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Perspectives in Education, 18(1)

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Jansen, J. (Ed.) (1999, September). Perspectives in Education, 18(1).

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Perspectives in Education

September 1999

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Volume 18 Number 1

PERSPECTIVES IN EDUCATION

Volume 18 No 1 September 1999

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Typesetting, layout and design: Rubby Dhunpath (UDW)
Cover design: Daisy Pillay (UDW)
Production: Juta & Co Ltd
Printing: Creda Communications, Eliot Avenue, Eppindust II

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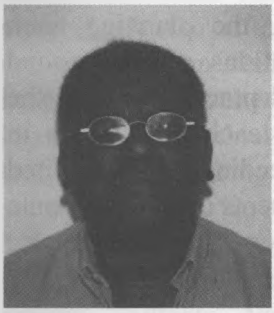
PART ONE

INTERNATIONAL TRENDS IN TEACHER EDUCATION:

POLITICS, POLICY, PRACTICE

Introduction: Teacher Education Politics, Policy, Practice

Jonathan Jansen and Keith Lewin



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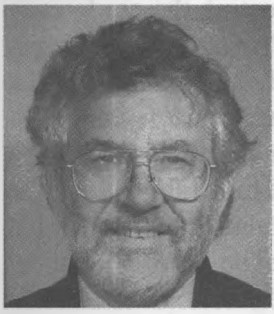

KEITH LEWIN is director of the Centre for International Education, University of Sussex. His research interests include educational planning and finance, science education policy, curriculum, evaluation and assessment. He has worked in South/South-East Asia, China and Southern Africa.

It is a special privilege to introduce the inaugural issue of *Perspectives in Education* from its base at the University of Durban Westville (UDW) after a long and distinguished tenure at the University of the Witwatersrand. This Special Issue represents a selection of refereed research and policy papers from a historic conference on *International Trends in Teacher Education* convened jointly by the Faculty of Education at UDW and the University of Sussex Institute of Education (USIE) from 20–22 July, 1998.

The conference represented the culmination of a three-year international linkage between UDW, USIE and the National Teachers Training College (NTTC) in Lesotho in which approximately 30 students were trained through an interdisciplinary research and professional development programme called COMET (Co-ordinated Masters in Education and Training). The students, mainly senior professionals, were drawn from colleges of education, schools, government departments, universities and technikons to pursue an advanced research degree focused on the improvement of educational policy and professional practice.

Three of the students were senior faculty at the NTTC in Lesotho. A specific target originally set for this linkage was the development of high-quality research dissertations which would be presented at an international conference in conjunction with commissioned papers by the participating staff from the partnership institutions.

Immediately following this very successful conference, the planning team assembled to identify a range of different kinds of publications, centred around the conference theme, that would bring to a "policy and practice" forum the kinds of critical and cutting-edge issues percolating in teacher education in Southern Africa. Apart from the official conference proceedings and an edited book, this Special Issue of *Perspectives in Education* represents one further route through which we showcase exemplary academic papers drawn from the conference.

The papers are presented in three clusters or couplets reflecting the conference themes and debates engaged in over the three day period. Professor Keith Lewin from USIE presented a timely analysis of the costs of teacher education and the implications for educational policy and planning. Lewin raises important methodological dilemmas in "counting the cost of teacher education" by sketching "the arenas in which data is needed to understand more about what the costs of training are, why they are configured in particular ways, and what constraints and opportunities they create for the future". The issue of teacher education costs have never been more salient in South African education. In public schools, teachers are being redeployed and retrenched or, in the insensitive language of officialdom, "declared in excess". In universities and colleges of education, student teacher numbers are dramatically down, leading to closure of whole institutions in some cases, and incorporation of Faculties of Education into larger and "more viable" administrative units. Clearly, financial reasoning within the climate created by macro-economic policy (notably the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy, or GEAR) lies behind the drastic cuts in teacher employment with ripple effects back into teacher education institutions. In this context, Keith Lewin raises critical, steering questions for educational policy and planning within and beyond South Africa.

The partner paper to that of Keith Lewin is provided by Beatrice Avalos, a very distinguished academic now working in the Ministry of Education in Chile, Latin America. Avalos is concerned to review the state-of-play with respect to international teacher education and "to lay out possible courses of action in relation to the tasks of improving teacher education in different country contexts". While Lewin draws attention to the *economic* basis for teacher education planning, Avalos outlines the *organisational* requirements for teacher

education programming. Drawing on recent literature, she argues that we need to strengthen the subject knowledge dimension of teacher education programmes, draw on "what student teachers bring to the training situation," broaden the vision of teachers and teaching beyond competency models and behavioural modifications, and strengthen good institutions as centres of excellence for teacher education. The significance of the Avalos contribution is not only that it shifts the debate on teacher education reform from its narrowing and harrowing concentration on skills, performance and outcomes, but develops the broader landscape of teacher understanding, empowerment and affirmation as key ingredients in achieving more than *change*, i.e. genuine *transformation* of teachers and teaching.

Moving from these two broad survey papers on international education, the next couplet of papers examines teacher education reform within two neighbouring country contexts, Namibia and South Africa. Lars Dahlström unravels the concept "critical practitioner enquiry" as a strategy mobilised through the Namibian curriculum in order "to support a new kind of knowledge and understanding which would empower Namibian practitioners ... to become significant contributors to ... a broader reconstructive agenda in Namibian society". The dissemination of this concept is traced through different media including the regionally acclaimed Basic Teacher Education Diploma (BETD) in Namibia. In a similar vein, John Gultig argues with those constraining discourses in South Africa which "view teaching as a craft which is best taught in practice" (that is, procedural knowledge) at the expense of what he calls "principle knowledge". The colonial interconnectedness of Namibia and South Africa has, unsurprisingly, led to similar ideologies of teaching and authority being stamped onto the teacher education curricula of these two countries. It is not unexpected, therefore, that in both countries new discourses compete with older, more entrenched ones. It is an open question whether new discourses of teacher education reform in these two post-apartheid states will in fact lead to Gultig's quest for "a strong conception of lifelong learning and professional development as a primarily *intellectual* affair" (our emphasis).

The concluding couplet expresses the spirit and substance of the international linkage through post-graduate student development. In this section, two students, one from UDW (Anitha Ramsuran) and the other from USIE (John Hedges) conduct case investigations of curriculum reform in two different settings. Ramsuran traces the policy of *continuous assessment* in South Africa, finding a considerable distance between official intentions and classroom practice. Her study represents one of the few attempts to understand innovation in the terms of teachers and on the terrain of teaching within post-apartheid classrooms. Using a similar methodological (and, I would argue, political) take on curriculum

innovation, John Hedges tracks "teachers' experiences of recent change in English and Welsh education". Hedges commits to finding, through conversations with teachers and teacher educators, what lessons emerge for the process of curriculum reform given "the difficult process of putting paper policies into practice".

In addition to this set of six papers, *Perspectives in Education* introduces a new segment called *Conversations about Research*. We are privileged to produce through the pages of this journal a powerful account by one of the world's foremost scholars in education, Professor Michael Apple. This account is of his recent and first South African visit to an international mathematics education conference at the University of Stellenbosch. Weaving subtle theoretical insights into a set of conference reflections, Apple unthreads the conservative and constraining discourses which continue to govern our academic performance (sic) long after the termination of legal apartheid. We are further pleased that a Member of the Editorial Board could contribute in this way.

Rubby Dhunpath (a graduate of the COMET linkage) and Cynthia Mpati (a distinguished and well-known South African educator) engage in dialogue about the researcher-researched relationship. The context for this dialogue is Dhunpath's dissertation which developed an account of teacher development in KwaZulu-Natal as seen through the life-story of Cynthia Mpati. This highly innovative life-story account generates, as readers will see, refreshing insights into power, knowledge, authority, voice, ethics and relationships in the interactional replay of this research project. In addition, two other students from this COMET programme present a novel methodology for a book review in which they interview two authors, Michael Cross and Karen Brodie, on their recent work, *Getting Published and Getting Read in South Africa* (1998). The interview, together with a close reading of the text, is offered as an evaluative account by two novice researchers on the value and significance of this latest contribution to academic writing in South Africa.

As editors of this issue of *Perspectives in Education*, working with a remarkably talented management team, we trust that this special issue will stimulate new questions and address pressing concerns among researchers, policy makers, teachers and other educators as we press on in the task of enhancing critical scholarship and relevant publication in the field of education.

Counting the Cost of Teacher Education: Cost and Quality Issues

Keith Lewin

Abstract

The costs of teacher education in many developing countries arise from historically established patterns of organisation and budgeting which have their origins in colonial history. Costs per qualified and employed teacher can be high, the quality of teacher training is widely contested, and many of the assumptions that underpin common models of delivery are open to question. Uncertain proportions of those trained obtain teaching jobs; in some cases the match between training and job placement is weak with teachers teaching at different levels or in different subject areas to those for which they were trained; in other situations the average length of teachers' careers may be shortening with implications for the nature of appropriate investment in training.

Providing basic schooling universally in the wake of the commitments made at the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) has resulted in rapidly expanding enrolments of primary age children throughout sub-Saharan Africa. This conference resulted in most governments developing national plans to ensure at least six years, and often nine or more years of schooling (Colclough with Lewin, 1993). Unlike previous attempts by the UN agencies to promote targets related to primary education, WCEFA included explicit concerns for quality and achievement alongside enrolment targets. Increased enrolment was to be accompanied by investment to improve learning outcomes (WCEFA, 1990:30).

These developments have created unprecedented demands for the training of teachers. Many of the poorest countries with low enrolment rates have high proportions of untrained teachers (UNESCO, 1997:26). This is particularly a problem in sub-Saharan Africa. In much of Asia, demographic transition and other changes associated with development have reduced the demand for new teachers, though it remains the case that many teachers are untrained, especially in South Asia (Lewin, 1998). If quality is to be improved, the needs of untrained teachers for professional development must be met. In addition, in many African countries new teachers are needed to meet the demands of enrolment growth to universal levels. Thus the capacity of existing systems of teacher education is challenged to meet high levels of demand in the short term and new needs arising from an emphasis on effective learning which links the competencies of teachers with the capabilities of pupils. This has placed pressures on the financing of

teacher education which invite reflection on cost-effectiveness, internal efficiency and the value for money provided by different methods of delivery.

The purpose of this paper is to share some preliminary thoughts on cost and resource issues related to the training of teachers. It anticipates a programme of empirically based research which is being developed at Sussex as part of the Multi-Site Teacher Education Project. It is therefore exploratory rather than designed to report findings which may emerge from the data that will be collected. This preliminary exploration charts a range of possible research questions, many of which could become the basis for analytical studies.

This paper has a focus on patterns of education and training which lead to initial qualification since this is where most investment is concentrated in most systems. The first section outlines some core issues and discusses a number of concerns which contextualise the subsequent arguments. The second section provides an overview of common features of conventional patterns of teacher education and draws attention to a range of consequences relevant to resource utilisation. The third section raises some methodological issues. The fourth section explores the analysis of costs and identifies major categories. Section five develops a framework of questions before, during and after core training experiences. These are summarised in Appendix 1. Section six summarises some alternative organisational patterns and draws attention to the range of options available, and is followed by some concluding remarks.

Introduction

There are many good reasons to be concerned about the costs of teacher training in developing countries. The most important appear to revolve around the following observations and issues.

Firstly, teacher training can be surprisingly expensive. Orthodox, pre-career full time residential training in some countries has costs per student which can average several times the costs of conventional higher education. This may arise as a result of many factors including the length of training, the small size of training institutions, low pupil-teacher ratios, inefficient working practices, and historic budgeting largely unrelated to enrolments. If teacher training is comparatively expensive, and if demand for newly trained teachers is high (as a result of enrolment expansion), simple expansion of existing modes of training may be unrealistic. Even if this is not true, high costs per student need justification. The pressures created by austerity in those countries suffering from recession add to the needs to reconsider patterns of educational investment during economic downswings (Lewin, 1987).

Secondly, in many developing countries there are concerns about the quality of new teachers and the need to qualify the untrained. Where criticisms are valid, and the content and pedagogy of training need to change to increase the probability of newly trained teachers possessing appropriate competencies, innovations need to be planned which are costed against sustainable budgets which can claim to provide value for public funds.

Thirdly, and closely related, where the quality of the intake to initial teacher training is low and expansion is anticipated, it may be necessary to re-profile not only content and pedagogy, but also the organisation and modes of delivery of training to cope with trainees who have different characteristics and weaker basic skills than those who entered training in the past.

Fourthly, many training systems have their origins in colonial practice. What may once have been rational may no longer meet new needs and resource constraints. Systems based on conventional training colleges may have been unduly influenced by colonial administrations and exogenous influence and advice provided by those who have sponsored their development. In many countries the training college sector has received sustained support from private and public donors of one kind or another based on a variety of mixed motives. As needs are increasingly identified at a national level, qualified teachers become more mobile, and much of the costs of expansion are borne publicly, it is timely to review practice and resource allocation.

Fifthly, studies of the comparative costs and benefits of different methods of training teachers are not readily available in most developing countries. Decisions on modes of training are therefore often made on grounds which are largely independent of these kinds of considerations. It is not that cost and cost effectiveness data should or could be the main basis for policy. It is simply that without considered judgement of what is known of costs and benefits it is unlikely that the best use will be made of public investment.

To avoid the misunderstandings that are sometimes associated with economic analysis of educational development issues a number of observations are relevant.

Firstly, it should be clear from the outset that the training of teachers is both desirable and necessary. It is obvious that an appropriate level of mastery of content and concepts is a prerequisite to the ability to share competencies with learners whether in language, mathematics, science or history. It is also self-evident that intuition and experience are not in themselves efficient ways of acquiring skills of effective teaching which are the common property of those who have trodden the pathway successfully before. It would be perverse to argue

that it is advantageous to be unaware of established theories of cognition, common errors of reasoning amongst children of different ages, or tried and tested methods of learning to read. Such things can be understood and translated into learning and teaching strategies through systematic learning and organised experience more efficiently than in other ways.

Secondly, though training teachers is in principle attractive, this does not mean that all methods are equally effective. Nor does it mean that what may have been satisfactory in the past will be so in the future. Belief in the efficacy of a method is probably a necessary condition for its successful realisation; it is not sufficient. Assertion and advocacy need to be buttressed by evidence that desired competencies are actually achieved by trainees who are able to deploy these in real learning and teaching environments. In a rational world it ought to be possible, at least at the level of judgement backed by systematic data, to separate out the more and the less costly and effective approaches to training given defined goals in order to assist choices that have to be made where resources are constrained.

Thirdly, there are obvious pitfalls in believing that an initial qualification to teach represents an end point in the acquisition of competence and guarantees its manifestation in practice. Certifying all teachers so that none are formally untrained is a desirable goal but is insufficient to guarantee improved teaching quality in schools. Initial qualifications are literally what they present themselves as — confirmation of the minimum levels of competence which justify a public "licence to teach". They can hardly be based on competencies possessed by average and above average members of the profession established in mid-career. This is why belief that initial training is sufficient to certify teachers for the whole of their working lifetimes have been over-taken by widespread recognition of the importance of continuing professional development spread over a career. The underlying point is that investment in the development of teachers' competencies can and should be seen as a continuous process that follows initial qualification with support which consolidates newly acquired skills, encourages reflection and self-criticism, and provides opportunities to move to higher levels of competence. Models of investment in training which are heavily front loaded (i.e. all the investment is pre-career), as is the case with conventional pre-service training, begin to seem less and less attractive.

Fourthly, making connections between costs and resources, and policy on training teachers, is uncomfortable and often unfamiliar to many of those involved in the training process. This may be because training institutions distance faculty from decisions on the allocation of resources, because trainers may be predisposed to think in terms of what is desirable rather more than what

is feasible and sustainable in terms of resources, and because cadres of trainers may well have sectional interests that value the self-interest of their profession over the interest of those who are trained. None of this detracts from the fact that training is resource constrained and, where it is a public activity, it should be accountable for the resources it consumes which might otherwise be allocated to different purposes which might have more effect on learning and teaching outcomes for school pupils.

Some common approaches to initial teacher education

There are many different modes of teacher education and several ways of developing typologies. For the purposes of this paper a simple ideal-typical schema has been developed that differentiates four main pathways to becoming a qualified teacher. These are encapsulated as:

1. Full time certificate/diploma/undergraduate college-based training in purpose built institutions usually lasting for 3 to 4 years
2. Full time post-graduate training in higher education institutions subsequent to the acquisition of a degree level award
3. Apprenticeship models based on service in school with in-service support leading to certification as a qualified teacher
4. Direct entry as teachers without training who are subsequently certified

Table 1 offers some familiar distinguishing features of each approach in terms of duration, entry, curriculum, teaching practice, teaching methods, certification and probable costs per student.

Table 1: An ideal typical typology of initial teacher education programmes

Description	Duration	Entry	Curriculum	Teaching practice	Teaching styles	Certification	Costs per student
Type 1							
College certificate diploma BEd	2–4 years full time residential	Junior or senior secondary school leavers	Subject upgrading, subject methods, professional studies	Block practice 4–12 weeks	Lectures, small group work, use of specialist facilities	Written exams, school practice reports, projects or special studies	Relatively high

Description	Duration	Entry	Curriculum	Teaching practice	Teaching styles	Certification	Costs per student
Type 2							
University Post-graduate Certificate of Education	1–2 years full time residential after first degree	University degree	Subject methods, professional studies	Block practice 2–10 weeks	Lectures, small group work, use of specialist facilities	Written exams, school practice reports, projects or special studies	Relatively high but for shorter duration
Type 3							
In-service and post-service upgrading for initial qualification	1–5 years part time residential and/or non residential	Post-experience as temporary or untrained teachers	Subject upgrading, subject methods, professional studies	Teaching in schools in normal employment	Residential lectures/ workshops of varying duration, self study, distance learning	Written exams, school or inspectors' reports	High or low depending on duration and intensity of contract with tutors
Type 4							
Direct entry	0–2 years probation	Senior secondary, college or university	None, or supervised induction	Teaching in schools in normal employment	Apprenticeship	Inspection, school reports	Low

This simplified typology cannot reflect the many detailed variations on the characteristics identified for each type. Thus it is not uncommon for Type 1 programmes to have different characteristics depending on the level of entry. It is also the case that in some systems students graduate from certificate, through diploma to degree programmes over an extended period interspersed with teaching in schools. Degree level BEd programmes may or may not have additional Honours years dependent on completion of the basic qualification. University-based BEds may have different entry criteria and curricula to college-based programmes. Curricula may treat academic- and subject-based courses concurrently in each year or more sequentially with a shifting emphasis as the course proceeds. Type 2 courses probably have less variation. Nevertheless their duration is not standard, the mix of curricula requirements varies widely especially in relation to teaching practice, and they may be offered part-time and non-residentially.

Type 3 arrangements can be found *de facto* or *de jure* in a substantial number of countries. It is not uncommon for large proportions of those accepted for initial training to have experience as untrained teachers. They may also have taken part in in-service programmes and will have received a more or less systematic induction into teaching from those with whom they work. This is important. It means that those who enter initial training may already be familiar with the classroom environment and schools as organisations. It is also likely to be true that they have acquired teaching styles, pedagogic dispositions, and beliefs about pupils' learning and the nature of the subjects they teach which reflect those commonly held by their teacher colleagues. These may or may not resonate with the teacher education curriculum and its realisation. What has been learned may need to be (at least partially) unlearned or developed in different ways than might be the case with inexperienced school leavers. It certainly has implications for the nature, value and extent of periods of school practice in professional training. These issues are obviously relevant to Type 3 training and are also germane for Type 1 and 2 programmes where a significant proportion of the entry have prior school experience.

Type 4 patterns are those closest to apprenticeship. Graduates, or those with sub-degree qualifications are allowed to enter teaching by virtue of their final academic qualification. In some cases this is sufficient to teach indefinitely; in others a probationary period has to be completed successfully. The possibilities are very wide. Induction may be systematically supported and monitored or may depend on informal arrangements with minimal reporting. Prior experience may or may not be recognised. Higher levels of qualification may be accepted in lieu of training. Sufficiently long service may result in recognition as a qualified teacher.

Another important feature of initial teacher qualification systems, which carries cost and resource implications which cannot be simply captured in the typology, concerns the rubrics which define different levels of qualification. These are usually linked to conditions of service and salary scales determined by public service commissions or similar bodies. This a complex area. Teacher's salaries are often determined by the highest level of academic qualification and the level of training certificates. Entry onto one scale or another influences earnings over long periods independent of performance. Once on a scale, seniority is generally the basis for increments. This means that the point of entry is of great significance. It can and does create pressures for would be teachers to pursue the highest levels of academic qualification and training before career entry, or to focus on upgrading after experience. It can mean fully qualified and trained teachers have experienced between 5 and 10 years of formal education and training beyond the school leaving age. In countries where primary and

secondary school teachers are on different salary scales independent of academic qualification and training, may mean that disproportionate numbers of those who are primary trained rapidly gravitate to secondary school posts.

A further observation is of interest. It has become fashionable in some countries with a long history of college-based teacher education to argue the merits of an increased emphasis on school-based training. In England this has resulted in mandatory guidelines that require partnerships between training institutions and schools and the allocation of substantial amounts of training resources to participating schools. In exchange for resources that may exceed those allocated to the training institution, schools play a central role in the initial training curriculum.

In many developing countries school-based training is in reality the default method of training. As noted previously, trainees have often cut their teeth as untrained teachers. Their largely informal training takes place as an unstructured and unrecognised apprenticeship. Some countries (e.g. Trinidad) deliberately provide school experience through on-the-job training before admission to training programmes. These programmes can be used to filter and select trainees.

Proponents of more school-based training strategies argue the advantages of initial training close to the chalk face and focus on basic skills and competencies modelled by practitioners close to the realities of effective learning and teaching. They contest the ability of conventional college-based training to provide relevant and contextualised professional learning. Depending on how school-based training is costed they may have some economic attractions. Trainee teachers contribute teaching time to schools at low cost, teacher mentors may be cheaper per unit of tutoring than college staff, and if trainee teachers are more competent at the point of initial qualification than would otherwise be the case, cost effectiveness will be increased.

A brief historical digression which illustrates that recent fashions in education usually have their precursors in previous practice may be of interest to some readers. Various forms of school-based teacher training have a long history. In the 1930s a lively debate took place between the proponents of the system used at the Institute of Education, London and the one used at Oxford (Dixon, 1986:14). At the Institute of Education, teaching practice involved a preliminary 3–4 week period in schools.

> ... as a means of turning back, before it is too late, young people who seem plainly unfitted to the teaching profession and ought not to prepare for it at public expense.

Subsequently students spent two days a week in school and the remainder of their time at the Institute (thus they did not undertake block teaching practice). Tutors were paid to supervise students in school and also gave tutorials in the Institute for which they were paid about one third of a lecturer's salary.

This approach had many of the elements of school focused training intended to link college- and school-based experience in a continuous dialogue. It was contrasted with the orthodoxy of block practice which the University of Oxford used. At a meeting of the university's Departments of Education and the Headmistresses Association the issues were debated in 1938. The Institute defended its system which required students to spend at least 60 days in school on teaching practice which extended over the school, not the university term. The advantages were said to be that theory and practice could be welded together and methods tutors were specifically invited to ensure that their lectures addressed problems of presentation, classroom management and teaching craft skills. In contrast, Oxford representatives argued that block practice gave students early responsibility for learning and integrated student teachers into school life where they could develop skills systematically. The conservatism that this implied — students would adopt existing practices rather than experiment with new ones — was criticised by the Institute's tutors. Subsequently, Oxford adopted school-based internship models as did many other institutions in the UK, sometimes apparently reinventing practice with a long history (McIntyre, 1990).

The historical record also reminds us that the major elements of the teacher education curriculum are long standing. The London Institute's Teaching Diploma examination in the 1930s required successful performance in:

Principles of Education, Methods of Teaching, Elementary Psychology and Hygiene, The English Education System.

One of these: History of Education, Comparative Education, Further Educational Psychology.

Successful practice teaching in a school was the final requirement. Term essays were included in the assessment along with the closed book written examination papers for the Diploma. Further Educational Psychology included a course in vocational testing and guidance for an extra fee. In this system students had personal tutors who conducted weekly seminars and arranged demonstration lessons. They also advised on personal matters. A "Colonial Course" was run as a variant on the Diploma for those preparing for teaching or educational administration in the colonies which included core courses from the Diploma and special inputs in comparative education and the teaching of English to non-Western peoples.

Much could be said about the attractions, disadvantages and necessary antecedents for effective school-based training. Not least, it is plausible that the advantages are more than counter-balanced by possible problems. These include difficulties arising from locating a sufficient number of partnership schools where good practice is abundant, finding mentor teachers who are willing and available to train new teachers, and where the costs of adequate infrastructure support (e.g. advisory visits, training of mentors, monitoring of standards and assessment of competencies) are not excessive. It was implied earlier that many of the normative conventions of teacher training can trace their origins back to once rational practices elsewhere — the familiar curriculum of the London Institute in the 1930s is an admittedly fragile illustration of the extent to which this might be the case.

In summary, this section has drawn attention to the range of common patterns of initial teacher qualification. It has highlighted some important features that may be significant in responding to new needs and the changing qualities of trainees in many of the training systems in developing countries. Specifically attention is drawn to the fact that many trainees have experience of learning and teaching on entry to training programmes. It is likely that these students will have established patterns of working and grounded (if possibly naive) theories of learning and teaching which may or may not match with the presumptions of training curricula. Issues which relate to the content and length of training are also flagged. Normative practices and bureaucratic regulation seem to have been at least as important as considerations of professional competence in making decisions on the teacher education curriculum and its length. Lastly it is suggested, using school-based training as an illustration, that many proposed innovations in initial education may have antecedents which invite further analysis, especially if the norms which currently exist in many countries derive directly or indirectly from them through processes of historical (colonial) transfer or through contemporary diffusion by the diaspora of teacher educators.

Some methodological issues

There are methodological reasons why exploring the allocation and utilisation of resources to teacher education is difficult. Establishing the costs of different teaching and material inputs to training appears to be the easiest part. In systems where initial teacher education and certification is undertaken in training colleges which have training as their main function, it should be relatively straightforward to establish the cost per student successfully trained. This may be more difficult where initial teacher education is provided alongside other activities, e.g. large scale in-service support or where several modes of training co-exist in the same institution (e.g. PGCE, BEd) and share staff and other

resources. It may also be complicated where distance education programmes exist if these share an infrastructure that delivers a range of courses. But it should still be possible to separate out costs attributable to initial training at least to the point where there is a good enough approximation sufficient to guide policy.

More difficult is to decide how to treat costs that arise from contributions that student teachers may make to teaching. If they undertake a substantial amount of teaching during training they contribute to the cost of providing an adequate number of teachers. If they were not in the system more teachers would have to be provided for the same levels of pupil-teacher ratios.

It is also problematic to include the costs of salaries which are paid in full to trainees in some systems during full time training. These teachers may or may not be replaced in the schools in which they are employed. In principle the teaching they are not doing has to be covered, but it may not be.

Notwithstanding these problems it is realistic to attempt to discover what costs are associated with different modes of delivery, how they have been changing, and what will be the budgetary implications of an expansion or reduction in any particular mode. This is needed in any medium term planning which aspires to place qualified teachers in front of all classes within a defined time period. In some cases this may indicate that the ambition cannot be realised using existing modes of training designed for different circumstances. If so, alternative modes need to be considered which are cost sustainable and likely to be at least as effective.

The analytical difficulties associated with measurements and judgements of the effectiveness of training are considerable. Most studies which attempt this either assess the extent to which training programmes change trainees in relation to subject competence and/or professional skills, or they focus on the degree to which trained teachers are more effective in the classroom than those who are not trained. Linking these two perspectives — to establish whether those who are trained acquire relevant competencies, subsequently transfer these to classroom teaching, and as a result their pupils learn more effectively — is very ambitious. What appears simple in principle is very complex to research in reality as others have noted (Tatto, Nielson, Cummings, Kularatna and Dharmadasa, 1991:7). School effectiveness research indicates how important school effects may be on achievement independent of individual staff attributes. Pupils' achievements generally cannot be viewed as the outcome of individual teachers competencies since pupils may experience several teachers. Teachers' effectiveness is unlikely to be independent of who is taught under which circumstances, and out-of-school factors may vary in importance between pupils, classes, schools and subjects.

There is no simple resolution to the complexities of unravelling the effectiveness of teacher training. Nor can there be without careful grounding in context. There is no *a priori* reason to suppose that the definition of effective teaching, and the methods of assessing whether or not it is occurring, have universal characteristics. A variety of proxy measures are often employed — pass rates and other measures of learning gains amongst students on training courses, observation of pedagogic practice amongst those who are trained, performance of pupils taught by trained and untrained teachers. Analytic problems exist at many levels, for example: the operational definition of the dependent variable (effective teaching?) to be explained; the causal relationships between training, pedagogic performance and learning outcomes; the separation of the effects of prior experience from the effects of training *per se*; the difficulties of distinguishing between institution level effects on performance and those that arise from individual level competences amongst trained teachers working in many different school environments.

No programme of research can easily explore all such complexities. It may be possible to make some progress by adopting a less comprehensive but more practical strategy to the analysis between costs and effectiveness. At a minimum it is possible to arrive at estimates of costs broadly defined which include most of the resources mobilised in different types of training activity: staff time, materials, physical facilities, supervisory support and so on. Proxy measures of performance can be useful, especially if approached from a null hypothesis perspective. Thus, a working assumption can be made that there is no difference in effectiveness between training methods unless or until there is evidence to the contrary. Costs almost certainly will vary. The issue then becomes a judgement as to whether any differences that are observed are sufficiently attractive to justify additional costs. Where there are large cost differences, and differences in performance appear small, the challenge is for advocates of particular training methods to demonstrate why the most parsimonious approaches should not be adopted since they offer the opportunity to train more teachers at less cost. This approach may not satisfy purists intent on demonstrating the value of an approach to which they are committed for non-economic reasons. It is attractive in the absence of realistic methods of capturing the full complexity of the antecedent condition-training–performance-in-practice relationships which confront researchers.

To put it simply those who have been trained should perform in the classroom very differently to those who have not, those who have been expensively trained should be very different from those whose training has been much less resource intensive. In the first instance it should be possible to provide some answers to these kind of pressing questions.

Given this mosaic of problems the question is how to proceed. With the luxury of offering possibilities for discussion rather than conclusions to a process, I offer some ideas to create the beginnings of a framework for empirical enquiry in the next sections.

Analysing costs

There are two obvious ways to begin to explore costs and subsequently effectiveness. The first focuses on different types of costs (or more generally resource issues). The second seeks to unpack the training pathway to minimum competence for a publicly licensed teacher into three domains: before, during and after the core training experience. This section addresses the first focus.

Firstly, some general observations. At a macro level the main cost drivers related to teacher training systems are self evident and can be separated into recurrent salary and non-salary costs and into fixed and variable costs.

Recurrent salary costs arise from teaching faculty and support staff (which include non-teaching administrators and service personnel). The costs of training in full time institutions will normally be most heavily influenced by salary costs which will typically account for between 50% and 90% of all recurrent costs per trainee in post-school training institutions. The distribution between teaching and non-teaching salary costs can vary over a wide range — it is possible to find institutions where non-teaching salary costs may exceed those of teaching salaries per trainee, especially where training is residential.

