students. It also incorporated the Port Elizabeth campus of Vista, which determined that it was the senior partner in that relationship. The merger in 2005 with PE Technikon, which had incorporated a college but retained some staff and a single programme, meant that this pattern was largely reproduced in the new NMMU. Considered together with the fact that the technikons had a recent history of teacher education, introduced only after 1993, with very small enrolments in a niche area (typically FET), the former UPE staff came to dominate the merger de facto.

The case of NWU straddles these two patterns, with a merger between formally equal university partners, both of whom incorporated colleges in a form of protected enclosure. Given the very distinct historical legacies, institutional cultures and strongly contrasting ideologies of the two universities, the main parties operate largely on parallel tracks in practice. There are two faculties with two deans operating on the two campuses at considerable geographical distance from one another. The complexity of the dynamics of interaction is such that there is a possibility of subsumed integration or institutional cessation of one partner in the future.

These universities face a major challenge at the micro-level to integrate groups of academic staff with distinct histories, institutional cultures and sometimes conflicting approaches to teacher education within a single organization (see also Woodward & Parsons 2004, Humphrey 2003, Arnolds & Boshoff 2004, Pillay 2004). The form of incorporation or merger will continue to impact over the medium term in shaping the conditions of consensus or contestation created within the 'new' institution – and the conditions for initial teacher education. Before discussing this in Section Two below it is important to consider the challenges at the meso-level of the position of initial teacher education within the new universities.

Higher education dynamics shape education's position within universities

Initially after 1994 state steering and the dynamics of education change drove the restructuring of teacher education more strongly. However, the merger process made it clear that higher education imperatives were increasingly predominant in driving change and shaping institutional conditions. Many academics and senior managers reported support in principle from central management, rectors or vice-chancellors to promote teacher education within their institution in the national interest. In the majority of cases contestation at the meso-level, determining education's institutional status, depended on its financial standing within the university, its ability to enrol students and its image as an academic discipline. (A commonly reported view of those in other faculties was that teacher education is not 'the real thing', not a strong

academic discipline.) Together with the devolved faculty structures and decentralized financial models adopted by many universities, this might result in the needs and priorities of initial teacher education being overshadowed by other pressing responsibilities of institutions.

The cases do illustrate a degree of variation, with higher education dynamics in some cases playing a strong determining role and, in others, articulating more effectively with education dynamics to varying degrees. At Unisa, for instance, shortly after merger, the Faculty of Education was changed to a school within a college and then a year later to a cluster of departments within a school within a college, driven by financial imperatives of the newly merged mega-university. Here higher education dynamics operated strongly but in a potentially negative way, in that institutional financial policies are creating pressures on education that may be in tension with professional education imperatives – or certainly, the priorities of initial teacher education as academic staff perceives them. The UKZN case reflects the growing pressure from the university centre to improve research outputs, which for some staff is in tension with their task of professional education of teachers. CPUT represents the other end of the spectrum, in which merging was seen to provide an opportunity to further education agendas within the institution, shaping a more proactive strategic pathway for initial teacher education.

The challenge for teacher education faculties and schools is to ensure financial security and synergy with other university priorities – in order to protect or promote their educational priorities.

Section Two: Impact on initial teacher education

This section considers the impact of the double dynamic driving restructuring and of the specific forms of institutional restructuring experienced. It signals general trends across the system but focuses on the institutions that have experienced successive waves of restructuring. First, it describes the current organizational structure, focus and capacity of education schools and faculties to produce new teachers across the phases of the school system. Second, it considers the points of potential contestation and synergy within schools and faculties as a result of successive waves of restructuring.

Current organizational structure, focus and capacity

Current organizational structure

In general there has been significant internal change, from a discipline-based organization informed by the logic of fundamental pedagogics or other educational philosophy, to a tripartite-programme-based structure derived from the distinction between in-service, initial and postgraduate teacher education. This logic is found with a num-

ber of variations in most universities, strongly shaped by education imperatives and dynamics.

Where institutions have experienced successive waves of restructuring, there were essentially three main responses with variations on the theme: include the incorporated or merged entities within existing structures, co-exist on parallel tracks in separate structures or create new integrated structures. There is a degree of disjuncture between the new formal internal organization as intended and the extent to which staff have accepted or contested the structure to make it work effectively in practice. This is particularly the case where there have been complex multiple mergers or a lack of strong leadership at critical points in the process. The cases illustrate the demands of creating new integrated structures, which tend to question the basis for long-standing academic 'homes' and disciplinary territory. Finally, the way in which leadership positions are filled in merged institutions (in particular, the extent to which each party to the merger is represented) creates the potential for power imbalances and 'undercurrents of dissatisfaction', which may impact on programme delivery.

Programme structure

Education changes determined the nature of the tripartite-programme-based division, but micro-level dynamics of specific institutions determined the final shape of internal structures – and likewise with the programme structure of individual universities. Different universities are prioritizing initial teacher education, continuing professional development or postgraduate programmes as a niche area of specialization, related to their patterns of restructuring. Just who prioritizes what is not solely determined by incorporation or mergers but rather by the institutional legacy, research profile and the strategic vision of the faculty or school or, in some cases, university central management. The choice of programme focus within a faculty or school, however, can exacerbate or facilitate contestation and tension at the micro-level, between the groups of staff brought together in a single new university, who may prioritize one of the three areas of focus differentially. This is exacerbated when the institution prioritizes or accords greater status to one of the three areas, in particular to postgraduate programmes and research.

Enrolment patterns

The balance of enrolments found at the time of the National Teacher Education Audit in 1994 had shifted considerably by 2006. The proportion of postgraduate enrolments has stayed relatively steady but it is evident that only a few universities have significant research capacity, reflected in the number of accredited publications and the quality of postgraduate programmes (see the 2006 HEQC review of Med programmes). Relative to total output across the system, for instance, education has a

very low share, consistently representing 5% of the national total of publications – 288 articles of a total of 6 018 in 2000 and 348 of a total of 6 492 in 2004. The proportion of initial teacher education enrolments has declined dramatically and the proportion of formally certificated in-service and up-grading programmes (NPDE and ACE qualifications) has increased dramatically. In fact the proportions of the two have virtually inverted over the last ten years. This trend is driven in a contradictory way by an intersection of the education imperatives of the National Department of Education to promote teacher upgrading and equity and the entrepreneurial or survival interests of individual higher education institutions – and even individual academics.

Mergers and college incorporation provided significant opportunities for universities to grow student numbers and some have taken advantage of this to expand into complementary new fields and qualifications, while others have responded in a reactive and short-term manner to the opportunities offered. Restructuring has also shifted the traditional student demographic profile in some universities, which presents challenges for implementing mergers.

Emerging from the analysis is evidence that the desirable and achievable balance between teaching and research, between initial teacher education and in-service education programmes, between professional education and post-graduate education programmes and between professional education programmes oriented to different phases of schooling is strongly contested – both within universities and between universities and the National Department of Education.

Impact on approaches to initial teacher education

The degree to which restructuring impacts on approaches to initial teacher education and curriculum processes varies between the universities that have experienced successive waves of change (see also Mfusi 2004, Jansen 2002).

In some cases, restructuring has a *strong direct* impact on the nature of initial teacher education programmes. These universities have to develop new approaches and curricula based on complex organizational dynamics that include multiple academic voices with potentially contrasting histories and identities, potentially giving rise to contestation and requiring considerable energy to negotiate and create synergy – the cases of CPUT, UKZN and NWU. The challenge at UKZN, for example, is to establish working relationships between groups of staff who have come from a college, a historically advantaged university with two geographic locations and a historically disadvantaged university, each with their own distinct ethos, focus and programmes.

In the other cases, restructuring has a ‘medium’ degree of direct impact on initial teacher education. In these cases – Unisa, NMMU and Free State – a single institution dominated incorporation and the merger, and only a small number of academics from one or more of the other parties are retained as a minority within the newly-created

institution. This means that the structures, curricula and staff of the dominant party tend to determine the approach and practice in the new institution. However, the academics from the 'legacy' institutions maintain a subordinate voice that needs to be accommodated in the process of dealing with the demands of curriculum development. They may add to and complement what is possible in initial teacher education programmes or they may potentially undermine new programmes in practice – but two of the possible responses. The cases in the study have dealt with these challenges of accommodating subordinate voices in different ways. For instance at Unisa it was explained that programmes of the incorporated colleges and merged universities were 'taught out', because college programmes were not seen as valuable and Vista and Technikon SA did not have a strong education identity or programmes to offer. The subsumed academic staff was generally positive about becoming part of a 'more reputable' academic institution but they highlighted the often negative ways in which the process impacted on their personal and professional lives.

The impact of mergers and incorporation on personal and professional lives

Although not a core focus of the present study, inevitably in the course of interviews it became clear that the toll on individual academics was high, both personally and professionally – and that this impacts significantly on the conditions for teacher education. If those responsible for carrying out institutional mandates are not fully focused on their task because of personal stress or professional dissatisfaction there is a negative impact on what is possible. It is important to understand the points of contestation and impact on personal and professional lives in order to manage change more effectively and lessen the impact on individuals.

A descriptive list of the common issues related to personal and professional lives was compiled across the cases. The work of Trowler (1998), who distinguishes four approaches that academics evince to deal with change (sinking, swimming, coping mechanisms and policy reconstruction) was used to make sense of the list. Trowler argues that rather than passively 'suffering' the impact of change large numbers of academics in fact adopt a 'policy reconstruction' approach, using strategies such as curriculum and syllabus innovation or strategically manipulating or reinterpreting policy in terms of their own experience and interests. Such positive 'policy reconstruction' strategies were widely evident, perhaps given the strongly articulated and widely shared commitment to contribute to education transformation and the quality of the future teaching corps in South Africa. In more rather than fewer of the institutions visited a generally positive outlook and pragmatism guided the daily work of the academic staff, despite awareness of the personal demands and challenges arising from this common commitment to the professional development of teachers.

Curriculum change and approaches to teacher education

Curriculum change is strongly driven by national education policy processes in the

first instance, but these institutional restructuring patterns and dynamics complicate the demands and challenges.

In general there has been widespread recurriculation after 2000 to bring initial teacher education programmes in line with the Norms and Standards for Educators and the qualifications requirements of SAQA. In most cases this primarily entailed the repackaging of existing programmes as the core of the new BEd. In many cases curriculum development processes only extended to the *alignment* of the curricula of the merging parties. In one case the principle of 'equivalence' was used as a compromise that allowed a degree of curriculum and pedagogical variation between groups from merging institutions, with a shared set of outcomes.

A strong awareness of the need to develop new curricula was expressed at most universities, particularly in those cases that had undergone multiple waves of restructuring. However, national processes hampered universities from actively undertaking this task. First, because of delays in finalizing a new National Framework for Teacher Education in response to the recommendations of the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (finally gazetted in May 2007) and, second, by the demands of preparation for the review process of the Higher Education Quality Committee, being rolled out over an extended period of three years from 2006.

Nevertheless, it was evident that there are significant common issues of contestation between groups of academics from incorporated colleges or merged universities, which present a challenge for initial teacher education in the new university. Examining the substance of the (contrasting) approaches to teacher education that academics with different institutional identities contribute to the programme and curriculum design, and the lines of debate and contestation that may ensue, can contribute to the task of building synergy within institutions. (A second phase of the study, focusing on the new institutional cultures that emerge out of the processes of restructuring, will consider this task.)

Two sets of issues are highlighted in this regard. A first set of issues with which teacher educators are grappling relates to the pedagogical and theoretical approaches articulated by academics from different backgrounds and institutional identities, which shape future curriculum development in teacher education.

By way of illustration, in one case with a subordinate form of integration, academics from each of the institutions shared a fundamental pedagogics approach, which it was claimed made it relatively easy to reconcile different modules, qualifications and programme structures for recurriculation. However, this approach has been largely discredited and the academics share a common challenge to shift away from it. In other cases there were significant differences along ideological-pedagogical lines, reflecting different models of teacher education, which made the process of recurriculation more complex and conflict ridden. Academics interviewed framed the differences variously in terms of a dichotomy between 'Christian National Education'

and 'People's Education', or between Afrikaans and English traditional approaches, or between 'behaviourist' and 'child-centred' approaches, and so on.

A second complex set of issues around which there have been strong efforts to create synergy, or around which there has been considerable contestation, relates in the first instance to the perceived differences in the 'college' and the 'university' approach to teacher education. Clearly the set of issues has various interwoven strands and multiple layers – and is not specific to only those institutions that have incorporated colleges. At its heart it centres on different positions in relation to the most desirable balance between 'theory' and 'practice' in teacher education programmes and curricula. It is also overlayered with debates around the specific nature of initial teacher education required for different school phases, particularly for primary as opposed to secondary schooling. Contestation centres around what is the best place for content subjects to be taught, the best way to deliver professional teacher education, the most appropriate balance between theory and practice in programmes, and the most appropriate balance between research and teaching in teacher education programmes.

Competing discourses and models of teacher education and competing resolutions of the balance between theory and practice were often expressed in tensions between groups of staff. In the most complex cases of restructuring these tensions led to stereotyped perceptions of each other's positions. In some cases, unfortunately, these differences in approach and organizational culture are overlaid and exacerbated by the fact that positions are drawn along racial (or language) lines. Academics in these situations – particularly where there had been little integration and operation on parallel tracks – generally stressed that the dynamics of 'covert' and subtle racism, inter-site tensions and inferiority-superiority complex issues combine racial divisions with institutional background, which tend to deepen tension.

At the micro-level the amount of management and effort required to structure positive opportunities for engagement and dialogue in these universities is considerable.

In conclusion – futures and outcomes

The article reflects the emerging teacher education system and in particular the position of initial teacher education after undergoing an inevitable and necessary series of seismic changes. In pointing to the challenges and demands arising out of restructuring, it aims to contribute to the creation of a new vision for the future.

There are instances of success in creating new institutional forms and relationships, but at this early stage in the process the challenges for individual academics, faculties and schools remain considerable and are highlighted in this final section.

The relationship between the national Department of Education and universities

Currently, there is a lively national debate around the ideal nature of state steering in

higher education and the potential loss of academic autonomy (Jansen 2005, Hall & Symes 2003, Hall 2006, Jonathan 2007, Habib, Bentley & Morrow 2006, Freedman & Edigheji 2006). Engaging with the debate around state steering and institutional autonomy, of problematizing the ideal relationship between national and provincial teacher education structures on the one hand and universities on the other is critical in order to deal with initial teacher education – and produce the much needed corps of new teachers – more effectively in the future.

State steering of the teacher education system has strengthened over the period since 1995, driving externally-mandated restructuring. However, there has been an absence of a coherent vision at critical points. The creation of a new policy vision for teacher education is a priority. The national framework goes some way towards this. However, the case studies emphasized that the substantive implementation and mediation of policy at institutional level is critical to determine the actual form and direction of change. Ad hoc policy implementation potentially has severe unintended consequences. For instance the loss of the close relationship between provincial education departments and teacher education providers that resulted from the closure of colleges was a constant theme raised in relation to the current mismatch between supply and demand. The implications of the location of initial teacher education in universities, subject to potentially competing higher education imperatives driving decisions on the resources for teacher education, need to be taken into account more centrally. The shift away from initial teacher education enrolments towards the more lucrative professional development programmes, driven by state funding to upgrade the quality of the teaching workforce, is another instance of unintended consequences and of the double dynamic driving restructuring.

Coherent, systematic interventions across the board, based on a strong relationship between provincial and national departments of education and university providers of teacher education, seem to be necessary.

The relationship between faculties and universities

Individual universities also have a role to play in creating a new national vision. There was a degree of stated commitment of senior university managers to recognize their contribution to teacher education as a national priority. At the same time there was a degree to which teacher education was disadvantaged within institutions by being in the lowest subsidy funding category, but without compensatory recognition of the high costs of professional education in financial expectations. There were new pressures on academics to increase research outputs and raise academic standing, again without recognition of the specificity of professional teacher education.

A substantive recognition on the part of university managers of their responsibility to the public good in terms of the production of future teachers might aid education faculties and schools in developing a strategic vision.

The lack of a strong institutional vision of how teacher education is meant to be is evident in the way that some faculties and schools were swept along by restructuring, responding in a reactive, short-term, narrow interests manner that was ultimately potentially undermining their own best efforts. The contrast with those that had a stronger strategic vision that was able to channel a more proactive, medium- to long-term response in the broader interest of teacher education stood out starkly.

The relationship within faculties and schools

These institutional pressures often frame contestation within education faculties and schools and can exacerbate differences between groups of staff with different institutional identities and demographic profiles. There were evidently competing visions of the 'best' way to conceptualize initial teacher education, in terms of the underlying approaches and philosophies, the balance between theory and practice within curricula, the ideal requirements for primary and secondary school phases and between academic research and professional education as priorities. The absence of a coherent shared vision of teacher education and the personal and professional experience of multiple waves of restructuring have contributed to a situation in which academics adhere strongly to their own ways of organizing the curriculum, as one 'safety net' in an unstable situation. The danger for initial teacher education, of differences becoming solidified into stereotypical and prejudicial perceptions, was highlighted as a key challenge for faculties and schools to address at the micro-level.

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Who are we missing? Teacher graduate production in South Africa, 1995-2006

Andrew Paterson and Fabian Arends

Development Bank of Southern Africa and Human Sciences Research Council

Abstract

This article analyses teacher production in South Africa between 1995 and 2006. It synthesizes an in-depth analysis of enrolment and graduate data drawn from the South African Higher Education Management Information System with available literature in the field. The article first presents an overview of enrolment and graduation trends in initial professional education and training and in continuing professional development of teachers, thus generating a trend analysis of overall teacher graduate production for the decade. This serves as the platform from which to draw attention to a serious decline in the numbers of African women enrolled in IPET. In considering what has brought about this pattern, the article draws attention to the impact of the closing of the former colleges of education on teacher production. It also emphasizes the importance of understanding the social contexts that inform the movement of potential candidates from their households to teacher training institutions.

Introduction

The delivery of quality learning in any education system depends on sustaining the supply of teachers of quality and in sufficient numbers to meet demand. Changing patterns of aggregate teacher demand emerge as a consequence of the historical development of modern mass education systems. In turn, teacher supply is influenced by broader education and curriculum policy, policy on teacher education, and the social and economic environments in which young people find themselves as they make study and career decisions.

While teacher supply challenges are felt in the present, changes in graduate production affecting current supply may be traced by looking back at enrolment and graduation trends over a number of years.

The aim of this article is twofold. In the first part, we provide a picture of the features

of teacher education enrolment and graduates in higher education in South Africa from 1995 to 2004, with reference to overall change and then with reference to race, gender, qualification type and age.

In the second part, we discuss particular trends in the numbers of students completing initial professional education and training (IPET), age distribution of enrolment, student access to government financial support, and the impact of HIV/AIDS on students in teacher education. These trends highlight different strands of a single story – a significant decline in numbers of young African women enrolling for IPET. We advance two explanations for this unfolding situation that may attract focused research interest.

The main source of data for this analysis is the South African Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS), the repository for management information submitted by each higher education institution on an annual basis. Until 2004, HEMIS data was structured according to the now historical division between technikons and universities. These institutional types existed for most of the period in question, and the data is analysed accordingly.

Part 1: Teacher education enrolment and graduates

Teacher education enrolment

In the period 1995 to 2004, enrolment in teacher education faculties or departments in South African universities and technikons increased from 70 587 to 112 068 or by 41 479. This represented a 59% increase over the decade in question (Figure 1). This data refers to numbers of students involved in IPET and in continuing professional development of teachers (CPDT), which play complementary roles in teacher education.

The two institutional types experienced different enrolment patterns. In the technikons, enrolment increased dramatically from 1 351 in 1995 to 18 169 in 2004 – or by 16 818. The increase in university enrolment over the same period was 24 661.

Sharp increases in technikon enrolment between 1996 and 1998 and again in 2003-2004 had the effect of masking fluctuation in university enrolment. As a result, a somewhat more even overall growth curve was achieved for all teacher education. The overall enrolment pattern based on year-on-year

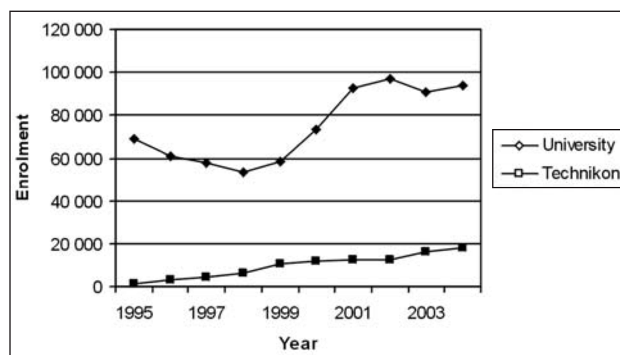


Figure 1: Enrolment in universities and technikons, 1995–2004

percentage changes revealed a period of decline (1996-1998), a period of resurgence (1999-2001) and a period of equilibrium (2002-2004).

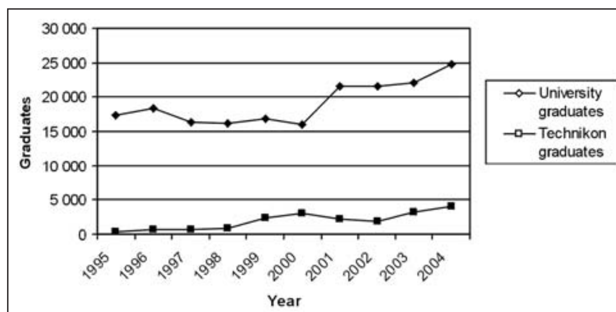
A comparison of education study field enrolments against total higher education enrolments shows that teacher education dropped to its lowest share in the period of 15% in 1998. In the technikons education study field enrolments began to grow significantly only from 1999 onwards. Between 1999 and 2001, both university and technikon enrolment grew faster than overall enrolment in each institutional type. Thereafter, only technikons sustained further growth against overall enrolments.

Teacher education graduates

In the decade in question, 210 432 graduates completed degrees and diplomas in the field of education. The number of graduates per year increased from 17 823 in 1995 to 28 756 in 2004, or by 61%. Overall, the lowest annual output of graduates was in 1998, when university graduations were in decline and before technikon graduations began to increase in volume (Figure 2). The technikon share of education graduate output rose from 2% in the late 1990s to levels between 8% and 16%.

Education graduates as a proportion of all graduates from the universities varied within a range between 23% and 35%. In the same period, education graduates as a percentage of all technikon graduates rose from 2% to 13%.

Figure 2: Graduates from universities and technikons, 1995–2004



Enrolments and graduates by race

Throughout this decade, African students constituted four in every five education students enrolled, followed by white students, who represented one in every ten education students, followed by coloured (3%) and Indian (2%) students. The consolidated enrolment data for universities and technikons (Figure 3) reveals that the major shift in enrolment proportions favoured

Figure 3: Enrolment numbers at universities and technikons by race, 1995–2004

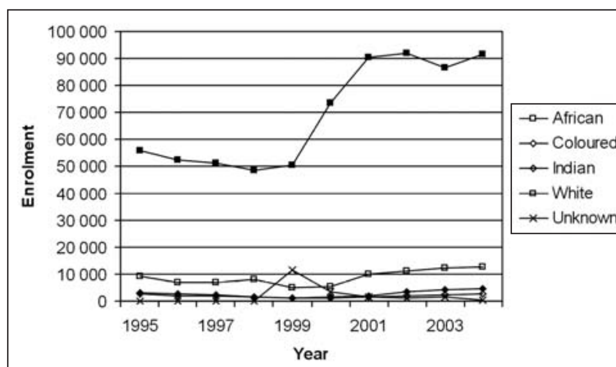
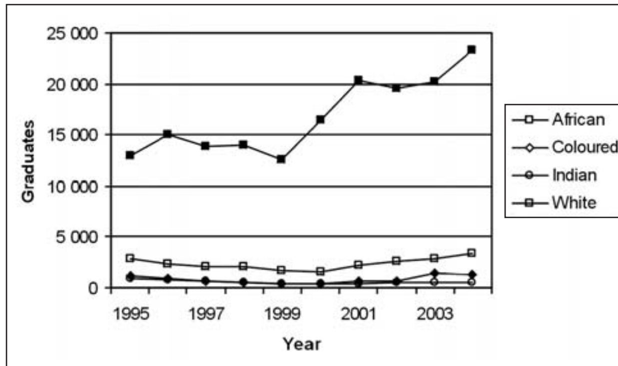


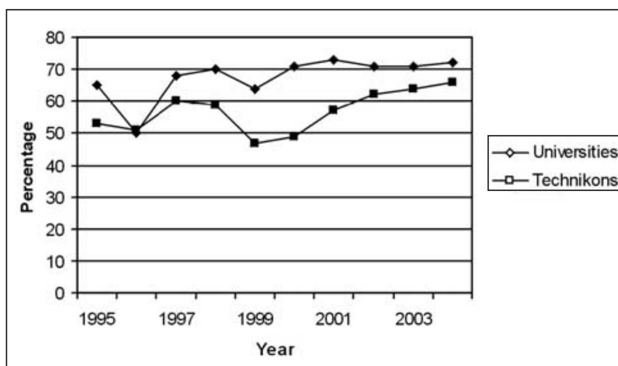
Figure 4: Graduate numbers for universities and technikons by race, 1995–2004



African graduates from 1999 onwards.

