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VOLUME 17 NO 1 MARCH 1996

PERSPECTIVES IN EDUCATION

Special Issue: Higher Education in South Africa

Glen Fisher, The Making of an Historian.
Bruce Murray, Defending the 'Open University'.
Les Switzer, University Reform.
Nomsa Ngqakayi-Motaung, Educational Achievement.
Pippa Stein and Hillary Janks, Collaborative Teaching.
Morapeng Modiba, SA Black Teachers' Perceptions about their Practice. Jane Hofmeyr and Graham Hall, The National Teacher Education Audit.
Mark Potterton, The NGO Teacher Education Audit.
Wally Morrow, Teacher Education. Khotso de Wee and Angela Arnott, Innovations in Colleges of Education. Malegapuru Makgoba, SA Universities in Transformation. David Brooks, Universities in a Time of Transition. Linda Chisholm, A Tribute to Harold Wolpe.

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Perspectives in Education, Vol 17 No 1, 1996, i - iii

Introduction

EDWARD FRENCH
Editor, Perspectives in Education

Perhaps the only feature common to all of tertiary education in South Africa is the depth of its present crisis: Problems of role and identity, the irony of disaffection on the part of staff and students while huge numbers of would-be students and staff pray for admission, infrastructural decay, management traumas, transformation struggles, declining credibility and status, despairing debates around questions of quality, and – cause or effect? – ever dwindling funding. Otherwise the sector is diverse. What else do teacher training colleges, technikons, technical colleges, nursing training, the higher reaches of work and technical experience and universities have in common – other than their presupposition of a certain amount of previous education? Indeed, as Les Switzer's article suggests, even our universities have little enough in common.

Is there any point in lumping tertiary institutions together as 'higher education'? As this editorial is being written the first meeting of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is being convened to start exploring its role in implementing a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Some of the proponents of the NQF have argued that there is a clear potential commonality, if only that of status, at tertiary level. In their view the status conferred by privileged institutions should be replaced by defined national standards. Ideally a doctoral dissertation in philosophy and the demonstrated, sufficiently complex, knowledgeability of a master craftsperson might both be granted NQF Level 8 status. Were the NQF to work it would solve a number of the toughest problems reflected in various articles in this issue. But the applicability of the NQF to tertiary education, and especially to universities, is seen by many tertiary educators as unworkable, and sometimes as undesirable. Even those promoting the NQF hesitate to prescribe how it might work at tertiary level and accept that it will be many years before it is operational at further education and training levels. In his book review of *Ways of seeing the NQF* Kgobe points to problems in the applicability of the NQF to formal education as a whole.

This edition of *Perspectives in Education* devoted to tertiary education is dominated by articles on university education, with a lesser focus on teacher training. Although articles on other sectors of tertiary education were sought they were not forthcoming. (The edition was also delayed in order to obtain comment on the first report of the Higher Education Commission, but we have also been obliged to go to press without this.)

The most obvious choice in ordering the articles in the edition was to start with Switzer's broad view of the state of tertiary education in South Africa. However, the first article is Fisher's *The making of an historian*. The reason for this is the way it makes one look freshly at the academic project itself – of interest beyond the guild of professional historians. It is affirmative of the unique processes in the selection and unfolding of particular talent. But it is also somewhat disquieting (or merely realistic?) in its demonstration of the ways in which academic reputations and status are constructed. The article might be read in conjunction with the contrasting debates on tertiary education offered by Makgoba, Brooks and Morrow.

Fisher's article is followed by an actual example of the historian's work. Murray's *Defending the open university* puts our present travails in the perspective of an earlier contestation: the smouldering parochial politics kindled by an engagement of a university – not altogether welcomed – with national issues.

Students' perceptions of their education receive closer attention in Ngqakayi-Motaung's and Stein and Janks's articles. Together with Switzer's and Makgoba's articles these raise far more questions than they begin to answer about the likelihood of a transformation of the broader *modus operandi of* universities or their styles of teaching. But they do show something of the character of the debate on these matters in South Africa. Stein and Janks offer an example of a concrete attempt to move away from conventional university teaching. They actively challenge passive, transmission mode instruction. The experience shows that the students face change with almost as much hesitation as the institutions.

A willingness to put up with things as they are in spite of a consciousness of their inadequacy – or in spite of familiarity with the rhetoric of change – stands out in Modiba's research into teachers' perceptions of their practice. Only two articles in this edition offer optimistic perspectives on change: Hofmeyr and Hall's review of the national teacher education audit shows that in spite of the huge variability of teacher training institutions, the positive response of the national education authorities to this project for renewal remind us of some real and hopeful features in education in South Africa that we would scarcely have dreamt of in 1986. (At the same time Potterton reminds us of the NGOs which have pioneered change in many respects but which are increasingly being sidelined.) De Wee and Arnott's research into the factors favouring the implementation of innovations in a number of South African colleges of education show that individual leadership, well-timed intervention, purposefulness and sensitivity to participation (the many factors they consider draw on a wide range theoretical positions) can make a difference to the quality of institutions.

In the course of setting up this edition *Perspectives in Education* has seen two major changes in its context. We announce with regret that Shirley Pendlebury has asked to be allowed to withdraw from editing the journal because of pressure of work, although her

skills will still be available on the editorial board. Shirley's most visible contribution to the journal has been to its format and styling. She also brought to it her special rigour and her enthusiastic but sharply critical engagement with the theory and practice of education.

We will be experimenting with the dual editorship of Michael Cross and Edward French. Nazir Carrim continues as book review editor and Lesley Hudson continues as office and production manager. We remain committed, however, to nurturing the team work of the broader editorial board and of many other valued referees and consultants.

The second change is most welcome. This is the recent appearance of a number of new popular publications on education: a national newspaper for teachers *The Teacher*, a new regular magazine*The New Teacher*, and a supplement on Higher Education in the *Sunday Independent*. It has been disconcerting that education – which takes the largest chunk of the national budget, employs huge numbers, touches the lives of everyone, frequently shakes the country and is compellingly, obsessively, agonisingly interesting to its practitioners – has so small, dull and parochial a press. We wish the new publications well.

We have an ulterior motive in our good wishes. *Perspectives* has been under some pressure over the past years to stand in for the lacking press. We feel we have generally succeeded in sticking to our sense of our special role as promoters of fresh academic research, substantial argument, new talent and a lively critical perspective. We will write in future editorials about how we see the journal and how we would like it to unfold on the basis of a cherished alternative, progressive, but where possible not politically correct tradition.

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Perspectives in Education, Vol 17 No 1, 1996, 1 - 26

The Making of an Historian: Oral Histories from a 'Disputatious Discipline'

In Memory of Harold Wolpe

GLEN FISHER
Education Policy Unit, University of the Western Cape, Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535

History is analytical and fairly open-ended. It's a disputatious discipline (eminent historian).

They rate you immediately – 'who was your supervisor? Okay, fine; now *we know who you are'* (doctoral student).

Based on interviews with eminent historians and senior students, this article explores the ways in which the academic reputations and status of historians are established. The article draws on a larger study which argues that a critical understanding of the interventions between academic social organisation, academic cultures, and forms of academic knowledge is central to the project of ongoing access and equal opportunity to all talented South Africans.

INTRODUCTION

Attempts to broaden access to higher education in South Africa have over the past decade or more been focused on the questions of admissions processes and criteria, undergraduate teaching and learning, and institutional change or transformation. This paper addresses the problem of access from a different direction, that of postgraduate education and access to the academic profession; likewise, the paper focuses on academic disciplines, rather than on higher education institutions.[1]

The central argument of the paper is that the processes of recruitment, induction and socialisation of scholars into the cultures of the different academic disciplines and specialisms warrant closer and more critical attention than they have yet received, if by 'access' we are to mean more than the gaining of admission to an institution and the passing of first or second year courses. If the notion of 'access' is to encompass success

at the postgraduate level, and the opening of the academy and the academic profession itself to all South Africans, then the question of 'how' induction occurs must draw our attention as well to the issue of 'who' is inducted, and thus to matters such as selection, sponsorship and – my informants' term – networks and systems of patronage.

Thus, in the discussion that follows, attention is focused not simply on epistemological[2] issues and individual scholarly achievement but on the social dimensions of the disciplines, and on the ways in which, within a particular discipline - in this case history - questions of academic excellence and the role and significance of social networks seem to be intertwined. A critical understanding of the interconnections between academic social organization, academic cultures, and forms of academic knowledge is central, it is argued, to the project of ensuring access, on a footing of equal opportunity, to all talented South Africans.

THE STUDY

A fuller discussion of the theoretical framework, assumptions and research methodology which inform the present paper has been given elsewhere;[3] here only a very brief overview will be provided.

The starting point for this study is the assumption that, as Becher puts it, 'the ways in which particular groups of academics organize their professional lives are intimately related to the intellectual tasks on which they are engaged'.[4] From this it might be expected to follow that different fields of inquiry will tend to develop forms of social organization, communication, etcetera, and ways of inducting and socialising newcomers and novices, which, while sharing certain similar or common features,[5] also differ discernably and more or less systematically from one another. Thus the larger project on which this paper is based is intended to examine a cross-section of 'hard/soft', 'pure/applied' disciplines at two or more universities in South Africa.[6] To date, however, I have been able to complete only two interviews with zoologists, and one with a sociologist. The bulk of my work thus far has centred on historians, so that the comparative dimension essential to the larger project is absent from this paper.

The discussion here, then, is based on fourteen in-depth, loosely structured interviews with historians at two South African universities. The approach taken with regard to the analysis of interview material is that such material cannot be regarded as a 'literal' account of social action and belief in a given field, but must be regarded as an *interpretation* of action and belief produced by informants, together with the researcher, in the context of the research interview. As Potter and Mulkay observe,

> Accounts of all kinds must be understood as the products of participants' contextualised interpretative practices. Thus, for analytic purposes we cannot treat any subset of them as unproblematic and transparent windows onto the social or natural world[7]

This way of understanding the research interview has of course important theoretical and methodological implications, which can not be discussed here. What does need to be addressed, before we proceed, is the way in which the products of the research interview are to be understood, given this understanding of interviews as 'contextualised interpretative practices'. Potter and Mulkay outline what for the purposes of this paper may be regarded as a defensible approach:

> Although we have abandoned the traditional assumption that we can infer from interview talk what actually happens in the realm under investigation, we are nevertheless continuing to assume that we can, in a more restricted sense, generalise from interviews to naturally occurring situations. For we are assuming that the interactional and interpretative work occurring in interviews resembles to some degree that which takes place outside interviews.[8]

It is in this more conditional sense that the preliminary exploration of interview materials is undertaken in the present paper.

Interviews lasted on average between one and one-and-a-half hours, and centred on questions concerning the nature of the discipline (internal differentiation or specialisation, the relationship with neighbouring disciplines, theory and evidence, the role of ideology or fashion etc), recruitment into the discipline and the development of an academic career, recognition and advancement and so forth. Early interviews tended to follow a fairly similar, though flexible sequence, based on about a dozen open-ended questions, but increasingly my approach has been simply to start off the interview with a general question regarding the nature and subject matter of the discipline – i.e., 'what is history *about*?' – and then to allow the conversation largely to follow its own course, though with an eye to picking up or circling back onto themes that may have been omitted or only touched on in passing, when the opportunity arose.

All interviews have been fully transcribed, though most await final editing and checking, after which a more in-depth analysis will be undertaken. While a substantial amount of analytical work, then, remains to be done, it is hoped that the present paper will serve to stimulate much-needed debate and to encourage further, critical research by others.

THE HISTORIAN'S TERRAIN[9]

> ... I once said that history seemed to me to be – to stand in something of the same relationship to the other social sciences as mathematics does to the physical sciences, meaning that, in the same way you don't seem to be able to do physics or astronomy or engineering without some maths, it does seem to me that you can't really do economics, or geography, or anthropology or sociology without a sense of change over time. You've got to have some sense of, you know, historical dimension to it (BW45, 1-2).[10]

Amongst historians I've spoken to, the sense of the centrality of history as a discipline, as captured in the quotation rendered here, seems to run strong. The central concerns of the discipline were described by informants in a series of overlapping accounts: history is about change over time; it is about structure and agency; it is about reconstructing a past which can never be wholly reconstructed – and, crucially, it is about relating the past to the changing concerns of the present. Thus historical knowledge is described, in some senses, in terms which render it provisional, even contingent; and as iterative, not cumulative:

> ... it's my position that historians are very influenced by the times that they're working in. As the time changes, the situation, the environment in which you work changes, as it has changed over the last five years in our country and in the world in general; you get new interpretations of the past coming out of that, and then you get the old boys hanging on to the old interpretations, you know, there are debates that emerge out of that. So the historian, number one, is living in a changing environment, which influences the way in which he or she thinks, interprets the past; but number two, it is also the journals, I mean there are trends, there are what some people would call fashions. There are new methods, which I would put in as a third point really (HC65, 6).

> ... history has always been rewritten. If it was written twenty years ago it is probably wrong (CC105, 3).

Both internally, and in its relation to other disciplines, history is described as having changed considerably over the past thirty years. These changes are portrayed as having been shaped by changes in the wider society, by the engagement with other disciplines and with new theories and methods, by generational changes, and by changing conditions in the universities. The consequences are evident in the tendencies towards fragmentation and the blurring of disciplinary boundaries – or perhaps, the contestations around disciplinary boundaries:

> ... probably the central change is that social and economic themes have become mainstream, and with that there's also become a tremendous fragmenting and sub-disciplinary definition, so that there are probably numberless sub-fields of history all of which now have their own journals and their own conferences and their own, rather closed circuits of scholarship ... that does make the discipline simultaneously more inclusive, and, I think, less coherent (BW45, 2-3).

> History has always had a very strong core idea to it, but it's been fragmenting more recently ... there are elements who support a ... fragmentation of history, but others who still want to retain the old, non-multidisciplinary notion of history. So there is a conflict within the discipline. The great fear is that history is going to fragment into a whole series of, you know, anthropologies, and sociologies, and economics and statistics and what have you, and that there will be no core history left ... (HC65, 3).

The question of historians' theoretical frameworks provides one lens through which we can bring into focus the changing relationships of history to other disciplines, and the internal divides within a discipline which by all accounts remains centrally concerned with evidence and sources, with narrative and interpretation. As the passages below indicate, a range of theoretical approaches from other disciplines enter from time to time into historical discourse, while historians themselves may differ in the extent to which they are theoretically committed:

> Historians shop around in these different disciplines, and theory travels between disciplines and between areas of the world, and people in the field of history find things in common with people in other disciplines all the time. Ten years ago what we shared ... I suppose was a political economy approach that perhaps gave, accorded, more importance to economic matters than to political and other matters, and whether you were working in politics or history or sociology or sometimes even anthropology, you had political economy in common. Today I suppose what one is really seeing emerge is a kind of cultural studies, a cultural studies where I find myself having far more in common with anthropologists, with literary theorists, even though I have no background in literary theory, even though I have no training in anthropology, even though my relationship with anthropology was an antagonistic one (RW55, 10-11).

> Well I think, to me, theory leans, or comes out of these other disciplines, so that we have anthropological theory or economic theory, or sociological theory [indistinct] and I think again there is a division there between the empirical historians on the one side, and the historians who are more engaged with theory on the other side. And of course it is never as divided as that. I think all historians use a bit of theory, but some tend to be anti-theory (HC65, 4).

> I think it's becoming more difficult than it was, probably significantly more difficult than it was, to assume a kind of theoretical virginity, in history. Partly that's come through the salience of an explicitly theoretical Marxist history .... Questions about representation, reality and master-narrative I suppose are somewhere near the nub of the poststructuralist critique of what it is that historians are doing. And I think for all of those reasons, most historians I know are fairly theoretically self-aware (BW45, 5-6).

Within this changing scene, conflict and controversy may not so much be resolved as ignored; and here the boundaries between specialisations and neighbouring disciplines may provide one route out: referring to departments that had split and to individuals who had been centrally involved in certain controversies and then had moved to a different department, one eminent historian observed simply that 'the disciplinary boundaries can act as a way of actually not resolving controversies' (LW85, 5). Likewise, controversies may not so much be resolved as superseded by new interests and new controversies; for example,

> ... In the 1970s the nature of the South African state was a very important topic for debate, and there was controversy about it, but that controversy has never been resolved because people have simply shifted their attention away from that question, and you won't find historians these days writing about the South African state, on the whole (LW85, 16).

As a result of these shifts in attention, and of the way in which particular lines of inquiry are defined, through the processes of communication and publication within the field, as important at a particular time, gaps in historical knowledge may be overlooked:

> ... definitely, there are areas that get emphasized and areas that get left out....So, yes, the dialogue in seminars and then in writing helps to shape what is seen as the questions that are important to discuss, and therefore huge gaps can develop (LW85, 16).

That these ebbs and flows within the discipline are, as already noted, also affected by external conditions in the universities and higher education, and in the relation of higher education to the economy and society, may perhaps be seen with particular clarity in the case of academic jobs, and the effect that the availability or otherwise of jobs has on the ability of new people and new ideas to gain ground. Several informants touched on this; one observed,

> I think there is a great deal that is generational in this, you know; it's a new generation, which is growing up in a new environment ... and also a new generation that wants to make its mark in history, so there are both of these things which are at play there. And a new generation has a great deal of dynamism and a great deal of energy, because of its youth (laughter). But there's a problem for that new generation, here in South Africa, and that is that the universities have constricted the appointment of new staff enormously in the last ten years, so that new generation is very small, whereas for my generation it was big. Because, to me this is one of the reasons why the radical historians ran over the liberal historians in the 1970s and 1980s, was because there were just lots of us radical historians, because of the baby boom basically, whereas the liberals were outnumbered. Now the same thing is happening today, except the young ones, there are very few of them ... (HC65, 16-17).

History as glimpsed through the preceding excerpts might appear as a discipline in flux, a discipline marked by permeable boundaries, theoretical pluralism, internal specialisation and fragmentation: in short, as a discipline with divergent tendencies. Yet, paradoxically, one of the strongest impressions gained from the historians interviewed was that they seemed, in their different ways, despite this seeming discordance, to share a strong sense of what might tentatively be termed 'core' commitments and values. There appeared, at least amongst this small but heterogeneous group of informants, to be a remarkably strong consensus, which cut across theoretical and ideological divides, seniority and generational differences and so on, as to who the leading figures in the field were, both locally and internationally; which were the leading journals and publishing houses; and what the criteria were for distinguishing excellence from mere professional competence. In short, notwithstanding the apparent fluidity of the discipline - its 'disputatious' and 'open-ended' character - there does seem to be a sense in which it seems plausible to regard the discipline as a hierarchically structured field of study with a strongly held, shared set of clear, if implicit values, methodological and analytical commitments, and aesthetic concerns.

In part, the coherence of the field seems to rest upon a sense that, at the heart of the discipline, is a common concern with 'documents, archives, methodology, sources, that sort of thing' (HC65, 3). One senior historian spoke in these terms about the ways in which history remained a shared terrain for historians of very different interests and affiliations:

> The sharing would rest upon a shared sense, really, of the importance of the sources you use. That is what all historians would do. I mean, they may bring to bear different analytical perspectives, and they bring different theoretical approaches, to the same sets of evidence. But there would be common agreement, about *evidence*, and if you attended a seminar in history at which you would

> have, you know, fading Marxists, or new postmodernists, or liberals, what would bring everybody together, in let's say a common critique of a particular argument, or a particular paper, would be the question of evidence. You know, 'is this convincing? Why hasn't the author considered X? Y is a very important source of material for this topic; why hasn't it been ...?' Everybody would actually agree on that (NC65, 5).

Likewise, all historians I spoke to appeared to share a strong if somewhat elusive sense of what constituted 'excellent' or exemplary work in the discipline, even though, in practice, there might be some disagreement with regard to particular instances. The notions of 'innovation', 'insight', giving a new slant to things, ran like a golden thread through all accounts:

> I suppose *excellent* scholarship is, would be comprised either of work that opens up a new area entirely, or scholarship that brings an analytical edge, or a revisionist edge, to what we already know. Good scholarship would be, you know, something that's well put together, well researched, competently written. Passes the normal sort of scholarly standards, but does not have anything to - and these things are tangible, actually - and does not have the quality to *lift* it really, which quite often can be, you know, good *style*, I mean, would actually lift something (NC65, 22).

> I think that the really important historians write books, or a series of articles, that make one see the field of study differently. And, a hell of a lot of history gets published which is competent, absolutely orthodox, and adds to, you know, another layer to the field of study, but doesn't change it at all. And I would always value that scholar who comes in you know and tilts the thing a bit or shines a different light on it or asks different questions of it (BW45, 22-3).

> ... you can find a book that's very solid, and very good, on the one hand, which is written in what I would see as an empirical style. The person's gone out to the archive, done a lot of work and put it together in a coherent, not adventurous, but coherent way. And that's a very good book. But what makes the difference between a very good book and a really interesting, exciting book, is that little bit of adventure in the narrative, and the ideas that have put the book together, the ideas that have put the narrative together, but that have also put the facts together in a specific way (HC65, 27-8).

More elusive still, perhaps, as these passages hint at, is the sense of history as a *craft*, as a discipline with literary or aesthetic appeal: not only must the 'facts' be put together and interpreted in a novel way, but there must be that 'little bit of adventure in the narrative'. Indeed, one well-regarded historian offered the observation that

> ... what makes history convincing is, a lot of the time for me, is in fact the quality of historical writing (NC65, 4).

The implication here, it might almost seem, is that those who 'cannot write' cannot easily hope to become historians! As one aspiring historian observed, unimpressed, of an eminent colleague,

> I think if you are not a good writer - take someone like Greene, whose prose tends to be heavy, and I think it has counted against him in a lot of ways. The quality of writing, it's an art, not a science. It is not even a social science, it is an art. If you are not a good writer (you) are not going to get very far. Other people use your work and write it better (AC105, 22-23).

Supervisors may give a great deal of attention, accordingly, to editing a student's work: 'you won't let a bad sentence through', as one experienced supervisor told me (NC65, 23).

It is surely not too inappropriate, finally, in a field where implicit values and commitments run deep, to draw attention to a still less tangible set of commonalities; to suggest that what historians may 'share' as members of the historical profession may also include a particular set of pleasures and rewards; the thrill of discovery, and the rather – as one informant put it – 'aristocratic' privileges of a particular kind of academic life:

> What I like most is doing research. I get a real kick out of it, whether it is interviewing people about the past, or documents. At the moment I am getting a kick out of, it is like discovering an area of the world that I knew nothing about, and putting together the little pieces into a framework which I hope will constitute some kind of story which other people will become interested in. (LW85, 21).

> What I enjoy most is discovering, unexpectedly, an astonishing piece of new evidence about something. But ja, and as part of that writing it up in a very nice way, I mean that's quite a thrill ... the greatest thrill was actually finding it, the ultimate thrill of all of a sudden finding something in a file, or being able to close a connection that has eluded you for years, or months. To be able to complete a picture ... a number of historians write detective novels, under pseudonyms...and I think it's because of the detection thing, it's because of, you know, a lot of what you do is build up, or trying to stitch together a larger picture. The most frustrating thing in history is not being able to complete the larger picture because of, you know, a person or a connection, or a date or

> something, and once you have given up in exasperation, and then, quite by chance... there is nothing better than that, because that then enables you to write, you know, because you have then got it. (NC65, 40-1).
>
> Maybe [history] is about having *fun* in reclaiming realities that you can never really reclaim (NW55, 2).

REPUTATION[11]

The somewhat paradoxical notion of an hierarchically ordered (yet 'open-ended') field, which I floated earlier, is evident too in informants' talk about the 'great historians', the 'father figures', as one historian put it, and in their comments regarding the ways in which one acquired a reputation in the field. The role of the 'father figures' is described in quite direct and forceful terms, as will be discussed in a moment, for example in relation to scholarly networks and social circles, but also as in the following remarks concerning the internationally known figures of European or North American historiography:

> you are very influenced by the way in which they understand history - it's the way they project an understanding with which you can empathise. Instinctively what you try to do is to craft your work as closely to that as possible. Or *against* that....It's not imitation, you can't actually, but there is a sense of working within a - yes, of them setting a standard and of you working within that visionary framework, really. It's reading them and getting a clear sense of how they see social change, or contesting it actually, as well (NC65, 24-5).

Quality, excellence, it would seem, could be understood *in relation* to the work of those who have achieved eminence in the field; they are the people on whom the aspiring historian might model himself. Alternatively, one might, more or less consciously, model oneself *in opposition to* such figures. Indeed, contesting the dominant figures in the field, engaging them on their own terrain, can be a good way to assert one's own place in the sun, as one young scholar pointed out:

> The other classic way, which I am doing, is you pick out the reputable targets that people consider the best in your field and you bring them down ... that is how you build a reputation, because if you bring down the best in your field then you have to be damn good yourself. This is where Coombe and Steyn feature. Coombe got to start way back by bringing down Steyn; and Steyn of course survived and went on, sublimely, unconcerned with any minor attacks. That is how people got to know who Coombe was. It is a good way. The

> disadvantage of course is if you antagonise enough very powerful people you are bound to get in trouble. You have to do it really well. The easier way is just to be nice to everybody (AC105, 18).

Reputations may be built through controversy; through, as discussed above, innovation and the quality of one's writing, but it is also established through taking up questions that people 'are interested in':

> ... fundamentally what it comes down to is, are people going to read your book? Are the questions that you are asking questions that anybody is interested in? (AC105, 8)

Further, there may also be a sense in which productivity, and the ability of the historian to move into new areas of inquiry, attract favourable attention. Thus, one informant commented,

> I think productivity by itself gets recognised – gosh, you say, another article, you know? I think that's a real yardstick. And then, I can put this the negative way around, you do see scholars who do that damned dissertation, spend six years doing it, they've published two articles out of it on the way there, they then get somebody to bring out a pretty unreworked dissertation as the book; they then manage to get a chapter of that put into a collection of essays that somebody else is doing, and they then start working to amplify what they had in chapter four. You know? So you get somebody who becomes, you know, the world authority on a very narrow little thing, and doesn't seem able to break out of it. And it's a real dead end. So I think that's something else one looks for - you say, oh! she's doing something else now (BW45, 23).

One interesting aspect of publications and productivity is what might be termed the politics of publication, that is, the importance attached to where one publishes and to the type of publication. It is interesting not least because of the very explicit recognition of these issues by most informants, including I think all of the more senior historians interviewed, but also because of the way in which more junior informants sometimes appeared to have less certain a sense of these tacit, rather than explicit 'rules' and understandings. Asked about the importance of the book, as opposed to the journal article or paper, one informant replied,

> *Absolutely* crucial; absolutely crucial. It's your rite of passage into the profession, I would say. It's a personal opinion, but certainly I didn't feel that I was a real historian until I had published my book. But there are books and books, you know; I could publish a book with Snail Press or whatever, and that wouldn't mean as much as if it were published by Cambridge University Press. So there are specific presses that you aim for, so again, the politics of where you publish it is *extremely* important (HC65, 18).

Some people, it is true, may make their reputations through journal articles and not write a book, but this seems to be regarded as exceptional:

> ... I think of somebody like Greene. [He] has never published a book, but he built his career on a string of articles that he published in the early 1970s, which were foundational for South African history. But it is *very, very* rare and I think you have to be very, very brilliant, you know, in order to be able to get away with it (HC65, 19).

Or another senior and eminent informant, responding to a similar question:

> Greene never wrote a book, and he's been very widely identified as a key, or even *the* key, figure, for a particular moment, of South African revisionist scholarship. Steyn has not yet published a book, and he's also I think, you know, would be on anybody's shortlist of influential South African historians. But, having said that, I think they are probably exceptions to the general rule, that one does look for even the thesis as a book, the PhD as a book, or some other you know major monograph contribution. And I think for younger historians now, that that's the expectation, that's all (BW45, 9-10).

There may be moments, however, of intense ferment in the discipline, for example with the emergence of revisionist history in the 1970s, where the seminar paper, more than the journal article and far more than the book, is the key form of communication at least amongst certain scholarly circles – though here too the long-run importance of books is acknowledged, as in this quote from a protagonist of this period:

> ... the 1970s was a period of ferment, of intellectual excitement, or radical rethinking. Now in that kind of context, hot off the press, the seminar papers are what everybody is looking for. It it the latest word on the question. There is a delay before things appear in journals. I mean a lot of what I read at the time was pre-publication things. The books that reflected that only appeared later. It is the books that have the more lasting impact, although some people didn't

> write any books. ... The books over time are the ones that get quoted the most. In the time of the ferment it is the seminar papers that have the impact I think (LW85, 6-7).

The importance of the book is something that novices may not fully understand; or will take a while to learn. Thus one senior informant commented that he had not at first realised how important it was to produce a book, saying 'I now see books as much more important than articles ... which I hadn't seen before', while several informants at the graduate student/junior faculty level seemed unpersuaded about the importance of the book as opposed to the journal article. One for example commented sceptically, 'books are great but it's a one-off thing', and suggested it would add more lustre to one's *curriculum vitae* to publish the same work in the form of a number of journal articles. Other junior informants however were more conscious of the importance of the book, though perhaps taking a strategic view of their own need to publish:

> People publish journal articles. Journal articles are fine for me. I am still a young scholar. If in the next five years no book is coming out I am doomed. I must have a book out in the next five years (MC95, 29).

NETWORKING AND PATRONAGE

> I mean when I was thinking [about the interview] beforehand one of the things that I thought I should mention is, certainly in history but it seems to be more generally in the academic world, that it is quite quasi-feudal. The role of the patron is very key to one's advancement (LW85, 9).

To succeed, to win recognition and advancement in a field where the criteria for success are no less rigorous for being largely implicit requires, or so it would seem on the basis of the viewpoints recorded here, at least a modicum of literary talent, the capacity to fasten onto a topic of contemporary relevance or interest, and an ability to uncover new areas of inquiry or to render the familiar in a new light. All walks of life, however, seem to have their own networks, social circles and systems of patronage, and history seems on the evidence of my informants to be no exception. The interesting question, which I can only flag at this point, is whether networking and patronage take on a *particular* significance in the context of a discipline which appears to have relatively few explicit rules and criteria, but seems to be underpinned nonetheless by a very strong, highly

elaborated set of tacit understandings[12] or conventions. Where else is one to learn the codes of this unwritten knowledge, if not through social interaction? As one graduate student observed,

> I think as you learn the rules of the game, it is like what all sportsmen learn. There are other things which are not in the rule books. I think these are the rules of the game, you learn them through interaction (MC95, 30).

Be this as it may, all my informants were unhesitating in their recognition of the importance of networking and social exchange; at the crudest level – or, perhaps, provocatively or tongue-in-cheek,

> You publish in the right journals; you are seen at the right conferences, and not just the right conferences but the right sessions of the right conferences; the right panel discussions; the books that you publish get reviewed in the right places (AC105, 17).

Another younger scholar commented,

> ... it's social. I mean it really is, starting to attend social gatherings, starting to attend conferences, meeting people through conferences. All those sorts of things. I mean, it's a whole range of networking, and the better you are at that the more you can advance (WW124, 12-13).

An older historian drew the connection between these social networks and the ways in which history as a web of discourses is constructed through dialogue and exchange between members of the profession:

> You see, it seems to me a part of what is being a historian, is not just the written thing, but it is like, going to conferences, attending seminars, and entering dialogue with other historians. It is true that there are different networks, like there must be historical networks that function semi-autonomously from each other. For example, the Afrikaans universities and the English universities, there is very little connection between. But in general people are plugged into some network (LW85, 18).

Networks, however, may take on a significance which stretches beyond dialogue between historians; they may prove crucial in providing pathways by means of which talented, aspirant historians, and established members of the profession, gain recognition and seek the advancement of their careers. And it is in gaining access to important networks and to the resources they command that the role of the 'father figures' and other patrons may assume a particular significance. Several of my informants told stories about the role that particular 'patrons' had played in their own recruitment and induction into the discipline, in helping them to secure funding and places in doctoral programmes at prestigious universities, and in finding them jobs. A notable feature of these stories was the apparently quite common experience of having been 'offered' a bursary or a job, without having had to apply, suggesting that quite conscious and proactive processes of identifying and recruiting promising new scholars were at work. Not that these processes were necessarily transparent to their beneficiaries at the time, at least if the comments of this eminent scholar are to be taken at face value:

> I think [networks are] very important, and without being cynical, or only sceptical about it...it's something that I really only came to realise later. My own, I suppose, entry or induction, into those kinds of networks was largely unconscious. And it had to do with the fact that I was studying in [..], and travelling about once a week to London to attend seminars there, and knew most of the people who were active in, and/or influential in, South African historical scholarship in Britain. I didn't think of it that way then but that in fact was the case. And, you know, it clearly meant that when the Journal of [..] began, I knew all the sort of founding editors, and I became an editor about four years after it was founded, at quite a sort of junior stage in my own career. Looking back on that I can see very clearly, ah! Network! Pay-offs from network! But at the time it didn't feel or seem like that. I think that there is a danger it can be; I think many younger, ambitious, probably ... tenure-threatened American scholars, network in a kind of conscious, purposive, relentless way which I find absolutely appalling, but you know, that is something that happens. I don't think it happens to the same extent in South Africa yet (BW45, 11-12).

The role of the patron was frequently – and spontaneously – commented on by my informants; with both negative and positive connotations. For example, one informant having spoken highly of the mentoring role played by an older academic during his undergraduate years, nonetheless said pointedly, 'he wasn't a *patron*, who could send you on to a postgraduate supervisor' – meaning by this that the mentor had had a frictional relationship with important people in the field, and lacked settled status and recognition. The same informant spoke of his own somewhat marginal connection to key figures in the field in Britain where he did his doctorate:

> I then moved to [..], which was very much a centre of postgraduate work, and there, yes, I was sort of half-drawn into the Masters circle, but I was never really, I never really had been part of it, which is a bad thing on the one side, because you don't get the patronage, and on the other hand, it leaves you much freer to be critical. So it has been bad, and it's been good (HC65, 9).

Indeed, the flip side of the patronage coin is that the role of established historians as patrons can be experienced as constraining or intimidating by those who are junior or younger. On the other hand, a powerful patron might provide valuable professional recognition to an aspiring young scholar, for example by publicly praising his work. Interestingly, the speaker cited below links this to the expectation that the thesis supervisor should be someone who is 'plugged into' the right networks and can facilitate access by the novice:

> ... I think when you enter the discipline it is like a society, club ... you must win the recognition of some people to be recognised. For example ... Masters is among the leading historians. She likes my work and when she is summing up the conference, then she cites very lengthily from my own paper, and then everybody comes and talks to you, gains interest in you. That is how it works. They starting reading your papers. Every time they see you at conferences...they are interested....Your supervisor should push you with writing and publishing, and your supervisor should be a person who is known in the field ... (MC95, 24-5).

This brings us, then, to a consideration of the ways in which new blood is identified and nurtured, tested, and, perhaps, accepted into the profession.

A PENUMBRAL WORLD

> ... when we were talking about recruiting young staff, what that means is, very often and very typically, there's a kind of penumbral world, where graduate students get a foothold in a department and they kind of hang on, as teaching assistants and tutors or replacement lecturers or - you know, they don't have tenure, they don't have formal jobs, but they effectively serve a rather messy apprenticeship, and I see that as *very*, very prevalent at the moment (BW45, 20).

The route into the historical profession is a lengthy one and, if my informants' stories are anything to go by, fraught with financial difficulty as well as with academic and other challenges. At what stage are young, talented, potential historians 'spotted'? In what ways might they be encouraged or supported by their lecturers and professors? How, having registered for that Masters or that doctoral degree, do they settle on a research topic, and what is the role of the supervisor? How does the graduate student make ends meet and, in the words of the informant quoted above, gain a 'foothold in a department' and 'hang on' through a 'rather messy apprenticeship? And last but not least, how does the young historian develop a network of contacts and patronage through which recognition and resources might be obtained? These are the interrelated questions to which the remainder of this paper is addressed.

It would appear from informants' accounts that students who get good marks and show an interest in the discipline might be recognised even as undergraduates, as early as second year, and encouraged to continue. Encouragement would be based on a strong sense of the *quality* of the student's or novice's written work, on the extent to which the student asks questions or engages in debate in class, on hard work and the student's willingness to go beyond the minimum requirements of the course:

> Well, it's not that I look at their marks, as they come into my class, but if I've got a very special student who I feel is very good, at second year, I will sometimes look back and see how he or she has done the first year (HC65, 29).

> It probably is difficult in large departments to identify, you know, those students who're turned on by the discipline, but every now and then I mean it does happen, it's absolutely unmistakeable. I remember marking a third-year script, at [..], where the answers just leapt off the page! And I rushed around trying to find out, who is this student, is he doing Honours with – you know? We lost him, he went to [...] (BW45, 13).

> An analytical ability is the major thing, and then secondly, the ability to work hard and to be really dedicated to it. A big thing is, you know we all do, you'll kind of test a student, and if that student goes outside of the readings that are given to him, if that student goes into the field and does oral, historical research, and you can feel from those interviews he's really able to pry out of people good information, that student's got a potential that most students don't have (HC65, 26).

> I want them to be enquiring, to go outside of the traditional route, in other words to show initiative, to be able to find material in the library, that hasn't been spoon fed to them. It's got to be a student who can work on his or her own, in other words work independently – not necessarily completely independently

> of me, but who has got the ability to go and look for stuff, and put it together, and write papers in a fairly independent manner. Those would be the major points maybe (HC65, 27).

Good students might expect in due course to be advised on overseas study and on where and under whom to pursue a masters or doctoral degree. Thus one doctoral student told me how she was called in by her head of department during her Honours year and advised to ensure she obtained at least one overseas degree if she wanted a good academic job. An older academic described his trajectory from a South African university to Cambridge in these terms, beginning with

> ... good essay marks, as a sort of bottom line. And, I think, yes, I mean if you pull in First Class essays, and you perform well in tutorials and question – I think historians are interested in getting themselves reproduced, like everybody else ! [laughter] ... there were several students, of whom I was one, who were actively encouraged to consider postgraduate history, if not there, then elsewhere, and if you were going elsewhere, you know, probably people would have said, 'by all means use me as a referee', or 'you ought to think of applying to X, because I have contacts there ... I mean, that's how I ended up at Cambridge doing a PhD, because the head of the History Department at [...] told me which colleges to apply to, and in which order to rank them (NC65, 11).

The importance of overseas study, according to informants, lay in part in the exposure to new ideas and experiences, the broadening of one's horizons, that foreign travel supposedly provides; a further, crucial dimension however hinged on gaining access to important networks of patronage. As one eminent historian put it, in tracing the personal relationships that had led to his admission to a doctoral programme overseas and then on to various academic posts, 'my jobs came through networks of patronage' (LW85, 14). Another established figure explained the importance of overseas travel and study in this way:

> Just to be exposed to the range of newspapers that you get in London or Chicago or Paris or whatever, and the range of weeklies, and just a massive input of information that you've got over there that just doesn't exist here. It's very important, to be able to breathe, over there. And more than that, you start creating systems and networks and link yourself into those. And, for instance, my network is very much with France ... it's with the Continent. It's not with England, it's not with Masters and co, who again I get on well with, but that's not where my source of patronage is coming from. I've developed a network of patronage, and that's largely through my speaking French. My source of patronage is much

> more on the Continent. So again, it's important for students to go over, because it exposes them to new ideas. But also, it brings them into contact with new sources of patronage (HC65, 30-1).

So, then, following these accounts, the promising student is encouraged to think of studying further, is perhaps assisted to go abroad, and placed in the care of a senior member of the profession at a leading institution, someone who can act as a patron to the young scholar, and someone who, most likely, is known personally to the student's South African mentor - who might, indeed, herself have been at some time or another a student of the patron's, and who maintains contact at the personal as well as the professional level. In any event, the talented newcomer becomes a doctoral student: how does he find a research topic, and how does he make ends meet during the three or four or more years of archival research, sifting through documents, interviewing laboriously-traced survivors of the Great War or what-have-you, that it takes to produce a doctoral dissertation?

First, perhaps, we should note the new status of our fictitious student, and the newly acquired access to the established members of the profession that this status bestows:

> Being a doctoral student, all the rules are different. It's a different ball game. ... The people that were your teachers are now your friends, which changes your relationship crucially, in a lot of ways ... You can call them by their first names and you get to go to departmental do's. You get invited to these things and you have conversations. So very subtly the dynamics are changing, because obviously they are not your peers. These are not postgraduate students (AC105, 2).

> Of course they treat me differently. I have dinner at their house and they have dinner at my house, that kind of thing. That never used to happen (AC105, 3).

Still, apart from learning the ground rules of this expanded social world, one has to research, and one has to publish. Choosing a research topic can, it seems, be less than straightforward:

> I think the biggest problem is choosing a topic of research, because you cannot be fully familiar with the debates. In one way that could make it good, because you can come up with a question that nobody else is considering, but on the other hand, I find that the good students do, but you have to have an impetus to that. I mean if you have been political, for example, then you may already have ideas about what you want to write on. If you haven't, you can be quite parochial and unsure about what you want to work on, and that is where the question of

> the interaction between the supervisor and the student is important, but then the supervisor will also be determined by this whole existing structure of debate and the discourse, and therefore you can tend to just reproduce that. I think that is the difficult question (LW85, 17).

More mundanely, perhaps, the very open-endedness of the discipline can inspire confusion, especially for the junior postgraduate, as in the account below of one student's frantic efforts to settle on a topic for an Honours dissertation:

> [Choosing a research topic] is very difficult. I think that the make or break year is actually your Honours year because as an undergraduate you never need to think of the topic, you just do what other people tell you to do. ... For Honours ... you have to produce this fifty to one hundred page thesis. By August I still didn't have a topic. I was running around in an absolute frenzy. I knew I wanted to look at women and development, women and work, but how, what, where, why? My supervisor was not giving me very much guidance ... With hindsight I can see that what she was doing was giving me space to find something I was interested in. At the time I was in a panic ... I suppose out of desperation I latched onto something (CC105, 9).

The research topic might evolve out of a long-standing research interest, linked perhaps, as hinted at above, to one's political or other commitments; or it might be shaped quite powerfully by a charismatic supervisor, so that several informants were able to speak of the emergence of visible 'schools' of research, as groups of postgraduate students attached themselves to one or other of the leading historians of the day. The topic, once decided, however, might well come to acquire a logic of its own, so that the final product could end up looking very different from what was originally envisaged.

> I suppose the discipline in a way sucks you in. You come with specific questions but you end up after three years answering totally different questions (AC105, 16).

> I mean the choice of topic was initially through the patron, and then subsequently changed by the sources. And then I put this kind of theoretical stamp on it ... (LW85, 10).

At one level, the role of the supervisor is quite straightforward; it is

> ... to make sure that the student's thesis gets passed! [Laughter] ... I think it is two problems. I mean, one is critical, and that is to provide the sort of intellectual guidance and support that is needed, which could be everything from suggesting theoretical literature, to making sure that the student knows how to take archival notes properly....and I think the other role of the supervisor, particularly for

> *good* students, is to provide broader kind of academic support, in terms of trying to get them started on a career, and that would involve advice, guidance on publications for example, journals to submit material to, assistance with finding additional scholarship money, those kinds of things (NC65, 13).

The more narrowly academic role of the supervisor might, depending on the supervisor and on the student, be less central; students and supervisors alike tended to emphasize the need for the student to be able to operate independently, without undue direction or constraint by the supervisor: a 'good' supervisor tended to be described as someone who offered critical comment and advice when needed but by and large let you get on with doing your own thing.

One informant, for example, observed that while researching for his PhD he had worked with only minimal supervision, and said that while this had been problematic in some ways, on the other hand that was how he had wanted to work. He added that he would behave similarly today with a student who wanted to work independently. Similar accounts were offered by others. Indeed, a supervisor might feel unable or unwilling to intervene even where, in his judgment, intervention might be warranted:

> In my own experience of supervision of theses it tended to be the case that students have done their own thing. I mean, quite often to my despair or to my dissatisfaction, that I felt that they could have done something different etc. In theory I am for a much more hands-on relationship between supervisor and candidate. It depends on the circumstances and it depends on the personality. I think if you have got somebody who is a student who is good they will do their own thing, and that will turn out well. The problem is if you have students who are not so good and they try to do their own thing, but you know, it may be that the experience of doing the research takes on a logic of its own, and the supervisor cannot be as deeply into the material as the student is, and that limits the role of the supervisor to some extent perhaps (LW85, 11).

Apart from personal preferences and individual styles, there might be practical and other constraints on the ability of the supervisor to monitor a student's work. For example, in a field as wide and indeterminate as history, the chances are high, as one informant observed, that the student might stray into areas of which the supervisor has only limited or indirect knowledge; or the student might be engaged in fieldwork far from the supervisor's home base, so that regular communication, even if desired, becomes problematic. Several illustrations of the latter difficulty were provided by informants; one, for example, had an American supervisor but did most of his research in London; another's supervisor was based in England, but most of the informant's fieldwork was done on the Continent and in Southern Africa. Still another academic commented simply,

> My supervisor was really virtually superfluous. ... Still, you know, at that time I was quite happy to just get on and do it myself (SC75, 5).

Also, one might imagine, the supervisor-relationship is shaped by the *modus operandi* of a, perhaps necessarily, highly individualistic discipline.

> Mostly we don't share each others' passions, and on top of it if you do happen in the same field as somebody else you are very likely to disagree, so the people who *are* in your field are the last people you could possibly work together with (AC105, 20-21).

For the doctoral student, at least in South African universities and under present funding constraints, time for research is likely to be affected by the need to earn money as a tutor; and this in turn may be an important source of patronage for the aspiring historian. Here, again, being 'known' to the faculty may be a matter of some importance; as one doctoral student explained,

> I think my jobs at [...] have come through my contacts with academics who are in a position to offer jobs; and I think that that doesn't just apply to me, it applies to a lot of people. If you are known, you are head and shoulders above the rest. It is the 'old boy' network that has gradually included a few women. I think it is really important. To have an academic career you need to know other academics. You need to be part of that community .... (CC105, 16).