In principle it is easy to identify factors that will tend to increase salary costs and those which will reduce them. Low student-staff ratios (10:1 or less) will inflate costs, as will a high proportion of non-teaching staff salaries (more than 25%). Relatively high and growing lecturers' salaries (in relation to GDP/capita and other comparable groups of professionals) will increase costs unless coupled with higher levels of student-staff ratios. Younger average ages of college staff will reduce costs, high and increasing average seniority will inflate costs. School-based training, if it substitutes teachers' time for that of lecturers, may reduce average costs per trainee.

The main determinant of recurrent salary costs per student is the student-teacher ratio (STR). This can be expressed formally as follows.

$$\text{Student teacher ratio} = \text{STR} = \frac{Ns}{Nt}$$

Where Ns = number of students and Nt = number of teachers (lecturers)

Rearranging we have $Ns = STR \times Nt$

The salary cost per student for teaching staff (Cs) is represented as follows.

$$\text{Cost per student } Cs = \frac{\text{Sum of the salary cost of teachers}}{Ns} = \frac{\Sigma Ts}{Ns}$$

where ΣTs = the sum of all teachers' (lecturers') salaries

$$\text{By substitution } Cs = \frac{\Sigma Ts}{STR \times Nt}$$

If ΣTs is approximately equal to the average of all teachers' salaries ($AvTs$) $\times$ Nt

$$\text{then } Cs = \frac{AvTs \times Nt}{STR \times Nt} = \frac{AvTs}{STR}$$

This mathematical representation leads to the fairly obvious point that recurrent teaching costs per student rise with average teachers salaries and fall as the STR increases.

However, the more precise relationships over time will depend on whether average and total salary bills change at rates different to the STR as a result of pay awards, incremental drift and differential retirement and recruitment rates at the top and the bottom end of the salary scales. On the margin the relationship between AvTs, and $\Sigma Ts/Ns$, may not remain constant if the mean and the median salaries do not coincide with the arithmetic average.

It might seem as simple as arguing that if AvTs is minimised and STR maximised in ways consistent with maintaining quality, the economic concern with cost efficiency would be satisfied. It is not quite that simple. What is delivered to students in the training curriculum will not only depend on salary costs per student. These have to be translated into staff contact hours with students and the work which surrounds these contact hours. Higher salary costs per student and lower student-staff ratios, can co-exist with low student contact hours depending on how work is organised. Lower salary costs per student and higher student-staff ratios can be achieved without necessarily diminishing student contact time.

The key point here is that the STR is a function of the number of teaching staff thought to be needed (Ts). This of course ultimately determines ΣTs. Formally the relationships can be represented as follows.

$$\frac{\text{Number of}}{\text{teaching staff needed}} = \frac{\text{Number of students (Ns)}}{\text{Average teaching group size (Gs)}} \times \frac{\text{Av. taught hours/week/student (Th)}}{\text{Av. teaching load in hours per week (Tl)}}$$

$$Nt = \frac{Ns}{Gs} \times \frac{Th}{Tl}$$

and

$$Th = \frac{Gs}{STR} \times Tl$$

It is now clear that what is delivered in terms of taught time (taught hours per week) for a particular cost, is a function of the number of students per teacher (STR), the amount of teaching associated with teaching posts and the average teaching group size.

Table 2a is suggestive of some possible relationships between variables. It shows that for colleges with the same number of students and staff and which therefore have similar costs per student, different mixes of group size, student learning time and teaching loads are possible.

Table 2a: Four different patterns with similar costs

College	Number of students	Number of staff	Student-teacher ratio	Cost per student (av. salary per teacher 15 000)	Average teaching group size	Number of student teaching periods per week	Teaching load in periods per week
1	1 000	67	15	1 000	30	10	5
2	1 000	67	15	1 000	15	20	20
3	1 000	67	15	1 000	45	30	10
4	1 000	67	15	1 000	30	30	15

Thus College 1 has low teaching loads and students experience relatively few periods a week in middle size groups. In College 2 teaching loads are high, students have more contact time and group sizes are small. In College 3 group sizes are large, students receive a lot of teaching but teaching loads are not high. In College 4 students receive a lot of teaching in middle sized groups with middle level teaching loads for lecturers.

Table 2b shows possible effects of varying the college intake whilst maintaining the same number of staff.

Table 2b: Four different patterns with different enrolments and similar staffing

College	Number of students	Number of staff	Student-teacher ratio	Cost per student (av. salary per teacher 15 000)	Average teaching group size	Number of student teaching periods per week	Teaching load in periods per week
1	500	67	8	2 000	15	10	5
2	1 000	67	15	1 000	15	20	20
3	1 500	67	23	667	15	20	30
4	2 000	67	30	500	15	15	30

In this case the costs per student vary as the student-teacher ratio varies. College 1 has high costs and low teaching loads and taught time. Colleges 2 and 3 deliver the same number of taught hours to similar size groups of students but College 3 does so at a lower cost as a result of higher teaching loads. College 4 has the lowest costs but the highest teaching loads.

These two tables and further variations on them illustrate how the key parameters interact. Most importantly they highlight the fact that though costs per student are determined by average salaries and student-teacher ratios, what is delivered to students is also a function of teaching group sizes and teaching loads. High costs can co-exist with low levels of contact time for students.

The discussion above focuses on teaching salary recurrent costs per student and has general applicability. Total salary costs must include non-teaching salaries which arise from a variety of widely differing practices and expectations about staffing related to teacher education institutions. These are more difficult to generalise about. The number of non-teaching staff may or may not be related to enrolments. Some categories, for example director, vice principals, finance officer, hostel warden and so on may exist in every training institution independent of enrolment. Other posts may be related to enrolment, such as the number of laboratory assistants, caretakers and security guards. If historic budgeting is used employees may continue to be employed whether or not there is a continuing need for their services. The most that can be said about this category of expenditure is that it almost certainly is desirable to establish norms related to enrolment based on what is thought to be necessary in effectively run institutions. If this generates costs which are a small proportion of the cost per student, then analysis is of secondary importance, assuming adequate checks and balances exist to ensure what is allocated is spent as intended. If non-teaching salaries are a large proportion of the cost per student this invites scrutiny of whether such expenditure is essential to the main training mission.

Non-salary recurrent costs per student are also difficult to generalise about. Most costs, will arise from expenditure on maintenance, equipment, consumable materials, travel and subsistence, food subsidies, hostel costs and student stipends. All of these can be examined with a view to establishing whether what is spent needs to be spent to maintain the quality of the training programme. It is of interest to compare non-salary with salary costs, to establish the extent to which non-salary costs vary per student between institutions and to establish whether non-salary costs are or could be shared in an appropriate way which is not damaging to quality or equity. This applies both to the costs of physical assets (which may be shared with other institutions or used as community resources) and to the direct costs of training (which may be partly supported through contributions from those who would benefit).

As with non-teaching salary costs, if non-salary costs are a high proportion of per student expenditure they need careful examination. If they are a very small proportion this may also suggest that there is a problem in supporting basic infrastructure and providing conditions under which effective professional development may take place.

A complementary way of analysing costs is to separate the component parts into fixed and variable elements. The latter will be sensitive to the number of students trained and will normally not be subject to marked economies of scale. Fixed costs, as a component of costs per student, should fall with increased volume. The distinction between fixed and variable costs is clear in principle but can be blurred in practice.

In brief, fixed costs usually include central administration and other common support costs, national programme development costs, monitoring, quality assurance and accreditation systems. These cost are likely to be fixed within a range of student numbers, but may increase stepwise when thresholds are crossed. Thus within a wide band of enrolments a fixed size teacher education secretariat may be able to administer the services needed from the centre. In some cases, some of these central costs will behave more like variable costs, for example where the costs associated with periodic inspection multiply as the number of sites that need to be inspected increases.

Variable costs include staff costs associated with teaching, tutoring and mentoring, materials for students, the direct costs of assessment, school supervision visits, and student support costs for food, accommodation and clothing. Most of these will increase linearly with the number of students. There may areas where there are economies of scale, for example in textbook production where the cost of a book is reduced as the volume of production increases.

A framework for exploring costs before, during and after training

The second focus identified above for exploring costs concentrates on questions that may be asked of training systems before, during and after the core period of training. These questions can be framed in relation to relate to antecedent circumstances, the transactions associated with the process of training including its organisational features, and those aspects of outcomes from training that might indicate the value or otherwise of the investments that have been made. The latter include not only evidence of competence as a result of training but also any indications that may exist of the translation of competencies into practice.

Before training issues

It is fundamental to judgements of the efficiency of training systems that those who are selected for training are individuals who are likely to successfully acquire the competencies identified as the subject of the training. The predictive validity of selection methods should be high. If it is not, wastage will be excessive and many who start programmes will fail to acquire competencies and become certified. Thus, whatever the costs of training per student, these have to be adjusted to take into account wastage arising from non-completion and questions must be put related to whether better selection might improve the quality and quantity of those trained.

There may also be significant costs (and benefits) associated with different patterns of selection independent of their predictive validity. In particular, where selection takes place from amongst those who are already teaching or who have substantial periods of school experience, several considerations come into play. Selection may be more reliable since it can be based partly on judgements of performance in schools. Those applying for training may also be self-selected in the sense that some will decide that teaching is not their preferred career on the basis of their experience in schools. The work pre-training students undertake in schools may also be a net benefit to the costs of the school system.

Lastly, the attributes of those trainees selected constitute a starting point for training. If the assumptions made about trainees' characteristics are false, and subsequent training curricula and pedagogy are based on these, it is unlikely that appropriate competencies will be acquired efficiently. To be more specific, it may be assumed that students are fluent in the medium of instruction of colleges and schools. In some developing countries entry scores on language tests indicate that this is at best an optimistic assumption. It is also not unusual in some countries to find substantial proportions of new students minimally academically qualified in subjects for which they are being trained. If these students are confronted with subject based curricula which proceed from an assumption of, for example, mastery of basic mathematics at school level they may well find the content and expectations of courses very difficult.

Training organisation and process issues

Several general questions can be identified which relate to the costs and resource needs of the training process. As noted above these depend on the allocation and utilisation of salary and non-salary expenditure. Thus it is of interest to compare costs per student and patterns of expenditure (teaching and non-teaching salary recurrent) in teacher education institutions and between teacher education institutions and other types of education and training organisations. Are the

variations the result of different patterns of staff utilisation, economies of scale, or variations in one or other type of salary or non-salary costs? If so, is this the result of historic budgeting or can it be justified by current conditions? Would norm-based funding encourage a convergence in costs that might promote equity and efficiency within the same mode of provision?

Pre-career training is becoming more popular and in many countries it represents a preferred mode of training. It may or may not have higher costs than in-career upgrading. This will depend on how it is organised. Full time residential pre-career training is expensive especially where it is prolonged, residential costs are substantial, and attrition rates during and after training are significant. However, the simplest alternatives which depend on various types of in-career training can also be costly if there are significant periods of residential tuition, trainees are paid full salaries as opposed to student stipends, and supervision and support systems during training are extensive.

Increasing the extent to which training is school-based has attracted many advocates who advance convincing pedagogic rationales. In principle, it shifts some of the costs from the teacher education budget to schools depending on how it is financed and what model is adopted. This may or may not represent a net cost saving and could actually be more expensive, though of course it might be more effective. The critical question to answer before stepping in this direction is whether sufficient infrastructure and good practice exists in schools where trainees can be located for them to benefit from systematic and well informed training and support. If it does not, the costs become irrelevant.

Conventional college-based training systems generally operate block practice teaching systems where students are placed in schools for a teaching practice period and are visited by college tutors. The major cost of this is usually in tutors' time and travel expenses, assuming that schools do not charge for hosting student teachers (as they now do in some countries). Given that the workload imposed by school visits is often a focus of tutor dissatisfaction, and that students typically report variable experiences and learning benefits, the following questions should be asked. How many resources does teaching practice consume? Could some or most of the benefits be achieved in different ways or at lower costs? These questions have a sharp focus if students already have substantial school-based experience on which to draw as a result of periods spent in school prior to acceptance on training courses.

Lastly, distance learning systems are established widely. Teacher education is delivered using distance methods usually in combination with some face to face contact. This method of delivery can dramatically reduce costs though due

attention must be paid to completion rates. Where completion is linked to promotion and salary increments, attrition may be low. The criticism that some desired outcomes are more difficult to achieve through these methods and some cannot be achieved at all, can be countered by the observation that mixed mode methods (some distance some full time) can be developed that retain some of the advantages of both conventional and distance organisational patterns.

Outcome and deployment issues

A series of cost related questions effect the output side of initial training. Firstly, many training systems couple subject upgrading concurrently with the development of method and professional skills. This may be cost inefficient. If entrants to training systems have low academic competence, further schooling or targeted and intensive study programmes may be both more effective and less costly than post-school college-based subject work. This might also reduce the proportion of students who take education courses as a means of entering higher education to pursue non-teaching careers. It may also be true that where subject teaching co-exists with teaching methods and professional studies the latter are regarded as relatively low status and are neglected as a result.

Secondly, training may provide opportunities to acquire competencies that are unlikely to be acquired through other routes. Conversely, at least some of the competencies that training is directed towards are likely to be achievable through experience and purposeful induction. If the latter is true, the key questions to be asked are the following. How much does training accelerate the acquisition of competencies and at what cost? How long do training effects persist once teachers have entered the profession? (If this time is short then training is relatively cost ineffective.)

Thirdly, and closely related, is the question of what can be learned from studying the performance of trained and untrained teachers working in similar school environments. If schools as organisations are more powerful determinants of teachers' practice than training, where should investment in the improvement of learning and teaching and in the development of teachers competencies be located? This is not to deny the possible efficacy of training. It does open up questions of when and where in a teacher's life cycle training should be provided and whether it needs close coupling with the organisational realities, working preferences and incentives to improve practice found in school systems.

Fourthly, success rates on most teacher education programmes are high. This sometimes rests uneasily with observations of the competence of newly trained teachers and their working practices. There are both benevolent and malevolent

explanations. It may be that the predictive validity of selection is high and that competencies are well specified and reliably assessed. If there are dissatisfactions with performance, they arise from factors beyond the training process. Alternatively, selection for training carries with it the normative expectation of certification at levels of competence that do not reflect the reasonable expectations of schools which employ new teachers. Which of these possible explanations (or others that may be plausible) stand up to analysis?

The last element of an analysis of costs is concerned with three issues which relate to the deployment, induction and professional longevity of those trained.

Firstly, in some countries a free labour market operates and newly qualified teachers are expected to identify opportunities for employment and apply competitively for appointment. This has the attractions and disadvantages associated more generally with labour markets. It may not result in a rational deployment of new teachers in supportive schools which can cultivate good practice based on competencies acquired during training. Other countries post new teachers according to a wide range of criteria which are rarely based on the needs of newly qualified teachers for professional nurture. Yet, it would seem desirable that whatever is achieved in initial training was seen as the beginning of a process of professional development which would greatly benefit from some systematic support related to the consolidation of competencies. It should also encourage reflection on the conditions under which newly qualified teachers might have a real impact on the diffusion of innovations in learning and teaching, and consequently lead to effective teaching methods. Newly trained teachers with untried skills entering established departments in junior positions would not seem to have a high probability of convincing colleagues of the need to adopt new pedagogy.

Secondly, and as a follow on from the first point, it is largely unknown what support newly qualified teachers receive after training in their first jobs. Few education systems allocate substantial resources to induct new teachers. Guidelines may or may not exist relating to probationary periods but these frequently stress the administrative and procedural over the professional and developmental. Training institutions may have few or no active linkages with the schools in which newly trained teachers find themselves, and no contact with most of their alumni. In these circumstances it may not be surprising that competencies acquired in training are not recognised or consolidated, and that the relevance of what is acquired in training is questioned by those who receive its products. Lying behind these issues is the open question of how the resources invested in training should be distributed over the professional lifetime of teachers. As has been suggested, perhaps investment should not be as front loaded as has traditionally been the case in many training systems.

Finally, with a few exceptions, not much is known about the professional lifetimes and career trajectories of trained teachers in many systems. If certification does not guarantee employment, there may be wastage as a result of a proportion of those certified choosing to follow careers other than teaching. (Or these teachers may choose to teach in another national system of education, thereby representing a net loss for the national investment in training — though probably a high rate of private return to the individual.) Those who do enter the teaching force may not remain. This needs to be factored into costs especially where attrition rates are high — the proportion of those trained still working in areas they were trained for can drop dramatically after 5 to 10 years. The shorter the professional lifetime of teachers in the system, the higher are the real costs of providing an adequate number of trained teachers.

The issues raised in this section collectively begin to identify the arenas in which data is needed to understand more about what the costs of training are, why they are configured in particular ways, and what constraints and opportunities they create for the future. If expansion in enrolments is needed it must be achieved within realistic costs that can be sustained. Similarly, if qualitative improvements are desirable, these must be costed and justified in terms of at least some of the benefits that they are likely to bring. Appendix 1 collects together a summary of the questions that have been identified.

A note on organisational patterns and costs

It may be helpful before concluding to provide a schematic reminder of some of the options that exist in patterns of training that carry with them cost and quality implications. This is attempted in a descriptive summary of Table 3 below. It draws attention to alternative patterns of provision before, during and after core training periods.

Table 3 identifies seven possible modes and these can be descriptively summarised as follows.

Mode 1: Conventional full time college-based training preceded by no experience.

Mode 2: Conventional full time college-based training preceded by pre-course experience and followed by mentored induction into schools.

Mode 3: Untrained teaching experience followed by conventional full time college-based training.

Mode 4: Mentored pre-training experience followed by conventional full time college-based training and mentored induction into schools.

Mode 5: Mentored pre-training experience followed by a short period of conventional college-based training followed by school placement with INSET support.

Mode 6: Mentored pre-training experience followed by alternating short periods of conventional full time college-based training followed by mentored induction into schools.

Mode 7: Mentored pre-training experience followed by wholly school-based training on the job leading to mentored distance support.

Clearly these modes only illustrate possibilities and there are many other possible mixes which carry different resource and cost implications. This summary draws attention to four key observations. Firstly, extended full time institutional training is only one of many options. Secondly, what comes before and what comes after core periods of training may be just as important as what occurs in the core. Thirdly, there is no necessity for core periods of training to be continuous or front loaded in terms of costs or training inputs. Fourthly, mixed mode methods which make use of distance education and learning while working are clearly options which have potential cost advantages. The need to establish the resource implications of different approaches is a central theme of this paper. More difficult, but also very important, is insight into their probable effectiveness.

The analytical questions related to future policy and practice now focus on which of these (and other possible modes) are feasible, relevant to short to medium term needs, and are likely to be cost effective. Is a new and different balance of factor inputs, in the economist's language, attractive to meet new needs and disquiet over both costs and effectiveness of existing patterns of delivery? There are opportunities to reconsider how investment in teacher education and training is best organised and delivered given the shortfalls in teacher supply generated by enrolment expansion, the new emphasis in many countries on changing curricula to improve pupils' achievement, the consequences of austerity and the importance of improving quality and effectiveness.

Table 3: Seven possible training modes

Mode	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
	Pre-training		**College training**			**Post training**
1		No experience	Full time training	Full time training	Full time training	
2		Pre-course programme	Full time training	Full time training	Full time training	Post course mentor support
3	Unsupported	Teaching	Full time training	Full time training	Full time training	
4	Mentored	Teaching	Full time training	Full time training	Full time training	Post course mentor support
5	Mentored	Teaching	Full time training	In school + INSET	In school + INSET	In school + INSET
6	Mentored	Teaching	Full time + in school	Full time + in school	Full time + in school	Post course mentor support
7	Mentored	Teaching	School based INSET	School based INSET	Mentor + distance	Mentor + distance

Conclusion

This paper has explored resource and cost issues in the provision of teacher education. It implies that there is a window of opportunity for some radical reconsideration of how teachers are trained which may be long overdue. Tried and tested approaches can be expensive and may not be not self-evidently effective. Despite the existence of many enthusiastic teacher educators, what evidence there is often suggests a surprising homogeneity of practice and assumptions about how best to train teachers at the curriculum level, and a disappointing record of sustained innovations which might lead to new practice which meets new needs.

There are attractive images of teacher education institutions at the cutting edge of professional practice and the development of learning and teaching methods in schools and for teacher education students. There are many opportunities to contribute to and lead curriculum development, develop close relations with clusters of schools, support teachers over the early years of their careers, improve school-based assessment, and explore and evaluate pupils' learning at all levels. Teacher education institutions and teacher educators could be the critical mass at the centre of a web of partnerships designed to improve the quality and range of competencies that schools engender in their pupils. Can colleges become developmental institutions which are closely linked to practice? Can they provide theoretical insights and research-based rationales for experiment directed towards innovations that can "go to scale" and become generally adopted? Can they inspire and motivate new generations of teachers who might move more freely between schools and college environments? How can initial training and certification become more of a stop-over on a railway line to an interesting destination rather than an arrival at a terminus beyond which maps are scarce?

All these things and many others are possible in revitalising teacher education systems. All the options are resource constrained. The implication of this paper is that the constraints are not a starting point — imagination, enthusiasm, commitment, and insight into the training process take precedence. But costs and resources are a central issue which must be coupled with judgements of effectiveness to chart the room to manoeuvre in generating alternative and preferable strategies to train teachers in a vibrant and purposeful professional environment.

Teacher education is at risk where austerity in public financial resources leads to the asking of hard questions about how to re-profile educational investment. Unless the sceptical can be convinced that what exists, and what can be developed, does represent value for money, unless proposed and actual costs and resource needs identified are realistic, and unless there is robust evidence that training methods of whatever kind lead to tangible benefits, the pressure will be to find the cheapest methods of certifying teachers. These will not necessarily be the most effective.

This paper makes a start at mapping key questions concerning costs and resource utilisation that can be explored empirically. Appendix 1 provides a summary of these. Deeper understanding of these questions, and the reasons for whatever answers can be given, would provide a more secure basis to develop policy on teacher education in particular countries. Such policy will never be solely the result of analysis focused on resource utilisation. However, it can hardly ignore the questions raised in this paper if the best use possible is to be made of public funds.

Appendix 1: Researchable questions related to entry, training process, outcomes and deployment of new teachers

Question Entry Conditions	Sub-questions	
How are trainee teachers selected?	What criteria are weighted in the selection process? Academic achievement? Personal qualities? Age and experience?	What evidence is there of the predictive validity of the selection process? What are the selection ratios of applicants to places and what issues does this raise?
Is there "queuing" for selection in the training market?	Are trainees direct entrants from school or have they been teaching as unqualified teaching assistants?	If there is queuing for training places, does it increase or decrease costs and selection efficiency?
What are the characteristics of those selected?	What do the academic and professional experience characteristics of those selected indicate about their needs in relation to the desired competencies?	Are the (changing) characteristics of entrants into training reflected in the curriculum they follow and the pedagogic methods used?
Training Process		
What are the costs per successful student for different modes of training?	How do costs vary between institutions and modes of training? How do costs compare with those in other forms of post-school education and training?	Are variations in cost per student within a mode of training the result of different patterns of staff utilisation, economies of scale, or variations in non-salary costs?
Should pre-career training models be preferred to in-career models?	Does pre-career training have higher costs than in-career training?	What evidence is there that pre-career training is more effective and efficient than in-career training?
Is more school-based training an attractive option?	Are actual costs likely to be higher or lower?	Do schools have the infrastructure to support training and induction?
How much does teaching practice cost?	Is the cost of practice teaching consistent with the benefits?	Could the benefits be achieved in different ways?
Does distance education offer a viable alternative to college-based training?	Is distance education cheaper per qualified teacher? Does it result in similar outcomes?	How feasible are mixed mode systems?

Outcomes		
Does teacher training increase mastery of subject disciplines?	If it does, how much are the gains and how do they compare with the costs of achieving similar gains in further schooling or higher education?	Is it cost effective to mix subject upgrading with method and professional development courses?
Does teacher training speed up the acquisition of professional skills?	Does training impart competencies which are different to those arising from experience?	By how much does training accelerate the acquisition of which competencies?
Do newly trained teachers perform differently to untrained teachers?	To what extent do newly trained teachers act differently in organising learning and teaching to untrained teachers working in the same schools?	Do institutional effects overshadow training effects in teachers performance in the classroom?
What are the success rates on teacher training programmes?	Are the criteria for success set at appropriate levels? Which competencies are the most common cause of lack of success?	To what extent are newly trained teachers regarded as competent by schools and other stakeholders?
Deployment		
How and where are newly trained teachers employed?	Are newly trained teachers directed to posts or does a free market operate?	Would a managed market in placement of newly trained teachers be beneficial?
What support do newly trained teachers receive?	How much is invested in supporting the induction of newly trained teachers?	Should some of the costs of initial training be redirected to continuing professional development of newly trained teachers?
What is the attrition rate for newly trained teachers?	What is the average length of time newly qualified teachers teach after completing training?	Is the ratio of investment in training to the average length of service a balanced investment?

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Linking the Global Teacher Education Community

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Abstract

The article addresses issues that are potential themes for discussion and interchange of experiences among teacher educators. These include the search for a theory of teacher education from the perspective of issues relating to its purpose, students and teacher educators and the teaching programmes themselves. The paper refers then to change in teacher education and ends with some indications regarding what changes might be desirable to consider. Literature and experience in different country contexts serves to feed the discussions.

Introduction

Six hundred experienced teachers surveyed in 1995 were brutal about the education they had received, describing it as "mind numbing", the "shabbiest psychobabble" and "an abject waste of time". They complained that fragmented, superficial course work had little relevance to classroom realities. And judging by the weak skills of student teachers entering their schools, they observed, the preparation was still woefully inadequate (*Time*, 26 May 1997).

This statement can be heard the world over. Its content served to justify the need for teacher education improvement in Chile; it is found in diagnostic analyses of teacher education in Bangladesh; it served to justify (rightly or wrongly) the introduction of changes in the British teacher education system and it is a quotation of USA teachers in respect of their own system. Also increasingly stated around the world is the assumption that despite its problems teacher education, both initial and continuous, is a key element in the quality of

schooling processes (Delors 1996, 1998). Thus, if many agree on what the problems are in teacher education, while at the same time recognising the importance of teacher education, then we can at least think of it as a topic for global conversation. Further, we can think in terms of linkages that bind the interested parties, not only to highlight the problems of teacher education, but also to discuss and interchange experiences with a view to improving its processes.

This paper attempts to bring out themes that are or could form part of global discussions among teacher educators in different regions of the world. For this purpose, three areas are selected that, while being global, are also related to policy and to practical conditions needed for the renewal of teacher education. They refer to:

(1) the search for a theory of teacher education;

(2) issues relating to its organisational structures; and

(3) change or renewal in teacher education.

The paper concludes with suggested pointers for change in teacher education.

In search of a theory for teacher education

Until some twenty years ago, the topics that were of concern in thinking about teacher education had to do with the nature and content of courses offered in institutions; the timeframe allowed for these; the techniques for enabling trainees to adopt teaching skills and possible comparisons of teacher organisational structures or the role of school practice. These issues tended to be examined in a piecemeal fashion, with input from different theoretical perspectives depending on the nature of the issue. Discussions about the education of teachers were related to whatever was thought to be the status of educational theory:

- an applied synthesis of other disciplines such as sociology, psychology or philosophy, or
- a set of practical matters related to curriculum, assessment practices, guidance for students, techniques of getting the curriculum across to students, etc.

Teacher education was, and still is, referred to as "training" and derived its theory and practice from one or the other of the above assumptions. In the synthesis of behavioural disciplines assumption, teacher education viewed the content of its programmes as inferred from such theories. Such an approach is still found in university teacher education programmes in Latin America. On the other hand, behaviourism as a learning theory influenced what came to be known as competency-based teacher education. This meant seeing the preparation of teachers as development of specific teaching and classroom management skills. The key theoretical concern in this case was to describe what effective teachers do in order to decide what should form part of an appropriate training programme. Tom (1997) refers to both these approaches as teacher education by implication.

Seen from another angle, conceptions of teacher education also have been affected by two other traditionally divergent positions regarding teaching. On the one hand is the belief that teaching is a skill — that any content can be taught by any teacher as long as that teacher has acquired the skills proved to facilitate learning. Within this *skills* theory of teaching, understanding content matters less than learning how to teach. On the other hand, there stood and stands the *crafts* theory, holding that effective teachers are naturally endowed with the capacity to teach. According to this theory, the procedural knowledge teachers need is best learnt in the workplace, while substantive content knowledge can be learnt elsewhere. These positions have led to long discussions on the role of teacher training institutions.

Gradually, however, the tenor of the discussions on teacher education is changing. This is partly due to different issues being posed for teacher education to consider that are derived from studies about what goes on in schools, how teachers think out their practices, and how people who come from different backgrounds and hold different conceptions about the world actually learn. Increased attention to theory is also resulting in reaction to voiced complaints about teacher education's ability to produce competent teachers and in response to broader social and political concerns for quality and equity in education. These factors are converging into the search for a comprehensive theory of teacher education which looks at teacher education in the broader context of social concerns and not as if it were some self-contained hard structure that can be exhaustively described. This comprehensive theory should also be sufficiently fluid as to feed from research and experience and leave space for appropriate modifications as these become necessary.

This trend suggests that the purpose of those concerned is not to provide a hard-core theory but rather to keep open the possibility of continuously engaging in theory building. If that is the case, then it is appropriate to highlight focal points of current attention that enrich this process. Out of these, the following four are noted in the next paragraphs: the purpose and orientation of teacher education, what teacher educators and student teachers bring to the teacher education process, the nature of teaching programmes, and the specificity and organisation of teacher educational programmes.

The purpose and orientation of teacher education

There are indications that serious thinking is going into re-conceptualising the meaning and orientation of teacher education partly because national educational reforms are demanding changes that in turn require rethinking and restructuring and partly because new societal demands on teachers make these processes

inevitable. Starting from society, we face everywhere a revision of teacher traditional functions. Hargreaves (1997) speaks of a post-modern condition in which teachers, in different ways, are asked to perform a wide variety of functions where dominant elements are uncertainty about results and prompt response to constant and diverse challenges. Even more radically, as poorer societies push for change and require effective results from education, they demand more and better prepared teachers without being able to offer them the incentives that could make their work worthwhile and satisfactory. Messages are sent across the world indicating that schools should become learning organisations as opposed to teaching organisations (Delors 1996, 1998). Teachers are asked to be supporters of learning, activators of learning, facilitators or whatever word one may wish to use to denote the action of producing learning (OCED, 1994; Avalos, 1994) . Yet teachers must also engage in a myriad of activities that are not just classroom-based or responsive to classroom-needs, but related to the broader social, cultural or economic conditions that affect learning. Teachers must respond to the diverse needs of children and young people, work with parents, implement social policies such as drug prevention actions, and in a number of reform contexts they must engage in designing and implementing the change of their schools. Also, and this is part of the newer demands of the market economy sweeping across the globe and of national systems of measurement of school effectiveness, teachers are increasingly challenged to produce results and be accountable for them. Gone are the days of a teacher in the isolation of his or her classroom, faced with the sole task of teaching pupils up to where that class was able to respond.

This context poses critical theoretical questions regarding the purpose and orientation of teacher education processes. From a broad perspective, the distinction between initial teacher training and in-service training weakens training and is replaced with the concept of continuous teacher education. The purpose of initial teacher education is to open horizons, provide exposure and encourage the development of learning strategies that facilitate knowing and understanding of the knowledge-generating procedures of the disciplines that form part of the school curriculum. Teacher education must concern itself with experiencing knowledge structures; with enabling understanding of how people learn (as individuals and in social contexts) and with facilitating the actual practice of these processes in settings both within and out of the school and classroom. There is less and less belief in a comprehensive purpose of initial teacher education that prepares for all eventualities in the school, classroom and professional life as a whole. On the contrary, it is increasingly accepted that initial teacher education should only equip teachers with what is needed to cope with the early demands of teaching, but develop the ability to collaborate with other teachers to build appropriate learning environments and achieve effective

learning results. In the context of the school conceived as a learning organisation, learning to teach is a matter of continuous education, or as the concept is described, of continuous professional development through a variety of means.