African graduates contributed the most to graduate output in the period under review, reaching 82% in 2004 (Figure 4). The proportionate share of white, coloured and Indian graduates declined correspondingly.

Figure 5: Female students as a percentage of all students enrolled in universities and technikons, 1995–2004



Gender distribution of enrolments and graduates

In 2004, females constituted 72% and 66% of enrolments in universities and in technikons respectively (Figure 5).

At the end of the period seven in ten teacher education students enrolled in higher education were female. The representation of male students declined from 36% in 1995 to below 30% (29%) for the first time in 2004.

Gender representation among graduates was very similar, with representation of male students declining from 35% in 1995 to 28% in 2004. The data clearly attests to increasing female dominance of graduate output with teaching qualifications.

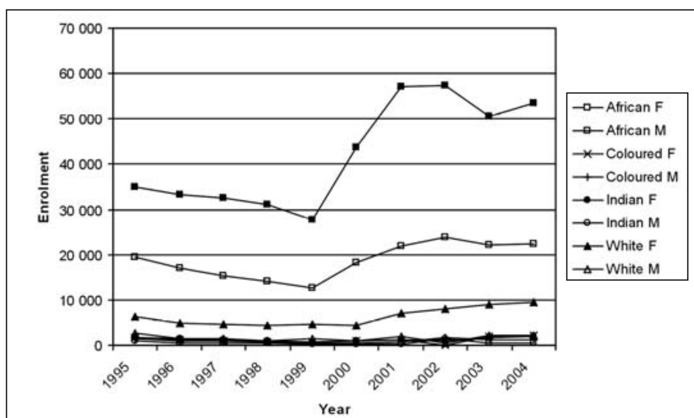


Figure 6: Enrolment by race and gender in universities, 1995–2004

Gender and race (nested) of student enrolment and graduates

Between 1995 and 2004, the numbers and proportion of African females who enrolled in univer-

sities for education programmes increased substantially (Figure 6). Concurrently, the proportion of African males who enrolled for teaching programmes declined to below one in four. This proportion determined the parameters of the gender share among newly qualified teachers entering the labour market.

The shape of graduations from universities by race and gender reveals a similar pattern to that of enrolments. If anything, the trend is more sharply evident. Nearly six of every ten university graduates in 2004 was African and female.

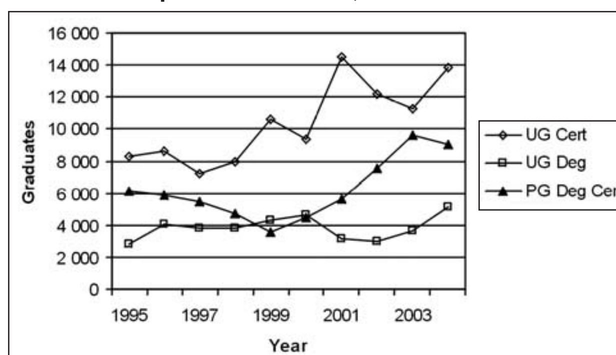
Enrolment and graduates by qualification type

Over the ten-year period, the majority of education enrolments in higher education were for undergraduate certificates (UG Cert) (45%) followed by an almost even proportion of enrolment for postgraduate certificate and honours degree qualifications (PG Deg/Cert) (26%) and undergraduate degrees (UG Deg) (25%). This was followed by masters and doctoral enrolments at 4% and 1% respectively.

The presence of education as a study field in technikons is relatively recent, with enrolments beginning to grow substantially within the period of analysis. The key source of enrolment growth in these institutions was undergraduate degrees (UG Deg), which accounted for 61% of enrolments by 2004, followed by moderate increases in undergraduate certificates (UG Cert), while postgraduate higher diplomas and honours qualifications (PG Deg/Cert) declined. This shape contrasts with the universities, where undergraduate degrees suffered the sharpest enrolment decline and fastest growth took place in postgraduate degrees and certificates.

Turning to graduations, based on the above intake the following can be observed in the decade under review: The largest proportion of graduates (49%) completed undergraduate certificates (UG Cert), while postgraduate certificate and honours degrees (PG Deg/Cert) accounted for 30%, followed by undergraduate degree (UGD) holders at 18% (Figure 7). Masters and PhD graduates accounted for the balance of 3%. A steady upsurge of postgraduate certificate and honours degree qualifications after 2000 is particularly clear from the trend lines. The bulk of this increase must be attributed to rising participation of practising teachers seeking further professional development, rather than to increased IPET graduate production.

Figure 7: Graduates in higher education by qualification level, 1995–2004



These profiles reflect the presence and graduation of the foll-

owing types of student: unqualified and under-qualified practising teachers seeking professional qualifications, qualified teachers returning for CPED, and would-be teachers registering for IPET programmes. However, it was not possible to separate out these groups from the overall counts within each qualification level.

Part 2: The declining participation of young African females in IPET

Enrolment by age

Students who enrol for study in the education field are distributed over a wide age range. The purpose for which students enrol for study in the education field is usually related to the point they have reached in their career path. For example, most people who enrol in initial teacher education programmes will do so prior to initiating their career and their age range will usually extend from late teens to late twenties. As teachers accumulate experience, they will engage in professional development by enrolling for programmes to raise their skills in particular curriculum fields or in the field of education management. Mature senior teachers or managers may seek to enhance their expertise further through pursuing higher degrees either in a professional domain or in research.

Notwithstanding the de-linking of qualifications to rank and salary promotion in the 1990s, the Department of Education's emphasis on continuing professional development, the desire of teachers to improve their own practice, and competition between institutions contributed to a healthy stream of teachers enrolling in teacher education programmes for CPED purposes in particular.

In considering what the desirable enrolment across age groups should be, we argue the following: First, the share of enrolment in the 25-and-under and the 26-to-30-year age groups should be equal to or slightly exceed the expected number of vacant educator posts in the system – for the moment leaving aside issues of subject speciality, etc. This assumes that most people preparing for a teaching career would fall within this relatively young age group. This is a *required* size, which relates to a specific need for new teachers in the workforce.

Second, an enrolment size drawn from all age groups greater than 30 years is *desired* in order to sustain the academic and professional qualification needs of the current teacher workforce. Increases in the proportion of this group in relation to the teacher workforce should be encouraged, because practising teachers who seek to improve their skills and qualifications can improve the quality of the system.

To examine the age–enrolment relationship, data on age of students for the five years 2000 to 2004 was employed. This variable was not available before 2000. Bearing in mind that the analysis of age-related data is affected by the selection of intervals according to which the data is described, it was decided to set categories in five-year intervals, up to the age of 40. Thereafter a single category was created for all teachers

in the mature phase of their career.

Looking at aggregate enrolment by age, the 41-and-over age category was the largest group, accounting for 34,5% of enrolments in the five-year period (Tables 1 and 2). The next age groups were the 31-to-35 and the 36-to-40 age groups, which accounted for 22% and 21,3% of enrolments respectively. The age groups with the lowest enrolment were the 25-and-under and the 26-to-30-year groups. The larger size of the older age groups was expected, because the number of qualified teachers enrolled for CPED purposes should be larger than the number of prospective new entrants doing IPET. Furthermore, we have observed that over the decade enrolment in CPED increased substantially.

Year-on-year analysis reveals changing participation by age over the period (Tables 1 and 2). Enrolment in the 25-and-under and the 41-and-over groups grew. The age group 36-to-40 retained a steady share. The proportions of the 26-to-30 and the 31-to-35 age groups declined (Table 2 and Figure 8).

Table 1: Enrolment in universities and technikons by age group, 2000–2004

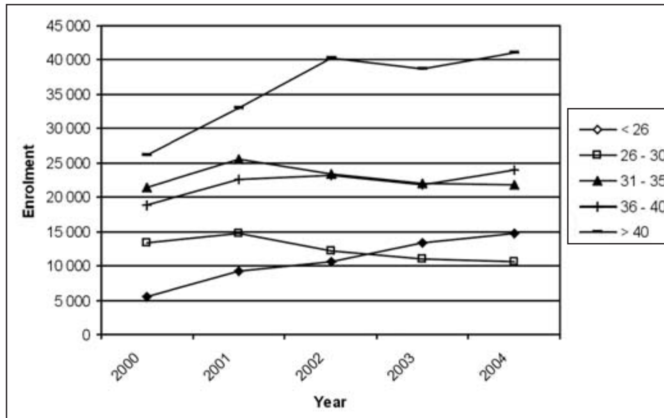
	25 & under	*26-30*	*31-35*	*36-40*	*41 & over*	*Total*
2000	5 530	13 361	21 514	18 800	26 150	85 355
2001	9 304	14 712	25 481	22 668	33 045	105 210
2002	10 563	12 202	23 415	23 192	40 329	109 701
2003	13 390	11 038	21 993	21 718	38 744	106 883
2004	14 666	10 555	21 792	24 025	41 033	112 071
Total	53 453	61 868	114 195	110 403	179 301	519 220

Table 2: Enrolment in universities and technikons by age group in percentages, 2000–2004

	25 & under	*26-30*	*31-35*	*36-40*	*41 & over*	*Total*
2000	6,5	15,7	25,2	22,0	30,6	100
2001	8,8	14,0	24,2	21,5	31,4	100
2002	9,6	11,1	21,3	21,1	36,8	100
2003	12,5	10,3	20,6	20,3	36,2	100
2004	13,1	9,4	19,4	21,4	36,6	100
Averaged % of enrol-ments	10,3	11,9	22,0	21,3	34,5	100

This research is particularly interested in the younger age ranges spanning 25-and-under (<26) and 26-to-30 years of age, assuming that this age range captures most people who are enrolled in initial teacher education (IPET). The enrolment share of the 25-and-younger group rose from 6,5% to 13,1%, whereas enrolment in the 26-to-30

Figure 8: Enrolment in education study fields by age group, 2000–2004



group declined from 15,7% to 9,4% in the period 2000 to 2004. How does this information contribute to our understanding of the claimed shortage of enrolment in initial teacher education? To make sense of this apparently contradictory pattern, one disaggregates the 25-and-under and the 26-to-30 age groups according to race and gender and according to institution type.

The patterns of enrolment for technikons and universities are discussed separately. This is because the latter institutions enrolled nearly nine out of every ten education students between 2000 and 2004. Furthermore, with rising age, the university share per age group rose to 89% of the 41-and-older group (Table 3).

Table 3: Enrolment in technikons and universities by age in percentages, 2000–2004

	Enrolment		*% share*	
	Technikon	*University*	*Technikon*	*University*
25 and under	41 936	53 453	21,5	78,5
25-30	52 778	61 868	14,7	85,3
31-35	97 739	114 195	14,4	85,6
36-40	96 078	110 403	13,0	87,0
41 and over	159 534	179 301	11,0	89,0
Total	448 065	519 220	13,7	86,3

25-and-under age group enrolment in universities

Looking at the 25-and-under cohort, total enrolment increased from 4 627 to 11 197 in five years. We see that enrolment was dominated by white females and that enrolment of this group rose to 50% in 2004 (Tables 4 and 5). By comparison, the proportion of African females, which in 2000 constituted 27,6%, dropped to 17,4% by 2004. In real terms, from 2000 to 2004 African female enrolment increased by only 666 students, whereas white female enrolment increased by 3 648 students. This confirms observations from teacher training units that there was increased enrolment of young white females. The changing conditions or motivations contributing to an increase in this group's participation in teacher education are worth further consideration.

Such a decline in the proportion of African females in this age group is counter-

Table 4: University enrolments by race and gender for age group 25-years-and-under, 2000–2004

	African		*Coloured*		*Indian*		*White*		*Unclassified*		
	F	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*Total*
2000	1 277	712	48	18	235	38	1 966	236	74	24	4 627
2001	1 607	956	142	53	281	45	3 456	554	169	65	7 328
2002	1 346	848	165	73	402	65	4 463	880	104	53	8 399
2003	1 746	1 094	243	102	553	111	5 308	1 042	121	66	10 386
2004	1 943	1 359	298	131	674	135	5 614	989	37	16	11 197
Total	7 919	4 969	895	377	2 144	394	20 806	3 700	506	225	41 936

Table 5: University enrolments by race and gender for age group 25-years-and-under in percentages, 2000–2004

	African		*Coloured*		*Indian*		*White*		*Unclassified*		
	F	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*Total*
2000	27,6	15,4	1,0	0,4	5,1	0,8	42,5	5,1	1,6	0,5	100
2001	21,9	13,0	1,9	0,7	3,8	0,6	47,2	7,6	2,3	0,9	100
2002	16,0	10,1	2,0	0,9	4,8	0,8	53,1	10,5	1,2	0,6	100
2003	16,8	10,5	2,3	1,0	5,3	1,1	51,1	10,0	1,2	0,6	100
2004	17,4	12,1	2,7	1,2	6,0	1,2	50,1	8,8	0,3	0,1	100
Averaged % of enrolments	18,9	11,8	2,1	0,9	5,1	0,9	49,6	8,8	1,2	0,5	100

intuitive, since African women are the wellspring of teacher supply for the majority of South Africa's school-age learners. In 2005, 79% of all educators employed in public schools were African and 66% female (Arends 2007). There is clearly a major disjuncture between the proportions of practising African female teachers and the proportions of African female students enrolled in the 25-and-under age group.

African male participation in this age group also declined, which meant that in 2004 the total African contribution to enrolment in the 25-and-under group stood at 29,5%, while white enrolment was 58,9%.

26-to-30-year age group enrolment in universities

The relatively low numbers of African students in the 25-and-under category could be explained with reference to the disadvantaged school and socio-economic environment that large numbers of young Africans must overcome to enrol in higher education. As a consequence of a variety of factors (e.g. older completers of Grade 12, time spent in seeking funding, taking care of household responsibilities, etc.) it is possible that African women who register for a teacher training programme are older than their white classmates. On this basis we may expect higher proportions of African students

in the next age group.

The enrolment pattern in the 26-to-30-year age group seems to lend credence to such an explanation, because African females constituted 56,4% and African males 28,1% of that cohort in 2000 (Tables 6 and 7). But the share of African females and males in this group declined to 50% and 24,9% respectively by 2004. In numerical terms there were 1 728 and 898 fewer African females and males enrolled in 2004 than in 2000.

We must also recall that the overall enrolment in this age group declined from 11 131 in 2000 to 8 965 in 2004.

Table 6: University enrolments by race and gender for age group 26-to-30-years, 2000–2004

	African		*Coloured*		*Indian*		*White*		*Unclassified*		
	F	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*Total*
2000	6 278	3 128	129	66	191	34	642	121	335	208	11 131
2001	7 433	3 436	148	108	221	44	847	208	141	159	12 745
2002	5 537	2 909	200	109	282	69	968	244	129	159	10 607
2003	4 463	2 466	213	98	318	78	1 080	225	203	182	9 325
2004	4 550	2 230	208	101	312	84	1 103	259	60	58	8 965
Total	28 260	14 168	898	482	1 324	309	4 640	1 056	868	766	52 773

Table 7: University enrolments by race and gender for age group 26-to-30-years in percentages, 2000–2004

	African		*Coloured*		*Indian*		*White*		*Unclassified*		
	F	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*Total*
2000	56,4	28,1	1,2	0,6	1,7	0,3	5,8	1,1	3,0	1,9	100
2001	58,3	27,0	1,2	0,9	1,7	0,3	6,6	1,6	1,1	1,3	100
2002	52,2	27,4	1,9	1,0	2,7	0,7	9,1	2,3	1,2	1,5	100
2003	47,9	26,4	2,3	1,0	3,4	0,8	11,6	2,4	2,2	2,0	100
2004	50,7	24,9	2,3	1,1	3,5	0,9	12,3	2,9	0,7	0,6	100
Averaged % of enrolments	53,6	26,8	1,7	0,9	2,5	0,6	8,8	2,0	1,6	1,5	100

Age groups older than 30 years enrolled in universities

Declining enrolment trends observed in the younger age groups are not replicated among older university students. In the 31-to-35-year age group, the proportion of African women remained securely above 60%, with an average for the period of 62,5%. Similar stability was evident in the next two age groups. Clearly our concern must be with declining enrolments among young African female students aged below 30 years.

Age and enrolment in technikons

Between 2000 and 2004 enrolment numbers in the technikons were comparatively much lower than in the universities. African students constituted more than 90% of enrolment in all age categories, and enrolment of African women never fell below 50% – with the exception of the 25-years-and-under age group (Tables 8 and 9).

In that age category, even though their enrolment numbers increased each year, the proportion of African females and males declined. In particular, the share of African females aged 25 years and younger declined sharply from 60,7% to 38,6%.

Table 8: Technikon enrolments by race and gender for age group 25-years-and-under, 2000–2004

	African		*Coloured*		*Indian*		*White*		*Unclassified*		
	F	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*Total*
2000	547	293	22	8	2	0	23	7	0	0	902
2001	854	441	54	15	7	1	516	88	0	0	1 976
2002	800	498	92	31	11	2	609	121	0	0	2 164
2003	1 245	681	118	39	9	3	745	162	1	0	3 003
2004	1 338	789	210	72	39	4	841	177	0	0	3 469
Total	4 784	2 702	497	165	68	10	2 734	555	1	0	11 514

Table 9: Technikon enrolments by race and gender for age group 25-years-and-under in percentages, 2000–2004

	African		*Coloured*		*Indian*		*White*		*Unclassified*		
	F	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*Total*
2000	60,7	32,5	2,5	0,9	0,2	0,0	2,5	0,7	0,0	0,0	100
2001	43,2	22,3	2,8	0,8	0,3	0,1	26,1	4,4	0,0	0,0	100
2002	37,0	23,0	4,3	1,4	0,5	0,1	28,2	5,6	0,0	0,0	100
2003	41,5	22,7	3,9	1,3	0,3	0,1	24,8	5,4	0,0	0,0	100
2004	38,6	22,7	6,0	2,1	1,1	0,1	24,2	5,1	0,0	0,0	100
Averaged % of enrolments	41,6	23,5	4,3	1,4	0,6	0,1	23,7	4,8	0,0	0,0	100

What needs to be asked is why the participation of young African women in teacher education appears to be dissipating in the post-millennium period? The data extends back only as far as 2000, but the trends identified were at work in the ante-2000 period.

The researchers suggest that some young African women who hitherto would have enrolled for a teaching qualification no longer perceive this choice as attractive, and where they have the financial means will enrol for career training in other profes-

sional fields. Alternatively, young African women from poor households who would otherwise have registered for teaching qualifications are not able to access higher education for social, health, financial or other factors in their household environment.

Having raised the question of financial support, we now turn to an analysis of the extent to which the largest public source of financial support for teacher training has served the population of those seeking to take up teacher training.

Financial support through NSFAS

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme of South Africa (NSFAS) provides financial aid through loans and bursaries for academically deserving and financially needy students to meet their own and South Africa's development needs. It seeks to impact on South Africa's racially skewed enrolment and graduate demographics and is funded primarily by the National Department of Education.

How have NSFAS disbursements contributed to teacher training within the overall NSFAS remit? To put this support into overall perspective, of the approximately 717 000 students in higher education in 2004, 98 856 received support from NSFAS (Kruss 2007). In the same year, of all students receiving NSFAS support, 5 216 were teacher training students.

Between 1996 and 2004, the numbers of education students supported by NSFAS and the total disbursements to education students by NSFAS fluctuated. Table 10 shows that the teacher training share of all NSFAS funding dropped from a high of 11% in 1996 to a low of 3,3% in 2001.

Concerns about the low numbers of candidates entering teacher education prompted the Department of Education to allocate R60 million per annum ring-fenced NSFAS funding for teacher education between 2003 and 2005 (Kruss 2007). The allocated amount was only fully expended for the first time in 2004 (Table 10), but did not bring the teacher training share of expenditure on a par with the 1996 level. Despite this increase in expenditure, the allocation to teacher training as a percentage of all NSFAS disbursements in 2004 (5,8%) was substantially lower than the 1996 allocation (11%).

Table 10: Expenditure by NSFAS on teacher training students, 1996–2004 (R000 000)

	1996	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Total expenditure by NSFAS	335	354	398	447	534	646	747	914	1 029
Expenditure on teacher training	37	29	32	24	20	21	32	48	60
Teacher training expenditure as a percentage of all expenditure	11,0	8,2	8,0	5,4	3,7	3,3	4,3	5,3	5,8

Source: Extracted from Department of Education 2005b Table D1.

The number of teacher training students funded suffered a similar decline to a low of 2 535 in 2001, thereafter rising to 5 216 in 2004 (Table 11). The trend in student numbers receiving funding mirrors the expenditure trend discussed above, revealing that the 2004 count of students funded was well below the 1996 level of 8 509.

Table 11: Students receiving NSFAS funding, 1996–2004

	1996	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
All students funded	67 709	63 433	67 598	68 416	72 080	80 593	86 194	96 605	98 856
Teacher training students funded	8 509	5 230	5 967	3 875	2 813	2 535	3 577	4 336	5 216
Teacher training students as a percentage of all NSFAS students	12,6	8,2	8,8	5,7	3,9	3,1	4,1	4,5	5,3

Source: Extracted from Department of Education 2005b Table D1.

If one looks at the group of NSFAS students as a proportion of all education students enrolled, there is a clear decline in the latter from one in ten to less than one in twenty over eight years (Table 12).

Table 12: Education students receiving NSFAS funding, 1996–2004

Year	*All education students enrolled*	*Education students receiving NSFAS funding*	*Education students receiving NSFAS funding*	*Education students not receiving NSFAS funding*
1996	63 825	8 509	13,3	86,7
1997	61 949	5 230	8,4	91,6
1998	59 760	5 967	10,0	90,0
1999	69 500	3 875	5,6	94,4
2000	85 347	2 813	3,3	96,7
2001	105 206	2 535	2,4	97,6
2002	109 697	3 577	3,3	96,7
2003	106 880	4 336	4,1	95,9
2004	112 068	5 216	4,7	95,3

Source: Extracted from Department of Education 2005b Table D1.

If the population of teacher training students receiving NSFAS funding is disaggregated into those engaged in training to teach in the primary phase and those training with the intention of teaching in the secondary phase, it is immediately apparent that a different dynamic is at work in each group.

Headcount numbers of primary phase students rapidly declined from 3 294 in 1996 to 348 in 2004, which was 90% down on the number funded barely eight years earlier. Until 2000, primary phase student teachers represented roughly half of all NSFAS

teacher training beneficiaries. Thereafter, the proportion of students enrolled for primary teaching with state assistance plummeted to 6,7% (Table 13). Not even the ring-fenced NSFAS conditions that provided for an increase in overall numbers of funded teacher education students between 2002 and 2004 could bring the primary share upwards. By 2004 NSFAS was largely funding secondary education students at a ratio of 9:1.

Table 13: Proportions of primary and secondary phase students receiving NSFAS funding, 1996–2004

	1996	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Primary	3 294	2 185	2 600	1 832	1 476	1 127	1 062	379	348
Secondary	5 212	4 045	3 367	2 043	1 337	1 408	2 515	3 957	4 868
Primary phase students as a percentage of all teacher training students	38,7	41,8	43,6	47,3	52,5	44,5	29,7	8,7	6,7

Source: Extracted from Department of Education 2005b Table D1.

Table 14 below reveals how education graduate numbers dropped to a low of 3,9% of all NSFAS graduates, with only 1 130 graduating as teachers in 2004.

Table 14: Teacher education graduate share of total NSFAS graduates, 1996–2004

	1996	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Total NSFAS-funded graduates	13 041	14 025	15 448	13 056	12 435	14 876	12 891	11 648	28 766
NSFAS teacher training graduates	2 723	2 552	3 141	2 503	1 685	1 108	915	620	1 130
Teacher training graduates as a percentage of all graduates	20,9	18,2	20,3	19,2	13,6	7,4	7,1	5,3	3,9

Source: Extracted from Department of Education 2005b Table D1.

In summary, between 1996 and 2004 education students receiving NSFAS funding declined as a proportion of all higher education students receiving such funding, *and* declined as a proportion of education students. The numbers of education recipients of NSFAS did begin to increase after 2002. However, this increase was evident almost exclusively among students enrolled for training as secondary school teachers.

The analysis draws our attention to the alarming fact that the numbers of NSFAS-supported students enrolled to train as primary school educators continued to

decline. The NSFAS recently changed its eligibility criteria, through lowering the threshold household income level below which young people would be eligible for financial support. This was implemented to focus the NSFAS opportunities towards lower-income households. Yet the enrolment numbers of would-be primary school teachers who received NSFAS support – mainly young African women – have dwindled.

This leaves the question: What has led to this decline? If there are lowered impediments to students accessing NSFAS financial support, then the implication is that potential primary phase students either would rather not enrol for teaching even with financial support available or are not able to take up the opportunity.

Later this article will consider what social and economic circumstances may be contributing to the changing demography of IPET enrolments and graduations.

In the next section, IPET graduate production is located in its broader institutional context, which must take account of the dissolution of the colleges of education.

IPET graduate production from higher education and colleges of education

Attention recently sharpened on the role of initial professional education of teachers and its contribution to teacher supply. The flow of IPET graduates from South African higher education institutions into teaching is one of several potential sources of teacher supply, but it is potentially the most reliable in terms of quality assurance and is therefore of critical importance.