Tutoring may also be an important part of developing a 'track record' which hopefully might lead to postdoctoral work and, perhaps, in due course, to an academic appointment. Thus tutoring could be seen as a way of trying to gain 'a foothold in a department', as one informant put it, in the quotation with which this part of the discussion commenced. The benefits, real and perceived, of tutoring have to be weighed against the disadvantages, however, notably the fact that time spent on tutoring is time taken from research and publication:

> It takes you, what, two years to produce an MA, four years to produce a PhD; that is six years during which you have to live, and the only way you can really live, in this country anyway, is by tutoring. So if you don't get a job as a tutor, you've had it. So that again is a *very* important source of patronage (HC65, 17).

> The combination of sustained research, and a conference paper here and there, publication here and there, plus undergraduate tutoring experience and marking, certainly for junior level appointments, if you're hoping to get a post-doctoral fellowship or something of that sort, are very important (NC65, 20).

> I really do need to publish. Part of it is that I didn't realise how important it was; part of it is that I don't quite know how to go about converting a chapter [of a dissertation] into an article, and part of it is that I have been really busy with writing lectures and teaching commitments. If I don't do it then I can kiss any chance of an academic career goodbye (CC105, 15).

Publishing or even presenting a seminar paper can on the other hand represent an enormous, intimidating obstacle to young faculty or graduate students. As an eminent member of the profession commented,

> ... again one realises these things if you just knock around a bit – I hadn't fully realised how *intimidating* many junior faculty, and especially graduate students, find those networks, those [in]formal sides of the discipline. Again, I was very lucky, I was eased into them, they just seemed, they came with, my experience. But I've seen people get terribly intimidated and flustered at the idea of writing a seminar paper, or attending a conference ... (BW45, 22).

It may be, however, that one of the unanticipated benefits of tutoring or lecturing lies in the development of a professional competence, perhaps a professional self-image, which in due course may make it easier to engage in debate with one's peers, in the seminar or conference, and via the printed word. As a younger faculty member explained,

> ... just the challenges of the large classroom, I found those overwhelming in the first couple of years. I mean my research was just nowhere; just beginning to think about research was awful. I had done research but I just felt that that was worthless. I couldn't even show it to people. Gradually one overcame that. Slowly you showed people what you were writing and slowly you went to little conferences here and there. Gradually because of the confidence that you pick up in the classroom, because of the skills you develop as a teacher, you just become a lot more confident as a writer and researcher, and I think the two develop hand in hand (RW55).

And so, it seems, through this 'rather messy apprenticeship', and the rigours of teaching, through exposing oneself to the critical scrutiny of peers and one's more senior colleagues not only in seminars and conferences but over drinks and dinners in one another's houses,

through the development of a network of relationships locally and abroad, and of course through the quality of his research and publications, the aspiring historian may find himself gradually inducted into the historian's profession.

CODA

In concluding this paper, in which a first, exploratory analysis has been made of an ongoing series of research interviews, I want to avoid premature theoretical closure. However, it may be useful briefly to draw together some of the strands of the preceding discussion.

The central argument of the paper has been that an understanding of the social aspects of academic disciplines, of the tacit knowledge which is acquired by immersion in a particular scholarly milieu, and, in particular, of the processes of induction and socialization of scholars into different disciplinary communities, is crucial to an understanding of the problem of access to higher education. More specifically, it has been suggested that if we are to address in meaningful terms the opening of the academic profession in South Africa to all talented and qualified South Africans, conscious and more critical attention needs to be paid to the social processes by means of which the academy reproduces itself.

Here my interviews with historians have provided a number of clues. The criteria according to which talent is identified, the processes by means of which it is encouraged, and the explicit consideration given, by graduate students and their supervisors, academics and their patrons alike, to the development of networks of support and patronage, to the acquisition of resources and the building of a scholarly reputation, to the politics of publication and of academic competition, have been the subjects of frank and sometimes eloquent testimony.

Through the lens of these interviews, the emerging outlines of a 'virtuous circle' of mutually reinforcing effects may perhaps be discerned. In the drama of academic life, much of which, it will be noted, takes place off-stage, individual talent and ability appear to draw promising scholars into powerful social networks, which in turn promote the reputation and foster the recognition of their members, thereby, as Becher (citing Merton) reminds us, confirming the words of the Gospel according to Matthew: 'To those that have shall be given, and from those that have not shall be taken even that which they have'.[13] Becher indeed cites a number of studies which appear to confirm the existence of a 'self-reinforcing elite structure' in which 'The more eminent a scientist becomes the more visible he appears to his colleagues and the greater the credit he receives for his research contributions.' Becher concludes,

> ... the evidence that success breeds success spans the social sciences, the humanities and the professional disciplines.[14]

This circle of effects – which perhaps may more accurately be described as a tightening, ever steeper spiral – may tend over time to result in the construction of disciplinary hierarchies which are at once social and intellectual in character, dominated at the top by small and more or less closely knit elites. It is precisely because the boundaries of these hierarchies are social as well as intellectual – indeed, it is precisely on account of the analytically distinct yet, in practice, closely intertwined nature of the social and intellectual – that this paper seeks to move beyond the restricted notions of 'epistemological access' that loom so large in the current debate.[15]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Notwithstanding the focus of this paper, it is scarcely necessary to point out that the institution, and the academic department, play important roles in academic cultures. See for example J. Adkinson, "The Structure of Knowledge and Departmental Social Organization", *Higher Education*, 8: 41; W. Tierney, "Academic Work and Institutional Culture: Constructing Knowledge", *The Review of Higher Education*, 14, 2 (1991): 199. A more extensive account is provided by B. Clark (ed.), *The Academic Profession: National, Disciplinary and Institutional Settings* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1987).
2. See W. Morrow, "Open Learning and the University", *AD Issues*, 2, 1 (1994): 35 for a discussion of what he terms 'epistemological access'. I have suggested elsewhere that the notion of epistemological access "underplays the social dimensions of knowledge production, dissemination and acquisition". See G. Fisher, "Thinking about Access: The Significance of Disciplinary Communities", *Academic Development*, 1, 1 (1995): 7.
3. Fisher (1995).
4. T. Becher, *Academic Tribes and Territories*, (Milton Keynes: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, 1989), 1. This book offers a richly detailed and nuanced account of disciplinary cultures in a range of fields. It is important to register the point here though that while the growth of disciplines follows a certain internal logic, following from the development of knowledge within the field, disciplines are at the same time inserted in complex ways not a wider social and economic context. Indeed, my informants themselves do not offer a wholly 'internal' account of the field. See for example, L. Huber, "Disciplinary Cultures and Social Reproduction", *European Journal of Education*, 25, 3 (1990): 241. P. Maassen has provided a workmanlike overview of the range of approaches to the concept of academic culture in an unpublished paper entitled, "The Concept of Culture and Higher Education", (unpublished paper, 17th Annual EAIR Forum, Zurich, Switzerland, 27-30 August 1995).
5. Commonalities may stem from certain shared features of academic life, from pressures which bear upon the higher education system as a whole – one might think, for example, of the conflicting pressures facing higher education in the present South African context – or from instititional particularties. See B. Clark, "The Organisational Conception" in B. Clark (ed.), *Perspectives on Higher Education*, (Berkley: University of California Press, 1987), 106.
6. T. Becher, *ibid.* See also A. Biglan, "The Characteristics of Subject Matter in Different Academic Areas", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 57, 3 (1973): 195.
7. J. Potter and M. Mulkay, "Scientists' Interview Talk: Interviews as a Technique for Revealing Participants' Interpretative Practices", in M. Brenner, J. Brown and D. Canter (eds.), *The Research Interview* (London: Academic Press, 1985), 247-271.

8. *Ibid.*, 269.
9. An interesting account of history as a discipline is offered by T. Becher, "Historians on History", *Studies in Higher Education*, 14, 3 (1989): 263.
10. Interview references are coded to ensure informants' anonymity.
11. For a fascinating account of the importance of reputation, and the 'cycles of credit' by means of which reputation and the credibility of a scientist are linked to the scientist's very ability to 'do science', see B. Latour and S. Woolgar, *Laboratory of Life*, (Beverly Hills, Sage, 1979), 187-233.
12. Gerholm provides a valuable account of the significance of 'tacit' knowledge in academia. See T. Gerholm, "On Tacit Knoweldge in Academia", *European Journal of Education*, 25, 3 (1990): 263.
13. See Becher, 1989, 58.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Morrow, *op cit.*

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Defending the 'Open University': Wits University, Student Politics, and University Apartheid 1955-1959

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In 1959 the Nationalist Government, after a decade of power, finally secured the passage through Parliament of legislation to impose apartheid structures on South Africa's university system. The country's two previously 'open universities', the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (Wits) and the University of Cape Town (UCT), were now largely 'closed' to black applicants. This paper examines the nature and significance of the opposition mounted by Wits to the proposed legislation; it details the process by which student protests culminated in corporate protests against university apartheid; and indicates that once enacted, the legislation was fully complied with by the University administration.

INTRODUCTION

In 1959 the Nationalist Government, after a decade in power, finally passed through Parliament legislation to impose apartheid on South Africa's university system. The legislation was carried in the face of a major campaign of protest mounted by the English-speaking universities of South Africa, led by Wits and UCT as the country's two 'open universities', by Fort Hare University College as the primary university institution for Africans, and by the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), which co-ordinated student protest both domestically and internationally. Various liberal organisations, notably the Women's League for the Defence of the Constitution, or Black Sash as it was known by its emblem, and the South African Institute of Race Relations, also joined in the campaign to arouse public opposition to the Government's proposals for university apartheid, and in Parliament the Opposition put up a dogged resistance to the legislation first introduced in 1957. Apart from the removal of the 'Coloured' voters of the Cape Province from the common roll, no other single measure of the 1950s gave rise to so great and prolonged a public furore, and as a consequence of the international links NUSAS and the universities themselves brought into play, the repercussions were international. As the *Rand Daily Mail* commented on 9 March 1959, "few of the Union Government's apartheid measures have created a worse atmosphere for this country overseas than the University Apartheid Bill". A feature of the campaign against university apartheid was the high degree of solidarity demonstrated by Wits and UCT, in developing

a united front on their respective campuses and in coordinating action between themselves. What began as student protests resulted ultimately in corporate protests at the two universities, involving all their constituencies, Council, Senate, Convocation, lecturers and students.

Wits staged two such protests, the first in the University's history: a march from Braamfontein to the City Hall in May 1957, and a General Assembly in April 1959 to record the University's "solemn protest" against the new legislation. "Wits", the *Witwatersrand Student*, the Wits student newspaper, commented on the eve of the 1957 march, "is today a completely united front against apartheid." Eddie Roux, senior lecturer in Botany and once a leading member of the Communist Party, was deeply impressed by the protest march undertaken by academic staff as well as students. He could never previously "have visualised an academic procession of staff and students through the streets of Johannesburg".[1]

At Wits, the solidarity displayed once the Government announced that it was proceeding with legislation was facilitated by three developments in particular; the transfer of leadership in the Students' Representative Council (SRC) from the radicals to the liberals, subtle changes in the leadership of Council, and what Roux perceived as "the steady growth of liberalism in the staff". That solidarity, however, was only attained after major internal conflict, initiated by the Principal and Council in their drive to destroy the hegemonic position of the left in the SRC, and perhaps inevitably, given the diverse nature of the student body and the inherent conservatism of university establishments, it was by no means complete. A vociferous right-wing, drawn mainly from engineering and dental students, jeered from the sidelines, and fractures between the student leadership and the University establishment was always evident. While the student leadership was committed to eliminating social segregation on campus so as to rid the University of what they perceived as its contradictions, Council preferred to live with those contradictions, even though this gave the then Nationalists the opportunity to deride the 'hypocrisy' of the 'open universities'. The result was an underlying tension between the SRC, on the one hand, and the University's Principal and Council on the other, a tension rooted in somewhat different understandings as to exactly what was being defended against the Nationalist onslaught. The former thought more in terms of the defence of 'academic freedom', including the freedom of all qualified persons to attend the university of their choice; the latter more in terms of the defence of 'university autonomy', notably the freedom of each university to decide who it would, or would not, admit. Again, the liberals in control of the SRC, like the left before them, came to appreciate that the struggle to preserve academic freedom could not be divorced from the wider struggle against apartheid, whereas Council steadfastly refused to take up wider issues.

For critical observers the formal protests staged by Wits against university apartheid were little more than symbolic. As Albert Luthuli, the President of the African National Congress (ANC), commented in his autobiography on the passage of the separate universities legislation:

> It was some small comfort to us to see the way in which world universities, and South Africa's formerly 'open'universities, demonstrated against the Act. But they were too late. This Act's foundations were laid much earlier, when the Act applying to school education was passed. The Nationalists were not deterred.[2]

The reality was that the 'open universities' were absolutely powerless against a Government equipped with a formidable parliamentary majority, and determined to get its own way. Once the Nationalist Government had decided on its formula for apartheid university structures, it simply brushed aside the arguments and protests of the 'open universities'. From the standpoint of the left, it would have taken an active alliance with the black majority, meaning in practice the ANC, to mount any truly effective resistance to the Nationalist plans for university apartheid, but that was perhaps not a pragmatic option in the 1950s.[3] However, it does not necessarily follow that the protests of the 1950s were purely symbolic and without any real effect. In the liberal analysis, indeed, the whole movement of student protest from 1948 onwards gained for the 'open universities' an 'eleven year reprieve', enabling hundreds of black students to receive a full university education in the meantime, although such a claim presupposed that university apartheid enjoyed more of a priority on the Nationalist agenda than was evidently the case.[4] The real achievement of the protests staged by Wits, and the campaign against university apartheid more generally, was to ensure that an important set of principles was defended, although with varying degrees of intensity, and not simply allowed to go by default; to establish Wits itself as a rallying point for opposition in the 1950s; to develop the political awareness of students and create a base for future opposition; and, arguably, to do more than anything else prior to the Sharpeville shootings to alert the wider world to the oppressive nature of the Nationalist regime.

UNIVERSITY APARTHEID

Both Wits and UCT were categorised as 'open universities' in that they admitted black students to the same classes as whites. The policy of Wits was officially described as one of 'academic non-segregation and social segregation'. In terms of that policy, black students were offered the maximum practicable access to the academic facilities in the University, but beyond the academic sphere formal social contact with white students was severely curtailed.[5] In segregationist South Africa, conformity with the 'social colour-bar' was regarded by the University authorities as the necessary price to be paid for

black admissions to Wits. From the very outset, however, the Nationalist Government formed in 1948 attacked Wits and UCT for their policy of 'academic non-segregation'. In his first speech in Parliament as Prime Minister, Dr D.F. Malan denounced the "intolerable state of affairs" caused by the presence of black students at 'white' universities, and declared that it was Government policy to create separate university institutions for "both the Natives and the Coloureds".[6]

In retrospect, Nationalist Government policy-making on the universities went through two distinct phases. During Malan's premiership (1948-54) the 'intermingling' of the races at the 'open universities' served as the main Nationalist target, and the 'open universities' were increasingly subjected to Government threats and attack, culminating in the appointment of the Holloway Commission at the end of 1953 to investigate "the practicability and financial implications of providing separate training facilities for non-Europeans at universities". During this phase there was some hesitation within the Government as to whether it could legitimately proceed against the 'open universities', and the Government itself lacked a firm scheme for establishing black university institutions. Following the fiasco of the Holloway Commission report, which suggested that the creation of separate university institutions was not financially feasible, and after J.G. Strijdom's accession to the premiership at the end of 1954, Government policy entered its second, more assertive phase. As Mary Beale has detected in her study of the evolution of the policy of university apartheid, there was a shift from a "relatively open-minded investigation" to "a more driven ideological approach".[7] The positive sense of ideological direction was provided by Dr H.F. Verwoerd's Native Affairs Department, and more particularly by the Secretary for Native Affairs, Dr W.W.M. Eiselen. Eiselen, the son of the superintendent of the Berlin Missionary Society at Botshabelo in the Eastern Transvaal and a social anthropologist, had initially contemplated the creation of a single, large 'Bantu' university, but from the the Holloway Commission hearings onwards he consistently urged the case for a series of ethnically based universities.[8] It was this scheme that was enacted in 1959.

During the first phase of Government policy-making on university apartheid Wits was badly riven by a conflict between the University Council, which sought to avert Government intervention by following a policy of appeasement, and the student left, often effectively in control of the SRC, which sought to involve Wits students in the wider struggle against apartheid. In the midst of the Holloway Commission hearings, a bruising battle was waged between the new Principal, the engineer Professor W.G. Sutton, and the Council on the one side and the SRC on the other.[9] It was only after that battle had been decided, with the imposition in 1955 of a new constitution on the SRC, and with Government policy defined, that Wits came together in a truly united front, with a remarkable degree of co-operation emerging between the SRC, the academic staff, and the University authorities.

THE STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Since World War II, a left/liberal alliance had dominated the Wits SRC, with the left generally in the driving seat. While the left comprised varieties of Marxists, members of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) formed the largest single group in the years immediately after the war, and at times Communists seemed to control the reins of student power at Wits, as in 1950/51 when Harold Wolpe served as SRC President and Lionel Forman as editor of the *Witwatersrand Student*. Following the Nationalist victory in 1948, the CPSA effectively abandoned the notion of class struggle leading to socialist revolution for the notion of a pan-class national struggle leading to national liberation, and that required building alliances with nationalist organisations and movements, notably the ANC.[10] In the context of students politics, CPSA members on campus were consequently concerned to engage students in the extra-parliamentary struggles in the wider society. What provided common ground between liberals and the left on campus was a mutual attachment to notions of non-racialism, and the two groups generally worked together in student politics. For SRC elections, which were conducted on a Faculty by Faculty basis, they organised a 'ticket' or 'slate' so as not to split the vote, and thereby normally ensured their control of the SRC. "One of the reasons the left swept the board always", George Bizos later recalled, "was that the vote wasn't split. They were good politicians".[11] There were, however, underlying tensions between the two groups. A generally amorphous group, without any party political base until the foundation of the Liberal Party in 1953, the liberals were initially concerned about the SRC venturing politically into matters not directly related to students and education, and they were also anxious to avert having the left's political agenda foisted on them. In the era of Cold War, the question of the continuing affiliation of NUSAS to the pro-Soviet International Union of Students (IUS) proved highly divisive.

For Sutton and Council, the hegemonic position of the left in the SRC was anathema, and the purpose of the new statutory constitution devised by Council in 1955 was both to clip the wings of the SRC and to destroy the left's control over that body. For almost a decade the SRC had campaigned for statutory recognition for itself in order to enhance its status; what the new statutory constitution provided for instead was the SRC's subordination in matters of action to Council and the Principal, and it also overhauled the system by which the SRC was elected. Under the old system of Faculty by Faculty elections, the left/liberal alliance had secured a majority in the SRC by capturing the representation of certain key Faculties, notably Arts, Medicine and Law. Under the new constitution, SRC elections were 'democratised' so as to undercut the left; each Faculty was to have a single representative on the SRC, but the bulk of its members were to be returned in a University-wide election based on proportional representation. While several radical stalwarts were returned in the elections of August/September 1955, leadership of the SRC now passed to the 'moderates' and the liberals.

For radicals on campus, the imposition of Council's constitution on the SRC represented a capitulation by the University to Government pressure. As Bob Hepple, the last of the SRC Presidents drawn from the left, wrote in an article in *The Forum*, the liberal weekly: "The conclusion is inescapable that the authorities are falling into line with the dictates of the Nationalists. An emasculated and powerless student body will be of great assistance to the Nationalists in imposing segregation in the universities". In the view of the *Witwatersrand Student*, edited by Hepple, Stanley Trapido and R.W. Harvey, the University authorities had submitted "completely" to Government pressure.[12] No doubt, growing Nationalist criticism of the 'open universities', and Wits in particular, as 'hotbeds' of political subversion, intensified the traditional concern of the University's Principal and Council about the 'politicisation' of the campus, but their aversion to 'the left' had also acquired its own dynamic, and became replicated within the student body. Not only did the 'moderate' majority on campus, which was essentially United Party in its political identification, welcome an end to the era of left wing control of the SRC, but so too did an increasingly assertive liberal grouping, which was determined to change the student political culture at Wits. The next two SRC Presidents, Chris Rachanis and Mike Kimberley, were both 'moderates', but in the face of the Government attack on the 'open universities' the liberals were able to take up much of the running.

1953 had seen the formation of a series of new political groupings in South Africa, notably the South African Communist Party (SACP) as an underground organisation in succession to the CPSA following its banning in 1950; the South African Congress of Democrats (COD) as the white arm in the Congress Alliance, in partnership with the ANC, the South African Indian Congress and the South African Coloured People's Organisation; and the Liberal Party. The fundamental principle of the latter was non-racialism, but from the outset it was anti-Communist as well as anti-apartheid. The Liberal Party's declared opposition to "all forms of totalitarianism such as fascism and communism" ensured a hostile relationship between it and COD, which was widely perceived as a Communist 'front'.[13] Given that the differences between liberals and the left had now been organisationally defined at the national level, their relationship in student politics acquired a new edge. A new generation of student leaders, at UCT as well as Wits, belonged to the Liberal Party, and they were as intent on politicising students, and mobilising them against apartheid, as were the left. Increasingly well organised, they were also intent on asserting their leadership in student politics. As before, liberals and the left would co-operate on a wide range of issues, but the liberals were determined that the reins of student power and the public platform on campus would now be controlled, in the main, by themselves.[14]

The new era of liberal dominance in student politics at Wits was presaged by developments in NUSAS, which had always provided more of an arena for actual conflict between liberals and the left than the Wits SRC. The emotive central issue was NUSAS' international affiliation; in the early and mid fifties it was an issue that sparked more

controversy, and generated more heat, than any other. In 1954 John Didcott of UCT and Dan Goldstein of Wits brokered a compromise arrangement whereby NUSAS would associate with both the pro-Soviet IUS and the rival International Student Conference (ISC), which, as was then rumoured and later confirmed, was financed by the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States. In 1955, after a particularly acrimonious debate initiated by Ernie Wentzel of UCT, the compromise was revoked, and NUSAS cut all its ties with the IUS. Goldstein was so outraged that he resigned on the spot as NUSAS Vice-President. Complete secession from the IUS symbolised the fact that the left had lost its ground in NUSAS, on the very eve of losing its hold over the Wits SRC.

THE 'OPEN UNIVERSITIES' CAMPAIGN IN 1957

So far from leading, as Hepple's SRC had forewarned, to a long-term embitterment of relations within the University, the imposition of the new SRC constitution resulted in their improvement; the change-over in the leadership of the SRC from the radicals to the 'moderates' and the liberals considerably facilitated a closing of the ranks as Government policy-making on university apartheid moved into its second, more assertive phase. While strains continued to manifest themselves from time to time, the new SRC leadership showed itself both anxious and able to work with the University authorities and the academic staff in a way not before evident; a major premium was now placed on constructing a united front against the Government. A closing of the ranks was facilitated also by subtle changes in the University's own leadership. Following the death of the highly conservative chairman of Council, P.M. Anderson, at the end of 1954, the liberals on Council, headed by the Chancellor, Richard Feetham, played a more assertive role, with Sutton allowing himself to be sidelined in political matters, displaced by Professor I.D. MacCrone as the senior member of Senate. Temperamentally unsuited to the politics of protest, Sutton kept to himself, permitting Feetham and MacCrone to serve as the University's spokesmen as Wits entered into the untrodden territory of official protest against Government policy.

For relations within the student body, the important feature was that the left did not mount a sustained rearguard action against the new SRC regime. Although deprived of its position of leadership, and although sometimes contentious at meetings, the left effectively decided to work within rather than against the new SRC; in so doing it helped to ensure that the change-over in leadership was not accompanied by profound changes in the SRC's agenda. A major point of contention, and one of the fundamental dividing lines between the left and the liberals, remained the IUS. The left continued to put the case for the IUS, and debates over it, and its Soviet alignments, got particularly heated as liberal criticism of the Soviet Union intensified after the Soviet suppression of the

Hungarian uprising in1956. In the SRC and on campus, liberals seriously questioned the credibility of people who championed democracy in South Africa and yet supported the action of the Soviet Union in Hungary.

How the first statutory SRC, under Chris Rachanis, would handle the question of university apartheid was soon put to the test with the Government's announcement in November 1955 that it had appointed an interdepartmental committee to inquire into the establishment of separate university facilities. Initially, Rachanis's SRC floundered over how to respond, but by the beginning of the 1956 academic year it had come down heavily in favour of a motion to "reaffirm the traditional policy of academic non-segregation" and to protest against the Government's intention to implement university segregation. The motion was duly carried by 614 votes to 15 at the annual general meeting of students.[15]

With the election of the next SRC in September 1956, the liberals were basically in the ascendant; the new President, Mike Kimberley, was a 'moderate' from the Law School who allowed his liberal colleagues to make the running. Both in NUSAS and on the Wits campus, the liberals were by now well organised, and poised to sustain a wide-ranging national campaign in protest against the idea of university apartheid. Their leaders, Wentzel and Neville Rubin at UCT, and Magnus Gunther at Wits, were all members of the Liberal Party, with the charismatic Wentzel the central figure as President of NUSAS. Wentzel was the intellectual strategist, Rubin the master organiser and tactician, and Gunther the theoretician and energetic mobiliser. At its annual meeting in July 1956, held in Pietermaritzburg, the NUSAS Assembly adopted resolutions that signalled it was moving into top gear as an organisation to co-ordinate protest against Government plans to impose university apartheid; it resolved that NUSAS should give a new priority to its national academic freedom campaign, bringing together as many groups as possible, and the SRCs of Wits and UCT were both requested to set up standing committees on university autonomy.[16]

At Wits, an academic freedom campaign was duly launched on 13 September, immediately after the SRC elections, with the outgoing SRC President, Chris Rachanis, chairing a mass meeting of 1 300 students at the swimming pool. By an overwhelming majority the meeting, on the motion of Gunther, "instructed" the incoming SRC executive to make arrangements for a "symbolic protest" against university apartheid by way of the cancellation of lectures for an hour, or alternatively non-attendance at lectures for an hour.[17] The 'instruction' from the student body immediately put the new SRC statute to the test. The Acting Principal, Professor I.D. MacCrone, promptly vetoed it, warned the SRC that any protest action would be in breach of University discipline, leading to disciplinary measures. In defiance of MacCrone's ruling, the 'boycott' of classes nevertheless went ahead on Wednesday 19 September, with an ad hoc group of some 600 students taking responsibility for it. In all, about 1 000 students congregated for an hour on the Great Hall steps. This was followed by a mass meeting in the Great Hall, which

rapidly degenerated into what the *Rand Daily Mail* described as "a noisy farce", with a rowdy group of mainly engineering students at the back of the hall hurling abuse at the speakers, who included the Bishop of Johannesburg, the Right Reverend Ambrose Reeves. "When I was called to mediate in the Liverpool dock strike", the Bishop expostulated, "I never saw such disgraceful behaviour, even from dockers".[18]

For the moment, Wits student politics seemed to have returned to the 'morass' of cleavage and conflict, but in reality the trajectory was very different, moving towards the creation of a new united front at Wits against university apartheid. Gunther's motion of 13 September, designed to appeal to a range of constituencies, had also called for a co-ordinated programme to arouse 'national' opinion in defence of academic freedom and to ensure "the fullest possible co-operation of the staff". In what was taken by student leaders as a crucial signal of encouragement, some 70 members of the academic staff responded by signing a petition to MacCrone in support of the students' "symbolic protest", and several even cancelled their lectures as a sign of solidarity. As MacCrone made evident in his reply, he was by no means unsympathetic to the students, but on academic grounds he was "strongly averse" to any disruption of the regular University routine. More importantly, he confided, he considered that the actions of the students were likely to embarrass the University's Council in its dealings with the Government. He had himself been giving "some thought" as to how the Council should act, and had concluded that Wits and UCT should work together to prepare for any likely 'show down' with the Government. They should first send a joint deputation to see the Minister to ascertain exactly what the Government had in mind and to make representations; should the Minister fail to heed them a 'show down' would follow. "And only after such a 'show down'," he contended,

> would the appropriate time have arrived, in my opinion, for a strong public statement or protest on the part of the two Universities jointly—a statement which would then have all the greater effect in the light of our record.[19]

With the threat to the 'open universities' becoming more immediate—in mid-September Verwoerd announced that legislation to enforce university apartheid would be introduced in the "very next session of Parliament"—what MacCrone was signalling was his determination to ensure an inclusive stand by the two 'open universities'.[20] That was precisely the goal that the new SRC and its Academic Freedom Committee were aiming at. Headed by Gunther and Ada Bloomberg, a COD member, the Academic Freedom Committee was specifically set up to politicise students against university apartheid, and to mobilise their protest action, by way of placard demonstrations outside the City Hall, the Railway Station and at Clarendon Circle, and other newsworthy ventures. But the intention all along was that protest action should not be confined to students. The goal, which was ultimately realised, was to build up a University-wide consensus for a collective protest, which would be far more dramatic in its impact than any purely

student protest. In this process MacCrone proved a pivotal figure. With Sutton on the sidelines, MacCrone emerged as the key link between Council and Senate on the one hand and students on the other, developing a powerful *rapport* with the students themselves. Where student leaders, liberals as well as those on the left, went beyond MacCrone was in their recognition that protest against university apartheid was not an end in itself but part of a wider campaign against the apartheid regime. "The defence of learning in South Africa", the *Witwatersrand Student*, edited by Ada Bloomberg, declared, "is simultaneously a campaign to arouse public opinion against the Nationalist Government and the evils it has wrought".[21]

Verwoerd's announcement in mid-September served to galvanise every constituency within the University, with the academic staff taking a particular lead. The whole experience of the 1950s, together with the increasing recruitment of Wits graduates to the staff, had given the academic staff an altogether more liberal leaning. This was a process the campaign against university apartheid was to intensify. A spread of academics, among them Professors J.S. Marais, Errol Harris and G.H.L. Le May in addition to MacCrone in the Faculty of Arts, Len Samuels and Anne Welsh in the Faculty of Commerce, and Dr Phillip Tobias at the Medical School, were passionately involved in the effort to maintain the 'open' status of Wits, and the sense of their support was crucial to the SRC. Welsh, the daughter of the University's Chancellor, Richard Feetham, was particularly important, keeping her father abreast of thinking among both academic staff and students.

At the beginning of October 1956, the Lecturers' Association, presided over by Dr Walter Hesse, set up an Open Universities Vigilance Committee, and under its auspices a statement in support of the maintenance of the 'open universities' collected 256 signatures from members of the academic staff, including almost two-thirds of the professors. On 16 October 1956 the Vigilance Committee sponsored a meeting of representatives from the Senate, Lecturers' Association, Convocation, the SRC, and the Students' Medical Council to form the Open Universities Liaison Committee as a 'ginger' group to co-ordinate protest action and organise co-operation with UCT. For this latter purpose Professor Le May was despatched to Cape Town in November, and within the space of weeks formal co-operation was on the agendas of both the UCT and Wits Councils.[22]

Accompanying the moves initiated by the Lecturers' Association, a special meeting of Council was summoned, and it agreed to ask the Minister of Education, Arts and Science to receive a deputation "to discuss the admission of Non-European students to this University". Dr F.E. Kanthack, Anderson's successor as chairman of Council, Sutton and MacCrone constituted the deputation.[23] When the Minister made it clear to the deputation that the Government intended to legislate for university apartheid in the forthcoming session of Parliament, Council agreed at its meeting of 14 December that Wits and UCT should stage a joint conference in early 1957 "with the object of producing

a reasoned statement of our belief in the value of open Universities in South Africa". While the UCT Council passed a resolution declaring its opposition "in principle to academic segregation on racial grounds", the Wits Council based its stand more directly on the principle of university autonomy by asserting its opposition "in principle to legislative enforcement of academic segregation on racial grounds".[24]

Within Council, Sutton was evidently greatly perturbed about the prospect of the University itself being drawn into protest politics, but Feetham, who, as a member of Council, began playing a more active role as Chancellor than any of his predecessors, and MacCrone took the initiative and insisted on the need for the University to register a dignified but 'emphatic' protest against legislation that would prohibit Wits from admitting black students. For them the essential autonomy and freedom of the University was at issue; in the oft-repeated phrase of Dr T.B. Davie, the former Principal of UCT, "the four essential freedoms" of a university—"to determine for itself on academic grounds who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught, and who may be admitted to study"—were at stake.[25] Having witnessed the Nationalist juggernaut in action in removing 'Coloured' voters from the common roll, those in Council and on the academic staff who urged a principled stand held few illusions about their ability to force the Government to retreat. Professor J.S. Marais, as chairman of the Open Universities Liaison Committee, conceded there was no prospect of victory, but the principle could not be allowed to go by default.[26]

The opposition to the Government's legislative proposals to enforce academic apartheid proved wide-ranging. It encompassed all the English-medium universities; NUSAS, which drummed up massive international support and which was re-joined by Fort Hare SRC in the belief that it was "the most urgent need of the day ... for students of different races and political beliefs to unite to fight the University Apartheid Bill"; the ANC, which denounced the 'intellectual kraals' the Government was designing for blacks; the parliamentary Opposition, which engaged in a 'dogged' defence of the 'open universities' in the second reading debate of the Separate University Education Bill; the South African Institute of Race Relations, which sent a memorandum to all MPs and the press in support of the 'open universities'; and the Black Sash, which staged a vigil outside Parliament. The two 'open universities' themselves, co-operating with one another for the first time on an issue of significance, demonstrated a remarkable degree of solidarity.

The highlight of their co-operation was the organisation of a joint conference, consisting mainly of senior academics and representatives of the two Councils, in Cape Town in January 1957; its outcome was the book *The Open Universities in South Africa* based on papers presented at the conference. Compiled before the details of the Government's legislative proposals were known, the book was essentially a statement by the 'open universities' of their vision of a university in a multi-racial society, and a declaration that the "legislative enforcement of academic segregation on racial lines" represented "an unwarranted interference with university autonomy and academic

freedom". The central contention of the book was that: "The open universities believe that the policy of academic non-segregation provides the conditions under which the pursuit of truth may best be furthered; and that it has promoted interracial harmony and understanding. They are convinced that to impose academic apartheid upon them would deprive the South African community as a whole, both white and non-white, of a service which has proved beneficial". As contended in the book, it was not only the right but also the "plain duty" of the 'open universities' to resist the Government's interference, for otherwise they would "become party to the betrayal of their own ideals and traditions". While the book recognised that "the crux of the matter" was that apartheid was being forced on the universities by legislation as "an integral part of an over-all policy", an extended critique of that policy, and the threats it posed to freedom more generally, was studiously avoided; the decision taken at the plenary session of the conference was to focus on the university issue. Again, while the virtues of racially mixed universities and academic freedom were extolled, the book's guiding principle was university autonomy; there should be no more compulsion on 'closed universities' to become 'open' than on 'open universities' to become 'closed'. It was a matter of "free choice".

Published by the Witwatersrand University Press at the end of February 1957, *The Open Universities in South Africa* was directed at 'right thinking' South Africans and, more particularly, overseas opinion. Within South Africa, the book was given extensive coverage in the English-medium press, receiving the *Rand Daily Mail* award for book of the year, and overseas it was distributed to every university in the British Commonwealth, to Commonwealth governments and a range of individual academics. Common room debate among academic staff in response to the book, and the position adopted by Council, focused on the central importance given to the principle of university autonomy in the defence of the 'open universities', as distinct from the broader principle of academic freedom or a critique of the very policy of apartheid itself, but the consensus at the time among academic staff was that university autonomy provided the most pragmatic line of defence. For the student left, however, *The Open Universities in South Africa* amounted to no more than a document of appeasement.

Following the Cape Town conference, Council set up its own Open Universities Liaison Committee to maintain contact with UCT and to advise Council on future action; its members were Feetham, Sutton, and the University's representatives to the conference. With the publication in early March of the first draft of the Separate University Education Bill, the committee swung into action. It approached the Minister to receive another deputation from Wits, and arranged for MacCrone and Sutton to go to Cape Town to brief the parliamentary Opposition; it requested the Principal to call a meeting of all members of the academic staff; and it recommended that Council adopt a powerful resolution condemning the Bill.[27] The resolution prepared by the committee, and approved by Council at its meeting on 25 March 1957 for submission to the Minister, not only protested against the Bill's interference with the University's autonomy, but also subjected

the proposed new university colleges for blacks to scathing attack. They were dismissed as inadequate, and the Government's draconian measures for their control were represented as an insult to the very notion of a university. Feetham, Sutton, Glyn Thomas and MacCrone were deputised to see the Minister, and authorised at their discretion to publish Council's resolution after the interview with the Minister. The preparation of a petition to the Speaker and House of Assembly was also approved, and authority given to release to the press the resolution passed by a special general meeting of academic staff held on 22 March condemning the draft Bill as "an attack, unparalleled in the history of South Africa, upon University autonomy and academic freedom".

To symbolise the unity of the University in opposing the Separate University Education Bill, a well-orchestrated corporate academic protest, the first of its kind in South Africa, was staged on Wednesday 22 May 1957. With the formal blessing of Senate, which cancelled classes for the occasion, it took the form of a solemn procession of protest, with well over 2 000 academic staff, students and members of Convocation marching six abreast, in their gowns and university blazers, from the University to the City Hall behind a single banner: "Against Separate Universities Bill". According to the *Transvaaler*, some 100 of the students in the march were "Natives, Coloureds, Indians and Chinese". Sutton, who had an especial distaste for protest marches, did not participate, but he addressed the procession before it set out. At the City Hall it was addressed by MacCrone. "Let no one have the temerity or be so foolish as to dismiss this public demonstration as a mere futile gesture", he declared. "It has cost all of us real effort to engage in this kind of public demonstration." He added: "We shall obey the law when it becomes the law but we will never accept it. We will continue to maintain our claim to be an open university, whatever changes may be enforced upon us by law".[28]

According to *The Star*, police, armed and in uniform, watched the proceedings, which were recorded by four different kinds of photographers—local and overseas pressmen, newsreel photographers, television cameramen, and the Special Branch of the South African Police. Similar protest marches by Fort Hare and UCT followed.

The idea of staging a 'dignified' protest march through the streets of Johannesburg had originated with the staff/student Open Universities Liaison Committee, which together with the Academic Freedom Committee of the SRC had been co-ordinating protest activity since the conclusion of the 1956 academic year; that activity included a major public protest meeting in the Great Hall on 7 December 1956. With the publication of the first draft of the Separate University Education Bill and the beginning of the 1957 academic year coinciding, strenuous efforts were made by the SRC and the Academic Freedom Committee to fully politicise the student body on the issue; the mobilisation of the campus was seen to require persistent engagement.[29] At the annual general meeting of students on 15 March the motion of Magnus Gunther and Henry Eigalis rejecting the Bill was passed by 524 votes to 74, and during the Academic Freedom Week that followed MacCrone addressed some 2 000 students at the swimming pool on the implications of

the Bill. However, the remorseless nature of the campaign on campus sometimes threatened to prove counter-productive. A ceremonial burning of the Bill on the Great Hall steps arranged for Friday evening, 29 March, was broken up by a group of some 30 students using home-made tear gas-bombs, and the special general meeting of students called for 11 April to give its support for the proposal for an academic procession of protest by the whole University attracted fewer than 500 students. At the end of the day, the two great set-pieces, the march itself and the petition to Parliament, attracted the support of over 2 000 students each, about half the student body. In the view of the Academic Freedom Committee of the SRC, the campaign initiated in September of the previous year had, for the time being, reached a fitting climax, and together with the international protests engineered by NUSAS was at least indirectly responsible for the Government's decision to postpone enactment of the separate universities legislation. The main objectives had been achieved, "namely of uniting the University against the Bill and thereby of forming the solid basis for the magnificent national and international support received".[30]

1959

After the University's evidence to the Select Commission had been entirely ignored – as MacCrone expressed it in a favourite phrase of his, "we might as well have saved our breath to cool our porridge"– De Wet Nel introduced the Extension of University Education Bill in Parliament for enactment in the next year. In all quarters, it was accepted that its passage was only a matter of time because of the Government's substantial majority; the Government even began building operations for the new universities before the Bill was passed. Council's response was to decide to close the University for a morning during the second or third reading of the Bill and stage a General Assembly, comprising all the official constituencies of the University, Council, Senate, academic staff, students and the executive of Convocation, to re-affirm the University's adherence to the cause of the 'open university'.[31] In contrast to the march through the streets of Johannesburg in demonstration against the Separate University Education Bill, the University's corporate protest against its successor was to be an essentially internal affair: a General Assembly staged in the Great Hall as a symbolic statement of principle.

For the student leadership, the continuing protest against university apartheid was inevitably far more wide-ranging and ambitious than that. Through NUSAS, the SRC was linked into both a national and an international campaign of protest; NUSAS again went to great lengths to drum up international support, in the effort to bring international pressure to bear on the Government and reassure the English-medium universities that they were by no means isolated in their protest. It had been said, B.J. Vorster, the Deputy Minister of Education, Arts and Science, sniffed in Parliament, that 296 universities had protested against separate universities, but it had all been orchestrated by a NUSAS

person called Rubin, the son of Senator Leslie Rubin.[32] Domestically, the chief intent of the campaign against the Extension of University Education Bill was to politicise students against apartheid and the whole principle of racial segregation. At Wits, some of the old fractures between student leaders and the University authorities consequently again showed up as the liberals in control of the SRC now articulated an activist philosophy on the role of students in society, and also challenged the practices of racial discrimination on campus. As the apartheid screw tightened, and as they moved to give expression to their own principles of non-racialism, the liberals adopted positions and a programme of action not unlike those advocated by the left at the beginning of the decade. While uniting with Council and Senate in the defence of university autonomy against invasion by the state, the student leadership parted company in seeking to mobilise political opposition to the apartheid regime itself and in challenging the continuing practices of racial discrimination within the University, notably the quota system in the Medical School, the exclusion of blacks from the Dental School, and the overall policy of social segregation.

Following the University's protest march of May 1957, and with a view to catering for the return of Fort Hare to NUSAS, the SRC clarified and codified its position on student involvement in political matters by adopting a motion prepared by Gunther and Henry Eigalis, who was more centrist in his position. The omnibus motion was designed to appeal to a range of constituencies, but at its heart was the declaration that the SRC opposed the Government's whole policy of apartheid. After declaring its attachment to the idea of a truly 'democratic' system of education and to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, so as to reach out to a black constituency and establish a link with the ANC, and after affirming that the SRC should engage only in those aspects of life that had particular reference to the student, so as to pacify apolitical students, the motion asserted that education could not be separated from the society in which it took place; consequently the SRC declared its opposition to the policy of apartheid as it rendered impossible any democratic system of education in the country. Nevertheless, the motion continued, the SRC would continue to refrain from identifying with any political movement or party and would "play its role in the total life of the community by defending and seeking to implement all factors relating to the basic principle of academic freedom and academic equality". While including a clear statement of opposition to apartheid, the motion contained several qualifications to mollify those who thought the SRC was venturing well beyond the legitimate arena of student involvement. For the left, it was precisely these qualifications that undermined the efficacy of the motion, and more radical statements were suggested by Ada Bloomberg and Ismail Mahomed. What they proposed was a clear-cut assertion that "Under conditions such as prevail in South Africa, student activities cannot be restricted solely to the University but must be directed also against all discriminatory racial measures in South Africa". With the defeat of their amendment by 10 votes to 6, the left sufficiently approved of the original motion to allow it to be

carried 16-0, 3 members abstaining. In effect, the Gunther/Eigalis motion represented the ultimate liberal statement of the fifties on student participation in politics, and at the annual NUSAS Congress in Cape Town in July 1957 it was adopted, with some modification, as the official NUSAS standpoint. It was a formula that allowed NUSAS to reincorporate Fort Hare in its ranks and ward off suggestions emanating from nationalist-minded African students at Wits for the formation of a National Union of African Students, as well as to retain the 'moderate' elements in its support.[33]

As Kimberley's Vice-President, the strongly Catholic Gunther was installed as SRC President following the September 1957 elections, and under him the SRC moved to challenge the operation of the quota system at the Medical School, the exclusion of blacks from the Dental School, and social segregation on campus. While the University's Council centred its case against the enforcement of university apartheid on the principle of university autonomy, the SRC advanced more positive notions of academic freedom, the elimination of discrimination in the university sphere, and the development of a 'democratic' system of education.

The attack on Council's long-standing policy of social segregation was launched in September 1958, immediately after the Government had introduced its new Extension of University Education Bill in the House of Assembly. On 9 September, on the motion of Gunther and Richard Goldstone, the SRC voted 15-0 to set up a five-man commission, under Goldstone's chairmanship, to investigate all forms of segregation at the University. It was a move that infuriated Sutton and MacCrone. As they made clear in meetings with the SRC executive, they considered it tactically wrong to provoke white opinion at a critical juncture in the University's fight to retain its 'open' status, and they totally disapproved of the commission's approach to individual members of Senate to comment on Council's policy. With regard to the operation of the quota system in the Medical School, the University administration bluntly refused to provide the detailed information requested by the Students' Medical Council, which had been deputed to look into the matter. The Registrar, Mr A. de V. Herholdt, curtly advised the SMC that he was not prepared to discuss the University's admissions policy with any student organisation.[34]

At a time when a premium was placed on maintaining a united front against the Government's plans for university apartheid, the SRC's challenge to the University's own policies of discrimination was clearly divisive. What the challenge reflected was the growing impatience of the SRC liberals at the compromises and contradictions inherent in the University's position, and also a growing irritation at what they considered was an unimaginative, reactionary administration.