In the quotation below, Darling-Hammond and Cobb (1996) illustrate aspects of this approach and describe how teacher education is being conceptualised in the context of USA education, where there has been a serious effort to reform or "reconstruct" schools:

> Teachers will need to be prepared to teach in the way these new standards demand with deeper understanding of their disciplines, of interdisciplinary connections and of inquiry-based learning. They will need skills for creating learning experiences that enable students to construct their own knowledge in powerful ways. In addition, teachers will need to understand and use a variety of more authentic and performance based means for assessing students' knowledge and understanding as well as for evaluating students' approaches to learning and their prior experiences and conceptions. These kinds of assessment will require keen observation conducted in the context of a highly developed understanding of how children learn, develop and demonstrate their knowledge. They will rely on teachers' capacities to invent their own means for looking carefully and deeply at student learning processes and products as well as to use — and teach for — much more sophisticated performance assessments developed by others.

The student-teacher and the teacher educator

A growing body of research is centring its focus of attention on the student teacher and what he or she brings to the teacher education situation. There is a shift from believing that there was a body of technical knowledge "out there" which can be passed on either via a "craftsmanship" or a "technician" model of teacher education. Teacher training theory stimulated by cognitive psychology and constructivist approaches, is recognising now that there are prior beliefs, attitudes and experiences that student teachers bring to the teaching situation that are not easily changed. According to Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1996), these are beliefs about teaching and learning, about subject matter and about students. In the field of science teaching, for example, there is substantive work on the effect of ethno-cultural views on the development of scientific concepts and of the views that student teachers, after undergoing a science degree course, bring to the training situation (Avlos, 1995). Gardner (1993) contends that children develop strong views about the world before they enter school and the school

seldom changes these views. Not only does the student teacher bring a set of beliefs to the training situation, but the teacher educator, faced by new demands or theoretical perspectives, approaches these with his or her own ideas, beliefs and deep-set theories of what works or does not work.

We are witnessing a greater awareness of the need to understand how people modify beliefs, or how it is possible to build on pre-existing concepts and structures. More specifically, we need to examine the existing conditions for change. A good example of the need to recognise beliefs came into my hands as I examined materials used to train in-service teachers in Bangladesh. In an effort to improve teacher training it was suggested that a module relating to action research be introduced in the training programme. During a workshop situation, action research was discussed on the basis of materials describing the approach with those who might in turn implement this approach in the curriculum at institutional level. From two sets of documents I was able to compare the explanation given by the person who "owned" the concept and practice of action research, and the person who heard it but understood it in his own terms. Table 4 illustrates the manner in which the concept was interpreted by both persons.

Table 4: The objectives of action research

The original proposition	The interpretation
The aims of the action research module are to:	Action research — subject is included in the teacher training course to:
(a) promote collaborative working relationships between trainees	(a) increase the capabilities to formulate plans and to take decisions as a group
(b) develop capacity for planning and decision-making on a team basis over an extended time-scale	(b) increase the knowledge and skill of the methods and techniques of research
(c) develop trainees' planning and negotiating skills	(c) increase the skill of the trainees to identify the problem, interpret and analyse the data
(d) develop knowledge about research techniques and procedures	(d) create consciousness among teachers, students, guardians and others about developing the educational environment of the college as a whole
(e) sensitise trainees to issues in the creation, interpretation and analysis of knowledge	

Because a conventional concept of research was so deeply entrenched in the learners, and no strategy was used to at least call such a concept into question, the new idea was accommodated to the old one in order to make them

compatible. As a result, teachers did not develop action research projects in the sense originally presented, rather they embarked upon conventional survey projects.

The nature of teaching programmes

Darling-Hammond and Cobb (1996) (see the quotation on page 39) redefine the purpose of teacher education and highlight the processes a student needs to undergo in order to learn to teach effectively. If one looks around the world at the formats used for the preparation of teachers, it is fairly easy to distinguish what I would call the traditional or conventional mode with its variations, and the emerging experiences that are trying to break this tradition. The key elements of the tradition are programmes organised around timeframes between two and five years, where subject knowledge is either learned before or concurrently with pedagogy, and where pedagogy is clearly divided into a theoretical portion and a practical component. Every time reforms are introduced into these programmes they are usually either structural (changes in the timeframe) or the addition or subtraction of courses. In the face of this tradition, we observe interesting, though in some cases controversial, efforts to break the convention such as transferring big chunks of the tasks of learning how to teach to general schools or to schools specially selected for the purpose.

In reading the literature on teacher education, what stands out is a dissatisfaction with the traditional forms of understanding the "pedagogy" component of teacher education and its relationship to learning how to become an effective teacher. While there is little dispute that a sound knowledge base is a key foundation for learning how to teach and for teaching itself and that universities are better equipped for this task, the issues at hand are really how this knowledge is transformed into teachable knowledge (Shulman, 1987); how student teachers modify their own perceptions of teaching and their subject knowledge conceptual frameworks to fit the needs of different children and of different learning situations; how practical experiences blend in the process of learning how to teach and yet allow for analytical skills and reflection on those experiences to take place; what sort of support is needed from supervisors and school mentors and what capabilities these persons should have (Carter and Anders, 1996).

The literature on teacher education borrows increasingly from brain research, cognitive psychology, branches of constructivism represented by Piaget and Vygotsky, practical theorisation supported by sociological and anthropological considerations such as those found in Schön (1983) and Zeichner and Liston (1987). Teacher education increases its knowledge base from research that is

centred on cases, on the way teachers think, and the way teachers learn to learn in pre-service experiences as well as in a variety of professional development school-based situations (Russel and Munby, 1992).

All these inputs are leading to what might be called a revision of the linear concept of teacher education where content knowledge and theoretical pedagogy come first and are followed by technique learning and practical implementation. Instead, what is emerging is a view that sees teacher development moving spirally through successes and failures towards a teacher who understands his or her content and context and is able to perform competently. This kind of teacher is prepared through an educational process that involves conceptual understanding, exposure to different strategies of organising learning experiences, assisted and reflective practice, experiential checking of practices and understandings, all proceeding from an initial stage to stages of continuous professional development. We will see later how the theory is embodied in different organisational structures.

Specificity of contexts and the demands of global reality

The fourth element that one is able to glean from the writings on teacher education is its connection to the particular demands and conditions in which teaching occurs, as well as predictions based on global conditions and demands.

In a country like Bangladesh where I have worked, it is tempting to say that what education needs is to be more effective in preparing young children to learn the basic skills for surviving in a very precarious society. The fallacy of this, however, is that most children already know how to survive; so survival is not the goal, but something different. It is also tempting to consider oneself as an expert who has something to say about what this different goal could be and how it can be made achievable. That is also a fallacy because I am not an expert on their society and what I have to offer comes from an experience which is different to theirs. But what our global reality allows and makes possible is a conversation, a discussion that may be enriched or re-invented with the knowledge each partner has to offer, and which in the increasing connectedness made possible by technology, can be quickly disseminated and become the knowledge of others.

The approach to preparing a teacher is being redefined in terms that recognise the shifting nature of the reality in which we live, in which the meaning of "expertise" changes with the evolving nature of situational demands. The teacher who settles in a particular context, wherever this may be, can no longer perceive

himself or herself as an "absolute holder of knowledge" because global reality and social demands will not let this happen. In turn, finding his or her path or redefining knowledge and tasks to be done cannot occur in isolation — neither from the immediate community nor from the world community. Teachers, like other professionals faced with the requirement to maintain a sort of constant review of their existing knowledge structures and practices, require a preparation that is not simply based on "getting knowledge" and "applying skills". Those traits needed to cope with risk situations such as the capacity to seek information and willingness to enter into collaborative forms of work, the capacity to ask questions, to look for answers and the willingness to constantly experiment, are impacting on the focus of teacher education and professional development programmes.

The organisation of teacher education programmes

Structures as embedding formats of activities are key to the development of programmes. As Arends, Winitzky and Burek (1996) note, they can facilitate or restrict what is possible and the effectiveness of desired results. This applies to teacher education. There are many ways of looking at particular structure configurations, but here I use four categories to distinguish between them, showing the possibilities and restrictions in each. These categories are *location*, *time*, *connectedness*, and *particularity*.

The issue of *location* has become a major one in contemporary discussions of teacher education, mostly because two major countries have restructured their systems in terms of the location of their teacher education programmes (the United Kindgom and France), and another big country, the USA is experimenting with different ways of organising the relationship between schools and teacher education programmes. What is the best site for teachers to learn how to teach? In many countries throughout the world, sites are still teachers' colleges or normal schools where learning to teach is strongly a matter of skills for teaching a curriculum, capabilities for organising a classroom and an environment where mystique for the teaching mission is developed. They are often boarding institutions. Through occasional contact with mainstream pedagogues, maybe once in a decade, these institutions reformulate the content of their courses, while all the rest remain the same: the training period (one to three years at best), techniques and practice. Teacher educators in these institutions learn about "modern strategies" at some time in their career and do not revise these much unless forced to do so by some external decision. These institutions produce teachers who cope with the minimal demands of their systems, but such teachers are less and less able to create stimulating learning environments for their students.

After analysing the potential of existing locations to achieve the aim of producing teachers able to stimulate their pupils to learn, the countries mentioned have opted for changes in location. But changes differ substantially from country to country. In the case of France, where teacher education was carried out in non-university programmes with loose university connections, the change has meant establishing 20 *Institutes Universitaires de Formation de Maîtres*, with teacher training programmes leading to licenciature, certification and Masters' degrees. These institutions are attached or will seek attachment to existing universities (Martin, 1997).

On the contrary, in UK the once solid programmes of one year of post-graduate or four-years undergraduate teacher training, have been weakened in their university base and much of the teacher training is transferred to schools. In most cases schools take charge of two-thirds of the training time and share with universities the assessment of student teachers. A few schools carry out on their own the task of teacher training. The governments Teacher Training Agency has centrally determined standards and evaluation schemes for teacher education in England and Wales (Department for Education and Employment, 1997; Office for Standards in Education and Teacher Training Agency, 1996–1997).

In the United States there are several forms in operation influenced by individual experiments and recommendations from reports produced in the eighties and nineties. They aim at bringing teacher education closer to schools. Among these new forms are the Professional Development Schools or Professional Practice Schools selected from existing schools because of their potential to model the best practices for all kinds of teachers (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986; Goodlad, 1990).

There is not enough evidence as yet to support any one of these newer forms of institutional organisation. All in all, however, if one thinks of the situation in poorer countries where the conditions in schools for pre-service learning are fragile, it would seem that solid institutions are more appropriate where content knowledge can be more firmly secured and where conditions are potentially better for a relevant pedagogy. Martin (1997), in her review of the role of university in teacher training in England and France, concludes that this is still a desirable option. "Especially with regard to the subject matter area and the critical approach inherent in university based training, the comparative advantage of the universities over other institutional environments can hardly be questioned".

Time is an element receiving much attention in worldwide literature concerning learning opportunities. Recently, a reform introduced in Chile has lengthened

school hours from a 5 hours a day of basic school to 5,7 hours and from 5,4 hours a day of secondary school to 6,3 hours. The issue of time is being discussed in Bangladesh and may also be an important issue in South Africa. In teacher training, the question of an optimal length of time has also been around for quite a while. In many of the poorer countries teacher education has been short and specific because there were no resources, both human and financial, to support a longer period of education. But as soon as it became possible to introduce some change, this has been done. Papua New Guinea did so with its primary teacher training in the early nineties. Engaging in an interesting and collaborative work to produce a new curriculum and backed by support from Australian technical assistance, the teachers' colleges organised their primary teacher training programme into a three year one (Burke, Elliot, Lucas and Swart, 1997). In the USA, Darling-Hammond and Cobb's (1996) research examining the effects of full-fledged training programmes versus short-term alternative routes, points to the benefits of the longer programme. Time is needed to learn and understand subject matter content, to process it into its teachable forms, to practice, to reflect and to review and to learn again. Equally important as the timeframe in which a programme develops are the time slots in which learning activities take place. Short time slots only allow for traditional lecture styles of teaching, and yet many institutions continue to organise their timetables in this way.

Connectedness refers to the degree of proximity between curricular activities, be these within faculties that administer subject knowledge components of the teacher education curriculum or within the educational faculties or departments themselves. The quotation which heads this paper talks of the experience teachers have had of fragmented learning in their initial teacher training programmes. Such a criticism was repeated about the Chilean teacher training programmes (Avalos, 1998) and its timetables show courses described as self-contained representations of a discipline or activity. The literature on learning and learning organisations speaks against this sort of representation of the world. The effective demands of our society is for what Guile and Young (1997) call multidisciplinareity or collaboration across fields including connective reflexivity or working together in partnerships with stakeholders. In a certain sense, the efforts to open teacher training to partnerships with schools could be interpreted as one way of dealing with the issue. Another is to look at the curriculum and its organisation with a view to its restructuring into broader connecting themes. Some of this is occurring in the USA through the introduction in some centres of "thematic programmes". The programmes may be organised around themes of a more academic nature such as a developmental constructivist theory of learning or around themes of social justice, diversity of learners and the organisation of diversity in society as in the case of Michigan State University's Heterogeneous Classroom Program (Arends, Winitzky and

Burke, 1996). Collaboration also requires breaking the boundaries between faculties such as Arts, Sciences and Education, but this is less easy. In Chile, reforms being developed by universities are seeking to tackle this issue of connectedness through restructuring the curriculum along thematic structures concerned with content and pedagogy (Avalos, 1998).

Particularity refers to the specific modes by which teacher education institutional organisations deal with special situations. These are, for example, the particular needs of different cultural groups (and we may think of multilingual and multicultural teacher training), or the needs of untrained teachers requiring different organisational structures (perhaps just temporarily), or even the situation of raising the levels of reflective awareness — the capability to think differently among teacher educators in the context of reform requirements. There is little in the literature that deals with these aspects of particularity other than, perhaps, what has been studied about alternative routes to training for untrained teachers including distance education (Perraton and Potashnik, 1997). And yet, organisational forms do emerge, such as a specific programme within the teacher education programme of a university in the south of Chile, to prepare teachers for the Mapuche indigenous people, or the *ad hoc* teacher training that emerged from interested communities in Papua New Guinea to teach their children in their vernacular the first literacy and numeracy skills, together with forms of their cultures (the *tok ples preskuls*). A well known and documented experience in Bangladesh is that of the training of young high school leavers (women) to install one to three grade schools and teach the children who were not able to enter the system.

How do we change the teacher education organisations and processes?

The need for changes, as indicated earlier, seems to be present all over the world and actual reform processes are in place in a number of countries. Here, we refer not to examples of these changes but to those aspects that can be gleaned from the literature and experience on what is involved in change and what are some of its conditions. Firstly, a somewhat sketchy distinction can be made between, Aristotelian terminology, the "matter" and the "form" of change in training institutions. Teacher education involves a curriculum, a structure, teacher educators, students, opportunities to learn in the field, resources, and so on. This is the "matter" of teacher education. These elements are interrelated and may be totally or partially in need of restructuring, whatever may be the case. Such restructuring implies a theoretical outlook that defines the nature of the connections and the form that its elements may take. Forms are the ways in which curriculum, training processes, organisational structures and so on are conceptualised theoretically and revamped in the course of a change process.

The implementation process: a question of learning

Assuming a proposed change, with a matter and form decided with greater or lesser participation of stakeholders, the key issue of change remains the process itself or its implementation. This is so because the forms adopted and the beliefs that support these forms constitute the real nature of change.

Change involves learning of different kinds. Learning that is linked to awareness of the need for change and of the risks involved if one or another avenue of change is pursued. Learning from predicting possible outcomes, implementing suggested actions and being able to reflect on its results. Leaning through interacting with others doing the same thing is important and perhaps, if conditions allow, modifying the implementation.

The learning involved in change is rarely possible without support systems. In this respect, much of the relevant literature in the field indicates the importance of learning within a community of practice. The community of practice in this case consists of teacher educators within a training institution or within a network or association of teacher educators. Change requires participants to develop both a disposition for change and create a shared understanding of what is involved in the various roles. This in turn requires the generation of institutional conditions that the discussion of change, the sharing of experiences, and reflective inquiry facilitate. From the perspective of external assistance, some form of incentives and expert advice systems deemed appropriate by those involved in change, can support changes in individual dispositions and offer "new opportunities for learning" (Guile and Young, 1997). Such opportunities may take the form of materials, information, and persons with particular forms of expertise, or participation in courses and workshops outside of the institution carrying out the change. Support may also extend professionally related expert systems to the experience of stakeholders in the wider community. As an example, during a workshop for school head-teachers on the management of learning institutions in Chile, an invitation was extended to a group of mountain climbers who had summited Everest from its difficult side after several attempts. The issue concerning the workshop was change, the proposal was to strengthen team leadership in schools, and the learning that was needed was how effective such a strategy might be and what was involved in its implementation. The Everest group provided the experiential material to understand what is involved in the planning of an expedition, the failures that precede success, the importance of closely-knit team strategies and commitment, information-gathering, the hard decisions about who will actually get to the top and who will stay behind to provide support, and so on.

The implementation of change is also dependent on the nature and strength of its usual constraints, such as bureaucratic rules and controls, and conditions of the

wider social and political system. Believing that they act in favour of quality, controls are often put in place to assure adherence to established standards or procedures. In the case of "standards and assessment", Smylie (1996) has reservations about these being simple solutions to ensure the quality of educational change. Without denying the importance of monitoring devices for regulations and standards, these need to be set against the wider context of what persons in change situations can offer: "the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and social resources of adults in schools that can be applied to promote children's learning and development". In other words, standards monitoring or other control devices should not be so fixed that they repress creative deviations from the change model which in fact may be more useful to the purposes of change than fidelity to the original procedure.

Without exhausting the discussion on change, one finally has to remind those concerned that changing a teacher training system or an institution and stimulating the development of a different outlook by its members, is a complex process that takes time. Time is not necessarily to be seen as a timeline indicating progress from a point 1 to a point 10, but as a cycle with high points and low points which may, however, be indicating advancement.

Some pointers regarding change of teacher education institutions and processes

In this last section, I wish to lay out possible courses of actions in relation to the task of improving teacher education in different country contexts. These I would propose as a contribution to discussions in the global community of teacher educators.

Strengthening subject-knowledge and its linkages to the forms and practice of teaching

The nature of the links between subject-knowledge and the use of appropriate styles of teaching is a complex issue. Probably few hold to the theory that learning to develop these links belongs to two distinct phases of the education of a teacher. In fact, there is sufficient recognition that though subject knowledge may be acquired through programmes that occur prior to teacher preparation, such knowledge is in fact reorganised by the holder to serve the purposes of teaching and of stimulating learning processes in diverse pupil groups. Nevertheless, it remains true that organising teacher education programmes, especially for the primary level, without sufficient attention to teachers' adequate conceptual *understanding* of their subjects, is a policy that in the long term backfires on the quality of children's learning. Also, it is not always sufficiently acknowledged that the subject knowledge needed to teach is not necessarily as

broad as the field would allow nor as narrow as the curriculum would require. Grossman, Wilson and Shulman are among those who have examined the nature of subject knowledge and they point out its key elements:

(a) the knowledge of facts, concepts and procedures of a discipline;

(b) the knowledge of the explanatory frameworks of the field; and

(c) the knowledge of ways in which new knowledge is generated in the field (methods and verification criteria).

Pessoa de Carvalho and Gil Pérez (1993) hold a similar view. These key elements of knowledge may be found in the learning of a particular segment in a discipline or field of knowledge and not necessarily require learning the entire field. What matters then is not the coverage of facts or concepts but their understanding and the ability to make connections, something which is not always achieved through the usual styles of teaching in courses whether university or non-university based. Despite this acknowledged limitation of the delivery systems in university courses, there is more of a chance that students will be taught by university staff who are competent in the field than the staff in a teachers' college or similar institution.

Linking subject knowledge to teaching is not a simple second stage in a teacher education programme before a teacher engages in practical teaching. It is a complex stage that requires a set of conditions that allow for transformation of what is known into "teachable" knowledge and constant interaction of learning how to teach with actual teaching in real situations. Therefore, it concurrently needs other pedagogical information to assist in the process of learning to teach. While Shulman (1997) distinguishes three domains of teacher knowledge: content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge per se, Feiman-Neimsar and Remillard (1996) warn against believing that teaching is simple discreet application of these domains at different moments of their activity:

> Teachers do not draw on knowledge in one domain at a time: rather they weave together different kinds of knowledge as they reason about what to do and take action in particular situations ... For instance, in planning an instructional activity, a teacher may consider what concepts she wants students to learn (content), how those topics fit with previous and future topics (curriculum), how appropriate the activity is for her particular group of students (learners) what might be difficult for them (learning), how she will find out what students do and do not understand. Researchers are just beginning to study the processes by which teachers meld different kinds of knowledge in teaching and to consider how best to represent the results.

Where best to situate the site for learning content knowledge and facilitating pedagogical content knowledge, pedagogy and practice, is an issue for discussion.

Understanding the importance of what student teachers bring to the training situation

As shown earlier in this paper, there is an interesting body of research on what student teachers bring to the training situation. We know that student teachers have models of how teachers should behave, have views and concepts about content knowledge brought from their previous education, and have views about students and their potential to learn as well opinions on the role of education and schools. Many teacher education courses ignore these views, or if they acknowledge that they might be there, do not use them to build new knowledge or attempt to produce at least cognitive dissonance, a necessary condition for wanting to implement change. Often in teacher-training situations, the norm is training through propositional knowledge about content and pedagogy and procedural knowledge for classroom use. This of course serves the purpose of being successful in tests and exams, and even in classroom teaching that is measured against agreed procedures. However, it cannot guarantee that past the period of training and into the period of school teaching, the novice teacher will not restructure his or her teaching to fit a pre-existing pattern, which never was really changed. Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (ibid) suggest that to detect and change student teachers' prior beliefs and attitudes, the following conditions have to be met:

(a) provision of opportunity for student teachers to consider why the new practices and their associated values and beliefs are better than the conventional ones they may hold;
(b) examples of the new practices in realistic conditions, and preferably to have experienced them themselves as learners; and
(c) provision of ongoing support and guidance in the process of reconstructing their views and practices.

The sorts of arrangements (organisational and teaching strategies, and practical experiences) that need to be made to provide opportunities for teacher educators to recognise concepts, beliefs and attitudes among student teachers, and how these may be adjusted in the process of learning to teach, is another issue for discussion among teacher educators.

Widening vision among teacher educators in different contexts

Recent experience in projects aimed at improving teacher education programmes has made me aware of the need to maintain forms of contact with other experiences, with theory development in the field, and with researchers and practitioners from different locations. The case in many countries that have been recipients of technical assistance is that new ideas and forms of doing things are

conveyed at some given time, educators then are trained in these ideas, books are provided and processes and structures are changed accordingly. We thus find, for example, that a concept of teacher education developed largely in the USA on the basis of behavioural theory and competency-based models of teacher training was introduced around the world some twenty years ago. Only now that there is renewed interest in teacher education and new waves of reform in this area, do we recognise that in those settings where the competency-based principle has been applied, nothing has changed over time. Discussions based on other theories and research literature to assist these teacher educators to think differently about their system was hardly accessible to them and to practitioners in the field. And so, faced with the need for change, technical assistance will come in again to update professionals and propose curricular and institutional reform. In turn, resulting changes will remain in place for another twenty years — that is, unless conditions for periodic renewal are put in place.

For such a purpose, establishing world-wide teacher education networks, stimulating contacts through visits to other locations and similar strategies should be considered. Widening vision, that is, providing access to information available only in one part of the world, is an important factor in the empowerment of teachers and teacher educators and the establishment of conditions for change.

Developing models by strengthening potentially good institutions

More and more we realise that where there is great need for change. To begin the reform process will be like drops of water falling in an arid terrain. Selectivity is thus a feasible course of action, though perhaps not necessarily a politically desirable one. Institutions with potential for change can always be found. These institutions may have potential because of existing leadership or a history of innovation because of particularly capable individual teacher educators. In such cases, an incentive may trigger an awakening to the need for reform. Incentives might harness dormant capabilities, stimulate activities such as curriculum review or collaborative actions to improve training strategies, and with some external support might make a reform project feasible. Every country context needs institutions that provide conditions for the development of research and good practices and that provide a critical mass able to influence what is said and decided in the field of education. Where no such centre of excellence exists, national and international assistance should consider offering support to potentially able institutions to move in this direction.

The topics and discussions presented in this article are those selected by the author on the basis of learning from the literature and from personal research and

experience. They are offered with the intention of stimulating the process referred to in the preceding section: as input into discussions that might be held in a world-wide network of teacher educators. In my view, around the world there is much more that we share today than that separates us, even if social, cultural and political contexts are different. Those concerned with teacher education either because they are teachers, policy-makers, lecturers or researchers need to talk to one another. They need to share analytical and critical insights, in order to find ways of improving the quality of learning among those who will be teachers in a world of difficult but challenging demands.

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"There is nothing so practical as a good theory."

Re-thinking the Role of Theory and Practice in South African Teacher Education

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Abstract

Post-apartheid teacher education policy has been characterised by intense debate about the role that "theory" and "practice" plays in the education of teachers. While virtually all policy documents give rhetorical support to the importance of theoretical education, and of a curriculum which integrates theory and practice, this is often not carried through in the sentiment of key policy documents. Instead, a significant distrust of the disciplined study of theory, and of teacher and textual authority, is evident in both policy and popular discourse.

This paper warns that this tendency, which is strongly informed by *laissez-faire*, Rousseauin understandings of education, is unlikely to develop a practice of teaching that is effective or transformative. As an alternative, this paper proposes a structured, but democratic, Deweyan understanding of learner-centredness and experientialism. Foundational to this is the development of teachers with a rigorous theoretical understanding of how learning occurs of their subject and the ability to use theory to intervene in the practice of teaching. The paper argues that a reconceptualised understanding of *theory* and *teacher authority* are the legs of good, progressive education.

Re-thinking the role of theory and practice in South African teacher education

> To entrust teachers with critical outcomes — with highly challenging educational goals — and at the same time place them in the background as stage workers of a play is to rob them of their pedagogical authority necessary for achieving these outcomes (Shalem, 1997).

Changing educational discourses

Post-apartheid South Africa has witnessed an avalanche of new education analysis and policy. The cornerstone policy document, the 1995 White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education, 1995), describes the "paramount" post-apartheid educational task as building:

> ... a just and equitable system which provides good quality education and training to learners young and old throughout the country ... Appropriate education and training can empower people to participate effectively in all the processes of a democratic society, economic activity, cultural expression, and community life, and can help citizens build a nation free of race, gender and every other form of discrimination (ibid).

The White Paper sets up what has become an enduring educational policy tension: balancing the *political* imperative to transform the philosophy and ideology which underpins South African education while at the same time fulfilling an *economic* imperative, namely developing and managing a system that will educate/train more competent workers. This tension isn't new and it isn't surprising. Since the advent of industrial society and mass schooling, tension has emerged between "trainers" and "educators". As the White Paper suggests, the historical divisions between "education" and "training":

> ... have grown out of, and helped reproduce, very old occupational and social class divisions. In South Africa such distinctions ... have been closely associated with the ethnic structure of economic opportunity and power (ibid).

Thus the White Paper's emphasis on the need to "integrate" these historically antagonistic tendencies. But integration is also driven by an understanding of future needs. The White Paper explains that a vision of an integrated education and training system:

> ... implies a view of learning which rejects a rigid division between 'academic' and 'applied', 'theory' and 'practice', 'knowledge' and 'skills', 'head' and 'hand'... (ibid).

This vision of an integrated education and training system is essential because:

> ... successful modern economies and societies require the elimination of artificial hierarchies, in social organisation, in the organisation and management of work, and in the way learning is organised and certified (ibid).

This vision is powerfully echoed in the *critical cross-field outcomes* developed through the South African Qualifications Authority (Department of Education, 1995b). These seven outcomes, and five additional "suggestions" relating to personal development, have been designed as generic to all educational programmes with the idea that this will ensure a degree of qualification portability. In addition, these outcomes set an educational agenda committed to developing learners with an "applied and integrated" competence which would allow them to live more fulfilled lives and to work more productively.

Educational transformation, then, is driven by internal socio-political *transformation* imperatives (with a glance over our shoulders to our past) — a commitment to redressing apartheid inequalities in education, work opportunities and political power — and by external economic *efficiency* imperatives (with a look across the oceans to our future) — a recognition that South Africa has re-joined a globalised world economy and has, thus, become subject to the rapid changes in knowledge and work taking place there, as well as the need for a skilled and productive work force that can compete globally.

But by 1995, two significant shifts away from this "holism" had already begun. Firstly, the White Paper cements the shift — that had begun with the National Education Policy Investigation (1993) — away from a strongly transformative, interventionist, and socialist "people's education" to an essentially humanist, liberal and non-interventionist understanding of education and of education's role in society. Secondly, although the White Paper argues strongly for an integrated education and training system, the first post-apartheid government made no move for this integration to be operationalised in a combined Department of Education and Labour (or Training) (Mahomed, 1996). While the establishment of the National Qualification Framework and the South African Qualifications Authority attempts at a level of qualification to bridge the education and training divide, this lack of systemic integration is likely to fuel the current understandings of training as "practical skilling" and education as "theoretical knowing".

I will not explore the historiography of these shifts. Jansen (1998), Kraak (1995), Chisolm (1998), Christie (1998) and others have done so. Instead my interest lies

in the way in which teaching and teacher education are being constructed within this discursive environment.

Emerging teacher education discourses

Teachers, although recognised as crucial to transformation, have also been identified as ill-equipped to meet its challenges. So, teacher education policy — from the 1995 National Teacher Education Audit (Department of Education, 1996a and 1996b), through the 1996 COTEP Norms and Standards (DOE, 1996c) and 1996 Agenda of Possibilities (DOE, 1997), to the 1998 Norms and Standards for Educators (DOE, 1998) — set itself the task of developing a teacher education able to meet the broad education policy outcomes suggested by the White Paper and SAQA: namely, a competent teacher who can think, problem-solve, and practice effectively.

At the heart of new teacher education discourses lies the notion of "competence". Historically, this has been understood either as *explicit and measurable behaviour* (as technique), or as an *additive combination of knowledge, understanding, skills and values/attitudes*. In an attempt to give meaning to South Africa's commitment to "holism" and an education system that "integrates" education and training, the Human Sciences Research Council (HRSC, 1995) suggested that South Africa needed to move towards a competence characterised by a "thick" integration of knowledge, understanding, skills and values or attitudes. In other words, rather than simply place knowledge, skills and attitudes side by side (and thus teach them separately), the HSRC's conception was dialectical: each informed, changed and deepened the others in an ongoing cycle of performance and reflection. The Education, Training and Development Practices Project ETDP — and the Norms and Standards for Educators (National Training Board and German Technical Cooperation, 1998) (DOE, 1998) worked with this understanding of competence in developing suggestions for qualifications that had as their purpose an "integrated and applied competence" with:

- theoretical depth (through the integration of foundational and practical competences in the development of a teacher's reflexive abilities), and
- occupational breadth (through the integration of the various roles teachers, defined as "extended professionals", would ordinarily have to play).