There are serious difficulties (discussed at length in Paterson & Arends 2008) with extracting IPET output from data from the HEMIS database maintained by the Department of Education. To the knowledge of the authors, there is as yet no official mechanism for obtaining separate IPET enrolment and graduation data from education departments in higher education institutions. The first publicly available IPET information was published in the report of the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (Department of Education 2005a).

The committee data indicated that enrolment in IPET – though missing data from five institutions – was 21 748 in 2005 and expected graduations were 5 322 (Table 15, column c and column d). More recently, Morrow, who served on the Ministerial Committee, produced a set of data on enrolment and estimated graduate numbers for 2006 using the same method. The data was obtained from deans of education, and in Morrow's view could be deemed 'reasonably accurate' (Morrow 2006). This data covering all institutions indicated IPET enrolment to be 27 393, with an estimated 6 029 graduates.

This data reveals that the location of IPET enrolment is distributed unevenly across the institutions. The ten largest contributors to IPET graduate output account for

Table 15: Education students receiving NSFAS funding, 1996–2004

Year	(a) Education students enrolled	(b) Education student graduates	(c) IPET enrolled	(d) IPET graduates	(e) Undergrad teaching degree[5] graduates
1995	70 587	17 823			2 830
1996	63 825	19 060			4 023
1997	61 949	17 065			3 814
1998	59 760	17 027			3 851
1999	69 500	19 056			4 336
2000	85 347	19 079			4 613
2001	105 206	23 873			3 114
2002	109 697	23 383			3 019
2003	106 880	25 310			3 621
2004	112 068	28 756		6 000[4]	5 153
2005	105 826	29 348	21 748[5]	5 322[5]	4 134
2006			27 393	6 029[6]	

Note:

1. The HEMIS data for 2005 became available after the bulk of this analysis was already complete. The data is included in this table to add value to the discussion of IPET.
2. Data on IPET from Department of Education (2005a) and Morrow (2006)
3. NSFAS data from Department of Education (2005b)
4. Self-reported data from the Dean's Forum suggests that of an estimated 9 000 graduates in 2004, 3 000 were probably already practising teachers (Peltzer et al. 2005: 60-61)
5. This is an underestimate because data from the University of the Free State, University of Venda, University of Zululand and Vaal University of Technology was not available
6. Morrow (2006) notes that of this group, at least 179 are already in teaching posts and 1 138 are in learnerships. This means that these numbers must be deducted from IPET graduate numbers to obtain the real number of potential new entrants to teaching. Morrow (2006) also observes that some HEIs may have interpreted 'learnership' to mean 'teaching practice', which can obscure the meaning of the data.

between 86% (2005) and 80% (2006) of all graduates (including Unisa numbers). This suggests that quite a number of institutions engage in IPET on a low-key basis.

The data confirms that across the teacher education sector, the undergraduate degree qualification serves as the biggest conduit of IPET students, constituting between 79,3% and 83,8% of enrolments in 2005 and 2006. The next largest group was the PGCE, accounting for between 16,3% and 15,4% across the two years. The smallest contribution derived from pre-graduate diplomas, which are being phased out (Morrow 2006).

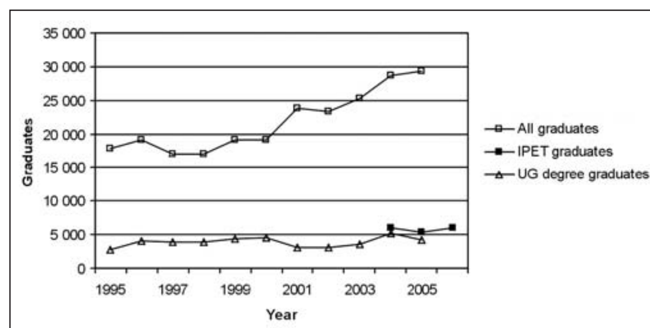
The purpose here is to place IPET within the broad parameters of overall graduate production in teacher education programmes in higher education in South Africa. The data has its limitations. With IPET enrolment and IPET graduate data for only two consecutive years we cannot reveal trends. But if the data for just two IPET years is juxtaposed with other trend data, it is possible to add value to our understanding of the terrain. The table above therefore assembles several pieces of data in order to generate a picture of IPET as a component within overall graduate production (Table 15).

First, the overall enrolment and graduate numbers are included as the basis of comparison with IPET numbers. Taking overall enrolment from 2004 (112 068) to 2005 (105 826) (Table 15 column a) and IPET enrolment data given for 2005 (21 748) and 2006 (27 393) (Table 15 column b), we can estimate that IPET enrolment as a percentage of total education enrolment for 2005–2006 was 20% to 25%. This importantly demonstrates the current size-ratio of IPET output in relation to all other education programmes. Turning to graduates, the IPET cohorts constituted between 18,6% and 20,8% of total graduate numbers in education in 2005–2006.

While we have a sense of the current IPET share of graduate output, the critical question for the decade is: did the IPET share decline relative to overall graduate numbers?

In an attempt to address this question, the authors have elected to include graduate numbers of students completing undergraduate teaching degrees (from Table 15 column e). This data is used as a proxy for IPET, given that undergraduate teaching degree enrolment constituted more than 80% of IPET enrolment and between 40% and 60% of all IPET graduate output between 2005 and 2006. The relationship is presented in Figure 9. It is clear that the general trend in IPET graduate output from all higher education institutions – expressed as undergraduate degree graduates – maintained a flat profile over the period. In contrast, the trend line for overall teacher education graduate output rose steadily. This suggests that in the universities and technikons CPED grew substantially whereas IPET did not.

Figure 9: IPET graduate production and all graduate production in teacher education



An additional concern regarding IPET graduate production relates to the skills mix within each IPET cohort. Preparing students for working with learners in the General Education and Training band requires them to focus on specialties in the Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase and then Further Education and Training-band teaching. Morrow (2006) draws our attention to the fact that many higher education institutions do not have separate programmes for these levels.

In particular, Morrow (2006) highlights the low numbers of Foundation Phase students currently enrolled in only 12 of the 24 higher education institutions. This dire situation was identified in the 2006 *National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa* (NPFTED), which observed that the teacher supply situation is 'especially serious in the Foundation Phase, where learners require teach-

ers with mother-tongue competence. Of the 6 000 new teachers likely to graduate in 2006, fewer than 500 will be competent to teach in African languages in the Foundation Phase" (Department of Education 2006: 12).

The closure of the colleges of education and the IPET big picture

A discussion of the recent history of IPET graduate production is incomplete without taking into account the closure of the colleges of education. The colleges no longer exist, so there is no institutional memory or institutional base from which to assess whether the populations from which college student numbers were formerly drawn found IPET programmes offered exclusively from higher education institutions after 2001 to be attractive. This question draws attention to the problem of explaining continuity and discontinuity of access to and graduate production from IPET in South Africa.

In order to obtain the 'big picture' of graduate production over the last decade, the distribution of IPET graduates from the universities and technikons and from the colleges of education must be looked at together. The researchers suggest that the institutional incorporation of the colleges should have redirected a flow of students – who would otherwise have registered at a college – into the universities and technikons.

The data elements that complete a picture of what transpired in this transition period will be introduced below.

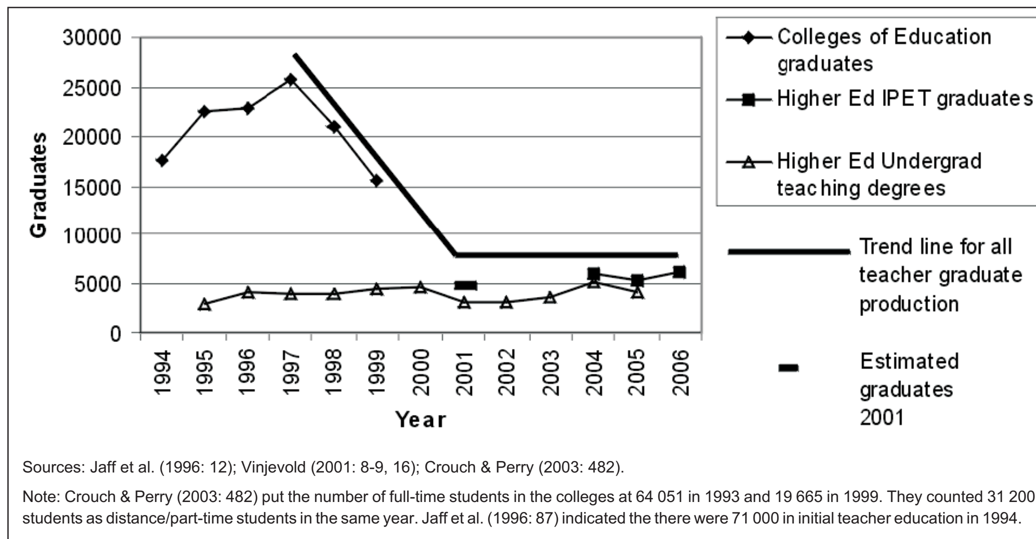
First, the declination of the trend in IPET graduate production in universities and technikons before 2004 cannot be established with confidence. However, one proxy measure, the trend of undergraduate degree graduations, which provided the major share of new teachers, fluctuated between 3 000 and 5 000 (Figure 10).

Undergraduate degrees in teacher education are by far the largest contributor to total IPET graduate output. Comparison between the trend line 'Higher Ed Undergrad teaching degrees' and the 'Higher Ed IPET graduates' line in Figure 10 confirms that in the past few years IPET production has consisted mainly of output from the undergraduate degree level.

If we turn to the colleges, graduate production reached a peak of over 25 000 in 1997 (Jaff et al. 1996: 12). The data clearly delineates a sharp downward trend thereafter. The drop in graduates was foreshadowed by sinking enrolment. According to Vinjevold (2001: 8, citing a January 2000 report by the Committee of College Rectors of South Africa), enrolment in contact IPET programmes declined from 70 731 to 10 153 between 1994 and 2000.

The rationalization of the colleges continued into the millennium. Reliable data on education graduate outputs for all institutions could not be obtained for this transition period. In her research for the Education Training and Development Practices SETA,

Figure 10:Trends in IPET graduates for higher education and colleges of education, 1994-2006



Sources: Jaff et al. (1996: 12); Vinjevold (2001: 8-9, 16); Crouch & Perry (2003: 482).

Note: Crouch & Perry (2003: 482) put the number of full-time students in the colleges at 64 051 in 1993 and 19 665 in 1999. They counted 31 200 students as distance/part-time students in the same year. Jaff et al. (1996: 87) indicated the there were 71 000 in initial teacher education in 1994.

Vinjevold (2001: 8-9, 16) reported that at the end of 2001 there were approximately 14 400 students enrolled in IPET, with the expectation that about 5 000 would graduate in the same year.

We do know that post the various mergers and incorporations impacting on teacher education, IPET production was in the order of 6 000 in 2005/06 (Department of Education 2005a; Morrow 2006) (see Figure 10).

When the various pieces of data are assembled, a clear trend line emerges of bottoming-out graduate numbers and thereafter a flat profile (Figure 10). The heavy line drawn in Figure 10 shows that graduate numbers seemed to flatten at a level that was – and still is – not much higher than higher education IPET graduate production on its own. It looks as though there was hardly any overflow of enrolment from the colleges into higher education after the former institutions were closed. Had this overflow been more substantial, enrolment and graduate numbers in IPET may have been sustained at a higher level.

The outstanding feature of the period is that the contribution of the colleges to IPET dissipated to a small fraction of the peak in numbers of college graduates recorded in 1997. How can this be explained in relation to evidence that there was strong demand for entry into the colleges? In 1995 there were 37 0159 applications for places – in 79 colleges – 25 272 of whom were admitted (Jaff et al. 1996: 53).

The issue is not only about overall numbers. Also pertinent are the demographic characteristics of the student population at the colleges of education. In 1994 most students (78%) were 29 years of age and younger, the majority were African (89,1%

African, 3,5% coloured, 1,4% Indian and 6,2% white) and 65–80% were female. In pre-primary and junior primary courses, 98% were female. This means that the colleges, even more than the higher education institutions, were the base from which young African women entered the teaching profession as primary phase teachers.

Furthermore, an estimated 35% to 45% of students were accommodated in residences (Jaff et al. 1996: 51-52, Table P) in the mid-1990s, suggesting that the colleges served an important institutional role in making teacher training accessible to young rural students. One may ask: Were rural communities in the catchment areas of the former colleges left stranded once teacher education opportunities receded towards the towns? Why did the impetus of teacher training established in the hinterland of over 90 colleges not generate a secondary wave of education students who pursued teacher education opportunities in numbers after the closure of the colleges? Is the propensity to study teaching very sensitive to the impact of distance and cost on households?

The researchers suggest that given the dominant urban location of current teacher education facilities, young rural people, especially African females, were cut out of the graduate production process.

We now turn to discuss the possible impact of HIV/AIDS on people enrolled for teacher training. The discussion will draw attention to social, economic and health issues that may be constraining would-be teacher training students from enrolling for such programmes.

HIV/AIDS and teacher supply

South Africa is fortunate to benefit from a large-scale study funded by the South African Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), which addressed educator supply and demand in the South African public school system. In the integrated report emanating from this empirically rich study, Peltzer et al. (2005: 112) reported finding a high HIV prevalence rate of 12,7% among South African teachers.

There are three ways in which HIV/AIDS probably influences the demographic profile of those who are in a position to access and complete pre-service teacher training. First, the impact of HIV/AIDS on parental death and more generally on adult mortality – especially those employed – affects the availability of resources in households to absorb the costs of keeping a family member at school (Bennell 2005) or in higher education. These circumstances can restrict or rule out would-be teacher trainees from accessing higher education opportunities and increase the chances that once enrolled they will be forced to abandon their studies for financial reasons or care-giving responsibilities at home. These pressures may already have played a part in restricting students from registering for IPET and may account partially for the downturn in enrolments observed in this article.

Second, a proportion of student-teachers themselves may be HIV-positive and illness

and absenteeism may have affected their academic progress or curtailed their studies prematurely. Third, a proportion of HIV-positive student teachers will qualify and, with appropriate ARV medication and support, will live healthily and work productively for a long period.

In a key component of the ELRC study, Shisana et al. (2005) investigated the health of South African educators and student teachers, including their HIV status. They (Shisana et al. 2005) collected data on third year (n=905) and fourth year (n=147) teacher training students. The sample covered 25 higher education institutions, excluding Unisa. A convenience sample was taken at each institution, and response rates and weights could not be calculated. For these reasons, the sample may not be representative. Nevertheless, the indicative findings are useful.

At 8,2%, the proportion of education students who were HIV-positive was much lower than for the sample of educators (12,7%). Within the student group, females had a much higher HIV prevalence than males, and prevalence among African students was at 13,2%, compared with less than 1% for coloured, Indian/Asian and white students combined. Peltzer et al. (2005: 69) observe that HIV prevalence among students was highest in the 25-to-34-year age range at 14,7%.

Shisana et al. (2005) presented evidence that socio-economic status is related to HIV among educators. The same relationship was examined among student teachers. Peltzer et al. (2005: 69) cited results to the effect that 'those with a perceived low socio-economic status [have] a much higher HIV prevalence (13,1%) than those with a perceived higher status (3,7%).'

The data strongly suggests that in the sample African female students had a much higher HIV prevalence than other race and/or gender groups. In combination with the findings on socio-economic status and age, the picture that emerges is that young African women who are of perceived low socio-economic status are most at risk. Could the impact of HIV/AIDS on individuals, households and communities have lowered the propensity of young African women in poor rural areas to take up teacher training? The impact of HIV/AIDS on the households and families of aspirant teachers seeking IPET opportunities is difficult to assess.

Conclusion

Key trends in teacher graduate production in the period have been identified, including:

- Significant increases in enrolments and graduates from teacher education overall
- Increased participation of African students, especially after 1999
- Increased share of graduates produced from technikons after 1998
- Teacher education participation dominated by large-scale expansion of CPET
- Stagnation of IPET

The researchers also confirmed what has long been suspected – that there has been a decline in the number of African women aged 30 and younger entering teacher training programmes. Given that African women constitute the majority of South Africa's teachers, this decline is matter of serious concern.

A critical question is: why is the demography of young women who enrol for teacher training changing? There are four key interlinked trends that need to be taken into account:

- A decline in numbers of young African women enrolling for IPET programmes
- A decline in numbers of students applying for NSFAS bursaries to enter primary-phase teacher training
- Low numbers of students with mother tongue competence in African official languages enrolling in for training in the Foundation Phase
- Higher HIV prevalence among African female students of low perceived socio-economic status who are currently registered for teacher education

No attempt has been made to establish causal links between these trends. The intention was to expose the four trends as a contribution to improving understanding of the declining numbers of young women enrolling for initial teacher education.

In conclusion, the researchers advance two tentative hypotheses for this situation:

1. Numbers of young African women who might have enrolled for teacher training are instead electing to pursue careers other than teaching and to that end are enrolling for higher education qualifications in other fields of study.
2. Numbers of young African women who might have enrolled for teacher training are not enrolling for teacher training or for any other education programme at higher education institutions because of insufficient personal or household resources.

In the first case, it is hypothesised that there are new social and economic conditions that are providing opportunities for previously disadvantaged women to break into new study or occupational fields. It may be that young women able to access these opportunities are mainly from urban households, from which higher education is physically accessible.

In the second case, the hypothesis is that those young African women of the social groups that might otherwise have enrolled for teaching find themselves unable to access these opportunities. These young women may be from urban unemployed, urban working class or rural poor households. Their enforced withdrawal is influenced by low or unstable household income levels, which may or may not be associated with the impact of HIV/AIDS.

Where young rural women could qualify for education bursaries such as through NSFAS, they cannot leave their homes to take up the bursary in the urban area because of increased care-giving responsibilities. The NPFTED observes '… the unusual mortality rate, especially among women teachers, which varies considerably by

province' (Department of Education 2006: 9), may also be affecting the proportions of young African women from rural areas who could seek access teacher training.

Under these general conditions, 'inaccessibility of educator institutions to black students from rural areas' (Peltzer et al. 2005: 61) probably reduced participation of rural African women in teacher training. After the closure of the colleges, no other sufficiently powerful policy or accessible mechanism was put in place to secure the link between graduate production and rural teacher supply.

NSFAS financial support was available throughout the period, but there was a steady decline in NSFAS applicants for primary teacher training – a form of training traditionally female-dominated. This strongly suggests that social or household conditions are constraining the capacity of people to use the financial assistance.

The two explanations advanced here provide the frame within which one can consider social class and rural-urban differences within the social category of young African women aged 30 years and under. The overall decline in numbers of young African women entering teacher training may therefore have its origins in more than one set of social conditions: aspirant young women who seek other careers and life prospects and survivalist young women whose immediate personal and household circumstances prevent them from making choices about studying in far-flung places.

The scenarios sketched above raise important underlying questions: What is the social class base of student teachers, and has this base changed since 1994? What labour market characteristics or signals inform the decisions of young women to go for – or not go for – teacher training?

The last questions relate to the Department of Education's newly implemented bursary scheme. In 2006, the Ministry of Education began a programme of implementation based on the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development, which included a national teacher education bursary scheme (Department of Education 2006: 23-25). The Fundza Lushaka ('teaching makes a difference') Bursary Campaign made R700 million rand available for bursaries in priority subject and learning areas across a range of qualifications (Tyobeka 2007: 7). Those awarded bursaries are obliged to teach in a provincial education department post for one year for each year that they received their bursary (Tyobeka 2007: 10). In 2007, 3 000 bursaries were already made available and allocated. How successful will the bursary scheme be in countering the trends discussed above? In particular, how will the scheme fill the gap in delivery of teacher education opportunities left by the dissolution of the colleges of education? Critical to the success of the scheme will be how well bursaries are targeted and supported.

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Towards collaboration rather than cooperation for effective professional development of teachers in South Africa: Insights from social practice theory

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Abstract

Recent curriculum policy change has increased the demand for continuing professional development of teachers in South Africa. Support for teachers has been fragmented. This has resulted in the formation of informal teacher learning communities. This article explores the potential of a 'community of practice framework' for teacher learning in a South African education context characterized by the marked absence of teacher development programmes in areas of need. It draws on case study data from the TEMS teacher development project and from published reports of the PLESME teacher development study. Of note is that both studies adopted tenets of social practice theory in their design. The article argues that the challenge for teacher developers is to develop, through empirical studies and sound theoretical foundations, plausible models for the continuing professional development of teachers. One such approach that offers a challenging possibility is that of teacher communities of practice. The article suggests that social practice theory provides a framework for useful and meaningful insights and as such offers much potential for continuing professional development of teachers in South Africa.

Introduction

Many countries are engaging in major educational reform in order to meet the needs of the economy and society, and governments have begun to acknowledge the fact that teachers are crucial role-players if any change in the education system is to be effective (Hargreaves 1995). Professional development of teachers should thus be afforded high priority if reform and restructuring initiatives are to be successful. In the South African context, teacher development has been sporadic and poorly coordinated (Taylor & Vinjevold 1999). Once-off workshops without follow-up or support have

been the order of the day. Such workshops and courses of limited duration are ineffective in developing subject matter knowledge or even pedagogical knowledge (Adler 2002). Sustained programmes over extended periods of time that utilize all available resources in creative ways, as envisaged in teacher learning communities, are much more likely to have a lasting impact on teachers than once-off workshops.

Conceptualizing teacher learning in terms of participation in a teacher learning community is a relatively new phenomenon in South African teacher development. Drawing on the ground-breaking work of Graven (2002), who had conducted the *only* significant research study that analysed the workings of a mathematics teacher learning community, using 'communities of practice' as a theoretical framework, the TEMS project was set up in 2003 to analyse the workings of an Economic and Management Sciences teacher learning community. This article draws on insights offered by the PLESME mathematics teacher development inset project (Graven 2002) and on empirical evidence obtained from the Teaching Economic and Management Sciences Teacher Development project (TEMS) (Maistry 2006). Graven's (2002) initial work and subsequent refinements (Graven & Lerman 2003, Graven 2004) are....." are important to this present article as they embraced the usefulness of social practice theory (in particular the work of Wenger 1998) in understanding teacher learning through participation in a learning community, an approach aligned with the TEMS study. The distinct similarity between the studies is that they were both set up with the intention first of enhancing teacher participation in the respective inset projects and secondly of illuminating and theorizing the potential of a community of practice framework for professional development of teachers. Both studies acknowledge the importance and peculiarity of different 'teacher learning' contexts and their implications for teacher development in the South Africa. Of particular significance is that both studies used the theoretical framework offered by social practice theorist Etienne Wenger (Wenger 1998) to set up and analyse the functioning of the teacher learning communities in question.

This article sets out to answer the following question: Drawing on the empirical work of the TEMS study and with particular reference to Graven's (2002) work with mathematics teachers, to what extent does social practice theory enhance our understanding of teacher development in South Africa?

A brief note on the PLESME study

This was a study of a group of Mathematics teachers involved in the Programme for Leader Educators in Senior Phase Mathematics Education (PLESME). The PLESME programme focused on enabling teacher engagement with mathematics curriculum changes. PLESME had as its vision and primary aim the need to develop 'lead teachers' in Mathematics, who would assume a range of leadership roles in the contexts in which they worked (Graven 2002). Graven's work provided story evidence that Wenger's model and its associated constructs *do* in fact have significant potential

for analyzing the workings of a *teacher* learning community. Graven was able to demonstrate the specific application of the Wenger's core concepts of 'meaning', 'practice', 'identity' and 'community' to a *mathematics teacher* learning community in a South African context (Graven 2002, 2004)

While there were several similarities in the findings of both studies, the most notable difference was that in the PLESME study the concept of 'confidence' emerged as a significant outcome of the programme. This led the researcher to proceed to theorize this notion of 'confidence' as it emerged in PLESME. This 'confidence' was strongly associated with teachers expressing confidence in their subject matter knowledge of Mathematics.

The TEMS study

This study examined the functioning of a teacher community of practice in the greater Durban area of South Africa. The research was limited to a group of EMS teacher learners in primary schools who, out of need, had constituted themselves to make sense of and develop the new EMS curriculum for learners in grades four to seven. This was an ill-defined group of teachers who were socio-economically, ethnically and academically diverse and who taught in starkly contrasting contexts. The thread that appeared to bind the teachers was the novel challenge they experienced in having to teach EMS, a learning area in which they had had no formal training. While the term 'novelty' may conjure up positive images, these teachers in fact had negative initial dispositions towards this learning area. The formal TEMS project was set up with a dual purpose, namely to provide professional development support to the teacher community and to study the workings of the community. Wenger's social practice theory of learning informed the conceptualization of the TEMS project and provided a focus for data collection. In terms of Wenger's theory, data collection would have to include teachers' voices and actions as they engaged in the community of practice. This necessitated a special kind of relationship with the teachers, one that involved building relationships, establishing trust, developing rapport and credibility, and developing mutual respect in order to gain meaningful and effective access to the data.