As already manifest in the Holloway Commission Report, and in the debates over the Separate Universities Bill, the University's own discriminatory practices opened it up to the charges of inconsistency and hypocrisy; when not accusing Wits of promoting social equality among the races, Nationalist spokesmen denounced the University for its hypocrisy in discriminating against blacks and denying them the full benefits of student

life. In its treatment of the Wits protest march of May 1957, the *Tranvaaler* had skilfully played on these themes.[35] Fort Hare's intervention at the 1958 NUSAS Congress, furthermore, had driven it home to the SRC that defence of the principle of university autonomy was in itself highly problematic; complete autonomy meant that universities were then free to practice discrimination, as was indeed the case at all South African universities, Wits included. The standpoint adopted in the SRC position paper prepared by Gunther's successor, John Shingler, and Richard Goldstone, was that the Wits SRC's policy "has been and is now" that universities had the right to decide, in terms of their autonomy, who should be taught, but that no such decision should be made on the basis of race, religion or sex.[36]

While the SRC's challenge to discrimination and segregation at Wits proved highly divisive, the proposal from two of its members to allow the Afrikaanse Studentebond (ASB) to establish a branch on campus was exploited by the liberals on the SRC to unify student support behind them. In a referendum on 17 June the SRC motion to deny the ASB a branch on campus, on the grounds that the organisation was "not open to all students irrespective of language, colour or creed", was carried by an overwhelming majority.

By resorting to the device of a referendum, the SRC quite consciously avoided the prospect of a stormy mass meeting on the issue of ASB recognition. Because of the rowdiness – or "belligerent heckling" as the left wing weekly, *New Age*, described it – that often accompanied mass meetings, the SRC had become wary of staging them.[37] At the annual general meeting of students in the Great Hall on 11 March 1958, at which "a gigantic clique of jeering engineers" demonstrated their "notoriety at all such gatherings", the SRC was unable even to put its motion affirming full support for the ISC – an embarrassment that thoroughly amused the left. Afterwards, *Wits Student* commented that the increasing "autocracy of our badge-wearing, office-bearing brethren" was a direct consequence of the fact that "every time the SRC calls a meeting, a bunch of puerile, noisy, semi-literates, gathered together in a protective herd, yell and scream their ugly little pinheads off and effectively prevent business being done".[38]

In mobilising the campus against the Extension of University Education Bill, the SRC and the Academic Freedom Committee, chaired by Clive Rosendorff in 1958 and Saul Bastomsky in 1959, made effective use of small discussion groups, held in residences and individual Faculties, as well as centralised events such as exhibitions, symposia and public lectures. At the beginning of the 1959 academic year Professor Phillip Tobias addressed a special meeting of the student body. With the Great Hall crammed to overflowing, and a noisy crowd at the back heckling and hurling toilet rolls, two motions were carried by overwhelming margins. The one reiterated the student body's opposition to the "proposed closing of Wits"; the other condemned "the nefarious activities of a

former student of this University, who informed the Security Branch of the South African Police of the *bona fide* activities and ideas of students, expressed both in public and private conversation".[39]

The effect of the notorious 'blonde spy' affair of 1959, in which Patricia Lefson confessed that she had been providing the Security Branch with information on "trouble makers" at Wits, was to give an additional edge to the student campaign against the Extension of University Education Bill, but also to inject a new element of anxiety into student politics. Ever since the Nationalists had taken power in 1948 the police had monitored protest action by Wits students—at demonstrations, police cameramen were frequently more prominent than those from the press—and such intimidatory tactics were undoubtedly effective; they made students wary about participating in public protests, fearing in the main that police identification would lead to the loss of their passports. In September 1957 the confession of a Rhodes University student that he had supplied the Security Branch with information about the political activities of staff and students raised a new spectre; that a network of police spies was operating at the English-medium universities. The discovery of a 'blonde spy' at Wits seemed to confirm that this was so. The state's security apparatus, it was now sensed, was sufficiently well developed in its structures and far-reaching in its activities to enable it to penetrate student and liberal groups as well as the country's major left-wing and African nationalist organisations, notably COD and the ANC.

On Thursday 5 March, after the special general meeting that had denounced the 'spy', and despite the presence of a formidable contingent of Special Branch detectives and uniformed police, close on a thousand students staged what was then the biggest student demonstration in the history of Wits. Several hundred students lined the traffic island in Jan Smuts Avenue holding a 300 yard long iron chain "to symbolise the chaining of university freedom", and others carried banners and posters, one reading "Keep Wits open – but not to spies". The next day a banner-waving, slogan-shouting crowd of about a thousand students marched through the streets of central London to protest against university apartheid.[40]

The protest against the Government's plans to impose university apartheid reached its climax in April 1959 with the second reading debate of the Extension of University Education Bill in the House of Assembly. Inside the Assembly the Opposition mounted a 'spirited' resistance for the three days assigned to the debate, forcing a continuous 26 hour session on the last 'day' before the Government imposed a guillotine on all further discussion. Outside the gates of Parliament students and the Black Sash maintained a constant vigil in pouring rain. On Thursday, 16 April, Wits staged a solemn day of protest against the Bill. At 8 in the morning white and black students joined in erecting a huge banner on the columns of the Central Block that reaffirmed Wits's commitment to the idea of a university open to "men and women without regard to race or colour" and dedicated its members "to the maintenance of our idea of a University and to the restoration

of the autonomy of our University"; photographs of the banner were published around the world. Inside the Great Hall was held, for the first time in the history of Wits, a General Assembly of the University, presided over by the Chancellor, the Hon Richard Feetham. On the platform sat members of Council and Senate as well as lecturers and members of the Convocation executive, all in academic dress. The main body of the Hall was packed to capacity with students. The sole speaker, Professor I.D. MacCrone, gave a valedictory address on the struggle to prevent the enactment of university apartheid. The assembly then stood as the Principal, Professor W.G. Sutton, read the Re-affirmation and Dedication. After a minute's silence was observed, the assembly was dissolved, and the University closed for the remainder of the day.[41]

END OF AN ERA

An era ended at Wits with the passage of the separate university legislation in 1959. This was symbolised on 17 April 1961 when Richard Feetham, as Chancellor, unveiled a plaque outside the Great Hall to record, in both English and Afrikaans, the Dedication affirmed by the University two years previously:

> We affirm in the name of the University of the Witwatersrand that it is our duty to uphold the principle that a university is a place where men and women, without regard to race and colour, are welcome to join in the acquisition and advancement of knowledge; and to continue faithfully to defend the ideal against all those who have sought by legislative enactment to curtail the autonomy of the University. Now, therefore, we dedicate ourselves to the maintenance of this ideal and to the restoration of the autonomy of our University.

The practical manifestations of the end of the 'open university' era were by then already evident, with African enrolments, in particular, plummeting.

At the time of the 1959 legislation, the total 'non-white' enrolment at Wits was 297, up from 201 at the outset of the decade. In the same period, white enrolment advanced from 4 025 (including over 600 ex-volunteers) to 4 813. Within this context of limited growth in 'non-white' numbers, from 4.7% to 5.8% of the total student population, African enrolments were static – seventy three in 1950 and seventy four in1959 – and there was a decline in the absolute number of 'non-whites' in the Medical School, from 109 to seventy three. Both features were a direct consequence of the opening of the Natal University Medical School for blacks in Durban and the imposition of racial quotas at the Wits Medical School. Indians remained the largest single 'non-white' population group at Wits, with Indian enrolments increasing by about a third over the decade, while Chinese and 'Coloured' enrolments both doubled, from thirty to sixty and from sixteen to thirty respectively. Apart from a tripling of the 'non-white' enrolment in the Faculty of Arts, to almost a hundred, the new growth points in the 1950s were Engineering, with

eight Chinese, six Indian, three African and one 'Coloured' student by 1959; Architecture, with eight Chinese students; Commerce, with nine Chinese, nine Indian, three 'Coloured' and two African students; and BA Social Work, with seven Africans, four 'Coloureds' and one Indian. While the African students in the Medical School continued to be recruited from all around the country, and a substantial contingent of the Chinese students came from Kimberley, the overwhelming majority of 'non-white' students by 1959 were drawn from the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV) complex, what is now Gauteng, in marked contrast to the pattern a decade previously. As a result of the Government's clampdown on the granting of travel permits, and the opening of the Natal Medical School, Indian students from Natal were virtually a thing of the past; so, too, were blacks from outside the country's borders.[42]

In terms of the number of graduates produced, Wits had by the end of 1961 awarded the grand total of 377 degrees to 'non-whites'; 207 to 'Asians', 153 to Africans and seventeen to 'Coloureds'. Neither the University of South Africa (UNISA), which provided for degree study by correspondence, nor UCT kept a full account of their 'non-white' graduates, but comparative figures for all institutions through which 'non-whites' could obtain degrees are available for the years 1956 to 1961. In that period 670 Fort Hare students obtained degrees, UNISA awarded 650 to 'non-white' students, Natal 350, UCT 298, and Wits 127. Wits' main contribution throughout was in training 'non-white' doctors. Half the total of degrees awarded to 'non-whites', and eighty four of the 153 degrees awarded to Africans, were in Medicine.

Once enacted, the 1959 legislation was complied with by Wits. Whereas the University of Natal, Durban, which ran separate classes for blacks, earned the wrath of the Government by exploiting a 'loophole' in the initial regulations governing 'non-white' access to the 'white' universities to continue to admit certain categories of 'non-white' students without ministerial consent, Wits was meticulous in following Government guidelines. In terms of the legislation, 'non-white' students already at Wits were permitted to complete their degrees, but for new students the policy adopted by the University, after consultation with the relevant government departments, was that it would admit only those 'non-white' students who had obtained special ministerial permission, with the University itself undertaking to process the applications for permission. The University's heavy dependence on the state for its finances, and a long tradition within the Wits administration that the law of the land should be scrupulously observed, precluded any real prospect of the University seeking to defy or circumvent the law. Furthermore, as the legislation made individual students, rather than the universities themselves, liable for prosecution for infringement of the law, it was felt within the Wits administration that it would be unfair to expose students to the possibility of prosecution.

The Government's enforcement of the 1959 legislation was phased in over two years. For 1960, 'interim' provisions allowed all 'non-white' students wishing to attend a 'white' university to apply for ministerial permission; for 1961 ministerial discretion was itself

severely restricted. In terms of the proclamations issued in October 1959, no 'non-white' person not yet registered as a student at a university might attend a university, other than the University of South Africa or the Medical School of Natal University, as a student without the written consent of the Minister of Bantu Education, in the case of Africans, or the Minister of Education, Arts and Science, in the case of "other non-white persons".[43] For Africans, that consent was usually not forthcoming. In 1960 the Minister of Bantu Education, W.A. Maree, turned down 186 of the 190 applications he received from Africans to enrol at 'white' universities, including eighty four of the eighty five who had applied to attend Wits. The majority were turned down on the grounds that "parallel facilities" already existed for them at the black university colleges, but the eight who had applied to enter engineering at Wits were rejected as employment opportunities for them allegedly did not exist. A "qualified Bantu engineer", the Department of Bantu Education advised, could only expect to be employed by a Bantu authority, and at present their need was not for engineers but for "Natives with qualifications in agricultural surveying".[44] For 1961 the Government streamlined the system. The Minister of Education, Arts and Science let it be known that he would not grant permission to 'Coloured' or Indian students to enter the Faculties of Arts, Science and Commerce at the 'white' universities, and in terms of Proclamation 434 of December 1960 the Government listed a long series of courses that Africans would be precluded from taking at the 'white' universities, thereby removing any further discretion on the part of the Minister.

Feetham, as Chancellor, urged the Registrar's office to continue to bombard Pretoria with 'non-white' applications even though "it may be a labour of Sisyphus", but the office itself had already tired of processing 'hopeless' applications. Prior to the issuing of Proclamation 434, D.A.Duggan, the chief clerk in the Registrar's office, wrote to the Secretary for Bantu Education that "It would be of great assistance to the Administration of the University and would eliminate much administrative work, if it were known that the Minister does not propose to admit Bantu students in 1961".[45] Because Proclamation 434 included in its list of courses from which Africans were excluded at Wits all the preliminary courses for any of the professional degrees, the Wits administration reached the conclusion that Africans were now completely barred from attending the University at the undergraduate level and there was consequently "no point" in applying for ministerial permission on behalf of Africans.[46] That this was perhaps too "restrictive" an interpretation was later recognised by the Faculty of Engineering and the Vice-Principal, Glyn Thomas. "The fact that the University has submitted no applications for Bantu persons for permission to commence undergraduate studies in any Faculty", Thomas wrote in confidence in December 1963 to P.R.D. Germishuis in the Department of Bantu Education, "is due to our interpretation of the Proclamation as excluding every Bantu applicant. Have we gone wrong in this? Is it possible that the Proclamation was not intended to be quite so far-reaching?". As a consequence of the approach, and a new-

found desire in the Department of Bantu Education to train engineers "for the Bantustan areas", a scheme was worked out whereby BSc graduates from the black university colleges might transfer to Wits as postgraduate students for the purposes of completing the engineering course.[47]

In the meantime, the number of African students at Wits had fallen sharply, from seventy four in 1959 to 21 by 1963, and ten by 1965.[48] In 1961 the African Medical Scholarship Trust Fund (AMSTF), run by the SRC, was dissolved, after having raised £70 000 (R140 000) in slightly over a decade; its surplus funds were handed over to the South African Committee for Higher Education (SACHED), founded in 1959 to assist black students not wanting to attend the 'tribal colleges' to obtain UNISA degrees. By the time of its dissolution, the AMSTF had enabled sixteen African doctors to graduate from Wits, with five remaining to complete their degrees.[49] That an era was indeed over was firmly underlined by the closing at the end of 1963 of Douglas Smit House, the residence at Milner Park, the site of the University's campus, built specifically for African students at Wits.

The number of 'Coloured' students at Wits declined greatly, down from thirty in 1959 to eleven by 1965. By comparison the decline in the number of 'Asian' students, Indians and Chinese, was marginal, but the overall statistic masked the fact that Chinese students, normally readily granted ministerial permission, were continuing to expand. Between 1959 and 1965 the total number of 'Asian' students dropped from 193 to 177, but by then there were almost as many Chinese in the University as Indians, 85 as against 92.

CONCLUSION

If Wits was basically helpless to resist the imposition of university apartheid, it was within its power to articulate a cohesive defence of the 'liberal' university in an apartheid society. However, the 'official' standpoint of the University, as defined by Council, fell far short of any compelling assertion of liberal values. In the final analysis, a defensive-minded Council rooted its stand against university apartheid in the narrow principle of university autonomy, a principle that enabled it both to protest against enforced university segregation, and simultaneously to maintain at Wits practices of racial discrimination. Even the book, *The Open Universities in South Africa*, which was the work of senior academics from Wits and UCT, as well as representatives of the two Councils, gave more weight to the principle of university autonomy than that of academic freedom. At the time F.S. McNeilly, lecturer in Philosophy at Wits, derided the emphasis placed on the rights of universities. In an article in *The Forum* in November 1956, following the petition organised among Wits academic staff, he wrote:

> Once more the liberal forces of South Africa are on the march. Once more they have raised the wrong flag, and grappled furiously with imaginary enemies... The Government have a right to consider themselves badly done by. They deserve to be attacked frontally for their superstitious policies, and not merely to be deafened by a clamour of irrelevant bleatings. The 'non-Europeans' of our universities have been badly done by also. We shall miss them if they go, and they will miss us. But it is their rights that should have been defended, and not the imaginary rights of universities.

While the student leaders at Wits attempted to rid the University's'official' policy and position of its limitations and contradictions, their main objective was to ensure that all constituencies at Wits were brought together in corporate protests against university apartheid. In this they succeeded.

Whatever its limitations, the campaign in defence of the 'open universities' against university apartheid was an important chapter in the history of opposition to the apartheid regime. The international dimension of the campaign was central to the emergence of sustained international opposition to the apartheid regime, and domestically it transformed NUSAS into a formidable protest organisation. In the 1960s, with the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress, and the Communist Party all banned, it was left to the liberal organisations, NUSAS, the Black Sash, and the Liberal Party itself, to maintain the voice of protest.

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University Reform, Academic Performance and the Crisis in Education at the University of the Western Cape and other Historically 'Black' Universities in South Africa[1]

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This article is in five sections. Sections I-III examine some assumptions about the nature of the academic project in the context of university reform, restate some well-known but unresolved issues in university education, and assess the crisis in academic performance at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and other historically 'black' universities in South Africa. Sections IV and V offer proposals for reorganizing the university system, and addressing the problem of academic performance at historically 'black' universities (HBUs) with specific reference to UWC in the post-apartheid era.

INTRODUCTION

Few South African universities would dispute the need to eliminate racial, ethnic, class and gender inequalities, and to promote educational policies that reflect the country's multicultural but primarily non-western society. Problems arise when these objectives are pursued without democratic representation from all constituent groups in the academic community; without considering fully the educational and non-educational (including the fiscal, demographic, historical, social and cultural) issues involved; and without assessing the impact of a given course of action on the citizenry outside the university.

For the HBUs in particular, the one educational issue that cannot be ignored in the quest to fulfil these objectives is that of academic performance. It is a crucial issue for UWC which has been an inspiration and in some ways a role model for other universities once designated for Africans, Coloureds and Indians. UWC is one of the fastest-growing HBUs in South Africa. It epitomizes the problems – even though they are not of the same magnitude experienced at sister universities. Nevertheless, there is virtually a conspiracy of silence in terms of public debate on issues concerned with the academic performance of students enrolled at these institutions.

It *is* an issue in private debate.[1] Academic performance was a standard topic in informal discussions with UWC staff in 1994. The writer spent that year teaching in the Department of History and began to examine the complex question of academic performance at university level in the new South Africa.[2] It was also a major concern at five other

universities (three of them designated HBUs) and one technikon, where the writer lectured during the year. This article arises from a genuine concern for the academic project in South Africa. There is nothing new in the issues it raises, but very little has been done to address them in the historically 'black' universities. The article is also written for academic staff, who seem to be the least organized and least empowered constituency when compared to other vested interest groups – students, workers and administrators – in South Africa's universities. Lower and middle-ranked staff in particular need to take a more active role in decision-making when it comes to issues of academic performance.

The writer lives in Houston, Texas, a culturally diverse, metropolitan city of roughly three and a half million. It is served by four universities, some with branch campuses, a variety of graduate and professional institutions, and a community college system. Despite various state-mandated entrance and exit exams, and a plethora of internal advising, academic placement and mentoring programmes, academic performance remains a major problem at the university level.[3]

South African universities can learn something from academic life in Houston and other culturally diverse communities in the United States. Historically white and black universities can move from a homogeneous to a heterogeneous learning environment, embrace cultural diversity and maintain – even improve – academic performance. But if issues of academic performance are not addressed, there will be little racial, ethnic, cultural or intellectual diversity and the university's overall academic standing will suffer. The U.S. can afford to maintain universities that graduate first, second and third-class students. Can South Africa afford to maintain its differentiated university system?

I. INTERROGATING SOME ASSUMPTIONS IN THE DEBATE ABOUT THE REFORM OF SOUTH AFRICA'S UNIVERSITIES

Numerous assumptions concerning the nature of the academic project undergird the debate about university reform in South Africa. Some critics assume there are different conceptions of this project in western and non-western environments. Other critics assume academic standards are relative, and experiences outside South Africa are not necessarily relevant to South Africa's academic problems. They say the historical and social background at UWC and other historically black universities, moreover, must be taken into account in reforming the university system. They assume the problems involved in educating disadvantaged students at HBUs can not be compared with the problems faced by historically white universities (HWUs). Perhaps, too, one should distinguish between teaching and research institutions at university level in South Africa.

These assumptions need to be interrogated. Critics who suggest, for example, that one can distinguish between western or European and non-western or African concepts of higher education are being naive as well as ahistorical. UWC and the other HBUs are flawed clones of South African models that were themselves based on models adapted

from Europe. There are no universities in Africa that are of purely African origin. Indeed, the vast majority of universities in the western and non-western world are derived essentially from models that are European in origin, but these models have been altered in varying degree by the cultures outside Europe that imported them.

This is a major reason why educational realities in other culturally diverse countries are relevant to educational realities in South Africa. In a fundamental way, they share the same academic project. The lessons – negative as well as positive – to be learned from universities outside South Africa (and of necessity these must include universities in other African countries) may provide South African universities with some of the medicine they need to rid themselves of diseases inherited from the apartheid past.

Educationists may not be able to agree on academic standards, but western and non-western scholars actively involved in research within established academic disciplines are in broad agreement on the criteria to be used in setting academic performance levels for their students. One cannot ignore the past at UWC and other historically black universities, but local experiences don't have to be decisive in determining a future role for South Africa's HBUs. They were created by the apartheid regime to produce a subaltern class of semi-educated functionaries who would service the 'homelands'.[4] Most HBUs became sites of struggle during the 1980s (and a few long before the 1980s), but this *political* project must give way to the *academic* project of the 1990s if these universities are to be reconstituted as *universities* in a post-apartheid South Africa. The historical experiences of HBUs – enshrined as they are in the loyalties and traditions of another era – should not be decisive in determining their role in the new era.

There is no academic merit in the argument that South Africans should distinguish between teaching and research institutions or between lower-level and higher-level institutions at *university* level. Unfortunately, those who hold this view include some senior planners and policymakers at UWC: in effect, they argue that HBUs should graduate students who are not necessarily competitive in terms of their qualifications and should not be subjected to competitive market conditions in seeking jobs. Such arguments are a form of racism because they would maintain the discrimination process by graduating students who do not have the tools, as it were, to succeed in their chosen careers. These critics are suggesting that it is all right to turn out sub-standard graduates, protect them from having to compete for jobs in an open market and guarantee employment for them – presumably in their own disadvantaged communities.[5]

Another assumption that needs to be challenged is the meaning of the term 'disadvantaged'. It is commonly assumed that virtually all black students in HBUs are disadvantaged, but criteria used to define the term are by no means codified or applied equally to all student populations. A significant proportion of the students at UWC, for example, come from the black middle class. Few if any assessments have been made of disadvantaged students at HBUs from the lowest ranks of the economically disadvantaged population.

A corollary assumption in this debate is that the burden of responsibility for university reform rests with the academic and administrative staff. Little attention is given to *student* responsibilities. Let me illustrate this point by using UWC's History Department as an example. The staff as a whole consists of published scholars on the cutting edge of contemporary research in historical studies, especially in African and South African history, which is in a state of paradigmatic change. The lecturers are continually rethinking their approaches to history, and revising and updating their lecture and tutorial notes. They take their teaching responsibilities very seriously, and they truly care for their students. But they will be the first to admit that the students are not coping with the material. Poor language, mathematical and analytical skills, poor study habits, poor attendance at lectures and tutorials continually undermine the efforts of the staff to develop the academic potential of their students.

The problem of student competence takes on added significance when the debate shifts to the issue of academic standards and the almost universal perception that the black universities in South Africa maintain much lower academic standards than the white universities.[6] To their credit, individual activists and many departments at HBUs have tried to establish high academic standards for their disciplines. But they also cite significant inconsistencies in the assessment of academic performance because of 'affirmative' marking,[7] verbal intimidation, malicious damage to personal property and, occasionally, even physical attacks against staff by students. Indeed, one lecturer exclaimed, "the students refuse to accept exclusion and threaten quite seriously to destroy any individual or institution that tries to expel them".[8]

Staff incompetence and low morale – especially in some HBUs – undoubtedly contribute to the problem. Academics from the universities of the North West (Bophuthatswana), Transkei and Zululand were fairly vocal on the subject at the 1994 Association of University English Teachers of Southern Africa (AUETSA) conference. They called for "less sympathy and more teaching" from their colleagues. They cited teachers who "lack dedication", "don't cultivate a sense of learning in their students" and "pass [students] for convenience." One head of department at a former 'homeland' university wrote disparagingly to the author: "I am having an incredibly tough time with my staff, who just won't lift a finger to do anything after years of repression and mental turpitude." Another senior academic noted, "the quality of university teachers is uneven ... people with honours degrees and, at best, masters were made professors; they are still there, behaving like school masters ...they encourage no initiative on the part of students, encourage no independence of mind, no debate".[9]

Debates at this level, however, go nowhere when those in positions of power have not established educational objectives for individual faculties or for the university as a whole. Few procedures are in place to measure the competence of the academic staff, and even

fewer are in place to measure the competence of the students-entering and exiting students, beginning, interim and advanced undergraduate students, and, in many cases, even graduate students.

II. UNRESOLVED ISSUES IN EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Numerous issues need to be addressed if serious attention is going to be given to developing and implementing a coherent set of educational objectives at UWC and other historically black universities. Five of these issues will be addressed briefly here.

First, South Africa does produce first, second and third-class university graduates. The historically white Afrikaans-language universities (Stellenbosch, Pretoria, Potchefstroom, Orange Free State, Port Elizabeth and Rand Afrikaans University), which were associated with the apartheid state, and the white English-language universities (Cape Town, Witwatersrand, Natal, Rhodes), which gradually and tentatively positioned themselves in constitutional opposition to the apartheid state, remain in the first tier in the post-apartheid era. The universities established for Coloureds (Western Cape) and Indians (Durban-Westville), and perhaps out of nostalgia Fort Hare (the country's first nonracial university, which under apartheid was reduce d to a homeland college for Xhosa-speaking Africans), are perceived to be in the second tier. The universities established for Africans under apartheid (Transkei, Zululand, University of the North West,Venda, University of the North, the autonomous branch of the University of the North at QwaQwa in the Free State, the Medical University of Southern Africa (MEDUNSA) and Vista University) remain in the third tier. Eleven of South Africa's twenty two universities ten were designated for blacks (Africans, Coloureds and Indians) under the old regime, and their status as *universities* has always been contentious.

Second, future funding for the HBUs is a major problem, especially for those universities established in the former African homelands – the so-called TBVC states of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (which was allocated the University of Fort Hare). These universities did not have to submit information to the SAPSE system-the formula that determines central government funding to South Africa's universities – and therefore they cannot be compared directly with other universities subsidized by the South African government. In theory, these homeland universities were subsidized through their previous governments. In practice, they were funded directly by the South African government, and for many years the funds they received were *far greater* than the funds available to the white and black universities through the SAPSE system.

The homeland universities will lose up to two-thirds of their present funding if they are forced to abide by the subsidy formula applied to South Africa's other universities. The collapse of these universities – plagued as they are by allegations of widespread corruption (including fraud, theft of university property, use of government funds for personal profit, nepotism, abuse of power in the hiring, promotion and performance of

academic and administrative staff, inflated salaries, free housing, free cars and other questionable benefits[11]) – would have serious political ramifications for the present ANC-led government of national unity, even though some critics would welcome this solution as a fitting end to apartheid in higher education.

The HWUs currently receive about two thirds of their funds from the central government (apparently they meet the World Bank's goal of universities generating thirty percent of their income from non-government sources)[12], but the HBUs are almost totally dependent on government aid. Since tertiary education in the foreseeable future will receive even less money from this source than it has in the past, it is interesting to note the conclusions of a report prepared for UWC's Centre for Education Policy Development on the funding and financial status of six HBUs.[13] The data were compiled solely from SAPSE tables, since financial statements generated by the universities concerned were not available. The six universities examined were Zululand, Vista, Durban-Westville, UWC, University of the North, and MEDUNSA..The analysis indicated that only MEDUNSA was seriously underfunded. The rest appeared to be reasonably well funded, although the data were somewhat ambiguous in the case of UWC and Zululand.

If these preliminary results are confirmed by a more comprehensive study of government funding in historically black and white universities, we may be surprised to find that there is already a reasonably equitable distribution of *state* aid to these universities. Such a study may also raise significant questions concerning how the money allocated to HBUs was spent in the past.

The HBUs cannot count on funding from other sources – from the students themselves or from the private sector. Although tuition fees are relatively lower at HBUs, alarming numbers of black students at both black and white universities have refused to pay their fees.[14] Protests have disrupted several campuses, as these students demand the right to a free university education. In addition, private-sector enterprises apparently see no future in helping to fund these universities, presumably because they can draw increasingly on black students recruited from the white universities. If this is a valid description of the funding problem HBUs are already facing, they have a major credibility problem.

Third, the traditional dichotomy between historically white and black universities is becoming more and more blurred as white universities increasingly reinvent themselves as multicultural universities.[15] As one might anticipate, the English-language universities are in the forefront of this development. For example, black students (African, Coloured, Indian) comprised a majority of entering students (fifty two percent) for the first time at the University of Cape Town in 1994, and they were spread pretty evenly across the faculties: fifty-nine percent of first-year science students, sixty percent of first-year engineering students, forty-seven percent of first-year medicine students and forty-four percent of first-year commerce students were designated black. Overall, forty-four percent of the undergraduate and twenty-eight percent of the graduate students at UCT are now black. UCT's student body (undergraduate and graduate) was thirteen percent black in

1982 and thirty-nine percent black (twenty one percent African) in 1994. More than seventy five percent of the African students at UCT were educated in the segregated and sub-standard Department of Education and Training (DET) system.[16] Witwatersrand, Natal and Rhodes are well on their way to becoming multicultural universities.[17] The Afrikaans-language universities have been much slower to respond to the challenge of cultural diversity, but the language, ethnic and racial composition of the student body is changing. English is used increasingly inside and outside the classroom,[18] and the percentage of black students in some Afrikaans universities has risen sharply in the last two years.[19] Once the historically white universities are truly heterogeneous and they have a critical mass of black alumni – this will probably happen in the English-language universities within five years – these alumni will demand quality education. Unless the HBUs do something *very soon* to raise levels of academic performance, the black middle class will put their money and their political clout in the universities that were once reserved for whites.

Fourth, the rationalization of resources and the promotion of cultural diversity is hampered because there is little academic planning among universities within specific regions of the country. Each university in the Western Cape region, for example, seems to establish academic-planning priorities with little regard to what the others are doing. Apparently no university has drafted a document that provides an overall assessment of its academic strengths and weaknesses, and so far very few teaching and research priorities have been negotiated between the three universities and two technikons in the region.[20]

Academic planning within the university, moreover, is sometimes done piecemeal and without significant input from the academic staff. The UWC Senate academic planning committee's proposals for a new staffing formula and planning matrix was a case in point during the 1994 academic year. This exercise was concerned with how to allocate scarce monetary resources more efficiently and effectively, but it looked at only one component of the university community, the academic staff. The proposals were heavily criticized, because they were prepared without consultation with the academic staff and without regard to other issues that impacted directly on the university community. These issues ranged from the needs of the students to the inadequacy of a wide range of goods and services (from library resources to computer technicians). Staffing formulas cannot be divorced from decisions about allocating scarce resources to support other components of the university community.

Academic strengths and weaknesses should be assessed and key problems identified before new staffing and academic-planning procedures are adopted. If science is to be a priority at UWC, for example, the university may have to fund new departments and dramatically increase financial support for an already capital-intensive faculty. The academic skills of entering students in science subjects, moreover, are especially weak, and there are serious problems in assessing the academic performance of advanced students.[21]

Have administrative planners compared UWC's science facilities, its staff and students with UCT and Stellenbosch? Have they calculated what sacrifices will have to be made just to gain financial parity with science faculties at these universities? Jonathan Jansen in a recent study highlighted gross distortions in research activity during the late 1980s between UWC and its white sister universities in the Western Cape. UWC ranked far behind UCT and Stellenbosch in funding, in the "establishment of prestigious academic programmes or departments," in the number of graduate students and research institutes (especially in the natural sciences), and in the quality of academic staff as measured by the number of research publications. Jansen concluded that UWC had "little capacity" to make a contribution "to the scientific and technological development of a new South Africa," and there can be no doubt that this scenario is even worse in the other HBUs in the 1990s.[22]

The last issue-and a focal point of this study – concerns the problem of academic performance in a culturally diverse environment. I am especially interested in policies which historically white and black universities are implementing with regard to student admission standards, testing procedures, academic bridging and enrichment courses, English-language skills, mathematical literacy, computer literacy and related issues. So-called 'white' universities like UCT – with entrance standards perceived to be high – have instituted testing procedures and academic support programmes for their disadvantaged students. Universities like UWC – with entrance standards perceived to be low – have virtually no testing facilities, and academic support remains little more than a pilot project for disadvantaged students.

The issue of academic performance is a matter of urgent concern for historically white universities. At UCT, for example, there are more than 70 part-time and full-time academic staff associated with the Academic Development Programme for disadvantaged students. Some staff are located in the ADP and cognate units, and other staff (generally through joint appointments) are attached to various disciplines in the faculties of arts, science, commerce, architecture, engineering and medicine. Twice a year (in October and December) educationally disadvantaged applicants who would otherwise not be eligible to enter UCT are invited to write tests in English at sixteen centres throughout the country. Students wishing to enter science-related faculties are also invited to take a mathematics test.[23] The decision is voluntary, and about two thirds of the 3 000 or so DET applicants to UCT write the tests. Once they are marked, recommendations are forwarded to the faculty deans, who examine the test scores and make the final decision on admitting students. Depending on the results, students are placed in a special English course (English for Academic Purposes), and generally also enrol in faculty bridging courses. ADP students are monitored closely, and their university results and graduation rates are considerably higher than those of African students from DET schools who meet UCT's admission requirements and are not in the programme.[24]

Rhodes University, in a pamphlet sent to all new students, spells out its version of a Foundation Programme that effectively extends the university's three-year undergraduate degree to four years: "It is in the interests of *all* students that the standards of our degrees be maintained – nobody wants a degree that is not respected world-wide. Rhodes University has set up foundation programmes in commerce, science and arts, in which under-prepared students may select a mixture of standard ('full') courses and special *foundation courses*, designed to prepare them thoroughly for other standard courses that will follow." Students admitted to these faculties who do not meet minimum requirements are urged to plan for four-year degrees based on their faculty's Foundation Programme.[25] Foundation courses have now been developed in various faculties in all the white English-language universities.[26] Ever-increasing numbers of students (some white as well as black) are moving to four-year degree programmes, and a few faculties have even managed to subsidize those obliged to take catch-up courses in the first bridging year of an effective four-year degree.

Establishing testing procedures and bridging courses for disadvantaged students entering the university is only one measure of academic performance. Other measures would establish minimum standards of admission and performance *within* the chosen discipline, assess the academic performance of *intermediate* and *advanced* students, establish *minimum* performance levels for required courses in *cognate* disciplines, and require minimum *exit* standards for all graduating students. In my opinion, academic performance is also linked to other issues confronting HBUs relating to student morale (including the conduct of students on and off campus), staff morale, insufficient technical and staff support, curriculum revision, use of library resources and unregulated enrolment.

One hopes the problem of academic performance will generate more attention from policymakers, especially those involved in the National Commission on Higher Education. The commission needs to consider a *radical* reordering of priorities and resources to address this problem – especially at HBUs.

III. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AT UWC

While UWC claims to be an open-enrolment university, a perception widely held by its students, staff and administrators, the normal ticket for admission is possession of a matriculation exemption certificate.[27] Even this version of open admission is faulty. A true open-enrolment policy would be one in which *all* students possessing matric exemptions in *all* communities in South Africa had an equal chance of studying at UWC. But it would appear that no HBU has an admissions policy that is *designed* to produce a culturally diverse student body. As at other HBUs, moreover, a majority of entering students at UWC now graduate from former DET schools, where standards are extremely low.

UWC has virtually no mechanisms to regulate the flow of students entering the university, and departments are not allowed to turn away students who want to take their courses. This means no academic department (except for a few professional programmes) has entrance standards, and there is no possibility of planning for student enrolment from year to year. The failure rate in many departments is fifty percent or higher in the first and sometimes even the second year. This is a wasteful, somewhat arbitrary, and rather cruel system of assessing academic performance.[28]

The problem is compounded by the fact that enrolment has soared in recent years, and UWC's undergraduate student population is moving towards parity with the white universities in the region, but there has been no comparable increase in facilities and equipment or in the academic and support staff.[29] In addition, there has been a shift in the composition of the student population at UWC. Significant numbers of Africans (mainly Xhosa speakers) from DET schools began entering the university – designated for Coloureds under apartheid – and they constituted about fifty percent of the undergraduate student population in 1994.[30] Tensions between African and Coloured students at UWC are increasing – as are tensions between African and Indian students at Durban-Westville, where the composition of the student body is also changing rapidly. The issues – rarely raised in public – will be difficult if not impossible to resolve without a major reform of the university system.

UWC's graduation rates, like those of other HBUs, remain low. As enrolments have risen each year, moreover, the percentage of graduating students has dropped. The problem can be illustrated by referring briefly to graduation rates for full-time (presumably first-time) students entering the Faculty of Arts between 1988 and 1990. The Arts Faculty traditionally has more students than any other in the university. There were 1 071 full-time B.A. students registered in 1988, of whom 299 (27.9 percent) completed the degree in three years and 433 (40.4 percent) in five years. Enrolment rose to 1 515 full-time B.A. students in 1989, of whom 269 (17.8 percent) completed the degree in three years and 371 (24.5 percent) in five years. Enrolment rose again to 2 400 full-time B.A. students in 1990, of whom 224 (9.3 percent) completed the degree in three years (figures are not available for 1993 or 1994 to obtain the five-year total, but it is estimated that 14 percent of the 1990 class will graduate in five years). These were also years in which significant numbers of African students from DET schools began to enter UWC.[31]

UWC has been unable and is probably unwilling to provide academic development programmes that meet the needs of the majority of its undergraduate students. For example, the administration so far has not introduced – much less imposed – English-language and conceptual skills courses at first-year level, even though an increasing majority of its students are non English-speaking Africans from DET schools. So the burden rests with the departments.

To illustrate the scope of the problem: The writer taught English-language skills to *graduate* students in the Department of History at UWC in 1994, and only seven of twenty honours students passed an English-language grammar, punctuation, spelling and style test. A standardized test was selected that is administered to second-year students (many of whom come from families where English is not the home language) in the School of Communication at the University of Houston. The pass mark was dropped by ten percent, questions with an obvious American cultural or language bias were omitted, and students were given twice as long to complete the test as American students. Only two students would have passed if the original pass mark had been adhered to. Obviously, this test is not definitive, but the results do point to a serious problem in language competence.

It is significant in this context that AUETSA devoted three sessions at its 1994 conference to English-language competence in South Africa's universities. Black academics at this conference cited the poor language competence of their students and maintained that "English as a second language [in school] often means second-class language teaching".[32]

The Department of English at UWC has undoubtedly done more to address this problem than any other department, but the staff has not yet convinced university authorities to support a foundation year course in English that would be mandatory for all entering university students. The Department has such a course, developed in conjunction with the Academic Development Centre, which is entitled English for Educational Development (English 105). In addition, it had a mandatory writing programme (English 101) for its own first-year students, but the course has been dropped. The main beneficiaries apparently were selected *third-year* students who were trained in the course to be the teachers! English second and third year students may approach the Writing Centre for help, but no formal tuition in writing at an intermediate or advanced level is undertaken in this department.

UWC's Academic Development Centre (ADC) – in contrast to its counterpart at UCT – has only eight permanent staff (two of whom have been seconded to other units within the university) and thirteen contract staff. The ADC is funded from sources outside the university, and there are nowhere near as many staff members as are needed to service the departments. The ADC does not have the financial and human resources to provide meaningful academic support for the vast majority of disadvantaged students, and the situation apparently is even worse at other historically black universities.

The ADC also has numerous critics, who focus on what it actually does with the limited resources available. Some lecturers complain that ADC staffers are interested only in studying the problem, and students in ADC classes are used as "guinea pigs"for researchers. One critic claimed the ADC wanted to "impose a strategy ... in remedial education and get departments to accept it". A History Department committee report about an ADC-Writing Centre policy document noted: "the WC [Writing Centre] has no

intention of becoming a dumping ground for student problems. It therefore concentrates on those students who already show some degree of writing proficiency". The committee had no choice but to advise that history students be referred to the Writing Centre only "at the end of the first semester of the second year and to select only those students who, according to lecturers and tutors, have a chance to pass, provided they get extra help".[33]

Poor academic performance unquestionably affects perceptions of insiders and outsiders about the university. UWC staff (black and white) preach the rhetoric of open enrolment and of catering to the disadvantaged, but if they can afford it they will usually send their own children to historically white South African or overseas universities. They walk a fine dividing line between issuing grades they think the students deserve and passing them to avoid being harassed. Many concerned staff at this institution privately acknowledge that their students have little hope of competing on anything like equal terms with students (black and white) attending historically white universities even in an affirmative action-oriented job market.

IV. A PLAN TO CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN HWUs AND HBUs AND TO ESTABLISH A THREE-TIERED SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa's university system will not make a complete break with the culture of apartheid until it is reorganized in a manner that addresses the political, social and economic distortions engendered by apartheid. In attempting to meet this objective, the National Commission on Higher Education should propose one university system for each region of the country. Existing universities would be reorganized as campuses of one regional university-one for each of the country's nine regions. The autonomy of the new regional universities to govern their own affairs would be guaranteed, and English would be the medium of instruction in all regional universities.

Academic performance cannot be separated from other fundamental issues that explore, as Jansen has put it, "the meaning of transformation in the university of the 1990s".[34] A regional university would be empowered to make decisions on questions like (a) financial equity and transparency between campuses, (b) the funding of students who cannot or will not pay for their own university educations, (c) the deployment of financial and human resources, and (d) the rationalization of existing academic and non-academic goods and services between affiliated campuses. A regional university would be mandated to establish procedures to develop (a) a culturally diverse student body on all campuses, and (b) a new culture of learning that moves from confrontation to cooperation in addressing educational issues of concern to a culturally diverse community.[35]

The Western Cape could be a role model in the reorganization process. It has one English-language and one Afrikaans-language HWU, and one HBU that once relied mainly on Afrikaans and now relies mainly on English as the medium of instruction. The

three campuses of a future University of the Western Cape are in close proximity to each other, and to a limited extent they have already embarked on specific cooperative projects. Hopefully, past memories and traditions that made these universities sanctuaries of power or sites of struggle would fade as the names of the former autonomous universities were dropped (in favour of the University of the Western Cape at Cape Town, Bellville and Stellenbosch, respectively), the academic population became truly diverse, and new academic loyalties were forged.[36]

Such a transformation in the way South Africa's universities are organized, however, will not succeed unless the lowest-ranked universities – all HBUs – are deprived of their status as universities. A university that caters to all students *with* academic potential is not the same as a university that declares itself to be open to all students *regardless* of academic potential. In my opinion, more than half of South Africa's HBUs are in the second category, and many cannot be salvaged as universities. Critics will disagree about which HBUs should be decertified as universities, but it seems to me at least four should be placed immediately in this category – Venda, University of the North-QwaQwa branch, Vista and MEDUNSA. Four others of marginal status – Transkei, Zululand, North West and the University of the North – will require major changes if they are to survive as campuses of a future regional university.[37]

The second and third tiers of the proposed three-tiered system would consist of (a) the present technikons, and (b) multi-layered, two-year community colleges (CC) – a new educational institution for South Africa. CCs constitute one of the major success stories in the U.S.A. higher education, and the system has been adopted successfully in a number of other countries.

CCs serve local communities, and they must fulfil a variety of functions. They might offer terminal diplomas or even two-year degrees to students seeking vocational or teacher training. They might provide post-matriculation courses for students seeking to upgrade academic skills for eventual transfer to a technikon or university. They might provide continuing education courses for individuals in the community who have specific interests but are not necessarily interested in acquiring a diploma or degree. They might provide literacy-training courses and matriculation courses for older-age students.

In other words, CCs could be the cornerstone in reforming South Africa's tertiary educational system. Since they would comprise the base of this pyramid-shaped structure, eventually there should be more community colleges than universities or technikons. A national plan for developing a community college system would undoubtedly receive financial and technical support from USAID, which has targeted community colleges as a primary area of need.[38]

The powers of technikons and community colleges need to be articulated with precision and in much more detail than in this article. Decertified universities, for example, might be reorganized as technikons, but the courses, diplomas and potential undergraduate

degrees should be in areas of specialization appropriate to the technikon's *mission*. Students receiving a technikon education, moreover, should graduate with skills that could lead to employment opportunities in the region where the technikon is located.

V. AN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE PLAN FOR UWC AND OTHER HBUs IN A NEW REGIONAL UNIVERSITY SETTING.

If South Africa's university system were reconstructed on a regional basis, *one* of every three campuses of each new regional university should be a former HBU. With specific reference to UWC in the Western Cape, an academic performance plan could address the following issues:

* *The four-year degree option*. UWC should establish as soon as possible its own version of a first-year Foundation Programme for students who do not meet university entrance standards – based on matric exemption results and on entry-level tests that measure English language literacy and numerate skills – to prepare them for university-level education. One should anticipate that most UWC students would be required to enter the Foundation Programme, which would effectively extend the undergraduate degree to four years.

Incentives should be provided to help cushion negative student reactions to a first-year bridging programme. For example, courses passed in the first year might constitute a partial credit towards the degree, and students might have the option to test out some modules. Individual departments and even faculties might establish bridging courses for credit for their students in the first year of instruction. These courses should be regarded as foundation courses, in which the issues to be addressed are interdisciplinary in terms of application – such as a course about social science research methods in the human sciences. But students in the Foundation Programme should not be allowed to take courses other than those designated for the first year of instruction.

There are clear political implications in this proposal, especially with students still conditioned by the culture of confrontation. It also has financial implications in terms of staffing, equipment and monetary support.[39] But there may be no other alternative if UWC is to remain an open-enrolment *university*.

* Counselling and testing for entering and exiting students. UWC cannot afford to maintain an open-admissions policy without preparing incoming students for a university-level education that will give them a reasonable chance of competing in the new era. It must begin by setting up enrolment procedures that adhere rigidly to deadlines when it comes to admitting students. These deadlines should be made early enough so that all incoming students can be evaluated in terms of language and mathematical skills and overall academic potential. The results of these tests should be made available in a timely manner to the heads of departments and faculties, who should have the right to turn away students until they have completed successfully the first-year bridging programme.