Common to the HSRC's, the ETDP's, and to the Norms and Standards' understanding of how "competence" is developed, is the suggestion that better practice rests on the development of strong foundational (theoretical) knowledge in teachers (DOE, 1998: Sections 4, 6, 7, 8). But they also stress that while

foundational knowledge is a necessary condition for the development of "applied and integrated" competence, it is not sufficient.

This understanding, however, is not predominant in either the bulk of policy, or "popular" discourse about teacher education. Instead, "best practice" is assumed to be learner-centred (where curriculum and pedagogy is based on learner interests and experience), and geared to assisting learners *to do* things within their particular, localised, contexts. While rhetorical commitments to "reflective practice", or a "theory-practice balance" in teacher education programmes are common, a significant suspicion of theory (foundational knowledge) and of teacher or textual authority is evident.

School education policy reflects similar suspicions. *Curriculum 2005*, the most public expression of the manner in which the White Paper's vision is to be implemented, suggests a number of key changes in schools education. Two of the most significant commitments are to:

- *Learner-centredness and experience-based learning*. Education "should put learners first, recognising and building on their knowledge and experience, and responding to their needs" (DOE, 1996d:11). This leads to teachers being re-named and re-positioned as "facilitators" of learning, and the focus of learning being on small group discussion and collaborative methodologies.
- *An outcomes-based curriculum*. The emphasis in education and assessment "must be on what learners know and can do: on the intended results of learning ... rather than the prescription of content" (ibid). This shifts the educational focus from internal educational processes to external outcomes, and from internal processes of learning to external measurements of *doing*.

The uneasy tension between imperatives of economic efficiency on the one hand and socio-political transformation on the other, are thus, also evident in *Curriculum 2005*. The tensions manifest themselves as an uncomfortable coupling of a training-inspired outcomes-based system — where outcomes should be "publically-defined", "focused on life skills and context", and where a "learner's progress is based on demonstrated achievement" (DOE, 1997b) — with a romantic naturalist view of the child and learning (Burnett, 1991) — where the child is assumed to be innately curious, spontaneously self-active, and driven to learn by his or her "inner organic powers" during a period of education that is described as a "period of free growth" (DOE, 1997b).

While the two strands may fit uncomfortably, they have in common a suspicion of teacher authority, and of the usefulness (or desirability) of theoretical discipline and structure. A Rousseuian "romantic naturalism" assumes these to

be undermining of a child's "free growth", or oppressive of the child's "inner organic powers" while a neo-liberal training discourse would believe them unnecessary. Of course, within a training environment where a particular kind of skilling has to be developed in task-oriented adult workers, this is entirely correct. But teachers aren't these kinds of trainers, even when committed to a competence-based education!

In teacher education these suspicions have led to a powerful lobby arguing for what has been called elsewhere a "craft-based" teacher education (Stones, 1992), or a "value-sanitised, managerial" understanding of a teacher's role (Ball, 1994). In South Africa this plays itself out in calls for less "theory" in teacher education and more emphasis on the practical skilling of teachers. This discourse is one which validates a cluster of concepts associated with an instrumentalist skills discourse — like "experience", "practice", "local", "contextual", "immediate" and "school-based" — and demeans practices associated with a humanist discourse — like "knowledge", "theory", "universal", "abstract", and so on.

The first officially expressed criticism of an allegedly over-theoretical teacher education in South Africa was in the National Teacher Education Audit (NTEA). This criticism was followed soon afterwards with policy prescriptions in the Agenda of Possibilities. For instance, the NTEA (DOE, 1996a) is littered with phrases like "assessment is too theoretical and concentrates on factual knowledge rather than skills" and "teacher education in South Africa focuses more on content than on skills and competences". There are few who would dispute this analysis. However, Hofmeyr and Hall (1996) then turn these *symptoms* into a *cause*, and then a dubious *solution.* (Practice will improve if teachers are exposed to more practice and less theory.)

The *Criteria for Analysis of Teacher Education in South Africa* (ibid) (an appendix to the audit's *Synthesis Report*) suggests that "increasingly teacher education will occur as INSET". Another appendix, *International Best Practice: Research evidence on effective PRESET and INSET*, suggests that "the most cost-effective way to improve the quality of education in the developing world is a relatively brief period of PRESET, with the systematic provision of INSET" and that an "alternative model" where a "mix of shorter initial teacher education ... coupled with a distance education year incorporating the best international practices of open learning" (ibid) should be developed as a solution to the poor quality of teaching in South Africa. The NTEA's *Colleges of Education Sector Report* and the *Agenda of Possibilities* are far more explicit. The *Sector Report* states "college curricula are overloaded and repetitive, theoretical, and underpinned by inappropriate philosophies", and "the dominant pedagogy is content-focused and teacher-centred" and "the curriculum should be more

practically-orientated and geared to actual experiences in the classroom" (DOE, 1996b). It summarises respondents' views in the following way:

> ... the curriculum is too theoretical ... colleges should be made more relevant to the needs of schools. These thoughts were a 'leitmotif' repeated in almost all interviews (ibid).

Why has this new "common sense" emerged?

Why has this shift, from a deeply humanist and transformative people's education to a rather narrow and instrumentalist notion of teaching and learning, occurred?

Historically, the great majority of teacher education institutions taught a teacher education shaped by an authoritarian educational philosophy, Fundamental Pedagogics. By definition, institutions subscribing to this philosophy taught one-theory explanations of learning, curriculum and society, but more problematically did so in a didactic, racist and exclusionary manner. The small minority of "liberal" teacher education institutions — while generally committed to eclectic programmes focussing on critical understanding and steering clear of explicit racism — also taught educational theory "borrowed" (mostly without adaptation) from anglophone countries. In other words, the content of the theory taught ranged from racist and insulting through to merely inappropriate. In either case, the theory emerged as alien and alienating.

But the impression among many teachers — and many of these teachers now sit in policymaking positions — that theory was a reified and alien academic exercise was propagated most powerfully by the *way in which it was taught*. Invariably trainee teachers were taught *about* different theories and assessed as to whether they could critically analyse, or compare these theories in coherently written essays. In Ryle's language (1998), the theoretical education of teachers focused on "knowing *that*" (or *about*) rather than "knowing *how*" (and *why*). Teachers were seldom taught to theorise or to develop their competence in using theory as an analytical tool. Claims that teacher education programmes taught learners to integrate theory and practice, and to become reflective practitioners simply wasn't true. Instead, programmes tended to place theory and practice side by side, or teach teachers *about* reflective practice, or illustrate theory with practical examples, but it never developed the tools required to interrogate practice.

In *all* teacher education, then, the contexts of learners — in the sense of being aware of their needs and feelings — were largely ignored. Theory became

associated with the neglect of local histories and cultures. In a sense "theory" became increasingly associated with political exclusion and domination. Theory, texts and teachers came to represent the powerlessness felt within an authoritarian system while practice — the local, own experience and learners — came to symbolise freedom. Unsurprisingly, then, policies that suggest that authority be devolved downwards, from teachers to learners, from central government to local parents, from disciplines and texts to own experience and practice, from teacher education institutions to schools, emerged as popular.

But the suspicion of theory, of teacher educators (and, ultimately, teachers), and of collective authority, is not confined to South Africa. Ball talks of the "discourse of derision" towards teachers and theory in the United Kingdom and argues that this has been used to undermine university-based education and place almost all of it in schools (1994).

However, the argument that a practical teacher education (with a little bit of theory on the side) represents a consensus in international literature about "best practice", as suggested by Hofmeyr and Hall (1996a), is false according to Stones (1992). Instead, the nature of the teacher education that best develops quality teachers is fiercely contested and a policy position which foregrounds "practice" and "school-based training" has far more to do with political dynamics, in particular the prevailing dominance of neo-liberal governments in Western democracies, than with education (in DOE, 1996a). In other words, Stones says that rather than being a solution to poor practice, it is a solution to the influence of left-wing education theorists in universities and to the high cost of full-time, institution-based, teacher education (Stones, 1992). The overwhelming dominance of this position is matched only by the overwhelming "lack of any substantiating analytical argument" (Stones, 1992). Stones argues, with reference to the British Department of Education and Science's White Paper, *Education: A framework for Expansion* (Stones, 1992) which suggests that increasing teachers' knowledge of subject matter, their teaching skills, and downplaying pedagogic "theory" as the path to "quality education", is likely to lead to further declines in the standards of teaching.

Concurrently, and ironically (given its ostensible aim of liberation), post-modern educational ideas also play their part in undermining the role of authority, discipline and foundational knowledge in education. Shalem's fascinating paper on how teachers construct the pedagogical authority necessary for good education, contains the following quote from a post-modern feminist educator, Peggy Phelan, outlining the goals of a post-modern pedagogy: (1997:2)

> How can one create a pedagogy ... which refuses the acquisitive model of power-knowledge operative everywhere in institutions of 'higher learning'? How can one invent a pedagogy for disappearance and loss and not for acquisition and control?

Performative pedagogy, says Phelan, should "save nothing ... and leave no visible trace afterwards" (in Shalem, 1997). While this response to the historically oppressive nature of Western thought is understandable, its impact in a South Africa that is trying to re-build an education, reconstitute a history and regain a semblance of order after apartheid must be questioned. Yet it lurks threateningly: the confluence of a technocratic and valueless neo-liberalism and equally valueless post-modernism, both in their different ways committed to the local, to individual experience, and ultimately to "disappearance". This provides a powerful platform for a teacher education in which the importance of teacher authority is diminished, and in which the organising potential of meta-narratives — like the discursive rules that underpin disciplinary knowledge — give way to the validation of localised and personal "craft" knowledges as the appropriate "foundational" knowledge.

Finally, while we continue describing teaching and learning in an industrial metaphor where teaching is understood as "delivery", schools and teachers as "providers", learners as "consumers", and the process of education as "managing resources for learning", the argument for a practical on-the-job training for teachers will hold sway. After all, if the efficient delivery of information causes learning, then why bother trying to understand how the internal processes of the mind work? And why fret over the different explanations of which kinds of pedagogy and curriculum are most likely to activate learning? Thus the current focus on practical skilling — on classroom management, or chalkboard techniques, or group management skills, or explanation abilities — and on imitation, modelling and school-based training in so much teacher education talk is a logical consequence of education understood as "delivery" or "information dissemination". Incidentally, redefining the complex, internal, and unpredictable processes of learning as a matter of efficient delivery also opens up the door to packaged learning where, again, the teacher's role is reduced to that of organiser and manager. This will strengthen the arguments for shorter, less intellectual, teacher education courses and will ultimately erode teachers' claim to be recognised as professionals.

What's wrong with this new "common sense"?

The slide from a "thick" integration of theory and practice as suggested in the White Paper and latterly in the Norms and Standards for Educators, to a narrow

"craft" approach, has been particularly evident in teacher education, the sector regarded as the engine of transformation. This technocratic "vision" has been exacerbated by the lack of attention given to appropriate curricula and pedagogy for teacher education in policy documents (or in practical implementation), and the massive emphasis instead on systems and governance issues.

The simplistic elevation of learner-centredness, experience, and group work to the level of pedagogical principle, and the consequent undermining of teachers, teaching, and theory tends to further undermine the practice of teaching and the possibility of teachers developing a rigorous competence in their learners. The danger is that, despite a commitment to both efficiency and transformation, a hegemonic "common sense" in teacher education is emerging which is profoundly anti-intellectual and is rapidly devaluing the authority and status of teaching as a profession.

Teacher education, then, is not currently focused on building a curriculum and pedagogy that integrates "academic and applied, theory and practice, knowledge and skills, head and hand" as suggested in the White Paper. Instead, the tendency in many policy papers and even more so, in practice, has been to validate the "applied, practical, skills-based, hand" components of teacher education and neglect any real engagement with the "academic, theoretical, knowledge, head" components.

The current debate about whether or not we should integrate theory and practice, or whether or not we should ditch theory for practice, is really not a debate at all. Instead our key questions, as we begin transforming teacher education into a higher education activity geared to developing competent and professional teachers, should be the following:

- Exactly what kind of *theory* is most useful, and how should we teach this theory so that teachers can use it to deepen their understanding of educational processes and can therefore change their practice for the better?
- What educative roles does *practice and experience* play, and *how* do these "teach", in our attempts at educating thoughtful and competent teachers?
- *How, exactly, should theory and practice be related* when our purpose is the development of thoughtful and competent teachers?

A number of commentators have pointed out that even in a world where the "performativity" of knowledge is its primary validating force, competent performance cannot be collapsed into a bald "doing", or an old-style technical "skill". In a Framework for Transformation, the National Commission on

Higher Education (DOE, 1997) comments that a shift from "closed knowledge systems controlled and managed by the canonical norms of traditional disciplines" to a "greater mix of programmes, some based on disciplinary knowledge, others emphasising in a more flexible way the development of vocationally focused competencies and the skills of inter-disciplinary co-operation" characterises higher education globally. But even as this shift to the ostensibly more "practical" occurs, so the importance of knowledge production and application becomes more (rather than less) important for a wider base of people than ever before.

Barnett (1995) suggests that while the old "humanist" goals of higher education, like developing individual autonomy and general intellectual abilities (the "knowledge for knowledge's sake" idea) is largely dead, the emerging alternative isn't about less research and less theoretical work. On the contrary, argues Barnett, the goals of higher education in knowledge societies will be characterised by the development of "intellectual" attributes, like:

- a deep understanding of 'higher order' concepts and perspectives ... rather than the acquisition of low level facts and information;
- reflexivity ... an ability to rigorously evaluate and, if necessary, reconstitute our own thoughts and actions;
- the ability to think metacognitively ... to recognise that our claims to knowledge are always susceptible to further and ever-higher forms of evaluation (ibid).

Teacher educators who believe that teacher education is a legitimate higher education activity must accept that theoretical work — knowledge production and application — is the activity that *constitutes* teacher education as a "higher" education. And this shouldn't be a startling revelation. As Stones (1992) argues, teaching is increasingly becoming (but has always been) a complex task that has as its basic goal *changing both thinking and behaviour*. Researchers probably know less — and with less certainty — about how people think and behave than they do about how human bodies function. Yet, alarmingly, teachers believe that they can attempt to change thinking and behaviour — in other words, teach — with a dash of theory and dollops of imitation while surgeons spend five years in theoretical study and then a gruelling year in mediated practice!

What is to be done about teacher education?

Firstly, we need to recognise that teaching (when *learning* rather than *delivery* is the goal) is a complex intellectual task. While teachers may spend enormous

amounts of school time in practical, administrative and management matters, their "core" activity is *knowledge* work. As such, any teacher education must develop the theoretical tools that teachers require to begin making sense of the processes which occur in "black boxes" of their learners' minds. Teachers cannot ever fully observe or know how learners think. So, while practice provides some anecdotal advice, teachers can only really make sense of this "advice" and develop it into a "tool" that can be used practically to improve teaching practice, if teacher educators construct a curriculum in which this localised experience is set in a carefully mediated dialectic with the generalised theory about learning that has been developed over a length of time and in many different contexts.

Secondly, as higher education institutions, teacher education institutions have — as a duty and a matter of their own survival — to contribute to higher education's core activities which Clarke (1994) defines as:

> ... being the repository of advanced knowledge: research creates it, scholarship preserves, refines and modifies it, teaching disseminates it and professional services use it in developing the wider community ...

What, then, is the challenge for South African teacher education institutions as they reconstitute themselves as higher education institutions and develop curricula and pedagogy able to produce teachers capable of educating the critical citizens and competent workers envisaged by the White Paper and SAQA's critical cross-field outcomes? Any attempts to address this question requires an understanding of the integration of theory and practice.

Developing a "practical" theory of teaching

Stones (1992) argues that teacher education needs to "navigate the straits of sterile theorising and blind practice". Teaching, he says, "cannot be a-theoretical, nor can it be nurtured by disquisitions on the nature of teaching by theorists with their feet in the clouds".

There is nothing new or surprising about this challenge. Yet it seldom moves beyond a rhetorical commitment in policy, and a matter of time allocation in teacher education programmes. As suggested earlier, the key challenges lie in understanding theory, practice and the integration of theory and practice *educationally*.

So, if teaching is a practice which has as its foundation *theoretical understanding*, then what is the *nature* of a useful theoretical education?

As Stones laments, no-one as yet has a satisfactory answer to this precisely because teacher educators have abrogated their higher education responsibility of producing useful professional knowledge. Instead, argues Stones, what passes for a theory of teaching is a continuum of "theologies" ranging from anecdotal "folk wisdoms" gleaned from practice on the one end, through romantic and politically-motivated commitments to "action research", to "pure" disciplines (like educational psychology) which give only a cursory glance to the processes of teaching and learning (1992). The lack of rigorous, research-based, theoretical work in teaching and learning has led to education falling prey to a series of "latest fads". A critical first step for teacher education institutions, then, is to begin doing good, systematic, research into teaching and learning.

Secondly, we need to distinguish "content" from "theory". Contrary to the assertions of the National Teacher Education Audit (DOE, 1996a), South African teacher education has never been "overly theoretical". Instead it suffered from content-overload. Content overload — through its focus on discrete bits of information without providing a set of disciplinary or conceptual rules through which this information can be organised coherently — made courses difficult to understand and impossible to use analytically. Given these difficulties, rote learning became a logical learning strategy and it also fuelled the idea that "theory" had no use in teaching.

The focus on content detail rather than conceptual substance led to many institutions producing re-written, simplified, potted versions of theories. Aside from the massive content inaccuracies of many of these, a crucial deficiency with such summaries was that the very heart of theoretical learning, of conceptual learning — noticing how arguments are developed, and so on — was gouged out in the interests of simplicity and brevity. So, for instance, while learners learnt that Marxists "had" a "conflict theory" they had no understanding of the assumptions on which this rested (in other words, what "permitted" them to offer the theory they did) or how one key concept (like *alienation*) was related to another (like *class conflict*).

In offering learners summaries of content they ducked a central higher education imperative, namely of teaching learners how to access theoretical discourses and so become part of a teacher's research community. While given the nod towards notions of "empowerment" or "reflective practice", they refused to teach teachers the tools through which they could become empowered participants in the practices of teaching.

Thirdly, teacher education programmes need to move from learning *about theory* to the practice of *theorising*. Some institutions avoided teaching only content, but

instead of teaching learners how to *theorise*, they taught them *about theories*. Student teachers would learn about the relationship between education and the economy, for instance, and be asked to "critique" the views offered with examples drawn from their own experience. They would also be offered the chance to read original texts, but were seldom assisted in doing this. (In fact, lecture summaries at times provided a means for avoiding the reading altogether!)

While a great deal better than simply teaching content, this kind of theoretical education was still deficient in the following crucial ways.

- Much of the theory taught was "pure" sociology or psychology rather than these disciplines bending their minds to the specifics of the practice of teaching. Questions of relevance, when voiced by students, received the retort "you must *learn to* make the links" rather than teacher-educators teaching teachers how theory can be used practically.

- Rather than immerse student teachers in the practice of theorising, they learnt about theoretical findings. This left many with the impression that theory-making was a bit like fiction writing: dozens of bright people speculating — all equally correctly, or incorrectly — about "things". Theory was *reified* as some kind of esoteric activity indulged in for pleasure rather than the immensely practical and grounded process of trying to understand human behaviour or society.

In order to develop a "practical" theory of teaching, we should teach teachers to *theorise* their *teaching and learning*. In other words, we need to reconstitute theory as a *practice* with a clear *purpose* (a better understanding of, and ability to intervene, in *our particular* practice of teaching). Teacher education programmes — at all levels, but at different degrees of complexity — should immerse learners in the process through which key theorists emerged with their particular explanations. Demonstrate the problem that spurred the writer into research and thinking, show how the time in which the writer lived predisposed him or her to thinking about certain things and in particular ways (it's remarkable how few learners understand that Marx would not have been able to write the way he did had he not read Plato), and demonstrate the unspoken assumptions made in order to develop the argument. This kind of process can be achieved easily with contemporary research by getting students to do an "archeology" of the prescribed paper by reading "back" to see how other (referenced) writers contributed to the end product.

This kind of approach allows us to overcome vague claims to *linking* theory and practice, or *applying* theory to practice. It gets us away from those dreadful

"reflective" assignments where learners provide a couple of anecdotes describing their school experiences, then summarise a theory and add a conclusion claiming that the experiences "prove" or "disprove" the theory. Instead, the practice of theorising is *tested* in the practice of teaching. Through this mediated activity students begin to understand the different, but important and "practical" roles theorising, observation, and practice teaching play in developing an "integrated and applied" competence. Students begin using each reflexively to adapt and refine both their practice and their analytical "tools".

A fourth critical move is to give theory and theorising a clear focus and purpose, and that should be the teaching of a particular classroom subject. Our current orthodoxy, which overly focuses on pedagogy rather than on subject knowledge, is an orthodoxy limited to Anglophone countries. Continental Europe, for instance, follows a pattern in which a deep, principled understanding of subject disciplines is the focus with pedagogical theory and practice being built on this. While this orthodoxy is also now being challenged in the Anglophone world (Stones, 1992), the challenge is often motivated by a conservative politics rather than a concern for a good education. It is often accompanied by a call for a "back to basics" approach to teaching and a practical, school-based training for teachers.

To teach so that a deep understanding of a particular subject is developed — and this is critical if our learners are expected to *use* the knowledge learnt in their life and work — the subject knowledge education of teachers must focus in the subject's underlying rules, its architecture.

This leads to a fifth crucial shift in teacher education: the curriculum and pedagogy of both educational theory and subject "methods" must develop a *principled* understanding of the discipline being taught (an understanding of constitutive principles and assumptions of the subject) rather than focus only or primarily on *procedural* knowledge (on the narrative understanding of specific content). Teachers should emerge from teacher education courses with an understanding of how discrete bits of content are related so as to form concepts and how these in turn constitute separate disciplines like Mathematics or English Literature.

Teachers should understand how these principles coalesce into a particular explanation of, for instance, how different literary genres (like detective fiction) work, how they are distinct from other genres (like romance), why and how society gets pleasure from reading stories of this kind and why young children have very different readings habits from adolescents. Obviously, this is not what teachers will actually teach. But it provides a framework or an analytical "tool"

— which is always provisional and tentative — with which we can begin planning the best way of teaching a particular kind of novel to particular kinds of learners, understand why they are doing so, and be able to diagnose learning difficulties when they occur. None of this can be done by teachers whose subject knowledge is limited to learning the content of a number of "important" pieces of literature and some "methods" for teaching them.

This approach offers a way around vexed questions of contextual relevance and of ever-expanding syllabi. Teacher education gets caught in the trap of focusing on *detail* — teaching teachers *about* human rights, for instance — rather than teaching a human rights approach (in other words, focusing on the underlying disciplinary rules and associated "skills", a human rights way of thinking). This would probably suggest that "human rights" should become some of the new content in a course that aims to develop teachers' abilities to think ethically and to make sound and reasoned moral judgements within a human rights culture. The focus on underlying principles — but contextualised within South African challenges — will develop in teachers the flexibility of mind which allows them to use this thinking in a number of different contexts.

Clearly, then, teacher education must aim at developing a sound understanding of subject knowledge, an understanding of educational theory, and an ability to use both of these in an integrated act of teaching. This requires a focus on underlying disciplinary rules of both teaching subjects and educational disciplines rather than a focus on content. But, according to Muller and Taylor (1997), these seem to be absent in current school educational thinking which has witnessed a move away from a subject discipline base in schooling to one based on "learning areas". While old subject disciplines were underpinned by disciplinary rules, they argue that "learning areas" seem characterised by some form of "pre-disciplinary common sense … in which case students may have fun but won't learn anything". This warning seems equally opposite for a teacher education that seems to be re-organising itself in "integrated", inter-disciplinary ways.

The aversion to a disciplined study of subjects is often linked to "learner-centred" and "experiential learning" movements, and thus to John Dewey. Yet Dewey is absolutely insistent on the need for both deep subject knowledge *and* a rigorous and disciplined understanding of pedagogy. Dewey explains that if a teacher wants to be "the intellectual leader of a social group" which he expects teachers to be, then:

> … the first condition goes back to his own intellectual preparation in subject matter. This should be abundant to the point of overflowing. It must be much wider than the ground laid out in textbooks (1993).

This is necessary, says Dewey, for two reasons:

- so that subject matter can be "psychologised" and students can recognise it as relevant to their own level and type of problem-solving;
- so that teachers can fully observe the learning processes in their classes, attend to difficulties and begin taking risks and using new and creative teaching methods.

Dewey voices the old truism — that no amount of training in "creative, learner-centred" educational methods will succeed unless a teacher knows his or her subject:

> ... the central reason (for intellectual preparation in subject matter to be abundant to overflowing) is that the teacher must have his mind free to observe the mental responses and movements of the student members ... unless the teacher's mind has fully mastered the subject matter in advance, unless the teacher is fully at home in it, using it unconsciously without the need to express thought, he will not be free to give full time and attention to observation and interpretation of the pupils' intellectual reactions (ibid).

Subjects are "known" according to Dewey when they can be used "unconsciously". In other words, Mathematics teachers need to *think mathematically*, rather than simply think *about* Mathematics. This allows teachers to constantly embrace new mathematical information and integrate into their understandings. It also allows the time for teachers to "psychologise" their subject. To use Shulman's language, this means the ability to turn "subject knowledge" into "pedagogical knowledge" by devising the most useful (in terms of both the nature of the subject and the nature of the learners):

> ... forms of analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations, in a word, the ways of representing and formulating the subject in order to make it comprehensible to others (cited in Banks, Leach and Moon, 1996).

But as Dewey, Shulman and others emphasise, this must follow an analysis of both subject demands and student learning: it cannot be taught in the abstract or as a set of "pick-and-choose" teaching methods.

The disciplined study of the constitutive principles of different subjects and of pedagogy — learning to theorise learning — doesn't *prescribe* a particular action or even diagnosis. For instance, a teacher schooled in Vygotskian thinking would be unlikely to analyse a situation in which a ten year old was unable to learn an abstract mathematical concept in the same way as someone uses a Piagetian

analysis. But what both teachers would have is a "tool" — and I use this term deliberately — with which they can make sense of, and intervene in, their practice. In fact, the irony is that theoretical understanding opens up the possibility of debate. Personalised, localised, a theoretical, "craft" knowledge gleaned from experience do not constitute the common ground for debate. Instead, all anecdotal experience simply has to be accepted as there is nothing with which to refute it except a cosy discussion in which notes are *compared*, rather than *debated*.

Turning "practice" into a means of teaching

As suggested earlier, while practice and observation are absolutely necessary for developing reflexive teaching abilities, they are not sufficient. Dumb "experience" and "observation" — in themselves — don't *teach*. As Dewey has reminded us, teachers teach. In order to make experiential learning work teachers need to:

- enrich the learner's experience by disrupting the dull normality that characterises familiar contexts (like schools);
- develop the "lens" necessary for making sense of the random clutter that characterises environments like schools.

Teacher educators who advocate that "practice makes perfect", subscribe to the same logic that underpins "teaching as telling" (the delivery metaphor). While "teaching as telling" assumes that information that is efficiently delivered will be effectively learnt and then applied, so "learning by doing" assumes that the "expert" teaching practices modelled at schools will "deliver" to the novice teacher a set of practices that can be unproblematically imitated. If only learning actually occurred in this way! But this "photographic" notion of learning — where the negative imprints exactly what the lens focuses on — simply takes no account of the mediating effects of individual minds, learning styles, emotional states, social and cultural filters, and so on). There is no place in this "model" for the complexities of individual interpretation, misinterpretation and misunderstanding. In short, teaching as the means to effective *learning* disappears. The second rather unconvincing leap of faith is that once a learner has seen or heard (and even if they actually understand) they will be able to act on this information and implement the ideas. There is absolutely no evidence of a direct correlation between understanding and better practice. On the contrary, strong evidence exists that such transfer will not occur unless some kind of mediation takes place to cement the links between ideas and practice, and between expert modelling and own (new) practice. Banks, Leach and Moon (1996) suggest that a "situated learning theory" offers suggestions in this regard. Stones (1992), while not

mentioning situated learning, describes an approach to teacher education that is remarkably similar. What characterises both approaches is, firstly, the foundational nature of a flexible, working theory of teaching and, secondly, the importance of mediation during practice. This mediation focuses on setting the theory and enriched practice in a strong and rigorous dialectic in which both practice and theory are dismantled, re-assembled and refined. The writers emphasise that reflective and competent teaching practices rest on complex sets of *intellectual* actions — not simply practical actions — and that these need to be taught as they don't pre-exist in people's minds or in raw contexts.

A simple immersion in practice often inhibits rather than develops the ability to reflect. The experience is similar to that of an individual standing with his or her nose to a mirror; the mirror reflects but the viewer can't see his or her own reflection. In teaching and teacher education, two things inhibit reflection:

- being too close to the mirror (being too immersed in the hurly-burly of a real-life situation); and
- having too much clutter in the frame (not having the means to make sense of the randomness of real-life situations).

So how do we turn "dumb" experience into an experience that can "teach"?

A teacher educator could "disrupt" the dull normality of everyday life through providing contrast or absurdity. The crucial teaching point is to create a cognitive "gap" between what the learner expects and something new; between "what is" and "what could be". This idea isn't new. Bertoldt Brecht, Maxime Greene, Dewey, Piaget and Vygotsky have all written about the importance of "dissonance" in the process of learning. In different ways they all suggest the need for normality to be "made strange" so that we see new possibilities and understand the constructed and "abnormal" nature of our old "naturalised" understandings. Brecht demonstrated this most dramatically in his use of *alienation* in theatre. He argued that audiences got "lost" in the "magic" of theatre and, in so doing, became passive consumers of entertainment (rather than the "learners" he wanted in his form of agitprop theatre). So he "disrupted" the magic by getting actors to speak directly to the audience, or having them break into song at "inappropriate" moments, or creating uncomfortably long silences. This, he believed, helped theatre-goers to adopt a more critical stance. Dewey, similarly, suggested that experiential teaching required teachers to turn the ordinary into puzzles and problems. The "gaps" in logic that characterise puzzles motivate learners to search for some form of completion and equilibrium. The learners look around for the intellectual and other resources that will assist them in achieving this and, in so doing, begin learning from their experiences.

This suggest two important bits of "re-thinking" in South African understandings of what constitutes "experience" and "interactivity". We very often mistake landscapes for experience. Experience is an internal emotional and intellectual response to, among other things, our context (or landscape). But, as Dewey intimates (1916), experience can often be elicited most powerfully *away* from real contexts:

> A book or a letter may institute a more intimate association between human beings separated by a thousand miles than exists between dwellers under the same roof.

If our starting point is *learning*, then we might choose *vicarious* experience as equally and possibly more evocative of the experience we believe learners should have in order to learn what we want them to learn. In addition, vicarious experiences — like case studies, role plays, or even the much maligned micro-teaching — all have the powerful advantage of being open to our manipulation and control. Rather than clinging to the belief that learning is best achieved in particular *physical contexts*, teacher education needs to pay more attention to what it is in *experience* that triggers learning. This opens up a wider definition of "practice" and "experience" as well as shifting our thinking back to learning.

Another crucial dimension of using practice and observation educationally is the need to provide learners with the lens necessary for seeing and observing. Learners can only *see*, and *learn* from this seeing, through the mental frames they have when they enter a particular experience. If we want learners to notice new things, or to see old things differently, or be able to envisage new possibilities, they require theoretical tools with which to do this. If they don't have the means with which to organise and analyse the clutter of experience, they are likely to either focus on the explicit and obvious detail and miss the crucial educational dynamics or drown. The lack of any new theoretical frame is at the root of so many poor action research projects where students simply recycle their own common sense. This, again, points to the need for educational interventions by way of texts and teachers — of strong and directed mediation rather than technical facilitation — in the process of learning.