This research study adopted the tenets of qualitative research methodology. The issue of context is particularly important in South Africa, a country with complex social, economic and political peculiarities. Contextual factors have a particularly compelling diversity and power in South African schools. A qualitative approach was effective in capturing the process and developing a rich understanding of contextual factors (Walford 2001, Anderson 1999). It used various methods to interpret, understand, explain and bring meaning to these phenomena. Critical elements of case study research and ethnography were employed in the data collection process. The role of the researcher was central to the study, acting as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data collection methods included a researcher's reflective

journal, teacher interviews, classroom observations and field-notes over a 17-month period. Initial interviews were used to capture baseline information, including reasons for participation in the study, while the second interview entailed a mid-term review. The final interview provided a summative view of teachers' experiences. The empirical field for this research study was the TEMS teacher development project, a teacher learning community. The TEMS grouping comprised approximately 20 teachers, some of whom drifted in and out of the project. A core group of seven teachers were active participants in the research project. Of the original group of ten committed participants, three dropped out of the research project for various reasons such as work pressures and personal commitments.

Wenger's social practice theory: A brief outline

The work of situative theorist Etienne Wenger (1998) has much significance for understanding teacher learning in a community of practice. He argues that we should adopt a perspective that places learning in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world. Learning is as much a part of human nature as eating or sleeping – it is both life-sustaining and inevitable and people are 'quite good at it' (ibid.: 3). Learning is a 'fundamentally social phenomenon'. His four main assumptions about learning are as follows:

1. People are social beings (this principle constitutes the central aspect of learning).
2. Knowledge entails competence with respect to valued enterprises.
3. Knowing involves participating in the pursuit of such enterprises.
4. Meaning is the eventual product of learning and refers to our ability to experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful (ibid.).

The focus of the theory is on 'learning as participation', i.e. learners being active participants in the *practices* of social communities and constructing *identities* in relation to these communities. The focus on participation implies that for individuals *learning* is an issue of engaging in and contributing to the practices of their communities. For communities, it entails refining their practice and ensuring new generations of members (Wenger 1998). This implies that learning cannot be a separate activity. ' It is not something we do when we do nothing else or stop doing when we do something else' (ibid.: 8). Learning is something we can 'assume', irrespective of whether it is visible or not or whether we agree with the way it takes place or not. Even 'failing to learn involves learning something else instead' (ibid.). Learning is an integral part of our daily lives and is represented by our participation in our communities and organizations.

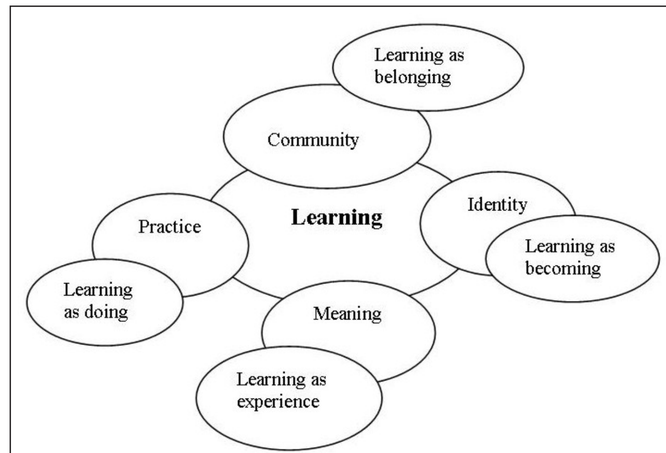
Our perspectives on learning are important because what we think about learning influences both where we recognize learning *and* our actions, should we wish to influence learning (Wenger 1998). Our conception of learning has a profound effect on interventions and models that we prescribe for learning. '[A] key implication of our

attempts to organize learning is that we must become reflective with regard to our own discourses of learning and to their effects on the way we design for learning' (ibid.: 9).

Wenger posits the following elements of a social theory of learning:

1. Meaning: a way of talking about our (changing) ability – individually and collectively – to experience our life and the world as meaningful.
2. Practice: a way of talking about the shared historical and social resources, frameworks and perspectives that can sustain mutual engagement in action.
3. Community: a way of talking about social configurations in which our enterprises are defined as worth pursuing and our participation is recognizable as competence.
4. Identity: a way of talking about how learning changes who we are and creates personal histories of becoming in the context of our communities (Wenger 1998: 5).

The elements of Wenger's social theory of learning



Applying Wenger's social practice theory using a Weberian-style ideal type

In qualitative research, selection is unavoidable and should be informed by the overall purpose and theoretical perspective of the study (Carspecken 1996). All science involves selection as well as abstraction. Abstraction is essential for the understanding of any particular social phenomena. 'Ideal type' is a construct that serves as a methodological tool that can be used in the analysis of social phenomena (Weber 1949). An 'ideal type' is constructed from elements and characteristics of phenomena under investigation but is not intended to correspond to all of the characteristics of any one case. The concept 'ideal type' enables the creation of a composite picture against which all the cases of a particular phenomenon may be compared. From the data sets, John's (pseudonym) data set is selected to demonstrate the nature, extent and complexity of teacher learning that occurred during the TEMS project.

Wenger's (1998) broad social conception of learning as comprising four complexly connected components allows us to analyse teacher learning from a unique, inclusive

perspective. In terms of his first component – 'meaning' or 'learning as experience' – the TEMS study elucidated the changing understandings and meanings (changing ability) of the TEMS participants with regard to EMS and EMS teaching as a result of participation in the TEMS community of practice.

Teacher learning *had* in fact taken place. Teachers had begun to experience the new EMS curriculum as meaningful. While some degree of uncertainty still existed, these uncertainties were not as pronounced as at the commencement of the programme. With regard to teachers' understandings of EMS, it was evident that teachers had experienced definite shifts in their content knowledge and pedagogic content knowledge base.

Extracts taken from the data set of John (below) reveal how the learning area (EMS) became more meaningful to him. In the initial interview at the commencement of the project, we note that he conceived of EMS as merely a focus on life skills. In response to a question asking him to explain what the EMS learning area was about, John suggested that

> … it's one of the life skills. It is a science that a child will map out his life.

In the final interview eight months later, John was much more knowledgeable about EMS and EMS teaching. John showed a distinct understanding of what the economic problem was about. In the following extract John reveals that as a result of working with other teachers and engaging with the workshop material he has developed a better understanding of the learning outcomes and has a more sophisticated understanding of the essence of economics, which is the problem of scarcity.

> Ja, you see meeting with other people and working with others and working with material that is not in the textbooks as such, you become more familiar with the outcomes. You know you have a better understanding, you learn the scope and depth that you have to get into and generally most of us who attended we are familiar with the outcomes now. We've learned how to apply it in a classroom. In the material we covered in Module One we studied how … we learnt how the economic cycle worked. I think the issue of scarcity was one I did not engage my pupils with in the past. But now, I am able to relate almost anything to the problem of scare resources and about making choices. In fact that for me it's like the crux of economics.

Graven (2002) in the study of PLESME community of mathematics teachers described the phenomenon where a person is able to see the workings of the mathematics discipline in everyday life as developing a 'mathematical gaze'. In the above extract we see John alluding to the fact that he was able to 'relate almost anything' to the fundamental economic problem of scarcity.

Below John explains how access to the TEMS group of teachers helped improve his own ability to teach EMS. He indicates that he sometimes ran out of ideas and therefore used opportunities that were presented to him. He comments on the 'information' that he acquired with regard to teaching about money and banking. He was able to expose his pupils to the long-term benefits of saving. He also notes that his 'subject matter' knowledge of EMS has grown since he first joined the TEMS project.

> Ja immediately we did those workshops, see now I use opportunities…. I used the opportunity, I got the information, I found it easy to just transfer it. For example, banking, it was very convenient to do it in class, because I had the information with me. It's relevant.

John identified the cooperative group sessions as particularly useful for sharing ideas amongst participants and generating new ideas as well as learning from other teachers' experiences. When questioned about the aspects of the TEMS programme he felt were most useful, John commented

> … I think when we had our group discussions. In the group discussion, we were able to share a lot of ideas and then come up with new ideas, find out what other people were doing in their own schools, try what they are doing in their schools, in my school, and eh, in fact it was a good learning experience.

With regard to 'practice' or 'learning as doing', the study illuminated teachers' changing practices in relation to EMS teaching. All participating teachers experienced changes in their practice, a finding in common with the PLESME study (Graven 2002). It was clear that John's *stated or claimed* changes in his classroom practice as revealed by the interviews did in fact translate into changes in his classroom practice. Classroom observations and reflection sessions were conducted at two different points during the TEMS project. A semi-structured observation schedule was used to guide the observation, and detailed notes were taken of the lesson. The lesson observations focused on critical incidents that may have arisen in each lesson, especially those that may have related to ambiguities, misconceptions, confusion, attempts at clarity, and the depth of subject matter knowledge being engaged. In the table overleaf, we see key differences in John's practice as a result of participation in the activities of the TEMS community.

'Identity' or 'learning as becoming' was signalled by the fact that teachers experienced their learning in terms of changed perspectives about who they were and what they were becoming. Teachers identified themselves as EMS teachers and envisaged a future for themselves as EMS teachers at their respective schools. The study also showed that their increased involvement in EMS activities at their schools had strengthened their positions at their schools and that they were perceived as 'valuable' to their schools. Their participation in the TEMS programme had resulted in their repositioning themselves within their own school communities. They had also started receiving recognition for their participation in the TEMS community from their school *and* other communities.

In theorizing the notion of emerging confidence amongst Mathematics teachers in the PLESME study, Graven (2004: 208) argues that 'confidence as a product and a process of learning enabled the teachers … to move from being teachers of mathematics towards being and becoming competent and confident mathematics teachers.' Wenger's framework allows for identifying and observing participants' changing identity, a phenomenon that was also common to the TEMS study.

In John's case in particular, his involvement in TEMS project had enhanced his status

Key differences in John's practice

Key characteristics of John's classroom practice *before* participation in TEMS	Key characteristics of John's classroom practice *after* participation in TEMS
Poor subject content knowledge	Displays significant subject content knowledge
Inability to relate everyday economic phenomena to EMS and EMS teaching in a meaningful way	Has developed an economics perspective – ability to identify and make sense of economics in everyday phenomena
Lessons built on potentially misleading everyday understandings of economic phenomena	Lessons developed with an understanding of the concepts of the discipline
Tight locus of control with regard to what and how learning took place (as a result of insecurity related to inadequate EMS knowledge)	Improved knowledge enablesa more dispersed 'rein' on how and what was learnt. Ability to exploit opportunities that arise to enhance pupils' understanding of EMS
Inadequate subject content knowledge resulted in stifled interactions with pupils	Improved knowledge facilitates freer and more purposeful interchange with pupils
Unfamiliar with the nature of the discipline and its associated pedagogical approach	Has begun to engage in a pedagogical approach that articulates with the nature of the discipline
Limited meaningful questioning – little or no attention paid to levels of questions asked and with seemingly little awareness of how these might contribute to learners' conceptual development	Significantly improved questioning technique testing higher-order thinking skills
Inability to probe incorrect responses – dismissive – preferred to 'side-step' the unknown	Confidence to engage with incorrect responses – tolerant and supportive – comfortable with uncertainty and confident in his ability to direct responses towards more correct positions
Insular approach to content and its boundaries	Easily identifies opportunities for integration across learning areas
Limited opportunities to engage pupils in reading, writing and speaking	Opportunities for reading, writing and speaking leading to conceptual development in EMS
Fairly rigid approach to lesson planning and presentation – lesson proceeded rigidly according to plan	Makes critical and valid shifts during the course of the lesson, making the most of learning opportunities as they arise – has developed a deep enough understanding of subject content knowledge to do so
Poor subject matter knowledge resulted in misconception and confusion of concepts	Logical, sequential development of concepts – increasing complexity

and image in his school. He noted that the principal and staff held him in high esteem and relied on him to provide feedback to the school. He had begun to play a bigger role in his school's staff development initiatives and was looked to for leadership, especially in EMS development. He felt that the active role he had played in the TEMS project had earned him the respect of his colleagues at school. He said that running a workshop or making a presentation at a regional forum like the TEMS project was a step up from running a workshop at school level. This is evidenced in the extract below from John's final interview. In response to a question regarding his participation in

the TEMS community and his changing relationship with his school colleagues and his principal, John commented as follows:

> They look upon me differently; they know that I'm bringing a lot of information and relevant information to school. They expect me to conduct workshops, to pass information on to others. When teachers and principals and heads of department know that teachers are presenting workshops outside the school, they respect you more. In school, it's one of those things, that everybody can do it in school, but if it needs to be done outside school, then many teachers are reluctant to do it. So the fact that you have done it, I think they show you more respect.

In the next extract, we note that John has begun to look to the future of the EMS learning area. He has begun to articulate curriculum development plans for the learning area and sees himself as participating in and leading this endeavour.

> I think one of the things we can do is, eh, you see we've gone past the first stage where we've learnt about the subject, and we've come up with some content, subject matter. The next stage is to work on work programmes for the year, for all grades, you know, for – groups working out a year plan, to groups working out study routes, groups working on worksheets. So you know a three-tier system where we have three different groups and you … eh, we'll have the complete lessons done so for the next three years we know we have enough subject matter and of course it has to be reviewed on a regular basis, because this is a dynamic subject.

Finally, in terms of 'community' or 'learning as belonging' (participation), the study provides evidence of teachers' changing participation in the TEMS community. It suggests that the community subscribed to the notions of a 'shared repertoire', 'mutual engagement' and 'joint enterprise' in substantial ways. The TEMS community created opportunities for different forms of participation (core and peripheral) and developed a wealth of communal resources from which members could draw.

Practice serves to bring coherence into a community, as it is through practice that members in a community form relationships with each other and with their work (Wenger 1998). In order for a practice to generate coherence within a community, the essential characteristics of 'mutual engagement', 'joint enterprise' and 'shared repertoire' must be present. The discussion that follows provides an analysis of the degree to which these characteristics played themselves out in the TEMS project.

John described how the Department of Education had tried to contrive groupings of teachers to promote curriculum development in the region. There had reportedly been much resistance from teachers. Teachers felt that such a grouping ought to be have been initiated by teachers themselves according to their needs. He indicated that his participation in the TEMS project was voluntary, and had arisen out of the need to acquire information about the learning area. The extract below highlights John's dissatisfaction with the procedures that the Department of Education applied in setting up teacher development initiatives.

Extract from initial interview:

> … we were *ordered* to have the CELL groups. I said *no*, let it come from us, from our needs and after two meetings I see everything fell. (Meaning that the initiative did not succeed). Unfortunately my name is minuted there as the person who moved that we don't like this top-down approach. Let it come from the bottom.

In response to how he perceived his participation in the TEMS project, he states

> … No, I went there voluntarily. Nobody pushed me to go to it and I needed information. I needed to find out what other teachers are doing …

John regarded the close interaction of teachers in the TEMS project as crucial for the development of teachers. He suggested that it had allowed the work of the group to be more 'focused'. It also allowed for greater continuity and flow since each new session did not have to be preceded by 'ice-breakers' for teachers to begin engagement with each other. TEMS teachers had become familiar with one another and the schools in which they taught. He contrasted this with other workshops that he had attended in the past.

> … I think here there is greater interaction. You see here, because we seem to know each other, but if you go to the department workshop, you generally don't know most of the people there. And the interaction is not as good as it was here. So what I'm saying is that this is more focused. If you have bigger, larger groupings then interaction won't be so great. Then you have to have things like icebreakers sessions to get to know each other. See we are talking here, we tend to know each other's school; we know each other's background. We know the children in the school, so it's easier for us to talk about these issues.

Mutual engagement

Membership of a community is a matter of mutual engagement, and it is this mutual engagement that defines the community (Wenger 1998). In the TEMS community, mutual engagement would refer to the fact that teachers in the community of practice were engaged in a common negotiated activity. Practice would thus be the result of teachers engaged in activities they had negotiated with one another.

An essential component of any practice is basically what it takes to cohere to make mutual engagement possible. The kind of coherence that transforms mutual engagement into a community of practice requires concerted effort, and without mutual engagement a community is more likely to resemble a network of individuals rather than a single community of practice (Wenger 1998). For mutual engagement to occur, the conditions must be conducive for such engagement. As stated above, the model of teacher development adopted in the TEMS programme was such that teachers could contribute to and shape the programme activities. Teachers were also encouraged to contribute to discussions that arose in the TEMS workshops. The following example is typical of much of the interaction and exchanges that occurred in the course of the TEMS programme. A teacher would recognize another teacher's question or comment and then attempt to advance more information on the issue.

Extract from workshop observation report:

> Kim's idea about linking geography or HSS with EMS is important. For me I try to do this with my kids by using what I know. For example, I grew up in Newcastle, a coal-mining town. It used to be called a 'boom town'. When the coal reserves were exhausted, the town started to lose skilled labour and many people moved out of Newcastle to find jobs. Now, there's a lot of geography and EMS that we can bring in here. It depends on how you want to look at it.

In the above extract, John had recognized the issue of integration raised by Kim. He acknowledged it, and identified it as important and proceeded to provide additional information on the issue. This kind of mutual engagement and participation became a common feature of the TEMS workshops. The focus on participation implies that for individuals, 'learning' is an issue of engaging in and contributing to the practices of their communities. Although individuals may appear to work individually, and although their jobs are primarily defined and organized individually, they are in fact important to each other. All participants in the TEMS project reflected on the importance of the 'people' in the group. Wenger (1998) notes that individuals act as resources to each other by exchanging information, making sense of situations and sharing new tricks and new ideas.

In the next extract, we see another example of a frequent exchange that occurred between teachers. Teachers would often pose problems or questions about issues with which they experienced difficulty. In the early stages of the TEMS project, teachers would often look to the facilitator to provide the 'answers' or possible solutions. The facilitator's intention at the outset was not to play the traditional role of provider of 'answers', but to rather have the group develop their own solutions to the questions they raised. As the members of the TEMS community began to feel more comfortable with each other, teachers began increasingly to take on this responsibility.

Extract from workshop observation report:

> I can understand what Shirley is talking about. I have the same difficulty with my children. When it comes to abstract concepts in EMS, the children, they have a problem with that. You know, the richer children receive pocket money; they can understand what it means to budget. But with most of my children, the concept doesn't exist. I made up my own simple case studies, you know; and like I get them to determine whether people are making good decisions about how to use their money. It's like beginning to make sense to the children. When I do my presentation I'll show you how I used them.

Wenger (1998) notes that mutual engagement in a community of practice does not entail a homogenous grouping; in fact, the mutual engagement in a practice is more productive when there is diversity in the grouping. This community (TEMS) could well be described as an 'ill-defined' group of people brought together by varying reasons/motivations. They comprised male, female, young and old, representing different ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds; and they were also teaching in vastly different contexts, with different problems and aspirations. What made a community of practice of this medley of people was that they were teachers engaged in personal and professional development as they made it happen within the TEMS project.

Not only are members of a community of practice different, but working together created differences as well as similarities. In as much as they developed shared ways of doing things, members also distinguished themselves or gained a reputation. Each participant in a community of practice finds a unique place and gains a unique identity, which is both further integrated and further defined in the course of engagement in the community of practice (Wenger 1998). In TEMS for example, John was seen as the joker, with a sense of humour, relating urban legends and other quaint stories and teaching experiences.

Evidence of John's approach can be seen in the following extract taken from a workshop observation report. John was introducing the topic 'inflation' to the TEMS group.

Extract from workshop observation report:

> … John paused to reflect on his own past – early childhood (obviously felt comfortable to do this). He described himself as 'coming from the sixties' (caused some laughter) – reflecting on his age. He described how on his first day of school, his parents had dressed him and taken a photograph and had given him two and a half cents as pocket money (again some laughter) …
>
> He explained that when he mentioned this to his current pupils in his lesson, his pupils laughed out loud, asking what could be bought with two and a half cents. He said that he went on to explain that back in the sixties, two and a half cents could buy four sweets, two bubble gums, and a packet of nuts. He noted that similar sweets of a poorer quality cost much more today …
>
> … John then moved on and asked the group to reflect on spending over the last decade. He described that he had a 'sweet tooth' 'I don't know if you have a sweet tooth but I do. Every sweet that lands on my desk goes into my mouth – I have a high dental bill!' (laughter)

Mutual engagement involved not merely the competence of an individual participant but the competence of all participants. Mutual engagement draws on what participants do and what they know as well as their ability to connect meaningfully to what they do not do and do not know, that is the ability to connect meaningfully to the contributions and knowledge of others. It is therefore important to know how to give and receive help. Developing a shared practice depends on mutual engagement (Wenger 1998). The following extracts from a workshop report describe how this had begun to happen in the TEMS programme.

Extract from workshop observation report:

> After the brainstorming exercise, teachers were grouped according to grades they taught and were required to develop a plan to teach two/three lessons on the topic. Teachers got down to the task with enthusiasm. It was interesting to note discussions on what level to pitch the lessons, explanation and discussion of the different contexts in which they taught and the kinds of lessons that were likely to succeed in each school.
>
> Teachers appeared to become more adept at planning these lessons. It was interesting to note the different angles from which teachers approached the different topics. This had a lot to do with their personal experiences with the topic. They were able to build on each other's ideas, and make suggestions to overcome possible difficulties that individuals may experience. Teachers were able to develop suitable lesson outcomes for the learning

experiences that they drafted. Groups also made suggestions about ways of assessing the sections that they proposed teaching.

Each of the components of learning is connected and mutually reinforcing. Teachers' abilities to talk about and make meaning of new EMS knowledge influenced their practice and shaped their identities. These changes occurred within the context of a supportive learning community. Enhanced identities led to increased participation in the practice of the community, which in turn facilitated improved meaning. However, as noted above, outcomes for different participants were not uniform. They were, in fact, uneven. This unevenness is attributable to several factors. Individual teachers differed in terms of previous experience, qualifications, biographies, career trajectories, cultures, present practice and expectations of the future. These differences influenced the extent of their learning along the learning continuum for each of the four learning components.

Implications for professional development of teachers

A social response to addressing the policy–practice gap

In South Africa, the vision for CPD is quite clear. CPD is regarded as being a fundamentally important aspect of teacher education and should embody the principles of democracy, with stakeholder involvement being prioritized. CPD providers should have discretion over programmes but be accountable to quality control mechanisms. However, while this vision for CPD in South Africa looks good on paper, it is nowhere close to being actualized (Parker 2002). Christie et al. (2004) argue that policy at present exists at a symbolic level, and they point to the weakness of the policy framework for CPD in South Africa. They argue that there is much ambiguity surrounding responsibility for CPD and the nature of and strategies for implementation. There is also the danger that state-initiated CPD may not even occur, a situation that could lead to spontaneous initiatives by 'agents' outside of the state. One such initiative is the voluntary formation of teacher learning communities where teachers from across schools come together to collaborate on educational issues that are relevant to them. This is not surprising given the complex world of teaching where problems are unpredictable, solutions are unclear and the demands on and expectations of teachers are intensifying. Collaboration amongst teachers in learning communities is beginning to emerge as a strategic response to overcome these challenges (Hargreaves 1995), a phenomenon that is beginning to take root in the South African context.

This 'social' response lends itself to a social practice theoretical approach, which is likely to offer useful insights into future CPD initiatives in South Africa. Teacher collaboration for purposes of professional development has been around for a long time (Day 1999). Professional development through networking via teacher learning communities suggests that teachers understand that learning only from experience will limit development. Teacher learning communities allow teachers to come together

and learn from one another and to engage with curricular issues. They are a response to an important issue: that responsibility for continuing professional development simply cannot be left to 'others' (namely bureaucrats in departments of education).

Christie et al. (2004) remind us about the power and potential of human agency and initiative in engaging with CPD, but warn that this must be complemented by state involvement. They suggest that the Department of Education take ownership of and responsibility for CPD programmes and lend support to voluntary formations such as teacher learning communities so as to enhance their sustainability. A powerful feature of teacher learning communities is that they lend themselves to teacher professional autonomy, where teachers of their own accord elect to participate in professional development initiatives of their own choice. It is not difficult to understand why contrived networks legislated by Department of Education officials are likely to encounter resistance from teachers. Such networks often have as their agenda the uncritical implementation of new education policy (Day 1999). 'Contrived collegiality' entrenches power relationships between participants and undermines teachers coerced into such networks (Hargreaves 1994). In their endeavours to improve student learning, teachers often embrace contrived 'system-initiated professional development partnerships and collaborations' but later encounter much 'emotional turmoil and ripples of change … (that can) … threaten self-image and self-esteem' (Day 1999: 188). Day argues that '… the building of joint, authentic purpose, trust and mutual understandings, and the provision of support and continuity …' are crucial to the development of successful collaborative initiatives (ibid.).

A need for a conceptual reorientation of CPD

Grounding continuing the professional development of teachers on the principles of social practice theory necessitates a 'paradigmatic' shift in the way in which we conceive of CPD. It implies a radical reconceptualization of CPD, one that would mark a departure from the traditional 'training model'. The 'training model' for CPD advances a 'skills-based, technocratic view of teaching … [i]t is generally "delivered" to the teacher by an "expert", with the agenda determined by the deliverer, and the participant placed in a passive role' (Kennedy 2005: 237). The weakness of this model is that it creates an artificial separation from the classroom context, as much of the 'training' takes place off-site. How new knowledge is used in practice is not addressed. The model is characterized by a high degree of central control, with the programme agenda determined by dominant stakeholders (usually the state). It also adopts a narrow perspective on teaching and learning. The teacher is marginalized and is relegated to the role of recipient of knowledge (ibid.). This model has limited effectiveness, especially in a country like South Africa where the legacy of apartheid education has left the country with many teachers who have had inferior schooling and basic teacher training. This problem is compounded by the fact that many South

African teachers are not predisposed to reading and do not see themselves as curriculum developers (Christie et al. 2004). Instrumentalist CPD initiatives aimed at transforming teachers and the curriculum may therefore prove to be counterproductive. This is a significant issue and must be given due consideration when CPD programmes are developed.