A counselling and testing unit should be created and personnel hired to staff it. A computer network should be installed and maintained to service the unit. The testing service would be responsible for a range of activities from processing tests (including computerized teaching evaluations, which should be made mandatory for all departments) to instituting measures to monitor the effectiveness of these tests. The counselling service would function as a career-guidance and job-placement centre for students. Among other responsibilities, it would coordinate the activities of companies sending recruiters to the university to interview students.

* *Academic development courses and evaluation procedures for beginning, interim and advanced students.* Essential skills are acquired most effectively when they are the responsibility of the academic departments; taught by academics in these departments; integrated into the course lectures, seminars and tutorials offered by the departments,[40] and maintained from the first to the last years of a student's undergraduate career.

New priorities should be established that focus on academic development, and resources channelled to the appropriate departments and units to ensure that comprehensive development programmes are implemented. The Academic Development Centre should be encouraged to focus its efforts on helping individual departments *train* instructors in academic development skills, and ADC staff should be subsidized to teach modules in every department in the university.

Academic development for *entering* students should encompass a wide range of skills. Priority should be given to English for all first-year students in conjunction with the English Department and cognate departments and the ADC. Other modules should examine reading and writing skills, study skills and library skills, including taking notes

in lectures, compiling research notes, organizing and writing essays, using styleguides, preparing for exams, and learning something about research ethics – especially when it comes to issues like plagiarism. Priority should also be given to upgrading mathematics skills and introducing computer skills to all entering students in conjunction with the mathematics, computer science and cognate departments. Numerous computer-assisted educational programmes could be employed in teaching these skills.

UWC might also consider a team-taught, first-year foundation course for credit that would serve to introduce the academic project of the university to beginning students. For example, the course might focus on key concepts and key contributions by thinkers in the human and natural sciences. Such a 'great minds' course would be a wonderful opportunity to introduce students to the contributions of non-western scholars and to the correspondence between western and non-western thought, past and present.

In a four-year degree programme, UWC should encourage individual departments to establish levels of performance (such as minimum first-year course marks) that students must obtain before they are allowed to proceed to second, third and fourth-year courses. Departments should be allowed to establish ceilings on student numbers – especially in the first and second years of undergraduate training – and they should require students to take prerequisite courses where needed to enter and advance within the discipline. Departments should also be encouraged to establish fourth-year exit performance tests (for example, an exam or an extended essay) that students must pass *before* they are allowed to graduate.

Students in some faculties should be allowed to take courses in other faculties that are presently off limits to them. UWC's Arts Faculty students, for example, are precluded from enrolling in gateway courses like Private Law I, Public Administration I and Business Economics I. UWC is much too rigid in prohibiting student access to courses across disciplinary lines. Students need opportunities to acquire new knowledge that may help them to find employment in a rapidly changing economic environment.

* *Transforming the curriculum.* The academic project will not be served by budget cutters who seek to lower costs by eliminating essential disciplines within the university. Ahmed Essop, deputy director of UWC's Centre for Education Policy Development, for example, has suggested that separate faculties of social science at UWC, Stellenbosch and UCT are "not necessary."[41] This misses the point. The question is not whether one or more social science faculties – or arts faculties for that matter – should be eliminated to avoid duplication. Many disciplines as they are presently organized do not address the questions that are being asked by contemporary scholars in our culturally diverse world.

The question is whether arts and social science disciplines should continue to be regarded as having distinct linguistic and analytical skills, theories, methodologies and parameters of study. The question is whether these disciplines – in terms of their assumptions, premises, conditions and contexts – are not undergoing similar paradigmatic crises in a post-Enlightenment, post-Eurocentric, post-colonial and, yes, a post-modern world. The question is whether we should formalize an arts-social science nexus, a single faculty with departments that truly reflect the new interdisciplinary and cross-cultural boundaries being constructed in the academy in other parts of the world.

Nothing in this article is not already under discussion. But amidst all the other problems UWC and other historically black universities face, many having little to do with the academic project, one can only hope that administrators will pay more attention to the fundamentals of living and learning in a *university* environment.

In the writer's experience, staff teaching in historically black universities are among the harshest critics of the present system. They face virtually insurmountable problems in making the academic project viable in their own institutions, and they understand only too well that South Africa's segmented university system is becoming entrenched. It is a system of privileged and underprivileged classes and castes that money alone will not change.

The proposals outlined above can be implemented, but university authorities must have the courage and commitment as well as the consent of government to carry them out. If South Africa's universities are to be transformed, the time to begin is now.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1.. For this reason, I have protected the confidentiality of several sources I contacted in researching this article. The sources are identified by job status and university affiliation only.
Source A (Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, UWC)
Source B (Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, UWC)
Source C (Academic Staff, Science Faculty, UWC)
Source D (Academic Staff, Science Faculty, UWC)
Source E (Administrator, Witwatersrand)
Source F (Administrator, Natal)
Source G (Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, North West)
Source H (Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, North West)
Source I (Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, Zululand)
Source J (Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, Rhodes)
Source K (Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, Transkei)
Source L (Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, Transkei)
Source M (personal communication, physician, Cape Town)
Source N (Academic Staff, Social Science & Humanities Faculty, UCT)

2. The first version of this article was read as a paper to members of UWC's Education Policy Unit, administrators and interested faculty in October 1994. The Education Policy Unit's agenda is to establish new educational guidelines for South Africa's ten 'black' universities, but academic performance apparently has not been a priority in their deliberations. In one article summarizing the EPU's project in 1994, for example, there was no reference whatsoever to academic performance. Argus, 21 August 1994 ("Inward eye on black varsities").
3. This is particularly true of the city's two public universities - the University of Houston and Texas Southern University.
4. In some respects - for example, the idea that HBUs "were supposed to produce teachers only" - this mission lingers on "in the minds of many teachers and students" at HBUs today. Source B (Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, UWC).
5. Cf. J. A. Simons (Botany), "Input to the education debate in South Africa," Faculty of Science Minutes, University of the Western Cape, November 1994:

> *There appears to be a growing belief that a democratic South Africa should not necessarily adhere to the commonly accepted 'Western' standards of university education. The arguments usually advanced are: that such standards may not be 'appropriate' to the redevelopment required in the country; that the country cannot 'afford' to maintain such standards (because they have largely been preserved for the white minority at the expense of the black majority); that given the present inherited state of schooling for the majority it is unfair to expect them to overcome years of poor schooling in a short time ... the first two arguments exhibit the most pernicious form of racism imaginable. The proponents of these arguments are essentially saying that black South Africans should accept a second- or third- rate education because that is all they need.*

6. For a student view on this issue, see S. Hercules & A. de Jongh, "The academic implications of UWC's 'open admissions' policy," supplement to UNICOM, 10, 9 (1994). UNICOM is a news magazine compiled by students of the Department of Communication Science at the University of Zululand. The article was published originally in a UWC student journal.
7.. UWC's History and Sociology departments, for example, have targeted major discrepancies in the assessment of students by instructors. Fred Hendricks (Sociology) disclosed departmental correspondence dating to 1992 on this issue. e.g. Sociology Department discussion document, "Leniency, stringency, marking and standards," November 1992; F. Hendricks & D. Winterbach, Letter to colleagues, 29 September 1994: "The difference between stringent and lenient marking had caused all manner of problems with the students who could easily identify the skewed level of expectation amongst lecturers." For the sciences at UWC, Simons, "Input to the education debate," and Sources C and D (Academic Staff, Science Faculty, UWC).
8. The intimidation factor is difficult to assess. These remarks are based on comments from academic staff at UWC, UCT, the North West and the Transkei, and one comment from a physician in private practice who has knowledge of the situation at MEDUNSA. As one academic, a head of department, put it: "student attitudes are a major consideration, because these [threats and occasional assaults] can heavily influence lecturers - the 'grade inflation' has a physical side." Sources N (Academic Staff, Social Science & Humanities Faculty, UCT), G (Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, North West), L (Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, Transkei), M (personal communication, physician, Cape Town).
9. Sources B (Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, UWC), G (Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, North West), H (Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, North West), I (Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, Zululand), K (Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, Transkei). All but one of these statements were made by African members of staff.
10. The University of South Africa, a correspondence university, was not included in the above list.

11. HWUs, of course, were not immune to charges of corruption during the apartheid regime – for example, in the questionable activities of certain privileged Afrikaans-language universities and in the employment of large numbers of unqualified and/or incompetent Afrikaans-speaking academics and administrators in the HBUs. The stories about endemic corruption at many HBUs, however, have become a litany in recent years. On this issue, virtually every person from an HBU whose opinions were sought for this article had a personal tale to tell.

12 The writer does not necessarily endorse the World Bank's educational initiatives, which have had a dubious reception elsewhere in Africa, but one can't ignore reality. The bank is already involved in various long-term planning projects in South Africa.

13. Mark B. Bunting, "The funding and financial status of historically black universities in South Africa. A background report," unpublished paper, Centre for Education Policy Development, April 1994.

14. The fee problem is partly, of course, a resource problem. University students in South Africa, in contrast to their counterparts in the U.S.A., do not have ready access to funding or employment agencies. And African students at HBUs, in particular, usually cannot depend on their families for financial support.

15. They really have no alternative, since there are now far more blacks gaining matriculation exemption certificates than whites. The 1993 figures (excluding the results of supplementary examinations): Africans (29 517), Coloureds (5 411), Asians (6 862), whites (27 030). Research Institute for Education Planning, Education and Manpower Development, No. 14 (1993), Faculty of Education, University of the Orange Free State (Bloemfontein, August 1994), 10.

16 W. Gevers (Deputy Vice-Chancellor) to Switzer 20 January 1995, with enclosures providing a demographic profile of student enrolment at UCT from 1992 to 1994. The figures were supplied by Jon File, UCT's academic secretary and a member of the National Commission on Higher Education.

17 The writer could not obtain comparable figures for other English-language universities before leaving South Africa, but administrators at these universities insisted in telephone conversations that their enrolment figures also reflected dramatic increases in the percentage of black students as a proportion of the student body. Sources E (Administrator, Witwatersrand), F (Administrator, Natal).

18 Prestige universities like Stellenbosch and Pretoria have launched recruiting drives to attract English-speaking students, and they advertise regularly in the English-language press. Dual-medium or separate English classes are now a fixture in all Afrikaans-language universities.

19 Of 56 061 full-time-equivalent students at the six Afrikaans-speaking HWUs in 1993, only 4 406 students were black (2 564 African) - a paltry 7.9 percent. But significant increases in the number of black students at these universities - except for Stellenbosch - did occur in 1994 and 1995. About 25 percent of the students at Pretoria and the Free State, for example, are now black, although most students are concentrated in the faculties of arts, humanities and social science. Few blacks in Afrikaans universities are entering the faculties of medicine, commerce, science or engineering. Gevers to Switzer 18 August 1995. Figures supplied by Jon File.

20 A small coordinating committee at vice-rector level, drawn from three universities (UWC, UCT and Stellenbosch) and two technikons (both in Cape Town), was formed in 1991 to consider various joint projects. The main one was the creation of a computerized library consortium for the region and an associated information literacy project to upgrade the resources of the poorer libraries in the consortium.

21 Sources C and D (Academic Staff, Science Faculty, UWC). For a perceptive critique of the problems encountered in mathematics training at UWC, for example, see L. Slammert & N. Baijnath, "Thinking about curriculum innovation in mathematics at UWC," unpublished paper, University of the Western Cape (1994).

22 The study focused on research activity at these institutions between 1986 and 1988. J. Jansen (ed.), Knowledge and power in South Africa: Critical perspectives across the disciplines (Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1991), Chap. 2. Some scholars are calling for radical surgery in the teaching and learning of science at UWC and other HBUs in South Africa. E.g. L. Slammert, "Science in transition: Science culture in the science faculty," AD Issues 2, 1 (July 1994): 14-16.

23 The tests seek to ascertain the student's potential in these fundamental skills rather than replicate the school-leaving exam. For background information, see "Alternative admissions research project: taking stock," unpublished report, UCT Academic Support (now Development) Programme, March 1993. The writer is grateful to Nan Yeld (ADP staff), who commented on this section.

24 UCT's Department of History could be a model of how one department has responded to the new era. Academic staff met with their counterparts at UWC, effectively redesigned the History 1 syllabus at both universities and initiated a new approach to the teaching of the course.

25 Rhodes University, Arts Faculty Minutes circulated to heads of departments, 13 October 1994.

26 This could be true of the Afrikaans-language universities as well, but I was not able to obtain information on this point.

27 Thus Renfrew Christie, Dean of Research at UWC, vehemently disagrees with UWC's open-enrolment claim: "By law, candidates admitted for degree studies must have a matriculation exemption ... UWC has never had an open admissions policy ... This place is closed to the overwhelming majority of the school-leaving population, and deliberately so." Christie to Switzer 4 November and 15 November 1994. UWC's admissions policy was revised slightly in 1989. Twenty percent of the applicants are selected to ensure that all disadvantaged groups are represented fairly in the student population. An attempt is made to achieve balances between urban and rural, male and female, African, Coloured and other disadvantaged applicants. All those with an "A" or "B" matriculation aggregate are also guaranteed entry under the 20 percent quota system. Mature-age applicants are also admitted without having to satisfy the matric exemption requirement. In addition, a few degree courses (such as dentistry) accounting for a small number of students have different entrance criteria. Interview with Stan Ridge, Director of Development and Public Affairs at UWC, 1994.

28 According to one source, 59 percent of first-time, entering undergraduates at UWC passed in 1989. Academy for Educational Development, "South Africa: tertiary education sector assessment," unpublished report for USAID, April 1992, Table 6.8 ("Undergraduate success rates in universities, 1989"). In the words of one outspoken critic: "We have to admit that we have accepted far too many students who have the most basic educative problems. To add insult to injury, we have failed to provide a supportive learning environment for these students ... Neighbouring universities [UCT and Stellenbosch] have creamed-off the best students for themselves ... and relegated UWC to an institution of almost uniformly ill-prepared students." F. Hendricks (Department of Sociology) to S. Ridge (Director of Development & Public Affairs) 10 June 1994, 21 June 1994. The writer is grateful to Fred Hendricks for allowing him to quote from these letters.

29 Undergraduate enrolment at the Western Cape's three universities in 1993

University	Total Enrolment	Black Enrolment	% Blacks
Cape Town	14660	5 070	34.6
Stellenbosch	14387	1215	8.4
Western Cape	12685	12491	98.5

Source: Givers to Switzer 18 August 1995. Figures supplied by John File

Educational authorities assumed parity in undergraduate enrolments between the three universities in the region would be reached in the next two or three years. Graduate enrolment in 1993 was estimated at 29 percent of the student body at UCT, 27 percent at Stellenbosch and no more than 10 percent at UWC.

Permanent academic/research staff (all ranks) at the Western Cape's three universities

University	1993 (% Blacks)	1994 (% Blacks)
Cape Town	752 (6.5)	702 (7.0)
Stellenbosch	857 (1.4)	772 (1.3)
Western Cape	528 (59.1)	471 (56.3)

Source: C. T. Verwey, P. K. Kibuuka et al., "Trends in higher education development, 1988-1995," unpublished report, National Commission on Higher Education, August 1995. Jane Hendry (UCT, Social Sciences & Humanities) supplied these figures.

30. This was a consistent, albeit unofficial, figure cited by several UWC administrators in conversations during the 1994 academic year.
31. University of the Western Cape, Academic Planning Committee, "The structure of the B.A. at southern African universities," unpublished report compiled by Klaus Menck (German Department) for the Faculty of Arts, February 1994. Figures for UWC's Faculty of Science were not available,but if anything the picture is even worse. According to Lionel Slammert (Department of Mathematics), only "a handful of students" in science are graduating within three years. His own figures for third-year maths indicate that two of 37 students are on track to graduate in three years. Personal communication, Lionel Slammert.
32. Sources G (Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, North West), I (Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, Zululand). Language competence is a major problem for most graduates from Fort Hare, for example, who enroll in Rhodes University's post-graduate Journalism diploma course. Source J(Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, Rhodes).
33. Source A (Academic Staff, Arts Faculty, UWC); Switzer interview with Fred Hendricks, 24 November 1994; History Department, "Report on the Writing Centre policy document," unpublished report, University of the Western Cape, 1994.
34. The quote is taken from J. Jansen, "A vision for university transformation in the 1990s," unpublished paper, n.d. The writer is grateful to Lionel Slammert for providing him with a copy of this paper.
35. Jansen's idea about developing "standards of engagement" with students and staff on curriculum, teaching and research issues is relevant to this discussion. See J. Jansen, "Standards-and other myths: the transformation of universities in South Africa," Academic Freedom Lecture, University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg), 19 August 1994.
36. In a similar vein, one could envisage other regional university systems. The University of the Eastern Cape, for example, could consist initially of three campuses at Port Elizabeth, Grahamstown (the present Rhodes University) and Alice (the present University of Fort Hare). Future sites for university campuses could be at East London (now a satellite campus of Rhodes University) and perhaps Umtata (the present University of Transkei).
37. It is the *universities* that have failed, not all academic units within these institutions. Indeed, individual departments may have performance levels for staff and students that are comparable to the HWUs in South Africa. They may have established teaching and research programmes, and perhaps outreach programmes with disadvantaged schools in their regions, that would be regarded as success stories even by international standards.
38. E.g. J. Jansen, "The 1992-1993 socio-educational survey: politics and education in the era of negotiations," unpublished report commissioned by USAID, January 1993, 19 (Section 5.1.7), 34-36. USAID's development strategies, like those advocated by the World Bank, have had an ambiguous impact on African development, but this major funding agency is already involved in projects for the new South Africa.
39. If the four-year degree option were to be made a priority at UWC, new sources of funding might have to be found. UCT, for example, obtained several million rand from the Independent Development Trust to help fund academic development, and in 1994 the Tutu Trust was given a huge grant to expand development programmes at universities in the Western Cape. USAID might look favorably on a Foundation Programme initiated by UWC.
40. To a limited extent this is happening at UWC in such departments as psychology and public health and in some science subjects.
41. Argus, 21 August 1994 ("Inward eye on black varsities").

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Educational Achievement and Interpretations of 'Difference' in Post-1990 South African Tertiary Education

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This paper is an analysis of verbal accounts on the educational achievement of black students at the University of the Witwatersrand. With the transitional period still characterised by continuing structural inequalities as well as imbalances in the South African school system, the study constitues an investigation of the social construction of educational achievement in a context of social inequality. Linkages between meanings attached to achievement and constructions of 'difference' in post-1990 in South African higher education are outlined. The analysis further attempts to trace connections between the construction of achievement in higher education and broader processes of political and social-economic legitimation and to assess what these might mean for change in South African higher education.

The recent change in the South African political order, which introduced a Government of National Unity with the African National Congress (ANC) as a majority party, is likely to raise even greater expectations about the role of education in facilitating the redistribution of wealth amongst South Africa's various social groupings. As has been the case elsewhere in the world, the idea of social change through education is a particularly appealing one. The appeal lies in a view of education as functioning to translate issues of distributive justice into matters not of colour, gender or class position, but of individual ability and effort, in the classroom and in the job market.[1]

Notions of individual ability and effort, however, become loaded in a context of competing societal interests. In fact, in South Africa, the role that education might have played in laying the basis for economic and other forms of equality was reversed to achieve the opposite. At the hands of the Nationalists, in particular, education was designed to work optimally for the advancement of the white sector of the population, and within this sector, had an additional favourable bias for males and the middle classes. Through its promotion of white interests at the expense of black interests, the South African education system, in conjunction with other inequalities in the society, has visited onto matters of individual ability and effort 'differences' that muddle conceptualisations of performance and achievement.

The admission of black students to white universities brings such 'differences' to the fore and serves to confront conceptualisations of individual performance and achievement with two problems. Firstly, the circumstances of dysfunction and deprivation that, by the 1980s, had come to characterise 'Bantu' Education were likely not to have equipped African students who came through that system with the kinds of academic skills by which 'excellence' has come to be signified, especially in English-speaking white universities.

Secondly, the structural context of achievement is biased against black students since black students in white universities study and perform alongside students whose racial and class status places them at a considerable advantage in generating the kinds of resources (such as linguistic, material and psychological) that facilitate success at university, and in the mainstream of society. The entrance of black students to universities which have historically catered for an exclusive racial elite thus serves to accentuate not only deprivation in the school system, but also conditions of historical structural inequality.

The research study on which this paper is based sought to investigate staff and student views on issues of achievement pertaining to black students at the University of the Witwatersrand. Prompting exploration of this area were Academic Development Programme evaluation reports which point to a persistently high drop-out rate and low graduation rate of black students in the university. Another problem mentioned is that of low pass marks obtained by the majority of black students. These problems are shown to have persisted from the time black students were first admitted to the university in the early 1980s, to the present. For example, by the end of 1989, for the entire university, about 58% of the 1985 student intake had deregistered and 30% actually graduated. Moreover, "[about] 70% of the Africans who pass obtain thirds, 25% lower seconds, and 5% either upper seconds or firsts".[2] A follow-up study, tracking cohorts of students in the Faculty of Arts in the period between 1989 and 1992, suggests that these problems still persist.[3]

By virtue of constituting an analysis of verbal accounts on the educational achievement of students who are black and of low socio-economic status in a university which has historically catered for students who are white and predominantly middle-class, the research is a study of the social construction of educational achievement in a context of social inequality. As such, the analysis intervenes to tease out the network of meanings generated by constructs of educational achievement (such as ability, motivation and effort), and to develop some understanding of the manner in which such meanings feed into constructions of 'difference.' It is also an attempt to explore how these meanings articulate, not only with educational theory and practice, but also with broader political and economic concerns.

The significance of this exercise, for the macro-politics of a society grappling with issues of change, is that it attempts to capture the dynamism of change at the level of legitimation of interests. An analysis and understanding of structures of knowledge

underpinning legitimation and the social relations of power that influence the continuous shifting and reshifting of such legitimation is important, if the change process itself is to be assessed and comprehended.

At a micro level, the relevance is in highlighting how competing societal interests are reflected both in the articulations and activities of individuals or groups. In the case of this particular study, the analysis delineates links between articulations of educational achievement and constructions of 'difference' by individuals attached to a particular institution. The analysis, therefore, constitutes an exploration of where individuals within a South African university locate the role of their institution in the restructuring of education and in the realisation of a more equitable social order.

CHANGING POLITICS IN POST-1976 SOUTH AFRICA: CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE ACCOUNTS

To make it possible to begin to unravel linkages between constructs of educational achievement and the broader political and economic considerations that shape them, the accounts need to be viewed against a backdrop of certain political and educational processes in post-1976 South Africa.

The era following the 1976 uprisings ushered in a change in the face of South African politics. On one hand, it introduced a switch in the language of legitimation of Nationalist Party (NP) politics, in line with changes in its political agenda. Analyses indicate that under the pretext of creating change, the political strategy underlying this programme of political 'reform' was to tighten loopholes in the Apartheid system, rather than dismantle it, through movement away from crude to more subtle forms of discrimination.[4] The shift from overt to more sophisticated forms of discrimination implied that the conservative ends of the political Right could no longer be communicated in segregationist discourse. Instead, an invasion of the territory of the language of liberation politics became necessary and the NP's 'reform' agenda came to be couched in the progressive discourse of 'change.' On the other hand, the quest for a peaceful settlement prompted dramatic shifts in ANC discourse, from a position that could be clearly identified as ideologically left, on major issues such as socialism and nationalisation. This has been particularly evident in the period after 1990.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to elaborate fully on changes in the language of articulation of the various political positions on social change and education, from 1976 to the present. This area warrants analysis in its own right, in order to provide a holistic picture of post-1976 shifts in the legitimation of particular interests and the implications these have had for the restructuring of Apartheid education.

For the purposes of this paper let it suffice to point out that the set of social, political and economic constructs with which Apartheid education was justified, on the one hand, and those explicating the position of resistance politics, on the other, are no longer explicit and easily discernible. Analyses of discourse changes in educational policy formation[5]

demonstrate that there is no longer the comfort of neat and distinct patterns of discourse on which inferences and interpretations can be based, as was the case before 1976. These patterns have been somewhat obscured, and sometimes lost, in the replacement of old discourse by new and in the substitution of open discourse by coded discourse.

DATA COLLECTING METHODS AND ANALYSIS

The research reported here was conducted in the second half of the 1993 academic year.

Methodology entailed tape recorded in-depth, semi-structured interviewing of twelve staff members and nine second year students. Both sets of participants were attached to one of the departments of the Faculty of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand. Since the focus of the study was not so much on the number of people offering particular explanations as it was on the variety of explanations operating, this sample was regarded as adequate. The shortest interview lasted for about forty five minutes whilst the longest was two hours. The recorded data was then transcribed and subjected to analysis.

Analysis necessitated the utilisation of a framework that would throw some light on the manner in which the interconnection between education, politics and the economy is either constituted or disassembled in discourse. Discourse analysis, defined in this paper as the analysis of patterns of meaning which can be perceived in peoples' everyday utterances, seemed the most appropriate.

The formulation of discourse analysis informing my approach to the data draws on aspects of Hollway's[6] post-structuralist interpretative discourse analysis as well as on aspects of Therborn's[7] theory of the operation of ideology in power relations and social change. This formulation takes the following into consideration:

1) The competing systems of knowledge on education and educational achievement which have been generated in the historical processes of the formation of social groups or collectivities in South Africa, and the language used to communicate them. Further, the model takes cognisance of the manner in which discourse changes as intergroup relations change. Implicit in this formulation is a "... rejection of any version of discourse analysis, such as cognitive linguistics, that starts with the individual".[8] Rather, the term 'discourse' is understood as integrated in an analysis of the production of knowledges within societal power relations.[9]
2) A recognition of the "primacy of language and text (written or spoken) as the site for investigating social psychological issues".[10]

3) A theoretical understanding of the social that takes into account material reality and individual agency. This means a conceptualisation of the social as more than just a set of 'free-floating' discursive practices, which are neither pinned to their material base nor to the "...subject's knowledgeability about his/her fatal imbrication in discourse, and the very material consequence this has for action".[11]

To phrase these two tenets in terms of the practicalities of making sense of the research, the analysis was, firstly, informed by an account of discourse that recognises discourse as generated, first and foremost within what Therborn[12] refers to as "non-discursive social matrices." These are the internal social dynamics of societies and their modes of production. So, the accounts that the research participants gave were interpreted against a backdrop of knowledge systems that, implicitly or explicitly, arose out of the role that education was made to play in the creation of social groups as well as in their positioning in the structural economic arrangements of South African society.

Secondly, just as it is problematic to utilise notions of discourse that are stripped of their material base, it is equally untenable to view discourse as creating subjectivities without raising the issue of the subject as a conscious speaker and a conscious actor; in other words, the subject as not merely being created in processes of meaning making, but also as consciously involved in creating meaning and acting on it.[13] The framework, therefore, pays attention to the question of "consciousness", in relation to both researcher and the researched. This means that over and above being positioned in particular ways through discourse, and accounts being reflections of such positioning, both researcher and researched are seen as consciously involved in research as a process of making meaning.

From the above formulation, two aspects of meaning making become important for the analysis. There would be the set of meanings generated in the space between the researcher and the researched.[14] The researcher's 'characteristics' of being a black, female, ADP employee researching the academic performance of black students, were likely to generate particular images, metaphors and storylines around what her agenda was likely to be. These 'characteristics', as well as the language of the research questions, were likely to contribute to the shaping of what was said or was not said in the interviews. Due to limited space, this aspect of analysis will not be addressed in this paper. The other set of meanings would be contingent on history and societal relations and would make it possible that analysis, whilst focusing on the personal, still hold in view the wider historical, political and economic issues.[15]

4) With regard to questions of content validity as well as validity of data interpretation, the approach emphasises the way in which the social domain constitutes the individual, and implies that the information obtained from any participant is valid since that account is a product, although complex, of the social domain. If a specific analysis of domain is undertaken, the resultant interpretation will be valid without the support of statistical samples; in other words, without evidence that whole groups do the same.[16]

EXPLANATIONS GIVEN AND SOLUTIONS OFFERED: AN ANALYSIS OF THE ACCOUNTS

In the interviews, respondents were asked to comment on a number of areas. This paper deals with two. One covered the poor graduation rate of black students, extended to include the question of the drop out rate and low pass categories. The other comprised possible solutions to the problems and issues raised.

Elicited responses fell into three broad discourse categories which operated as frameworks for what was said. The three categories are :

1. Socio-political factors as explanation.
2. The context of learning as explanation.
3. Explanations positing the student as the problem.

For purposes of clarity, the format for presenting the findings is organised so that explanations delineating the same issues, albeit from differing perspectives, are dealt with under the respective explanatory category. Discussion of each of the three categories will comprise the following dimensions :

- An outline of the different perspectives that were given.
- Suggestions on what can be done about the problems and issues that were raised as explanation.
- Analysis of the ways in which achievement and 'difference' are constructed as well as their implications for change.

1. Socio-political factors as explanation

Several of the accounts constructed socio-political factors as of relevance in the understanding of educational achievement at university level. It was evident, however, that the specific manner in which social factors affect the learning of black students is understood in dissimilar ways. Consequently, whilst a common point of departure was

that problems of under-achievement amongst black students should be linked to the historical deprivation of black people in South Africa, differing opinions were expressed on what the source of this deprivation is and on what aspect predominantly explains under-achievement.

As far as the source of deprivation is concerned, some participants cited structurally based racial discrimination, whilst one person expressed it as primarily a phenomenon of class structure. The latter stated, "Race in this country...is closely associated with socio-economic class. Now if we look at a racially homogeneous country like Sweden, which is all white...we still find that people who originate from the working class, even if their measure of intelligence is high, do not attend university, do not want to go to university, are not prepared to put off learning and living for such a long time, so that any problem of race is confronted by socio-economic class."

In relation to what aspect of deprivation is conceptualised as the major explanatory factor, three discourses emerged. The first expressed deprived schooling as the predominant variable of explanation. The second highlighted the significant role of continuing conditions of inequality and oppression, inside and outside the university. The third implicated class and family values in success at university.

The deprived schooling discourse

From this viewpoint, the poor schooling that most black students have had, has not provided the basic skills necessary for university, such as grammatical comprehension and essay writing. One of the lecturers declared, "It's certainly got nothing to do with ability. It's certainly got to do with preparation in schools."

Interviews with students extended the notion of deprived schooling to go beyond what was learnt or not learnt in the classroom. They mentioned the adverse effects of deprivation in other school related areas, such as career counselling. For example, a student mentioned his haphazard choice of first year social science degree courses following his failure to qualify for entry into Medicine. As a result of lack of exposure to relevant information, he enrolled for one of his courses on the basis of having once heard that a neighbour who was at Wits had enrolled for that subject. He registered for yet another course on the basis of having met a schoolmate who was doing the same course at another university.

Also coming across quite forcefully in the interviews with students was the continuing impact of poor school education on university studies, even after first year. In the second year of study the effects of inferior education were felt most acutely in two areas, namely, language and workload.

Language related problems were linked to inadequate grounding in the English language in the school years. The experience of workload as almost overwhelming was seen to be a consequence of poor school training in independent material search, independent reading and in the handling of large amounts of work.

Participants mentioned bridging courses and the formal teaching of skills by ADP as solutions. Student solutions were evidently more oriented to the specific problems they felt were still plaguing them in their second year. They included English enrichment projects to help improve the quality of English, academic development at second year level, a more tolerant and less punitive attitude from lecturers and sensitivity to the needs of black students.

These suggestions notwithstanding, both staff and students expressed concern about the racist connotations that can be attached to bridging courses and academic development programmes. About academic development programmes a student said, "You did not see any whites there so some [students] did not want to go there." Students attending academic development programmes were also stigmatised as 'stupid'. "I think the image that is presented there is problematic." Further, some students felt that attendance of such programmes should be voluntary and should not be made compulsory by bursary schemes.

Discourses on continuing conditions of structural and institutional inequality

One of the students identified a complex of factors that, in her view, have a detrimental effect on student motivation. Firstly, job reservation for whites undermines the motivation of black students, "You go to university and study but there are no jobs." Secondly, a combination of disrupted schooling and inadequate family support culminates in an attitude of "What's the point of doing school work ?" The resultant lack of ambition, and work habits borne out of it, persist at university and manifest as "laziness." An elaboration on inadequate family support portrayed parents as not taking an interest in the learning world of their children and not providing inspiration for their children to proceed beyond Matric. "They might look at homework, but nothing further...They did not do it themselves, so it is not important to them."

One of the lecturers drew parallels between student failure and the "failure" of black academics within the institution. "Maybe we [the department] ought to see black students as failing, and black academics as far as I'm concerned...It's not only black students who are failing to move high up, it's faculty members as well...The whole environment confirms within their own minds that you can only go up to a certain point...By saying academics are failing I understand that over the years, time and again, there will be a black person in a vague position...[P]eople are not put in positions with a clear message that they have a long life, that they are on tenure track. So they are often at the mercy of a key player...you do the right things in terms of that person and you survive...It's easy to eliminate anyone

who is seen as having a potential to rock the boat, who is not being gentle with the process...So that's the context in which I see student issues, that there's a lot wrong beyond individual students who are not making it."

Solutions that were offered are oriented towards seeking change at structural, institutional, family and personal levels. Specifically mentioned were changes at the political level so as to bring about equality of opportunities in the job market, culture change in the university to make it more inclusive, the active engagement of parents in their children's education and a change of attitude in students.

With regard to university, a fundamental requirement for the effective learning of students from oppressed backgrounds is culture change. It was evident that the proposed change is targeted at what is seen to be the reproduction of inequality and oppression within the university. "We need support services which will not wait for an "individual" victim student who has failed one test or two tests. I think we need programmes which will immediately create a certain culture which is conducive for learning. In other words students need to immediately begin to trust their environment...Both white and black students need programmes which will look at issues of integration, because in a classroom situation, it is not only you who comes from an oppressed environment who is responsible for our past but it's also the student sitting next to you."

Other than integration programmes, additional mechanisms advocated for achieving change were the appointment of black persons to positions of power, a racially inclusive department at lecturer and postgraduate student levels, equipping staff with skills for facilitating the learning of students from oppressed environments, addressing aspects of the student-lecturer relationship and the endorsement of the above measures at policy level. Equally important are changes in the curriculum and approaches to teaching, exposing students to a variety of perspectives and having senior members of staff showing a willingness to address issues of change.

The class and family values discourse

The participant who alluded to the association of race with socio-economic class suggested that class and family values are the primary determinant of success at university. "Socio-economic class teaches you a number of values, whether you value education or not....A great deal of education takes place in the home. If we take out the race factor we will find that people who were brought up in wealthy or intellectually oriented northern suburbs homes tend to do better in this university than people who were brought up in Mayfair or Malvern or somewhere like that."

Bridging programmes and a differentiated system of higher education were argued for. The former was motivated for in the following way : "It seems to me that if a person is not suitable, not qualified to enter university rather than the university modifying itself to suit him, he should be modified to suit the university." With regard to the latter, the participant said, "I also believe that irrespective of race there is an argument for two

levels of university...I was most impressed by the community college system...That is how I see affirmative action working effectively...America in the 1950s was going through the problem of the admission of a disadvantaged group to the mainstream culture (inaudible) the Negroes wanting their rights...I believe that we can learn from them."

Despite the claim that the community college system is impressive, these colleges are placed at the bottom rung of the American university system, "Community colleges...are lower than the technikons, in a sense." The quality of education in these settings was also ridiculed, "I've got a book somewhere in my shelves by a man who is a professor of shorthand at one of these community colleges...The idea of a professor of shorthand in this country is totally unacceptable. We can't have a discipline course called shorthand in the university."

Later on in the interview it became clear that the promotion of a differentiated university system was based on segregationist tendencies. "Well, the bigger question is actually whether you want to or have the right to change people's values, where does education begin and indoctrination end, it can be argued. Let us say we created a class of school-leavers everyone of whom was interested in theories and ideas and how to get to university. Who would mend the roads ?...You know to change an entire social system is I think idealistic. I quoted to my third year class a (inaudible) of the poet (inaudible) who was the great liberator of Ireland. Cornell said to the men who had cheered by the side of the road, 'Ireland shall get her freedom and you shall still break stone'... Northern Ireland ... in many ways is still the most third World country in Europe."

Constructions of achievement and 'difference'

The deprived schooling discourse and the discourses on continuing structural and institutional inequalities acknowledge that problems of achievement are linked to inequality of opportunities in the society. This imbalance is, in turn, conceptualised as resting on structurally based racial discrimination.

For both positions, the consequence of the explicit construction of underachievement as resting on 'difference' born out of racial inequality seems to be sensitisation against the reproduction of such inequalities in the broader society and in the university. Evidence for this assertion lies in the unease expressed in the deprived schooling perspective about racial connotations that can be attached to intervention programmes such as the academic development programmes. In the discourses on continuing conditions of inequality it is detected in the need to see change take place at the political level and in the circumstances of black students and black staff at institutional level.

Despite this similarity, the assumptions informing these two positions do not seem to be the same in all instances. The difference in assumptions is highlighted in two schools of thought discernible in the deprived schooling discourse.

The one school of thought views issues of racial inequality only in terms of outcomes of individual functioning. Little consideration is given to processes feeding racial inequality and, therefore, to the ways in which reproduction of societal inequalities in the university setting and in the system of higher education as a whole might be contributing to the underachievement of black students. By overlooking this aspect, this version of the deprived schooling discourse assumes that what needs 'fixing' is in the person of the student and that neither the system of higher education nor the immediate context of learning needs to change. Consequently, solutions offered treat the social engineering of 'difference' as fixed only in the past and only as a creation of structures outside of the university, hence strategies of intervention that only address deprivation in the school system and deprivation outside the university.

Some of the solutions, such as a less punitive attitude from lecturers and sensitivity to the needs of black students, constitute what can be regarded as the second school of thought. Whilst also expressing deprived schooling as a causative factor, it differs from the one mentioned above in that it expresses some awareness of problems arising out of the immediate context of learning. It is also in this respect that this school of thought approximates understandings of achievement and 'difference' expressed in the discourses on continuing structural and institutional inequality.

Flowing out of the continuing conditions of inequality discourses is a conceptualisation of achievement and 'difference' that insinuates three things. The first is that the structural and institutional circumstances that create and sustain 'difference' are continuous, belonging as much to the students' past as they do to the present. The second is the recognition that such continuity has no physical boundaries and is a feature characterising as much of what takes place inside the university as what happens outside of it. Last, and perhaps most important, is that the perceived culture of the learning context is significant for motivation and ultimately school achievement.[17]

In contrast to understanding underachievement as resting primarily on racial inequality, the view that defines class structure as the dominant explanatory factor seeks to downplay the implication of race in Apartheid education. The elimination of the race variable as a causative factor is achieved in two ways. Firstly, equating the learning circumstances and achievement of black children to that of white working class children, achieves a deflection of attention away from differential performance between black students and white students. Secondly, shifting questions of educational achievement from the sphere of education to that of the family holds the connotation that racial politics has not impacted differentially on black and white family life.

Bypassing the school to focus on family values helps paint a picture of 'difference' at university level as having little to do with unequal education, but as having everything to do with 'deficient' working class family values. It follows, therefore, that, if 'differences' are not attributable to deprived schooling, a restructuring of Apartheid education is a

futile strategy, since it tackles the problem from a faulty premise. Likewise, any form of intervention by the university is unwarranted since the problem is predominantly family-based.

Further, by equating the schooling of black children to that of working class white children, and then going on to state that people brought up in the northern suburbs tend to do better in the university than people brought up in working class suburbs, the respondent is suggesting that a university like Wits is neither a place for black students nor for students with working class backgrounds. By defining the presence of these categories of students in the university as illegitimate, the respondent is absolving the university from the responsibility to address problems of 'difference' arising out of racial and class inequalities. He is also implying that historically white universities should remain white and English speaking white universities remain white and middle class.

In portraying both pre-university and university education as not needing restructuring, such a formulation seeks to perpetuate a social organisation of education that serves the interests of white children at pre-university level, and white, middle-class students at university level.

Two points of incongruence are evident in this discourse. The elimination of the 'race' factor is contradicted by a statement of solutions that recommends programmes that are an outcome of what is referred to as "Negroes wanting their rights". Equally incongruent is the claim that community colleges are impressive when they are, in the same breath, classified as substandard institutions of higher learning. As indicated by this participant's utterances (particularly as can be deduced from the quote to a third year class), lying behind these incongruencies are aspirations to maintain the subordinate position of blacks in the economy.[18] The suggestion of a segregated university system and the association of community colleges with affirmative action are solutions reflective of a thrust to preserve the dominance of white interests in the society and in the economy.

Overall, the simultaneous downplay of the effects of racial dynamics on schooling and family life and the highlighting of the role of class family values in educational achievement constitutes a discourse that generates silence about the role of power in the formation and positioning of social groups. In as far as race is concerned, this silence discourages scrutiny of the manner in which, as Donald and Rattansi put it, the 'race' category operates in practice; of how "racial logics and racial frames of reference are articulated and deployed, and with what consequences".[19] With regard to class, the portrayal of educational values as inextricably linked to class position has the effect of naturalising class 'differences', that is of portraying class 'differences' as a consequence of a natural order rather than as an outcome of social power relations. What this implies for meanings attached to achievement is that the educational under-achievement of black children and working class children is attributable to their natural position in the structural arrangements of society and to the value system that flows from that position. As such,

working class families have only their class position and their values to blame if their children under-achieve educationally. Power differentials in the society or inequalities in the education system are not implicated.

Whilst the student account which raised insufficient parental involvement as a factor in students' lack of motivation can also be seen to allude to family values, the ways in which it differs from the class family values position warrants some attention. Its mentioning of disrupted schooling alongside inadequate parental involvement in the development of unhealthy learning habits is an attempt to explain the circumstances under which certain values and, hence, behaviours come into existence. Further, explaining inadequate parental involvement in terms of deprivation ('They did not do it themselves, so it is not important to them.'), rather than in terms of a natural order, infuses a conceptualisation of differences in educational values that takes into account lack of opportunities resulting from societal inequality. A dynamic view of value formation is thus presented and communicates values as shaped by particular life circumstances and, therefore, as transformable with changes in those circumstances. In contrast, the class values discourse posits a static and conservative account of behaviour that portrays behaviour as an outflow of values that are inevitably and inextricably tied to particular structural positions.

2. *The context of learning as explanation*

In this category explanations centred around institutional factors that may be affecting student performance. Some explanations linked underachievement to institutional tradition whilst others mentioned institutional racism and indifference as causative factors.

Discourses linking underachievement to institutional tradition

Issues and problems raised as explanation in this sub-category are as follows :

The non-specificity of selection procedures: Students are not selected on the basis of their potential for critical thinking. "At second and third year we expect critical analysis...We expect essay writing which is not reflected in the matric mark...but we are not selecting for that in the first place".

Problems in the quality of lecturing and training: Some lecturers considered the quality of lecturing as not facilitative of critical thinking. Big classes discouraged the implementation of teaching that could help develop this aspect of student functioning.

The format of exams: Staff associated the poor graduation rate with the changing format of exams after first year. Viewpoints emerging on how exam format impacts on performance suggested that students cope poorly with this change. One such point of view was that students do not transfer essay writing skills they learn at first year to the second year exam situation.

The non-availability of academic development after first year

The unavailability of academic development for students after first year seemed to be considered a contributing factor by some lecturers. However, notions about the value of academic development differed across the participants who raised this issue.

Favourable views of academic development were expressed in relation to improving the quality of lecturing and to strengthening student performance. These seemed to engender a positive view of making academic development available in second year.

A contrasting view expressed scepticism about what academic development can achieve for students. Students are either university material or not university material. "The core issue about coming to university is that you are an independent thinker and an independent worker. Those who are not university material are not going to make it".

Another opinion was that the high first year pass rate associated with academic development, has tended to be problematic for departmental rationalisation of student numbers in subsequent years. "[W]e tend to get very high pass rates in the first year. I think our pass rate was 95% or so last year and obviously we are passing students that aren't really going to cope in the second year...The problem with the June exams this year is we have a very high failure rate. Although the year mark will bring that mark up we are expecting quite high failure rates at the end of second year to balance up the high pass rate we had at the end of first year".

The loading of assessment procedures with considerations outside of the objective measurement of performance surfaced in two other interviews. In one of these a staff member hinted at the possibility that there might be too many people getting into first year. This is a factor that creates an obligation to push them through to second year.

Yet another account pointed to pressure to increase student intakes. "We are under pressure from the Faculty to take numbers. There is no doubt about it because students want to come into [the department] ... I know when we reduced numbers at first year the Faculty..did not seem very happy because we lost 200 places and there were a lot of students who said, `Well if I can't go to into [the department], I'm going to UCT or wherever ..."

Discourses linking under-achievement to institutional racism and indifference

Explanations associating the poor graduation rate and other problems of achievement to institutional racism and indifference surfaced in relation to 'standards', the exam failure rate and the quality of the learning context.

'Standards': The question of 'standards' was raised in the student interviews. What are perceived to be Wits' 'high standards' were described as difficult to attain. A student referred to the high expectation that black students should perform at the same level as white students, despite the former's background of deprived schooling.

There seemed to be lack of clarity on how 'high standards' are attainable. The lack of clarity was typified by a comment that second year brings with it the realisation that "..you should write in a particular way and that's something I haven't been able to determine yet ... I'm just aware that I'm somehow expected to improve and reach a certain level".

The structure of the course: Some staff members and students commented on the exaggerated bias towards theory in course content, with very little concern about the extent to which content ultimately meets the needs of the majority of South Africans. Students described the department as valuing subject matter that is so theoretical that they have difficulty identifying with it.

The exam failure rate: Student accounts linked the high failure rate in the second year June exam to racial discrimination. One person said, "Like this year...the results for [the second year course] were very bad [overall], but there is almost a 100% failure rate [of black students]. So we asked our class rep to go and find out why there is such a high failure rate ... The people in the department said some of us are not even supposed to be in [second year] ...What does that mean? So I think it's a racial issue".