We only have to think of the role practice plays in the education of other professionals to understand this. Doctors, for instance, learn how to diagnose and they do so in relation to disciplined bodies of medical knowledge. Their ability to work and apply this knowledge has to do with how they:

- *Learn it*. They immerse themselves in the existing bodies of knowledge but do so in a manner which allows them to use theory — to diagnose — rather

than to merely recite theory. In other words, specific content is used to illustrate general principles.

- *Practice it.* They do this in a close mentoring relationship with experts in a workplace. But at no stage does this practice become "pre-disciplinary".

The point isn't so much that both theory and practice must exist but more about which comes first, how they relate to each other, and the nature of the teaching or mediation work required during "practice". It is unlikely that learner doctors would ask whether they can operate to "see what happens", or that they would watch another doctor operate and then wander across to another patient and imitate the actions of the doctor. Instead, disciplinary knowledge gained through reading, listening, talking, writing is tested, used, transferred and adapted in a rigorous engagement with both context-specific demands and general medical "theory" and through the mediation of "experts". Yet, in teacher education, we so often ask learners to reflect but don't give them new possibilities with which to compare their present, or the theoretical tools with which to reflect, or the strong mediation *in practice* that glues our teaching into a competent practice.

In order to understand and read through and *transform* the practices embedded in our present as "natural" we need to be able to imagine different futures. Yet a system which assumes that learning is primarily about "modelling", teaches "what is" rather than "what could be". It focuses on technical efficiency rather than values. This is in keeping with much of the technocratic discourse evident in much of the teacher education but it does contradict the White Paper's call for educators who can understand, initiate and manage change. To understand, initiate and manage change, requires at least a theoretical understanding of other possibilities, and of the interventions that need to be made to achieve these. While the need for change is particularly urgent in the South African context — where educational transition is deliberate and urgent — it is also vitally important if we are to meet the needs of rapidly changing global demands.

There also seems to be a major slippage in current teacher education discourse between a critique which argues that school practice is exceptionally poor and a suggestion that we place learners in practice to improve this practice! Aside from the obvious racism and massive inequalities of a still largely segregated school system, most schools also don't come close to modeling the values espoused in the White Paper and many won't model the technical competence or analytical skills the White Paper aims at.

So, aside from the argument that the theoretical nature of much school-based education is conservative and unhelpful in changing and unstable educational environments, the lack of technically good and philosophically appropriate

"model" schools in SA make arguments for school-based training tenuous (or massively cynical). School-based training tends to blunt the development of new ideas, or the understanding of education in a wider context. It foregrounds the efficient management of what is, but does not "enskill" teachers to work within changing contexts or to use theory as the way to develop new practices.

Re-defining and re-asserting an educational authority

The notion of a particular kind of authority is implicit in all these suggestions. A strong plea is made for *intellectual leadership* by teachers (and teacher educators) and by carefully chosen texts. This is premised, also, on the idea that teachers (and teacher educators) need to intervene decisively in educational activities, which runs counter to the current discourse which tends to suggest that education should be led by learner needs.

Yet, since the first democratic elections, South Africans have bought into a populist notion of authority in which it is assumed that everyone is equal and that all decisions should go through a process of consultation with all stakeholders. This is reflected in the unstructured, learner-centred, anti-authoritarian ethos of *Curriculum 2005* as well as the easy acceptance of an as yet undefined notion of learner-centredness being vital to "best practice" in teacher education.

But as Moore (1993) and Dewey (in the Archambault, 1964) suggest, good teaching must assume a relationship of authority. This authority emerges from the fact that teachers know more, but also through learners understanding and accepting that surrendering their educational autonomy for a period is necessary for learning to take place, and also for the long-term and meaningful freedom a sound education may offer.

For instance, Dewey (in Archambault, 1964) argues that the debate between subject/teacher-centredness (generally supported by those committed to "discipline") and learner-centredness (generally supported by those committed to "freedom") misses the point. He suggests, instead, that they are two sides of the educational coin. Through the example of a painter, he demonstrates that freedom is meaningless without sound painting technique and a solid understanding of art (the disciplines of composition and painting):

> In truth, discipline is positive and constructive. It is power: power of control of the means necessary to achieve ends, and also power to value and test ends. A painter is disciplined in his art to the degree to which he can manage and use all the elements that enter into his art ... the discipline which is identical with trained power is also identical with freedom. It signifies mastery capable of independent exercise, emancipated from the strings of others (1964).

However, says Dewey, this discipline cannot be learnt if the learner is not given the freedom to experiment and paint.

The question then, is not about whether authority is necessary in education but how authority is used. If one removes the coercive status of authority which characterised the previous system, then one has to replace it with something. I would suggest that the new basis for authority must be a disciplinary authority — which includes a principled knowledge of subjects (including an engagement with texts) as well as an ability to teach (rather than simply manage teaching).

Morrow (1993) makes a distinction between "force" and "rights" and suggests that this distinction is a key feature of a democratic society. "Legitimate authority" needs to be understood in terms of rights. This leads to an argument which suggests that some forms of legitimate authority — in this case, education — are democratic, but do not depend on anything like direct consultation based on a superficial idea of "transparency". Part of the challenge in South Africa, says Morrow, is to get teachers to understand this form of authority and the difference between the way in which political and educational authority is exercised. While all learners are treated as equals within a political context, they cannot be treated as equals in respect to "what it is they are trying to learn". He argues that if we lose this distinction and "teachers become mere facilitators, engaging in some form of therapeutic exercise, rather than critical mediators of intellectual and cultural worlds to which learners in a democratic society are trying to gain access, then we lose the essence, the ground rules, of the game called teaching and learning".

The current tendency, however, is away from any kind of authority. Not only is this manifested in the acceptance of a "thin" laissez-faire understanding of learner-centredness and the importance of learner voice and freedoms, it is also evident in the narrowly practical, de-intellectualised teacher education suggested. This will ultimately retard the development of a competent, professional and transformative teaching corps as well as signalling a symbolic downgrading of the teaching profession in the eyes of the public.

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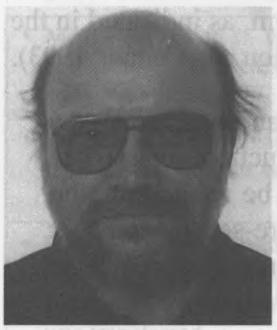
Critical Practitioner Inquiry and Teacher Education in Namibia: The First Attempts to Build a Critical Knowledge Base for Education

Lars Dahlström



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Abstract

Teacher education was recognised as a key area in the reform of the education system in Namibia after independence in 1990. The introduction of critical practitioner inquiry was part of the agenda to change educational experiences, educational thought, and to support the production of a new kind of knowledge and understanding. The aim was to empower Namibian practitioners and educational institutions to become significant contributors to the discourse and implementation of educational change within a broader reconstructive process of the Namibian society.

A tentative evaluation of the attempts to introduce a critical pedagogical perspective into the post-independence agenda shows that it has had some merit when it comes to the introduction of systematic analysis of practice. It is also noted that critical practitioner inquiry has met some resistance from conservative forces, which would benefit from keeping the traditional power, related to research and the official right to define educational realities, with the academics.

The introduction of critical practitioner inquiry and the attempts to develop a critical knowledge base of education in Namibia is also analysed in relation to the common discourses of the ongoing globalisation trends and recognised as a counter-force in this respect.

The education system which the Namibian government inherited at independence in 1990 had to face radical changes. The views and practices of a system where development of knowledge and understanding was confined to an autocratic pseudo-academic power relation, embraced by a control system effected through a rigid test and examination hysteria, had to be replaced.

Teacher education was recognised as a key area in the reform, as indicated in the policy document *Toward Education for All* (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993).

> ... teachers must develop new visions, new understandings, and new commitments. Curriculum content, medium of instruction, classroom practices, assessment and evaluation — all these must be re-thought and revised ... especially, we must be sure that our pre-service teacher education incorporates and helps develop the learner-centred approach we are adopting throughout the education system.

A new national teacher education programme was introduced based on a merger between educational experiences during the liberation struggle, critical pedagogy and reconstructive ideologies of education. The new policy had the following implications for teacher education.

- A national teacher education programme had to be created to replace the previous differentiated system based on race and ethnicity.
- A unified teacher education programme had to be developed which answered to the need of teachers in basic education, that is, grades 1 to 10, and replaced a system with different courses for different levels of the system with an accompanying differentiation in gender, status and remuneration.
- A new teacher education programme, based on experiences in exile and modern educational thought developed during the liberation struggle, had to replace the traditional authoritarian and examination driven practices.
- A different system for the development of teacher education had to be applied with an internal notion of democratic participatory practices and which was developed through a balanced process answering to the needs to establish a new national agenda as well as decentralised and democratic functions, to replace the apartheid legacy of education (Dahlström, 1998).

The Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) programme was developed for this purpose and replaced all other programmes at the four colleges of education as from 1993. Therefore, the BETD differs significantly from previous programmes in Namibia.

Table 5: Important teacher education programme emphases in Namibia (ibid)

Previous programmes	The BETD programme
• The studies were in most cases teacher- and/or content-centred.	• There is an emphasis on a learner-centred philosophy.
• Most — if not all — studies took place at college with little teaching practice and contact with schools.	• A significant part of the programme is school-based studies.
• There was an emphasis on academic learning and subject studies.	• There is a balance between professional and subject studies carried out through a "didactic filter".
• Knowledge was considered as a given and transferable commodity and understanding defined as a successful repetition of what was transferred.	• Knowledge and understanding follow a constructive process and are dependent on contextual factors.
• Educational practices were examination and test driven.	• Assessment practices are carried out in a variety of ways within a policy of continuous assessment.
• Initial teacher education was at the best for diploma certification, but for the majority of black student teachers an exercise in failure.	• Initial teacher education is a part of lifelong learning within a paradigm of educational change and improvement.

The pre-independence dispensation did not give any allowance for independent thinking and initiatives, let alone critical practitioner inquiry. As Swarts and Dahlström (1998) state:

> The type of authority exercised in education was a 'derived' authority: that the authority of teachers over learners, of principals over teachers, and of departments over schools, was derived from elsewhere. At the heart of this view was the assumption that nobody was to challenge the authority, even when they were excluded.

The same dispensation was, of course, found in South Africa from where the Namibian educational system, following the same mindset, was derived.

I will not attempt to give a holistic description or analysis of the BETD programme. Instead, the focus of this paper is on an important aspect of the

BETD, critical practitioner inquiry, which also is an integrated part of the reform efforts in other respects.

Introduction of critical practitioner inquiry in Namibia

The introduction of critical practitioner inquiry was part of the agenda to change educational experiences, educational thought and to support the production of a new kind of knowledge and understanding. The aim was to empower Namibian practitioners and educational institutions to become significant contributors to the educational discourse and implementation of educational change within a broader reconstructive agenda in Namibian society.

The programme aimed at drawing on the experiences of practice during their exile, in-service and pre-service programme. The lack of teaching and learning material created the need for locally produced material, which could be used by the teachers in their daily work. The first "booklet", based on material produced by teachers and learners, was a compilation of short stories about issues significant to the contextual situation. A story about the principal's bicycle — the only one in the camp — is a good example of the kind of material included in the booklet, which was hand-printed on folded A4 paper. This first attempt to implement "relevant" education resulted in a comment from one of the teachers involved in this production, which was an early reflection on the empowering strength in this approach. The teacher said, "I have always wondered where books come from and how they are produced. Now I know that they are done by ordinary people like myself" (Dahlström, 1996). This first attempt was followed by wall newspapers, newsletters and more systematic productions. Readers like *Stories from the Struggle, Wipe your Face and Get Ready for School,* the teacher's magazine *The Frontline Teacher*, and a number of educational pamphlets based on student teachers' classroom projects were produced. Some of this material is used today for in-service teacher education in the northern part of Namibia. The innovative aspect of these products was that they were all carried out as an integrated part of teacher education. What is officially known as action research practitioner reflection and a critical pedagogy, combined with the view of education as a productive process which contributes with useful products beyond examinations, beyond individual gains and beyond the classroom, was applied within a strongly influencing political context.

Critical practitioner inquiry is an established concept in Namibia today and it is gaining momentum, especially in relation to teacher education. It is understood as an educational approach based on a critical pedagogy, which addresses unconventional educational issues, broadens the base for what is recognised 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.

Critical practitioner inquiry in Namibia

Critical practitioner inquiry is today applied in the BETD pre-service and in-service programmes for basic education teachers. It is also used as a research strategy in post-graduate courses for teacher educators, education officers and support teachers.

Critical practitioner inquiry in the BETD pre-service programme

Critical inquiry is identified as one of the eight professional themes in the BETD pre-service programme. The *BETD Broad Curriculum* states that student teachers shall develop "a critical inquiry approach into one's own practice and context" (Ministry of Higher Education, Vocational training, science and technology and Ministry of Basic education and Culture, 1988). In the foreword to the first publication of reports from BETD student teachers the role of critical inquiry is further emphasised.

> Critical Inquiry is one of the professional themes in the BETD, which permeates the three years of study. Students are expected to develop a critical practitioner inquiry perspective during their studies, which will equip them with the necessary critical, proactive and democratic professional skills, and an extended professional understanding needed by teachers in the future.
>
> Critical Inquiry is also running through the BETD as a 'methodological and pedagogical project' with focus on the learner, the learning environment, and educational practice for change and improvement (National Institute for Educational Development and The Colleges of Education, 1998).

The "critical inquiry project" starts during the first year with observations focusing on learners in schools. This is carried out as an introduction to the subject or phase specialisation which the students have selected and is expected to create a basis for further studies in their subject areas as well as in the professional studies carried out in Education Theory and Practice (ETP). The second year students focus on learning environments and contextual issues affecting teaching and learning in basic education. The data from year 1 and 2 form the basis for the students' major action research project during year 3. The

critical inquiry project is carried out as an integrated part of the students' school-based studies and is reported through seminars, in the students' portfolios and as written reports.

The potential in critical practitioner inquiry as applied in the BETD pre-service programme is expressed by a Namibian teacher educator, Mayumbelo, in her elaboration of the Namibian experience of inquiry and reflection.

> ... there is a need to build a bank of indigenous local knowledge in Namibian education. The pre-service teachers' reports are a beginning in that direction and although most of them may be described as amateurish, they contain much valuable information. Through their availability to a wider audience we hope that new insight will be shared, new theories will emerge and a better collective understanding of the forces underlying and shaping Namibian education will develop (Mayumbelo, 1996).

The ambition to aim beyond the lecture room, to make printed products of teacher education more widely accessible and to develop a critical knowledge base of education was demonstrated through the first publication of BETD students' critical inquiry reports. These critical inquiry reports were published by the National Institute for Educational development and the Colleges of Education in 1998. Each college selected a number of reports produced by the third year students and from this collection a further selection was done by NIED to compile a representative sample of reports with different focuses, from different grades and representing different subject areas.

This publication shows that a lot has been achieved so far in the development of practitioner understanding about educational issues since the inception of the reform. However, the broader aim of critical inquiry and action research still needs to be developed to make way for alternative school practices with developmental aspects beyond the common formal schooling in Namibia. It also needs to develop a broader critical view on schooling itself beyond the individualistic examination hysteria and narrow career perspectives developed during the colonial era.

Practice-based inquiry in the BETD in-service programme

At independence it was estimated that more than half of the members of the Namibian teaching corps were unqualified or underqualified for their duties and that most of the remaining teachers needed some kind of retraining to be able to cope with the envisaged radicalisation of the system.

The BETD in-service programme was established based on the same broad curriculum as the pre-service programme, but adapted to an in-service and distance mode of delivery, to upgrade the unqualified and underqualified teachers to a professional standard acceptable to the new philosophy of education. As with the pre-service programme, the BETD in-service went through a number of "piloting phases on a broad level", before a mode of delivery and an educational approach which incorporated the new educational philosophy were developed.

The in-service version of critical practitioner inquiry was given the name "practice-based inquiry", mainly due to the close connection with the daily classroom practice in the programme. The aim of practice-based inquiry was to create a closer link between the educational goals of equality of access to education, equity through the overcoming of educational disadvantage, the raising of quality of educational provision, and the development of education for democracy through democratic education (Ebbutt and Elliot, 1998).

The modular material was developed with a close link to the daily work of the in-service teachers. The modular material therefore attempted to move away from the common approach in in-service training and distance education, where assignments relate to the theoretical concepts introduced in the study material and are totally disassociated with the pressing issues in the classrooms. The practice-based inquiry mode was also introduced in an attempt to move away from the conception that professionalism is a matter of transforming theory into practice to the notion that practice-based inquiry is a way to develop holistic professional and theoretical understanding based on analysis of practice and as an integrated part of the transformation process. Therefore, the modular material produced for the BETD in-service programme is divided into a core activity booklet, which is following a practice-based inquiry model, to which relevant reading material is attached in a support booklet.

Practice-based inquiry opens up the mind to new possibilities in the classroom situation. The reflective analysis it involves doesn't simply focus the attention of teachers on the problematic aspects of customary practice. It also involves deliberating about how to develop and improve practice. It not only identifies and diagnoses problems in current practice but also generates action-hypotheses as a basis for practical experimentation in the future. Practice-based inquiry and therefore reflective analysis has a deliberative dimension and is future oriented (Elliot, 1997).

Modular material, following a practice-based inquiry mode, has so far been developed in Education Theory and Practice (ETP) and Lower Primary

Education (LPE). What lies ahead is to transfer this model for in-service teacher education to the other subject areas in the programme. Also the understanding needs to be developed, especially amongst the support staff to the teachers such as in-service education officers and in-service tutors, that practice-based inquiry also puts new demands on them in line with a constructivist perspective on knowledge and understanding. Another contribution to the new knowledge base will be available when teachers have developed their skills to document their daily practice through practice-based inquiry.

Critical practitioner inquiry in post-graduate staff development of teacher educators

Continuous staff development activities for teacher educators, education officers and support teachers involved in the teacher education reform, have been organised parallel to the implementation of the BETD programme. These staff development activities have been both informal and formal in nature. All teacher educators in Namibia have been involved in workshops and seminars on national and local levels since the introduction of the BETD programme. Formal staff development has also been carried out with support from different donor agencies both inside and outside Namibia. Two in-service and part-time courses, one building on the other, have been carried out in Namibia since 1992, with a special focus on central aspects of the new philosophy of education, such as learner-centred education and critical practitioner inquiry. This means that up to now, one third of all teacher educators have had learning similar to those experiences which the teacher educators are supposed to create for student teachers at the colleges of education. Teacher educators have also carried out critical practitioner inquiry and action research related to their own work.

Zeichner, Amukushu, Muukenga and Shilamba (1997) have given a broad description of the first of the two courses mentioned above based on six "case studies". The conclusions from the case studies indicate that there are a number of potentials with this type of staff development activities. Zeicher, et al make the following observations: these practitioners have experienced new insight into their own practice, they have demonstrated progress in their understanding and advancement of the reform agenda and through their engagement in "useful educational research" they have demonstrated the potentials in action research as an alternative to traditional academic research carried out by an educational elite. These writers also point to the contextual social and economic factors which call for "transformation in other spheres of the society" as a precondition for the achievements of the educational goals expressed in policy documents (ibid). Zeicher, et al conclude:

> Action research conducted by teachers, teacher educators and curriculum specialists in the course makes a very small but useful contribution to educational and social transformation in Namibia. It is a methodology for conducting educational research and the professional development of educators that contributes to the demystification of expertise and the lessening of hierarchy that will eventually lead toward decreased reliance on outside experts and the increased capacity of Namibians to determine their own future (ibid).

A post-graduate Higher Diploma course was developed from the first course described above. This course follows the same model, meaning that teacher educators continue to work full-time at the colleges. During the three vacation periods they attend face-to-face "institutes" where different aspects of the transformation process in Namibia are attended to. Tutorials are carried out, critical inquiries are discussed, and tasks and further inquiries are planned at these institutes. The tasks are discussed and reported in regional seminars when course participants from the same college come together over the weekends and they carry out critical inquiries as an integrated part of their ordinary practice. A group of twenty-nine higher diploma course participants finalised their studies in December 1997 through a series of seminars when they presented their critical practitioner inquiry studies to invited colleagues from the colleges, NIED, and the University of Namibia (UNAM). The reports presented at these seminars will soon be published in Namibia under the title *Namibian Educators Research Their Own Practice* (National Institute for Educational Department, in press) and will constitute another contribution to a Namibian knowledge base of education. The reports deal with issues like co-operative and active learning, issues relating to the teaching and learning of Namibian languages, independent learning and responsibility, reflective practices, constructive criticism, educational management issues and community related work.

The positive experiences from these courses contributed significantly to starting a Master's degree course in 1999. The Master's degree course would follow the same basic philosophy of critical practitioner inquiry and have an innovative focus on collective and community learning to break away from the common individualistic view of learning and knowledge. It would also revitalise some of the positive social and educational aspects of collective learning and action through critical pedagogy and critical solidarity.

The new situation with parallel courses (the Higher Diploma and Master's courses), carried out together with participants from the same institutions and same regions, will create another possibility for institutional capacity building through "internal" tutoring and other contacts between the two groups of

participants. Another important aspect is that teacher education reform in Namibia includes the education of teacher educators, which goes beyond "a weekend introductory course and good luck with the implementation".

Many international scholars, such as Walker (1996), Zeichner and Craig (1997), Kraft and du Plessis (1998) have commented positively on the staff development courses described above. However, it is worth noting that the meeting point between contradictory educational perspectives, which the implementation of these courses constitutes, has sometimes been problematic. Many course participants have had their educational experiences, basic views about education, and professional ambitions firmly anchored in a conservative educational foundation. This foundation has been moulded by behaviourism, racism, tribalism, and colonialism and mashed with the significance of social positions in the modern enclaves of the post-colonial society. The course organisers, on the other hand, have to a large extent represented critical international educational thought based mainly in the Nordic countries and the USA, but in many cases with a strong African perspective developed through years of "frontline" educational work in Africa. This meeting point has sometimes been characterised by contradictory expectations. While some course participants believed that everything new had to come from outside and be "handed over" to them, others developed a sceptical view on everything coming from outside the previous dispensation, developed through the colonial situation and sometimes signifying the remaining resistance towards the post-independence agenda. On the other hand, course organisers sometimes over-estimated the participants' analytic and critical professional skills as an expectation on educators representing a nation, which had managed to free itself from colonial subjugation.

Towards a critical knowledge base of education in Namibia

Education cannot stand isolated from ideology. Education is both involved in the creation of ideology and it is a battleground for the struggle over ideologies, of which the educational and social history of Namibia is a significant example. Globalisation has to a large extent replaced other international transformative forces with mostly negative connotations like colonialism and imperialism, and education is an integrated part of the societies affected by this new globalisation trend. The primary feature of basic education schools in Africa is that they operate in an environment that for the large majority consists of lifestyles, work, economy, family and convictions, that are different from the lifestyles and cultures globally spread by the transnational modernistic globalisation trend and its modern conceptual incarnations like "Planet Hollywood". This transnational modernistic culture is spreading, based on the claim to be the expression of the

universal truth about people and society. It eliminates the chance of a constructive growth process involving different cultures and ways of life. Schooling in Africa has, to a great extent, continued in the colonial mode and therefore is supportive of this transnational modernistic culture. Now it has to take a drastic turn in order to invent and promote an alternative way of life and culture. The process of being an instrument of the unconscious destruction of civilisation, without allowing people to participate in the transnational agenda, except for an urban middle class minority, has to be reversed (Dahlström, 1998).

It is with this perspective that the urgency of a critical knowledge base of education is formulated. Traditionally, knowledge production has been part of a transmission paradigm, which today has global features. The downgrading of knowledge of practice and knowledge developed from practice is an integrated part of this transmission perspective where the knowledge produced by "experts", usually far away from reality, is overemphasised. A critical knowledge base can break this transmission paradigm and make a difference by including practitioners' production of knowledge, meaning and understanding into the common discourse of education (ibid).

Educational systems are conservative in nature and change processes are usually threatening enterprises. Namibia was in an exceptional situation at independence with an indisputable consensus amongst the majority of Namibians that change was inevitable in the midst of a conservative system. The way forward was to create a change process where the practitioners were at the centre, thus avoiding a strategy of imitating the previous dispensation. In a way, the change process had to undo the effects of the previous system and to create space for thoughts and actions by practitioners. An alternative to the common and dominant culture of educational discourse had to be developed and critical practitioner inquiry became an important tool for this development. The process of redefining what counts as official knowledge was started with the call for the creation of a critical knowledge base of education in Namibia.

Critical practitioner inquiry and the creation of a critical knowledge base of education are still in their infancy and are in need of ample support at different levels if they are to develop into the progressive force they have the potential to be, in spite of the many contradictory agendas contributing to the new global trends affecting life everywhere, including formal schooling.

It is from a long-standing commitment to progressive educational development in Southern Africa, within a critical pedagogical perspective, which started twenty years ago, that the developments described in this article have been supported by Umeå University in Sweden through the Teacher Education Reform

Project (TERP). This and the international co-operative network which has emanated from the co-operation between Namibia and Umeå University, including scholars from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the USA, the University of East Anglia in the UK, and the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, is a sign of the development of an alternative global "trend" opposed to the common mental and material "consumerism" supported by the mainstream globalisation. This development can be placed within the perspective advocated by Samir Amin (1997), a profound thinker on the changing nature of capitalism, North-South relations and development issues for a renewing of global socialism.

> Of course the transformation of the world always begins by struggles at its base. Without changes in ideological, political and social systems at the national level, any discussion about challenging globalization and polarization remains a dead letter.

Melanie Walker (1996), a South African educationalist, who dedicated her article "Subaltern professionals: acting in pursuit of social justice" to the staff of TERP in Namibia, and all Namibian teacher educators and teachers, points to the "shift from authoritarian approaches and externally imposed expert knowledge, to a democratic pedagogy and knowledge creation in teacher research communities" as a way for teacher educators "to find their voices as producers of knowledge about education".

The introduction of critical practitioner inquiry as a way for practitioners like student teachers in the BETD pre-service programme, teachers attending the BETD in-service programme and teacher educators in their post-graduate in-service courses, to carry out systematic analysis of their own practices and to make their findings accessible to others, is another challenge in the transformation of education in Namibia. To support these attempts to shift the power balance between practitioners and the academics closer to the practitioners, it has recently been suggested by TERP and NIED that funds generated by the privileged strata in the international educational community will be made available for Namibian practitioners to assist them in their attempts to write up and publish their critical practitioner inquiries.

About constraints and the future

The national transformation of teacher education in Namibia started in 1993, with the introduction of the BETD as a new programme for the education of teachers for basic education offered to students at the four colleges of education. The philosophy of the programme was based on the notion of learner-centred

education with roots in constructivist conceptions of knowledge and understanding and a practice-based and critical notion on teachers' professional development, within a reconstructive agenda towards social justice and democracy. Teacher education was at the forefront of the national efforts to transform the former educational system, which was based on behaviourism and a racist ideology. The transmission tradition in teacher education had to be replaced with other approaches, which fostered critical thinking, empowerment, and creativity. For a further description of the previous tradition, exemplified through "Fundamental Pedagogics" — the South African way, see Harmelen (1998).

Before independence it was anticipated that such a transformation process would face many obstacles as well as active resistance as it would challenge many of the basic conceptions about schooling and education in Namibian society. Both Jansen (1995) and Angula and Grant-Lewis (1997) have addressed this resistance and the way it has been dealt with during the transformation process. Jansen (1995) points to the possibility that conservative Afrikaner bureaucrats, remaining in critical positions, could undermine the transformation process and that one response to this would be to create parallel structures of decision making, which would exclude the conservative bureaucrats. Angula and Grant-Lewis (1997) claim that international advisors at ministerial level acted as buffers between the internal resistance and the new policies. Jansen (1995) also makes a comment on the role of international advisors and states that they, in spite of their good intentions "limited the scope for development of black Namibians". Questions about the future are what happens when these "buffers" are gone and who will have the capacity to invade the empty space? There are some indications that the struggle over the "empty space" has already started, as the conservatives have become more outspoken and also express propagandist opinions more openly (Dahlström, 1996). In this respect the proponents of the post-independence policy need to organise themselves collectively to be able to remain with the initiative. The collective resources made available from critical practitioner inquiry can play an important role in this struggle over the common discourse. However, the lack of confidence amongst many Namibian teacher educators, curriculum officers, teachers and student teachers and their belief that they are not able to formulate their experiences and ideas in writing is a constraining factor. As a consequence of this and the traditional belief that schooling is only for certification, there are Namibian educators, who do not think that there is something to benefit from this type of educational accounts.

Due to the factors discussed above, a new and significant knowledge base of education cannot be realistically achieved within a short period of time. There are still years to come of collective struggle, until the traditional thinking about

the creation of educational knowledge will ultimately give recognition to critical practitioner inquiry as a legitimate way to knowledge production, even though the process has already started.

Part of this struggle is related to the fact that after Namibian independence, the responsibility for teacher education for the first ten years of schooling was taken over by the Ministry, thus negating UNAM's inherited pre-independence power to act as the sole "academic authority" on teacher education. Even though representatives from the Faculty of Education at UNAM have been invited and have participated in the development process of the new teacher education programme, there is still resistance to the programme, which to a large extent can be attributed to the struggle over "paradigms". Callewaert (in press) states: "The contribution of the Faculty to the development of the BETD has been limited to never lasting efforts to create or maintain alternatives at the Faculty, to fight the BETD reform and to boycott its implementation". Callewaert (ibid) explains that this resistance became worse when new staff were appointed, mainly elderly black scholars from elsewhere in Africa, who represented "the state of art in Anglo-Saxon institutions under the last decades of the colonial period".

These scholars had to claim the right of control over everything connected with schooling at all costs and they had to maintain the past conventional academic knowledge as the unique criteria, without any relationship to the issues at stake and the need of specific and real competencies in the aftermath of apartheid (ibid). A recent initiative from a group of Namibian scholars at the Faculty, is an internal attempt to address some of these issues. One of the objectives is to "evolve a development plan, through dialogue and consultation, that would bring the Faculty in line with the national reform initiatives" (Hope, Engelbrecht, Katzao and Villet, 1998).

At a different level Zeichner (1996) refers to the teacher educators participating in the staff development courses mentioned earlier in this article and expresses the view that the critical practitioner inquiry they have carried out will deepen their understanding of the underlying intentions with the reform agenda in Namibia.

Student teachers' perceptions of the reform as expressed in the data collected for the national evaluation of the BETD pre-service programme also points in a direction supportive to critical practitioner inquiry and the practitioners' production of knowledge. Based on the analysis of 336 critical incidents, three different levels of conceptual importance have been identified. The most important conceptions are related to participation, sharing, working together, and research. The strong emphasis on collective aspects and research is an indication

of the general support to what we have called a new knowledge base of education (Dahlström, 1997).

Traditionally, texts produced as part of schooling and training were confined to the teacher's red pen and soon ended up as sheets of torn papers blowing in the wind and pinned on the thornbushes on the outskirts of the communities. Purposeful education has to be characterised by a purpose beyond the marks of the red pen. It includes the identification of significant receivers of genuine texts containing knowledge, feelings, and attitudes, which are expressed through the development of professional skills in a constructive learning perspective (ibid).

A recent PhD thesis (Swarts, 1998) has addressed some of the constraints in the transformation process, for example, "that teacher educators and teachers seem to have a narrow conception of reflection and critical inquiry, focusing primarily on the immediate and technical aspects of teaching". Swarts study focusing on the impact of the broader social, economic and political forces on teaching and learning is needed in order to explore the ethical and moral dimensions of teaching and learning".