Christie et al. (2004) identified two typologies of CPD that occur in southern Africa. In the first, the teacher is viewed as a technician, with CPD directed at institutions and systems and based on the assumption of teacher deficit. This notion is supported by Sayed (2004), who notes that the weakness in many continuing professional development programmes is that they position teachers as clients that need 'fixing'. The second, more progressive notion is framed along the lines of the teacher as a reflective practitioner, with CPD aimed at the personal domain and based on the principle of teacher growth. CPD in Africa subscribes to the first typology, which starts from the premise of teacher defect (Christie et al. 2004). CPD is often viewed as a means of implementing reform or policy changes, which can disguise issues relating to the underlying purposes of the activity. If CPD is conceived of as serving the purpose of preparing teachers to implement reforms, then it is likely to align itself with the training and deficit models (transmission view of CPD). A community of practice model based on the principles of social practice theory, while it could also serve the above function, is, however, more likely to create opportunities that support teachers in contributing to shaping education policy and practice (Kennedy 2005).

The challenge in developing a curriculum for a teacher development programme in which teachers *do* in fact have a deficit in terms of relevant subject content knowledge is to interrogate the assumption of the 'deficit model' for continuing professional development. Such a model assumes that teachers need to be provided with knowledge and skills that they do not already have, and that all teachers' circumstances are the same, and that there is a corresponding relationship between teacher learning and pupil progress. Adopting the 'aspirational model' of continuing professional development, however, acknowledges that effective teachers can build on and improve existing knowledge. This model builds on research into effective schools and teachers and teachers' identities, work and lives (Day & Sachs 2004). A useful point of departure in a context in which teachers lack content knowledge is to adopt Grundy & Robison's conception of the interconnected purposes of continuing professional development, namely extension, growth and renewal. *Extension* would entail the introduction of new knowledge and skills into a teacher's repertoire; *growth* and *renewal* would refer to the development of greater levels of expertise that can be attained by changing knowledge and practice (Grundy & Robison 2004).

Social practice theory affords an opportunity for authentic teacher involvement

In describing a model of high-quality professional development for teachers, Smylie,

Bay & Tozer (1999) posit that '… teachers learn best when they are active in directing their own learning and when their opportunities to learn are focused on concrete tasks and dilemmas' that emanate from their daily encounters with pupils. Such opportunities should be based on enquiry, experimentation and reflection. Furthermore, such opportunities should be intensive, ongoing, allowing for collaboration and interaction between teachers and educational professionals. Collaborative initiatives that manifest themselves in teacher learning communities allow teachers to participate more in decisions that affect them. They also allow teachers to share pressures and burdens that result from policy changes. While collaboration may at first glance suggest an increase in the quantity of teachers' tasks, it is likely to make teachers feel less overloaded if their tasks are viewed as being more '… meaningful and invigorating and the teachers have high collective control and ownership of [them]' (Hargreaves 1995: 152). CPD based on the principles of social practice theory minimizes uncertainties faced by teachers and is likely to create what Hargreaves (1995) refers to as situated certainties and collective professional confidence among particular communities of teachers.

Researchers like Wells (1999) assert that learning communities do not require a designated expert and that teachers can learn from each other. This idea is also supported by Rogoff (1990), who suggests that in a learning community learners scaffold one another's learning through a powerful exchange of ideas. Groundwater-Smith & Dadds (2004) argue for systematic practitioner enquiry undertaken as a collegial activity. Similarly, Little (2004) advocates continuing professional development that is based on work that is self-selected, suggesting that such self-selection would create a sense of ownership and collegiality that may lead to the development of communities of mutual inquiry. These ideas, however, may prove to be problematic in a context where teacher knowledge of subject content is seriously lacking. The crucial question is whether such systematic practitioner enquiry, scaffolding and self-selection can in fact occur in a teacher learning community where teachers do *not* have content knowledge. In a context where teachers do not possess content knowledge, the directive role of an outside expert is indeed crucial to the professional development initiative, especially in the early stages of the community's development. The sustained development of the community will depend on the successful induction of a core group of teachers into the fundamentals of the discipline. Once a critical mass of teachers in a teacher learning community have acquired expertise and experience one can expect the learning community to flourish (Wideman & Owston 2003). It must be noted, though, that teachers' intellectual backgrounds and personal contexts determine the extent to which they pursue the goals of the community (Grossman et al. 2001). When planning for teacher development programmes, it is important to fully understand teacher learning. This can happen only if there is an understanding of teachers' biographical contexts, which comprise teachers' previous learning, present practice and expectations for the future. Simply focusing on the form and location of teacher development programmes is insufficient to achieve effectiveness (Kelchtermans 2004).

Social practice theory provides a framework that implicitly and explicitly acknowledges and affirms teachers, their backgrounds and contexts

Professional development programmes for teachers should be sensitive to complex local conditions (Clark 2001). The needs and existing capabilities of teachers must be acknowledged and respected. In developing continuing professional programmes in South Africa, due cognisance must be given to the fact that apartheid education created huge inequities in education. Teacher education initiatives need to be particularly sensitive to this (Adler 2002). In particular, such initiatives have to be guarded about adopting deficit models of teachers and teaching. Adler argues that 'INSET programmes needed to relate to and work with all qualified teachers as professionals, both experienced in the work they had done and knowledgeable about their current practices in their local contexts, but at the same time acknowledge a history of neglect and dysfunction' (ibid.: 7). Continuing professional development must provide opportunities for teachers to repair and develop their subject matter knowledge as well as equip them with skills for dealing with the socio-economic difficulties that face the country. Teacher learning communities provide a forum that can potentially serve this function in ways that affirm teachers and provide non-threatening opportunities for development.

While a teacher learning community may have a virtuous agenda, attempts at actualizing such an agenda may be seriously limited by existing structures within which teachers work. General working conditions, resource deprivation and poor remuneration are mitigating factors that inhibit the potential of teacher collaboration and their ability to participate and engage in ongoing learning in learning communities. Hargreaves (1995: 172) reminds us that '… teachers' hopes and fears (and interests and identities) are deeply embedded within and to some extent limited by the historically ingrained structures within which they work – many of which are the source of the problems of underachievement and inequity…' When professional development for teachers is engaged through learning communities, these complexities have to be factored into such initiatives.

Understanding the historical context of education in African countries is crucial if educational reform, including continuing professional development of teachers, is to be effective (Christie et al. 2004). In a country like South Africa, it would be foolish to ignore the historical peculiarities that have shaped the present status of education and continuing professional development in particular. The challenge then is to create a conducive forum where historicity is acknowledged and respected and where individuals from varying historical backgrounds can begin to engage in CPD. A forum based on the principles of social practice theory as envisaged in teacher learning communities offers immense potential as a context for this to happen. Hargreaves (1995) argues that collaboration amongst teachers embodies the principle of moral support. '[It] strengthens resolve, permits vulnerabilities to be shared and aired and carries people through those failures and frustrations that accompany change…'

(ibid.: 151). In teacher learning communities where collaborative activity occurs, such collaboration is likely to improve teacher effectiveness since it encourages teachers to take risks and to engage with different methodologies. Teachers are likely to feel a greater sense of efficacy since collaboration in learning communities allows for positive encouragement and feedback to teachers (Hargreaves 1995). Such a forum also provides a setting for another significant challenge facing African countries (including South Africa) in their CPD initiatives, namely managing the tension between tradition and modernity (Christie et al. 2004).

A framework for problematizing the role of teacher developers in CPD

If teacher educators believe that learning is social in nature, and that socially-based learning is a requisite for transformation and ongoing teacher professional development, the challenge then is to create contexts in which teachers and other stakeholders interact in ways that help them to overcome barriers to ongoing professional development. Grundy & Robison (2004) suggest several themes for successful professional development, including its relevance to teachers' needs; control by participants; access to expertise of facilitation by others; collegiality; active learning and the need for long-term programmes. It must be recognized though that the lack of high-quality support for teacher learning and limited long-term continuing professional development programmes are critical barriers to effective teacher learning (Long 2004). The question then is to determine the kind of continuing professional development that is most likely to be successful in different contexts. A challenge facing teacher development is to consider a community of practice framework as an underpinning model for professional development programmes.

Some challenges in adopting a communities of practice framework for CPD

In developing teacher development programmes, it is useful to take cognisance of the problematic issue of 'transfer' as the immediate manifestation of the products of teacher learning. Although Avery & Carlsen (2001) alert us to the potential that the development of strong subject content knowledge has for classroom practice, immediate transfer is not likely to occur. While it may be assumed that teachers who develop strong content knowledge are more likely to develop strong pedagogic content knowledge and become effective teachers in comparison with teachers with weak content knowledge, it must be noted that teacher learning through professional development may not result in changed practice and improved student performance. Day & Sachs point to an increasing understanding by researchers and teacher developers in recent times that continuing professional development 'will not, should not, and cannot always produce direct "pay-off" in classroom learning and student achievements. There are too many other variables which prevent immediate transfer

of learning' (Day & Sachs 2004: 29). Continuing professional development can only have an indirect impact on student learning (Bolam & McMahon 2004). Adler, Slonimsky & Reed (2002: 136) note that a common assumption is that '… knowledge of subject matter for teaching is of primary importance, for without this teachers would not be able to engage their learners in high-level conceptual thinking'. They warn, though, that '… inferring teachers' knowledge from classroom observations and learner performance is no straightforward affair' (ibid: 138). They note that teachers with a poor knowledge base struggle to embrace new approaches to knowledge and that this phenomenon is particularly prevalent amongst teachers who work in impoverished contexts.

A learning community approach to teacher development has much potential and is increasing in popularity, as indicated by Avalos (2004), who notes that there is growing evidence of school-initiated continuing professional development in which groups of teachers collaborate to form and develop their own learning agendas. She cautions, though, that a major factor impeding such initiatives is heavy teacher workloads, which impact on teachers' time for personal improvement.

While communities of practice hold immense promise as an approach to professional development of teachers, the model also carries many problems and dangers. Engaging in the collaborative activities of a community of practice could become a superficial and pointless exercise if the enterprise lacks purpose and direction and is disconnected from the teaching and leaning process. Simply becoming a member of a community of teacher learners for the sake of joining is futile. Another negative outcome is that communities of practice can create a situation in which collaborating teachers become conformists. They could suppress individuality and lead to groupthink (Hargreaves 1995).

Contrived collegiality (Hargreaves 1994) can lead to situations that could suppress teachers' desires to collaborate for professional development if this forced collaboration degenerates into administratively controlled planning by official sources. If teacher learning communities (clusters for example set up by DOE subject advisors) are used to secure teachers' compliance with and commitment to external policy reform initiatives that may be suspect, then collaboration within such communities will essentially serve a cooptative function.

Acknowledgement of diversity and accessibility and participation could in fact be facades that disguise the source from which the rules and conditions governing such collaborative gestures originate. If the functions of, for example, school clusters that operate as teacher learning communities are overly determined at a central level, it is likely that the process of collaboration will be constrained and disconnected by a focus on what the products of such learning communities should be (Hargreaves 1995). While the function of learning communities is to articulate, listen and provide a forum for different voices to be heard and to determine guiding ethical principles as a basis

for this to occur, contrived learning communities may in fact coerce teachers into compliance with imposed policy reform that may be bankrupt, elitist or 'inappropriate'.

In the diverse South African context, while teacher learning communities may comprise teachers who hail from vastly different teaching contexts, dominant teachers in learning communities may well be from middle-class schools and as such may dictate the agenda by focusing on curriculum issues pertinent to middle-class schools and children at the expense of the challenges facing teachers working in socio-economically deprived schools. Soudien (2004) in his analysis of the 'class scape' in South African education reminds us that while dominant classes have had to make space for new constituencies, they have done so on their own terms. If middle-class teachers formed middle-class teacher learning communities and engaged in issues that were peculiar to their contexts, and if working class teachers did the same, this would be likely to perpetuate imbalances and inequities that exist in our society. Some teachers working in socio-economically and academically advantaged contexts may exercise self-interest by electing to form learning communities with likeminded individuals who may for example include on their agenda the need to 'maintain standards' and achieve high and quality pass rates as a way of entrenching their own status within their schools. This particular type of community formation is exclusionary as it may discriminate against certain groups and may be in contravention of the principles of a democratic society.

Collaboration within teacher learning communities can lead to what Hargreaves (1995) refers to as 'incestuous professionalism' if such learning communities exclude significant other role-players in education, such as pupils and parents. If learning communities are considering new innovations in assessment, for example, as a focus of CPD, then it is important to involve both parents and pupils in their development, rather than creating anxiety and suspicion by simply foisting completed plans on them. Similarly, if teacher learning communities that comprise teachers from different schools formulate plans that are not congruent with the ideas of the individual schools from which the teachers originate, then affected teachers in the learning community are unlikely to receive sympathy and support from their own schools.

The context of education and teacher education in particular has become quite confusing and chaotic. Plurality and diversity are likely to result in disjointed and dissonant perspectives and aspirations. Miscommunication and misunderstanding, lack of consensus or common ground about the purpose of professional development for teachers or the intentions of policy reform could result in voluntary formations like teacher learning communities exercising almost complete discretion over their individual enterprises, resulting in 'inappropriate' or 'unacceptable' divergences and disparities. In other words, individual learning communities may end up basically 'doing their own thing', which may not articulate with that of other learning communities or generally accepted policy reform.

Sustaining communities of practice over time is perhaps the most serious challenge. In teacher development, the task would be to motivate and obtain commitments from a wide array of participants. Balancing teachers' short-term needs with the community's long-term goals is an issue that teacher education planners must consider, an issue that Grossman et al (2001) cite as an important tension that must be negotiated by teacher learning communities. Thought must be given to identifying methods for generating and sharing knowledge with a wider audience and allocating time and resources to all of these efforts. The organized sharing of ideas that emerge from communities of practice and developing strategies for documenting and disseminating new ideas and 'products' (new curriculum materials, etc.) are key issues that will determine the long-term survival of the community. The sustainability of teacher learning communities depends on significant levels of trust and the development of new types of relationships between teachers and teacher developers (Day & Sachs 2004).

Conclusion

Communities of practice have sufficient promise to warrant development on the part of education authorities. Such innovations, however, need to be monitored by research activity. The lack of research in the area of communities of practice as a vehicle for teacher professional development means that there are a number of important questions that need answering: What is the best way to orient new members to a community? Is there an optimal size for a community of practice to promote professional growth? How are administrative and coordination functions negotiated? How effective are various community configurations? Teacher development evaluation models need to be mindful of the complex relationship between teacher learning, pupil learning, school improvement and other pertinent factors that influence teacher development. Further research is needed to understand the conditions that enhance and sustain collaborative structures among teachers. Teacher developers need information on how to recognize communities of practice among teachers. The challenge is to move loose networks of teachers from their present state towards becoming more effective communities of practice. There needs to be a concerted effort to create communities of practice for the professional development of teachers.

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The practicum in pre-service teacher education: A survey of institutional practices

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Abstract

The paper reports on research aimed at providing an overview of practices, problems and innovative ideas within the teaching practice component of the Bachelor of Education (BEd) teacher education programme at nine teacher education institutions in South Africa in a period of policy changes and transformation. In this paper we report research related to a survey of various institutions regarding practicum practices, issues related to practicum and improvements envisaged. The research is framed in relation to theoretical ideas relevant to the teacher education practicum and mirrored against theoretical discussions regarding the improvement of the practicum. Results indicate that in most institutions very little attention is paid to teacher education theory and policy guidelines. Instead institutions seem to be introducing changes in a piecemeal fashion and not focusing on policy or theoretical ideas as guidelines. We contend that this could be due to the fact that educationists are in the early days of policy development and implementation in relation to the new policies drafted since 1994 or because established practices have become dominant and almost taken for granted in an uncritical manner.

Introduction

Internationally and in South Africa, the last decade has been an intensive period of education reform and restructuring, particularly regarding teacher education. In SA this includes new policies to govern teacher education processes, restructuring of institutions providing teacher education (closure of colleges and incorporation with education faculties) and also a shift of teacher education to higher education institutions, making teacher education a function of universities, governed by the Higher Education Act (RSA 1997). In some cases universities were also merged, bringing together staff from different institutions. It is against this backdrop that our research took place.

In this paper we report on research linked to the practicum as it is organized and developed at nine institutions in South Africa in a time of political change and transformation in teacher education. The research involved a survey of staff working with the practicum in BEd programmes by way of focus group interviews. One of the main reasons for embarking on this research was that we were in the process of reviewing practice at our institution with a view to improving the practicum in the BEd programme. We reasoned further that a survey of this kind would provide data that might be useful in assisting us in a process of synthesizing 'good practice' for practicum in our particular programme. We developed a series of questions from the literature related to our interests in improving the practicum and then developed a semi-structured interview schedule based on the key questions.

Changes in teacher education have been strongly influenced by policy and we discuss some of the main policy changes and processes to illuminate the policy context of the research. Since the research focused on the practicum, a literature review of key ideas related to this aspect of teacher education is presented as background to the study.

South African policies and processes in teacher education

Since 1994 teacher education policies have been under review in South Africa. This started with the development of a Council on Teacher Education Programmes (COTEP) document that set out ideas for transformation in teacher education. This document was formalized as the policy document *Norms and Standards for Teacher Educators* (RSA 2000), which became a statutory Bill and guided the review and reconstruction of teacher education. It spelt out three essential competencies and a number of roles for teachers, essentially reflecting a strong competence-based point of departure that teacher education programmes need to enable the acquisition of clearly defined competencies for teachers: foundational, practical and reflective (N&S 2000). Teaching practice or practicum sessions need to provide opportunities for students to develop and practise these, particularly the practical and reflective competences.

A ministerial committee was set up to further review teacher education with a view to developing a new policy framework for initial teacher education in line with the Higher Education Act of 1997 (RSA 1997) and the draft Higher Education Qualification Framework (MoE 2004). A discussion document was released as 'A National Framework for Teacher Education' in 2005 (DoE 2005) and in 2006 formalized as the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (DoE 2006). In both these documents a strong competence (technological)-based underpinning is detected. Practicum periods are described as 'work-based experience' and on-site induction into situated contexts of practice. No specific minimum time period is specified, but students are expected to be exposed to a variety of contexts during their teacher education programme and the practicum constitutes 120 credit points out of a total of 480 for the programme (effectively 25%), which seems to indicate the importance afforded to the practicum in teacher education programmes.

The most recent documents were only to be used by institutions as from 2007, while most institutions were referring to and using the *Norms and Standards* document as a policy reference during the period we conducted the survey.

Overview of teacher education programmes and practicums

Teacher education is generally viewed as the formal and systematic preparation of teachers for professional work (Garm & Karlsen 2004). Tatto (1997: 405) writes that 'teacher education refers to organized (formal) attempts to provide more knowledge and skills to prospective or experienced teachers and it occurs in either education institutions or school contexts'. Garm & Karlsen (2004: 731) describe teacher education (in Europe) as a field with a high degree of complexity and variation, yet with common trends identifiable. Teacher education programmes, however, seem to be much the same throughout the world and Tom (1995) indicates that programmes in the United States of America have not changed in almost 100 years. He describes the general structure of teacher preparation courses as including several foundational courses followed by so-called methods courses, which are capped by a few months or weeks of apprenticeship or student teaching (practicum), a model that has found broad application in South Africa.

A variety of orientations to teacher education have been outlined in the literature. With regard to perspectives and categorization of teacher education programmes we draw on the views of Beyer & Zeichner (1987), Feiman-Nemser (1990), Diamond (1991), Liston & Zeichner (1991), Stuart (1999) and Zeichner (1983). Five main orientations or paradigms emerge from the literature:

1. The *academic* orientation places the emphasis on transmission of knowledge and the development of understanding.
2. The *practical* orientation is concerned mainly with using experience as a source of learning, with students being encouraged to apprentice themselves to experienced teachers.
3. The *technological* orientation emphasizes the acquisition of clearly defined competencies on the part of teachers.
4. The *personal* orientation makes the teacher's personal development central to teacher preparation.
5. The *critical social* or *social reconstructionist* orientation regards teacher education as a crucial element in creating a more just and democratic society.

What does emerge from the discussion is that all teacher education orientations are concerned with knowledge and skills in mastering basic teaching competence. Teacher education programmes generally have a structure of foundational courses coupled with a session of practicum or practice teaching that provides school experience, with varying emphases on the different sections.

The term or construct 'practicum' has been variously described in the literature. These

descriptions include initial professional socialization (Zeichner & Gore 1990), pre-service professional development (Lauriala 1997) and pedagogical-professional development (Kagan 1992), to mention but a few. This is a topic on which there is great diversity of opinion and never likely to be uniformity of description. Essentially, it involves periods of time teacher education students spend in schools supervised by university staff or school teachers to whom they are assigned.

Student placement in schools seems to have a dual purpose: firstly experience in implementing skills and knowledge and secondly assessment of students' readiness to enter the teaching profession. Currently there is a great deal of debate on the role that student teaching experience plays in the development of teachers and the relative contribution of various institutional and individual factors to the socialization of novice teachers.

Practicum periods, according to Buchmann (1999), can provide opportunities to break this chain of experiences of cumulative socialization of student teachers dating back to their own school years. Cochrane-Smith (1991) similarly indicates that it is important to consider environmental requirements that emphasize reform in teacher education and to organize for students to be placed in contexts in which teachers are open to change and reform. Students are then able to gain a critical perspective on standard school practices by working with teachers who are themselves engaged in practices aimed at reforming teaching. She adds that if students are going to learn to 'teach against the grain' (practices not aligned with the traditional teacher-centred approach), innovative classrooms need to be set up where novices come into contact with the knowledge of experts so that there is opportunity for professional learning. In such cases it is imperative that there be good cooperation and consonance between partners involved in the process.

A point of contention related to practicums is the effect of school visits on student thinking about and motivation for teaching, as these experiences often highlight disjuncture between school and university practices and settings. In this regard Goodman (1986) argues for a critical rather than utilitarian teaching approach to 'challenge' the pre-existing world at practicum sites with its customs, rules, belief systems and behaviour patterns. Institutions set predetermined patterns of conduct that control things in one direction and that can suppress attempts at innovation. These are often supported by teacher education institutions and established and dominant teacher education discourses (Garm & Karlsen 2004).

One of the major challenges facing practicum supervisors and teacher educators in general is the assessment of pre-service teacher practicums. How does one distinguish between those who are and those who are not yet competent and minimize uncertainty and subjectivity associated with assessing teaching competence? This represents serious challenges as assessors need to consider several modalities such as (a) suitable assessment instruments, (b) the competences to be assessed, (c) the advantages and disadvantages of direct observation methods and (d) relevant levels of performance

(Fraser et al. 2005).

Goodman (1988) examines some cultural factors within universities that can frustrate efforts to alter the purpose of teacher education field experiences. These include viewpoints and views of supervisors (academics who visit schools) and the nature of the programme at the institution. Universities also lack resources, leading to fragmented curricula with unclear intent and low status for practicum programmes. In addition, the professional perspectives of teacher educators and conditions that exist in schools often hamper change and the implementation of critical and developmental programmes for teacher education.

These factors can inhibit and even suppress change and attempts at innovation in the practicum/teacher education programmes. However, approaches that are explicitly aimed at enabling change are well documented and some of these are explored next.

Enabling change and innovation in the practicum

In terms of change and improvement and the breaking of the dominant culture in teaching practicums, Cochrane-Smith (1991:105-109) reports three main categories of activities that might serve to 'reinvent' or improve the practicum process. These refer to the partnership or relationships with schools and are consonance, critical dissonance and collaborative resonance. Each is briefly explained below.

Consonance

This is described as an affirming relationship between university and school-based sections of the practice teaching relationship. Cochrane-Smith adds that these components need to be consistent with and affirming of each other. This would include common understanding and application of effective teaching so that pre- and in-service teachers speak the same language regarding expectations of good teaching. Teachers need to be prepared regarding the above and a good relationship needs to be in place between schools and university faculties or departments for consonance to occur.

Critical dissonance

This requires that the university-based pre-service section of the practicum be sufficiently incongruous with the school-based portion of preparation to interrupt the influence of school and prompt challenges to that which is usually taken for granted. This in a sense suggests a radical critique of teaching and schooling. Furthermore, it suggests that the problem with student teaching is related to its conservative effect and its tendency to perpetuate existing instructional and institutional arrangements. Katz (1974) indicates that programmes that aim to create critical dissonance are

intended to be transformative, to overcome what he calls excessive realism of student teachers by enabling them to develop the analytical skills to critique and reinvent their own perspectives.

Collaborative resonance

Essentially this approach to renewal involves linking what students learn through their field-based school experiences with what they learn from their university experiences through mutually constructed learning communities. The term resonance here refers to increasing the intensity of school-university relationships based on co-labour of learning communities. Programmes organized in this way are based on the assumption that conjoint efforts to prepare new teachers create opportunities that are different from and richer than the opportunities either the school or the university can provide alone.

All three approaches above require a fairly good relationship between the university departments and the schools at which students do their practicum for the processes to be progressive and to promote change.