For another student, the high failure rate led to disillusionment and demonstrated the university's insensitivity to "...different needs, different backgrounds and different ways of understanding".

Yet another student viewed his failure in the exam as a predetermined fact based on what he perceived to be a quota system operating in the department. "The fact that when I go to a second year class, the lecturer stands there and tells you, 'We have 600 ... students and in third year...we'll accept maybe a third of this class'. Superimposing that to the aftermath of the exams, the failure rate, it brings to question what is happening. I might attribute it to my lack of effort but then to what extent is it determined by the quota system that they use; that 'We're just going to accept a third of you ?'...I think it is better to be denied the chance to register for a course than to be made to fail ... [You] don't feel much pain if you ... haven't been accepted rather than when you are accepted but you are not going to make it. That takes too much". This student went on to link the perceived

quota system to racial bias. "Mostly black students are the ones that don't get through...I don't see much reason why there should be a radical barrier that determines who is going to pass and who will not pass based on racial considerations..."

Clashes in the philosophical or ideological assumptions on which lecturer's knowledge and students' knowledge is based seems to complicate issues of performance even further. "I was listening to this research by a social psychologist in America who found that there are differences in intelligence levels across racial groups. Imagine, as a black student, someone saying to you that white students are more intelligent than black students. I really have to question that, because, first of all, this is a white person saying it...Sometimes, in such controversial matters, you are faced with accepting what you know you do not believe in. Not much room is [allowed] for you to manoeuvre. You're caught up in a white university and you've got to accept that...[W]hat we're talking about is the failure rate...the crux of the matter is the exams...You've got to take that [the material] as it is, synthesize something so that when somebody marks it up there, they should feel very comfortable with it...So all you are here for is to try and grope for what this person is comfortable with...and try to strain [sift] what that person can inhale and put it into the script...[The course] is, like most of the Social Sciences, an open-ended course in which you deal with what somebody else believes in and how much that convinces you. And that's the most critical part, how much it convinces you. And if it does convince you somebody feels good about it and if it doesn't convince you, somebody does not feel good about it...There is an element of that".

A fourth student painted a picture of exams as a multi-faceted problem area. Her account highlighted three issues : 1) The nature of exam questions. With regard to short questions asked in the second year June exam, the problem was one of "...they tell you that you should answer in one sentence and you do not know what it is that is required in one sentence". The problem with essay type questions was that they were all compulsory and, therefore required a knowledge base that spanned a broad spectrum. 2) The exam questions were seen as testing theoretical knowledge only, unlike in other courses, where theoretical questions were linked to case studies. 3) Students are not given feedback on their performance in the exam. Such feedback would help alert students to where they might have "gone wrong" in relation to what was expected.

The quality of the learning context: A number of factors were mentioned as creating a learning context that undermines the academic performance of black students. These were a perceived distance between students and lecturers, lack of financial and social support, the impact of differing backgrounds on classroom activity, indifference to the needs of black students and reluctance to acknowledge that race and class based inequalities have consequences for learning.

Distance between students and lecturers made it difficult for students to approach lecturers. The distance was seen to arise out of differences in status. It was also seen to be a function of racial bias. "They don't look at you as an individual, they look at you as a black person ...When you have a problem ... you can see that this person is not listening to you".

The lack of financial and social support were problems that "... become so burdensome as the years go by that it is the students with intrinsically strong personalities that survive. I think the odds are staked against disadvantaged students from so many angles ..."

The impact of differing student backgrounds on classroom activities contributed to creating a negative context of learning. "To show this racial division amongst us. Last year we were doing this course...We are from different backgrounds as black and white, and then when we were discussing like issues in the workplace, white students would mention things like [a certain chain of restaurants] ... Those are things in the U.S. and we didn't know anything about it. The lecturer would entertain that and it will be a discussion amongst white students and the lecturer. Then you'd feel left out ... As a result some of us never bothered to go to the class because the topic would be [the chain of restaurants], which we did not know anything about".

Yet another student respondent expressed that the fast pace of lecturing in some of the lectures does not take into account that, black students' language competencies may be different from that of whites. It also assumes that students no longer experience difficulty in understanding some concepts in second year.

Reluctance to acknowledge, at lecturer level, that racial and class-based inequalities have consequences for learning has maintained a learning environment that is lacking in black role models who could fulfil a motivating role for students. "I think it would be different if there were black postgraduate students...and black tutors. It would help [the students] work harder, it would give [them] hope and a sense of expecting something. [They] would begin to believe it's possible".

The under-representation of blacks in the department was seen to be a matter of design. A student said, "It can't be a coincidence. There are a few black people in the department as a whole. I'm talking about the staff. There are also few black students as compared to white students. And then if you look at the results, it's the same thing; so it's a reproduction of the whole system ...The more we progress as black students in the department, the lesser [we] become ... So to me it is not a matter of performance only. I mean, as black students we cannot all perform badly ... it's a racial issue".

Departmental selection procedures and a compulsory statistical course were seen as mechanisms used to limit the number of black students in the department.

With regard to the statistics course, one student had this story to relate, "Last year when we did [first year], we were told that if you want to major in [the subject] you have to pass [the stats course] ... I got a C [in the first part of the stats course]. Unfortunately for me I had performed badly in the April test so my mark went down from a C to a D,

which is a pass mark. I wanted to do [the second part of the stats course] so I went there and talked to the people in the department and then they said it was a rule that you can only do [the second part] when you have a 60% and above. And then what he said was that what they have discovered...is that there are slow learners in class and the aim of [the stats course] is to get rid of the slow learners...Like if you do [the second part of the stats course] the chances for getting selected to Honours or Masters would be much higher than if you have [just the first part]. Then I said, "OK, ... if I have managed to pass [the first part] why do you have to deny me access to something I know I can do quite well. He didn't have an answer to that... And then again if you look at how many people pass [the first part], it's mostly whites".

What can be done : a statement of possible solutions

Ideas expressed on what can be done could be categorised into views rejecting any form of intervention aimed at assisting students academically, ideas expressing existent forms of academic development as a solution, and those advocating cultural change and the transformation of the university.

No intervention is necessary: The person who referred to students as being or not being university material suggested that academic development should not even be a consideration at university level. Students have enough enabling mechanisms at first year. If academic development is to be offered at second year, it should be less enabling and more facilitative.

Present forms of academic development are a solution: Subsumed under this category are views that articul:ate academic development as a constructive means of equipping students with academic skills as well as an effective strategy for staff development. All students were perceived as needing tutorials at second and third year level, with academic development tutorials recommended for, at least the second year. A number of accounts advised on other forms of academic development, such as a needs based approach that focuses on individual student needs and bridging courses "where education would be provided at the appropriate level".

Transformation of the university as a solution: The accounts which prioritised institutional racism and indifference as explanatory factors viewed transformation of the university as a fundamental requirement for dealing with problems of racism and indifference. "We cannot talk about transforming a department; we have to talk of transforming the whole structure of the university...This is not going to be easy but something has to be done".

The department could contribute to the creation of a new culture by changing its course structure and introducing a problem-based curriculum, increasing the black component of its staff, increasing the number of black students in its postgraduate programmes, and changing teaching strategies in order to facilitate the learning of students from oppressed backgrounds. Strategies suggested for changing approaches to teaching included more vigorous instruction, more assistance for lecturers and the splitting of big classes in order to make it possible to conduct practical small group activities. Necessary for the above to take root is "...democracy of some kind and just from lecturers, transparency, to be prepared to debate issues openly and set up committees that will look into these issues".

In addition, in order to help bridge racial divisions rather than reinforce them, lecturers should use examples that all students can identify with when they illustrate a point or the logic of an argument. "O.K. they [white students] are not familiar with taxi associations but maybe we can talk about things that are more common, Wimpy's and so on".

Present forms of academic development were rejected on the grounds that 1) their concentration on the student only gives them a narrow focus of what an academic problem is, "Whenever X is failing, meaning the student, I as a lecturer must examine some practices and then the social context, where I'm coming from, where I am, where [the student] is, the total learning environment"; 2) they are racist because they only target black students as if students, and not the university are the problem; 3) through their treatment of issues in isolation, they pathologise students as 'learning disabled', therefore alienating students and lowering their self-esteem. For these reasons, existent forms of academic development should only be a secondary form of intervention.

Constructions of achievement and 'difference'

Accounts in this explanatory category essentially address themselves to questions of the context of learning. The point of departure between student and some staff explanations is that staff, on the one hand, understand these issues predominantly from a perspective of 'this is how the university has always functioned'; in other words, from a perspective of institutional tradition. Students, on the other hand, suggested that the general vulnerability of black students to poor performance is an outcome of racial discrimination and insensitivity to their needs. It would seem that students' explanations are based on a perspective deriving from being on the receiving end of institutional culture they feel does not accommodate them.

Whilst articulations of institutional tradition as a causative factor appear to overtly blame problems of achievement on the immediate context of learning, they nonetheless implicitly operate from an assimilationist assumption which defines success as having to do with fitting in with the university's traditions. 'Difference' is thus construed as misfit or disruption, with the disruptive or misfitting element belonging to or brought in by the

student. Students who underachieve are thus portrayed as not fitting in with university tradition either because they lack critical thinking skills or because their numbers are unmanageable or because they do not cope well with change or because they did not deserve to pass first year.

The connotations of the covert construction of 'difference' as misfit is that university traditions need not be altered to accommodate students whose needs may be different from those of its traditional student body. Misfits either have to assimilate or remain marginalised or eject themselves out of the system.

The accounts which prioritise institutional culture as the problem construe 'difference' as a function of racial discrimination, the abuse of power in the university and unequal opportunities in school education, hence the need for transformation. The reference to a clash of assumptions between lecturer knowledge and student knowledge depicts the imbrication of discourse, as knowledge, in the playing out of power relations in the classroom.

Complicating processes of cultural change and clouding issues of the objective assessment of student performance are hidden considerations, such as the image of the university *vis a vis* other universities. The review of exam 'standards' when black students pass well in their first year constitutes a shifting of goal posts which raises questions about commitment to 'standards' and 'excellence'. It also possibly points to tension between the creation of institutional culture that addresses the needs of a diverse student population and protection of particular interests within white universities.

The solutions offered in this category throw into sharp focus the question of accommodating 'difference'. Three sets of ideas are discernible.

The first is comprised of the belief that success at university is dependent on whether the student has or does not have academic ability. The taking for granted of a lack of ability in students who do not succeed at university creates a silence about the role of oppressive power in the structural positioning and schooling of social groups. It also constitutes an interpretation of 'difference' that connotes cognitive deficit and is reminiscent of the racist genetic deficit model of 'disadvantage'.[20] For this school of thought, the accommodation of 'difference' is, at best, a concept limited to forms of intervention that target students only and do not problematise the context of learning. At worst, it is a concept that should be wiped off the face of academia.

The second presents existent forms of academic development as a means of dealing with problems of 'difference' in the university. This discourse thus constructs poor educational performance as redressable rather than fixed. However, its disregard of the importance of institutional change in the building of a context conducive to the learning of students from oppressed backgrounds constitutes an individualisation of 'difference' that overlooks the importance of the psychological characteristics of the learning context.

Acknowledgement of the impact of the learning context on patterns of achievement is a feature of the third set of ideas. The accommodation of 'difference' is seen to primarily consist of changes in the organisational structure and culture of the institution. In terms of this perspective, therefore, 'difference' signifies, not cognitive deficit, but the entry of black persons into an organisational structure whose cultural value system defines aspects of their behaviour and attitudes as constituting deficit. "This ... changes the direction of the issue from one in which deficits must be remedied to one in which social prejudices must be broken down ..."[21] It is not surprising then that participants leaning towards this position view academic development as comprising of problematising and changing the context of learning rather than 'fixing' the student.

3. Discourses suggesting the student to be the problem

A set of explanations suggesting that factors lying within the student are responsible for poor performance came up in interviews with staff. Mentioned was the age factor, the status of English second language speakers, misguided registration and lack of academic skills.

It was suggested that the young age of eighteen or nineteen disadvantages students at university. At this age students should still be at school. A contrasting opinion, presenting an alternative version of how age is implicated in achievement, was that black students enter university at an age when they already have responsibilities. "The average age of the black students, you'd find it to be twenty five, twenty six. Many of my students are parents, breadwinners, and besides their studies they have all of those responsibilities to attend to as well".

Second language speakers of English were seen to be at a disadvantage. "It is a big problem for people writing in the second language...people get marked in terms of not expressing themselves clearly". A more controversial perception depicted the status of second language English speaker as predetermining incompetence in English. "I also realise that people have got language problems, they are not first language students and this is an English-speaking university and I think that might be the delaying factor".

The point made about misguided registration was that students register for the degree for the wrong reasons. They do not do the necessary research before taking a decision about what degree to do. When the degree does not meet their expectations, purposelessness and dwindling motivation sets in and discourages them from continuing with the subject. Students also come into the discipline with the impression that the subject is easy and that they, therefore, do not have to work hard.

It was also expressed that students get into university without enough skills. They somehow get through first year but do not have enough critical skills and writing skills to be able to go on and they drop out.

What can be done?

The tutorial teaching of essay writing has led to marked improvement in essay writing.

Efficient pre-university counselling is needed to give students a more accurate picture of the content of courses at the undergraduate levels. Students also ought to research courses and degrees beforehand.

Constructions of achievement and 'difference'

This group of explanations mainly argues that student success or failure is a function of factors lying within the student. Underachievement is attributed to immaturity, language incompetence, unfulfilled expectations and lack of skills. The exception is the account that explains underachievement in terms of personal circumstances, such as parenthood and earning a living.

As already indicated previously, the expectation that all students will have obtained the skills necessary for success at university is based on a dehistoricised view of South African education, that does not take into account societal inequalities. It also borders on the racist notion that 'disadvantage', in this case signifying blackness, necessarily implies 'ineducability'.

The association of underachievement with immaturity connotes that young students should be spared the stresses of university studies. The problem with this construction is that the age of eighteen qualifies students to be adults. In view of this fact, defining adults as incapable of carrying out their educational responsibilities is to label them as deficient. Just to what extent this definition of deficiency is based on racist constructions of the African as 'a child', and, therefore needing to be spared the stresses of responsibility[22] is an open question.

The portrayal of English second language speakers as incapable of being 'good enough' in their grasp of English, is a variant of biological determinism replacing notions of cognitive deficit with those of 'cultural deficit'. In the psychological and educational literature, this framework posits 'disadvantage' to signify "...a relatively enduring condition of the lifestyles of certain social groups - the working class, immigrant populations and ethnic minorities...- which contributes to poor academic achievement for children at school, and generally lowered chances of success in the larger society".[23]

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AND 'DIFFERENCE' IN HIGHER EDUCATION: SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE CHALLENGES OF CHANGE

A pulling together of the observations made, and the arguments presented, in the course of the analysis presented in this paper requires to begin with a statement about the differing interpretations of political change that operate in the South African context. On the one hand, the political right spans interpretations which vary from preservation of crude segregation, such as in the demands for a separate Volkstaat, to the more sophisticated Nationalist Party version of laying less emphasis on crude segregation whilst simultaneously executing new and subtle ways of protecting white interests.[24] On the other hand, the political left constitutes a more complex scenario which, amongst other things, is epitomised in the range of interests, from conservative to liberal to left and ultra-left, that are represented within the ANC; of course, in varying degrees of visibility. There are also the parties considered to be to the left of the ANC, such as the PAC and AZAPO. Without going into a long discussion of past and present permutations of interpretations of change in the political left, it can be stated that the consistent articulated element common amongst them, regarding change, is a dismantling of the Apartheid system of segregation.

An awareness of the operation of differing interpretations of change in the South African context is useful for the purposes of the present study in that it facilitates exploration of the manner in which meanings attached to achievement articulate with broader issues of change. It also makes it possible to examine the relationship constructions of achievement and the legitimising of particular societal interests, hence making it possible to predict the quality of change that is likely to flow out of particular constructions of achievement, in a society where aspirations to maintain the status quo are in contestation with interests that aim to create a more equitable social order.

As demonstrated by the class family values discourse and the deprived schooling discourse which views issues of racial inequality only in terms of outcomes of individual functioning in the section on socio-political factors as explanation, the linking of issues of educational achievement to social context is not politically progressive in all instances. Despite citing variables of social context in explanation, both discourses propagate versions of change that overlook the influence of social power relations on patterns of achievement in South African higher education. In leaving social power relations out of the change equation these discourses serve to legitimise the *status quo* in higher education.

Further, the class family values discourse constitutes a coding of conservative discourse in progressive language and, in this fashion, operates as a discourse of new forms of racism. Concepts such as 'community' and 'affirmative action', considered to be progressive politically, are utilised to obscure fundamentally conservative ideals.

The targeting of politically progressive concepts for the realisation of conservative goals places an even greater obligation "...to grasp the historical and cultural specificity of different racisms."[25] Without unpacking the various representations of social reality

posited by racist ideologies and practices in particular contexts and at particular historical periods, it becomes difficult to reflect on the theoretical, pedagogic and political foundations of progressive practice in education. In other words, it becomes difficult to make an assessment of the degree to which anti-racist practice in education shares the assumptions of conservative ideals[26] and the extent to which it achieves its goals.

From the point of view of the need to assess anti-racist practice against the assumptions of conservative ideals, the continuing conditions of inequality discourse that emphasised inequality at the level of the institution can be criticised for neglecting to emphasise academic skills acquisition. In advocating changes in organisational structure and institutional culture without laying equal emphasis on the active acquisition of academic skills, it overlooks the extent to which the degree of dysfunction in township schools and continuing conditions of social and economic oppression outside of universities are likely to remain reproducing the kind of poor academic results aspired to by a conservative vision. This is most likely to be the case if there is no significant restructuring of interests at the economic level, if the deprivation at school level is not alleviated to any significant degree and if higher education continues mirroring and reproducing societal inequalities.

The explanatory category listing factors pertaining to the context of learning draws attention to the importance for achievement, of the psychological characteristics of the learning context. Once again the citing of context as causation does not automatically lead to a confrontation of the role of societal power relations in the shaping of institutional culture. Instead, understandings of issues of achievement from the perspective of institutional tradition take it for granted that students, irrespective of their race, class or gender status, ought to fit into the value system which already informs institutional organisation and functioning.

Connections between difficulties students experience in identifying with the content of course curricula, the failure of both natural and human sciences to address the needs of the black majority and historical power relations between groups in South Africa is an area for further enquiry. As Giroux points out

> ...it must be recognised that any form of pedagogy has to become meaningful before it can become critical...The notion of radical pedagogy raises, of course, serious questions about what constitutes appropriate knowledge for working class [and black] students. In the most general sense, any approach to knowledge aimed at these students must take seriously, the concepts of work, class, [race] and gender...Knowledge for working class [and black] students must illuminate the themes that dominate their lives through the use of pedagogical approaches that contribute simultaneously to the awakening of their political consciousness.[27]

Issues and problems relating to the abuse of power raise questions of the violation of human rights in educational contexts "where there are non-racial or race neutral or anti-discriminatory policies".[28] These issues also present us with the broader problem of ideological and practical struggle against, "subtle, less visible, discriminatory patterns of personal and interpersonal [and structural] forms of racism".[29] For, the less visible and subtle nature of racial discrimination does not necessarily imply a more gentle form of psychological violence. The lethality of the 'intangible' violence of subtle racism, in a context of racial inequality in which the discourse of 'non-racialism' nonetheless predominates, lies in the double bind situations it creates. In such contexts, not articulating the experience of, and not 'struggling' against racism carries the risk of psychological mutilation, yet voicing concerns around this issue leads to accusations of 'anti-white'.

The coming to being of new forms of racism in education and their targeting of politically progressive concepts for the realisation of conservative interests poses new challenges for anti-racist practice in higher education. The biggest challenge relates to the continuation of the politicisation of racial inequality in education. One of the tasks of this politicisation is to confront constructions of 'non-racialism' that, by virtue of the extension of the vote to blacks, seek to impose artificial 'equality' on persons and social groups who actually still live gross inequalities in their daily lives. This measure acquires added significance in a context in which certain constructions of 'non-racialism' portray the questioning of continuing racial inequality as 'racist'. Another task is to find practical solutions to the continuing violation of human rights, through racist practice, by persons who hold positions of power in institutions of higher education.

NOTES

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17. In a study done to assess how school culture is associated to motivation and achievement, Maehr and Fyans (M. Maehr and L. Fyans, "School Culture, Motivation and Achievement" in M.Maehr and C. Ames, (eds.) *Advances in Motivation and Achievement : A Research Annual, Vol. 6, Motivation Enhancing Environments* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Jai Press Inc., 1989) produced strong evidence that the 'psychological' characteristics of the learning environment, more so than its 'physical' characteristics, are an important factor in motivation and academic achievement.
18. The community college system in the United States has, in fact, achieved such subordination. Whilst this system has facilitated an upward mobility to middle-level occupations, it has left higher education with the monopoly on entrance to higher middle and upper level positions. In other words, on the surface, the community college system seems to accommodate and affirm potential and merit whilst in essence, it diverts attention "from underlying questions of distributive justice" (J. Karabel, "Community Colleges and Social Stratification" in J. Karabel and A.Halsey (eds.), *Power and Ideology in Education* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977, 234).
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Collaborative Teaching and Learning with Large Classes: A Case Study from the University of the Witwatersrand

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This case study is a critically reflective account of a course for second year Applied English Language Studies (AELS) students at the University of the Witwatersrand on 'Classroom Communication in South Africa'. The course, taught collaboratively by the English speaking writers of this paper with a multi-lingual student group, dealt with different communication patterns in South African classrooms, and the role of language in learning. The pedagogy involved using the class's own patterns of interaction and communicative practices as the object of analysis. Student feedback on the course was gathered via the regular, termly, open-ended student evaluations for the different sections of the AELS course. Further qualitative data stem from a video recorded interview. Students who volunteered were interviewed by a facilitator who was not briefed about the course content or processes. The aim was to create a genuine information gap so that students would need to tell the uninformed interviewer about the course. The student feedback was collated with summary-overheads constructed in class, and with the teacher/writers' course notes and recorded observations. Aspects of this case study might be useful for educators working at other tertiary institutions in the country.

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, we have evolved practices of collaborative teaching with large classes in our work as teacher educators. We are accustomed to using interactive, participatory methods with classes of one hundred English methodology student teachers during their post-graduate diploma year and wanted to explore how these practices would work with undergraduate students. In this article we will give a critically reflective account of our 1992 course on Classroom Communication in South Africa for ninety second-year Applied English Language Studies (AELS) students at the University of the Witwatersrand.[2]

1992 was the first year in which the course was run. It has continued to be offered to AELS 2 students since then. In its subsequent years the course has been taught by two other collaborative teacher partnerships, the students have been different, and there have been dramatic changes in our socio-historical context. Because in this course the process is the content, dynamism and evolution are built into it, and the course has materialised

in different ways each year. We are currently working on a second paper which gives an account of the course's shifting nature in order to build up a critical ethnography. Pointers to these shifts are included in endnotes and a post-script.

This account will begin with a summary of the content aims of the course, as well as a brief outline of the weekly sessions. This will be followed by an explanation of the practices used to teach the course, in order to show how these practices enacted the content and were designed so that the process both reinforced and fed the content. Then a detailed account of our methods of course evaluation will be included, as well as an overview of the data. We will conclude the article with an analysis of the data under four separate headings: method, the match between method and content, the collaborative construction of knowledge, and self-reflection.

THE COURSE: PARTICIPANTS, AIMS AND CONTENT

We had five content aims for the course:

1 to explore the linguistic features of talk;
2 to explore the role of talk in learning;
3 to explore different communication patterns in classrooms across the curriculum and their implications for learning;
4 to enable students to analyse their own interaction patterns and to explore critically the role played by gender, race and language in shaping these patterns;
5 to consider course ideas in relation to a range of primary and secondary classrooms in the South African context.

The student group consisted of ninety students from diverse backgrounds in terms of race, gender, class, religious affiliation and language. The majority of students were women. Seventy percent of the students were multilingual and, in this course, were using English as their second or third language. Both teachers were white, middle class women who speak English as their main language.

We ran the course in the time allocated: one and a half hours, once a week, for five weeks. This allowed a brief seven and a half hours of contact time in total.

Session 1: After the course was introduced students were asked to analyse and compare actual transcripts of scripted talk (from a television play) and spontaneous talk (from a conversation). Students looked for the main features of talk, including interaction patterns such as turn-taking, topic control, silences and interruptions and speech features such as contractions, pauses, hesitation, repetition, and the structure of utterances.

Take-Home Task: Students were asked to reflect on and record the different kinds of talk produced by the participants during the different stages of the class in Session 1.

Session 2: Students discussed their responses to the take-home task in small groups. In Session 1 the introduction had been straight teacher input, the analysis had been conducted in small groups and the discussion had taken the form of a plenary report-back. We wanted students to begin thinking about the different kinds of language use and communicative ability that each of these classroom situations demanded. In the class report-back that followed, students compared the management of turn-taking in their small groups with turn-taking in the plenary report-back. Important issues in relation to linguistic capital and gender were raised. We will return to these later.

Following this activity students analysed a transcript of small group work in a science class. They were to continue looking at the interaction patterns. In addition, they needed to focus on the role of talk in the construction of meaning. Take-home task students were given readings which stressed the importance of 'languaging' to learn, and the role of 'exploratory talk'.[3]

Session 3 Video-viewing Task 1: Using their reading on the role of talk in the classroom as a starting point, students were asked to evaluate critically a video of a biology lesson in a Std 4 Soweto primary classroom where children are learning through the medium of English. The lesson is teacher-fronted and the pupils are required to learn by rote. The AELS 2 students analysed the functions of talk in this lesson, who talked the most, the least, the type of questions asked, the features of the overall interaction pattern, and the consequences of these for learning.

Session 4 Video-viewingTask 2: Students were told that they were going to watch a video of small-group work in a high school classroom in America. Working in small groups, they were asked to formulate criteria for a structured observation of this video. In many groups students decided to apportion different observation tasks to different members of the group. After watching the video, they were given an opportunity to compare notes and to pool their observations and insights with the other members of their group. They were able to take the initiative for allocating responsibility and for structuring the group's activities.

Session 5 Video-watching Task 3: Students watched 'Language and Learning across the Curriculum'[4] a language across the curriculum video tape produced for South African teachers. Each group used the criteria it had developed in Session 4 for watching this video. A plenary report back followed. This led to discussion on the extent to which the ideas elicited from the class are predetermined by the questions asked and tasks set by of the teacher; by extension they questioned whether we, their teachers, were manipulating them to produce the responses we wanted. We will return to this later.

The course evaluation was completed during this session. Before turning to evaluation we need to give an account of the methods we used to teach the course.

METHODS USED IN TEACHING THE COURSE

1. Interactive methods

Our main aim for the course in relation to method was to achieve a strong match between content and method, so that the practices would 'enact' the content. The tasks were designed to produce different communication patterns which were then discussed as part of the course content. By using the class's own interactions as the object of analysis we hoped to raise our and our students' consciousness of our practices and their practices. This meta-cognitive awareness developed by examining processes and practices is based on the premise that learners could become "reflective practitioners"[5] alongside their teachers. We wanted students to reflect on *our* management of the classroom talk as well as *their* own contributions to the classroom talk by asking questions such as: Who was talking to whom? How was turn-taking managed? Who had more turns? Who had fewer turns and why? How and why did the talk in the group work differ from the talk in the report back? Did our/their talking contribute to their learning or not? When was our/their not talking helpful? How were our joint reflections impacting on the social interaction patterns in the classroom?

All these questions led to a consideration of power relations within the classroom. Classroom interaction patterns affected by issues of race, gender and class relate to patterns of interaction in the wider society. For us critical pedagogy[6] is centrally concerned with paying attention to what teachers and students need to do in the classroom in order to see themselves differently[7] so that they can change the social relations inside the classroom which are predicated on racism, sexism and class. By reflecting critically and creatively on the nature of the interactions produced in our own classroom, and the way in which they reproduce or resist the existing social inequalities *outside* the classroom, we hoped to make some progress towards reconstructing our own practices in the interests of social equity. We realise that this is too ambitious for a seven and a half hour course, but it is an ongoing project which underpins our teaching more broadly.

The means we use to achieve this critical reflection consists, in the main, of collaborative teaching and learning. Collaborative teaching offers the possibility of developing a reflective pedagogy. We shall discuss this more fully later. Collaborative learning using task-based small group work with whole class plenary report backs offers participants an opportunity to engage in the collaborative construction of knowledge and understanding. This move to engage students in the production and construction of course knowledge is another mark of critical pedagogy. Knowledge is made communicatively and intertextually by the course participants on the basis of the classroom interactions and their reading. Offering tentative ideas, talking about them with peers and reshaping

these ideas in response to immediate feedback is a central component in the building of shared systems of meanings between teachers and students. Furthermore group work encourages learner inter-dependence and reduces the learners' dependence on the teacher.

In 1992 we deliberately moved the usual venue for these classes from a conventional lecture theatre to a more open-plan room with movable desks, which facilitated the reorganisation of furniture for group work. In the preceding term the time-tabled double session had been split between a lecture and a tutorial run by three different members of staff. We chose to use each session as a double period workshop, as group work needs more time than transmission models of teaching and learning.

2. Task-based workshops

We see a workshop as essentially task-based, with the participants generating much of the 'content' of the session in response to stimulus material provided either by the teachers only, or in response to the classroom processes and the issues raised in the class. Our course planning allowed us to make changes to tasks for subsequent sessions on the basis of reflection during and after each session and to incorporate student feedback. We took responsibility for structuring a sequence of tasks for the workshops based on material that would generate student exploration of various aspects of classroom communication.

Much of the stimulus material chosen was video recordings of classrooms because of their immediacy and the medium's ability to capture context and the body in relation to language and communication. We also saw it as our responsibility to suggest reading that would introduce other contexts and other voices in order to complicate the ideas available for reflection in the course. Later discussion in this article will revolve around the extent to which participative methods produce anything other than what the teachers controlling the tasks and the reading predetermine. We have spelt out in detail what we understand our responsibility to be in structuring a course: we choose the material, the tasks, and the reading and we decide on their sequencing. This selection is made to achieve the content aims of the course, what students call 'the teachers' agenda'.

3. Informality

We 'named' our sessions 'workshops', changed venue, and we changed to a double-period format to create something different from students' naturalised conceptions of large classes at tertiary level. We deliberately created an informal, relaxed atmosphere in the hope that students would feel freer to participate. Teachers and students called one another by their first names, we established and maintained a conversational register, and we encouraged exploratory talk.[8] We believe teaching and learning to be a form of ongoing conversation, a collaborative dialogue, between teachers and learners, between

learners and learners and between teachers and teachers. We know that informality is not a guarantee of a low-risk learning environment and are familiar with Fairclough's argument that the 'conversationalisation of discourse' masks relations of power in late capitalist society.[9] Nevertheless it is important to attempt to lower the "affective filter"[10] in order to enable more students to join the discussion.

We tried to limit our own talk to:

1. structuring and explaining the tasks,
2 class management (getting students to move from one activity to another),
3 contributions to group work either in the role of facilitator (with, say, a probing question) or as another group member (with, say, a relevant anecdote),
4 facilitating or recording in the report-back session in order to ensure that the different threads of the discussion were coherent and included both points of agreement and disagreement.[11]

4. Collaborative teaching

According to Nunan,[12] collaborative teaching and learning have emerged over the last ten years as significant concepts within the field of language education, and collaborative teaching should be seen as distinct from team teaching. This distinction by Nunan resides in the differences between a procedure and a process and between individualism and collectivism.

In a team you are responsible for your own 'part' in relation to the 'whole'. *Team* teaching foregrounds individualism: each team member makes his or her individually constructed contribution to the whole. It is possible for each individual member of the team to prepare his or her part autonomously and then to simply come together in the same space to teach each part. Team teaching often involves hierarchical relationships: team leaders and followers. It also allows for individual ownership of different parts of the 'whole'.

In *collaborative teaching* participants are jointly responsible and jointly negotiate each 'part' in relation to the 'whole'. Collaborative teaching foregrounds a process where power sharing is more equitable, where decisions about content/process arise out of consultative mechanisms which ensure joint responsibility and accountability. In the collaborative teaching process, there is less emphasis on individual ownership of the 'parts' of the whole; indeed, joint or collective ownership is established through the negotiation process.

In traditional team teaching, responsibility and power are distributed across the team or localised in one member of the team.[13] Collaborative teaching, however, emphasises shared power and shared decision-making.[14] The sharing of power, responsibilities and

decision-making at each stage of the process characterises the way in which we work together. Our teaching goals are compatible, and we operate in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. For these reasons, we would describe what we do as 'collaborative teaching'.

Our preference for collaborative teaching with large classes over the last seven years incorporates a number of the reasons outlined in Nunan:[15] a wish to experiment with different ways of organising teaching and learning; a concern to promote a philosophy of co-operation rather than competition; a desire to create an environment in which learners, teachers and researchers are teaching and learning from each other; and the possibility of incorporating principles of learner-centredness into our courses.

Collaborative teaching helps us to keep track of the many things that happen simultaneously in classes with large numbers of students. We have learnt to vary our own level of involvement so that one of us is freer to observe the interaction patterns, to listen to students carefully, to record the discussion on the overhead projector. More obviously it is helpful to have more than one person to manage the group work: to answer students' questions, and to participate in the group discussions.[16]

We are particularly interested in the nature of the talk between us in this context and how this impacts upon the nature of the students' learning. Earlier on, we described our interactions in class as an 'ongoing conversation'. Collaborative teaching enables us to make this 'ongoing conversation' public. We disagree with and challenge each other in front of the students. We do not preplan these interactions. There is often a genuine exchange of ideas and information arising from points raised in the class.

Making our 'conversations' visible has distinct advantages for the students, for it enables them to perceive the constructed nature of our own knowledge. We make our differing viewpoints visible in an attempt to prevent their reification and to encourage students to share in the construction of knowledge. This ongoing conversational register contributes to reducing the status of our own input into the workshop and shows students that there are no clear-cut right answers. Ideas are open to question and reinterpretation.

Often our decisions about who will do what, when, are shaped by what happens in the class itself. We make our deliberations about these decisions public by discussing them with or in front of the class. This allows students to see the spontaneous and contingent nature of classroom decision-making and how the students' part in the processes affects the course of the session.

EVALUATING THE CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION COURSE

Students in AELS always complete a quarterly evaluation which includes an open question for each course component. The rubric invites comment on methodology, level of readings, content and the accessibility of concepts on the basis of students' experience of the course.

Sixty two percent of the class responded. We did a content analysis of the responses and found that they fell into eleven categories. We allowed the categories to emerge from the students' responses, adding new categories as the data dictated. Both of the teachers had to agree on the categorisation of responses. The eleven categories were: course content, the practical usefulness of the course, the methods used, the use of videos, the self-reflective nature of the course, improvement in self-concept, the readings, issues pertaining to race, issues pertaining to gender, examinations, and fears in relation to learner independence. The only global quantification of responses was in terms of whether the students felt positive or negative about the course. 78% of the responses were positive, 17% were negative, and we found 5% difficult to classify as either positive or negative. We did not attempt to quantify the positive and negative responses by category as we were interested in pursuing all the issues raised, irrespective of how many people raised them.

In addition we arranged for a colleague[17] who had not been involved in the course in any way, and who was not in our department, to interview the students. We invited all students to the interview and told them that it would be recorded on video. Although only eight members of the class volunteered, the video provided valuable qualitative data for analysis. We believed that an 'uninformed interviewer' would produce less bias in the interview than either of the writers, who would be inclined to ask questions to confirm or disconfirm their own hypotheses. We also wanted to create a genuine information gap. The students would need to tell the interviewer what happened in the course as this would be her only access to this information. 'Information gap' is a standard technique for communicative language teaching: where people do not share the same information there is a real need for communication. By using this technique for an interview designed to produce qualitative data, we hoped to provide a reason for the students to describe the course's aims and content as well as a feel of what happened on the course, the course processes. There would be no authentic need for the students to do this if we had conducted the interview ourselves. Many of the interviewer's probing questions are a genuine attempt to try and make sense of the student's making sense of their experience. This new method of eliciting qualitative data proved very fruitful.

In addition the writers compared and analysed their own observation notes and their overhead summaries of class discussions. We collated these reflections with the students' feedback, looking for consensus and conflict.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

We have decided to offer our analysis of the data under four headings: method, the match between method and content, the collaborative construction of knowledge and self-reflection and issues of social equity. While this does not cover every aspect raised by the data, it is in these areas that we believe our case study has something to say about practice.

1. Method

Initially students complained about the fifteen minute walk across the campus to the new venue and the attendance was poor. For the majority of students, participating in a course run as a workshop, using collaborative learning and teaching methods was a new experience at tertiary level. This was evident from the slow and uncertain way in which the group work started as well as from the interest created by the novelty. As students began to value the course, attendance grew steadily and by the middle of the course we had an 83% attendance which was maintained.

From their questionnaire responses and from the recorded interview it is clear that the students saw the value of interactive methods for them both as learners:

> *I have learnt many things that I was not aware of them before ... Some of these things are participation in the classroom.*

> *It was excellent. I wish they can continue because most of us got chance to express ourselves. Communication is the way of life.*

and as future teachers:

> *It is an essential section for me as I will be a teacher.*

> *I know now how to communicate with pupils in a classroom, which skills should I use if children encounters difficulties, how should I guide them to the questions and answers and how I help them to develop their own thinking.*

We attribute the large number of responses praising the course for its 'practical approach', to the students seeing the course as relevant to teaching. We will return to this later when we discuss the match between method and content and the way in which the processes were so foregrounded for the students, that they felt unsure about content. In addition,

because the method enacted or demonstrated the ideas, the students also saw it as 'practical' in the sense of 'not theoretical'. We believe that the course combined theory and practice in such a way that students' 'fear of theory'[18] was allayed.

We believe that students' insecurity about content also arose from the way in which collaborative learning in small groups attempts to reduce the learners' dependence on the teachers. In large classes it is not possible for teachers to monitor all the groups, although some time is spent with each group. Students cannot rely on teachers to check their work. Instead they are forced to rely on one another and they each have to take responsibility for the group discussion. Not all students liked this.

> *I wish we could have had tuts (tutorials) to hand in, for we may think we're following what is intended when in reality we're stumbling.*

> *Lecturers must make students focus on the aims of the lecture rather than allow them to speak and argue in empty rhetoric.*

Both these students are asking for *more teacher control* than we were prepared to offer. We believe that report-back sessions, because they make the group's deliberations public, do allow for sufficient monitoring of group work by the teachers and the class. As everyone grows in confidence the monitoring function of the report-back is reduced and the report-backs provide an opportunity for groups to exchange and pool ideas.

Other students accepted the value of working in a collaborative learning environment. For them,

> *The teacher is not the only person who play important role in the education of children. The children themselves have to help themselves by working in groups.*

> *Good participation and debate was encouraged and one got a sense that his/her contribution was valued and respected.*

> *We have to know the opinions of others.*

We were encouraged by the fact that several groups decided to take the initiative in the group work by allocating tasks so that each group member's responsibility to the group's work was structured by the group and not the teacher (see Session 4).

At the other end of the scale there were some students who felt that we were too controlling and 'deprived [their] further thinking'. This relates to the issue of the extent to which the structured nature of our workshops predetermines their outcomes. We will discuss this more fully in the next section.

Students commented on the collaborative teaching environment by referring to the 'informal system' and 'relaxed atmosphere' which made it easier for them to speak.

> *The nature and structure of the lecturing allowed exploring, elicitation of views and concepts from us without tension.*
>
> *I enjoy the fact that [teachers] encourage discussion so freely.*

One student made a direct reference to the positive effects of having two teachers as a way of allaying boredom.

> *The involvement of two lecturers for a double class relieved the stigma of the 'double' class.*

Students commented informally on the way in which we interacted with each other during the workshops but they did not make specific reference to it in the formal evaluations. Students seemed very comfortable to interrupt and to disagree with each other and with us and there were no open clashes in the classes[19]. Although some students saw 'the method' as 'very experimental', others maintained that the 'workshop method was especially valuable in helping me to grasp concepts'. The concepts that we wanted students to grasp related to different classroom interaction patterns. Method was used to enact the theory.

2. The match between method and content

The content of the course was the relationship between language and learning and the role played by different forms of classroom communication and interaction patterns. Much of the content was generated by asking students to reflect on the processes of the course itself. This established an ongoing dialectic between method and content. The interaction patterns of the workshops became the content focus of the course, as students and staff reflected on their own and each other's practices. This 'marriage' of form and content was difficult for many students to grasp. In the recorded interview the facilitator struggled to get students to articulate what the course was about. Every time she asked a question about course content, students told her what they *did*. This lack of certainty about content was expressed as fear of what to expect in the examinations.

> *This section is most understandable although the content is not at times clear.*
>
> *Very interesting, especially the practical approach. Very dynamic, still not highly clear as to what is wanted in the exams though.*

> *Very interesting when doing it in the class but without light of what exactly would be needed in the exams. The method of teaching is very good and stimulate further research and investigations. But is what we are doing in class what we should expect in exams?*

By exploring the content through the classroom processes, we left behind those students who see their job of learning as acquiring a fixed body of content. They knew what they had learnt but they could not square this with their concept of learning as information gathering.

> *Concerning classroom communication I have no problem for I am able to grasp what is being taught. I only have psychological confusion on the question of its evaluation. Which information is of utmost importance for the examination?*

This concern is different from the students whose insecurity lies with the teachers not sanctioning their ideas, the students who want their work checked and marked, who want 'tuts to hand in'. *These* fears have to do with deeply embedded notions of examinations as requiring the rote reproduction of course content. This was confirmed for us by the way in which students answered the examination question:

> *Using your reading and your experience discuss the advantages and disadvantages of group work.*

Almost without exception students did not include their experience on the course or elsewhere as a legitimate form of examination knowledge. Instead, they reflected on the readings they had done for the course. Our education system has taught students to devalue their reflection on their experience.

In the recorded videotaped interview the students discuss at length the question of whether this course is 'reformist' or transformative. (Their word for 'transformative' is 'revolutionary'). Because this course is embedded in the context of a university which still measures students by examinations which expect them to produce the answers that examiners want, some students believe that there is no significant change taking place. Are the changes in practices that the course creates lasting or transient? Are students preparing for class because they are becoming independent learners or because they do not want to be embarrassed in the group? These are valid questions that we still have to address in the rest of the article. The role of examinations in tertiary education, however, is the subject of another paper.

Our critical reflections on these responses led us to believe that the next time we taught the course we would need to help students understand the articulations of ideas, theory and process in more explicit ways. Intrinsic to the content were their reflections that resulted from our putting their class interaction on the course's agenda. This helped the students to learn. They felt confident about applying this knowledge to a practical classroom situation but they were not sure how to read the embeddedness of content in process. This made them nervous about preparing for their examinations which they understood to involve mastering a discernible body of content[20].

3. The collaborative construction of knowledge

An issue which surfaced as important for us and the students had to do with the ownership of knowledge. Can learners construct knowledge in collaboration with each other and with their teachers?

In the last video that we showed the class[21] there is a sequence in which an art history teacher tells the viewer what information he wants to elicit from the class. The video then shows the teacher eliciting this exact information by the skilful use of questions.

This resulted in a heated discussion in which students were arguing with one another about the extent to which we, their teachers, had a predetermined idea of the course content which we were simply manipulating them into producing. The discussion raised important issues with regard to the relationship between learner generated content and the 'teachers' agenda' for the course. Some students suggested that participatory, collaborative methods which help students to use the knowledge that they already have, are not very different from straight transmission methods. They are in the words of students on the video recording, 'merely a reformist shift'.

This forced us to reflect hard on our own practice. We have been teaching collaboratively for five years and react fairly instinctively to each other in the classroom. In preparing the classes, we design tasks together but do not in advance explore possible responses from the students, confident that we can meaningfully use whatever the students say. In our preparation we do not rehearse right and wrong directions for the discussion. This does not of course mean that we do not have many shared assumptions based on a similar background in reading and years of discussing issues related to our teaching. We know that we take into class unconscious parameters which may lead us to screen out or accept some responses from students. It is, however, our sense that we go into class with our minds only partly made up and that we are often persuaded by our students or each other in the class. We know that the students make us change our minds or see things that we have missed. It is as if, in preparing for class, we deliberately avoid discussing how the tasks will work in order to avoid premature closure.

This does not mean that our courses are open-ended. By structuring the workshop tasks and the students' reading and by making decisions about method, we are exercising a high degree of control over the course and its outcomes. Our course on Classroom Communication in South Africa is not a process or negotiated syllabus as described by Breen[22] and by Boomer, Lester, Onore and Cook[23]. We do not set out to jointly construct the curriculum content with our students. We have argued elsewhere[24] that it is 'the teacher's role to structure the situation so that learning can take place'. In structuring the tasks, the reading and the methods we are not exercising any real control, however, over how the students use their reading or respond to the tasks we give them. By using the students' own interaction as the course content, there is a large degree of unpredictability of outcomes. We believe that a workshop can structure a framework within which learners can move. We do not believe that it can determine how they move within that framework or that it can even keep them within the framework.

We are not always able to anticipate, even subconsciously, what will actually happen in class. When we showed students the final video we had no prior expectation that most of the session would be taken up with the students deconstructing our practice and attempting to decide for themselves the extent to which we were eliciting a predetermined content and the extent to which they as learners were shaping the course. Our characterisation of the students as "attempting to decide for themselves" is an understatement: the forcefulness of their dununciation of our practice as manipulative might, at its height, more accurately be described as a clash. Others used these students' perspectives as a source of important insights for speculation and reflection. In foregrounding this as an important issue, students constructed the session very differently from the way in which we expected it to happen. Ironically the fact that they made this discussion happen, answers the question that the discussion raises.