In spite of the many constraints, some of which were anticipated due to the magnitude of the whole enterprise to transform a colonial and segregated system to a system building on the policy goals of access, equity, quality, and democracy, Swarts includes the following in her summary.

The study has revealed that the reform has achieved a measure of success in terms of participants displaying positive and receptive attitudes towards the goals, philosophy and principles of teacher education reform in Namibia; that student teachers articulate and demonstrate conceptual changes as well as a broader repertoire of educational views and methods; and that they are supportive of ongoing professional development (ibid).

Critical practitioner inquiry has contributed significantly to this success and has the potential to become a force, which will make the difference in the future in the building of a critical knowledge base of education in Namibia.

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Teachers' Experiences of Continuous Assessment: Between Policy and Practice

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Abstract

Research suggests that policy intentions seldom define classroom practice. This study uses continuous assessment as a case study of the policy-practice relationship by examining teachers' experiences of continuous assessment against the claims of official policy on continuous assessment. The research strategy involved a critical review of policy documents on continuous assessment; interviews with Department of Education officials responsible for continuous assessment; a survey questionnaire on continuous assessment distributed to teachers in ten secondary schools and a detailed exploration of continuous assessment practice in three institutional settings. The findings confirm that continuous assessment is rarely implemented as policy intended; that teachers at the classroom level have altered the aims of policy to the extent that implementation proceeds at some distance from original policy intentions and that teachers continue to experience numerous problems in attempting to implement continuous assessment.

Introduction

Educational change in South Africa since the first democratic elections of 1994 has been characterised by recurring waves of reform. One such reform measure was the syllabus revision process of late 1994 that aimed at consolidating the different syllabuses of the nineteen racially defined Departments of Education and removing offensive racial content from these syllabuses. A National Education and Training Forum (NETF), formed in late 1992, spearheaded this

initiative to revise the apartheid syllabuses. A curriculum sub-committee of the NETF decided to consider such *short-term* syllabus revisions as one means of intervening in the education crisis as the long term curriculum framework that was needed would have taken at least two to three years to establish.

One of the key findings of this syllabus revision process was that schools were still dominated by one-off, high stakes examinations and that continuous assessment (CA) was unevenly implemented across the racially divided departments of education (Rollnick, 1994).

A number of writers have cited the limitations of conventional testing and examinations in:

- failing to address broader learning objectives (Nitko, 1994; Erinosho, 1993; Edgeworth, 1980; *Star*, 1976);
- reinforcing a limited range of educational objectives (Broadfoot, 1994);
- mainly targeting students instead of teachers or curriculum (Jansen, 1994); and
- creating a negative backwash effect on instruction (Dixon and Rawlings, 1987).

The need for learners to be exposed to alternative forms of assessment consonant with the broad policy commitment of the new government was self-evident.

At the end of its work on syllabus revisions, the NETF therefore recommended to the minister of Education that a more equal assessment environment be created for all learners. The minister in turn issued a brief to all nine provinces in South Africa to systematically implement CA in public schools.

In the case of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, two policy documents were distributed to schools: Circular 10/95 from the national Department of Education (DOE) and KZN circular 3/95 from the KZN Department of Education. It is the relationship between these policy documents (*what was intended*) and the practice (*what actually happened*) of CA that forms the focus of this research study. This study addresses one overarching research question: *given official goals, how do South African teachers understand and implement CA in high school biology classrooms?*

Research methodology

I combined the use of a survey questionnaire (largely quantitative) with the development of case studies (qualitative) to address the main research question.

I made use of three data sources to ascertain the intentions of CA policy: a critical review of the two CA policy documents mentioned earlier; semi-structured interviews with four DOE officials; and a survey questionnaire completed by 289 secondary school teachers from ten schools in the Durban and lower South Coast areas of KZN. These policy intentions were isolated in order to understand teachers' experience of CA against the claims of official policy. I generated a series of analytical questions that were used to interrogate each of the two policy documents on CA with the goal of identifying the explicit and implied policy goals articulated for CA in South African schools. Data extracted from the document analysis also formed the basis for more in-depth questioning of DOE officials through a semi-structured interview to obtain their understanding of CA goals. In exploring CA practice, I used two main data sources: a survey questionnaire to determine the manner in which the goals of CA were communicated to teachers, teachers' understanding, perceptions and experience of CA and problems experienced by teachers in implementing CA. I compiled three descriptive case studies on three standard nine Biology teachers chosen conveniently from the sample of 289 teachers who responded to the questionnaire in order to understand CA practice in a school setting. I used five methods of data collection to comprise each case, namely, semi-structured interviews, teacher profiling, analysis of teacher mark schedules', analysis of teacher transcripts and the questionnaire.

This study is limited to secondary schools only and will therefore not lend itself to generalisation with regards to primary schools or tertiary institutions. The data is limited in two ways. Firstly, teachers and schools were chosen conveniently depending on their willingness to participate in the study and whether they are in fact implementing CA. Secondly, the teachers chosen for the case study were from schools with different levels of resources across the cluster. The study is limited to ten South African high schools in the province of KZN. The broad survey of CA implementation was conducted with all teachers from the ten schools. The schools chosen were predominantly from the ex-House of Delegates schools (serving mainly Indian pupils) as these schools systematically implemented CA *as a consequence of* the new policy. The ex-House of Assembly schools (serving mainly white pupils) were already practicing CA prior to the policy announcement and the ex-Department of Education and Training schools (serving mainly black pupils) were not uniformly practicing CA despite policy directives from the KZN Department of Education. Schools that were not implementing CA were therefore excluded from this study as it was not possible to explore the policy-practice relationship in these cases given the design of my research. Case studies were conducted with three standard nine Biology teachers and not across standards on the assumption that standard nine Biology teachers' assessment styles would form a common basis for comparison.

Teacher understandings, perceptions and experiences of CA

The KZN Department of Education (1995) circular 3/95 defines CA as:

> ... representing continuing awareness, by the teacher of the development of knowledge of learners over a period of time. It is a gradual build up of a cumulative judgement about performance. A teacher using continuous assessment is looking for signs that show the growth of thinking processes, development of skills and acquisition of knowledge and understanding.

This definition presents a useful measure against which to assess how teachers actually understand CA. The items in Table 1 incorporate this definition and the various policy recommendations outlined in the policy documents. Firstly, the policy document suggests the assessment of *different kinds of tasks* and most of the teachers in the sample agreed that this was true of their practice (see Table 1), *but* the quality of these tasks is highly questionable. Case study evidence indicates that cumulatively a range of tasks are assessed, but on closer analysis tasks that assess recall and comprehension carry a relatively higher weighting. Tasks also lacked challenge and creativity and were in the main context blind. In offering different kinds of tasks, case study evidence indicates that while some teachers have offered five different kinds of tasks others have offered only two. These variations in implementation causes administrative problems (see Table 2). The majority of teachers have indicated that CA gives them more options for assessment, yet few have maximised these options. Teachers have indicated that CA has been introduced to reduce rote learning yet an analysis of tasks reveals that they are content-laden and in the main assess simple recall of facts. Clearly teachers lack the skills in constructing tests and other CA tasks of a high quality and current assessment practices undermines deeper and more meaningful approaches to learning on the part of pupils.

Secondly, the policy documents (ibid) recommends that *evaluation must occur on a continuous basis* and a significantly high percentage of teachers have indicated that this is "often true" (Table 1). According to Pennycuick (1990), gathering assessment over a substantial period of time increases the validity of the results. Two main points emanate from Pennycuick's comment:

- There are variations on how frequent "frequently" should be. Case study evidence indicates that the frequency of assessment ranges from assessing tasks 15 times to 35 times! The reliability of this type of assessment is questionable when added to this is the problem of the doubtful validity of the marks obtained as pupils copy on a large scale (Awomolo, 1992). Procedures for moderation have been decisively absent from the two policy documents on CA.

- The effect of CA seems to be a redistribution of stress throughout the year rather than the debilitating stress that frequently accompanies examinations. Teachers claim that pupils' workloads have increased due to the varying demands made by different subject teachers, as is reflected in the following commentary.

  > ... they are unable to cope with the work given because the demands are high. In some cases they have to satisfy the demands of nine teachers, for example, the std 7s. They are not able to submit their assignments timeously as teachers don't consult each other as to the submission dates for assignments.

Thirdly, the document suggests that the recommended *weighting for CA should be between 25 and 50%*, and this is evident from case studies on the subject. Other studies indicate a high preference for a hybrid approach to CA and examinations (Erinosho, 1993; Starr, 1970; Dixon and Rawlings, 1987; Chansakar and Rautney, 1981; King, 1976; Willis, 1974; Cox, 1973).

Fourthly, the document suggests that *CA is purported to enhance teaching* and more than half of the sample of teachers have indicated that this is "not true", their teaching has gone on in the same way as before. This is contrary to the findings of Ali and Akubue's (1988) study where this feedback from evaluation provides useful information for modifying and adapting the teaching curriculum. In addition, the document suggests that CA will enable teachers to *explore the curriculum more fully* and most of the teachers have indicated that is "not true". Case study evidence indicates that the curriculum is narrowly construed as the syllabus and is dictated by examinations. Innovative assessment techniques like group or peer assessment, debating and field observations are seldom used. In fact, although some teachers have claimed that CA results in an improved curriculum, a significant percentage have also indicated that they are pressured to cover the syllabus and have little time for assessment. More than half of the sample of teachers have also indicated that they do not assess *only the important, significant aspects of the syllabus* now that CA has been introduced. There is little evidence of continuous assessment going hand-in-hand with teaching and learning (Akwesi and Murphy, 1994). Explicit learning experiences which encourage and support peer and self assessment have not been incorporated into the curriculum. Case study evidence indicates that assessment is summative rather than formative.

Fifthly, the document suggests that CA allows for *the growth of thinking processes, the development of skills and the acquisition of knowledge and understanding*. However, and a large percentage of respondents have indicated that CA does not result in cognitive growth, very few believe that pupils better

develop their skills and acquire knowledge and understanding and half of the sample claim that CA does not assess what pupils really know. All three cases documented have offered assignments as one type of assessment task. These clearly do not reflect the true ability of the individual pupil as there is access to resource materials and scope for consulting with other pupils. Studies have found that pupils were more concerned about their grades than using CA as a learning experience (Chansakar and Rautney, 1981).

Table 1: Item analysis of questionnaire responses: teachers' experiences of CA

Item		True true	Sometimes true	Not true
A	CA allows me to assess different kinds of tasks	73,3%	20,4%	7,4%
B	I am better able to understand my students since CA allows me to develop a cumulative judgement about their performance	53,1%	23,8%	23,0%
C	CA has improved my teaching	27,3%	17,1%	55,6%
D	CA is what I have been doing all along	47,9%	20,3%	31,8%
E	CA gives me more options for assessments as a teacher	60,1%	20,6%	29,2%
F	I am better able to recognise the cognitive development of my students	33,5%	25,5%	40,9%
G	CA has allowed my students to better their skills knowledge and understanding	35,3%	24,5%	40,2%
H	I am now able to explore the curriculum in a much deeper and meaningful way	29,8%	1,86%	51,6%
I	I now assess my students more frequently since CA was introduced	55,2%	15,1%	29,6%
J	I now assess only the important significant aspects of the syllabus	3,35%	14,4%	52,2%
K	I now follow a more systematic approach to assessment	42,9%	15,5%	41,6%
L	In my school, opportunities have been created to provide feedback to the major stakeholders	37,4%	17,6%	45,1%

In the sixth place, the document suggests that *continuous assessment aspects and procedures should be discussed fully with learners and parents before*

implementation. More than half of the sample and two out of the three case study participants have indicated that this is "not true". Further, case study evidence indicates that where feedback was provided, it was in its limited form of a mark and comment. Thus the fulfillment of CA's diagnostic role is questionable. Does the teacher intervene and provide guidance when weaknesses are diagnosed?

In the seventh place, the document suggests that the teacher using CA should adopt a *structural and systematic approach to assessment*. Half of the respondents have indicated that this is "not true". This individualistic and fragmented operation of CA raises implications for record keeping and accountability. The document is notably silent on the issue of the recording of CA marks. This has resulted in teachers experiencing problems with increased workloads from recording CA marks for large groups of pupils.

In the eighth place, the document suggests that schools should decide *when and how frequently assessment should be made and care should be taken not to overload the school programme with too many tests situations*. However, two of the three case studies reveal that these schools have not developed an internal policy on CA. This has been the cause of teachers claiming problems of pupils not handing in tasks timeously, pupils handing in incomplete tasks and pupils being overburdened with too many tasks. What is evident in all three cases is the lack of communication between departments in the school, even in the case of the school that has an internal school policy for continuous assessment.

In the ninth place, the document advocates that the *language of assessment must be clear and direct and care should be taken to penalise language only to a certain extent*. Case study evidence indicates that tasks were heavily reliant on the English language. The language used in assessment tasks was complex and abstract. The underlying assumptions in all three cases are that scientific concepts will mediate themselves irrespective of language usage and that language is somewhat neutral or transparent in relation to subject matter. This has significant implications in a multilingual classroom.

Problems of CA implementation

The apartheid education system of the past has created schools in which teachers and pupils experience vastly different teaching and learning situations. One of the major differences lies in the extent to which schools are resourced, both in terms of trained human resources and material resources. Problems of inadequate structural support feature largely in this analysis (40,3%). Teachers have recounted problems of inadequate resources, large classrooms, inadequate textbooks, and so on. To elaborate briefly, one teacher interviewed commented that:

> ... the other problem is the lack of resources in school. For History my CA involves making worksheets on the subject matter under study and when I came to Siyasiswe High I saw there was no electricity, no library and many others. I ended up losing hope and being frustrated. I find that my teaching becomes boring and dull and as a result I can only implement CA via tests and assignments.

Also featuring largely, as reflected in Table 2, is that most teachers "strongly agree" that CA increased the workload of teachers. This increased workload is the result of frequent testing. Teachers explained that their workloads included computation and recording of marks and the construction of assessment tasks for large groups of pupils. It is important to locate this problem of heavy workloads in the broader context of poor conditions of service, the low morale that prevails amongst teachers and the erosion of the culture of teaching and learning that is characteristic of most South African schools. Another problem that is cited by most teachers is that they lack expertise in — and experience of — continuous assessment. As Table 2 indicates, 33,1% of the teachers "agree" and 16,7% "strongly agree" that they are not equipped with adequate skills to carry out effective assessment. Teachers have indicated that they are not equipped to measure learning outcomes in domains other than the cognitive one. Teachers have been found lacking in one assessment of work that could not be formally assessed, in the construction of demanding and interesting assessment tasks that challenges pupils, in record keeping and reporting, in the grading of assignments, and so on. Problems of inadequate support from the management of the school as well as DOE officials have also been cited by teachers. Some teachers complained that they were pressured to cover the syllabus and consequently had little time for assessment. One of the teachers commented as follows:

> Continuous assessment interrupts the progress of the syllabus and leads to a teacher completing a section not as thoroughly as he would have liked.

Sixty-five percent of the respondents have cited pupil related problems. Occurring more frequently are problems of pupil absenteeism, work not being handed in timeously, apathy and laziness. Also, pupils from relatively wealthy backgrounds may be advantaged as is shown in Table 2. Teachers claim that wealthy pupils have greater access to resources and professional assistance and can therefore present projects of high quality.

Table 2: Item analysis of questionnaire responses: problems experienced by teachers in implementing CA

Item		Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Dis-agree	Strongly disagree
A	CA increases the workload of teachers	49,1%	30,7%	3,8%	15,0%	1,4%
B	CA is an administrative burden	30,0%	33,4%	11,1%	20,9%	4,5%
C	CA benefits the wealthy students	19,5%	27,2%	11,5%	27,5%	14,3%
D	Teachers lack expertise of and experience in CA	16,7%	33,1%	17,8%	25,8%	6,6%

Conclusion

This study has been an attempt to explore teachers' experiences of a new reform, continuous assessment, against the claims of a policy. The study has shown that the goals of CA remain largely unattained. Firstly, the absence of front-line educators (district officials, circuit managers, principals and teachers) in policy formulation has distorted the aim of policy makers. Willingness, attitudes, motivation and beliefs are some of the factors that influence an implementator's response to policy goals or strategies (McLaughlin, 1987). Continuous assessment is reliant upon teachers for its acceptability and credibility. Also the DOE has absolved itself from the implementation process, indicating that this is a provincial function. This neat separation of policy formulation and implementation is not as clear cut when faced with the realities of the classroom.

Secondly, the pedagogy inherent in CA requires a significant shift in teaching styles. The DOE failed to institute proper training programmes to empower the teacher to effectively implement CA in the classroom. The need for providing teachers with skills to effectively implement CA both at the in-service and pre-service levels is paramount.

Thirdly, there is an urgent need to institute moderation procedures in schools and districts. This body of preferably district officials could be responsible for the random monitoring of CA techniques and procedures used in schools as well as ensuring comparable results between schools. Schools will then be informed of over-rating or under-rating or inconsistencies in CA. This body could also facilitate the development of standardised tests and CA tasks for curriculum modules in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains, which teachers can administer and use as models for developing their own instruments. They could also assist in the structuring of a CA committee in each school.

Finally, the findings of this study could also inform the wider debate of how to effect the sustained implementation of pedagogical innovations within the context of a transforming South Africa. The poor grasp of educational dynamics on the ground as well as the most appropriate way to change them has eluded policy developers. Policy sociologists (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992; Dale, 1989; McPherson and Raab, 1988) argue that policy is above all about contexts, processes and conflicts of actors as they relate and mediate their actions within their institutional structures and state organisations. Extending this argument, it is suggested that implementating bureaucrats will always put their own interpretations and meanings to intended policy and in the process will use their power and discretion to subvert or transform the original goals of policy makers (ibid). Recognising the power of implementators, a new generation of policy implementation analysts argue that effective policy making should reckon with and anticipate implementation problems in order to strategise accordingly and influence or constrain the agents of the implementation process (Gunn and Hogwood, 1982; Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1979). There is a need for exploring research possibilities towards the shift to evolutionary policy planning which aims to improve the fit between the intention of the policy change and the conditions on the ground.

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Conflict and Control, Agency and Accountability: Teachers' Experiences of Recent Change in English and Welsh Education

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Introduction

"If we wish to enhance teachers' professional lives, we have to direct our inquisitive gaze at teachers' own experienced worlds, and from there, pose demanding questions to those who seek to change and restructure the teachers' work from above. For at the end of the day, teacher professionalism is what teachers and others experience it as being, not what policy makers and others assert it should become." (Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996).

This paper is a preliminary piece of research examining teachers' experiences of and reflections on the recent changes that have taken place in English education at the primary level. The sample group was small (ten people) and not necessarily representative as it was equally balanced between people still working in primary education at infant and junior levels, and former teachers now involved in teacher education and research. I wanted to explore issues of interest to me, including some of the context of the reforms, but this paper is primarily an attempt to capture a small selection of the diverse views and reflections of teachers who had experienced major educational change. Debates about education reform in England have often been polarised between dichotomies that are never so clear in classrooms and staffrooms and, if nothing else, this paper is an attempt to represent something of that world in between. I hope these reflections provide a useful source of information for anyone

considering the implications and potential success or failure of major educational reform.

The reform process: paper, paper everywhere ...

The key reform was the introduction of a National Curriculum in England and Wales, and national testing at ages 7, 11 and 14 (the Standard Achievement Tests), which complemented the already existing GCSE's, taken by all pupils at 16. The National Curriculum gave detailed advice on what should be covered in different subjects and at different levels and it is based on the concept of educational *entitlements*. The curriculum has recently been rationalised in the light of teachers' complaints about the workload, and in the process it has become less ambitious or more realistic. There were also reforms to encourage greater involvement of parents in school as governors and assistants; the introduction of a more rigorous inspection procedure Office of Standards in Education (OFSTED); a school based teacher training system and other significant changes, such as an increased emphasis on parental *choice*.

Lewin (1998) has noted that initial ambitions for major innovations in education often prove to be over-optimistic and some of the comments of my interviewees on the English experience clearly echo these sentiments:

> There were too many changes too quickly and in that sense the government was not realistic about what could be achieved. There were some good ideas, but though some were clearly ideological and came out of a lack of respect for teachers, the main problem was the idealised (therefore impractical) nature of some of the reforms. It was useful to have a sense of expected standards in Maths and English and models of good practice were very helpful, but the expectations in the curriculum for teaching History, Geography, Science and Design were too much (current teacher).

What immediately becomes clear in discussions with teachers is that much of their anger seems to have been directed at the process of change, particularly their exclusion from initial decisions about it. There was a strong feeling of loss of control and this was linked by many of them to the widespread social prejudices that surrounded teaching at the time:

> ... you felt you had very little control over your environment and apart from your immediate colleagues, felt very unsupported and undermined on a national scale. A culture of blame-the-teacher seemed to emerge ...

> Teachers are always viewed as subversive (former teacher now doing educational research).

My interviewees saw different reasons for the loss of control. Many noted that the teacher-bashing approach of the Conservative government reflected a politically expedient desire for scapegoats, which had led to the miners, a few years earlier, being called the *enemy within*. However, some accepted that there was a widespread public anxiety about education at the time and recognised the need for reform while rejecting the way in which it was carried out. Unlike the miners, the teachers who were being very publicly undermined, were expected to implement the reforms and this was to prove to be a costly mistake. When the impracticality of some of the changes was exposed and the reforms had to be amended, teachers felt justifiably cynical, seeing it as the only possible outcome of a reform process which had deliberately not been based on consultations with them. From their perspective, their working practices had been systematically undermined for little obvious long-term benefit, but a great deal of short-term stress and chaos:

> In the beginning there were thousands of boxes to tick. Then it became a) more realistic and b) much more in tune with what people felt should be happening in schools, and people didn't feel terribly unhappy once it had gone through that cycle. But what's been left behind is this de-skilling and de-professionalising of teachers (teacher educator).

De-skilling is a term often used to describe the stresses placed on teachers during any reform process. In the English and Welsh context it is strongly associated, as Helsby and McCulloch (1996) have noted in their research in this area with the widespread uncertainty among teachers in relation to the "shifting sands" of both the substance and the direction of the reforms. Consequently, teachers felt a lack of investment in the success of the changes and there was widespread subversion and resistance at a union and an individual level. West-Burnham (cited in Jones, 1995) has noted that teachers, "... have a tremendous capacity to assimilate changes in such a way as to perpetuate existing modes of working". A typical strategy for dealing with the changes, mentioned by several of my interviewees was, as far as possible, to adapt new expectations to old ways of doing things:

> Many felt that the changes led to teaching that was more superficial because you had to give the appearance of doing foundation subjects for inspectors when in fact you tended to focus on core skills, like literacy and numeracy and the subjects you felt passionate about, in my case Art ... Infant teachers tended not to embrace the national curriculum because it wasn't seen as particularly relevant (current teacher).

It has often been noted that a significant proportion of teacher knowledge is ritualised and based on internalised routines. This accumulated, even habitual, wisdom forms a crucial foundation of a successful teacher's identity, but it is exactly the area that is often undermined by major reform, leaving even the most experienced and confident teachers feeling uncertain of their abilities. One of my interviewees expressed this in terms of being unable to recognise the teacher she was becoming in terms of her initial motivations for entering the profession. Furthermore, the uncertainty in the early years of the reforms, bred particularly acute cynicism among one of the groups of teachers who held the key to their success, the so-called "early adopters" (teachers who show a willingness to engage with reforms in the initial stages), as they were affected most negatively by the constant change (Jones, 1995).

In this context, teachers' assimilative strategies, though undermining in terms of the reforms, made sense in terms of pragmatism and the long-term investment that most of them have in their career and their survival in it. In some cases, however, pragmatism was not possible and teacher professionalism was significantly affected:

> ... junior teachers found themselves with very rigid timetables, which are completely inappropriate to that level, and became paranoid about doing the right thing as stated by the government rather than what they felt was right or appropriate" (current teacher).

One of the areas of greatest dissatisfaction with the effects of the reforms was in relation to the significant amounts of new paperwork they generated. All my interviewees saw it in negative terms; it was seen as "undermining of professional role and responsibilities", "time-consuming" and as the demands changed, it was seen to be getting in the way of "real teaching":

> I was teaching before the National Curriculum came in and we had a plan for all the curriculum areas and we linked it into what topics they had done in infant school. So when the NC came in at first everyone went 'Oh No!' and then we thought, actually we were doing this anyway. We had always planned at all levels week by week as well as term by term. It was really aggravating the way they kept changing it. Five years of constant change was very wearing and small changes would often mean major changes to paperwork ... You just felt it was a lot of work for not very much effect (current teacher).

There was an acceptance that some paperwork was a necessary part of the job, but for many teachers, the volume of the paperwork and the constant change due

to government mistakes had been one of the major causes of uncertainty about their futures in the profession.

A handbook, produced by the University of Sussex Institute of Continuing and Professional Education for the British government Employment Department, has argued for an evolutionary approach to any major educational reform. Policy-makers, however, often find themselves under pressure to find a *quick fix* and this tends to discourage lengthy processes of gradual and negotiated change:

> Innovators are likely to be impatient in their attempts to effect change and often have an evangelical zeal for their particular programme. But too fast a pace can become counter-productive. People take time to adjust and learn to do new things; and it takes longer than is usually recognised for any kind of change to take root (Eraut, 1990).

Taken to an extreme, this perspective can be used simply to defend the status quo, but it offers an important reminder for reformers that they should try and have the majority of teachers on their side and highlights the need to see innovation as a longer-term process. Clearly one of the main aims of any education reform is to ensure, as Parlett has put it, that new ideas have *currency* among teachers (cited in Eraut, 1990). This can only be achieved through dialogue and negotiation and without this, as happened in the initial stages of the English reforms, teachers' feelings of a lack of ownership or investment in the substance of the reforms, while being expected to work hard at implementing them, led to them being undermined.

Mixed messages: control or accountability?

As many commentators have noted, the changes in English education in the 1980s grew partly out of a neo-liberal approach to educational planning and management with a strong emphasis on standardisation and accountability. This was often presented in the rhetoric of the market, which redefined parents and pupils as *consumers* who could make informed choices. However, the National Curriculum in its early stages also had a strongly prescriptive element, which reflected the authoritarian tendencies present in the Conservative government of the time and a more explicitly conservative agenda. In public, Kenneth Baker, the Minister for Education, defended teachers' professional autonomy, saying in parliament:

> We do not intend to lay down how lessons should be taught, how timetables should be organised, or which textbooks should be used (cited in Helsby, 1996).

In private, however, as Helsby and McCulloch have noted (1996), Baker's later memoirs reveal his real views, long suspected by teachers, favouring greater prescription in the curriculum in order to deal with:

> Vagueness and lack of detail [which] will allow an inadequate and lazy teacher to skip important parts.

Many teachers perceived these mixed messages in the curriculum, with its covert and overt agendas, and the language of differing political views about education and teaching running through it. Unsurprisingly, this increased their reluctance to wholeheartedly adopt it:

> The rate of change over the last few years, and the half baked ideas have had a disastrous effect on all aspects of education, particularly on pupils (teacher quoted in Helsby, 1996).

When Napoleon introduced a national curriculum in France, he didn't see it primarily in terms of raising standards, but rather as a tool, "to direct political and moral opinion" (cited in the TES, 1988). In the Thatcher government, there seemed to be a similar Napoleonic zeal for directing the moral and cultural life of the nation through a curriculum which was supposed to concentrate on *facts* in history, *British* English literature and business *values*. In practice, much of the debate surrounding the curriculum in its early stages proved to be rhetorical and the focus of the reforms and resistance to them turned out to be focused on teachers' professional autonomy. In their major research, looking into the experiences of secondary school teachers in relation to the reforms, Helsby and McCulloch (1996), discovered that only 37% of teachers surveyed agreed that the changes had been for the better and 63% disagreed. In their summary they noted that key negative aspects of the changes that were highlighted by teachers included: the centralisation of planning, the lack of consultation, fears about pedagogic prescription, the limiting of teachers' autonomy, fears of disempowerment and a general unwillingness to be proactive in the current climate. Many of my interviewees made similar points:

> Teachers' resistance to the national curriculum was partly due to the paperwork and partly ideological … It all became tied up with different opinions about the way children learn and how they should be assessed (teacher educator).

Some writers, such as Alma Harris (1997) and Martin Lawn (cited in Goodson, 1996) have taken this a step further and argued that teachers' fears have been realised and that there has been an historic shift of *control* away from teachers.

From this perspective, teachers have become increasingly powerless in the face of government reforms that sought to reconstruct their role as that of technician or *deliverer* of the curriculum, in line with a more managerial version of professionalism. In this view, teaching has been reduced to a series of "skills" and the historic autonomy of teacher professionalism has been fatally undermined. This seems like a simplification; my interviewees were all keenly aware that a process of redefining teachers' roles had taken place, but were divided as to whether it was necessary and what the consequences had been. Several of my interviewees suggested that the job had become more complex since the reforms, an aspect of change that has been referred to as an *intensification* of the profession, and some felt that infant teachers, for example, had achieved a higher status because of the reforms.

An important distinction needs to be drawn between the level of prescription in assessment, which many of my interviewees were unhappy with, and the lack of prescription of pedagogy despite early signs that the government wanted this. There was even praise for the guidance aspect of the curriculum from several of my interviewees:

> The teaching of Science in primary education has been given a higher profile and as most primary teachers are not Science specialists, the national curriculum has provided useful materials and guidance (current teacher).

> The National Curriculum doesn't dictate teaching styles and therefore allows for creativity and flexibility in the classroom (former teacher now doing research).

Others suggested that attempts to prescribe teaching too closely would always prove unworkable, but that did not stop governments from trying to do it. Teachers were very unhappy with any attempt to control their work in the classroom, but generally acknowledged the need for structures of accountability and in that sense seem more aware of the demands of the community than other professions like doctors and lawyers. An important factor in understanding the changing attitudes of teachers is the publication of the *Dearing Report* in 1993.

The *Dearing Report:* a new consensus?

> I was trained in the National Curriculum, but most of the teachers at the school where I started had taught under the old system and there was a lot of unhappiness about the National Curriculum. I agreed with a National Curriculum in some ways. When I talked to some of the older teachers about the way they used to plan and teach, though they were spontaneous

> and creative in some ways, in other ways they used to churn out the same old things and there was no way of knowing who had covered what. It was very inconsistent (former teacher, now doing educational research).

The view of this former teacher reflected a view among some, though by no means all teachers that, despite the clumsiness of its implementation and the conflictual approach of the government, the National Curriculum had turned a spotlight on issues of standards and accountability in education. Lewin has suggested that debates about education were increasingly influenced by "the growing popularity of research on school effectiveness" (1998). Some of this research seemed to highlight an unevenness of achievement, even in schools with similar intakes of pupils and in comparable areas and the debate increasingly focused on how to achieve greater transparency in education, higher levels of expectation among pupils and higher standards.