A significant amount of research describes the characteristics of *powerful learning environments* (PLEs). Recent publications by De Corte (1999, 2003), Merrill (2002), Van Merriënboer & Paas (2003) and Vermunt (2003) on the topic clearly link to the educational orientations we have described above. The central aims of 'modern education' seem to be represented by high-quality knowledge, problem-solving competence, self-directed learning skills and the ability to transfer knowledge and skills meaningfully from one context to another (Könings, Brand-Gruwel & Van Merriënboer 2005).

Merrill (2002) and Van Merriënboer & Paas (2003) have emphasized that active knowledge construction is stimulated by acquisition of problem-solving skills, 'real-world' problem-based learning contexts and complex as well as challenging learning tasks. Additionally, Merrill has described other characteristics of PLEs that seem to be common in theories on effective teaching and learning. They could be seen as five non-linear, interactive phases or stages of the learning process, namely that (a) prior knowledge and experiences of students must be activated in order to build new knowledge, (b) new skills or knowledge should be demonstrated through modelling, (c) opportunities must be created for students to apply their new knowledge and skills, (d) students should receive feedback on these applications and (e) newly-acquired knowledge and skills should be integrated into real-world activities. These characteristics fit well with the ideas underscoring cognitive apprenticeship (Collins, Brown & Newman 1989).

In addition to staging or phasing the learning process, Van Merriënboer & Paas (2003) have stressed three grounding guidelines for PLE design. These are learning goals

integration, variation to suit different students' learning styles and increasing student self-directedness and independent learning. Goal integration points to a sound integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes to allow students to recombine acquired skills in order to solve problems in new situations. Learning style variation links to both deductive (general knowledge, then specific cases) and inductive (specific cases, then general knowledge) approaches, inquisitorial (discovery, asking questions) and expository (processing pre-structured information) approaches and aligning with cognitive architecture (particularly the processing capacity of the human mind). Self-directed and independent learning implies a gradual transfer of responsibility from teacher to student, developing reflective and self-reflective articulation capacity as well as assisting students to gain control over their own learning processes.

It appears that three crucial factors potentially influence and direct the way in which students in initial teacher education programmes might optimally learn: firstly, how teacher education institutions essentially view teacher education; secondly, what prime orientation they take in educating teachers; and, thirdly, whether and how they create optimally powerful learning environments for student teachers, which served as a focal point in this study. The concept of 'teacher practicum' therefore presupposes an important learning instrument and is discussed briefly in the next section.

Viewpoints differ on the effects of teacher preparation and formal pedagogical training on teachers' socialization. On the one hand there is the viewpoint that student training has a significant effect, e.g. that student teaching experiences are the most important and valuable aspect of pre-service preparation, and on the other that the major socialization influences are located at a point prior to formal training (Tabachnik & Zeichner 1984). The relative contribution of practicums and their value to teacher education processes vary in different contexts and will probably remain a point of much contention and debate. This study links to that debate in a South African setting and discusses viewpoints on some questions related to practicums in pre-service teacher education programmes at various institutions.

Research project and process

As part of a small-scale investigation of teacher practicums at one higher education institution in South Africa, a research team comprising three academics conducted a literature review on the topic and selected a convenience sample of nine faculties/schools of education in South Africa to be visited during 2006 – the University of the Witwatersrand, the University of Cape Town, the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood), the University of Pretoria, the University of the Free State, North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus), Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Johannesburg University (Auckland Park, Kingsway Campus) and the Centre for Creative Education (Cape Town) – to generate viewpoints from practitioners on practice teaching in the BEd programme. Group interviews with staff at the local institution were also conducted.

The following questions were posed:

- To what extent is your programme informed by prevailing education policies (e.g. the *Norms and Standards for Teacher Educators*)?
- To what extent is your programme informed by particular theoretical frameworks (e.g. constructivism, competency-based teaching)?
- How is your teaching practice organized (how do the logistics work)?
- How do you assess your practical teaching and who does the assessment?
- Do you have any burning issues or innovative practices in relation to practical teaching?

The majority of the questions refer to structural and logistical aspects of the programme. We included a question on burning issues to try to focus on particular issues at particular institutions, as many institutions have undergone changes and may have been involved in mergers or have new appointments in managerial positions. Some might have introduced new approaches to the practicum or variation on existing practices. Although this question was designed to highlight issues that emerged in particular contexts, it did not produce much data.

Method

A literature overview produced a theoretical basis for generating the interview questions. These questions were sent in advance to staff who volunteered to participate. Interviews were conducted throughout by at least two of the three project staff members, while interviewee involvement ranged from one person (the teaching practice organizer or coordinator) at one institution to academics teaching on the BEd programme. At a few institutions persons responsible for teaching practice in the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) practical teaching also participated in interviews, although our survey was focused on the BEd programmes. This caused the information to become somewhat 'blurred' between the BEd and PGCE programmes at times. However, at the reporting stage the data was separated. After each interview field notes were produced, compared and summarized and recorded in a comprehensive, detailed report.

Interview times varied from 45 minutes to close to two hours. We were always under some kind of time pressure owing to the full work schedules of the staff. While we had an interview schedule, interviews tended to become more conversational as the time progressed. Some issues raised were peculiar to the context of the institution concerned. More general ideas were also raised that had a bearing on most of the institutions offering programmes in teacher education, particularly BEd programmes. Some institutions provided comprehensive information, including documents related to practice teaching.

Seven of the institutions we visited offer the BEd (Foundation Phase) programme,

while three also offer specialization in early childhood development (ECD). Eight institutions offer the programme at the Intermediate and Senior Phase and the same number offer the Senior and Further Education and Training (FET) Phase, mainly in specialized areas like Mathematics and Science. Student numbers at the different institutions vary between 40 and 1 500.

Analysis and frameworks

Data was collated per question and organized in terms of the collective responses to the questions and not per institution. The different ideas presented were analysed by way of content analysis and presented and discussed as such.

Data produced

The practicum or school-based learning is clearly viewed as important by all institutions surveyed. It forms a core element of the BEd programmes and is one of the promotion requirements that may determine whether or not a student is allowed to qualify as a teacher. However, school-based learning can be compromised when student numbers are large in proportion to the number of staff members who need to do school-based assessment.

The specific data from the survey is discussed in the order that questions were put to institutional representatives.

The influence of policy on teacher practicums

In terms of policy influence in the BEd it appears that programmes in the majority of cases are influenced by national teacher education policies like the *Norms and Standards for Teacher Educators* (N&S) and the 'seven roles' of the teacher identified by the N&S. A number of institutions indicated only moderate influence of the N&S, while 'other influences' were indicated as of a non-policy nature comprising 'codes of behaviour' for teachers, student-centred approaches, reflective practice, self-criticism, experiencing disequilibrium or discomfort with the status quo (or 'shaking students from their comfort zones'), Waldorf methodology (or holistic views of education) and 'living theory'.

The significant lack of attention to policy documents reflects the findings by Robinson (2003), where teacher educators indicated that they rarely consulted policy documents in planning their programmes. Many suggested that they had merely changed programmes 'on paper' to suit requirements for programme registration with national authorities. Part of the problem seems to lie with a lack of understanding of the N&S document or even uncertainty about the nature of current policy documents.

The influence of theoretical frameworks

On the question of what influences the BEd practicum *at the theoretical level,* a few institutions indicated that 'a variety of theoretical frameworks' are propagated, rather than one particular theory. This includes outcomes-based education, competency-based education, skills-based training, constructivist theories and Bernstein's theory. At most institutions the balance between theory and practice continues to be a challenge. Respondents indicated that while it remains important to expose students to a sound theoretical basis for teaching practice, exposure to good school practice and powerful learning environments seems equally important. One possible solution suggested is to introduce limited research for students at the senior stages of the BEd programme, aiming at meaningfully integrating theoretical and practical knowledge and skills. One institution mentioned the importance of a holistic approach in order for students to understand that the BEd programme as a whole constitutes much more than merely the sum of its parts. Another institution believes that BEd students in the first year need a firm grounding regarding the nature of the practicum and the ability to plan properly, that second-year students need to study teaching methods, that third-years need to master assessment strategies, and that students in the fourth year should handle problem-solving and difficult issues effectively, and that they should reflect and do limited research, indicating some form of progression across the programme at this particular institution. This progression across the four years was not justified theoretically and seemed to be based on the opinions of staff and past experiences of the organization of the practicum.

There is a distinct absence of reference to theoretical or paradigmatic orientations to teacher education as described by Zeichner (1983) and various authors cited earlier. Some of the responses, however, do make reference to competencies and the roles for teachers discussed in the norms and standards document as guiding theoretical ideas.

The organization of practicums

The organization of practice teaching in the BEd varies dramatically among institutions. Some institutions require their students to visit schools for teaching practice on a weekly basis (typically one day per week with supervision), while others have 'block periods' of school visits. Some student practice periods are not supervised, while others are closely supervised – particularly in the final year of study. The number of days or weeks institutions require their students to be in schools also varies. Students from some institutions have no practice teaching in the first year, while others have only periods of observation – particularly in schools close to their homes.

One institution planned for its students to practice teach in schools as follows in 2007: six weeks in each of the first three years and 12 weeks (one academic quarter) under supervision in the fourth year. As contexts differ, for instance between 'city' and 'town' universities, the practical arrangements and organization of teaching practice also differ. Overall, institutions find it difficult to identify a sufficient number of effective

and diverse school environments in close proximity to universities for practice teaching. Most institutions point out that transport, accommodation and finance increasingly prove to be limiting factors in student placement for teaching practice. It was also mentioned that risk in terms of student safety in and around schools poses a problem at a number of institutions.

There is wide variation in terms of the length and location of practicum sessions. This is probably due to a lack of policy prescription or clarity on this issue in policy documents, which give no indication of a specific period, leaving this up to institutions to decide.

In our survey the views on time differed from institution to institution and this is echoed in literature that supports these views. Quick & Siebörger (2005:1) indicate that the vast majority of survey respondents felt that students should spend more time in schools. One teacher favoured three instead of two placements each lasting a month, another felt two six week placements was best. Another mentioned a university in SA where students spend six months in schools. There was a strong feeling that students should not be loaded with on-campus assignments while on practice teaching. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education in America (NCATE) states that a practicum should be sufficiently intensive and extensive for students to demonstrate proficiencies in the professional roles for which they are preparing (NCATE 2002: 26). NCATE guidelines suggest at least one semester or 16 weeks. New Zealand standards for teacher education suggest that blocks of at least three weeks are needed for each practicum (NZ Teachers Council 2002: 11). They indicate further that at least 14 weeks but preferably 20 or more are necessary for practicum over a three-year period. In England, the Teacher Education Authority requires that students complete 18 weeks for all primary graduate programmes (Teacher Training Agency 2002: 15). In all the cases mentioned, there is a specified period for teacher practicums, something which is absent in the recent South African policy documents.

Sites chosen for the practicum are not always ideally suited to the process and sometimes present institutions with problems. Most institutions aim to provide students with diverse teaching practice experiences in a variety of schools. However, it seems that there are not enough 'good' schools available for this purpose and some schools are in areas where student safety cannot be guaranteed. Concerns for the safety of students is also linked to exposure to social dynamics in schools related to drugs, unacceptable sexual behaviour and weak discipline among learners. The interviewees at the various institutions seemed to agree that exposing students to bad learning experiences in malfunctioning schools was contrary to the goals of effective teacher education. Interviewees at another institution mentioned that they increasingly have physically challenged students who need special arrangements at school, which are not always available at the schools they have to visit.

In terms of staffing, most institutions have dedicated staff responsible for planning,

organizing and implementing teaching practice. It appears that both academic and administrative capacity is available at most institutions for this purpose. In some institutions temporary secondments rather than appointments are used to make this possible. A few institutions also have practice teaching committees that oversee the policies and quality assurance of the process.

Not all academic staff members have a ‘feel’ for or are otherwise suited to supervising practice teaching. Some staff members are not interested or competent and do not take practice teaching seriously. A number of staff members appear not to have had recent experience of or exposure to the challenges of school teaching, which hampers their accurate assessment of students’ teaching in school contexts. At most institutions staff expressed concern that school visits were done by some staff members and not others. While they indicated that this was a point of contention, no details were given about how it is being dealt with. The exception appears to be where mergers have taken place with teachers’ colleges and where faculties of education have separated into schools for professional and postgraduate education. At two merged institutions staff members indicated that ex-college staff members do the bulk of the school visits. They appeared to accept this as part of their job, but also indicated that university staff members do not consider it as integral to their jobs.

At least one institution indicated a concern about the cost of teaching practice in relation to subsidy generated. It appears that costs exceed the income generated by practice teaching modules. Moreover, the time and effort needed to support students are vast if compared with the more ‘theoretical’ modules of the BEd. In the same vein, teachers are already overburdened with teaching and administrative duties in their schools, so that they have little time left to mentor or supervise student teachers. Remunerating teachers for their ‘services’ to universities also seems to be problematic, since schools are hesitant to allow such an arrangement. At least three institutions reported on students’ financial problems in meeting travel and accommodation demands related to practice teaching.

A number of institutions are currently using or planning to introduce a teacher-mentor system to supervise students in schools as an innovation to their practice. This basically entails assigning students to a particular teacher, who needs to guide, assist and assess the student during the practicum. This is time-consuming, requiring training and inputs from university staff before and during the practicum. In cases where mentors are not trained or committed, students tend to be ‘misused’ by mentor teachers for petty tasks or exposed to huge assessment workloads that hamper or negatively influence students’ learning experiences in schools. Students are burdened with menial tasks such as photocopying, collecting books and organizing materials for practical work for teachers; this resonates with the findings of Quick & Siebörger (2005: 2), where respondents felt that mentor teachers would be useful provided they were given adequate guidance and structure from the university regarding practice teaching. Examples include providing teachers with instructions and guidelines on

what schools should do during the period that students visit schools. Students and teachers in the survey felt that more assistance was needed in structuring teacher observation and better ways should be developed for recording this observation. What they were essentially suggesting was a better connection between the liaison teachers, the host teachers at the school and the university.

Dreyer (1998: 110) concurs with this suggestion and concludes that for mentorship to be effective a very close relationship needs to be developed between the school and the university. Maynard and Furlong (1993: 70) argue in favour of active mentoring, where teachers at school not only supervise training done elsewhere but have an active role in the training process. Hagger, Burn & McIntyre (1993: 17) indicate that in mentoring relationships teachers contribute their classroom expertise and understanding while the university contributes awareness of professional practice elsewhere. Maynard and Furlong (1993: 82) write that 'mentoring is a difficult and demanding task and teachers performing the role need time and in-service support appropriate to the increased responsibility placed on them.'

In most instances students are allocated to available schools (usually of their first or second choice), but some institutions have a system of 'free choice' whereby students ultimately decide themselves where to practice teach. In such cases they have to make the arrangements themselves. The latter system poses a number of challenges, but according to one of the institutions it works well and teaches the students organizational and negotiation skills. Another feature highlighted by a number of institutions is the importance of proper liaison (between university staff and school staff) on a continuous basis. Good relationships with and goodwill from schools are essential for effective practice teaching – in particular with regard to relationships with school principals and mentor teachers.

Besides practice teaching at schools, a number of institutions make use of additional teaching opportunities for students, such as micro lessons and transporting school learners to campuses. The institutions that use these strategies are convinced that they contribute towards preparing students better for real-life experiences in school. One of the institutions visited that abandoned micro teaching in the past plans to revive it as part of practice teaching opportunities for their students.

Assessing teacher practicums

The *assessment of practice teaching* seems to be both a contentious and a complex issue at a number of institutions. One of the main findings is that institutions are increasingly moving away from awarding a mark for practice teaching to merely stating whether a student is competent to teach or not. In most instances supervisors are allocated to students to assess them within the context of a particular school and class. Guidelines in terms of competences required in the form of rubrics or other descriptions are supplied to supervisors, but reports also have to be accompanied by written

and oral feedback. Feedback might be provided to individual students or to student groups.

There appears to be a move away from Likert-type-scaled behavioural lists of classroom teaching in favour of a more holistic view of practice teaching within context. The use of practice teaching portfolios appears to be on the increase as institutions use them from either the first year for students to 'build a CV' or in later years to help students with their recording and reflective skills. The difficulties and complexities of assessing practicums in terms of current policy documents have been highlighted by Fraser et al. (2005: 252), who indicated that 'it is unlikely that the requirements set out assessing for competencies in various roles will be met without systematic and sustained observations of students in school classrooms as such processes are costly and time-consuming.' They suggest that all modules in teacher preparation programmes could possibly be linked to practical school-based assignments to be completed during the practicum to try to go some way to achieving this.

It seems that most institutions require that a supervisor do no fewer than two to three observations per student at any given visit to a school. In addition, practice teaching journals or portfolios are required for assessment purposes. Some institutions require that portfolios be built from the first year of the BEd, while others require this only in the final year. Portfolios are assessed according to stated criteria and the assessment plays a role in the decision whether a student should be found competent or not. Where portfolios are being used, the weight in relation to classroom teaching is generally 20:80.

In a number of institutions students are encouraged to assess their own teaching competence and reflect constructively on efforts to improve their practices. In more than one instance institutions complained about schools being very 'rigid' at what they do and thus deny students the freedom to experiment with innovative ideas and strategies. Moreover, it was reported that some schools tended to be very disorganized – making it difficult for supervisors to assess students.

In all cases, schools themselves need to provide reports on students' performance on practice teaching. These reports appear to include written feedback from both teachers and principals or their delegates. At least one institution makes use of an external examiner system for quality assurance by appointing a lecturer from another institution to assess at least 10% of final-year students and write a report on the findings.

At most institutions the assessment of practice teaching is the responsibility of all the staff who teach in the BEd programme. Some institutions only involve lecturers who specialize in particular phases or learning areas/subjects, putting huge demands on staff in terms of time and responsibility. A few institutions also make use of temporary or part-time staff to assess teaching practice. While this compensates to an extent for staff shortages for supervisors, it often leads to quality assurance problems, as part-

time staff can be trained for supervision but little follow-up is done owing to time and staff shortages.

Specifying assessment criteria and gaining clarity regarding assessment procedures for portfolios are complex processes that vary according to context and institutional and individual ideas and preferences. All institutions have systems in place and some are introducing innovations for future assessment processes. How policy guidelines are being or will be invoked is not clear from the interviews or questionnaires.

Burning issues and innovative practices

Not much data emerged as burning issues. However, issues of concern were expressed in the other questions and are dealt with there.

Innovations suggested to improve and add value to practicums that might be worth considering include the use of 'consultant teachers'. At one particular institution consultant teachers are recruited, involved and remunerated on a limited scale in order to assist with the planning of practice teaching and the identification of excellent school learning opportunities for students. According to the staff at the institution, this notion differs considerably from the idea of teacher-mentors, since consultant teachers are highly involved in the overall planning and delivery of the BEd as a whole and practice teaching in particular.

The idea of 'cluster schools' mentioned by various institutions might also provide interesting opportunities, as not all schools in a particular geographical area are involved in practice teaching at all levels or in all subjects or learning areas. In this model, certain schools are grouped into clusters that are targeted for more specific involvement in practice teaching at particular levels or in areas of learning and work in partnership with the teacher education institution staff.

Discussion

Our analytical framework draws on recent literature concerning powerful learning environments (De Corte 1999, 2003; Könings et al. 2005; Merrill 2002; Van Merriënboer & Paas 2003; Vermunt 2003) as well as categories of activities that might serve to re-invent or improve teacher practicums (Cochrane-Smith 1991). As explained earlier, such learning environments are characterized by high-quality knowledge, problem-solving competence, increased self-directedness and independence, effective knowledge transfer, 'real-world' learning contexts, complex and challenging learning tasks, active learning, goal integration, and sufficient variation to suit differing learning styles and the types of relationships between teacher education institutions and schools. The framework also points to essentially productive relationships or partnerships between schools and universities that imply consonance, critical dissonance or collaborative dissonance. The data generated by this survey was mirrored against

all of these characteristics to form a picture of what might be learnt from the array of teacher practicum practices at the participating higher education institutions.

On the issue of policy and theoretical grounding, it became clear that institutions all seem to strive to expose their students to relevant and quality knowledge prior to and during teacher practicums. While the latest policy documentation (National Framework for Teacher Education or NFTE) was not mentioned anywhere as a key concern for knowledge direction (since the survey took place in 2006 before the NFTE was finalized), it was clear that previous policy directives like the N&S were taken into account, in some cases to a limited extent. 'Other influences' on faculties/schools of education in selecting practicum directives pointed to a broad commitment to student-centred approaches and effecting status quo disequilibrium or discomfort (exposure to unfamiliar contexts). These directives were all, at least from a learning point of view, encouraging signs that a healthy epistemological diversity exists across institutions. What is apparently lacking is the research role in initial teacher education, which is somewhat discouraging from an experiential and constructivist perspective, although there are signs from one or two institutions that enhancement of this role for their students is being considered. At one of these institutions, where student numbers are relatively low, action research and 'living theory' are being considered as a framework for teacher education in general and teacher practicums in particular. This might lead to ongoing improvement of practices and a better understanding of the practicum.

In terms of organizing teacher practicums for powerful learning and school-university relationships, most institutions seem to be sensitive to the contexts in which their students practice-teach. Although they realize the value and importance of exposing students to diverse school environments and consider diversity as enhancing powerful learning experiences, institutions are increasingly faced with practical problems that limit their options. These include serious financial constraints among students, risk to safety and health in informal settlement areas, availability of suitable and properly functioning schools, availability of suitable mentor teachers and role-models for exemplary practice. A number of institutions offer additional practice teaching opportunities such as micro teaching and bringing school learners into practice classrooms, but, again, these experiences seldom lead to goal integration as they are devoid of 'real-life' experiences and often lack sufficient complexity.

Reflecting university-school relationships most prominently was the element of essential cooperation between teacher education institutions and practice schools. As teaching in schools assists students to become more independent from the teacher education institution on the path to self-directedness, congruence between the expectations from both sides seems crucial. Here the Cochrane-Smith (1991) model is helpful. If, for instance, the aim of the teacher institution is to promote consonance between theory and practice, but students experience dissonance, the learning experience will be marginal and the learning gain negative. The opposite seems equally true. A possible solution is therefore to negotiate collaborative resonance between the

teacher education institution and the schools used for teacher practicums, so that the learning experiences of students are both stronger and richer than they would have been in either one of the two environments. In this respect we found some encouraging signs in a few institutions already making progress in effecting collaborative learning environments based on a mutual understanding of what might eventually be expected from student teachers by both universities and schools. This is particularly evident in the idea of consultant teachers who will be part of the planning and assessment processes of the practicums.

Linked to the previous point and in particular the staffing needs for teacher practicums, our findings underscore those of Quick & Siebörger (2003/4) indicating that mentor teachers require adequate guidance and structure from the teacher education institution in order to be useful. Many institutions that are either considering using mentor teachers in the future or have used them in the past agree that cooperation between academic staff and mentoring staff is crucial – particularly in terms of the role of variance in creating powerful learning environments. Agreement does not only involve decisions about the complexity and challenge of student learning tasks, but, more importantly, agreement on the way in which learning tasks are structured, observed and assessed. At least one institution is making use of 'consultant teachers' who assist not only in identifying excellent schools in their respective subjects or learning areas where students can teach, but also in identifying good teacher-mentors who co-structure students' learning tasks and opportunities. Another institution with large student numbers has opted for 'cluster schools', meaning that pre-service students would be able to enjoy diverse practicum opportunities within the range of experiences offered by any particular 'cluster' of schools.

The assessment of teaching practice remains challenging and is reported as such by most institutions. The variance we found in assessment practices and their complexity seem to be in congruence with Fraser et al. (2005), who report difficulty distinguishing between competent and non-competent teachers. Sometimes these assessments are fraught with subjectivity. At most institutions in our survey assessment instrumentation is in place, but these instruments are reportedly under constant review as new perspectives on what constitutes good or bad teaching emerge and as teaching-learning contexts vary. In terms of the phasing of learning in practicum situations, feedback to students seems to be crucial. All institutions report a lack of time and staff to provide feedback properly – particularly at the individual student level. What seems even more important than feedback is to check whether students use the feedback they get productively and thus further promote a powerful environment for learning (Dochy 2007).

Quick & Siebörger (2005: 1) note that 'teaching practice is such a long established practice it is easy to assume that those involved in it have a clear notion of what it is and how it should be operationalized and managed.' In this survey the statement above is partially borne out by the responses at the various campuses. Within the

framework of creating powerful learning environments for initial teacher education students the findings do not indicate clear trends but a rather a complex and multifarious picture for the BEd practicum. In spite of a centrally developed policy, admittedly not very prescriptive or direct, local practices seem to vary greatly, in some respects promoting powerful learning, but lacking in others. Some similarities and much variation in evidence emerged from the survey, but little in the way of innovation that is theoretically clarified and justified.

The strongest similarity in creating powerful learning environments and effecting meaningful university-school relationships at the institutional level is found in the fact that at most institutions school-based practicums are regarded as an important component of the teacher education programmes. It appears, however, that balancing theoretical and practical concerns in most BEd programmes against the background of programmes being relatively 'full' and demanding is still a huge challenge. One solution is to implement a more research-oriented approach in the senior years of the BEd to assist students in viewing teaching as a social practice rather than a 'bag of pedagogical tricks' or recipes to be followed. Naturally this will have consequences for negotiating sound university-school relationships.