In the videoed interview this issue is again foregrounded. One student maintains that we use the report-back sessions 'to correct' students, another believes that as teachers 'we had objectives but were happy to accept the things that students said', a third believes that both positions are correct and that the answer lies somewhere between the two.

Even if it were possible to predict the exact course of the lesson by skilful tasks that elicit exactly what teachers want from students (and we do not believe that it is), we maintain that students learn better when they formulate ideas for themselves in their own words and in relation to their own experiences, and that this constitutes sound pedagogy. It does not matter that in large classes it is not possible to 'correct' or monitor everything that students are saying in their groups. This method presupposes that learners can help one another to arrive at shared understandings of the issues with carefully structured tasks and reading given by the teacher; that they can help one another to make sense of their reading and their experience. We believe that pedagogy which helps students to own their knowledge is in the long term transformative and not merely reformist.

4. Self-reflection and issues of social equity

We believe on the basis of the data that the course was effective in raising students' consciousness about their own communicative practices. In analysing our overhead summaries of classroom discussions, we realised that students were insightful about the different authority structures in different groups, about the difficulty of keeping track of minority views in groups, about how group work often moves towards a false consensus, about how turns were distributed across members of the group, about how turn-taking was managed in large class interactions.

In particular there was a long discussion on the difficulties faced by students whose mother tongue was not English.

* Mother tongue speakers of English tend to control turn-taking because they are in control of the language.
* Students for whom English is not a mother tongue have to concentrate. They lose their turns because the speech is happening too fast.
* They battle to make their ideas precise/meaningful in English.
* The body language of listeners gives them 'impatience' cues and leads to anxiety.[25]

In South Africa the students who do not speak English as their language of choice are mostly black students. Although much of this discussion was about linguistic and cultural capital, it was not predicated on the basis of domination in terms of race or class. The asymmetrical distribution of turns and talk according to gender was made explicit, but references to race were absent even after one of the teachers drew attention to this silence. We believe that these silences were a deliberate attempt by students to avoid racial tension. The argument about linguistic capital was easily accommodated - more easily, we believe, than arguments about racism. It is as if linguistic advantage was offered as an easier pill for the white students to swallow than racial advantage.[26] While students were reluctant to discuss domination in terms of race and class, they did not show the same reluctance to discuss gender domination. It is as if in 1992 class and race were issues that were too sensitive to discuss and gender was not. The women were quite happy to tell the men that they talked too much. We, the teachers noticed that the white men substantially reduced their share of the talk, black men substantially increased their share and black women entered into the discussions for the first time.

So we witnessed the beginnings of change in the class. Native English speakers began to leave spaces for non-native speakers to take turns. Non-native English speakers started to take these turns. Students who had been used to more than their fair share of the turns spoke less, particularly the white men. Everyone became very conscious of speaking turns and the pattern of interaction changed. This consciousness about equitable turn-

taking is clearly apparent in the recorded interview. We were pleased that the consciousness raising in the course was able to begin to transform our practices. However, we have no evidence as to the transience or permanence of these changes.

In monitoring the whole class work, it became easy for one of the teachers to publicly tell the other, who was facilitating, that none of the black women were being given turns, or for the teacher facilitating at the time to ask students to volunteer a response if they had not yet spoken, or to ask students who had already spoken to make space for others in the group to speak. The course content and informal atmosphere naturalised these kinds of interventions. There is no doubt in our minds that some form of intervention and consciousness raising is necessary. Our large classes at the university are frequently monopolised communicatively by white men, followed by white women, and then by black men, even when white students or men are in the minority. Making space for black students, especially women, to speak in heterogeneous classes is an ongoing necessity.

The teacher/writers' perceptions are not supported by the students' written responses. Only two students out of fifty-six respondents commented on race and gender in their feedback. The comment on race contested the idea that 'mixing white people and black people is a useful procedure' and the comment on gender said that 'more attention could have been paid to gender issues in the classroom'. Issues of class, race and gender did not surface in the recorded interview. It is, however, interesting to note that six out of the eight participants who volunteered to be recorded were black women. There was one black man and one white woman. No white men volunteered.

CONCLUSION

What this case study illustrates is that it is possible to use interactive, collaborative learning and teaching methods with large classes of ninety students at the tertiary level. Although a small number of students expressed a preference for a more teacher-fronted style, specifically in relation to their feelings of insecurity about course content and examinations, the majority were able to take responsibility for their learning and found it challenging. In view of this we believe that interactive methods should be used more often in large classes at South African tertiary institutions.

Research into the role of language provides the theoretical underpinning of our use of an interactive, collaborative pedagogy. As soon as students begin to talk and work together, patterns of domination and subordination in relation to gender, class and race emerge. The power relations operating within the wider social context are often played out in the classroom and can inhibit collaborative learning. By constructing a course that reflected on its own practices, we put these power relations on the course agenda. There was some evidence that confronting these issues changed the patterns of interaction. For example, the contributions of the white men in the class diminished substantially. Further research is needed to answer a number of questions raised by these changes. Did these students

reduce their contributions to make more space for other students or because they were afraid to go against the changed norms of the classroom? In the long term, would this shift lead to a more equitable distribution of power or would this simply lead to a different group taking the power created by the vacuum? What this case study cannot reveal is the extent to which these changes in patterns of interaction were extended beyond the course into other classes and into the wider social context.

In addition to looking at collaborative learning, this case study is also a reflection on our practice as collaborative teachers. Our metaphor for teaching and learning is one of an 'ongoing conversation' and it links these two strands. We have used the metaphor of conversation to convey the sense that the interactions in the classroom are informal and that there are many voices. 'Ongoing' highlights our belief that avoiding premature closure helps the learning process. Discourse analysis of these 'ongoing conversations', as well as careful investigations of their outcomes for learners and teachers, are interesting directions for further research.[27]

POSTSCRIPT

This course, in various forms, has been offered to AELS 2 students every year since 1992. One of the writers, Stein, has taught the course every year. Only in 1994 did she again teach the course with Janks. She has also taught the course with two other people, one in 1993 and another in 1994. The students have continued to be diverse in terms of race, class, language, gender, age and religious affiliation. But since 1992 many of the students taking the course have career interests other than teaching. Because of the built-in interactive and self-reflective nature of the course, the changing participants and the changing socio-historical context have resulted in different issues coming to the fore each year. We are currently in the process of writing a second paper which tracks the shifts in this AELS 2 course in order to show how recording the ongoing dynamism in the process has further developed our understanding of collaborative teaching and learning in large classes.[28]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. There is no first and second author. This paper was produced collaboratively with each writer contributing equally.
2. We acknowledge that many institutions in South Africa have large classes which make our classes of a hundred seem small.
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27. This suggestion has been taken up by M. Kilalea, a masters student in the Department of Applied English Language Studies at Wits University. Her current research is on *Discourse Patterns in Collaborative Teaching and Learning*.
28. We would like to express our thanks to Esther Ramani for the detailed comments that she made and the advice that she gave on a first draft of this paper. We would also like to express our appreciation to the *Perspectives in Education* reviewers whose considered comments were helpful.

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South African Black Teachers' Perceptions about their Practice: Their Relevance to the Ideology of the Education System

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Black teachers' perceptions of their practice have been politicised by the education they have received and their life experiences in the Apartheid system. This paper examines the significance of this understanding to their professional role. To establish teachers' concept of education, a structured but informal interview process was employed to bring to light their position concerning structural constraints and expectations of the school. The conclusion is that teachers maintain an ideological stance towards their role and legitimate the school structures and their performance within them.

INTRODUCTION

> *We are teachers. We should be treated like professionals. But, what do we contribute to what we teach? We are just miserable rule-followers – people who are concerned with being up-to-date with D.E.T. documents and prescriptions about what and how to teach. There is not much you can do about it; we can't stop to teach [sic] ... that's how things have been and they will continue for a long time to come.* (A statement from a teacher in Soweto)

In South Africa Black teachers' thinking has over the years been channelled by Apartheid education into directions which were obstructive to their self-development as professionals. Their practice has been overshadowed by the practical demands of this situation. General life experiences could not equip them with the wisdom to challenge expectations they took for granted as essential responsibilities. The low level of critical consciousness evident in the data presented in this paper indicates clearly the extent to which their commitment to their 'own' ideals as Black people was adversely affected.

The paper results from a study conducted in 1994 with teachers who were at the time working in township schools situated in the former PWV area of South Africa (now called Gauteng). This was a crucial period in South Africa's history. Unforeseen changes were sweeping through the country, for example, from the release of Nelson Mandela from prison to the negotiation process for a new political settlement and the first general election to include all people belonging to the country. Although these developments

were very important, they do not seem to have brought with them significant changes to the education situation in the Black townships. They have instead created a situation that today resembles a form of social armistice characterised by salient features of the apartheid ideology existing alongside the new. As a result of this, these developments do not diminish the significance of the views expressed in this paper. They still constitute an important part of the framework within which future efforts at reconstructing and developing new ways of teaching and learning should occur.

This paper investigates the nature of these views through pursuing the following questions: To what extent did teachers regard as legitimate the structures within which they were working and the practices expected from them by the education authorities? What normative concepts did they use to describe their practice? To address these questions, the paper uses Gramsci's notion of common-sense to argue that in spite of being dissatisfied with the conditions of their work, teachers took for granted the structures within which they worked and regarded what they were expected to do in schools as worthwhile.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section sets out the theoretical context of the study in very broad terms. Reference is made to Gramsci's views on the significance of the role that is played by teachers as 'traditional intellectuals' in society to constitute hegemony through ideological practices. Concepts dealt with here are summarised. Their meaning is more detailed where they are employed in the paper to explain the perceptions of teachers.

Even though based on a culture that is different, Gramsci's overriding concern with ideological and cultural domination gives his work a peculiarly relevant tone when looked at in the context of how Black teachers have been socialised in Apartheid South Africa. He sees the exercise of ideological hegemony as lying in the development of society and polity and argues that peculiarities of the behaviour of people are due to the interest of the dominant classes in society. For these interests to function they require a "rule of ideas" that can successfully produce and sustain the active consent of dominated people.

In terms of this view, people will define themselves not in the isolation of pure consciousness but in terms of lived, everyday concrete values which are promoted in their circumstances. The symbolic representation of these values through, for example, the mass media, schools, theatre and cinema is, according to Gramsci, not an ineffective process. Through such means, the dominant group in society represents its interests in such a way that they are given the appearance of representing the interests of society at large and they may act to reproduce the inequalities of class within it. For Gramsci, this process becomes the mode through which a dynamic connection between ideology and what is considered common-sense occurs. He sees it (common-sense) as

> ... the conception which [is followed] in 'normal times' – that is when its conduct is not independent and autonomous, but submissive and subordinate. [1]

For Gramsci elements of the intellectual and moral leadership play a vital role in facilitating the link between ideological hegemony and the constitution of a common outlook necessary to create the submission and intellectual subordination of a dominated people.

> ... hegemony involves the successful mobilisation and reproduction of the "active consent" of dominated groups by the ruling class through their exercise of intellectual, moral and political leadership ... taking systematic account of popular interests and demands, shifting position and making compromises on secondary issues to maintain support and alliances in an inherently unstable and fragile system of political relations ... and organising this support for the attainment of national goals which serve the fundamental long-run interests of the dominant group. [2]

An important element in these views, and one relevant to this study, lies in the relationship that he sees between class intellectuals and their role in creating and maintaining ideological hegemony through educational practice. He draws a distinction between organic and traditional intellectuals and sees the former as belonging to the dominant group in society and the latter (to which he assigns teachers) to the dominated group. In contrast to the organic intellectuals whom he sees as giving credibility to the values of the dominant group in society by functioning to promote them in the economic, social and political fields, traditional intellectuals are viewed as functioning to facilitate links with the current and operative (normally dominant) social formation or culture in society.

> [their] assimilation and conquest is made quicker and more efficacious the more the group in question succeeds in simultaneously elaborating its own organic intellectuals. [3]

Gramsci's views are important not only in understanding the complexity involved in the creation of thought within the situation of ideological hegemony but also in demonstrating the significance of the ways in which people make choices within such an environment (in his words) "bringing about not only a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity".[4]

To explain how this union occurs, Gramsci asserts:

> The active man-in-the-mass has a practical activity but has no clear theoretical consciousness of his practical activity ... One might almost say that he has two theoretical consciousness ... one which is implicit in his activity and which in

> reality unites him with all his fellow-makers in the practical transformation of the real world; and one superficially explicit or verbal, which he has inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed. [5]

The main issue here is how individual human agency is utilised to allow the " two theoretical consciousnesses" to exist alongside each other. In Gramsci's opinion, there is a contrast between thought and action. Even though hegemonic control might be pervasive, it never has total impact on people's consciousness because there is a level at which the dominated groups are still able to hold their own view of the world which is grounded in their own culture.[6] This is possible, he asserts, because experiences, meanings and values of some people cannot be incorporated into the dominant culture but are lived and practised in ways that pay off in terms of material benefits.

The assumptions in this study are in support of this view. Teaching in the Bantu Education system presented itself as a job which took care of the values of those it served. At the level of the ideology of the system teachers would, according to the argument outlined above, wittingly or not promote the values which they have been made to view as worthwhile in their history. Making such an assumption about the agency role of teachers implies, a conscious, but naive expression of values as a dimension of pedagogic decision-making on the part of teachers.

While it would have been short-sighted for the study to deny the logic of such an assumption, it still could not be accepted uncritically because alternative ideological views and practices also played a crucial role in the lives of the teachers interviewed. As Gramsci pointed out, even though ideological hegemony is such a powerful control mechanism of people, there are circumstances in which subordinate groups, or at least sections of them, do not – and in conditions of crisis cease to – see their interest as similar to those of the dominant group. But as the evidence in this study demonstrates, even though some of the teachers expressed discomfort with the structures and their practices within the system they worked for, their actions still maintained and made these factors appear legitimate. Although the actions were explained as being based on nothing more than teachers' notions of what was prudent and admirable conduct in the circumstances in which they functioned, they helped sustain the values which teachers seemed to reject only at a level of thought. The teachers' perceptions could also be well understood when looked at within the framework of Stuart Hall's work in which he argues that one cannot understand society or any particular aspect of it, such as education, by focusing on the purpose or intentions of the individual involved. In his view, unconscious rather than conscious motives shape education. Intentions and purposes, and the explanations people give of what they are doing are unimportant to the direction and course of their actions. According to Hall, such actions occur while people are not aware of their meaning. He further asserts that because it is not human beings either individually or collectively who determine the nature of social institutions or society, they therefore cannot determine the nature of those who compose them. What is important

to him are the economic structures and processes which are the real elements or components of society. Individuals should simply be thought of, as he puts it, as "bearers of social relations":

> ... so long as the fundamental social and economic relationships of a society remain intact, education will tend to obey the 'logic' of the system. Education will tend to be harnessed and made to conform, by means of certain specific mechanisms, not simply to the interests of particular groups but to the whole system.[7]

The link between the social, economic and educational system which Stuart Hall points to is due to what he views as a gap between the general value commitment people declare and their actual behaviour. He argues that the gap deepens especially when what they think is different from what they actually do.

METHODOLOGY

As I was not aware of any studies conducted in this area of research on teachers in South Africa, this study began by looking at work conducted in other parts of the world, in particular, the Ford Teaching Project, Stubbs and Delamont, Tabachnik and Zeichner and Carter and Doyle,[8] in order to be able to appreciate the practical problems that might be involved in researching the area. For this reason, this work should be seen as one of the first attempts to formulate hypotheses for future research. As Stacey observes:

> Hypotheses which are worth testing can only be developed in areas about which a great deal is known, i.e. where a great deal of empirical field data has already been collected. Before this stage most research is of an exploratory nature .... It is only after much empirical data has been collected and a simple series of simple relationships, close to reality, have been established, that either precise hypotheses can be enunciated for testing or theory derived inductively from empirical data.[9]

As an exploratory study, its method could therefore not be decided upon on the basis of tested and available tools. It had to arise from a process of sustained trials.

First, a questionnaire was used to help identify important issues to address in the main study and reveal the nature of the problems likely to be faced. The questionnaire addressed aspects related to structures and practices that were considered legitimate and the normative concepts on which notions of legitimacy were based. Particular attention was paid to the macro- and micro-dimensions within these perceptions. The questionnaire was administered to fifteen teachers who were graduates of the Department of Education and Training (DET) Black colleges in the PWV and who had two or more years of

teaching experience to reflect upon when handling the questionnaire. Copies were delivered at the homes of those who agreed to participate in the study. The respondents were allowed two weeks to work through them. Of the fifteen, ten were returned.

In view of the nature of the responses obtained, I decided that a structured but informally conducted interview process was the best instrument to employ in the circumstances. The process addressed the same issues as the questionnaire but consisted of open-ended questions. Using such a tool proved useful for not only did it enable me to capture the views of the teachers from what they said but the face to face contact also conveyed a lot of meaning through the body language of the respondents. Also, I was able to probe where general, incomplete and unclear answers were given. The questions which appear in brackets in the paper are some of those asked to obtain clarity from the respondents.

A sample of thirty-six was randomly selected from teachers who were trained and worked in the PWV, the greatest metropolitan area of South Africa. These teachers were most likely to have been exposed to common pressures during training and afterwards as qualified teachers in schools. The PWV was selected because of the limited resources and time I had to conduct the fieldwork and because it was easily accessible to me.

Homelands were not included in the survey on grounds of difficulty of access, although the opinions of the teachers who were trained and were working in these areas would have been useful. Friendship networks were greatly relied upon to get into contact with the teachers.

Within both primary and secondary education a reasonable balance between men and women was sought and also a fair representation of teachers trained in the two levels of schooling. In general six teachers were selected from each college, three male and three female. However, in cases where a college offered primary school training only, it was difficult to balance the numbers as the majority of students in these colleges were female. The male students seemed to prefer secondary school teaching.

It was difficult to use the usual methods of stratification because generally as is the case with all tertiary institutions there were vast differences in the student populations with regard to such aspects as age. Only one additional variable could be used for selection, namely, experience in teaching, which was to vary between one and five years. I thought that with the years of experience behind them, teachers would be better able to talk about their work and the conflicting experiences if any on what they expected.

To explain the similarities in the teachers' images and representations, Gramsci's notions of common-sense and the role of traditional intellectuals in situations of ideological hegemony were used to explore the unquestioned form of the common-sense knowledge of teachers. This was because there was a need to search for the meaning behind what was expressed as legitimate practice and structures and go beyond the taken-for-granted individual explanations. Although related to the overall theoretical stance adopted for the study, the responses of the teachers did not always fit exactly into its propositions.

Neither could the propositions be deduced in a simple manner from the evidence. The two had to be constantly related to inform one another. It became necessary to blur the boundaries between the data and the theory adopted for its analysis.

LEGITIMATE STRUCTURES AND PRACTICES

Notions of professionalism in teaching espoused by Peters, Elliott and Smith,[10] amongst others, view teaching as a process during which principles are tested and through them concepts of education. For example, Smith, writing on teacher education in England and Wales, argues that in order for such a view to carry any substance there is a need to make a practical distinction between politics and the control of teaching and, if politics interferes too much with what teachers do, then the intellectual part of their responsibilities is compromised and they become disempowered as educational practitioners. On the basis of this position it became important to establish the extent to which the teachers regarded the structures which enabled or hampered them to be intellectual in their job as legitimate.

The teachers interviewed were denied the authority to be creative. As professionals they were entitled to such authority. Despite the fact that their views on this aspect were enormously rich, varied and striking in individuality, they all indicated how teachers yearned for such authority. The following selection illustrates the point:

> *You start with something in mind about teaching and learning, but the manner in which the heads of department and the principal dictate what to do, compels you to obey without questioning. ... The way the conditions of our work have been laid out is most worrying. When you question what is at times in contradiction with what you were taught at the college, then people think you are difficult and don't want to work.*

> *We're just sent text-books without prior consultation. The principal simply says: the department requires you to use this. Teaching is not treated like a profession because of all the controls and administrators on teachers' backs - to know every small little thing they do; and the state which is looking over our shoulders, it is hard enough to teach without having to say anything about what you teach. We teachers generally agree to occupying a subordinate position from which we cannot influence anything within the system. It's been always like this. I don't really plan things for myself. Subject-advisers do the basic planning for every subject. We are not expected to deviate from these plans. Principals and their departmental heads check on us to find out whether lesson preparations and our teaching corresponds with what the work programmes require. It is not fair. As teachers we have to be allowed to think out things ourselves ...but with us it is the education we offer – Bantu Education. That makes everything to be dictated and imposed on us.*

In the words of another teacher:

> *What else can I do in the place of not teaching as expected, so really I am just doing what I am in the job for. We have been told that this is what professionalism is all about. (sarcastic)*

The views reflect a general outcry against the lack of authority to influence practice. Of real concern was the simple and problematic relationship which teachers tended to see between their lack of power and inability to be professional in their job. Almost no matter where they drew the bottom line, responses indicated that teachers were deprived not only of their professional status and its proper practice but also of the conditions that could help them remedy the situation. The following is an example of what was felt:

> (How far do you think you influence what you do in the classroom?)
> *There is no independence in this department. I've got to rely on those in authority for direction.* (Do you ever feel there is anything else you could do to change the situation?) *No, if I could see myself as doing anything else it would not be as a D.E.T. teacher, but then I would not be a teacher in this country.* ***Being a teacher and the freedom to decide on educational matters are not compatible in this country*** [own emphasis]. *It is not as I thought things were like before I became a teacher. I thought I would become one and do what I thought was necessary for the Black child. I am here now, I am a teacher and should accept things as they are if I am to continue to teach.*

A comparison was made between the government-controlled and church schools to emphasise further the lack of meaningful involvement in matters related to teaching. Said one respondent about state bureaucracy:

> *You know, being in a D.E.T. school is different from Catholic schools, you work under more stressful conditions because the main preoccupation is satisfying those who are in charge. In Catholic schools we attend seminars and we are encouraged to teach creativity and originality ... now I am in a government school everything is so different ... I have been labelled a revolutionary who wishes to make it difficult for the pupils to cope with life later when they get into the adult world. I must say, it is difficult to implement the ideas acquired from my Catholic background.*

The pragmatism in the views is interesting. For teachers the degree of professional autonomy they could enjoy had to be viewed in relation to what would be possible in their circumstances and acceptable to those in authority despite their political stances.

The impression given was that of a continuous struggle to seek ways of winning over authority so as to be able to feel secure in their jobs rather than a concern with finding ways of improving practice. Concern with general conditions of work tended to overwhelm concerns about the specific implications of what it would mean to be professional in their situation.

> (Can you say you are generally satisfied with being a teacher?)
>
> *I don't really know. Satisfied, I suppose in as far as I consider myself as offering education to my pupils. I suppose I have to be in the circumstances. What's the point of being the other way when you know you are a Black person - you've got to take it. Well I suppose if you are dealing with a senior in a DET school it's difficult, ... it's a work situation* [a giggle] *isn't it? ... I think once heads do not like you it is easy for them to view you as insubordinate where there are differences of opinion between them and you ... you might be in trouble. They have the authority to recommend one's transfer. ... They normally do come up with a reason which will be convincing to Pretoria.*
>
> *I just think we teachers are getting a raw deal ... we can't change anything presently. For now, we need to earn a living. For example, I can't see myself doing any other job. I just have to take things as they are and adapt otherwise I'll starve* (a sigh).

The response given here cannot be considered as unrelated to the values on which the teacher's perceptions were based. It reinforces, and in some way gives legitimacy to them. There was little awareness that the apparent defeatist attitude and lack of a clear challenge to management and organisational matters of the school served to keep in place the very factors that the teachers were not happy about. One could argue that the attitude, seemingly taken for granted as unavoidable, and the backcloth of submission that went with it, were encouraged by what had been consciously developed in order to cope with the hierarchical system of control in the DET and the rewards it offered for compliance.

Functioning in a system where inequalities were associated with educational, political and economic opportunities, teachers felt compelled to be practical in the circumstances in which they found themselves. But their views also indicated that this was not a comfortable resolution but one that seemed realistic.

There was another dimension to this contradiction. The teachers felt trapped in a system which they viewed as the only one they had available to offer some form of education to the Black children.

> *I have to take into account what the department wants for the children, and think that I'll feel more guilty if I don't. It's probably the wrong attitude but I feel that if I cannot keep up with what's required I shall be wrecking people's future survival. Oh no I cannot be suicidal ...* (a sarcastic giggle) *... I toe the line when and if necessary.*

The conditions under which teachers worked resulted in a continuous crisis for those who could not wholeheartedly commit themselves to the values of the schools and were unable to do much to achieve what they perceived as the correct thing to do. In spite of the dissatisfaction, they still conceded as if fate dictated the choices they had to make. The following response is characteristic of what many of them viewed as legitimate in their position.

> *Firstly I am mindful of the fact that I should co-operate with people in leadership positions, that is, the principal, subject-advisers, inspectors and all others. In a way, it does not advance one's course to just oppose everything. You have to consider carefully the merits of everything that is said – it really depends on whether you are adequately knowledgeable to be aware of how to cope especially when you disagree with those in charge. I believe the solution lies in the teachers' co-operation. It is difficult not to comply if you are not well-informed about what your job involves. I am doing my best to do so because I do not wish to be made to do things I can easily avoid.*

Given the ideological and structural resources within the society and especially in the former DET structures, the link between the two, the nature of schooling generally and the importance teachers attached to what it expected from them, we can understand their perceptions. The severe monitoring in their situation could be compared to the conservatism that Lortie alludes to with regard to his American experience.[11]

Also important to note is the feeling of inadequacy in this statement. Teachers felt that their confidence to challenge what they viewed as unacceptable in their work depended much on the knowledge they had about what they were involved with, a knowledge which they felt was not sufficient. In my mind, the teachers' views originated from the awareness that they had been exposed to an inferior kind of education and had no opportunities and resources for meaningful development within the DET structures when comparing themselves to the other racial groups within South Africa.

According to Giroux and Aronowitz[12] the structures which in general deprofessionalise teachers cannot be changed unless there is first an awareness and acceptance among them that there is a need to change the basic values held about practice. In their opinion, this is related to the normative elements in the teachers' understanding of the purpose of their practice. What was clear from this study is that even though the teachers were aware of the inadequacies within the DET the implications of the role which they seemed prepared to play was invisible to most of them.

Teachers took for granted the power structures in their education system. They lacked a clear perception of the control mechanisms in the system and their critical attention was mostly focused on matters which had a direct connection with practice, such as management styles, rather than the real meaning of the structural expectations they had to meet. Though generally unhappy with the role expected from them, they still considered compliance as useful. Their understanding was, as they clearly pointed out, mainly rooted in their material reality. In their circumstances, the education they were offering was seen as not worthwhile for its own sake. Its significance lay in its value as a commodity in the economic sphere.

The teachers' low level of critical consciousness affected the degree of dissatisfaction they had towards the unacceptable aspects of the education system and ability to initiate change. Indeed, teachers argued that in their circumstances they could not do more than they did. The wider question of their lack of professionalism was connected to the racial problems in South Africa. The psychological effect of being discriminated against determined the greater part of the contradictions in their perceptions and caused them dilemmas and frustrations when they had to promote what they viewed as unavoidable values in their situation.

NORMATIVE CONCEPTS

The teachers' views were openly encoded in the assumptions about what they took for granted to be the necessary values to take into account in their practice if they were to promote what D.E.T. considered to be education. This also informed what they defined as worthwhile behaviour on the part of pupils they taught. Hidden and unchallenged was the normative valuation which had become mystified and defined as if they wholly believed in it. Their views appeared to be giving – in a rather uncritical manner – recognition to the values of Bantu Education. There was an apparent ease with which they endorsed the fundamental beliefs about the education they were expected to offer. The search for survival in an Apartheid environment was primary. When asked to describe what they considered to be an appropriate situation for effective practice, the general theme pointed towards this.

> *I require disciplined, that is, obedient children. Otherwise we cannot make progress. It is only when the pupils do what I ask them to do; ... eh, when there is complete compliance with the rules and instructions I give that my teaching can be effective. Rebellious behaviour masquerading as a questioning mind does not work in this system. Yes, this is important considering what school is all about* (What is it about ?) ... *preparing people who will be considered responsible and law-abiding by those in authority.*

The view was re-affirmed:

> *A classroom where the pupils follow the rules of the school. Everything is done according to rules here. I teach and prepare my lessons the way the principal wants, pupils must also behave the way I expect them to if they want to succeed in the system.*
>
> *What's important for my teaching to work is that children must be prepared to listen and stop questioning what we teach them as they do these days. We as teachers know what's to be done not they. Being critical in this system always results in sadness. ... Yes, a positive attitude is always to their benefit. Even though we accommodate individuality each pupil has to know that he is expected to say and do what is expected at school. For example students tend to mix political issues with education, they disrupt lessons in the name of politics and expect teachers to condone it. I've never understood why they come to school because they know full well what they are coming for. They just make it impossible for one to teach and it is impossible to discipline them ... there will be chaos and no progress if we do not in one way or another do what school stands for.*

Despite knowing the kind of system they worked for teachers were still convinced that their teaching could only be effective if pupils complied with what school officials expected them to accomplish. The question which subsequently arises from the existence of such an attitude is whether it necessarily reflected Bantu Education values? Is it possible to draw a link between the teachers' opinions and this system's values?

If people seek to achieve 'success' through compliance only and the search for this compliance is seen as a compromise of their ideals for the rewards of the others, and they further expect everybody involved in what they do to behave in the same manner, then one could argue that there are effects of an 'adaptation' in their perceptions. In this sense the teachers who were interviewed could be said to have been driven by ideals which existed within the schools and to which they were constantly trying to adapt their practices.

An outstanding feature of studies on practice in teaching, for example, Westbury[13] in the US. and in the UK. Mardle and Walker[14] is that it is only with a clear insight into the situational constraints experienced that it is possible to understand teachers' behaviour or the reasons they adopt certain approaches. Also in the UK Denscombe argues:

> ... teaching [is] not the product of pedagogic choice so much as a response to the environment within which teachers find themselves ... [15]

In this sense the teachers in this study could be said to have been responding to their environments. However, as the evidence demonstrates, there is an important diversity in the nature of adaptation that took place amongst them. Even though they largely identified with expectations of the school, on an individual level this was done with varying emphasis. The following quotation is a good example:

> *We cannot avoid to teach values which children are expected to have when they leave school. ... I personally feel satisfied when I see my pupils being able to cope after leaving school. It is, quite ironically, satisfying to know that you somehow had a hand in it.*

The same attitude stood out here:

> *I would hate to think of myself as a Bantu Education teacher. I really cannot come to terms with the fact that I am ... eh, that there is some good in what I am doing. I so much want to accept this rather than just continue to moan. Even though I know that I must be doing some good I still think that being a teacher in this system is like being a collaborator and this is really terrible to acknowledge especially in these days of such great political awareness and sensitivity.*

The dilemma faced by this teacher was not merely provoked by the interview. It was brought home by the everyday pressures experienced in her job. She recalled one particular incident and her reactions to it:

> *The thing that made me frustrated are the children. They are prepared to oppose the values we try to instil and they make sacrifices for the good of us all. They never fail to take advantage of opportunities to register their discontent. But, me as a teacher or rather us as teachers are always standing on the side watching them. One day I pointed this out to a colleague of mine and he just said, of course these children do not have a lot to loose. That's what you should keep in mind. He argued that some would give anything to be in my place - to be teachers and secured of a future. Then, I thought to myself, perhaps I need to sober up about all my concerns. I thought that maybe I was being stupid - I was better-off in the circumstances. But having thought so I still do get fed-up sometimes.*

The observance of the values of Bantu Education was seen by implication as good by the majority of the teachers because it did something for everyone involved, they and their pupils. The meaning of these values found their niche in their functionality which transcended the daily classroom situation. For a detailed analysis of this see Williams.[16]

Also useful to explain the teachers' perceptions are Gramsci's views on the agency role of teachers in situations of ideological hegemony. Teachers as traditional intellectuals and employees of the state were likely to be in a position where they would be making a contribution to an emphasis of what Gramsci calls the 'continuity of ideological hegemony'. According to him this involves a process of ideological cementing. In the case of this study, ideological continuity was a result of a practical consciousness by means of which compliance with the education system's values was seen to be of value, in spite of general discontent about it. Continual patronage and expediency functioned to maintain the teachers' survival in the system.

Teachers' beliefs that there was some value in their practice influenced the degree of resistance they were generally prepared to direct towards the constraining elements in their work. Could it therefore be fair to assume, following Gramsci's thesis, that because of the ways in which ideology was imposed particularly through education, it had to 'cement' attitudes and beliefs with Apartheid? Another interesting question to pose would be the following: With the level of political awareness and resentment against the system the teachers worked for, why was it not possible for them to be able to leave behind the imposed modes of thinking with the changes in the political structures of their country?

One could argue that the perceptions of the teachers were simply a demonstration of a kind of legitimation of a value system which was created and constantly reinforced by a leadership which openly protected the values of Bantu Education. It was maintained and prevented from developing in any other direction by the reward system practised within the schools. However, if one looks at their views within the framework of Gramsci's notion of how the organic intellectuals gain the will of the traditional intellectuals one finds coherence between them and the ideology they were expected to promote. According to Gramsci, organic intellectuals engage the support of the traditional in their efforts to gain popular will. Under the false impression that the aspirations of whoever is represented by the traditional intellectuals are also being fulfilled, what the organic intellectuals cherish is maintained and supported. This is what was happening to the teachers who participated in this study. They saw submission and compliance as being necessary and co-operation in the system as inevitable if some measure of satisfaction was to be attained. In their minds, although in theory they resented Bantu Education, in practice it was considered to be meeting their people's and their own needs for material survival. As long as they continued to live under Apartheid prescriptions and constraints, it was worthwhile for their practice to instil and sustain the ideals of the system which in their opinion also in part, benefited them. For them to do this unhindered, it was necessary also to identify with (perhaps without being aware of the implications) and not ignore the modes of thinking and behaviour which were expected from them by the Bantu Education authorities.

The teachers' criticism of the system of education can be seen as echoing the feelings in their real world. In their views, Afrikaner domination was alive in spite of the Black people's struggle against it. Their articulations of the social and political nature of their situation and the realisation that their role was inevitable can thus be regarded as a sign of a weakened conception of their own ideology because perceptions were linked to a strongly dominant Afrikaner theory of education, and their position in the South African ideological hierarchy of the time. They could not underplay the importance of these factors in the present state of affairs, that is, as long as they remained teachers who were expected to serve the political ideals of Apartheid.

CONCLUSION

The evidence of this study indicates that in general Black teachers concede to the conditions of their work-setting rather than challenge and resist those they regard as obstructive to their role as educators. It lends support, although not unqualified, to some of the sociological literature on practice in teaching (for example, see Woods and Hargreaves and Ginsburg[18] to mention a few). Even though South African, it also affirms the view that teachers operated in schools on the basis of common-sense assumptions ritually re-affirmed by expectations and practical consciousness.

The teachers' accounts were based generally on the belief that in their circumstances they had to act on the basis of what their common-sense told them was of practical value. The persistence of the structural influences in their opinions was taken to be the result of a particular ordering of their consciousness. In spite of their living circumstances, it was common-sense for them that they needed to take into account the expectations of the school. As a result, a full criticism and restructuring of these expectations was reluctant and considered senseless.

However, the evidence here also highlights the danger of trying to infer from the teachers' perceptions a full understanding of their ways of thinking about their practice, for even the more educationally conscious and politically sensitive accounts indicated contradictions. Following Gramsci, the assumption that all the teachers were subjected to structural pressures, and at the lower levels, at least, were able to exercise subtle forms of power, thus provided a useful point on which to base the investigation. Power was seen not just as a device to maintain social control through force and a reward system, but also in terms of how those in a dominant position within the society defined it and employed it to make concessions while reinforcing their definition of reality.

It was possible to try and understand the teachers' views in terms of the already extant Western models, for example, Lortie's[18] discussion of attitudes which are products of particular structural features. These include the pattern of recruitment and the kinds of rewards offered by the school system, for example, promotional and salary improvements. Also useful but not directly referred to here could have been Lacey's[19] study in which he

emphasises that the impact of the socialisation process in education not only involves the acquisition of skills, but also values and attitudes. However the sole use of the ideas adopted from these studies, amongst others, even though useful to the purpose of this study, would have faced the danger of reducing the analysis of the research data to a simple structural one in which the impact of the structure of the teachers' occupations would have been over-emphasised and behaviour within it seen to have been imposed on passive subjects through a form of socialisation which made resistance unimaginable. On the contrary, the investigation in this study was based on the assumption that the teachers were conscious of the constraints but, for practical reasons, took them for granted as worth complying with irrespective of what they knew and experienced in their situation. For this reason it was important that the analysis of their accounts should read meaning beyond their simple consciousness.

The position was not taken to try and infer from the teachers' perceptions a full understanding of their ways of thinking about their practice but rather an orientation to understanding what was expressed because, as pointed out by Carr and Kemmis[20] and Elliot,[21] teachers could not verbalise the kind of mental frameworks within which they operated. Neither could they spell out the more complex reasons why the behaved as they did. The interpretations given to the views of those who participated in this study partly depended on my subjective biases which were picked up from using Gramsci's theory. As put by Ann Oakley, academic research projects do bear an intimate relationship to the researcher's life. In agreement I support her assertion that:

> My biases are of course no more or less biases than those I ... [have] ...examine[ed]. Let those who do not care for mine, use their rejections to make their own explicit and as acknowledged as I ... make mine. [22]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to thank Pam Christie and Shirley Pendlebury for the useful comments they made on this paper.

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REPORT

The National Teacher Education Audit

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THE PROCESS

In December 1995, the report of the National Teacher Education Audit was made public at a press briefing in Pretoria. This Audit of 281 teacher education institutions was the largest ever undertaken in South African education. It was commissioned by the Department of Education (DoE) and funded by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). The research was undertaken by a consortium of research agencies led by the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD).

The objectives of the Audit were to:

* analyse teacher demand, supply, utilisation and costs as a basis for the development of models for projecting future needs. (This work was undertaken by Edusource of the Education Foundation).

* evaluate teacher education institutions involved in training primary and secondary teachers (colleges of education were surveyed by Edupol; distance education institutions by South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE); universities and technikons by the Education Policy Unit (EPU) of the University of the Western Cape; NGOs involved in teacher education by the Joint Education Trust (JET), and departmental Inservice Education and Training (INSET) by the Research Institute for Education Planning (RIEP).

From the seven reports which all the research produced, a final Synthesis Report was then prepared by Edupol, with Jane Hofmeyr and Graham Hall as the co-authors. Because the time-frame for such a huge undertaking was only six months, the research process was a serious challenge. A Steering Committee of all the research agencies, CEPD, the DoE, and DANIDA was established. It decided to develop a core questionnaire as the basic instrument for collecting quantitative and qualitative information from the teacher education providers. This was suitably modified to fit each sector and supplemented by other methodologies, including a literature review, interviews, on-site visits, evaluation of curriculum materials, documentary analyses, a meta-analysis of INSET evaluations and technical workshops in the provinces.

In order to analyse teacher demand and supply, Edusource was involved in a massive data cleaning and verification exercise to produce reliable data for its computer models. These were used to examine future scenarios of teacher demand and supply.

LIMITATIONS

Of course the whole process suffered from certain limitations. Most of these arose from the size and complexity of the field and the lack of reliable, comparable, up-to-date information on teachers. Time was never on the side of the Audit and there was the added complication of the 'pros' and 'cons' of consortium research! The tight focus that the Steering Committee managed to keep on the whole research project through its core questionnaire, guiding documents, frameworks, regular meetings and deadlines enabled the research to be completed within eight months. However, the challenge of reaching consensus among all the members of the Steering Committee and the different research agencies proved to be a very difficult, and often painful, process. Despite these limitations, the Audit has produced the most comprehensive data ever on teacher supply, utilisation and development in South Africa and thus constitutes an essential tool for policy-making.

CRITERIA

The Steering Committee developed evaluative criteria for the analysis of teacher education and a framework for the Synthesis Report. The evaluative criteria encompassed societal goals, values, key concepts, guiding principles, institutional issues, teacher education curricula in general and INSET in particular. In all, there were 53 criteria. Four sources were used to derive the criteria :

* values and principles for education reconstruction with special reference to teacher education;
* a vision of teacher education in South Africa in 2010 prepared by SAIDE;
* research findings about international/local best practice in teacher education;
* inputs from the Steering Committee members.

An example of one of the criteria is: *Teacher Education should be underpinned by a learner-centred philosophy of education and aim at improving practice and thinking about practice.*

FINDINGS

The purpose of the evaluative criteria was to help the researchers to assess the state of teacher education as a whole, rather than the quality of individual institutions. However, during the research, excellent and weak institutions identified themselves.

The typical profile of a successful institution was one in which there is strong leadership, a positive institutional ethos, democratic governance structures, learner-centred approaches, extensive curriculum reform and substantial teaching experience for students. Weak institutions were characterised by a lack of leadership, negative institutional cultures, conflict, authoritarian teaching, rote learning, outdated, fragmented curricula, little or no teaching experience for students, limited subject knowledge and poor infrastructure.

Major findings of the Audit included:

1. Teacher education (PRESET and INSET) is the largest sector of higher education, involving at least 281 institutions and some 490 000 students/educators.
2. The teacher education field, however, is very fragmented and increasingly diverse as new non-governmental and private agencies have broken the state monopoly, institutions have begun to experiment with new roles, and distance education has grown.
3. South Africa has sufficient capacity to produce enough teachers for the country's needs during the foreseeable future. Indeed, in most provinces, there is already an over-supply of teachers. However, the primary-secondary output ratio does indicate that there should be greater emphasis on training secondary school teachers for the country's needs after 2000.
4, The scale of INSET is also huge, both in terms of teachers studying for higher qualifications (approximately one third of all teachers) and programmes aimed at improving competence in the school or classrooms (approximately half of the teaching corps). Unfortunately, the scope of this provision is uneven across the provinces.
5. The quality of teacher education is the biggest challenge confronting South Africa at the close of the twentieth century. The quality of PRESET and INSET is generally poor, despite pockets of excellence and innovation.

6. Distance education is rapidly expanding. Unfortunately, however, good teacher education is rapidly being driven out of existence by poor teacher education as more and more institutions turn to cheap correspondence education without student support, instead of high quality open learning.
7. There are huge disparities across institutions and sectors as a result of apartheid and the urban/rural divide.
8. The present system of teacher education is inefficient as a result of high failure rates and cost-ineffective institutions.
9. The professional mission of teacher education institutions is being subverted by the presence of large numbers of students who have no desire to teach but want an affordable route to a higher education qualification.
10. Present policies of teacher supply, utilisation and development are underpinned by inadequate concepts and driven by the wrong incentives. PRESET and INSET are not linked in a continuum of professional development. A flawed notion of teacher quality, which equates it with qualifications (often irrelevant) and rewards these with an automatic salary increase, propels the whole system. In addition, institutions tend to measure their quality in terms of how many students pass rather than the standard of their courses and examinations. Furthermore, political rather than educational considerations, have tended to influence the establishment of institutions and the expansion of the teaching corps.
11. System reconstruction is essential. This must include a new conceptual framework and values, new governance and financing arrangements, new curricula focusing on teacher competences, institutional reform, capacity-building and quality assurance meachanisms. The deep-seated and severe nature of the problems in the field means that tinkering with the existing policies of teacher supply, utilisation and development will not solve them.
12. A national policy framework for teacher supply, utilisation and development which co-ordinates, regulates and synergises the contributions of all the actors is a necessary starting point. The goal should be a high quality system of teacher education for all would-be and serving teachers which focuses on a professional ethic and a commitment to teaching in pursuit of effective human resources development.

The researchers undertook the Audit in the hope that it would assist the national and provincial departments of education in their policy decisions about the future supply and development of teachers. The departments have not been disappointed. As a result of a preliminary briefing on the findings at the Council of Education Ministers in October 1995, the Council decided to limit the intake of students into colleges of education and to redirect the bursary system towards scarce subjects in 1996. In addition, the Director General indicated in December that the Audit would be used as the basis for developing

national teacher education policy. The anticipated process would include a national conference to disseminate the findings of the Audit, a Green Paper in September, and an international workshop in October which would submit the Green Paper to national and international scrutiny. The process will culminate with a White Paper in late 1996. An official response of this nature to research findings would make policy researchers the world over very envious!

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REPORT

The NGO Teacher Education Audit

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INTRODUCTION

The audit of teacher development non-governmental organisations (NGOs) formed part of a larger audit of teacher education institutions in South Africa. The National Teacher Education Audit was commissioned by the Department of Education and was intended to analyse teacher demand and supply in relation to future needs. The other major objective was to evaluate teacher education institutions and programmes in terms of their capacity to provide both pre-service and in-service teacher training. Quality, staffing and governance structures were also considered.

The NGO audit set out to focus on NGOs involved in teacher development in the formal sector, and provided an overview of the impact or effectiveness of NGO teacher development programmes. This paper summarizes the main findings and issues identified in the NGO audit, makes some critical comments on the report, as well as suggestions on how to take the audit further.

THE MAIN FINDINGS OF THE NGO AUDIT

There is some confusion as to what an actually NGO is. This is overcome in the report by covering non-profit organisations that provide teacher development and support in the formal sector that are not universities, teachers' colleges, technikons or state departments. Another criterion used is that NGOs receive funding from private sector or foreign donors.