It could be argued that the *Dearing Report* represented the clearest articulation yet of a new conception of teacher professionalism. Dearing had consulted widely and, unlike the earlier stages of the reform process, his report had received a major input from teachers and their unions. It emphasised the importance of teacher autonomy and "professional judgement" in relation to the curriculum, but also noted that this "increased trust in teachers" should be, "matched by accountability to parents and society" (cited in Helsby, 1996). The *Dearing Report* was published against the backdrop of widespread teacher resistance to testing procedures in the National Curriculum, which had been co-ordinated by the teaching unions. This resistance was largely expressed, as has already been noted, in professional rather than contractual terms, with the focus on three key issues: manageability, educational content and the style of assessment. It was, as *The Sunday Times* put it, "a battle over who controls the nation's classrooms, the way children are tested and how far the government should prescribe what pupils are taught" (cited in Helsby and McCulloch, 1996). Ironically, action against testing only started when it affected the secondary schools, reflecting a marginalisation of the voices of primary teachers. Primary teachers had been calling for action when they had been affected earlier in the cycle and some of my interviewees still resented the fact that they had not been listened to:

> SATs, for example, came in in the infants first and teachers stood up and said there were problems, then in junior schools, but it was only when it hit secondary schools that teachers were up in arms (teacher educator).

One of the main recommendations of the *Dearing Report* was a major rationalising of testing and once its findings had been accepted, the teacher

unions called off their action. There is still a lot of debate about the form of the tests, particularly at the primary level as they are summative rather than diagnostic and seem to be leading to test oriented teaching:

> ... the whole system is too negative and makes it even harder for failing schools to improve. SAT results are getting better, but that is because teachers are pushing kids hard. They're doing tests all year round and that leads to creative stuff being neglected (current teacher).

However, there is general recognition that they form part of a negotiated settlement and their primary function is to make teachers accountable and foster dialogue between teachers and parents:

> The paper tests revealed ridiculously high expectations on the part of the government and teachers knew that the underlying issue was accountability (current teacher).

One of the ways that tests were supposed to achieve accountability was through *league tables*, which was very unpopular with many teachers. Some teachers refused to support the publication of school test results and there were certainly good reasons for highlighting the problems with raw data on exams, as one of my interviewees explained:

> ... the whole emphasis has shifted to schools being in competition with each other in an unhealthy way. The information in the results is too simplistic and shows that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. In Camden, the top 8 schools are in Hampstead, everyone knows that this is related to affluence, but that is not shown in the league tables (current teacher).

However, a danger of outright rejection of publication of results was that teachers' attitudes could be portrayed as self-serving, suggesting there was something to hide and in conflict with the public's right to know.

This whole area is currently being renegotiated following the decision by the new government that league tables should take into account value added factors so that they become a measure of *improvement* rather than *results*. Most of my interviewees expressed more sympathy for this approach, but tended to doubt the reliability of the *science* involved in achieving a satisfactory system. All my interviewees were very unhappy with the policy of *naming and shaming* failing schools because they felt it inhibited staff rather than encouraged them and it was seen as another example of the government playing to the gallery rather than solving the problem.

Following the *Dearing Report*, therefore, teachers seem to have reluctantly accepted that tests are a necessary trade-off in the wider struggle to preserve autonomy in the classroom. Teachers had shown their *agency* by successfully contesting the changes and asserting their professional rights to influence the structure and content of the curriculum, but in doing so they had had to come to terms with a new way of making their work open to public scrutiny. Many teachers have seen industrial action as highly problematic and in conflict with their professional status, as one of my interviewees put it:

> Like the health service teachers are in a no-win situation as they are limited in the action they can take without affecting the welfare of their clients (former teacher, now doing educational research).

In this case, however, the centrality of professional demands in the action they took and a clearly articulated concern for pupils seems, in the eyes of many teachers, to have helped ensure their success. Ultimately accountability was recognised as a key factor in ensuring continued autonomy, though debates about the balance between the two continue.

Entitlements and standards: rights and responsibilities?

In order for teacher action to be successful, bridge building with public concerns, as has already been noted, is essential. For most teachers, even before the reforms, sensitivity towards parental and community concerns was central to their work and some feel that the curriculum interfered with communication procedures that were already good:

> Primary school reports are written in national curriculum — speak and parents need to ask — what's this really telling me about my child? There's a danger that we stop looking at things critically because we're told to do them (teacher educator).

However, the reform process enshrined a certain level of information as the *right* of parents, and, among teachers, the debate now seems to be not about whether there should be that entitlement, but what *form* it should take. Again, teacher *accountability* is seen to be a central part of a progressive social contract. In reality this is not a new conception at all but a new *emphasis* and could be seen as part of what Hoyle (cited in Jones, 1995) defined as *extended professionalism*. The bridge building involved in a curriculum based on student entitlement and interaction with parents undoubtedly makes the job more difficult, but most of the teachers I interviewed, while highlighting the pitfalls, recognised that it is necessary and useful:

> There is a problem in England that many people don't trust teachers, but to deal with that, you need to do it in a way that maintains teacher morale. Giving parents and governors more power makes sense, but there is a problem of lack of knowledge. Everyone thinks they're an expert because they've been to school. Some parents are confrontational and unwilling to accept any criticism of their kids and the turnout for fundraising etc. tends to be poor, revealing an unwillingness to get involved unless something is seen to directly affect their child (current teacher).

> There should be a dialogue, but it's got to be more holistic than just looking at numbers (teacher educator).

As debate around the issue of *control* shifted and teachers asserted their professional rights, there was a growing acceptance of the importance of *standards*, which grows naturally out of a curriculum based on entitlement. The recently elected Labour party, for example, has called its most recent policy document on education *Standards not Structures* to try and reflect a desire for quality, whatever the school and its set-up. The debate remains contentious. Is it possible, for example, to talk about universal standards in a society with huge differences in wealth and opportunities? This is the view of one of my interviewees:

> The staff where I worked (a very difficult school in inner London) was very committed to trying to address the children's needs. A targets in science, for example, just seemed so laughable when you had kids climbing out of the windows and abusing each other if they went to the toilet (former teacher, now doing educational research).

However, most of my interviewees agreed with the principle of a curriculum based on universal entitlements, and few disputed the rights of stakeholders, including parents, taxpayers and employers to contribute to any debates about education; with the important proviso that teachers' perspectives are listened to and respected. Some teachers argue that the standards debate is important as it offers a vehicle for greater respect and status for teachers, particularly if there is a high degree of consensus among stakeholders as to which standards are to be valued:

> The difficulties with the National Curriculum are slowly getting ironed out, and the result is an important standardisation of targets and content (former teacher, now doing educational research).

> ... the curriculum has broadened what is expected of children at the primary level, particularly for children with special needs, who previously had a very narrow diet, it's actually created a curriculum entitlement ... (teacher educator).

The debate continues and the focus has shifted away from the curriculum and the testing procedures and towards the role of government inspections.

OFSTED: all stick and no carrot?

Among teachers, attitudes towards government inspections range from considering it to be a necessary evil to seeing it as a bureaucratic imposition that undermines teachers' motivation and professionalism. Some of my interviewees accepted that there was some justification for the widespread view in society that pre OFSTED procedures for dealing with failing teachers and failing schools, were weak:

> OFSTED inspections are a difficult area. Inspections have been branded as the enemy, and every institution behaves differently for the time they are there. I think, however, there are a lot of poor quality schools, which are doing a disservice to the children, the taxpayers, and the teachers themselves. It is the government's responsibility to protect children from an inadequate education as long as schools are supported and resources provided to help them. We all know there are a lot of bad teachers out there, but there are also far more excellent ones, these teachers also need to be supported and developed. There are wonderful examples of schools rebuilding themselves and showing great changes in all areas of school life. Ultimately things should never have been allowed to get to this stage and in the long term I think OFSTED should try to identify weak schools before they become failing schools, just the fact of being accountable to an external body should keep heads on their toes! (former teacher, now doing educational research).

On the other hand, a large degree of suspicion remains about the actual quality and validity of inspections:

> It depends on the team, the time it's done ... there's a whole range of people becoming inspectors and in some cases teams are disputed because you've got people without primary experience on the team. Primary schools have a distinctive ethos and constraints which an inspector should be aware of in a first hand way. It's important to have a point of contact. It's also very important how things are handled. All schools have strengths

> and weaknesses, but if you've got a heavy handed team coming in to a school that's basically OK, with a few weaknesses, which they home in on. When they walk out at the end of the week, they can leave morale in school totally destroyed (teacher educator).

If OFSTED is to be respected as an enforcer of standards, then all my interviewees agreed, it must ensure that its own standards set an example and that it is accountable to teachers as far as is possible. As this remains one of the most contentious areas in English education it is worth considering one final perspective on inspections, which considers the possibility of a more interactive approach:

> Regarding OFSTED I think you do need to monitor teachers, but the way it's done at the moment is totally unsupportive and many teachers feel there is a lack of consistency and a lack of feedback, advice and discussion. Maybe they should follow teachers through a typical day and their whole approach should be less threatening and ideologically driven. They could learn from the Local Education Authority (LEA) system of inspections where somebody you know comes to visit once a term and discusses a key issue or subject with the head, before producing a report and giving advice. They know the school and they are willing to enter into a discussion about problems and be supportive (current teacher).

As OFSTED comes to the end of its first series of sweeps through English education, there seems to be a widespread desire for a system that retains its monitoring role, but also takes on greater advisory responsibilities:

> I would like to see OFSTED working towards a less confrontational role and for the whole experience to be viewed in a more positive light, this would involve a lot of organisational self-reflection for OFSTED but should be pursued for the betterment of all the agencies involved (former teacher, currently doing educational research).

This issue is clearly at the heart of any balanced discussion of a teacher professionalism that is both autonomous and accountable and it will be interesting to see how things develop. OFSTED undermines the notion of a self-regulating profession, but that does not necessarily lead to an undermining of professionalism. In fact, it could be argued that the transparency, which can result from sensitively carried out inspections represents the basis for a form of teacher professionalism that is more responsive to the community it serves. How far these arrangements offer the basis for a new consensus about teacher professionalism, and how far they are, yet more sticks to beat teachers

with, without the promise of the carrots enjoyed by other professions, remains to be seen.

School based teacher education: grounded theory?

A final reform worth considering is in the area of teacher education, where there has been a significant shift towards school-based teacher education using a mentoring system. Critics of this approach have cited it as typical of a limited skills-based conception of teacher professionalism, but most of my interviewees saw it in more positive terms:

> One of the strengths of Sussex [is that it] has always had strong links with schools and they've always had people with recent relevant experience teaching the courses. We've got very strong links with schools partly because we're all practitioners. I don't think you can run a course without that partnership and we were pioneers. Where you don't have that dialogue and interaction, it shows and trainees pick it up very quickly. It's very important that a trainer is able to say to a trainee 'In my experience ...' when giving examples or answering questions (teacher educator).

A perception of practising teachers' conservatism has often been used by academics as a defence of university-based training. However, as Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) note, it can be seen as a positive step away from an academic attempt to build teacher training on scientific certainty, which, ... may actually undermine teachers' professionalism. It could be argued that the recent shift to school-based teacher education in England and Wales has placed grounded theory and reflective practice at the centre of training. Others might argue that there has been a consequent loss of *enrichment*, though whether it is the purpose of initial teacher training to provide enrichment that is not focused on actual teaching is debatable and perhaps too complex to explore here. What seems beyond dispute is that the relationships between schools and universities seem to have been reinforced by the changes. Furthermore, the professional status and knowledge base of practising teachers, who have a key role in teacher education as mentors, have been enhanced by the changes:

> We never make unilateral decisions. The management of the course is four professional tutors (mainly heads), four mentors (class teachers) and two people at the university. Everything is done in joint consultation (teacher educator).

School-based teaching has also become associated with the hegemony of notions like *standards* and *accountability*. Teacher trainers are more immediately

accountable to the schools that they are producing teachers for and that is seen to shore up standards. It is likely that it would be difficult for teacher educators to persuade trainees and schools that teacher training should become less school-based once it is in place as so much of teachers' professional identity develops out of reflecting on practice. If there is a worry about the limited form of professionalism that might be developing out of this approach to training, perhaps the role of INSET in teachers' professional lives needs to be reconsidered.

The future: new government, old debates?

Education remains at the centre of English political debate and some areas seem forever politicised. For example, the current government, despite being ostensibly closer to teachers' interests, is seeking to prescribe approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy in primary schools with a reform that some see as a classic *quick fix*:

> I think the introduction of the literacy/numeracy hours are more worrying ... [they] ... are de-professionalising and prescriptive, although teachers really like them, and they are based on questionable pedagogies. I think teachers have really been struggling with the teaching of literacy and the superficial improvements in kids' literacy are very instantaneous, and therefore very satisfying. They have also been supported with materials and training, and schools always appreciate new material inputs (former teacher, currently doing educational research).

However, others are more positive about this change:

> My friend has been teaching the literacy hour in the pilot research and she has said that teachers and children feel very positive about it and they have been very popular in the two LEA's, Manchester and Sheffield, where they've been established (former teacher, currently doing educational research).

At a deeper level some of my interviewees detect positive longer-term shifts in the relationships between teachers and the community. One should not overstate this; few would disagree with general observations that teachers' stress levels and workloads, particularly in relation to paperwork, have increased as a direct result of the reforms. In fact, two of the main teachers' unions in the UK have voted, this year, to take action against what is seen as an over-bureaucratisation of their work. One of my interviewees, referring to the impossibly high expectations and complicated procedures that accompanied the reforms, put it succinctly:

> The overwhelming cry from staff rooms over the last few years has been, 'How can I fit this all in?' (current teacher).

However, if one focuses on primary education, there is also a clear sense that the very public debate about education over the last few years has led to a higher profile, and, in some teachers' eyes, higher status. Increasingly, primary education in the UK has come to be seen as the attractive option for people choosing teaching as a career and it is at the secondary level that problems of recruitment are at their most acute:

> There have been major reforms to primary education over the last ten years, and I think the quality and efficiency of classroom time has improved as a result. Teaching appears to be much more focused and more concerned with objectives which (I hope) has led to primary education being taken much more seriously by parents and professionals — changing from being perceived as a glamorised baby-sitting service to a (very challenging) profession (former teacher, currently doing educational research).

Interestingly, support for this view comes from an unexpected source. The English Law Society noted in 1994 that primary teachers had become a model of professionalism, which lawyers would do well to imitate, particularly in their constant drive for "reflective practice" and "continuous improvement" (TES; 2/1/94). It is hard to imagine this being said before the reforms. Helsby and McCulloch (1996) offer a more measured, but still positive view:

> It may be argued that recent State interventions in the curriculum, whatever their aims and rhetoric may have been, have had little impact on teacher professionalism in practical terms, or that they may even have tended to enhance rather than to undermine it.

Conclusion: trust me I'm a teacher ...

During any major reform process, with its concomitant increases in stress, workload and loss of confidence and security, it is very difficult for teachers to engage in significant reflection on and about the changes that have taken place. This paper is based on interviews with people who are still teaching as well as people who were teaching, but have now moved into teacher education and education research. For this second group, this change of role has enabled them to consider their experiences in a wider context and perhaps move from a more individualised view of their experiences and actions towards a more holistic view. However, teachers who are still teaching, have also been able to

catch their breath and reflect after a period of relative tranquility and their voices should remain central to discussions about the reforms. It is clear that pragmatism is a key foundation of successful teaching and that instinct will often lead teachers to undermine or circumscribe education reforms if they feel excluded by the reformers until they are expected to implement the changes.

People are coming to terms with new working arrangements and several researchers have acknowledged that, while the process of change may have challenged, even threatened teacher professionalism, there seem to have been some positive, or potentially positive outcomes, particularly in the post-Dearing era:

> ... [There is the potential for] a new partnership founded on a balance between professional discretion and public accountability, a partnership that would have at its heart the continual improvement of teacher quality (Barber, 1994 cited in Helsby and McCulloch, 1996).

Furthermore, these experiences need to be considered by teacher educators and anyone involved in the management of educational change as they reveal that a self-critical rather than self-protective approach may well become the professional norm in the future. There are currently widespread calls for a reconceptualisation of teacher education accompanied by a reconceptualisation of the education system as a whole (Wideen Grimmet, 1995). England and Wales offer an interesting case of that happening and while the agenda for change in other contexts, may well differ significantly from the changes in England, there are likely to be many parallels and overlaps in terms of aims and experiences. The debate has largely moved on from initial rejection of the changes and a defence of the status quo, towards a pragmatic process of reforming the reforms, exemplified by the action to be taken by teachers' unions against unnecessary levels of paperwork.

The focus of this paper as a whole has been a belief in the possibilities of teacher agency, rather than a conception of teachers as victims of all-powerful systems. There have been times during the last few years when it has been hard for teachers to be confident of their agency, but there are signs of it in the dialogue with government reforms and the willingness to resist where necessary. My interviewees seem to recognise that they must employ the discourse of teacher professionalism in a pragmatic way if they want to build bridges to get public support and challenge increases in central control. Also, judging from their comments, it now seems to be widely accepted that the balance between accountability and autonomy is an important issue in defining

modern professionalism; as I mentioned earlier, the debate is not about whether these things are necessary, but how they can be achieved. Inspection is recognised by some to be an integral part of that, but many question the way it is currently carried out and there seems to be a widespread desire for more dialogue in this area. In recent years teacher unions have often been forced into a reactive role, given the nature of the changes and the approach of the government implementing them. Perhaps now there is an opportunity for unions to initiate a teacher-led reform agenda, which moves beyond contractual issues, acknowledges that some changes have been beneficial, and goes on to spearhead a new professionalism of the kind envisaged by Goodson and Hargreaves (1996):

> ... one which is guided by moral and socio-political visions of the purposes which teacher professionalism should serve within actively caring communities and vigorous social democracies (1996).

Discussing the changes with teachers is a powerful corrective to the idealised and simplified views of teachers, their roles and their responses to change, which have emerged from both the left and the right. Teachers' voices tend not to fit neatly into any one framework and reflect a diversity that grows out of a profession that places a high value on experience and grounded theory. It has not been the intention of this paper to create an artificial consensus out of the dissonant voices of my interviewees, but to try and move beyond the anger and frustration that many teachers felt, and still feel, about the reforms, and explore where the consensus might emerge or, in some cases, may already exist. All my interviewees agreed that this consensus must be based on respect for teachers and the work they do and despite increased accountability and raised standards, teachers continue to remain trapped between two paradoxical views of teaching. On the one hand, as one teacher educator put it, "there's a new definition of average"; teachers are being pushed to their professional limits and, though pupils often get the best that can be expected given situational limitations, it never seems to be enough. On the other hand there is the self-deceiving innocence of the dominant societal view of teaching:

> The power behind the government's position is its simplicity: you just sit them down and teach them and make sure they've learnt it, then you tick that box and move on (teacher educator).

One of my interviewees sums it up effectively with a statement that anyone who has taught will identify with:

> You need to have a certain amount of trust and let people get on with the job. You need a curriculum and you need testing, but you shouldn't spend so much time doing that that you don't have time to do the important preparation of teaching (current teacher).

The central problem for all reformers is how to achieve and maintain that trust and what its limits are.

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Call for Papers: Volume 18 No 3
Higher Education, Globalisation and the Third World State

Guest Editor: Betty Govinden

Why is it that all countries tend to do more or less the same things at about the same time? This question is particularly apt in surveying the reorganisation of higher education institutions across the globe at the turn of the century. Most universities, whether in Europe or Africa or North America, are in the process of "restructuring". Most universities, whether in very poor societies or in affluent ones, are retrenching staff under various legitimating terminologies such as "right-sizing", or "rationalisation" or "repositioning". Many higher education institutions (technikons, polytechnics, community colleges), other than universities, are asking questions about their own identity, place and charters in the academic marketplace. Across nations, one of the fastest moving cultural transports is the private university. Unthinkable five years ago, South Africa now has a host of Australian and European private colleges and universities setting-up business and receiving state accreditation in the shadow of the 36 quasi-public institutions of higher education. At the same time, the African University, as in the case of its counterparts in other third world contexts, is under increasing threat through dwindling state subsidies, declining student numbers, decreasing public confidence in the quality of university graduates, and growing unemployment for those graduates who enter the marketplace after years of investment in study. At the same time, within institutions, reform and restructuring proceed with remarkable similarity across the world. Most universities invoke quality assurance as a mechanism for reform and accountability; most institutions require flexibility (or what one author called "flexibilisation") in the modes of delivery of higher education programmes; many institutions require a customer-service orientation which increasingly treats the student as client and the university as a business centre; many institutions, from California to Cape Coast, seek mergers, alliances and co-operative ventures as strategies for rationalising resources in a hostile consumer market; and most universities demand measurable outputs as evidence of performance and viability. In Lyotard's terms, "performativity" has become both the means and the end. National boundaries have evaporated and "indigenous reforms" customised in the sweep of powerful technologies from the Internet to distance education across Africa, Asia and Latin America. Perhaps the consumption of "national qualifications frameworks" and "outcomes oriented education" are the most powerful examples of the speed of dissemination of

overpowering technologies. In a short period of time, aided and abetted by international funding agencies, higher education has become big business. In this environment, "natural selection" retains competitive institutions while those less able dwindle into insignificance, if not oblivion. What does this all mean for higher education and the third world state? Against such a background, this Special Issue of *Perspectives in Education* invites research papers on questions such as the following:

- What are the effects of globalisation on universities in the third world?
- How has the third world state responded or contributed to the dilemma of the university in developing contexts?
- In what ways have intellectuals responded to the changing context of higher education throughout the world, and particularly in the third world?
- Are there counter-forces to the hegemonising influence of globalisation on the third world university? Is the African Renaissance, for example, complicit in or a challenge to globalisation tendencies?
- What about race? In states like South Africa, there are different traditions and institutional profiles separating historically white and black universities; how has globalisation and the marketisation of higher education impacted on the racial profiles of the post-apartheid university? Where have the black intellectuals gone?
- What have been the effects of globalisation on indigenous knowledge systems?
- Are there case studies which illustrate either dilemmas or constructive encounters with the homogenising effects of globalisation?

PART TWO

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RESEARCH

Foreword

Juliet Perumal

This edition of *Perspectives in Education* features the launch of a new column entitled: *Conversations about Research*. Inextricable to this title is our express intention to provide a "chat-room" for the relaxed and sincere interchange of research experiences and aspirations, insights and hindsights. The decision to launch *Conversations about Research* was precipitated by what we sensed to be a growing urgency to dismantling time-honoured cultures that have defined the hierarchical dichotomies around research epistemology and methodology. While there may exist any number of sophisticated inroads to facilitate this transformation, *Conversations about Research* seeks to provide a venue where researchers and the researched can enter into a dialogical relationship with a view to critiquing the dynamics of the research process.

This need for dialogical enquiry emanates from limitations and strictures that have hitherto been imposed on the theoretical and methodological research infrastructures which have sought to universalise and objectify everything ranging from the researcher to the researched, the research process to the research report.

In response, current, dissident research philosophies have begun to register mounting condemnation against research communities that insist on puritanically hanging up their subjectivities on a hook outside the *research laboratory*, bent on misrepresenting research as the objective pursuit of *sacred* knowledge disembodied from socio-cultural values and contextual specificities. It is not surprising that such archetypes conjure images of researchers clad in lab cloaks of symbolic asceptic innocence, neutrality, and objectivity. Klu Klux researchers often speak in powerful, mysterious, anonymous voices inaccessible for dialogical engagement. *Conversations about Research* is intent on demystifying and demythologising the official explanations and assumptions upon which such research traditions illegitimately thrive.

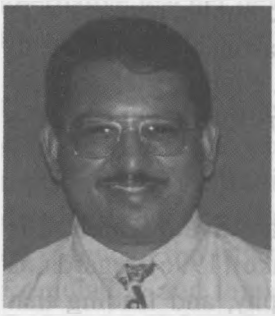
Conversations about Research is eager to explore the dynamic and complex interplay of knowledge and social relations that undergird research praxis. The two recurrent concepts of epistemology and methodology remain central to such an exploration. Proceeding from the understanding of epistemology as discourse about the theory of knowledge, and extending the notion of methodology to encompass the study of actual phases, techniques, and practices used in the research process, *Conversations about Research* envisions redefining and re-mapping the precincts that have policed the research process. Rather than

valorise any particular school of research thought or engender further factions within the research community, *Conversations about Research* seeks to bridge the divide by stimulating dialogue around less talked about issues involving power dynamics, ethics, authority, authenticity, that inform the research process. We believe, that the acknowledgment of myriad voices, varying interpretational and experiential perspectives, multiple subjectivities and authorships will enable us to strengthen our fellowship with the broader research community; and empower us to achieve greater representivity, and experiment with alternative modes of re-presentation. This is certain to unshackle the insularity that has kept us from talking to each other.

The research papers and pieces that feature in this column, serve as examplars to the re-negotiated researcher-researched relations and modes of representation that we hope to feature in future offerings of *Conversations about Research*. It signals our fledgling attempts at exploring new research horizons, and it is in this spirit of adventure that we invite both researchers and the researched to harmonise our voices in what promises to stimulate, provoke and challenge us towards re-configuring our research ideologies.

Conversational Epistles

Rubby Dhunpath



RUBBY DHUNPATH is Deputy Principal of the Merebank Secondary School in Durban, South Africa. He also teaches Sociolinguistics to post-graduate students in the Faculty of Education: University of Durban Westville, South Africa, and is the current managing editor of Perspectives in Education.

Biographies, life histories and other modes of narrative research enjoy increasing popularity as an alternative research genre. However, their status as a legitimate research methodology continues to be challenged by the positivist/empiricist tradition with its artificial dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative approaches to research. Debates around life history methodology slide imperceptibly into questions which challenge its legitimacy as a research genre in relation to the methodologically enfranchised empiricist tradition.

Without getting embroiled in the quirks of postmodernist research, let me say that I see no dichotomy between life history methodology and the empirical tradition. Narrative research does prefigure a challenge to traditional conceptions of epistemology with their fetish for certainty and objectivity of knowledge and the quest for universal truths. However, my intention is not to suggest that artistic approaches to research should displace scientific enquiry. Instead, I want to suggest that we promote "methodological pluralism rather than methodological monoism" (Eisner, 1981).

Biographies fall into the broad genre of narrative research, which actively seeks to affirm and sponsor the voices of the teacher, the teacher educator and the student; voices that have long been absent from educational research and policy. I have therefore coined the notion of a "NARRADIGM" to reaffirm the intrinsically narrative quality of our lives. Since we experience the world and re-present our experiences narratively, biographies and other forms of life writing enable us to REGAIN the art of reconstruction and interpretation of the subjectively meaningful features and critical episodes of an educator's life. This

allows us to see the unities, continuities, and discontinuities, images and rhythms, enabling us to reconceptualise our studies of teaching and curriculum in fundamentally different ways. In understanding something so intensely personal as teaching, it is critical that we know about the person the teacher is (Goodson, 1992). When we begin by examining the educator's work in context, we find that the educator is not simply a practitioner, but a complex persona with a unique history, which impacts on his or her work. It is reasonable therefore, to consider the social dynamics which have shaped the life. Studying educators' lives represents a counterculture, which encourages teachers to emerge from the shadows (Personal Narratives Group, 1989).

Without becoming overly defensive about the virtues of narrative research, it is perhaps prudent to be wary of the hazards of what Manke (1996) regards as "wandering into the darkness of the forest called biography, and finding that there are monsters hiding among what seemed to be well known trees and bushes". These monsters often appear in the apparently innocuous shape of ownership, ethics, legality, and integrity of the data. Equally contentious is the issue of relationships between the researcher and the researched. The issues get further complicated by the writer's veneration and awe of his or her subject so that the writer becomes susceptible to the under-valuing of personal importance. Such a situation is potentially dysfunctional, particularly when the researcher's voice is consciously muted to gain geniality in the relationship.

If we accept that our insights into education is best achieved by trying to understand how life is seen by those living it rather than by accepting uncritically perspectives of those administering educational systems, we have to begin listening systematically to teachers, teacher educators and learners. If teachers' voices in general have been absent from educational research, it is particularly true for black women whose voices have often been deliberately excluded, unrecorded and silenced. We have to change the established canon of research to give audience to marginalised voices. Narrative research is dedicated to celebrating the voices of the silenced. But more than that, it celebrates biography as an authentic reflection of the human spirit, a mirror to reflect *visions of our otherselves*.

It is in this spirit that I offer the following correspondence between Cynthia Mpathi and myself, extracted from my Master's dissertation: *A Tapestry of Teacher Education in KwaZulu-Natal Through the Eyes of Cynthia Mpathi.* Conceived in the belief that we have to persist in giving voices to the marginalised and the silenced, this biographic study affirms a growing commitment among educational researchers to find alternative forms of data collection and re-presentation.

In viewing *A Tapestry of Teacher Education in KwaZulu-Natal Through the Eyes of Cynthia Mpati*, we are given an intimate view into her precipitous personal circumstances as well as the multiple layers of institutional and structural constraint she had to endure. We are given insight into her unrelenting struggle against a reticent androcentric bureaucracy, in order to institute Vulani (an alternative teacher development programme for uncertified teachers who, at the time, were condemned to perpetual disadvantage by Bantu Education).

Using Anthony Giddens' Structuration Theory as a conceptual framework, the study explored the potential of individual agency, examining whether its scope at transforming institutional structures has been romanticised. Framed in a discourse that foregrounds the role of gender dynamics as a mediating influence on agency, the study surveyed the process of Teacher Education policy formulation and implementation in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. Embracing Huberman's stage development model (1993), the study attempted to explain the complex intersection of the individual, the socio-political and the economic dimensions in teacher education.

In the following letter to the subject of my biography, Cynthia Mpati (the vice rector of a Teacher Education College), I attempt to document the research process, reflecting on what the experience has meant for me. Cynthia's subsequent reply briefly captures the impact the experience has had on her.

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DATE: 15:12:1997

Dear Cynthia,

It has been almost a year since we embarked on this journey into the enigmatic landscape of Teacher Education to find answers to intriguing questions about our lives as teacher educators and to try to understand the nature of the complex Teacher Education terrain. I have attempted in this research to understand change through your eyes, as you have devoted your life in pursuit of a more humane and liberating system of Teacher Education. I have employed the biographical method to represent this change because I believe that too little attention has been given to educators' voices in educational investigation and educational policy formulation. I believe also that change can only be seen authentically through the lenses of those who have been the substance of change. Since human life is constructed narratively, I think narrative research offers a useful opportunity for us to hear educators' voices and begin to understand their culture from the inside (Cortazzi,1993). But, I have also been cautious of the potential limitations of narrative research which threaten its legitimacy as I have argued in Chapter Two of the research report.

In constructing your biography Cynthia, I have reaffirmed the potential of narrative to open the "window on the mind" (ibid), both for me the researcher, and you the researched. But it has done more than this. Constructing your biography has provided me with valuable insights into how educators construct their identity through their own unique social and cultural histories, and how this identity in turn impacts on the educational environments they occupy. It has demonstrated that Teacher Education is not free of the sinister claws of the capitalist state which readily appropriates Teacher Education policies as mechanisms for legitimation. It has illuminated aspects of educational bureaucracies and challenged traditional conceptions of these being fortified, monolithic structures. It has revealed that those who fortify these ideological structures are as frail and vulnerable as those against whom the structures are defended.

You have demonstrated through your story of Vulani that there are spaces in these bureaucratic structures and that human agents can infiltrate these bureaucracies to effect small but significant changes; but that these changes are mediated by the most pernicious

of power dynamics ingrained in society: gender inequity and the symbolic violence associated with it. It must be deeply distressing for you therefore, when the chairperson of the Human Rights Commission – Barney Pityana declares in a national newspaper that he is "sexist and not racist", and that the "elimination of gender discrimination is a cause which has to be championed by victims". This is another painful reminder that if the emancipation of women in society is aimed at freeing women from traditional forms of constraint in private and professional life, in participating on equal terms in structures dominated by males, she would have to contend with increasing levels of rejection, manipulation and even aggression. But then, this is something you have had to contend with throughout your life.