Innovations suggested include mentors, consultant teachers and cluster schools working in partnership with academic staff members. These suggestions are presented largely as logistical approaches and solutions and not necessarily linked to theoretical arguments or ideas related to practicums. A potential challenge that needs to be addressed is concern about the lack of training of mentors and the negative consequences of this for the student teachers.

In the final instance it needs to be noted that our survey took place in a period of change and transformation in education in general and against a backdrop of policy shifts and change in teacher education in particular. From the study it appears that policy imperatives have not had a strong influence on current practices or the suggestions for future innovations. The situation appears to be largely what Garm & Karlsen (2004: 739) describe as

> [N]ew reforms with subsequent structural and organizational changes [that] do not necessarily change the basic culture. The teacher education discourse is established and maintained within an institutional frame as an interaction between teachers and students. This discourse frames the actions and opinions regarded as acceptable expressions for values and norms in teaching institutions and teacher education.

Overall, our limited survey is intended to provide a useful overview of current models, practices, problems, challenges and innovative ideas. It is clear that practice teaching remains a very important element of any successful BEd programme and can potentially create powerful learning environments and productive university-school relationships that benefit pre-service teacher education students. However, ongoing critical review based on theoretical understanding of teacher practicums seems critical to achieve this.

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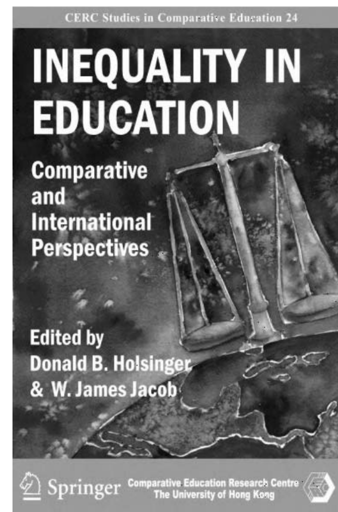
Inequality in Education: Comparative and International Perspectives



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Inequality in Education: Comparative and International Perspectives is a compilation of conceptual chapters and national case studies that includes a series of methods for measuring education inequalities. The book provides up-to-date scholarly research on global trends in the distribution of formal schooling in national populations. It also offers a strategic comparative and international education policy statement on recent shifts in education inequality, and new approaches to explore, develop and improve comparative education and policy research globally. Contributing authors examine how education as a process interacts with government finance policy to form patterns of access to education services. In addition to case perspectives from 18 countries across six geographic regions, the volume includes six conceptual chapters on topics that influence education inequality, such as gender, disability, lang uage and economics, and a summary chapter that presents new evidence on the pernicious consequences of inequality in the distribution of education. The book offers (1) a better and more holistic understanding of ways to measure education inequalities; and (2) strategies for facing the challenge of inequality in education in the processes of policy formation, planning and implementation at the local, regional, national and global levels.

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Keeping abreast of changing times and demands in education: Implications for teacher education in South Africa

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Abstract

Since the late 1980s large-scale education reforms have been introduced in various countries in response to increasing pressure to induce change aimed at rectifying the deficiencies in the transmission of knowledge, skills and values required by modern economies. Teachers as well as their trainers have *often* been singled out as scapegoats for the ills of societies. A barrage of criticism has been levelled at teacher training because of the stubborn refusal of some in the teacher training sphere to question the old orthodoxies and embrace different approaches. However, internationally and locally teachers complain about numerous endemic problems, including a culture that devalues education in many ways, unmotivated learners, a lack of public support and violence in schools. Teachers often feel that teaching in public schools has become a 'living hell'. In this article research findings are highlighted that record the response of education systems to the stated situation, with specific reference to how they have modified teacher education. In the light of findings about overseas developments, conclusions concerning judicious future approaches to teacher education are presented. Envisaged strategies include formal partnerships between teacher training personnel and identified reform-minded partner schools, a more rigorous core curriculum in undergraduate programmes, and intensively supervised and extensive clinical experiences. Some critical research questions are proposed as it was found that a revitalization of research with regard to teacher education in particular is necessary.

Introduction

Teacher education in South Africa is undergoing a process of transformation at present. Higher education institutions engaged in teacher education are rethinking their strategies with regard to teacher roles, programme outcomes and the criteria for the recognition and evaluation of qualifications for employment in education, as well as considering a new policy framework for teacher education and development.

The policy document on which the new system of teacher education is based, titled *Norms and Standards for Educators,* contains a description of seven fundamental teacher roles and associated competencies, thus detailing what it means to be a competent teacher (Republic of South Africa 2000: 13).

Development of the norms and standards has been a transparent process. All role-players, including university teacher educators, have had the opportunity to contribute to the norms. The norms and standards movement in South Africa is in line with the national standards movement in the United States and the national curriculum or competency-based framework as implemented in England and other education systems.

There are rational arguments supporting such a competency-based framework. The benefits include the following: it establishes clearly identifiable goals for the training process for both trainers and students; it offers a framework for course design to meet the need for practical classroom skills; it offers a framework for performance assessment based on clear, objective criteria; and it emphasizes the practical skills nature of teaching.

However, having new policies in place does not mean the end of the road for teacher education in South Africa. Changes and demands in education have caused a worldwide resurgence in research regarding the best possible ways to equip future teachers more effectively for the new era. Recent fact-finding visits by the author to the US, Canada, England, Australia, New Zealand, China, Taiwan and Japan have confirmed that education systems worldwide have been challenged over the past two decades by rapidly changing social needs. The countries mentioned have responded by introducing new educational policies, new management methods and administration practices, new curricular approaches and new forms of education delivery. These changes have in turn naturally had major implications for teacher education, with the result that major changes in that area are now evident in these countries.

Moreover, on balance the social developments and relevant responses in teacher education were found to be remarkably similar. Holdaway (1991: 13) observed as early as 1991 that education systems were increasingly influencing each other in a widening range of countries. Similarly, Guthrie & Pierce (1990: 202) observed the development of 'a similar model of modern public education' in a widening international context. Although still indefinite, the characteristics of an international model are becoming noticeable.

Since teacher education in South Africa is facing challenges similar to those abroad, it seems reasonable to consider whether global trends in teacher education should be contemplated here. This question is addressed below.

The research problem and methods

The research problem can be formulated in terms of the following primary questions:

What are the challenges facing education systems in a widening range of countries worldwide in an era of constant change, and how have affected education systems responded to equip future teachers more effectively for the new era? To what extent should South African teacher education follow overseas developments in this regard, given that similar challenges to teacher education seem to have emerged here?

The research aims resulting from this problem statement were to –

- investigate the most critical challenges confronting teachers and teacher education in the new era of change;
- determine worldwide trends in teacher education to equip future teachers more effectively for the new demands facing education internationally; and
- identify possible implications for teacher education in South Africa.

For the above purpose an extended review was undertaken of relevant literature, including books, research articles, research reports, policy documents, statutes relating to education and newspaper reports. Research visits were paid to ministries of education, education departments and academic institutions in the countries listed above. A large number of interviews were conducted with policy makers, administrators and representatives of higher education institutions engaged in teacher education.

Critical challenges facing teachers and teacher education

It is evident from this research that education systems worldwide are increasingly being held accountable for the ills of society. Relevant education in societies that are being continually transformed by political change, new technology, economic globalization, demographic shifts and workplace restructuring is essential. Education in particular is expected to equip learners with the experiences, skills and knowledge that will empower them to meet the requirements of a future society. In fact, in a situation of growing inter-country competitive pressure, education is often singled out as a pivotal factor in the fortunes of declining economies.

A worldwide need for education reform

Dissatisfaction with economic performance, a lack of relevance and low standards of education have led many countries to conclude that education should be provided in ways that break completely with the traditional modes of delivery. The quest for excellent and relevant education calls for fundamental changes in every facet of schooling from education policy and management and control to teaching and learning content and community involvement.

Since the late 1980s, therefore, various countries have launched large-scale reforms in the provision of education (Landa 2006: 1; Rahbek Schou 2006: 1-2). The author's overseas visits have confirmed that all the countries referred to have implemented new

policies, new practices of management and new curricular approaches, all in the interest of improved quality. New emphases on outcomes that need to be developed by education include increased proficiency in the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic; adaptability; creativity; an ability to solve problems; interpersonal and communication skills; competence in teamwork; an ability to learn independently; a healthy work ethic; and technological competence.

Although decentralization of decision-making to local school management is an important priority, national curricula or national standards are used by governments to control the standards of education centrally.

Furthermore, education systems strive to establish a culture of lifelong learning in order to retrain the workforce continuously so as to keep it abreast of changing times and demands.

Since 1994 education in South Africa has undergone revolutionary change reminiscent of the sweeping changes encountered by the author throughout his overseas tour. Although fundamental changes such as new education policies, new management and administration practices, and a new curricular approach were in the first instance intended to restructure the education system in South Africa according to the principles of equity and to redress past injustices, many of the areas of reform mentioned above (e.g. lifelong learning, problem solving, teamwork, skills education, technological competence, local management of schools and national standards) come to the fore in the policies of the new dispensation, thereby shadowing trends in overseas countries where low standards, irrelevance and skills deficiencies in school leavers are also becoming increasingly noticeable. Various recent research reports have indicated South African learners' inability to read and write properly, while in competitive international science and mathematics tests South Africa was placed last.

Teachers to be blamed for the quality of education

International renewal movements have not excluded teachers. In many instances the 'poor quality' of public education is laid at the door of the teaching corps. From Canada, for example, it is reported that although teachers' achievements are neither recognized nor rewarded, they are at the same time held accountable for all shortcomings in public education, including those beyond their control (Wiener 1999: 261). Similarly, in the search for scapegoats for the declining UK economy, education and particularly teachers are deemed to have 'failed' Britain (Lunt, McKenzi & Powell 1993: 144). Addressing the burden of responsibility placed on teachers by American society, Mary Otto (in Swartz 1999: 21), dean of the School of Education at Oakland University, states: '... I listen sometimes to the list of things that people want from a teacher, and I think they want God, walking on water. Because they want the teacher to have this profound, vast amount of knowledge, an incredible ability to work with all kinds of people, to handle every kind of emergency, to never let anything get out of

control, and to be totally comfortable at all times.'

Although the South African teaching corps has not been accused explicitly of failing society in this way, it is common cause that teachers in this country carry the same burden of expectations. They work in extremely complex conditions, largely owing to the pervasive legacies of apartheid, but also as a result of the new policies needed to bring about change in education.

Teacher education inadequate

Blaming teachers for having 'failed' society is tantamount to implicating their training programmes and the people and institutions training them (cf. Hansen 2006: 1). When schools fail, the causes are often seen to lie in the quality of the teaching provided, which in turn is seen to reflect the quality of the training that teachers receive and the ability of those who provide the training (Poppleton 1999: 233). In Europe and the US, for example, evaluations of teacher education programmes have revealed that many existing pre-service and in-service programmes are preparing and training contemporary teachers in an inadequate manner (Hallinan & Khmelkov 2001: 175).

Shortcomings that point to a need for the reform of schools of education include inadequate and unsupervised school-based experiences; poor quality of students in teacher education programmes; lack of experience of the university faculty in schools; lack of curricular connection and communication on the preparation of new teachers between schools of education; the low status of teacher education on campuses; and the low status of initial teacher education in schools of education. Teacher education faculties are described as being idealistic, detached from school realities and unconcerned with the public's priorities for schools (cf. Rhodes & Bellamy 1999: 17).

In a 1994 speech, the then British Secretary of State for Education claimed that discredited teaching methods still championed in teacher training courses were responsible for the underachievement of many children. According to the Secretary, much of the fault lay with the stubborn refusal of some in teacher training to question the old orthodoxies and embrace a different approach (*The Times*, 9 July 1994, as reported by Adams & Tulasiewicz 1995: 15). A barrage of criticism was levelled at teacher training. In particular the teacher education curriculum and overall ethos were accused of being too theoretical, left-wing and preoccupied with peripherals such as anti-racism and anti-sexism. There was a lack of focus, it was said, on the basic skills of teaching and too little knowledge of the core subjects of the school curriculum. Too much emphasis was placed on the traditional disciplines of sociology, psychology, history and philosophy (Coffey 1992: 110).

Besides concerns about too much theoretical content in teacher training programmes, Lunt et al. (1993: 150-153) endorsed the criticism that teacher training courses were not allowing adequate preparation and that not enough time was being spent on practical concerns, with a resultant negative impact on teaching and learning. This

has prompted efforts to redefine what makes an effective teacher, which has in turn led to a new conception of teaching quality and an emphasis on 'learning by doing'.

From many years of experience as a teacher educator, the author can state that the above shortcomings are indeed strongly reminiscent of the traditional modes of teacher education in South Africa. Substantiation of a statement of this kind is not feasible within the limited scope of this article. However, the fact that teacher educators are sometimes detached from school realities (e.g. where a new sophisticated curriculum is implemented in impoverished and under-resourced, overcrowded rural classrooms), that there is a lack of proper communication between schools of education and school management teams and that there is a lack of experience of university faculties in schools can be substantiated by a single quote. A well-known principal of a school in a previously disadvantaged area close to universities recently expressed the following view on television and in a keynote address: 'Teacher training institutions must consult with school principals and school management teams on what is going on in schools before they send students to a school. In my entire 27 years of teaching I haven't come across a single institution that has done that … The only form of communication by the institution is paperwork that has to be filled out and letters asking for permission to accommodate students' (Williams 2006: 6).

The relevance to local conditions of manifest educational shortcomings in overseas countries may be debatable, but it is high time to initiate this debate among teacher educators in South Africa. South Africa was in the past used to a fragmented and divided system of teacher education with little contact among apartheid institutions. The situation is still not favourable and fruitful debate should be stimulated on matters such as whether the overall ethos in teacher education is still too theoretical and how provision should be made for fundamental teacher roles in teacher education programmes.

Endemic problems affecting the role of teachers

The debate about teachers and the shortcomings in their education has revealed a range of critical problems that have an impact on teachers. Teaching faces unprecedented new challenges in an era where societies have placed in their schools many of the responsibilities that once were the domain of agencies such as the family and the church. At the same time, society, in endeavouring to ensure the welfare and protection of its children, has eliminated from education traditional disciplinary measures. In addition, society has expanded the rights of an individual to a level that is almost equal to the rights of the group in which the individual may be present. These and other matters have dramatically changed the face of the classroom, as well as that of teaching (Council of Ministers of Education, Canada 1996: 18).

Furthermore, in the countries that the author visited, teachers interviewed complained about a variety of endemic problems. Controversy exists as to the direction

education should take. Mentally and physically handicapped learners have been integrated into the regular school system. Owing to migration, in many schools as much as one-third of the school population belongs to an ethnic or racial minority or students are recent immigrants. Many learners have language deficiencies. A quarter of all students belong to families in which one parent is absent through divorce, desertion or death. Furthermore, contemporary students live in a culture that devalues education in many ways, emphasizing values that distract them from the discipline of learning. For instance, school children are quite likely to have access to, and use, alcohol, cigarettes, drugs and weapons. More and more children with behavioural difficulties are placed in regular schools. Statistics on violence in many schools are frightening and teachers are often physically assaulted. In China, for example, 43 learners died in the first nine months of 2006 as a result of school violence (*Beeld* 17 October 2006: 10). It is estimated that as many as one-third of all children are at-risk students and in jeopardy of not completing their school careers (Wilson & Cicci 2006: 4-5). At the same time, the demand for better educated and better skilled workers is increasing, relegating those without a high school diploma and job-related skills to low-salary positions, welfare or a career of crime punctuated by spells in prison (cf. also Reitz & Kerr 1991: 364; Gable, Mclaughlin, Sindelar & Kilgore 1993: 6; Hallinan & Khmelkov 2001: 176).

It is reported from various countries that because of an increase in the size of student populations schools are perilously understaffed. It is reported that in the US more than two million teachers will have to be hired to place a qualified teacher in every classroom. In view of such huge demand for teachers, school systems have lowered their standards in many instances so that under-qualified persons can be appointed. In addition, teachers are asked to teach subjects for which they are inadequately prepared, so much so that in some states more than 50% of students are taking physical science from out-of-field teachers, while approximately 30% of those taking English are in a similar plight (cf. Darling-Hammond as reported by Hallinan & Khmelkov 2001: 177).

Consider, further, the negative impact on teachers of the economic climate and globalization. It is reported that stronger economies have produced large-scale salary increases and incentives for persons in business, technology and medicine, while teachers' incomes are lagging far behind. 'Teachers continue to be seen as service personnel who earn less than similarly educated peers in other professions. The socio-economic status of teachers has failed to increase over time, despite favourable economic conditions' (Hallinan & Khmelkov 2001: 177). Darling-Hammond (1999: 28) states that for most of the century teaching in elementary and secondary schools has been treated as a form of semi-skilled labour requiring little more than the ability to 'get through the book' with the aid of a few simple routines and tricks of the trade. 'On most college campuses, preparing teachers has been a low status, under-resourced activity. The old adage – "those who can, do; those who can't, teach" – describes the

patterns of recruitment that have dominated on many campuses …'

Furthermore, attrition rates are reported to be serious. As many as half of all teachers leave teaching after less than five years' service. The reason for this tendency relates to conditions of work, salary level, lack of career ladders, non-teaching assignments, large classes, downsizing and budget cutting, lack of resources, the low socioeconomic status of the teaching profession, unmotivated learners, and lack of public and parental support. Many teachers leave because of frustration, isolation, unmet expectations and a sense of helplessness over the increasingly complex demands all teachers face (Morey, Bezuk & Chiero 1997: 4).

Again, there are striking similarities between the problems endemic to education systems abroad and those experienced in South Africa. A few of these similarities will be highlighted.

The direction education should take is as controversial in South Africa as it is in other education systems, a particularly prominent case in point being the debate around implementing outcomes-based education (OBE). In a report by a research consortium comprising the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the Medical Research Council (MRC) of South Africa, the system of OBE and implementation of new curricula were found to be among the main causes of dissatisfaction among those teachers considering leaving the profession (Education Labour Relations Council 2005a: 25).

South African learners also live in a culture that devalues education in many ways, emphasizing values that distract students from the discipline of learning. For example, Mweli (freely translated from *Beeld* 4 August 2005), regional head of education in the southern districts of North West Province, in declaring a crisis in schools of the region, stated that learners reveal a high level of indiscipline and lawlessness. 'Schools have developed a cavalier attitude towards the processes of constructive study and instruction.'

School children here are quite likely to have access to, and use, alcohol, cigarettes, drugs and weapons. As in other education systems, violence in schools is assuming frightening proportions. Research by the HSRC and the MRC (Education Labour Relations Council 2005b: xix) has revealed that violence in education institutions may deter educators from coming to school and may contribute to attrition. The three major forms of violence experienced by educators include instances where a learner or educator had been found carrying weapons into the institution (22%), assault (18%) and fights involving weapons (14,4%). Furthermore, numerous incidents, including bullying and attacks with weapons like scissors, and even guns, have been reported in the press lately.

As in many other education systems, many of our schools are still understaffed and under-resourced. Statistics released by the Department of Education (2005a: 6) revealed that the national average learner-to-educator ratio in 2004 in public schools was 34,5. However, in some districts in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and

Mpumalanga the average ratio could be as high as 56, going up to 106:1 in some individual cases. Schools with the highest learner/educator ratios were found in inaccessible or poverty-stricken areas, where very few educators reside or would be willing to teach (The Education Foundation 2000: 61-63).

Serious attrition rates are being reported in South Africa too. The Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) (2005b: xix) reported in a 2005 investigation by the HSRC and the MRC that 54% of educators intend to leave the profession, with two-thirds of this group being technology, natural sciences, economics and management teachers. In another report by the ELRC (2005c: 5) it is stated that around 20 500 educators are leaving the profession on an annual basis. In two reports by the Education Department (2005b: 11; 2005c: 10) it was found that between 17 000 and 20 000 teachers are lost to the system each year. Currently higher education institutions are producing, at best, between 5 000 and 7 000 new teachers per year. Moreover, during the period 1999-2003 there was an overall decline in student-educator enrolment by approximately 24,3% (Department of Education 2005b: 13-14). Consider further the impact that HIV/Aids will have on teacher demand and supply. A recent ELRC (2005d: 8) report shocked the country with statistics indicating that 12,7 % of all teachers (one in eight) are HIV-positive and that 10 000 teachers are immediately eligible for anti-retroviral therapy. By 2010 up to 3,5% of teachers could die annually from AIDS (Department of Education 2005b: 13). In addition, many teachers trained in South Africa leave the country for greener pastures in the UK and elsewhere. For these reasons, the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (MCTE) (Department of Education 2005c: 10) concludes that the education system will face severe shortages of teachers in the medium and longer term.

As in international education systems, unmotivated learners and lack of public and parental support are very much the order of the day in South Africa, with teachers feeling that teaching in public schools has become an unbearable situation. A teacher recently wrote: ‘It is unadulterated hell to work in a classroom when you are being taunted, tormented and stripped of your humanity and the “right” to teach’ (freely translated from *Rapport* 4 June 2006).

Key developments in the reform of teacher education

Teacher education has been central to the reform of education systems. While initial endeavours were aimed at improving schooling itself, the focus was shifted to the improvement of teaching. This change was brought about by a growing body of research evidence highlighting the critical role of the teacher in the learning process (Wirtz 2007: 4). Hargreaves (1994) noted that we have come to understand that the teacher is the ultimate key to improving education. Halloway (2005: 3) quotes the *Sydney Morning Herald* in concluding that ‘nothing influences education achievement more than the quality of teaching, regardless of whether the teacher is male or female’. This awareness has signalled a new direction for the debate on school reform. No

longer exclusively concerned with the lack of curriculum standards and academic rigour in schools, attention has shifted to teachers and the quality of their preparation.

It is clear from literature and the interviews conducted during fact-finding visits to other countries that a large variety of opinions exist on how schools of education and teacher education programmes should change to address the deficiencies referred to (cf. the section on 'Critical challenges' above). For example, some members of the profession and many policy-makers believe that teachers should be well-grounded in the content they plan to teach and have a firm grasp of how to teach it effectively to a diverse community of students. Others, including some policy-makers, contend that teachers need only a knowledge of the subject matter to teach well (Wise & Leibbrand 2000: 612). While it is impossible in an article of this kind to deal with all opinions, an interpretation and synthesis of the body of research material will now be provided.

Two major agendas in teacher education reform

How teacher education should respond to the challenges can be characterized as being contained within two larger agendas, namely the agenda to professionalize teaching and teacher education, which is linked to the standards movement, and the movement to deregulate teacher preparation, which aims to dismantle teacher education institutions and break up the monopoly of the profession (cf. Cochran-Smith & Fries 2001: 3).

The agenda to professionalize teaching and teacher education reflects a broad-based effort to develop a consistent national approach to teacher education based on high standards for the initial preparation, licensing and certification of teachers. Research on the common features of successful teacher training institutions has revealed that their programmes share several distinctive features, namely a common, clear conception of good teaching that is apparent in all coursework and clinical experience; well-defined standards of practice and performance that are used to guide and evaluate courses and practical experience; a rigorous core curriculum; extensive use of problem-based methods, including case studies, research on teaching issues, performance assessment and portfolio evaluation; intensively supervised, extended practical experiences; and strong relationships with reform-minded local schools that support the development of common knowledge and shared beliefs among a school and university-based faculty (cf. Darling-Hammond 1999: 32).

The agenda to deregulate teacher preparation questions the empirical validity of the research on which the professionalization agenda is based. According to analyses by specialists in this group, teacher education does not matter much at all since teacher ability emanates much more from innate talents than from the quality of education courses. This agenda sets out with the premise that the requirements of licensing agencies and schools of education are unnecessary hurdles that keep talented people

out of teaching and focus on social goals rather than academic achievement. The proponents push for alternate routes into teaching and promote teachers' tests as the major gatekeeper for the profession. Instead of requiring a long list of courses and degrees, they believe that a better solution would be to test future teachers on their knowledge and skills, and allow principals to hire the teachers they need. The focus is thus placed on results (Cochran-Smith & Fries 2001: 3-9).

Two developments in the external agenda also require discussion here, namely the idea of professional development schools in the US and a move towards school-based teacher training in England.

Professional development schools

Professional development schools (PDSs) are reported to be a reasonably successful initiative. These schools serve as a setting for clinical internships of pre-service teachers and for in-service professional development of practising teachers as part of wide-ranging collaboration between public schools and university schools of education. This collaboration usually takes the form of partnerships for the pre-service education of teachers in which school and university personnel share the decisions of operating both the school and the teacher preparation programme as a whole (cf. Morey et al. 1997: 20).

According to Darling-Hammond (1999: 31), PDSs carefully structure novices' practical teaching experience. Like teaching hospitals in medicine, PDSs provide sites for state-of-the-art practice that includes the training of new professionals, extending the professional development of veteran teachers and sponsoring collaborative research. The programmes are jointly planned and taught by university and school-based faculty members. Teachers, researchers and students all benefit (Wirtz 2007: 6). Hallinan & Khmelkov (2001: 180) note that PDSs have two major goals: First, they should enable future teachers to develop the actual ability and skills that they will need to teach effectively in today's diverse classrooms. Second, they should bring university faculty and practising teachers together in research generation and testing of new knowledge relating to learning and teaching.