The Audit identified one hundred organisations that are involved with INSET for teachers. A large proportion of these NGOs are based in Gauteng, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal

Table 1: NGOs based and operating in each province[1]

Province	Based	Operating	Total
Gauteng	41	8	49
Northern Province	5	17	22
Mpumalanga	2	21	23
North West	4	13	17
Western Cape	19	13	32
Eastern Cape	6	21	27
Northern Cape	1	14	15
Free State	3	20	23
KwaZulu-Natal	18	18	36

Table 2: Focus of NGO Intervention[2]

Type of Intervention	Percentage of NGOs involved
Teaching Methodology	85%
Subject Knowledge	71%
Materials Developed	65%
Cognitive Development	56%
Curriculum Development	56%
Study Skills	34%
Whole School Development	31%
Management	29%

NGO INSET activity varies, but English, maths and science programmes dominate. Some NGOs have also moved into school development programmes such as Whole School Development and Management Training. The Audit notes that 83% of organisations claim to provide short courses, which are essentially workshops or a series of workshops. The main focuses of NGO intervention are shown in Table 2.

The Audit reports that 102 201 teachers were reached by NGOs in 1994. However, these figures should be viewed with some caution, as many organisations do not keep accurate records and it is likely that some NGOs reach the same teachers.

Table 3: Number teachers, teachers reached by NGOs and total NGO income by province[3]

Province	Number of Teachers in Province, 1994	Number of teachers reached, 1994	Total NGO income in Rands
Gauteng	48407	17926	82547639
Northern Province	50109	8131	4864365
Mpumalanga	25177	3756	671700
North West	26676	15017	2795444
Western Cape	33848	12942	20656192
Eastern Cape	58438	15786	5673402
Northern Cape	7208	1162	482845
Free State	23684	5494	1681949
KwaZulu-Natal	68356	21987	33390894
Total	341903	102201	R152 764 429

Table 3 shows that just under a third of teachers in South Africa are reached by NGOs. The highest percentage of teachers reached by NGOs was in North West Province. Here, most teachers were reached by the Primary Education Upgrading Project (PEUP) an organisation set up by the former Bophuthatswana Education Department.

Financial support for NGOs has come mainly from local corporate funders (35%). Foreign funders and the IDT provide 22% and 20% of funds respectively, and the government contributed 6% of the total funding given to NGOs. Self-generated income, private giving, endowments and interest made up 12% of NGO income. The Audit clearly indicates that amount received by province is disproportionate to the number of teachers in each province to the number of NGOs (cf. table 1 and 3). Although some provincial NGOs, such as those in Gauteng, secure high proportions of the funding, it should be noted that they provide support to teachers in other provinces.

The Audit points out that the costs of NGO INSET programmes have not yet come under public scrutiny in the same way that the costs of teacher education and universities have. Most NGOs are not sure of the delivery costs of the INSET, and this is certainly an area where NGOs will have to make improvements. A very crude per capita expenditure estimate of R1 495 can be calculated from the findings of the Audit. However, this is not at all accurate because of the varying nature of courses offered, their duration and number of participants.

ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN THE NGO AUDIT

The audit raises a number of issues, some of them new, about NGOs including the following:

1. NGOs need to keep comprehensive data on the names, location and numbers of teachers reached, as well as other essential data.

2. There is an uneven distribution of NGOs and a need to reduce duplication of services offered.

3. Better, more accessible information about NGOs needs to be provided to allow schools and government to make informed choices about NGOs. There is a need to coordinate INSET work with government education policy.

4. More accurate costing mechanisms of INSET work needs to be established to allow users to compare INSET courses and their costs.

5. Questions are raised about the governance of NGOs, it is noted that few people that serve on the boards of NGOs have experience of teacher development, and in many cases there are no financial experts represented on boards.

6. There is concern about the priorities of INSET offered by NGOs. A tension seems to exist between teachers' perceived needs and NGO priorities.

7. There is a need for incentives for teachers to participate in INSET, and accreditation seems a possible solution.

8. The effectiveness, or impact, of INSET in relation to teachers and students needs to be established.

9. Generally, evaluation in NGOs has taken place in an *impressionistic* way. There has not been that much consistency in approach and data has not always been analyzed. NGOs need to move towards more *systematic* ways of evaluating their work.

COMMENTS ON THE NGO AUDIT

The research was carried out in terms of the brief outlined in the introduction of this paper. The work was systematic, and provides a useful overview of NGOs engaged in INSET. However, comparability of the data collected in the audit was difficult because of the different kinds of interventions that NGOs are involved in. There is little analysis contained in the NGO audit and it tends to be descriptive. Comments in the text referring to tables or charts merely summarize the information and seldom go further. It is a pity that the research approach did not consider the views of teachers who participate in NGO initiated INSET.

The inventory of INSET NGOs will certainly be of use to government as well as communities served by NGOs. Further focus on the nature of programmes would be useful for educational planners.

The NGO audit does give credit to NGOs and the important work they do. However, the role of NGOs in a civil society can be explored further.[4] One of the strengths of NGOs lies in their relative smallness and flexibility, their staff commitment, and their ability to learn and adapt, as well as their more direct impact. These dimensions should also be considered. The Audit does not seriously consider how NGOs can have wider impact, particularly in sharing their ideas and collaborating with other NGOs.

The audit is clearly written with little jargon, but there are one or two phrases that could do with explanation, for example, "real needs of teachers."

Unfortunately, the audit does not take the context in which NGOs work in into account. The last two years, particularly, have been difficult from a financial perspective, especially since some funders have redirected funding.[5] Also, a number of NGOs have operated in sectors within the education community where the government has not worked. These contexts have been often been politically unstable and difficult to work in.

NGOs are rightly criticised for having poor evaluation procedures to monitor their own work. The predominant evaluation model that NGOs use also comes under criticism. However, many NGOs are driven into particular ways of evaluating their work by the funders themselves, and this is not indicated. The size of NGOs, limited funding and expertise, can also explain why evaluation is not always up to scratch.

Chambers[6] gives five questions which are interlinked that can be used as a framework to ask about NGOs. These questions concern:

- *Clients.* Who and where are the NGO's clients?
- *Needs.* What do they define as their priorities and needs?
- *Means.* How can they be enabled to meet them?
- *Comparative competence.* What is the NGO good at, compared with other organis tions?
- *Additionality.* How can the NGO really make a difference for the better?

The links between NGOs and government should have been explored in more detail, particularly since this is a focus area of the audit. The NGO's role in getting teachers teaching again is hinted at in the report. However, most NGOs operate in "voluntary" environment, and do not play much of a coercive role.

Hofmeyer's international review of INSET is patchy with no references provided, offering very little help to NGOs. International trends in NGOs are not considered. For example, in the 1980s and 1990s self-criticism has become more evident in NGOs particularly as many have grown in size.

TAKING THE NGO AUDIT FURTHER

The NGO audit has been a valuable exercise and has succinctly captured an elusive dimension of the education sector. However, it would be a great pity if the findings were not taken further. For example:

1. The audit can be written up for the NGO community with recommendations and guidelines to improve practice.

2. There is an obvious need reflected in the audit to train people in NGOs to evaluate their work more effectively. Evaluation workshops can be organised by funders to address this weakness.

3. The database on NGOs should be compiled in a user-friendly way to allow INSET users to make informed choices about NGO services.

4. The audit acknowledges the important work of NGOs, however there is still a need to *work out strategies with NGOs* to guarantee their existence. For example, recognising that NGOs, particularly more recently, have worked under difficult financial conditions and that fundraising has become a major part of NGO work, it may be useful to register NGOs and to establish both short-term and long-term funding strategies such as: tendering for particular areas of INSET work in the province; entering into triennial contracts with provinces; obtaining major funding from contracts with the provinces; having their INSET work systematically monitored and evaluated.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank Penny Vinjevold, of the Joint Education Trust, for giving me access to the near complete draft of the NGO audit.

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DEBATE

Teacher Education – Reconstruction and Challenges

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REVOLUTION AND MIRROR IMAGES

Near the beginning of Emile, Rousseau, one of the fathers of the French Revolution, tells us that things are so bad in the society and education of his day, that the recipe for change is to do the opposite of everything that was previously done.

Such a sentiment has been at the root of much revolutionary fervour – slaves must become masters, masters must become slaves – but it is a conservative trap; it encourages us to think in terms of binary opposites and to think of revolution as simply favouring the alternative of each pair. If the hated regime prioritized facts, the revolution must prioritize values; if the oppressive regime over-rode wants we must celebrate wants.

In our historical situation I do think we need something like a revolution in the ways we think about schooling and, consequently, Teacher Education. But we will not accomplish such a revolution if we merely do the 'opposite' of whatever was done in the past. A revolution would consist rather in escaping from the framework which generates the binary opposites.

Let us remind ourselves of two binary opposites which can prevent our seeing what we need to do, and which we inherit from Apartheid and the struggle against it.

The unjust and divided education systems of Apartheid, with the `white' system massively and persistently better resourced than the `black' systems, has fostered a deep conviction that whatever the `white' system did and had provides the model for what all should do and have. If the `whites' had a 1:18 teacher:pupil ratio and a four-year initial Diploma, we should all have a 1:18 teacher:pupil ratio and a four-year Diploma – anything else will, obviously, be inferior.

But we can also consider what is, in a sense, an opposing tendency: to conceive of democratic education as the opposite of Apartheid education. Many people can say little about what democratic education is other than that it must be the reverse of Apartheid

education. But most of us here will acknowledge that we have run into some serious problems in our institutions and practices, and that some of our problems revolve around confusions about how we can give body to the ideals of democratic education.

Binary opposites such as these trap us into the framework that constructed them, and it is the framework itself which hinders our search for viable solutions.

CAUSES AND REMEDIES

Our schooling system is in a far from healthy condition. Indeed in some regions and sectors the system is close to total collapse. Most of us get a shock of recognition when we read Elizabeth de Villiers's *Walking the Tightrope*,[2] with its descriptions of the deep malaise which pervades many of our schools, overcrowded, violent, and suffused with frustration and dashed hopes.

Many teachers overwhelmed by despair and cynicism, defeated by the numbers of students they are expected to teach, and embittered by what they see as their poor levels of payment, do the absolute minimum, and devote their energies to other pursuits. They do not see themselves in terms of the ideals of the teaching profession, they have ceased to care.

Most of us here, I think, will acknowledge that the main causes of this deterioration have been political. But it would be an error for us to assume that because the causes were political that therefore the remedies will be political, at least in some facile sense of `political'. The `educational'" struggle in this country was at its heart a political rather than educational struggle, and whatever else it might be claimed to have brought about, it has not brought about an educational utopia. My main claim in writing this paper is that at least a large part of the remedy is going to have to be professional.

I am not claiming that the idea of a profession is not political in some deeper sense, or that there are no political dimensions to finding a remedy for our ills. It is quite clear that the educational policies which will be put into effect by the democratically elected government of this country, including the administrative structures put in place, funding decisions taken, etc, will provide some of the remedy. My claim is rather that it would be an error for us to think that such political measures are going to be a sufficient remedy.

Key agents in the success of any schooling system are the professional teachers who work in it. Even the most perfect political arrangements will not enable us to put Humpty Dumpty together again. The commitment, competence and quality of the teachers in any schooling system are necessary ingredients for its success.

LOSS OF A SENSE OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SYSTEMATIC LEARNING

Many people talk about a breakdown in the culture of learning. Another, and more explanatory, way of referring to this phenomenon is in terms of a loss of a sense of the significance of systematic learning. This phrase also provides a focus in terms of which to try to understand many of the current ills of our education system, and how we might remedy them.

A sense of the significance of systematic learning is necessarily a shared good, maintained by and within communities of practitioners and the institutions in which they work. Where, such as in our situation, this good has been lost sight of, the blame cannot be pinned on any particular individuals, classes of individuals or institutions.

Sometimes when people think about these things they think in terms of a deterioration of `standards' but a much less misleading way of talking is in terms of the concept of caring. A community which has a sense of the significance of systematic learning cares about learning, it understands it as having value which stretches beyond whatever value it might have in the market-place of employment, or the competition for social status, for example, and is offended by fraudulent *simulacra*.

If we now ask how we might recover a sense of the significance of systematic learning then we can see there can be no simple answer. Although institutional arrangements might enable and encourage a sense of the significance of systematic learning, no administrative dictates can guarantee this achievement; it depends crucially on the cumulative efforts of individuals who understand what it involves and what its cultural and political significance is.

There are forms of theorizing about education which undermine a sense of the significance of systematic learning. In general such theorizing revolves around the issues of the arbitrariness of "official knowledge", the idea that knowledge and power are simply two sides of the same coin, and relativist or subjectivist epistemologies which tell that knowledge is merely the common convictions of this or that local group, or the subjective beliefs of particular individuals. In these ways of thinking systematic learning is nothing other than an arbitrary imposition (Who decides?), and resistance to systematic learning comes to be seen as critical thinking.

Such scepticism does not seem to have reached two countries I have recently visited, Malaysia and South Korea. In these countries there is a widely shared sense of the significance of systematic learning. A sceptic might say that I am here confusing a sense of the significance of systematic learning with market forces. In our situation, the sceptic might continue, with our high levels of unemployment we can hardly expect a recovery of a sense of the significance of systematic learning. My view about this is that we have here a chicken and egg problem. Although market forces and a sense of the significance of systematic learning might be in some ways linked to each other there seems no particular reason to accord either explanatory priority – especially in a phase of reconstruction.

THE CHALLENGE FOR PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS

If a main problem for us is a loss of a sense of the significance of systematic learning, what can we do about it? I would here like to claim that professional teachers have a least a key role in the recovery of a sense of the significance of systematic learning. Indeed I take this to be a principal challenge facing the teaching profession in South Africa at this time. The reconstruction of our country depends on a reconstruction of the education system, and professional teachers are the main agents in this task.

One obstacle here is the shallow way in which the notion of a teaching profession has been politicised. That kind of politicization has led to the concept of a profession having been located in the discourse of the right, so that there is a tendency for professional associations to be contrasted with teacher unions, with all the forces of political correctness encouraging us to align ourselves with the unions. In my view it would be a bad error to abandon the concept of a teaching profession to the reactionary discourses of the right. What we need to do is to relocate the concept of a profession in the discourses of the left, those discourses which have the interests of the poor, exploited and excluded members of society at their heart.

The concept of a profession encapsulates the idea of expertise and knowledge to be deployed in the service communities and individuals. The benefits of a profession are not merely to individual members of the profession but to the communities they serve. This is a reason to have some reservations about how the policy of affirmative action is to be implemented in the realm of Teacher Education. If we admit someone to the teaching profession on affirmative action grounds we might benefit her, but the question which needs to be pressed is how that benefit is to be weighed against the possible benefits or harms to those she will teach, perhaps over many years.

One thing I am committed to in putting forward these views is that it is a mistake, in pursuit of a form of democratic egalitarianism, to repudiate the special expertise of teachers in contributing to the quality of life in a society. Such egalitarianism is based on misplaced political commitment and is as much a betrayal of the aspirations of learners as is any authoritarian imposition.

Indeed this point needs to be taken further. One of the aspects of the situation we find ourselves in is a serious disintegration of professional authority. If the teaching profession is going to make an effective contribution to a retrieval of a sense of the significance of systematic learning we will have to recover a proper understanding of the nature of professional authority, how it differs from authoritarianism and from political authority, and the ways in which it is enabling rather than restrictive. We will need to take into account the ways in which professional authority depends on respect for professional judgement and on institutional and community support and encouragement.

Professional authority constitutes the sphere of learning. What this implies is that the idea of service which is central to the concept of a profession is not subservient to the current whims, wants and beliefs of those served. A profession does not serve a society by making itself into its servant.

The teaching profession has the political responsibility to constitute the sphere of learning in society, and to enable access to it. One way of describing our present malaise is to say that one main reason why we have collectively lost a sense of the significance of systematic learning is that too many members of the teaching profession have, for whatever justifiable or unjustifiable reasons, failed to fulfil their public responsibility to contribute to the constitution of the sphere of learning. We need to discover, or rediscover, perhaps, a culture of professional teaching and at the heart of this stands the idea of professional practices.

The professional practices of teaching are constructed around the goal of enabling access to a particular kind of social good. But, in our situation, conditions seem to distort, or even prevent, the pursuit of this goal. Apart from may other things which could be mentioned, I think here specifically of the twin factors of lack of resources and numbers of learners.

We see these factors as problems because we understand professional practice not in terms of its definitive goals and principles but in terms of its particular implementations. When this happens then professional practice loses its flexibility, it becomes trapped in a socio/historical context which has passed. It is to this problem that I will now direct our attention.

LIMITED RESOURCES AND BURGEONING NUMBERS OF LEARNERS

We have all experienced the massive demand for access to the schooling system. At the same time we know that resources for education are limited, and, if anything, likely to decline. This sets the trap for professional practice. Most of us have experienced the effects. More students, crowded classes, `inadequate' resources, etc.

Across the world resources for education have declined. Developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, have spent staggering proportions of their budgets on education, and by now there is widespread scepticism about whether this was a fruitful use of scarce resources. The largest slice (between 75% and 90%) in any education budget is devoted to teachers' salaries.

Given these realities of our situation, what can we do? Apart from contesting whether this is the reality, I think we are faced with only three options: (a) drastically reduce teachers' salaries so that we can employ more teachers; (b) restrict access to the schooling system, so that there are fewer students to teach; or (c) enable teachers to teach more students.

Politically (a) and (b) are most unlikely to be possible. In addition, if we did pay teachers less it is likely, given the consumer orientation of our society, that some of the most talented teachers would simply leave the profession, and its overall quality would suffer. Similarly, given our Apartheid history of limited access to the system and our strong commitment to redress, we can hardly seriously contemplate limiting access to the system. This leaves us with option (c) which is the one I favour. I think it is not only desirable in the light of the political principle of equality of formal access (which is one way of giving body to the ideals of democratic education), but also viable, although not without some quite dramatic adjustment to our understanding of professional practice.

What I am talking about here is a fundamental shift in our entrenched conceptions of professional practice - an adjustment of the conceptual framework in terms of which we think about good teaching. We have a tenacious tendency to lose sight of the context-boundedness of particular practices and to base our conception of teaching on them. We need to rearticulate the definitive goals and purposes of the teaching profession and then come to see that particular implementations of those goals and purposes are context-bound.

One key feature of our common concept of teaching is that teaching takes place in a situation where there is one teacher face-to-face with about twenty learners (or fewer, if possible) for specified periods of time and in particular physical boundaries. We can note the extent to which the very architecture of our school and college buildings reflects this view of what teaching is, and the ways in which we conceptually link the ideas of small numbers and quality. As soon as the number of learners per teacher jumps to, say, forty or eighty, teachers see themselves as in a deficient teaching situation, and many teachers in such situations are overcome by despair and despondency and simply cease to care.

But this particular implementation of the goals and principles of teaching arose in a context in which education was for only limited sectors of the population and where the resources for education, especially the resources to pay teachers, were much more abundantly available. Our problem is that we have tried to take this particular set of practices into a changed context - one characterised by our trying to provide education for the whole population and in which the resources for this project are limited.

What we, as a profession, need to try to do, is to discover, or invent, ways of implementing the goals and principles of the teaching profession in our new context. What this means, in plain language, is that we will have to discover how teachers can effectively teach much larger numbers of learners. This might mean teaching larger

classes, but not necessarily, as we might find that the whole tradition of "class-teaching" is fatally tied to the particular conception of the practice of teaching which is inappropriate in our new context.

I might add that were we able to bring about a revolution of this kind, were we able to escape the inherited framework in terms of which we think of professional teaching practices, we might even be able to reach the situation in which the fewer teachers we needed could be more generously, more appropriately, remunerated for their seminal contribution to the reconstruction of our society.

One key institutional site at which such a revolution would need to be launched, of course, is going to have to be in those institutions concerned with the professional education of teachers. I shall conclude by drawing out a few implications of the claims I have made for the way we think about teacher education.

SOME LESSONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

Many of our students not only arrive in our programmes, but leave, with deep scepticism about the significance of systematic learning. Given our current situation, a major task of Teacher Education now must be insistently to undermine such scepticism, and show our students how to care about systematic learning, to take it seriously.

We need, then, to be much clearer that our central purpose is to initiate our students into the culture of professional teaching. We need to foster in them a commitment to its ideals, and show them how to take on board their political responsibilities, as aspirant members of the profession, for constituting the sphere of learning. We need to clarify with them the distinctive nature of professional authority and assist them to begin to develop teaching practices which are enabling rather than excluding.

We need, then, both in our own practices and in what we tell our students, persistently, to undermine some deeply embedded assumptions about the practices of teaching. It is striking to consider the countless ways in which, in our programmes, we assume an individual teacher teaching a small group of learners. Think, for example, of the kind of emphasis we place on individual performance during contact-time, as if that stands at the heart of the practice of teaching. We need to knock contact-time off its pedestal and replace it with something like the idea that teaching is centrally the organisation of systematic learning.

Finally, we need to avoid being over-ambitious about what can be accomplished through pre-service training. We need to avoid the illusion that we will be able to bring about a revolution in the practices of teaching by sending youthful missionaries into the schools. If we are going to be catalysts in accomplishing the revolution then we will need to see that what is traditionally called in-service training will have to become a major function of our institutions.

These are some of the thoughts I have about the challenges for Teacher Education as we move into a phase of Reconstruction and Development.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Talk given at the CORDTEK Conference, Springfield College of Education, 12th August 1994.
2. E. de Villiers *Walking the Tightrope* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1990).

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REPORT

Innovations in Colleges of Education: Lessons for Teacher Education Policy

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INTROCTION

Edupol has recently completed a research project focusing on five innovations in colleges:

* the Bellville College's Academic Enrichment programme: which is a "bridging programme" for black students who either failed or passed their matric in DET schools in the Western Cape and who are assisted to gain entry into tertiary education;
* the Transvaal College's INSET project: which upgrades unqualified, practising teachers in the former Kangwane homeland by means of distance correspondence tuition which is coupled with minimal contact tuition;
* Edgewood College's 2+2 year diploma course: in which Kwazulu's Department of Education and Culture (KDEC) student-teachers spend the first two years of their training in contact tuition in the college and the last two years completing their diploma through correspondence course at the Natal College of Education;
* the Giyani College's system of governance: simply put, it is basically a team approach to college governance in which key actors in the college such as students, staff, and college management participate in teams aiming at solving college-based issues; and

* the FULCRUM Project: which is a non-profit making initiative started by NGOs, the former Kwazulu Department of Education and Culture, and the college professional staff in Kwazulu colleges of education. Its key focus is to support the development of appropriate in-service training for college lecturers in Kwazulu.

Each of these innovations represents an important issue in the current debate about the future role of colleges of education. The purpose of this research was to draw out policy lessons which could be instructive in the reconstruction of teacher development, and especially the restructuring of colleges as key institutions for teacher supply. In pursuit of this objective, four stakeholder categories influencing the innovations in question were identified: education department officials, the college rectorate, the college staff, and students and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the case of the Fulcrum project. In total 123 people were interviewed.

The methodology used consisted of semi-structured and group interviews. An interview schedule was used in conducting semi-structured interviews with members of the college rectorate. In some instances interviews were held on a one-to-one basis and in other instances group interviews were held.

In most instances interviews were held first with the education department officials and the rectorate, and then with the college staff and students. This enabled the researchers to test critical issues raised by the department officials and the rectorate in group interviews held with the college staff and, in some cases, students or recipients of the innovation. In these group interviews, college staff members were requested to fill in questionnaires and thereafter group interviews were held.

A key limitation in this article is that our research was conducted in the old South Africa. Thus, some names and experiences mentioned in this article no longer accord with the spirit and the reality of the new non-racial and democratic order. However, we hope that this does not detract from the value of the experience the researchers are trying to share with the education research community and other interested parties.

In communicating the lessons drawn from our research, this article will discuss the following: the theoretical framework of our study, the research findings, the policy lessons and lastly, there will be a brief conclusion on our work.

2. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Education change is not a linear but a multi-dimensional process that needs to be examined at a number of levels. Thus, the theoretical framework of this study consists of three levels of analysis i.e, the system-wide level, the institutional level, and the programmatic level. We looked for theories that would best elucidate change at these levels.

At the system-wide level Archer's[1] theory of system change was used. She argues that negotiated change is the dominant change process in all state systems of education. The key dynamics in the change process used by Archer's theory of system change are: structure, agency, and ideology. With regard to structure, Archer argues that the centralisation of decision-making powers leaves little room for innovation and change whereas decentralisation enables more change processes to occur. In the case of agency, she identifies three change processes i.e, political manipulation, external transaction, and internal initiation which she says is very influential in changing the education system.

"Political manipulation" refers to a situation in which interest groups exert political pressure on the state to meet their educational demands. It also refers to instances when the state uses its power to bring about change to advance its own political interests. "External transaction" occurs when structures outside the state e.g business, exchange financial resources for expertise in the system so that improved products or services can be delivered. "Internal initiation" occurs when professionals in the system engage in professional efforts to renew or change the institution or system.

Another strand of Archer's theory of education system change is the effect of ideology on structure and agency. Educational ideologies play an important role in recruiting support and forming alliances, at times overriding differences of interest or introducing divisions within an interest group.

Hanson's[2] theory of institutional change was used in analyzing innovative change at the institutional level. His theory focuses on schools and the researchers use it to analyze change in colleges of education. Two analytical tools from Hanson's theory of institutional change were used in this research. Hanson stresses the importance of the external environment in shaping the nature of institutional innovation. He argues that within educational institutions there are different loci of power which contribute significantly to the directions taken by the change process in an institution. According to him, semi-autonomous power centres and the coalitions formed around them either work positively or negatively to influence the dynamics of organisational change.

Hanson views managerial control of schools (or colleges of education in the case of this article) as subject to diverse tensions. On the one hand, requirements of learning suggest an "unencumbered, non-prescriptive environment".[3] On the other hand, requirements of efficiency and predictability in human resource management suggest a rational, programmed environment. Thus arises the spectre of two very different sources of organisational control: one rooted in the classical bureaucratic tradition of formal centralised authority (of the education bureaucracy) and the other based on the informal prerogatives and professionalism of the educator. The unique quality of teaching organisations is that the core activity, the teaching-learning process, requires and justifies control by educators, who are subordinated to the bureaucracy in the educational hierarchy.

Whereas in other organisations refusal to comply might result in dismissal, the educator's refusal is frequently legitimated by an understanding of the unusual needs of classroom instruction. Certain organisational characteristics of schools, and in our case colleges, provide educators with the opportunity to govern from below - the looseness of system structures, tradition of autonomy and professionalism, collegiality, a low level of visibility in the classroom and the claim of teaching expertise. Therefore, while formally, the administrators are characterised as superiors and the educators as subordinates, informally the subordinates obtain considerable control over the governing process.

Hanson also explains that change inevitably brings about resistance and that the challenge is to manage resistance.

Bolman and Deal[4] were used to complement Hanson's[5] theory in explaining the role of leadership in institutional change. They indicate the importance of the dialogical interaction between leaders and both their organisational context and constituencies. They maintain that innovative leaders should think beyond their immediate constraints and possess political skills that will enable them to cope with the challenging requirements of multiple constituencies.

Fullan's[6] theory of innovation was also used to analyze the programmatic level of change. He emphasised the significance of facilitating shared meaning-making of the goals and directions of an innovation amongst participants through social interaction. The implementation approach, according to him, must be a blend of bottom-up and top-down approaches. He also differentiated between first and second order changes. First order changes are those that maintain or improve the status quo and second order changes lead to the fundamental restructuring of the institution.

For educational innovations to be successful, according to Fullan, they must include change in the curriculum, teaching practices and pedagogical beliefs. He also suggests six key variables whose critical mix can enhance the chances of success of an innovation. These are: vision-building, evolutionary planning and development, resource and assistance mobilisation, problem-coping, and restructuring.

3. THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this section, the key findings of our research will be discussed in accordance with the study's three levels of analysis.

3.1 Findings related to Archer's (1985) theory of system change

3.1.1 Main research finding 1 : Decentralisation encourages innovation

Our research confirms Archer's[7] theory that decentralisation tends to encourage internal initiation. Decentralisation of formal state powers away from Pretoria has allowed bureaucracies such as those of Gazankulu, Kwazulu, and the House of Delegates to initiate change and improvements in their education system.

The manner in which the Giyani College of Education was established clearly illustrates the space decentralisation of structure has on innovativeness. The government of what was formerly the Gazankulu homeland initiated the establishment of the Giyani College. According to the interviewees at the college, Gazankulu's former Chief Minister, the late Professor Hudson Ntswanisi, redirected the funds allocated to the building of a prison in the homeland by the then central government. Instead, he chose to build the Giyani college of education.

In Archerian terms, the legal status of Gazankulu as a self-governing territory was an important decentralising mechanism which enabled the late Professor Ntswanisi to be persuaded by his professional instincts and commitment to quality teacher education to establish the Giyani College of Education. Such a move, coupled with the Giyani college's association with the University of the Witwatersrand and the quality of its education faculty, has unleashed the innovative abilities of the whole college and the result, amongst others, is the innovative team approach to college governance attempted by the college.

Like the former homeland of Gazankulu, the relative autonomy of the former homeland of Kwazulu as a self-governing territory facilitated its education ministry's involvement in the FULCRUM project and the Edgewood College's two-year diploma. The latter was also enabled by Edgewood college's autonomy which derived from its affiliation to the University of Natal. In contrast, in Bellville College of Education the space to innovate was limited by the former Tri-cameral parliaments' House of Representatives' rigid control of the college, and, unlike Edgewood College of Education, the college's lack of autonomy. As a result, Bellville college's innovation i e, the academic enrichment programme, has not been as extensive as in innovations in other colleges.

This should not be understood to mean that only decentralisation works. While the research recognises the political power of the state in teacher development, the point made by the above evidence is that some amount of decentralisation of formal power to the local level must take place if internal initiation and external transaction change processes are to take place. Such decentralisation, as the research has shown, permits initiative-taking and innovation at the local level by the teaching profession and encourages partnerships. It is for this reason, for example, that this research supports and acknowledges the value of granting colleges of education sufficient capacity (e.g, well-qualified staff and infrastructure) and autonomy.

An important finding here is the desirability of a mixture of centralisation and decentralisation in the governance of teacher education. Our research illustrates that such a mixture will permit state support and direction of teacher education and enable innovation and change at the institutional levels of the system.

3.1.2 Main Research finding 2: Innovative individuals needs space and recognition

Our research indicates the critical importance of creating conditions allowing innovative individuals to be agents of change. The experience of Edgewood and Giyani Colleges in particular suggests that internal initiation will be a crucial change process in the future. Our observations suggest that the intervention of leaders such as the former rector of Edgewood College and the late Chief Minister of Gazankulu is very significant. It is important to recognise and nurture the conditions which produced such change agents, and which provided space for them to implement their creative schemes. In this instance, we do not refer to conditions of apartheid which cast, for example, the former Chief Minister of the erstwhile Gazankulu and the former rector of Edgewood College, in positions which, by their nature, sought to perpetuate apartheid's social and economic relations. On the contrary, we refer to such conditions as the decentralisation of formal decision-making powers through granting sufficient autonomy to colleges. Such decentralisation enabled internal initiation to take place as the centre provided space for innovative individuals to take initiative in improving teacher education.

The existence of the space provided by decentralisation is necessary but not sufficient for innovation to take place. It takes certain leadership qualities to exploit the possibilities raised by decentralisation. For example, awareness of the value and space provided by decentralisation is essential. The ability to use political power and the availability of financial resources is also crucial. In all the transactions involved in the innovations studied, political power, financial resources or their lack, and expertise have been shown to be the key bargaining chips. This confirms Archer's thesis about their significance.

3.1.3: Main Research Finding 3: Value-based innovation has a high success rate

Our research reveals that in instances where an innovation is strongly underpinned by a value-base, there are greater chances of success. Giyani College, the FULCRUM project and Edgewood College are clear examples; their strong value-base has contributed to the success of their innovations.

However, this does not mean any kind of value base would enhance the chances of success of an innovation. All the innovative projects that we studied were motivated, albeit in varying degrees, by their commitment to eradicate the legacy of apartheid. They were not only oppositional to apartheid, but they also saw themselves contributing to the

establishment of a non-racial democracy. This was particularly apparent in the FULCRUM project, the Giyani and Edgewood Colleges of Education. Some members of Edgewood College of Education's rectorate, for example, claimed that the two-plus-two diploma in their college was part of their "hidden agenda" to change the profile of their college from being exclusively white-dominated to being multi-racial.

An ideological component also seems to have played an important role in the initiation of Bellville College's academic enrichment programme. However, this appears to have fizzled out in the implementation stages of the project. The fact that the coalition created by the anti-apartheid ideological stance at the initial stages of the project was not taken into the implementation phase partly explains the lack of significant progress of the project.

The Transvaal College's innovation lacked ideological depth. The staff members' main concern was whether their initiative will make the college survive rationalisation by the House of Delegates. Economic survival was the key value base.

In sum, our third finding teaches that a clear and shared value base underpinning an innovation influences its chances of success.

3.2 Main findings on institutional change drawn from the case studies

Most, if not all, of the innovations studied can be seen as a direct challenge to illegitimate apartheid-created structures in the immediate external environment at a time of political transition. Moreover, strong pressures in the environment e g, lack of funds and teachers or dwindling student numbers have pushed agents to look for creative responses to their problems. As such, Hanson's thesis can be vindicated in that the external environment has been a prime force in shaping the nature of the innovation. However, the extent to which the organisational response of the innovation has addressed the variable needs and pressures of that environment will determine its ultimate impact.

3.2.1 Main research finding 4: Innovations need to be responsive to environmental needs

Our research confirms the significance of the institutions' articulation with the needs of its immediate environment. The FULCRUM project, for example, grew out of a need expressed by the Kwazulu Department of Education and Culture for the enrichment of English, Afrikaans, Mathematics and Science in the Kwazulu colleges of education. Initially located at the level of the student teacher, the innovation swiftly moved to focus on upgrading and empowering college lecturers in order to make a more fundamental and lasting impact.

Semi-autonomous power centres and coalitions:

3.2.2 Main research finding 5: There is a need to establish consensus amongst various coalitions in an innovative institution

The need to establish consensus and re-orientate various coalitions in the same direction as the innovation, is a key finding. The team approach to decision-making adopted by the Giyani College is instructive in this regard.

The team concept in Giyani college of education is a very popular one supported by the majority of staff. It evolved out of a staff response to a college leadership vacuum due to the loss of both the rector and the vice-rector in the latter part of 1992. The general administrative and academic work of the college was divided into a series of focuses, and committees or "teams" related to each were grouped under their umbrella. Every member of the academic staff belongs to a team. Teams discuss issues, resolve problems through consensus and bring their recommendations to the entire staff for further discussion.

Like all education institutions, Giyani College is characterised by two very different sources of organisational control. On the one hand, the requirements of efficiency and predictability in human and material management, as Hanson[8] argued, lend themselves to bureaucratic control; on the other hand the requirements and prerogatives of the teaching-learning process justifies professional control. Where Giyani college differs from other institutions is that the latter has been formalised and elevated to recognised units of management known as "teams". Further, because of the right of student representation at almost all levels of decision-making, students are a natural third source of power.

The old hierarchies of centralised authority are only nominal. The structures of Heads of Divisions, Heads of Departments, and the Rectorate exist but in effect have been made redundant by the development of teams. These teams cut cross authority levels and are open to all professional staff as well as student representatives.

Hence the administrators of bureaucratic control have been integrated with the professionals' loci of control. Typically, there is a natural division in management goals between the 'bureaucrats' and the professionals, but in practice these natural coalitions have been integrated through a formal coalition: the team concept.

In the administration, the Registrar and the Deputy Registrar are involved in the Finance and the Admissions Teams. Although committed to the Giyani innovation and its ethos, both administrators were critical of its weaknesses in the administrative and financial spheres.

> *Operating on the basis of trust is incompatible with bureaucratic procedure.*(Registrar)

> *The first team were academics and not enough attention was paid to record-keeping, register, security, and other administrative tasks. Because of the focus on democratic process a laissez-faire approach was adopted...Everyone had a master key. As a result visual equipment was stolen ...* (Registrar).

Those who have reservations about team management seem to be a minority. Of the twelve professional staff interviewed only one indicated that he/she did not have the time or the inclination for this team concept. Another staff member commented that those who resisted the innovation were *"people who still operate from an authoritarian standpoint - mostly white people."* Another noted the anxieties created by change,

> *People were frightened to move into teams and teams that still have to define their functions don't work* (Lecturer)

Despite these comments, both administrators stated that the management experience Giyani had exposed them to was 'exciting' and 'challenging'. Other members of the college community were more generous in their comments:

> *The loss of the rector and the vice rector last year popularised the team concept..it was a blessing in disguise as now we are more autonomous. Now the new rectorate will have to adapt to that structure* (Lecturer).

The re-focusing of coalitions within an institution towards the direction of the innovation is clearly important, as the team approach in Giyani College demonstrates, as resistance from internal power centres can make innovations unworkable if not completely wreck them. Such a possibility is suggested by the lack of coherence and direction amongst students and lecturers at Edgewood College. Despite the liberal outlook of the college black student-teachers, for whom the two-plus-two course at the college was meant, perceived their treatment in the college as racist. Some felt that the

> *2+2 course student-teachers (all of whom were black) will not be valuable in the field and will not be considered for promotions compared to white students.*

Others were of the view that

> *... the teaching methods we are taught are ideal for small classes in the white urban areas and not for big classes in the rural areas.*

The lecturers, on the other hand, were unhappy about the fact that they were not consulted when the two-year diploma course was introduced in the college. One lecturer at the college expressed that

> *Staff were not consulted-this (meaning the course) was presented as a fait accompli to staff- we had no say or discussion.*

Some junior members of the staff were also concerned that they were denied a say in the running of the project simply because they had a junior status. One lecturer expressed that

> *I would like to be more involved in decision-making-as a junior or new lecturer I will have to wait for my promotion to have my say.*

Leader's role

3.2.3 Main research finding 6: Leadership skills such as the promotion of participatory decision-making and risk-taking are critical to the success of an innovation

This research found that a management philosophy that encourages a collaborative work culture, experimentation and a participatory approach in decision-making and a shared implementation strategy improve the prospects of institutional change. This is clearly evident in the Giyani College. In addition; the position, status, personality and political skills of the leadership can play a major role in providing the impetus and energy to drive the innovation. The leadership roles played by the late Professor Hudson Ntswanisi in establishing the Giyani College, and Professor Andre Le Roux in establishing the two-year diploma course at Edgewood illustrates this point. Meaningful leadership implies dialogical interaction between leaders and multiple constituencies. It also implies co-ordination and control of sub-groups so that they move together in a mutually negotiated direction. At Edgewood college, as indicated earlier, the dialogical interaction was not properly done as the staff claimed that they were not consulted. In fact, it seems that dialogical interaction is an endless process that only switches from one level to another.

In short, a mixture of bottom-up and top-down approaches to management are crucial for institutional change.

Resistance

Resistance to innovation occurs both at the individual and organisational level. Hanson's argument that resistance has both a negative and positive function is vindicated through the experience of the case studies.

3.2.4 Main research finding 7: As resistance is inevitable in change situations, the challenge is to provide mechanisms that will deal with it

Our case studies confirm that change is inevitably accompanied by resistance, and particularly where risk-taking and experimentation are norms informing the change process. The case of the Giyani College of Education is illustrative in this regard.

Although the staff and students of Giyani College have been courageous in pursuing a team approach to college governance, such a risk-taking exercise is not unproblematic. For instance, it is clear that not everybody associated with the college understood or was prepared to go along with the changes sought by the Giyani college staff and students. The reason, in part, is that those who resisted attempts at change did not share the values underpinning such attempts. Neither did they share the vision that other actors in the college pursued. The Gazankulu Education Department was one such resistor.

In expressing the department's unhappiness about the college's style of governance, the former Gazankulu education department spokesperson declared that

> *The moral values are problematic in this College; ... unlike Afrikaner culture there is much questioning of values here ...*

The college staff, on the other hand, had a particular view of the department:

> *The GED resists anything new and progressive that does not fit with their strong hierarchical view of life.*

But the resistance and lack of understanding of what the college was trying to achieve was not only confined to the former Gazankulu Education Department. Teachers and principals in the schools surrounding the college, most of whom were grounded in the Fundamental Pedagogics tradition in teacher education, found the college's student-teachers difficult to deal with. One student teacher indicated that:

> *Principals misconstrue openness based on democratic principles as being equivalent to anarchy. They feel it undermines their authority.*

The conservative sections of the local community also had value conflicts with the college. This became evident when co-educational student residences were being introduced. According to a student-teacher:

> *Despite the fact that most students are married they (the community) thought it (co-educational residence) would lead to lots of female students falling pregnant. This has not happened and now they accept it.*

The above illustrates the significance of creating grievance resolution structures to handle resistance. The team approach adopted at the Giyani College has created structures consisting of staff and students to deal with a variety of issues, including resistance-related ones. Through such structures the organisational leadership attempt to manage the internal resistance so that various coalitions within the college should move together in the direction of change. However, judging from the above comments, resistance to innovation is not only within but also outside the college. The challenge, therefore, is that mechanisms devised to deal with resistance should also seek to accommodate forces external to the institution.

3.3 Major findings at the programmatic level

3.3.1 Main research finding 8: The process of meaning-making at both the individual and collective levels is crucial to the success of an innovation

Meaning-making, according to Fullan[9] enhances the chances of success of an innovation. Fullan defines meaning-making as a process of change located in a social setting in which solutions come through social interaction around the meaning of the innovation, and it happens at both the individual and collective levels. The experience of Giyani College is instructive in this regard. The participatory decision-making approach at the college has facilitated the process of social interaction between various college stakeholders which seem to have made both individual and collective meaning-making possible. This meaning-making process, however, stopped short outside the institution. The innovation's goals were often not shared by the community for whom the college was producing teachers.

The lack of or insufficient social interaction around the academic enrichment programme in Bellville College stifled both individual and collective meaning-making. The rector had a different understanding from students and some staff members about the objectives of the programme. According to the rector the programme

> *... only prepared students for life and did not guarantee their automatic entrance to the college.*

But one lecturer was concerned that:

> *The students from last year, 1992, feel that they do not have automatic and easy access to the college.*

Order of change

Fullan differentiates between first order changes that "intensify" or entrench the status quo, and second order changes that seek to "restructure" or alter the status quo. Fullan holds that it is only the latter form of change that is really effective. Fullan's differentiation was useful in allowing this research to distinguish the different forms of educational change in the innovations we surveyed.

3.3.2 Main research finding 9: Second-order changes have the potential to bring about fundamental change

In a context demanding immense efforts to reconstruct teacher education, second-order changes have the potential to bring about profound change in the education system. The challenge here lies in significantly altering the goals, structures, roles and ethos of teacher education programmes. The Giyani College seems to have made a successful attempt at profoundly changing the institution. This owes much to the college's courage in significantly altering the goals, structures, roles and the ethos of its teacher education programme. Of note is the acknowledgement within the college that change is an on-going process and that there should be further attempts at self-renewal.

Three change dimensions

3.3.3 Main research Finding 10: To bring about fundamental change, innovations must focus on changing the curriculum, teaching practices and pedagogical assumptions

Successful innovations such as the Giyani College and the FULCRUM project confirm that focusing on the curriculum, teaching practices and pedagogical assumptions can bring about fundamental change. Innovations in other colleges, on the other hand, serve to confirm that inadequate attention to the above three areas does not bring about significant change.

Developmental stage

Fullan distinguishes between the different stages of an innovation and the factors that affect them. What occurs at one stage of the change process strongly affects subsequent stages, and new factors appear which influence the subsequent stages. It is useful to distinguish innovations by their developmental stage so as to assess them dynamically as a change process rather than an event.

3.3.4 Main research finding 11: A step-wise approach to innovation is sensible

The innovations that followed a step-wise approach to innovation and had enough lead-time before implementation, as suggested by Fullan,[10] tended to be relatively successful. The Giyani and the Edgewood colleges seems to be relatively successful partly because at the initial stages of the programme there was time devoted (albeit insufficient) to conceptualising the innovations before these ideas were implemented. In another college there is little evidence, if any, that proper attention was given to conceptualising the academic enrichment programme before it was implemented. This suggests that innovations must provide space between the conceptualisation, design and implementation stages with provision for the process of progress review that usually accompanies the implementation stage.

Implementation

Fullan views implementation approaches to an innovation along a continuum of top-down to bottom up. The (top-down) "fidelity approach" assumes that the implementer will put into effect a change plan handed down to them. The "mutual adaptive approach" assumes that implementers will negotiate the plan with the developers and administrators of the implementation, and both the plan and the people will change to get a fit. Fullan argues that the blending of top-down initiative and bottom up participation is characteristic of successful multi-level change. Our findings in our survey verify Fullan's observation to a large extent.

3.3.5 Main research finding 12: In implementing an innovation there must be a balance between top-down and bottom-up approaches

Our research confirms Fullan's[11] contention that a mutual adaptive approach is a desirable implementation and management approach for innovations. The value of this approach lies in its potential to strike a balance between a top-down and bottom-up approaches. This is enabled by a social interaction encouraged by the mutual adaptive approach which stresses continuing flexibility in the innovation and institution. Again, the team approach

at the Giyani College illustrates this point. It allows all stakeholders at the college to influence the innovation and thereby co-own it. It also facilitates the development of meaning-making.

Key elements

Fullan suggests that there are no neat guidelines for the successful implementation of innovations. Rather it involves the right mix of a number of critical variables. These variables interact to determine success or failure. They are also integral to the meaning-making that individuals develop out of social interaction with the innovation.

3.3.6 Main research finding 13: The 'right' mix of critical elements is important to the innovation

The six critical elements i.e, vision-building, evolutionary planning and development, initiative-taking and empowerment, resource and assistance mobilisation, problem-coping, and restructuring suggested by Fullan were clearly visible in the more successful of the innovations we observed. The critical mix of these elements cannot be prescribed as it will be largely determined by the context in which the innovation operates.

4. POLICY LESSONS FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

The policy lessons drawn from our research are categorised according to levels of analysis drawn from this study's theoretical framework.

