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conflicting values in the education of teachers

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At a time when the future of colleges of education in South Africa is being discussed, the concept of goals in teacher education is important, both for an understanding of the current situation and the formulating of policy in this important sector in education. Although to some observers the proposed changes may appear to be only a matter of control and organisation, fundamentally it is a question of priorities and values. Those responsible for policy decisions have neglected to give adequate attention to the criteria for the effective education of teachers. Such criteria should not be based on notions of crude productivity at a time when a crisis in English education may necessitate emergency measures. Whatever happens, the need to increase the supply of teachers should not be at the expense of improving the quality of the education of student-teachers and upgrading the status of the profession. It is doubtful whether educational planners have a clearly developed concept of what the structure and content of teacher education should be, but in England it appears that:

> "a great deal more attention is being given in the 1970s than in the 1960s by educational planners to the value presuppositions which underlie the institutional patterns and curricula they advocate." [1]

The educators of teachers should also make a critical assessment of their achievements and reappraise their values. William Taylor has pointed out that any attempt to describe and analyse the values to which teacher educators subscribe is unlikely to do justice to the views of the many thousands who teach in colleges and universities or who are responsible for the administration of policy. How can one determine what the dominant values are? There is a need for a clear definition of the nature and properties of values as the first stage in such an inquiry. What effects have value systems of colleges and universities on the development of students and the manner in which they discharge their duties in the schools? In the absence of sophisticated follow-up studies in this field, we have to be content with: "insights, hunches, impressions and partial bits of evidence".[2]

R S Peters has reminded us that education involves the transmission of values. As one college lecturer has put it:

> "All education starts from a basic value standpoint and students must be helped to gain an understanding and awareness of this — hence the importance of the study of the philosophy of Education."

There is, however, a conflict of values on the nature and function of teacher education partly because of the changing values in society generally — changing conceptions of the teachers' role and functions among those responsible for training teachers.

The dominant tradition in most colleges in England and South Africa until about 1960 was pragmatic. Colleges sensed a need to identify with the values associated with teaching in primary schools. The curriculum was therefore dominated by the need to train teachers to perform efficiently in the classroom. Acadamic aspirations were restricted by lack of time and resources. Consequently training colleges provided more of an apprenticeship than an academic education. Since 1960 there has been an increasing emphasis on academic studies and a greater effort has been made to improve the general education of students. The change of name from teachers' training colleges to colleges of education was indicative of this trend but in spite of the aspirations of colleges to raise academic standards, it is still widely believed that the main task of colleges is the production of highly-trained and skilled teachers for the schools.[3] The fact that provincial departments of education regulate the supply of teachers in terms of the needs of the schools by imposing quotas on colleges, turning them on and off like taps, tends to reinforce the belief that colleges exist merely to train teachers for the classroom.

The university approach to the education of teachers has been contrasted with that of the colleges. The fact that the dominant values of the university departments and faculties of education differ is of significance at this time because the future of the education of all English-speaking teachers will be in the hands of the universities, although the

degree of control over existing colleges will vary from one university to another.

What are the dominant values in faculties of education at universities? The English universities of South Africa are in such close contact with the universities of the United Kingdom that one is justified in quoting the views of authorities such as Dr D N Aspin of Manchester and Professor G H Bantock of Leicester.

Professor Bantock has drawn attention to the disagreement among the teachers of teachers about their function as tutors: is it to help the student to **"know"** or is it to help him to **"act** and to **be"?** Where the average college tutor is more likely to accept the latter as his role, the university lecturer sees his task as the teaching of intellectual skills and the academic enrichment of the student.

Bantock suggests that there should be a return to the traditional role of the teacher which is to teach intellectual skills. At the symposium of he Colston Research Society in Bristol in 1968 where Bantock presented a paper on "Conflicts of Values in Teacher Education" he was taken to task by Professor Ben Morris for his "intellectualist bias", and his unwillingness to admit more than a little of the affective element in learning.

> "My revolutionary suggestion is that students should be sent out, not only full of friendly feelings towards their charges, but actually **knowing** something. Even facts. A profession defines itself, in part, in relation to the body of expertise which characterises its activities." [4]

Universities have been critical of the academic standards of colleges and it has been suggested that colleges tend to devalue the intellect. Taylor, writing of **colleges** in England, says:

> "Whilst intellect is highly valued in the teacher-education culture, it is also regarded with a certain amount of suspicion." [5]

As one person expressed it:

> "there is more to being a teacher than succeeding in college examinations."

Danny McDowell, referring to colleges in England, asserts that they are institutions which have not resolved whether they are offering a higher liberal or a vocational education, and that the kind of teaching and assessment in colleges assumes a dichotomy between education and training, between intellectual activity, valuable experience and moral concern, an attitude complex expressed by Richard Hofstadter:

> "Intellect is pitted against feeling, on the ground that it is somehow inconsistent with warm emotion. It is pitted against character, because it is widely believed that intellect stands for mere cleverness, which transmutes easily into the sly or the diabolical. It is pitted against practicality, since theory is held to be opposed to practice, and the 'purely' theoretical mind is so much disesteemed. It is pitted against democracy, since intellect is thought to be a form of distinction that defies egalitarianism." ("Anti-intellectualism in American Life", p. 46.) [6]

But as Professor Jack Niven has reminded us even university departments of education have not escaped this criticism, indeed few institutions have been free of the criticism of being anti-intellectual in comparison with what is considered the more "academic" departments. Much of the criticism has come from the academic colleagues of those engaged in educating teachers.