The number of PDSs grew substantially in the eighties and nineties. According to Abdal-Haqq (cited by Hallinan & Khmelkov 2001: 181), research suggests that PDS-based teacher education produces better results than traditional programmes, mostly by promoting teacher confidence and self-efficacy in teaching. Graduates of PDS-based programmes feel more competent, especially in dealing with culturally diverse students. They are less susceptible to 'reality shocks' and have lower attrition rates in the first five years of full-time teaching. However, definitive conclusions concerning the outcomes of PDS-based pre-service training of teachers are largely premature, since well-designed longitudinal research on the long-term effectiveness of this model of teacher education is needed (Hallinan & Khmelkov 2001: 182).

The PDS model nevertheless has particular relevance for teacher education in South Africa, but to date there are few examples of genuine partnerships between schooling and formal teacher education in South Africa (Department of Education 2005c: 12). However, the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (RSA 2007) will inevitably require participation between schools of education and practising teachers to ensure structured mentorship programmes for student teachers over a longer period. The policy framework foresees close collaboration between provincial education departments, providers of teacher education programmes and schools. A unique understanding of the PDS concept should be developed for the local situation. As mentioned previously, teachers, researchers and learners would all benefit.

A shift towards school-based training of teachers

In England, government reforms over the last two decades can be summarized succinctly as a move towards school-based training of teachers. The motivation is that teacher education should be taken out of the colleges and universities and placed in the hands of teachers since training can be as effectively carried out in schools as it can be done at institutions of higher education (cf. Hoyle & John 1998: 77). The reform movement is marked by definitive government intervention aimed at centralising decision-making power as regards teacher education. This trend has been endorsed by central bureaucracies such as the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE), the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), which have determined the content and carefully inspected the implementation process.

The developments represent an attempt to redefine the nature of teaching proficiency in terms of increasingly tight competency-based routines and to reconstruct the routes to this proficiency. This is being achieved by involving practising teachers to a much greater extent in the design, implementation and assessment aspects of the training courses (Galvin 1996: 86). Furthermore, through the so-called Licensed Teacher Scheme, a teacher could gain teacher status in a non-standard way (Lunt et al. 1993: 148; DaCosta 2005: 3).

Another intervention in the UK toward the school-based training of teachers was the Articled Teacher Scheme. This initiative attempted to recruit graduates for a two-year school-based training course in which 80% of the time was spent at a school and 20% on training. Students were allocated a mentor within the school who could give them much of the guidance and supervision previously undertaken by college-based personnel. This initiative has been seen as the precursor to reforms that followed later (cf. Lunt et al. 1993: 148; Hoyle & John 1998: 78). Policy announcements in 1992 stated that students should spend at least 60% of the training component in schools. Schools thus became the lead partners in the training of teachers.

Central control was further strengthened when the Secretary of State announced the introduction of a national curriculum and standards for teacher training in June 1996. The result was that not only training, but also the content of courses came under greater central government control (Davies & Ferguson 1998: 68). The standards, according to Abbott (1999: 73-74), gave clear guidance about the levels of competency required of trainee teachers and formed the basis for all initial teacher training programmes.

Although until recently the school-based training of teachers received far less attention in South Africa than in the UK, the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (RSA 2007: 14), which was announced by the Minister of Education on 27 April 2007, opens up a whole new strategy in this regard. The envisaged Bachelor of Education (BEd) pathway to the first professional qualification for teachers, for example, will include the equivalent of one year's supervised practical teaching experience. The degree can be done by means of full or part-time contact study, or as a combination of distance learning and the option of a learnership, or as distance learning and mentored school-based practice for first-time recruits who are employed as student teachers by provincial education departments. The practical component may be undertaken in short periods during programmes, added to an extended period of service during the final year with a structured mentorship programme, or it may be undertaken by student teachers or serving teachers in schools under supervision of a mentor. Providers may consider the latter option only where there is a guarantee of proper supervision and suitable school placement. This system, similar to that conceived in the UK, will inevitably bring about much more communication with and involvement of practising teachers in the design, implementation and assessment aspects of the training courses.

Implications of international developments for teacher education in South Africa

This research has particular relevance for teacher education in South Africa. The analysis of critical challenges facing education systems and the influence of these challenges on teachers and their education, as well as worldwide trends in teacher education reforms, suggest various conclusions that might inform teacher education.

A new awareness of the importance of research on teacher education

In the first instance, there has been a worldwide resurgence of research on teacher education and what it means to be a good teacher under prevailing circumstances. However, Internet searches by the author produced only very few South African research publications dealing specifically with the preparation of teachers. South Africa needs to revitalize its research on teacher education. Critical research questions could include the following:

- What is the most effective way of providing for the various *teacher roles* and applied competences as exit-level outcomes of initial teacher education programmes?
- What will future teachers' needs be with regard to teaching the new *outcomes-based curriculum* as being implemented in schools?
- How should *theory* be accommodated in the initial education of teachers?
- What is the effect of the shift away from the traditional discipline-based teacher education to the fragmented structure of *training based on modules and programmes?*
- How should the *practical school experiences* of future teachers be structured and monitored?
- In what way should student educators be equipped to be able to deal with the *pressures of violence*?
- Are the 'products' of teacher education programmes *successful teachers*?
- How can higher education institutions work hand in hand with education authorities to *recruit more students* for teacher education programmes?

These are the type of questions that should be addressed by ongoing longitudinal research.

Partnerships between teacher education institutions and schools for training purposes

Another key finding of the author's investigation is that there is a strong movement towards the creation of a partnership on teacher training between higher education institutions and schools. Of particular significance in this regard is the PDS concept as developed in the US. Although much research would need to be done on the viability of this approach for South Africa, there is evidence that it would have distinct advantages for teachers, researchers and students. Apart from teaching programmes being planned jointly and taught by university and school-based faculty members, the major goal of PDSs – to bring university faculty and practising teachers together for collaborative research purposes and to test new knowledge about learning and teaching – would only benefit schools of education The traditional divide between training institutions and educational practice in South Africa was recently confirmed by the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (Department of Education, 2005c: 12), which stated that there were very few examples of genuine partnership between the world of schooling and the world of formal teacher education.

Research in the US has highlighted important findings about the features being shared by all successful teacher training institutions and training programmes (cf. the section on critical challenges above). The distinctive characteristics of successful teacher education programmes could be a basis for the continual reform of schools of education and the structuring of programmes for teacher preparation. Two of these are of particular importance, as follows.

Importance of the core curriculum

A rigorous core curriculum is necessary. In view of this research finding, schools of education need to consider the undergraduate programmes offered by them in a serious light. For instance, the current composition of the BEd programmes requires that students pass many modules. To achieve the degree in four years the student basically needs to pass ten exams each year. From the author's experience it is evident that this structure is indeed very fragmented, obviously requiring a very superficial knowledge in any given field. The training is a mile wide but only an inch deep. The Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (Department of Education 2005c: 13) actually emphasised the fact that newly qualified teachers are frequently criticized for being under-prepared in the knowledge content of the subjects or learning areas taught by them. As stated earlier, the products of our training programmes need to be monitored to determine whether they adequately equip future teachers with the knowledge, values and skills required by current demands. Those who oppose the rationalization of modules and programmes need to think again. In fact, as indicated earlier (cf. the section on critical challenges above), many researchers believe that teachers only require knowledge of subject matter to teach well. Teachers should be well-grounded in the content of the field they plan to teach so that they will have a firm grasp on how to teach it effectively to a diverse community of students.

Enhancement of practical experiences in teacher education programmes

It has been found that extended, intensively supervised practical experiences are a key requirement for a successful teacher education programme. There is, for instance, a strong movement abroad towards adding a fifth year of teacher preparation to traditional four-year programmes to serve as a practical internship. It is common knowledge that the practical experience of students could be planned and structured better and that regular contact between university schools of education and schools is an urgent need. This could be brought about by, for instance, creating partnerships with carefully identified schools and doing regular, well-planned, supervisory visits to such schools.

This recommendation is in line with Recommendation B10 of the report of the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (Department of Education 2005c: 12) , namely that effective partnerships between institutions of higher education, schools and provincial education departments should be developed in South Africa. As in the case of PDSs, university personnel can benefit greatly from such partnerships. Teaching practice has changed considerably since most teacher educators were trained themselves. It is high time that exponents of training institutions become far more involved in schools and decision-making about education.

Conclusion

The author's research investigated the critical challenges of changing times and

demands facing education systems of a significant sample of countries. It determined the trends in developments initiated in teacher education to equip future teachers more effectively for the new demands. It was found that striking similarities emerged in the challenges impacting on both education and teacher education in the countries investigated. South Africa has a twofold responsibility to establish a just and equitable education system and to keep abreast of changing times and the demands of the global economy. There are striking similarities in the demands made on countries abroad and those impacting on the local situation. Although new South African policies resemble other countries in important areas, such as lifelong learning, the local management of schools, and national standards and a competency framework in teacher education, and even though important policy documents for teacher education are in place, far more needs to be done to improve teacher education. Strategies employed by the educations systems of other countries could be explored for their local viability. A key finding of the author's research is that the development of teacher education practices must be supported by ongoing authoritative research.

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The Trouble with Ed Schools

David F Labaree. 2004. New Haven, Conn., and London: Yale University Press. x + 245 pp; references, index. ISBN 0-300-10350-6. $35,00

Reviewed by Peter Kallaway

On the whole, southern African educators are unfamiliar with the rich tradition of history of education in North America. This is a pity in the post-colonial and post-1994 eras because, despite the differences of context, the work of the leaders in the field is remarkable for its insights into the dynamics of public education policy in a modern, free-market democratic context. These leaders, such as Laurence Cremin (1961), Larry Cuban (1995), Diane Ravitch (2000), Michael Katz (1975), Ellen Lagemann (2000), Thomas Popkewitz (1982), Joel Spring (1991) and David Tyack (1974, 1984, 1995) to name but a few, deserve to be studied for the insights they provide into the complexities and contradictions of educational policy and practice in the United States where there has been a rhetorical commitment by government to mass public education for over two centuries. The remarkable common denominator is that much of the work cited documents the failure of the public schooling system to achieve its noble goals of creating an education system dedicated to equity and the creation of democratic citizens. The great dreams of the American Revolution have not been met; the inspirational leadership given to teachers by the Progressive Movement in the early twentieth century has failed to yield its social promise in the schools. The landmark educational report on *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 provided a moment in which the research of these scholars and government policy came together briefly, but radical change has not followed.

Within that tradition is a rich vein of research, much neglected in southern Africa, concerning the role of teacher educators and teachers in the system. David Labaree's new book provides an easily digestible and fascinating set of insights into the complicity or victim status of the 'ed schools' in these events and trajectories.

He argues that there is a serious mismatch between the weak resources of the education schools charged with the task of preparing the teachers of the nation and the powerful needs of the public schools (p. 2), and that teacher educators themselves have been divided over their role. They have often been deeply committed to the professional role of preparing student teachers for a caring profession that seeks to address the problems of society through the noble ideal of education associated with progressive education, John Dewey and the reformers of the early twentieth century. Yet ed schools have been subject increasingly to market forces that have limited their capacity to achieve these goals, partly because the resources have not been available and partly because 'ed schools' as institutions represented a house divided against itself.

In attempting to understand the nature of change in teacher education over time, Labaree is indebted to Ellen Lagemann (1989) for the insights regarding the divided legacy of progressive education, which has influenced this story. He argues that the legacy of progressivism has at least two variants, one dealing with curriculum and pedagogy (associated with John Dewey) and another dealing with organization for efficiency and social usefulness (associated with Edward L Thorndike). To understand the role of ed schools Labaree argues that it is essential to grasp that the former trend has provided the dominant rhetorical legitimation for those associated with ed schools as it provided an excellent defensible ethical basis for the promotion of the education profession in its emphasis on the use-value of education. However, in practice the tradition that was massively dominant in twentieth century USA in the real world of schools and public education was the managerial model of efficiency and effectiveness – a model that emphasized the exchange-value of education. If Dewey has been revered among some educators, Thorndike's thought has been most influential within educational policy and practice. It played a major role in shaping public school practice as well as scholarship about education – even while many of the most prominent ed school professors saw themselves as defending the high ideals of Dewey.

In recent decades, owing to market and funding pressures on the whole higher education sector, teacher educators increasingly have been moved away from institutions dedicated exclusively to the ideal of professional teacher preparation to higher education institutions which are multiple service sites for higher education (from normal schools to colleges to universities). The nature of the teaching changes as a result and the role of the teacher educators changes as well – for they are now located in the high-stakes world of the university where scholarship and research count for more than dedication to the time-consuming tasks of preparing young people for a taxing life as a challenging classroom teacher. There is little space in the description of work profiles associated with a university lecturer for the mundane tasks of teacher education and preparation. 'This reduced the social efficiency of the programmes offered, undermined the ability of the institutions to provide professional preparation, stratified the way in which programmes were delivered, and marginalized education faculties within the home institutions' (p. 31). Teacher education institutions are being asked, therefore, to produce a large number of teachers as efficiently and inexpensively as possible or face the possibility that teachers would be trained and hired outside the traditional professional frameworks. Labaree argues that 'there is therefore little in this market situation to encourage teacher education to move away from its historic pattern of maintaining programmes that are easy, flexible and cheap … In the stratified world of contemporary American higher education, teacher education occupies an anomalous position. It is a low status option for students in a high status institution; it offers practical education in a decidedly academic setting; and it sells itself as a producer of occupational use-value in a market that ranks educational products on the basis of exchange value' (p. 35).

Labaree argues that most (high status) university departments associated with the discipline of education tend to 'avoid the disrepute of education schools by studiously avoiding engagement with social issues' (p. 8). To put it another way, 'market pressures have in large part led to the low status of teacher education and have contributed significantly to its inability to carry out its functions effectively' (p. 18). All this has resulted in 'thinly educated faculty, academically weak students, and foreshortened and academically weak curriculum' (p. 24).

Part of the problem is that the role of the teacher is devalued in modern America. Since everyone has been in classrooms, there is little public sense of the expertise necessary for good teaching. Since there is little in the way of private or secret technical knowledge for teaching, it is difficult to affect 'expertise' of the kind that a doctor or lawyer or engineer acquires. 'Everyone supposes that teaching is easy, and nobody can understand why preparation for it is so inadequate' (Judge 2006: 457). The role of the good teacher, as Labaree points out, is to make herself redundant/dispensable – something that does not create the impression of superior expertise in the eyes of 'clients'.

In the context of the university, teacher educators, according to Labaree, are under attack from within and without. They have become so caught up in the 'futile pursuit of academic credibility within the university they have chosen to turn their backs on the needs of students and teachers' (p. 7). In doing so these members of faculty embark on a precarious game, as the kinds of research they engage in is often of low status within the academe. The low status of the research is a consequence of its lack of location within recognized high-status disciplines and fraternities and areas of recognized academic expertise. Although this has produced a large output of doctoral research there is a general sense within the university fraternity that this is not high-status research. Or at the very least there is little understanding of or sympathy for the difficulties of engaging in this type of research.

According to Labaree, 'in the preparation of teachers as well as the production of research, structural realities triumphed over rhetorical ideals for the American ed school. As educational professionals we may prefer to produce teachers who will carry out the progressive ideal of student-centred, integrated, and inquiry-based learning, but we have accommodated ourselves, however reluctantly, to the role pushed on us, which is to prepare teachers who will fit into the existing pattern of teacher-centredness, differentiated, and curriculum-driven instruction in schools' (p.191-2).

Labaree provides no solutions to these apparently imponderable policy contradictions that arise out of the contradictory reading of educational rights. One reviewer comments on the 'pessimistic determinism' and remarks that it is 'not a cheerful book' (Judge 2006: 456). For me it provided one of the most thought-provoking reads about education I have enjoyed for a long time, even if it fails to locate the problems of educational policy firmly within the context of the neoliberal political framework that

has sharpened many of the contradictions pointed out in the study. Laberee seem to eschew radical 'solutions', preferring to leave the contradictions of the system unchallenged by firm policy proposals for change. That does a disservice to his excellent analysis of the problem and perhaps, ironically, emphasises his point about the weakness of educational research.

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Teaching in the New South Africa at Merrydale High School

Everard Weber. 2006. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America. xii + 231 pp; references, index. ISBN 0-7618-3427-3.

Reviewed by Carol Anne Spreen and Salim Vally

This book is a vital scholarly contribution to understanding the current state of schools in post-apartheid South Africa, particularly the impact of education policies on teachers and classrooms. Four years after the first democratic elections we wrote an essay, 'In the shadow of GEAR: Between the Scylla of a blurred vision and the Charybdis of obstructed implementation', arguing that despite the development of numerous policy documents that were intended to provide scaffolding for schools to address the demands for social justice the initial translation of policies from national to local levels was desultory. Weber's methodological approach, resting on participant observation, interviews and policy document review, provides clear evidence of the gap between policy and practice and the dangers of resorting to 'social meliorism'. The book is based on a case study of Merrydale High, a school serving the largely unemployed working class of Mitchell's Plain and the residents of informal settlements and migrant populations of Khayelitsha – two townships in the Western Cape. The book also discusses how some of the policies themselves have 'deprived the school of much needed human resources and have made far more difficult … the task of delivering quality education to the communities the school serves'.

Teaching in the New South Africa at Merrydale High School provides an insider's look at what is occurring in classrooms and in teachers' lives, in the context of political changes over time. This is an important type of ethnographic study: rather than exploring *place* simply through a cultural lens, the book shows how historical, cultural and political come together to mediate education policies. It sheds light on how new conceptions about teachers and teaching in South Africa intersect with their local context and resources, and the ways in which specific policy reforms have impacted on teachers' working conditions. In very concrete and poignant ways, Weber sketches the intersections of policies and social issues. For example, the effects of teacher retrenchment are analyzed in relation to the prevailing socio-economic conditions in the surrounding neighbourhood, and the school's policy of non-racialism and integration at the institutional level is discussed in relation to the national curriculum and outcomes-based education (OBE).

The book is a firm riposte against those seeking hegemony in education policy studies, who ignore history and the role activism played in creating democratic schools. These 'teams of overseas consultants' and local supporters, Weber argues, assume that

change will come from within state bureaucracies and not from social struggle, the premise being that pragmatism today should trump the 'idealistic' goals of the struggle of yesterday. This is the view that also characterizes the impact of globalization, politics and the macro-economic context as being of little use to what happens at the 'chalk face'. Instead, while firmly rooted in the local and the 'chalk face', Weber's analysis insists that 'political work on implementation studies must encompass ideographically informed analyses of South Africa's past as it relates to education' and the present dialectic between the local and the global. While describing the material conditions racial capitalism created in the communities served by Merrydale High, Weber poses the questions that relate to how the system of apartheid and the resistance to it are relevant to teaching at Merrydale High today.

While recognizing the school's outstanding history and achievements, the book carefully chronicles changes in governance, ethos, values and traditions and day-to-day experiences in classrooms. The study of the school is carefully constructed and provides a rich contextual analysis of whether and to what extent the post-apartheid state has been able to achieve its redistributive goals. It reveals that despite the values and belief in equity and redress (and given this particular school's firm commitment to social justice) conditions at Merrydale remain deplorable. Only 22% of teachers in the school wish to remain in teaching. Weber convincingly articulates the importance of relationships of social settings in high schools to broader educational changes today.

Weber's analysis, although anchored in the case study of Merrydale High, is not an insular one. He makes frequent forays into historical experiences in South Africa and abroad, as well as references to the likes of Amilcar Cabral, Paulo Freire and Mikhail Bakhtin. Literary theorists, psychologists, sociologists, social anthropologists and political economists, together with pedagogues and historians, all co-exist easily with each other and are marshalled skillfully to make sense of teaching in the new South Africa.

Accordingly, the book's contribution is in its rich ethnographic descriptions to explore policy implementation in context. In the first part of the book (chapters 1-4) Weber provides an extensive literature review that sets the stage for analyzing teaching in light of the country's historical experience, the social conditions it produced, and against the backdrop of the implementation of various reforms. Through these chapters and with an eye towards the literature of political economy and organizational theory, Weber discusses the changing nature of teaching in South Africa and relates this to studies of social context, the state and issues of policy reform.

Part one is an excellent account of the country and local political history, concise and cogently written. The introduction provides a social and historical landscape of the school and the country that are essential to understanding South African education today. Chapter 2 discusses the evolution of the apartheid system and its social leg-

acies. It frames the school community within which the study occurs and its particular activist legacy – situating the school community's racial integration over time and its continuing impoverished socio-economic conditions. We advise South African scholars to resist the temptation to skip this chapter partly since important and neglected writings of the likes of Tabata, Mokone and No Sizwe (nom de guerre of Neville Alexander), all outside the Congress tradition, are referred to. Chapter 3 reviews the policy context and describes the four major reform initiatives that impacted teachers in the last decade: changes in school governance; teacher rationalization, redeployment and retrenchment; the introduction of a new curriculum based on OBE; and the formalization of roles the state envisages for teachers. Chapter 4 discusses and problematizes the methodology of the study, based on case study and qualitative approaches.

The second part of the book delves deeper into the schooling conditions of township high schools, and particularly in the lives and experiences of the teachers. The professional and personal lives of these teachers, their trials, triumphs and tribulations, are dealt with empathetically and sensitively but also honestly. A common complaint by teachers and practitioners is that educational authorities and policymakers do not know what is happening in schools; hence the policy focus ignores the internal dynamics of pedagogical processes. Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 analyze the inter-relationship of school culture and classroom practices through the voices and concerns of several teachers. Chapter 5 begins with describing the most prominent feature of the school culture – 'its history of anti-apartheid struggle and its mission of advocating non-racialism' in light of the school's current context. According to Weber, the school's activist culture and politically progressive traditions have relevance to and strong implications for the implementation of democratic governance. This includes non-hierarchical social relations in school and often a 'relaxed non-authoritarian lesson ambience' in the classroom. Chapter 6 describes some of the tensions within the school and community given these new roles and responsibilities and describes how the new relationships are affecting teachers. The impact of national teacher rationalization policies on class size, teacher stability and motivation is the focus of chapter 7.

Key to Weber's analysis is the redefinition and evolution of transmission teaching at Merrydale, demonstrating that contrary to popular critiques teacher-centred pedagogy is 'not equivalent to rote memorization and actually included responses and engagement of students'. Classroom observations depict teachers as largely competent, understanding their subject matter and, in Weber's words, 'exuding confidence' in the lessons they taught. Importantly, this characterization of 'township' teachers runs counter to the ways in which they are typically depicted: as underqualified, unskilled, didactic and authoritarian. To illustrate, chapters 8 and 9 show that, despite their desire to leave teaching and their negative perceptions of the workplace, teachers remained highly engaged with the new OBE curriculum and pedagogical changes, and remain very committed to the school's policies. These detailed

passages of classroom interactions also depict learners not as passive recipients but as complex actors who bring to school myriad interests, concerns and needs – many of which the school cannot begin to grapple with. This important descriptive work places many of the critiques of OBE in context because it delves into teachers' understandings and concerns about its usefulness and relevance, and describes in detail what they are actually doing based on their own experiences and school culture. Chapter 10 concludes with a proposal for the implementation of school-based reform and innovation at Merrydale and links these with the wider societal and policy environment.

Perhaps the book's most unique contribution lies particularly with an eye on the government's policy 'twists' towards 'productivity and efficiency' and cost-cutting measures over earlier equity-based reforms. Weber takes on two key policies – teacher rationalization and school governing bodies – to illustrate how the state has redefined the nature and role of teaching in ways that do not serve students well in the new South Africa. Lengthy interviews and descriptive narratives of classrooms explore the impact of the retrenchment of thousands of teachers in the system on the remaining teachers' work in the context, organization and culture of the school. Accompanying this analysis is an eloquent critique of the state, demonstrating that despite the government's rhetoric about equity and redress its emphasis on technocratic solutions to policy problems and narrow focus on education for the development of skills and human resources to satisfy growing economic needs has been to the detriment of many school communities. Importantly, Weber's careful analysis explores and probes how policies were often formulated and informed by apolitical, asocial and de-historicized technical assumptions about how to achieve equity.

Weber's book is clearly inspired by a belief in the right to education – and the important (and currently overlooked) theme of the legacy of education as a site for political struggle during apartheid and the latent consequences of that in schools today. Weber uses personal narratives and vignettes of the many teachers who have been at the school for nearly two decades to articulate how the school's unique history and progressive political traditions remain a pervasive element in the school climate and operations today. Yet throughout the book Weber openly grapples with the loss of active participation or community activism on the part of both students and teachers in the school. This concern evolves for Weber as he re-examines the current school culture and questions why today's teachers and students are now relatively depoliticized and disengaged, despite the continuing difficult social conditions in which the school operates. The limitations of the book, such as the perfunctory treatment of gender and the voices of the students, are pointed out by Weber himself as he lays the ground for future research.

Overall, *Teaching in the New South Africa* is a thoughtful account of how, despite the wavering promise of a better future and in the face of continuing inequality, teachers remain committed to the ideas that informed the struggle for democracy and social

justice in South Africa. In very meaningful and profound ways this portrait of Merrydale High School is painted on 'a broader canvass of analytical categories, derived from state and society … [which] produces a deeper, fuller, more textured and qualitatively thoughtful view of the issues affecting education' (Motala 2007). Weber's use of ethnography to explore the particular ways in which political and economic shifts directly influence classroom and teachers is rare and a welcome lens for exploring educational policy.

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Southern African Review of Education (SARE)

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