4.1 System change

The following lessons were drawn at the system change level:

Structure

i. Colleges with sufficient capacity (e,g. qualified staff and infrastructure) must be autonomous and those without capacity should be strengthened so that they can be granted more autonomy in future.
ii. Partnerships between colleges and agencies such as INSET NGOs, universities, and different departments of education should be encouraged.
iii. Under-resourced colleges should be clustered around those with sufficient resources, until they can be supplied with adequate resources.

Agency

iv. There needs to be a broad direction of national policy from the centre and flexible implementation in the provinces.

Ideology

v. The value-base of innovations needs to be made explicit and used to motivate and bring groups together. This is important as improperly conceived solutions responding to political pressure tend to be stop gap measures that can do more harm than good.

4.2 Institutional change

External environment

vi. Colleges should be linked to schools in their immediate environment for them to be more responsive to their external environment. This will also be facilitated by community involvement in the college councils.

vii. Institutional policies and practices that take cognisance of the external realities of the institution's environment should be developed.

Power centres and coalitions

viii. Leaders who can initiate and effect change should be appointed in colleges.

ix. A climate of support should be created to allow and manage risk-taking in appropriate areas of educational innovation.

x. A management philosophy that encourages a collaborative work culture, norms of experimentation and a participatory approach to decision-making improves the prospects of institutional change. This also suggests that the college rectors should be assisted through training programmes to make a switch from authoritarian management styles to participatory decision-making styles.

4.3 Programmatic level change meaning-making

xi. Specific resources should be allocated for innovations to work.

xii. Time, resources and opportunities should be made available for social interaction. In addition, social interaction (in both contact education and distance education) must be encouraged between participants on the meaning of the innovation with the purpose of developing shared meaning-making in a project.

xiii. Equal weight should be given to both the individual initiative-taking and collective initiative-taking.

Order change

xiv. The college's ethos, goals, roles and functions should be restructured around the needs of the innovation.

Three change dimensions

xv. Innovations should involve change in the curriculum, teaching practices, and pedagogic beliefs.

Implementation approach

xvi. There should be a blend of top-down and bottom-up approaches to implementation.

xv. The outcomes and efforts of the innovation should be monitored and evaluated in both a formative and summative way.

5. CONCLUSION

Our research on innovations in colleges of education suggest strategies which can be employed in the reconstruction of teacher development. Having studied only five innovations, we cannot claim to have a solution for the national reconstruction of teacher development. This research, however, aims at contributing its experience to the ongoing process of change in teacher development.

The research makes an important contribution in collating often little known and widely different experiences of innovation in the field of teacher development. As a result, those involved in education innovation in general and teacher development in

particular can share these findings. The collation of the intricacies of the innovations researched would probably also contribute to informing the debate on reconstructing teacher development.

Three levels of analysis of this research i e, the system-wide level, the institutional level and the programmatic level have indicated significant issues and factors to be borne in mind in bringing about change. In broad terms the research suggests that education system change will not be successful unless there is change at all three levels.

Our research has outlined a number of guidelines for future action. However, change agents would do well to take cognisance of the important proviso that innovation should be seen as *"a journey and not a blue-print"*. Change is such a dynamic process that flexibility, open-endedness and sensitivity to the multiple constituencies in which innovations are situated is crucial if they are to be successful.

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DEBATE

South African Universities in Transformation: An Opportunity to Africanise Education

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What is the purpose of a university in modern Africa? Is it true that there is *only one* kind of university, concerned with *only one* tradition of learning? Should universities in Africa refurnish the house of Western tradition and adapt their degree structure to fit the needs of African society? When these questions were posed in 1955 in West Africa, the answer from the European advisors was "all an African university needed to do was to follow the European tradition; because that was what every country outside *Europe* had done" i.e. the 'made in Britain' syndrome. If the truth be told this was a lie. South African universities should accept as a matter of priority and for the sake of the majority population the principle of Africanisation. Eurocentric education has failed this nation for over 345 years and has become a tool for continuing domination, alienation and racial tensions.

> Nobody in Europe, America or Asia argues anymore about the relationship between civilization, culture and education but only in Africa
>
> But why?

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1860 the Morrill Act made a new contribution to the idea of a university i.e. it laid the foundations of the American land-grant university; Japan's decentralised and ability-orientated educational model imposed by the American occupation, soon reverted to their centralised and effort/group-oriented education policy model when the Americans left; the Australians after the second world war introduced policies in education that promoted Australiasation of their institutions.

The Morril Act fundamentally transformed the American Higher Education system from its largely European roots to fit American society and its economic and agricultural potentials. It linked academic pursuits with social responsibility directly for the first time. Where is America today? The Japanese centralised group- effort- oriented

educational policy fitted Japanese culture and traditions. Where is Japan today? Perhaps no country has recently transformed its Higher Education Sector more than Australia. The Australian Higher Education Sector is one of the most envied model of transformation today. It is adaptable, accountable, transparent and fits the Australian national needs.

In short nations sought to provide university education that was both *appropriate* and *relevant* to their societies. They recognised the primary reason for the origins of Universities "as societies" or as Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in 1155 said "rational knowledge would illuminate the world and maintain *social order*". To achieve this, nations had to adapt and integrate their university system into their social, cultural and economic life.

Recent examples of the essential role of culture and identity in education are: i) The debate in Great Britain sparked by Nick Tate, a leading educationist and government's chief adviser on school curriculum, by advocating *teaching Britishness in schools*. The debate has focused on what being British means today in multicultural Britain. There are major disputes about which culture/identity should dominate i.e. Britishness first, or Englishness, or Scottishness, or Welshness? Which identity should the large Asian, African and West Indian populations adopt? ii)In Australia, the government of Paul Keating, through national debates had worked towards defining its own culture and identity away from Britain. Finally modern Australians have realised and accepted where their presence and future are located i.e. in the Pacific and not Europe. iii) In the Jerusalem Report 1995, the President of Israel, Mr Weizman is quoted as saying: "Beware of McDonald's and Michael Jackson; beware of Americanisation" that would affect Israel's culture and national identity. Why are the British, the Israelis and Australians revisiting this issue towards the end of the 20th century? The answer is simple: i) culture and identity is an important national educational matter; ii) when culture and identity are not clearly defined, articulated or skewed, societal tensions increase, national reconciliation and success (economic, educational, political) are stunted; iii) national culture and identity are the common threads that weave society together and facilitate coherent development.

"In every society, culture influences political development to one degree or another. Culture can be compared to the variable x in the mathematical expression f(x)--i.e. each distinct cultural heritage will result in a different political outcome. It is my firm belief that our culture is the most important factor that has allowed the ROC to achieve successful political reforms in the past five years" so said Lee Teng-hui, President of the ROC in 1995. *Why should Africans be exceptions to this universal principle?*

2. AN AFRICAN UNIVERSITY

So, what is a university in modern Africa? From the above, it surely cannot be the same as the one in Europe, the USA, Japan or China. It may be guided by the same general principles but the specific objectives should clearly be different. Peoples are *cultural*

creatures, that have grown up in societies formed over the centuries by their ancestors, participating more or less energetically in *all institutions* that have equally evolved over long periods. People of African origin are no exception to this obvious but fundamental principle.

So, an African university should be:

i) One whose cultural and philosophical foundations are located within the African paradigm in its values and ethos. Like all traditional roles of a university (created by and for society) it should pursue knowledge with social responsibility.

ii) It should strive for excellence and high standards of teaching, research and community service. Its curricula and culture should reflect the culture of Africa in its fullest sense, ie diverse, vibrant, dynamic, accommodating and tolerant;

iii) It should be the champion and ambassador of Africanness and African scholarship to the wider world Cf. Oxford or Harvard. In educating and training future critical, analytical and adaptable scholars and citizens, the major focus should be Africa; be it political, economic, health, educational or science. These problems, which affect the continent in a major way, can only be fully understood and resolved by dedicated high level scholarship that focuses primarily on them as primary issues within their environmental and cultural context. The notion that foreign models are transplantable in a pseudo-colonial fashion to Africa is the biggest challenge for African scholars in transforming society. The present institutions do not fulfil these criteria. In this sense universities should be Africanised during the transformation process.

3. AFRICANISATION

Africanisation is the *process or vehicle* for defining, interpreting, promoting and transmitting African thought, philosophy, identity and culture. It encompasses an African mind-set or mind-set shift from the European to an African paradigm. Through Africanisation we *affirm* and *identify* ourself in the world community. Africanisation involves incorporating, adapting, integrating other cultures into and through *African visions and interpretations* to provide the dynamism, evolution and adaptation that is so essential for survival and success of peoples of African origin in the global village. It is a logic and way of life for Africans. By *inclusivity,* Africanisation is nonracial. It is enriched through the African Diaspora. Africanisation has evolved over time from the narrow nationalistic intolerant to a global tolerant form. Africanisation continues to challenge the thinking, the identity, the philosophy, the culture and simply being African in the modern world.

The challenges facing South Africa are twofold: high-level manpower and the incorporation of our indigenous culture into the education system to end the *alienation* that has occurred through colonial or apartheid education.

i) The needs for education: a manpower force that is vested in science, engineering and technology; education; management and the arts. The major difference between developed and underdeveloped nations is the level of set education in the population. We in South Africa should be bold enough to shift our emphasis as a nation from the soft humanity options that we have so far pursued to the sciences and face the realities and challenges of the future. All these fields should be appropriate and relevant for what we as a nation need.

ii) The second challenge is the incorporation into the courses of material from our indigenous culture as part of scholarly endeavour, for example, African: traditional political systems, philosophies and codes of behaviour, literature, music and dance. A teacher who does not understand or respect the culture of his pupils cannot reach their minds; a lawyer, a doctor or an engineer who is out of touch with the society he serves cannot serve that society well. *Education has to be contextualised and for the majority population this means the removal of the dominant and alienating Eurocentric philosophy to the humanistic Afrocentric philosophy.*

As education is one of the cornerstones of every successful society and tertiary education in particular represents its highest form, the Africanisation of South African tertiary institutions becomes essential. The success of the RDP and our fledgeling democracy is tied to the soundness of our education policy and programmes.

Great nations and tertiary institutions throughout the world are and have been inspired by the environment in which they are located. These nations and their institutions develop their scholarship and excellence within the cultural context in which they exist. Education and scholarship are tightly coupled as a vehicle for defining, refining and transmitting culture. These combinations produce great, stable and successful nations. So far our institutions have failed us as a nation in this regard. Our institutions are basically and primarily institutions of and for the benefit of the West. Largely copycat and imitative in character, they tend primarily to reflect, reproduce and service a dominant western ethos which is also partly class-based. The predisposition towards imitation rather than originality stems largely from the history of discovery, annexations, imperialism and a romance with the motherland. Originality would promote a more dedicatedly innovative approach to the contemporary challenges and promote independence.

Our institutions have generally tended to mould the African psyche along European lines, to ensure that the educated African is alienated from his roots. By this educational philosophy, the African will remain inferior, totally in root crisis and always a dependent of European descendants. This philosophy also ensures that the educated African can only compete from a position of weakness. Our institutions as products of colonial powers, originated from very simple but easily understandable roots, ie to connect the colonies to the motherland, to ensure that the progenies of the colonialists are able to return and find jobs in the motherland, to use the resources of Africa to enhance the motherland, and finally to ensure continued white supremacy. This is consistent with another fundamental characteristic of primate behaviour: *hierarchical dominance and a tendency to imitate*.

Education under the British and recently under the Christian education of the Nationalist party shared the latter features. Even Christ would be ashamed and grovel were he to return and realise how his Holy name has been abused in the education market of South Africa. The British used civilisation as the slogan, the Afrikaner used Christianity. I wish to quote extensively from Dr. Lamber's (a historian at Unisa) article summarising the history of 200 years of British imported ideas in education. He makes the following interesting comments:

> schools for Africans were founded throughout South Africa by English-speaking missionaries. These schools sought to mould black Christian communities along European lines, in the process often alienating them from their own people. ... in English-language schools, the emphasis on British values inhibited the growth of a common South African culture. ... Dutch, and later Afrikaans, was scorned and African languages were ignored. The private and more elite government schools tended to foster both a class and a race consciousness. [1]

We have experimented unsuccessfully with these two models for 345 years.

What are we present-day South Africans to make of this pernicious education that at best is meant to demote, subjugate, create dependency and alienate the majority. We have had many years of politically manipulated and socially engineered education. No wonder our country, economy, health, science and technology and education are such a spaghetti. The vision of South African education is intrinsically wrong and set on a shifty foundation which the majority cannot identify with and support. It is this foundation that needs immediate detailed and decisive restructuring. A common vision that reflects, incorporates and is informed by our South African roots is essential. This vision must take into account the primacy of Africa and what it embodies in its history, philosophy, identity and culture. The side effects of the present twisted education policies and philosophies are there for us to see and experience every day. These experiences are

sadly painful. Presently the majority of us are psychologically Europeanised through 345 years of colonial and apartheid history. However, unless this mind-set shift or *psychological Africanisation* does take place, our transformation and total liberation as a people will not be complete.

When Europeans decide about their institutions be they French, Germans or British, the first principle is to capture the essence of France, Germany and Britain. "No university is entirely free of confessional aspect. Every Oxford College was founded by a religious order ("Nadim Sehadi; Director of the Centre of Lebanese Studies at Oxford). *The major principle of a South African university should be to capture and encapsulate the essence of Africa*. This should define the essential character of an institution versus a similar institution in another continent or culture. All our universities should be African by drawing their inspiration from their African heritage and environment, *not transplanted trees*, but ones growing from the seeds that are planted and nurtured in the African soil. The *pursuit of knowledge and the truth for its own sake is a dead concept*, untenable in almost all modern societies.

The global competition, the interdependence of nations, the involvement of industry in universities, the social, economic and political pressures of modern society, have rendered this noble principle obsolete in many spheres of the academic endeavour. It would be irresponsible for any South African university to adopt this as a major principle. In the so-called global village it is even more imperative to specialise or market innovations that are unique to one's country in order to survive. Each country will have to capitalise on what is special and unique; that which it can do better than the rest of the world. It is the duty of academics and scholars to internationalise, articulate, shape, develop and project the image, the values, the culture, the history and vision of the African people and their innovations through the eves of Africans. African people should develop, write, communicate and interpret their theories, philosophies in their own ways rather than be constructed from foreign culture and visions. The missions of institutions in Britain today usually include the following: "making Britain competitive internationally and generating wealth".

The *pursuit of knowledge and the truth with rigour and excellence; with a purpose and social responsibility* is what an African university should be. If the above principles are fully appreciated it will become immediately obvious that transformation is not just mechanistic, is not simply about changing the colours of people (colour coding) but is a deep process underlined by sound academic principles and a philosophy that will lead to the total and genuine liberation of the Whites and Blacks in this part of the continent. For the Whites it will *unchain* and *decouple* them from the romance, the preoccupation with Europe as the source of supreme ideas and values and finally bond them permanently to Africa, it will release the Blacks from the chain of perpetual psychological inferiority and bondage to a freethinking people. The notion of one short leg in Africa and one long leg in Europe is disturbing.

It is within these polarities of dreams, vision, interpretation, ideation that the transformation process at South African universities has its greatest challenge, ie *to facilitate the emergence of a new nation with a common vision, principles, values and culture system based on the highest intellectual foundations.* All African universities should take a lead in capturing the essence of Africa and its indigenous people, to adapt and integrate western culture into the African culture.

This transitional period in our history is the opportune time for universities to take stock and ask hard, soul-searching and fundamental questions about who we are, whose/ which knowledge is crucial and important, what are the consequences of knowledge and research to future generations in the shaping of thought, values and society, what are the unique features of Africa today? In what ways can these features be best *exploited* to shape the people of this continent and the world into the future? What an African university should be doing is to take a lead in *trans*-educating, *trans*-orientating, *trans*-socialising and harmonising the various perceptions and paradigms from which the South African society has its roots, ie the African, European and Oriental. What an African university should avoid is the *'imitation thinking'* or soft approach that we are simply an extension of western culture located in Africa. Imitation or mimicry are a passport to perpetual third-world status and underdevelopment. No nation can compete globally without some form of originality or uniqueness.

4. MAJOR BARRIERS TO AFRICANISATION

The politicisation of the word Africanisation, the strong concerted effort to marginalise African culture and the tendency to regard and treat people of African origin as inferiors remain the major barriers to Africanisation.

i) The mention of the word Africanisation sends shock and shivers into the various establishment structures. The word Africanisation has become negatively politicised. Politically, it conjures a *deja vu* phenomenon of dictatorships, military coups, the expulsions, exodus of Europeans, Asians and unstable governments; economically, it represents poverty, famines and a mess; in development terms, it reminds one of the total lack of it; in education, in brings into focus the lowering of standards, campus trashing, kidnappings, poor academic scholarship; in health it brings memories of mutilation of bodies, witchcraft and AIDS somewhere in the

continent. Europeans have found this word, its interpretation and what it embodies uncomfortable. They have decided on its meaning and interpretation from their perspective, ie provided a Eurocentric meaning and promoted this throughout the world.

ii) While Europeans respect Oriental culture and identity, they do not accord the same status to African culture and identity. It is common knowledge and experience throughout the civilised world that the cultures and identities of India, Japan and China are not only respected, cherished and envied by the so-called Western nations but are also promoted with vigour and dignity. There is no similar promotion within the west of African culture and identity. In fact the reverse is true, ie its existence is doubted, it is denigrated and described as primitive, unsophisticated, inferior and a recipe for disaster.

It is also common knowledge that the cultures of India, China and Japan are not uniform even within each of these great nations. They are however recognised as oriental cultures because they share certain fundamental features in common. Equally, European culture is non-uniform within the various nations of Europe or descendants of Europeans but has distinct features that identify and distinguish it as European. One of the major factors in the success of European and Oriental nations in the modern global village can be attributed to their insistence and maintenance of their cultures and identities. They have ensured that their political, economic and educational systems promote, enhance and are closely-linked into their cultures and identities. The success of modern Japan and China as dominant economic powers can be easily ascribed to their rejection of Eurocentric educational and cultural philosophies. The buzz words are adaptation and integration. This potent medicine or formula, which has worked wonders for the orient and the west, is being denied to Africans, through various evolving forms of colonialisation.

It has been recognised and accepted that, just like oriental and western culture, African identity and culture is not uniform and does no pretend to be. It has many variations depending on where on the globe one is. The Afrocentric population is widely distributed throughout the world but is concentrated mainly in Africa, North America, the Caribbean and Western Europe. Even within the continent of Africa, the north African, west African, central African, East African and Southern African form their well-known and recognised clusters. All these clusters are linked by many fundamental features that are common to African identity and culture, for example the hospitality, friendliness, the consensus and common framework seeking principle, ubuntu, the emphasis on community rather than on the individual etc. It does not matter where you are in the world these features underpin the variations. So in short, the existence of African identity and culture is in no doubt. How African culture is maintained and articulated is another matter.

iii) In all these diverse continents, the Afrocentric community has been subjected to discrimination and a legacy of the old colonial system. They are always encouraged crudely or subtly to see the world from a Eurocentric perspective as their own perspective is inferior, uncivilised and barbaric. Therefore the common factors of discrimination, identity crises, culture crises, the frustrations of coping with eurocentricism, post-colonial political crises, coupled with poverty, low living standards, poor education, high unemployment, a short lifespan and a very poor quality of life that face peoples of African origin across the globe create, maintain and shape African thinking and Africanisation. Colonial powers have created a culture and identity (root crises) in Africa and people of African origin.

Interestingly, the orientals never impose their identity and culture on anybody. What they demand absolutely is a respect for their identity and culture. They practise that old motto of leading by example rather than by coercion. Africans over the years have been asking for this in different ways without success. May be the time is now ripe in the "new world order" and as we approach the end of this century to make it absolutely clear that the respect and dignity of the African peoples' identity and culture is not negotiable. We can no longer allow to be portrayed in terms that only serve to confirm political or social objectives and stereotypes. We all have read or seen Tarzan in the jungle as the African role model!!!.

Africans have become a major preoccupation of Eurocentric scholars, governments and industrialists. The reasons for this are multifactorial and complex but can be grouped as follows: knowledge about African people is always political, useful in maintaining intellectual neo-colonialism, for propagating Western culture, helps generate and perpetuate an inferiority complex, fosters individualism amongst Africans, disrupts organisation and unity in the community because there is inherent fear of a united, organised Afrocentric community, or a combination of all the above. In short, we are a people that can only succeed, realise our potential and destiny by being controlled, policed, nursed and guided by Europeans. We are incapable of being masters of our own destiny.

5. TRANSFORMATION

Transformation is not only a buzz word but it is also the overarching process. Transformation is an act or process whereby the form, shape or nature of something is completely changed or altered, ie *a blueprint change*. It should be distinguished from reformation: a process of modification without fundamental change, ie a cosmetic change. The nature of the change in education is what is at stake. The transformation process embraces a series of closely related, inter-linked and interdependent themes. These are

equity, governance, access, affirmative action, changes to curricula, effectiveness and development. These themes are underlined by race, gender and the cultural dimensions. Each of these has a structural and a functional component.

In April 1994 the whole of our society underwent a major political transformation. Our institutions are not going to be exceptions or immune from this fundamental process. Transformation is here to stay with us. *We can delay but not stop or avoid it.* We can also elect to transform peacefully or painfully.

Let us remember that Blacks are now empowered in government and they will be empowered in all institutions that govern or affect this society in a major way. They will be empowered with all their values and culture. They cannot be empowered to perpetuate foreign and alienating values. All universities will feel the impact of this cultural change for many years to come. Rather than dismiss or ignore this, I would rather advocate we positively and fully embrace and adopt this impending change. Transformation is not negotiable. It is important that the university community and supporters clearly recognise and accept that the past is gone and gone forever.

The stakeholders at most institutions share three common broad objectives in transformation. These are: a *first rate* institution, an institution that embraces *diversity of race and culture*, a university working *environment* that is *pleasant, stable and enjoyable*. These three broad objectives are what will or should guide transformation process. These objectives are also essential for the *improvement* of the so-called academic standards. What are then the ground rules from mount Drakensberg in this period of major contestation. These are:

i) We should discard pseudo-linguistic and pseudo-political images such as *English-speaking and liberal* or Afrikaans-speaking and conservative Christian images. We should forge a vision of university education that recognises and embraces our diverse cultural roots of which Africanisation is a critical component. In a democratic South Africa the old images are not only redundant, colonial or alienating but have outlived their purpose. They continue to create a major barrier for reconciliation and transformation.

ii) We should accept that the time for whites to determine or articulate what they *presume* are the wishes and destiny of Blacks is over, it does not matter how well intentioned whites are, broad consultations with Blacks at the start of every venture is absolutely essential. We can no longer as a people entrust our destiny to other people. It makes a mockery of our struggle for freedom.

iii) Blacks cannot be empowered in all of society with foreign values or cultures ie the struggle for our freedom is tightly linked to the struggle for our cultural survival and expression. All of education throughout the civilised world is tightly linked to the culture of the people. All nations of the world assimilate or are educated within a cultural context. South African Blacks are no exception to this fundamental principle.

iv) The time for Blacks to use the victim mentality as an excuse for their failures is over. As a people we should fight our destiny within the democratic principles that are now open to us. We should grab the bull by the horns to improve our lot.

v) As the stakeholders, transformation forums offer all of us a rare and unique opportunity, to sit as equal partners to define a common vision, values and specific objectives of our institutions. We should take advantage of our differences to enrich the level and quality debate. It is within transformation forums that institutions will transform in an orderly and democratic manner and avoid the anarchy that is often inherent in the transformation process.

To use the example of the so-called English-speaking, liberal institutions: In apartheid South Africa, English-speaking embodied a totality of things, ie an English identity, the preservation of the English culture, values, language. It implied a statement the English community of South Africa was making, who they were, where they came from, what mattered to them and what they stood for in the turmoil of the South African struggle. So English-speaking was never interpreted simply as the medium of instruction the university exclusively uses.

The liberal value system was derived from a political dimension. Liberal education and liberal politics are not synonymous or to be equated especially in South Africa. These institutions were fighting the struggle for justice and freedom. Their liberal ethos was distinct from the conservative, overtly racist philosophy of apartheid. For many Black South Africans though, this background remained totally alienating and oppressive. Our state President is one such example

> despite the university's liberal values, I never felt entirely comfortable there. Always to be the only African, except for menial workers, to be regarded at best as a curiosity and at worst as an interloper, is not a congenial experience. ... Although I was to discover a core of sympathetic whites who became friends and colleagues, most of the whites at Wits were not liberal or colour-blind.[2]

This statement reflecting the experiences of President Mandela in 1942 as a student, is as true today, 53 years later as it was then. It encapsulates the experiences of many Blacks at Wits and other so-called English-speaking liberal universities such as UCT, Rhodes and Natal. For many foreigners, this background remained predominantly British and thus reassuring for descendants of Europeans, the donors and the business community – and alienating for the majority population.

6. CONCLUSION

University education in South Africa has been distorted by the colonial and apartheid era. It enjoyed limited autonomy and academic freedom as it is universally defined and known; it could not admit or recruit whom it thought suitable to teach until recently. University education was pursued on the basis of a plan which excluded Africanisation and in retrospect has proved totally inadequate for the institution and country. As a result, the student populations and staff profiles, the distribution of hierarchy, the missions and visions, the cultural values within the institution are disproportionately skewed to reflect the legacy of a sad past. It is within this context and background that a back-to-basics transformation of institutions is needed and justifiably called for. Africanisation should be the guiding philosophy or principle of this transformation.

"We must in the development of our universities bear in mind that once it had been planted in African soil it must take root amidst African traditions and culture".[3] The classic ivory tower concept of a university is dead and may its soul rest in peace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This paper is a summary of ideas and thoughts by the author. It is based on several articles by the author that appeared in the *Star* and *Mail & Guardian* Newspapers and *Enterprise* Magazine.

NOTES

1. J. Lambert, "English-speaking contributions to Education in South Africa", *Sunday Times*, July 2, 1995.
2. N. Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 83.
3. K. Nkrumah, "Opening Address at University College, Accra", 1956.

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DEBATE

Universities in a Time of Transition

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The true importance and value of universities is often not recognised. This problem is exacerbated by several international intellectual trends which encourage demands for the democratisation of the university and affirmative action in South Africa. As a result South African universities are seriously threatened.

It is a truth universally acknowledged that an independent country in possession of any sort of economy must be in need of a university. This is difficult to understand when we consider that a university is neither a technikon nor a trade school; institutions whose value is more easily apprehended. A university is different in that it is dedicated to pure research as well as to education, and in that it does not confine itself to the scientific and the technical. Serious inquiry into any aspect of the cosmos or the human condition finds an appropriate home in the university which is essentially a community dedicated to learning at the highest level.

All too often the reasons why people wish for universities are not the reasons why universities are in fact valuable. Dictators who regard universities as jewels in their crowns get disconcerted when they realise that freedom of speech is necessary for the adequate operation of a university. I would like to argue that a great university is a thing of value in itself in the way that a cathedral, a work of art or a mathematical proof can have intrinsic value. Most people only think of them as having instrumental value; that is, they think of the university as valuable as a means to an end, and all too often that end is the crassly vulgar one of economic improvement.

One of the reasons for this is quite general. The ability to discern value is not universally distributed. Many people are unable to appreciate certain values. Sometimes this may be through ignorance or lack of experience; sometimes there is an inherent blindness. Consider wine tasting: Someone who has never drunk a glass of wine in his life will be unable to tell a good glass of wine from a bad one; neither will someone who lacks a sense of smell. Nevertheless, there is an objective difference. This is shown by the fact that those who have educated their palates can agree that some wines are good and some bad, and this agreement is a genuine response to the wine rather than a sham.

To truly understand the value of a good university, it is probably necessary to have experienced one, and this experience is unfortunately not universal. This is why justifications of the university are all too often both instrumental and materialistic. Bodily welfare is probably the only universally understood value. Everyone can understand the value of food and shelter. Economics is the guide to supplying these material needs. However, it is not only human beings who have material needs; so do animals. Why should we devote our economies to supplying the material needs of humans? Why should we not labour instead to keep increasing numbers of pigs warm, well fed and disease free? Because people are more valuable than pigs, because people have self consciousness, reason and language, and can create art and literature, science and mathematics. It is at university that we come to understand mankind's greatest achievements and acquire the skills to contribute ourselves. It is there that we should learn the value of the pursuit of truth.

But only a minority of those who go to university go on to make a contribution to learning themselves. Most university graduates go out into the world at large. New knowledge is one fruit of the labours of the university; the other should be the creation of an educated elite. If universities do their job well, they have a civilising influence upon those who attend them, and their graduates acquire not only technical knowledge, but a wider awareness and understanding which will enable them to make wise and humane decisions in later life.

There are forces at work which threaten universities both internationally, and in South Africa in particular. Internationally the university is threatened by various intellectual movements which I will call misplaced egalitarianism, scientism, relativism and multi-culturalism. In South Africa universities are at a particular risk from calls for democratisation and affirmative action.

What I call misplaced egalitarianism is the belief that elitism is a dirty word, that universities are elitist and that they should hence be changed. Now there is a sense of elitism which describes something which is wrong. This is the practice whereby a small class which holds power restricts access to it to its own descendents. This is a form of nepotism, as was apartheid. It is not necessarily wrong that societies should contain elites. Some egalitarians believe this, but it seems that all societies have elites, and that all efforts to produce classless societies have ended in failure. The stratification of society may well be inevitable. If it is, then attempts to abolish it are utopian. If elites are inevitable, then it is surely better that they be knowledgeable, wise and humane, and the place of the university in society is assured.

What I will call scientism is a refusal to believe in the objectivity of anything that is not scientifically vouched for. The truly impressive advance of science has led to scepticism about our ability to have non-scientific knowledge and a disregard for the power of human judgement. The amount of quantification and measurement in the sciences obscures the very large role that educated judgement plays in the advance of science, and

leads people to devalue areas where all we have available to us is human judgement. One symptom of this is the overemphasis on originality in the fine arts. It requires judgement to tell whether something is good; any fool can tell whether something has been done for the first time. Since values are not amenable to scientific quantification, and are often only discernible to those who have been educated to appreciate them, people find it all too easy to doubt their objectivity.

Scepticism about values comes to the fore with the intellectual disease of the moment, relativism and its trendy spawn of deconstruction and post-structuralism. Relativism denies that there is any fact of the matter, any truth or objectivity. All there is is what is true for me and what is true for you. Relativism, I tell my students, is the *pons asinorum* of philosophy, the bridge of asses such that no one who fails to cross it to the realisation that relativism's allures are meretricious can hope to become philosophers. Relativism, as Bertrand Russell puts it, has all the advantages of theft over honest toil. It renders the academic life nugatory and useless. The opinions of a first year student have the same value as those of Einstein or Shakespeare, and the academic, instead of pursuing the truth, becomes no more than a guide to the quirks of intellectual fashion.

Hand in hand with relativism goes modern multi-culturalism expressed most often in this country as an opposition to Eurocentrism. This accusation tries to smear academia with a form of chauvinist colonialism: This is taught rather than that simply because it happened to originate in Europe rather than because it is of universal significance and importance.

These interlinked trends of thought are undermining learning in universities world wide. They also serve to undermine the confidence of academics in the humanities. The proper study of the humanities is under threat, and that threat affects the university as university rather than as technical college.

In South Africa these influences from abroad impinge on a society in transition. The country is transforming itself amidst the ruins of apartheid which is universally acknowledged as an evil and unjust system. In such a situation it is all too easy to believe that any change in any thing must automatically be for the better. To resist any popularly supported call for change is to risk being pilloried as a reactionary who would welcome the return of apartheid. One such call for change is the demand that universities be democratised, another is the demand for affirmative action. When calls for the transformation of the universities are motivated in this way the only appropriate response of the universities is resistance.

The reasoning behind calls for democratisation seems fallacious. That democracy is good for the country does not imply that it is good for the university. Universities are in general not run by students because students, by and large, do not know what is good for them academically. That is part of what they are at university to learn. It is academics with a long experience of their subjects who should decide who is to teach and who is to learn, what is to be taught and what level of achievement is acceptable. For students to

be given the power to award themselves degrees would be to contenance a devaluation of degrees comparable to the currency devaluation in Germany between the two World Wars.

A slower and more insidious devaluation is already in process as a result of demands for affirmative action. This new form of racial and sexual discrimination affects universities in two ways. It affects the quality of the staff and the value of the degrees awarded. When it comes to appointing staff there is tremendous pressure to appoint people of the appropriate sex and skin colour. The result is that people who would not otherwise be short-listed are appointed to important positions . The pool of even remotely qualified people is not large and is also fished by government and industry. The supposed goal that the racial mix of the university's staff should reflect that of the population is unattainable. The demand that it be met is, however, in danger of leading to a culture of mediocrity where people of real ability are not appointed because they are seen as threatening. South African academia has already been bled almost dry by the brain drain, affirmative action threatens to continue the process. A university run by people who do not truly understand what a university is, and why it is valuable, becomes a mere shadow, the form without the substance.

Affirmative action leads to the appointment of inferior staff who would not otherwise be academics; it also leads to the admission of increasing numbers of people who would not otherwise be at university. Many of these do not have the background education necessary to benefit from university. Once in the university there is increasing pressure that they should leave as graduates. What is the upshot? First of all, there is a tendency for soft options and easy subjects to increase their student numbers. This affects the staffing of these departments. There will never be as many linguists in the university as there are teachers of English literature because the study of English literature is easier than the study of linguistics. Secondly, there is a great diversion of the resources of the university away from its proper function as the citadel of learning becomes a remedial school. Thirdly, there is a constant pressure on academic departments to improve their pass rates. The result of these three factors is that degrees become worthless as employers realise that the graduates they employ do not have skills which they would normally expect. First of all, in many cases the standard required of a student to pass has been lowered. Secondly, even where the standards required for a pass have remained the same, there is a great difference between someone who becomes a graduate on a sink-or-swim basis, and someone who has been coached and spoon-fed every inch of the way.

As I said earlier, the sociological role of the university is the education of an elite. Society benefits when key figures have the advantages of education. Universities should not, however, be seen as a means of propelling one or other favoured groups into elite positions. The attempt to use them thus is liable to backfire as the distribution of the degree, to those who are unworthy, renders the degree worthless.

South African universities face great dangers, but seem either to say nothing or to connive in their own destruction. In part, this is through a lack of confidence in their own worth engendered by modern scepticism about values I discussed earlier. The job of the university is to fight ignorance, not to pander to it.

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ORBITUARY

Harold Wolpe: His Contribution to Education

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Harold Wolpe, the founder of Research on Education in South Africa (RESA) at the University of Essex in 1987 and Director of the Education Policy Unit (EPU) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) from 1991 for the next five years, died on January 19, 1996. His death, following a heart attack and surgery from which he did not recover, was unexpected. Shortly before the heart attack he had completed a synthesis report for the National Commission on Higher Education; the day of the attack he had sent it to Task Team members for comment. To the end, his stamina, will and commitment were unfailing.

It was a privilege to get to know him and work closely with him in the EPUs. He was one of those great South African scholars, a sociologist by training, who decided to devote his talents to education. He was an engaged scholar, rare in South Africa, who never personalised contestation, consistently linked the nature of his work to social and political transformation, and had an abiding but not romantic respect for people in struggle. His political and intellectual life were inextricably linked. Neither was possible without the other.

Assessed in terms of his actions and impact, Wolpe's contribution to education was significant. His interest in education began after the 1976 Soweto revolt when he joined the ANC Education Committee in London. This Committee was responsible for the conceptualisation and establishment of the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) in Tanzania. He was a strong advocate of a more radical conception of what the school's curriculum should look like: integration of academic, political, technical and vocational education.

His interest and work for the last nine years were focused on the encouragement of black researchers and intellectuals. Through his work at Essex University he had attracted students from across the world, whom he exposed to a rigorous research regimen. He celebrated people's education and the work of his students in numerous articles and two books that emerged from a conference organised in that period. With Elaine Unterhalter, he produced a report for the Commonwealth Secretariat on education and training needs in a post-apartheid South Africa.

When RESA was relocated to UWC and became the Education Policy Unit there it was committed to the promotion of black researchers in the Unit and more widely in the society. Using funds initially raised for the EPU, Harold facilitated the establishment of another EPU at the University of Fort Hare. He became the chair of the EPU Directors' Forum which coordinates work at the Universities of Natal, Durban-Westville, Fort Hare, Western Cape and Witwatersrand, and includes the Centre for Education Policy Development.

At UWC, his ability to attract research funds enabled him to focused his energies on a major research project on historically black universities and their integration in a unified system of higher education. It was designed to train young black researchers in social research methods, develop an understanding of teaching and research at these universities to enable their transformation.

Both in his participation in the NECC's National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) (1992) and the ANC's *Policy Framework for Education and Training* (1994) and *Implementation Plan for Education and Training* (1994), he consistently argued for the interrogation of concepts emerging from the democratic movement itself. He was dedicated to participating in the realisation of a new system and criticising it in its emergence. Likewise he sought a critical assessment of the Reconstruction and Development Programme which appreciated the depth of the change which had occurred and recognized the creation of new contradictions and inequalities which needed to be fought and overcome.

Harold was in many ways a fighter; he fought for the EPU, for ideas, for space and recognition. But there was also an extraordinary humility which may lie behind why this eminence grise of South African scholarship and education was not given any formal recognition. As the director of the country's only policy research unit specialising in higher education, he should have been appointed to the National Commission for Higher Education. Instead, he became convenor of the largest of the Task Groups: on *Programmes, Qualification and Institutional Framework*. More than anything, he had a generosity of spirit, a warmth and tenacity which made him a dear colleague and friend. He also, when all is said and done, loved being back in South Africa, and loved his work. One had a sense that for all its frustrations and disappointments – such as there were – it was enriching and fulfilling, and that he would have wanted it no other way.

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BOOK REVIEW

Ways of Seeing the National Qualifications Framework, HSRC, Pretoria, 186pp

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Ways of Seeing the National Qualifications Framework is a product of the development work that has been taking place around the National Qualifications Framework. This development work has been carried out by the Inter-Ministerial Working Group of the Departments of Education and Labour which was set up in 1994. The book emerged as an informal initiative of individuals who have been closely involved in this work but is not officially sanctioned. It is meant to explore ideas surrounding the growth of the NQF and to open up the debates around the development of the NQF to the broader public. This initiative was nurtured by the HSRC. In all, the book has ten chapters each of which deals with a theme which addresses particular aspects/ building blocks of the NQF and raises pertinent questions about the NQF.

Chapter One is preceded by two short sections, one of which is a summary of each of the ten chapters making up the book. This may be useful for the reader who is less interested in a particular aspect of the NQF than the whole NQF. This section is followed by a section which provides a glossary of terms used in the book - a section which may prove important given the unfamiliar terminology associated with the NQF. This section may help to make the book more accessible to the broader public, but most of the concepts and terminology remain highly abstract. The use of practical examples could possibly have further clarified the concepts.

Chapter one provides a general overview of the NQF. Using the question and answer format, the chapter raises some of the "most basic questions people might ask when introduced to the idea of the National Qualifications Framework for the very first time" (p5). The difficulty, however, is that most of the questions that are addressed in this chapter ignore the specific contexts of the various constituencies in our society, for example, the contexts in which out-of-school and unemployed youth find themselves. While an attempt is made in some of the chapters that follow, especially chapter two and three, one is still left with the question: will the NQF be capable of addressing the issues and needs of the various sections of the population? The context of competing expectations

and interests of the various constituencies and how these will shape the development of the NQF for the various groups are not dealt with. Even more problematic is the silence on very basic questions dealing with the implications of the NQF for the present schooling structure and curricula, especially at the compulsory phase.

Chapter two looks at the questions of who will benefit from the introduction of the NQF and how. Emphasis is placed on the role of prior learning experience of the various people to progress through a career path and/ or access further education and training. The whole notion of the assessment of prior learning is treated as unproblematic and straight-forward. Experience from elsewhere, however, indicates the problematic nature of the assessment of prior learning experience and how it can affect the chances of many to access further education and training[1]. Even in the context where mechanisms to guard against "standard drift" are in place, the involvement of different organisations or institutions in the assessment of prior learning and experience often led in other countries to a situation in which some of these assessing institutions or organisations were seen as more rigorous in carrying these out than others, with implications for accessing further education and training [2]. These issues are critical if the notions of access, progression and portability that underpin the NQF are to be realised.

Chapter three focuses on some of the criticisms that have been levelled against the NQF. Many of the concerns that are raised in this chapter are critical but so are the many others which are not dealt with. A number of criticisms that have been emerging in relation to the NQF and its associated competency-based education are treated as if they are or would be peripheral to the development of the NQF. These include the criticisms that the NQF will benefit mainly large business and workers in this sector, and that notions of consensus-building that permeates the NQF ignore issues of power relations and conflict amongst the various interest groups.

Chapter four focuses on the debates which have informed the development of the NQF and the various stages the NQF development went through. The chapter looks at how the various stakeholders involved in the National Training Board (NTB) discussions differed on many critical issues around integration of education and training. A major problem, however, is that the book focuses solely on the NTB processes - leaving the reader with the impression that other important discussions which have informed, and are continuing to inform the development of the NQF barely exist. The book does acknowledge the important contribution of, for example, the CEPD's *Implementation Plan for Education and Training* initiative, but there is no discussion of these and other initiatives and their contribution to the development of the perspective of the NQF developed in the book. The impression is also created that debates around integration of education and training in South Africa begin in the1989-1994 period with the NTB while in reality these have been part of the various structures connected to the democratic movement for some time[3].

Chapter five, six and seven discuss the core concepts of the NQF, that is, performance, competence, assessment, units standards and qualifications. The concepts are defined and discussed drawing on practical examples. This is useful as abstract concepts are given concrete expression in real life contexts. The role of various structures which will be responsible for the different functions on the NQF are also highlighted (This is also taken up in chapter 10). Fields of learning which will inform the development of the National Standard Bodies are discussed. By and large, these organisational fields reflect occupational clusters. While the rationale for this may be for ease of organisation of National Standard Bodies, this may be telling about the extent to which "occupation" takes priority in the organisation of education and training embedded in the NQF.

Chapter eight moves beyond discussions of the actual framework and suggests various ways of beginning to implement the NQF. The chapter looks at how people can start defining new qualifications and unit standards in the various fields of learning. The chapter focuses on the various stages that would be involved in setting up NSBs, writing standards, etc. The chapter emphasises participation of the stakeholders as broadly as possible in these processes (p91).

Too much faith seem to be placed on the ability of stakeholder to ensure the success of the NQF. Throughout the book, stakeholder participation is strongly argued for and while no one could argue against the need for stakeholder participation, there is very little discussion of the ways in which this should be achieved. It is assumed that various interests will coalesce in the various kinds of forums and work in the interest of progress. There is a need to interrogate this notion of stakeholder participation rather tan merely mention it. A recent NQF Conference held in Johannesburg reflected clearly how powerful business interest is in the NQF process. This is also reflected in the existing pilot projects, most of which are industry based. While the pilots in the book are just examples, this may be indicative of the centrality of business in the whole process. How other constituencies such as out-of-school youth begin to influence the processes would depend on how all other powerful stakeholder groups who are already positioning themselves open up to other influences.

Chapter 9 looks at the various practical examples of setting standards by focusing on pilot projects. While these pilot projects clearly yield useful insights into the issues that would be central to the NQF, for example, emphasis on participation of stakeholders so that it does not generate problems at the implementation stage, it is clear that stakeholders are defined as those immediately affected. The notion does not go beyond to encompass "outsiders" and this has implications for issues of portability, progression and transfer.

Chapter ten looks at the various structures related to the NQF and their functions. Four bodies are identified: SAQA, NSBs and/QCs, ETQAs (implement and monitor the standards) and/appointed moderators. It remains to be seen, however, how the various structures would be representative of the various interest groups and stakeholders.

The book is an important contribution to the debates on the NQF and is the first ever detailed synthesis of the NQf debates to date.

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1. See a chapter on the NQF in L. Chisholm (ed), *Out-of-School Youth Report* (Witwatersrand Education Policy Unt: Johannesburg, 1996).
2 *Ibid.*
3 See, for example, Sisulu, Z " People's Education for people's power" *Transformation* 1, (1986)

Notes for Contributors

1. Contributions should be typed, doubled-spaced, on one side of an A4 sheet only. Three copies should be submitted and one retained.
2. Title, author's name, full postal address and a biographical note should be typed on a separate sheet.
3. An abstract of 100-200 words should also be typed on a separate sheet.
4. **Discs:** Where copy is submitted on disc, for computer based editing, text should be submitted with no formatting. *i.e. All text to begin flush with left hand margin. No indenting of text. One space (not two) after full stops, between sentences. No line spacing between paragraphs. No line spacing between headings and text. All headings in lower case. Tables without tabs or spacing.* Discs must be accompanied by a typed copy which indicates paragraphing, table formatting and relative importance of headings (A,B), in pencil in the margin. The following word processing programmes are acceptable: ASCII, DOA, MSWord, Multimate, Wordperfect, Wordstar, Xerox Writer, Xywrite.
5. **Typed copy:** Submit typed copy in the style of *Perspectives in Education*.
6. **Text:** Dates thus: 1 January 1989. Double quotation marks only (except for "quotes 'within' quotes") to be used; all quotations of more than 40 words to be on new line without quotation marks (but indicated in pencil in the margin). Abbreviations to be given in full at first, then written without points, for example, United States (US).
7. **Notes and References:** These are always at end of text, in order of appearance and numbered ("...at schools".[7]) No separate bibliography to be given. Please do not use computer generated endnotes.

For reference to a book:

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For a journal reference:

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

For a reference to a chapter in a collection:

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The Star, 3 September 1986.

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

Oral interviews:

N. Ncube, teacher at Citrusdal Primary, interview with author, Citrusdal, July 1988.

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