We have seen through the many impediments you encountered in developing Vulani, that notwithstanding the stifling constraints imposed on agents, the changes they effect are not always linear, progressive, overtly discernible or tangibly manifest, and that changes do bear the seeds of emancipation. But we have also seen that the consistent absence of affirmation for alternative visions breeds discontent and disillusionment, leading to disengagement.

I have tried to explain these complex phenomena through Giddens's theory of structuration. I think that despite the highly abstract and philosophical character of structuation theory, it has been an extremely valuable point of entry into the vacuum created by structuralist and functionalist theorists on the role of the individual in relation to the structure – even if, by Giddens' own admission, it serves purely as a set of "sensitising devices" (Giddens, 1984).

It has sensitised me to alternative ways of seeing and knowing. It has alerted me to the highly elusive character of educational theory, its tentative and dynamic qualities as well as its delusive potential. It has taught me not to hastily abandon one theory in favour of another which resonates more neatly with my own frame of reference.

I have, with varying degrees of success, answered some of the questions I set out to investigate. In the process, several new ones have emerged. Structuration theory has been partially useful in answering these questions, particularly in explaining how systems change and how educators develop. Huberman, albeit a scholar of social determinism, has provided a useful point of departure in understanding the relationship between phases of one's professional career and educational change. I've talked briefly about how my own life resonates with some of the stages identified by Huberman. However, having listened to you reflect fondly (sometimes painfully), on your professional career, there seems to be an uncanny co-incidence between your life and Huberman's stages of development.

For instance, your early days as a teacher of Science on the Natal South Coast was a traumatic experience as you tried to come to terms with the discrepancy between your own educational ideals and the reality of apartheid schooling; the fragmentation of working in perpetually disrupted schools; the incessant interference from inspectors and

tribal chiefs and a host of other difficulties which I as a somewhat privileged South African can never hope to fully comprehend. But for you, this was also a period of discovery and exploration in which your commitment to the profession was strengthened. You paid dearly for this commitment when you were banished to Swaziland. But this did not subdue your spirit. In the true spirit of your father, you *"Turned the lemon into lemonade"*, a creative elementary vocational experience that correlates to what Huberman calls the "*career entry phase*".

You returned from Swaziland years later with an even greater resolve to pursue your vision, this time with a definite commitment, a clearer focus, or what Huberman calls "*stabilization and responsibility*". Despite your personal tragedy when you were widowed, you affirmed your choice to uplift education from the morass of apartheid. Your entry into the tertiary education sector heralded a period of "*experimentation and diversification*". Determined to confront more vehemently the aberrations of the system which so many of us took for granted, you aggressively pursued a divergent vision. Vulani was part of this vision. Driven by your commitment to a more humane and socially responsible ecological environment for underqualified teachers, you suppressed your own ambitions to help other teachers fulfil theirs.

Your commitment to this vision eventually began to bear fruit as Vulani contributed to the professional and material life of teachers. But you were not happy. You began to show increasing signs of disenchantment and self doubt. This period of self doubt appears to have given way to an existential crisis when you reflect on how far you had to compromise your visions and ideals to appease male bureaucrats who did not share your vision. This phase which Huberman calls "*Reassessment*", continues to influence your professional life as you continue to labour tirelessly, but seek a detachment and *disengagement* from the battleground of education. Understandably, you need to take more time for yourself, to nurture other lives: the lives of the members of your family who often had to nurture themselves as you pursued the struggle. I can also see you deriving joy from nurturing yet other lives: the lives of your plants in your garden in Umgababa.

I have said in Chapter two that I am not altogether convinced that Huberman is able to capture the multiple layers of reality that characterise an educator's life through his *stage development model*. But I think a recent phenomenon in teaching and Teacher Education warrants that we take Huberman more seriously. The mass exodus of educators from the profession *needs* to be explained. We all know that that this exodus has not just been inspired by golden handshakes and financial rewards. If Huberman has henceforth, not been able to adequately validate a theoretical basis for the existence of the phases of development because of the absence of empirical data, there now exists an inexhaustible supply of data amongst the thousands of experienced educators who languish in semi-retirement after their voluntary severance from employment. The possibility of engaging in life history research with these educators will be a unique and positively exhilarating

experience for some enterprising researcher committed enough to what Huberman (1993), refers to as an "insane undertaking".

There are some questions that continue to intrigue me though. One of them concerns our relationship with the patriarchy: You have fought aggressively against the androcentric bureaucracy. You have challenged its oppressive stranglehold over women in their private and professional lives yet you have remained respectful to those men in authority. You have called them "Baba", a title showing reverence. I know that this was sometimes an act of expediency as you tried to win their favour in your determination to bring about change. But I know that it was more than expediency, it was genuine reverence. Your attitude and your approach towards them meant that you frequently had to compromise your ideals, settling for less when you could have got more, just so that you could maintain the peace. Is this because you have been socialised into accepting the patriarchal hierarchy as an objective cultural reality? If this is so, what hope is there for the masses of recently enfranchised women in this country who continue to live at the mercy of men?

AND FINALLY, I am reminded of something Edward Said wrote in his book *Representations of the Intellectual* (1994):

> There is something fundamentally unsettling about intellectuals who have neither offices to protect nor territory to consolidate and guard; self-irony is therefore more frequent than pomposity, directness more than hemming or hawing. But there is no dodging the inescapable reality that such representations by intellectuals will neither make them friends in high places nor win them official honours. It is a lonely condition, yes, but it is always better than a gregarious tolerance for the way things are.

My inspiration to write your biography as a Teacher Educator was fired by my instinctive admiration for people who demonstrate a healthy intolerance for the "way things are", particularly where this intolerance is rooted in the desire to fight for a more just and humane society, rather than to "protect one's office" or "guard one's territory". For most of my life as a teacher, I have worked amongst educators who were content with the way things are, and others who vigorously defended the way things are because changing the way things are would be an invasion of their offices and territories. When attempts to take the road less travelled upon are consistently marred by impenetrable terrain, one is inclined to stick to the beaten track. My increasing inclination to stick to the beaten track appeared to take root in the eighteenth year of my life as a teacher. This was a disturbing tendency as I gradually edged towards "disengagement" (Huberman,1993). I initiated this research in an attempt to resolve my own existential dilemma. I initiated this research in the partial fear that it was a private indulgence because it lacked a more universal pedagogic justification.

Having engaged in the research, I must state, unconditionally, that it has been a profoundly liberating and illuminating indulgence, and if private liberation and self

illumination does not constitute research, I make no excuses for my endeavour but I do think that traditional prescriptions of what constitutes research needs to be reconceptualised urgently. In writing this dissertation, I have deliberately deviated from traditional research conventions. I have sought alternative ways of representing the data you have illuminated because I believe that we need to expand our conception of the nature of knowledge and the relationship between what one knows and how it is represented. Being able to represent my thoughts and ideas in this unconventional way has given me many hours of sheer enjoyment and delight ... I have never known research to be such an exhilarating experience.

I know that you too have enjoyed this endeavour. In our last interview, you told me that the experience of co-constructing your biography has been something of a turning point in your own life and that the process has forced you to reflect critically on your experiences as a mother, teacher, teacher educator and the myriad of other roles you assume. Indeed, you have become critical of some of the choices you have made as you laboured on in pursuit of your dream. Even if this research has achieved that and nothing else, I believe it was a worthwhile enterprise.

I introduced my first letter to you eighteen months ago with an excerpt from Edward Said (1993), which I thought encapsulated my first impressions of you and your work. I want to reaffirm that impression by ending this letter with another dedication to you from Edward Said which, I *know*, epitomises your life and your work:

> Being a change agent ... "is not always a matter of being a critic of Government policy, but rather of thinking of the intellectual vocation as maintaining a state of constant alertness, of perpetual willingness not to let half-truths or received ideas steer one along. This involves a steady realism, an almost athletic rational energy, and a complicated struggle to balance the problems of one's own selfhood against the demands of publishing and speaking out in the public sphere is what makes an everlasting effort, constitutively unfinished and necessarily imperfect. Yet its invigorations and complexities, for me at least, make one the richer for it, even though it doesn't make one particularly popular".

I am deeply indebted to you for graciously and patiently accompanying me on this journey of self discovery, for opening up your mind and soul, for sharing with the world what was sometimes painful memories.

For this and for so much more, I remain your loyal and devoted friend.

Rubby

Area 38
Umgababa Village
Illovo Beach
24 December 1997

Dear Rubby

Thank you for your letter dated 24 November 1997. I was really moved by the various issues you have raised, and I would like to respond to just two of them.

I was particularly interested in your comment about Giddens' theory of structuration which served as a sensitising device for you, in explaining the role of agency in Teacher Education. I've often asked the question, what exactly are the roles of teachers and teacher educators? (And here I have to admit that as a teacher educator, I have not confined myself to a particular educational theory or philosophy. Maybe it is one of my schizophrenic tendencies). So the answer that always emerges is that teachers and teacher educators are sensitising agents. They should heighten the sensitivity of other human beings — to enable them to accept and to challenge a multiciplity of theories, philosophies and ideologies. If educators fail to do this, they take learners to cul-de-sacs. The challenge for us as educators is to keep relentlessly at sharpening the intellect of learners to take them to new heights in experiencing themselves and the world.

Yes indeed, I do agree with you that bureaucracies exist on frail and vulnerable ideologies and personalities. However, I know many people who believe that bureaucracies are firmly anchored in sound ideologies and that these ideologies are sacrosanct. That is another conflict and tension I've had to deal with. Should we burst the bubble? Or should we retain the tinge of mystique? Yes, you are right, I have "failed" to lose my respect for people in authority. I suppose I've tried to maintain a balancing act. I push, and stop, and push, and stop, and when I get precariously close to the inner skin — to the vulnerable psyche of the "Baba", I cannot and will not destroy the human being behind the bureaucratic face.

You may call this arrogance, I suppose. Maybe I've put to rest a number of conflicts around gender, race and religion, and that is why I believe that battles against bureaucracies and other social structures should never

destroy human beings. I sincerely believe that the human beings are often the innocent victims, and as long as I can remove the outer core which impedes progress for the rest of humanity, there is no need to destroy souls.

You referred to your research as being "profoundly liberating". Talking to you, Rubby, has indeed been a profound experience for me too. I am full of admiration for your intellect, your professionalism, your gentle yet determined persuasion ... Make no mistake about it, you are a very gentle person, but you persuaded me to climb and continue climbing new heights and I am certain this quality reflects on the kind of educator you are. You challenged me to considerable limits and provided me with the inspiration to construct the tapestry that has emerged. You took me on a precarious, but noble journey into my self. It was a challenging journey, one that forced me to unfold aspects of my being and my history which I have avoided or consciously suppressed for too long ... I don't think I had the expertise or the courage to confront them on my own. You helped me undertake this journey. I hope this is just the beginning of a long journey into a future of mutual self discovery.

Stay well Rubby.

Yours Sincerely,
Cynthia Mpati

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The Power of Common Sense: Reflections on the Primary Mathematics Education Conference and South Africa

Michael Apple



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In this brief essay, I want to describe some of my experiences during my recent visit to South Africa. I shall use my time at a particular conference as the lens through which I reflect on the realities of South Africa. What I say here must be personal and honest. I am fully cognisant that what I relate here is filtered through a particular set of political and educational commitments. Thus, other people at the conference at which I spoke and other visitors to South Africa might have witnessed a very different set of events and might interpret these things differently. I also want to say something else at the outset of this brief essay. While many of my comments will be critical, I do not want to impugn people's motives. Indeed, I think that nearly everyone involved in the conference acted out of an urge to improve the situation of education in this and other nations. Rather, my criticisms are meant to show how past histories create a common sense that does not easily go away even when political transformations occur.

Let me begin by positioning myself in a particular way. In a series of volumes I have attempted to uncover the relationships — ones that are exceedingly complex — between educational policy and practice and the relations of domination and exploitation of the larger society (Apple 1988, 1990, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1999). I have been equally interested in understanding not only how such relations work but also in interrupting them in practice (Apple and Beane, 1999). This has often led me to not only engage in theoretical, historical, and empirical analyses of these dynamics of differential power, but to work with dissident groups, unions, progressive governments, and educators in a number of countries to bring about counter-hegemonic and more democratic gains. As a former

president of a teachers' union, as someone whose first political acts while still a teenager were centred around the struggle against legal apartheid in the United States, and as someone who more recently had been arrested in Korea for speaking out against a repressive military government, I was not a romantic about what it took to overturn structures of oppression. Because of these political commitments and experiences, I came to South Africa with a combination of anticipation and an already formed sense that while the first steps had been taken, many of the hardest struggles were still to come. I had been invited to work with groups in South Africa before; however, I had been unable to come. Thus, this was my first visit.

The occasion for coming was to speak at the International Conference for the Psychology of Mathematics Education. One of the reasons I had accepted the invitation to speak at a group with which I had little prior contact — although I had written some critical essays on recent tendencies in mathematics education — was the opportunity it provided for meetings and intellectual/political work with critical educators, government officials, teachers union members and community activists in South Africa. I shall return to the issue of such work and meetings in a moment since it too provided key moments for reflection on what I experienced in South Africa.

Perhaps because of its focus, Primary Mathematics Education (PME) seemed by and large to be divorced from the real world of its actual physical setting. It was almost as if it made little difference that it was being held in South Africa, aside from the symbolic value of having an international conference there after the years of (fully warranted) boycotts. The fact that the part of South Africa in which it was being held was the University of Stellenbosch — with its long history as a centre for Afrikaner education and culture — gave it an even more unreal flavour. (Indeed, the ride from the airport in Cape Town to Stellenbosch and the utter visibility of the massive nature of the inequalities that are structured into the landscape of South Africa, could not have been a more powerful example of the ways race and class organise daily life if it had been consciously planned that way.) While a considerable portion of the conference participants were from Africa and were what we in the US call persons of colour, the educational concerns of the majority of these people felt marginalised. It felt as if it took a considerable amount of courage to raise political/cultural/educational issues specific to the African context(s). This was a wasted opportunity for all of the conference participants to grapple with the meaning(s) of mathematics and education in the world in which many of the participants lived.

South Africa *was* partly present of course. Among the opening speakers was an official of the University of Stellenbosch who admitted that "mistakes" had been

made but were largely in the past now that "we had a new South Africa". It was present in the opening remarks by a speaker of colour who reminded the audience in very honest ways that she was speaking from a stage where only a few years ago she would have been forbidden from addressing this audience. Unfortunately, such words, though honest and powerful, were slowly lost as the conference proceeded, for in the main, the realities of South Africa were present from then on in contradictory ways. It was present for some of the participants if and only if one chose to attend the sessions that were specifically about mathematics education in southern Africa. Or, it was present for everyone in an exoticised form — as largely tourist culture. Thus, before my opening address a group of black singers and dancers performed for the audience. They performed what were in essence workers' songs. While the music was appreciated by the audience (or at least some of the audience, since a number of the South African educators at the conference had expressly said that they did not want to begin the conference this way but were ignored). However, because of this the representation of South African culture was a culture of performance by "the other" for the "mainstream". Here, the representation of the cultural forms of the majority of the citizens of South Africa bore an uncomfortable similarity to the way minstrelsy works in US culture. The body and culture of the black "other" is reduced to song and dance performed for the benefit of the largely white dominant groups.

Yet to end this story here would be to misconstrue what actually happened in that opening ceremony. As Bakhtin reminds us, there are times when oppressed groups use festivities (what he would call carnival) to turn relations of dominance and subordination upside down. Thus in European medieval carnivals, poor people would often make grotesque parodies of ruling groups and "play" in public in ways that subtly, but powerfully, reversed existing power relations (Stallybrass and White, 1986). The same thing occurred during the performance at the opening of PME. The workers/singers cut off the general applause of the "mainstream" audience in mid-stream. Their leader then *orchestrated* the applause — first the right side of the audience, then the middle, then the left, then right and left but not middle. He conducted the applause as if he and the other singers were using the audience as their own instruments of music making. In essence, power was taken back from dominance and placed in the hands of the exoticised culture of the black "other" who was then fully in charge. I fear that many people in the audience did not realise what had happened. But for me, this taking back of power, this reversal of who was performing for whom, was worth the entire evening.

However, the reality of racialising forms of power and their accompanying common sense returned all too quickly. Once the performance was over, one of

the people at Stellenbosch who was in charge of the conference called the singers back on stage — not for applause, but in essence demanding — if I may be permitted to paraphrase — "Boys, come move the furniture back". This entire event — the choice to decentre or speak in a relatively coded and depoliticised ways about the South (and southern) African context(s), histories, struggles, and especially current realities, to make the major representation of black culture that of a performance of songs without placing these very songs into the context of class and race struggle out of which they partly emerged, the taking back of power by the singers themselves, and then the reassertion of hegemonic common sense by the organiser who, without thinking, made the singers move the furniture back onto the stage — all of this signified the ways in which past and current ideological and material realities are present even in such simple things as the beginning of a conference.

Of course, there were eloquent speakers who demanded attention, simply by the force of their arguments. Renuka Vithal, Jill Adler, Cyril Julie and a number of others gave voice to the concerns about educational policy and practice in societies driven with race, class, and gender hierarchies. Yet their eloquence seemed like a voice from outside. It is exactly this binary of inside/outside, "real" mathematics education versus ephemeral "non-mathematical" concerns that spoke constantly to the marginalisation of the economic and the political from the centre of the conference. While there were sessions on ethnomathematics (often made safe by losing much of the political bite they may have had in presentations on the topic by white academics who had left South Africa and had emigrated elsewhere) and sessions on critical mathematics education especially by southern and South African or European critically oriented mathematics educators that were theoretically and politically very interesting, the overall tendencies of the conference ignored these strands or tried to incorporate them within dominant discourses. Politics and inequality were not "real". They were to be dealt with as the "constitutive outside" — by arranging a pilgrimage to Robben Island for those conference participants who wanted to show their solidarity with *past* struggles. Dealing with current struggles was outside the purview of professional discourse. In essence, the unstated message was that South Africa had changed. Now let's get down to business, the taken for grantedness of a mathematics education that is divorced from the material conditions in which it is practiced.

Yet, when someone took the "outside" seriously, when for example race, class, and gender dynamics were the prime focus of a session, as in Renuka Vithal and Paola Valero's presentation or that of Jo Boaler, the excitement was palpable. The fact that this happened speaks again to the willingness of many of the participants to bring the margins to the centre. But the fact that this was not usual

speaks again to an opportunity missed. Opportunities come only when they are made, when the power of hegemonic common sense is challenged.

My and others' awareness of the power of unstated ideological assumptions was intensified by another incident that spoke clearly to the lack of political sensitivity among some of the white, and especially Afrikaner, academics and organisers of the conference. On the day I returned from meetings and lecturing in Cape Town (more on this later), many other conference participants were taken to the vineyards near Stellenbosch. The trip was planned and then carried out under circumstances that were deeply distressing to a number of people at the conference. The workers at the vineyards were on strike because of extremely low wages and poor working conditions. Thus, rather than informing the conference participants about the strike and giving them a choice in whether they still wished to visit the wineries under these circumstances, no mention of the strike was made. The visit went on as planned, thereby creating a situation where a considerable number of the more aware conference members were unknowingly put in a position that subverted their deeply felt ethical and political commitments. When I and others raised this issue at a public session the next day, the reactions ranged from distress at the lack of ethical sensitivity on the part of those who organised the visit to overt hostility. The latter was rather striking, put in a voice that claimed that "We are here to talk about mathematics, not politics". The lack of connection between mathematics education and any sense of politics and material conditions in the real — and immensely unequal — world was nowhere more visible than here. Even though a number of conference participants organised the collection of a strike fund to give to the striking workers, it was clear that this act of "bringing the outside in" was not seen as legitimate by many of the educators and researchers there, even among many of the South African participants.

Perhaps another vignette — one less related to PME — can speak to the ways in which formal political power had been transformed without being accompanied by a parallel transformation in ideological and racialised understanding. On my last day in South Africa I went into a museum in Stellenbosch. I stopped at the museum shop and found myself in conversation with the shop owner, an Afrikaner who had made repeated trips to the USA to sell jewellery made in South Africa. He was obviously eager to talk and when he discovered that I was from the USA, he remarked that there were few visitors to Stellenbosch from the States. He attributed this to our (the USA's) "misunderstanding" of the "real" reasons behind the need for apartheid. After all, he said, while "we" (most white South Africans) made "some mistakes", there still was a need for policies that excluded blacks from "our" institutions. The metaphor of "mistakes" was very visible among Afrikaners. The language of "mistakes", of course, allows for

blame for structurally generated relations of exploitation and domination to be "excused" as a mere error that can be expunged through apologies, without the need to give up the resources and economic power that were the identifiable results of such relations. "They" (black South Africans) were dirty and carried disease. "They rubbed themselves with cow dung" and because of that "it should be fully understandable why we couldn't let them into our homes and schools".

While such a social position is, in a word, simply disgraceful, the fact that it is held by someone who works in a public place and feels free to say this as a justification for thoroughly racist policies, makes it clear that racialised understandings are still extremely powerful at the level of everyday common sense.

I mentioned earlier that one of the reasons I accepted the invitation to speak at PME was the opportunity it presented to meet and work with groups with whom I had a good deal of sympathy, including politically committed educators, critical researchers, members of teachers' unions, community activists, and so on. What happened in regards to this was another source of tension and learning about the situation there. Arrangements were made for me to lecture to a large audience of committed educators, researchers, activists, and others and to meet with teachers' union members, ANC officials, and others on a "free" day when the conference participants went to the vineyards, to Robben Island, or elsewhere. At the very last minute, I was informed by a local PME organiser at Stellenbosch that he had cancelled my trip to Cape Town. There seemed to be two reasons. Firstly, because I had agreed to stay at the conference for the entire week as a resource person, I had to be there even on the free day when nearly everyone was to be elsewhere, in case someone wanted to meet with me. Secondly, and in my mind deeply troubling, there seemed to be a sense that since the conference had paid for my travel expenses (and to be honest were very responsive to my needs given the fact that my arthritis makes it painful for me at times to travel), it was not "proper" for the teachers' union or other groups to "use" me if they had not contributed to the costs. I am not totally unsympathetic to such a claim. Often when I am working internationally one university, union, or agency will shoulder the burden of the travel costs while other universities or groups make demands that I speak there as well without contributing to the costs. However, given the history of extreme inequality in financial resources in South Africa both in higher education, and nearly all other social institutions in general, the request for me to speak at other places and to meet with black and "coloured" educators and activists during "free" time and the last minute denial of this was an indication of the nearly total lack of understanding of the differential histories and massive inequalities in resources and power that still exist. Here again, a common sense is produced that makes it difficult for actors to see the ideological

and material structures that organise the daily realities of life in South Africa. In all too many ways, it seemed to mirror the reactionary common sense that is growing in the USA, the UK, Australia, and elsewhere that since racist legal barriers had been supposedly overturned, society was now a "level playing field" in which all had equal resources and an equal chance based on individual merit and effort. Nothing could be further from the truth.

I expressly rejected the denial of my right to speak to and meet with groups in Cape Town. The lecture and meetings were rescheduled, but the disruption caused by the denial made it very difficult to do it in an organised and coherent way. The willingness of critical educators and activists in Cape Town to creatively deal with the disruption does show the organisational and political skills learned over years of struggle. This may provide important resources for the continued challenges that face them.

I very much appreciated the friendship and the honesty and seriousness of the questions raised about my arguments in Cape Town. These discussions were intense and filled the space that was left empty in Stellenbosch. In the midst of these rescheduled meetings, however, I did note something that gave me cause for concern. There were indications of very real tensions between the communities of colour there. Once the common enemy — apartheid and its racialised and racialising economic, political, and cultural system — is partly deconstructed, the differences among oppressed groups come even more to the surface. This is clearly exacerbated by the ways in which economic power has remained largely in the hands of the same group who controlled resources and power before.

One last reaction needs to be mentioned. It became clear to me as well that even within progressive educational alliances there were serious tensions. Perhaps one of the best examples of this was the relatively unquestioned acceptance of the strategies of "management by objectives" (MBO) by many members of the government. This position is not only worrisome to many teachers and critical educators in South Africa, but it also ignores the serious criticism such approaches have generated in very many instances in other nations. Indeed, this kind of approach to educational policy and planning has been seen as limiting democratic participation when it has been applied not in theory but in the real world. It has been subject to severe criticism ideologically, with claims that it treats schools and the teachers and students within them in much too simplistic process/product ways. In my mind, it is absolutely essential that those who are so deeply wedded to "MBO" models recognise that they have been subject to very powerful criticisms elsewhere. Otherwise, educators and government officials risk applying models that may have unintended consequences. More

appropriate and more empowering approaches may be found in the "democratic schools" movement that is now having a considerable impact in a number of countries that are driven with severe inequalities (Apple and Beane, 1999).

Conclusion

There, of course, are many more things I could say. These remarks can be no more than a unsatisfactory summary of a complex sets of reactions and understandings that emerged from my visit. They are fragments; they represent my attempt to make sense of what I saw and heard. I have emphasised race here, but I am certain that class and gender and colonial and postcolonial elements are crucial to a fuller understanding of what I experienced. My remarks here also may be in need of criticism and reconstruction by people much more knowledgeable than I am about the multiple realities and histories of South Africa. Because of this I welcome responses to them, critical or otherwise.

On looking back on my experiences, a few things are clear. I came away with an appreciation of the immense resourcefulness of the educators, scholars, and activists who continually struggle in difficult conditions to create an education worthy of its name. Yet I also came away with a sober realisation of how difficult the task will be. As those of us in political movements are wont to say, the struggle continues.

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Book Review:
Getting Published and Getting Read in South Africa
Michael Cross and Karin Brodie

E-mail interview conducted by
Mafika Cele and Prema Asrie

Mafika Cele (Co-ordinated Masters in Education and Training 1998) and Prema Asrie (COMET 2000) are students in the Faculty of Education, who serve on the management team of Perspectives in Education. *In this non-traditional book review, Mafika and Prema conduct an e-mail interview with Michael Cross and Karen Brodie, the authors of* Getting Published and Getting Read in South Africa.

Getting Published and Getting Read in South Africa is a handbook for scholars and research groups interested in having their work published. It gives an overview of publishing in South Africa and takes the prospective author through the whole process of getting published. The book deals with conceptualisation, audience selection, the writing process, providing a focus, the basics of spelling and grammar, format, footnoting and referencing, selecting a journal or publisher, submitting the article, and the review process. The handbook also gives useful tips on mentoring and being mentored.

Q. Why did you find it necessary to write this book at this point in time, and what would you say is its most significant contribution to the academia?

The book came out of a long process of debate (this is outlined in Michael's paper "Re-aligning the hurdles: the dynamics of journal publication in SA", presented at Kenton Wilgespruit (1996), about increasing the participation of women and black scholars in journal publication. Much of the debate concerned whether the issues were about power and knowledge, and the control of the production and dissemination of knowledge, and/or the development of scholarly skills. Michael's experiences as editor of *Perspectives* suggested that the development of skills was very important, together with redressing power imbalances. So the Authorship Development Programme (Audepro) was created to work on the development of skills in a supportive environment and this book came out of the successes of Audepro and the need to reach a wider audience.

If the book can help to improve scholarly work in general in South Africa, and particularly can help to develop skilled, confident women and black scholarly writers, it will have made its contribution.

Q. In the introduction to the book, you claim that the aim of the book is to provide access to knowledge and skills and to address race and gender imbalances in publishing. Having read the book, we found that it does indeed provide access to knowledge and skills. However, as aspirant writers we failed to grasp how the book achieves your second claim: that of specifically addressing the race and gender imbalances in publishing. Can you tell us how the book achieves this aim?

As we said in the previous answer, our aim is to redress the race and gender imbalance by providing access to skills and knowledge. We feel that this is one important way in which power imbalances can be addressed. We have also dealt with strategies such as networking, forming support groups, mentoring, and developing and maintaining confidence in oneself as a scholarly writer. These are all strategies that have worked effectively in other spheres to help marginalised sectors develop confidence and skills.

The book comes out of Audepro workshops which were attended primarily by women and black writers, and therefore reflects the issues that were raised by the participants and which were important to them.

Q. In the introduction you state further, that writing and publishing are also social and political activities, a view we fully endorse. However, there is a perception amongst (black) academics that getting published in South Africa is contingent upon one's proficiency in the English language. Considering that a large number of South African academics lack the necessary proficiency in the language necessary for publication, what do you consider to be possible solutions in addressing this problem in the foreseeable future?

There is an extent to which getting published depends on proficiency in English, which is why the book tries to help writers to develop such proficiency. However, experiences with *Perspectives* suggest that this is not the only difficulty that many black writers face. Many articles proposed for publication also reveal difficulties in conceptualising, outlining and expressing ideas coherently and systematically. These difficulties may be compounded by language difficulties but they go beyond them, and they are more difficult to deal with. That is why we have tried to work on them in our book, and suggested mentoring and networking to deal with them as well.

Q. At times we found it difficult to discern whether the book was meant as a manual for workshops to assist novice writers or whether it could be used as a self-help guide.

- **How would you categorise the book?**
- **The activity sections in chapters 3 and 5 relied heavily on *Perspectives in Education* Volume 17 No 1 of March 1996. Does this disadvantage the reader who does not have access to this particular text?**

We intended the book to be used for both, so we are pleased that you found it difficult to categorise it as one or the other. It came out of workshops and so reflects them, and also reflects our belief that people must work together to build a culture of writing and publishing in South Africa. However, it can be used by individuals when working on aspects of their writing as well.

Because we wanted to build in activities, we had to use an example of a particular text and we felt that *Perspectives* was the most appropriate in this context. However, the idea is for the users of the book to be able to extend the same approach and questions to other texts, so in fact if that particular one is not available, others can be used. (In answering your question we have realised that we should have mentioned this in the book — we will put it in the next edition.)

Thanks from
Michael Cross and Karin Brodie

Reference

M. Cross and K. Brodie, *Getting Published and Getting Read in South Africa* (Cape Town: Juta, 1998).

Information for Contributors

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Perspectives in Education is a professional, refereed journal which encourages submission of previously unpublished articles on contemporary educational issues. As a journal that represents a variety of cross-disciplinary interests, both theoretical and practical, it seeks to stimulate debates on a wide range of topics. PIE invites manuscripts employing innovative qualitative and quantitative methods and approaches including (but not limited to) ethnographic observation and interviewing, grounded theory, life history, case study, curriculum analysis and critique, policy studies, ethnomethodology, social and educational critique, phenomenology, deconstruction, and genealogy. Debates on epistemology, methodology, or ethics, from a range of perspectives including postpositivism, interpretivism, constructivism, critical theory, feminism, post-modernism are also invited. PIE seeks to stimulate important dialogues and intellectual exchange on education and democratic transition with respect to schools, colleges, non-governmental organisations, universities and technikons in South Africa and beyond.

The journal is committed to the process of capacity building in the area of scholarly writing and publication among new writers. It aims to accelerate the development of capacity among black and women educationists in South Africa, broadening contributions to include writers from other African, Latin American and Asian countries. Through Authorship Development Programme (AUDEPRO), novice and developing writers are offered a series of academic support workshops aimed at developing researching and writing skills.

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P. Kallaway (ed.), *Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1984), 2–5.

For journal references:
A. Simon and P. Beard, "Discriminatory Factors Affecting Women Teachers in Natal", *Perspectives in Education*, 9, 1 (July 1986): 59.

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M. Cross, "Capital state, Missionaries, and the Foundations of a Segregated Schooling System on the Witwatersrand, 1900–1924" (MEd. thesis, University of Witwatersrand, 1985), 1.

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ISBN 0-7021-5282-X
9 780702 152825