A questionnaire circulated among college and university lecturers in South Africa by the writer reveals that college lecturers are often critical of the approach of university departments of education to teacher training.

> "Universities are too subject-centred while colleges are justifiably student-centred."
>
> "The universities neglect the methodology courses which teach the professional skills."
>
> "The universities' criteria of scholarship is too confined to academic learning."
>
> "University teaching methods are formal, one-way media which encourage a passive approach to learning — the university style of teaching i.e. lecturing is perpetuated by students in the schools."
>
> "Intellectual qualities are not the most important criteria of success in good teaching — success is dependent on other factors."
>
> "The study of educational theory is not thought to have practical value — an intellectual exercise only."
>
> "The concept that theory gives rise to practice needs to be questioned — theory in fact, should arise from practice as Scheffler argues."
>
> "Intellectuals at university are often unable to communicate with those who experience difficulties."

Responses to the questionnaire also suggested the reasons for the college criticism of the university style of teacher education. Michael Ashley suggests that:

> "the teacher who later becomes a college lecturer teaching teachers how to teach is 'professionally socialised' in the essentially conservative and almost anti-intellectual environment of the school. After years of this, he has lost initiative and feels insecure in the presence of challenging ideas. College

lecturers often feel insecure in the university environment. Although the two types of institutions have much in common, the professional character of the college does differentiate it from the university which has a more open-ended attitude to knowledge. Many college lecturers see their task as keeping the schools going and fitting people into slots." "The intellectual of the University Department of Education is seen as a non-conformist who will be a misfit in a profession of conformists."

"Very often intellectuals tend to rock the boat but education is essentially conservative — those who rock the boat are viewed with suspicion."

Niven explains the difference in approach of universities and colleges to the preparation of teachers in terms of the history of the two types of institutions.

"The dichotomy . . . appears to be related to the fact that the universities have seen their role as the pursuers of truth and knowledge, whereas colleges have been concerned with the preparation of students for a system which was held to be appropriate for the education of children. The result was that colleges in England in the last century and early part of the present one developing a 'trade training' approach in which an attempt was made to equip the student to meet every foreseeable situation within the existing framework of the schools. The aim in essence was the production of a conformist to a pattern, not the education of an independent mind which would challenge the nature of the schools or of the education system."

One of the basic conflicts in teacher education concerns the relative emphasis to be placed on theory and practice. Although as Peters has pointed out, the rewards of theoretical study are long-term rather than immediate, student-teachers show a reluctance to pay too much attention to theory. Lecturers in theory argue that a sound knowledge of their specific discipline is essential if the students is to develop any perspective in practical teaching.

Generally speaking, it is true to say that university lecturers attach less importance to teaching experience in schools as a qualification for those who engage in teacher education than do serving teachers in schools and colleges, indeed, the latter consider it a condition of appointment. They consider it necessary for college personnel to renew contact with classroom situations in order to keep in touch and up-date their knowledge of conditions in the schools. Some are of the opinion that many tutors show too little concern for the need to prepare students to teach the practical, vocationally orientated course.

Niven considers it essential that the educators of teachers should have had "relevant experience" before engaging in the work of teacher training; this provides a necessary framework of reference, but, as he points out, this framework should neither be so remote nor so rigid as to inhibit change.

There is nevertheless a place in colleges and university departments of education for tutors without school experience; these are generally young persons of intellect, integrity and inspiration. McDowell supports this point of view when he declares that a young graduate who stimulates and opens the minds of students is making a greater contribution to the education and professional competence of student teachers than an ex-headmaster "who left his school fifteen years ago and hasn't read a serious book since. But then if experience is all you have, experience is what you value".[7]

Colleges of education, it is believed, should have an ethos which will affect the sort of person the student becomes and imbue the future teacher with a sense of professional purpose. "What you do as a teacher is affected by what you are". The culture of teacher education in colleges incorporates value orientation which emphasize the role of the teacher as an agent of "social cohesion", that is, he should be responsive to the needs of society and a means whereby compliance and commitment to certain fundamental values on the part of the whole population is achieved. The task of the schools is to shape and uphold the ends which society should pursue.[8] If this is accepted, an effort has to be made to secure "a cognitive and affective identification with appropriate social and educational values rather than a mere intellectual recognition of their legitimacy".[9]

As Vivia Pope has pointed out:

"This process of socialisation will differ according to the society in which the teacher lives and works. Socialisation is always relative to the norm of the society in which it occurs. If the child is part of a democratic society, the development of critical abilities and the acceptance of the right to differ will be recognised, but in other communities there may be a greater emphasis on conformity and the promotion of the traditional way of life."

To what extent should college or university lecturers concern themselves with this aspect of a student's training?

Professor Niven and Dr Jackson are of the opinion that teachers are likely to be confronted with situations in which their advice is sought, and therefore they should have an awareness of the problems, especially of adolescents who are experiencing difficulty in adjusting to society.

Because of the increasing effort being made to improve the general education or personal education of student-teachers by enlarging the academic component, there is a risk that the development of important personal qualities of a less academic nature may be neglected. This possibility would not arise if courses were truly integrated. The Leeds University Institute of Education in its research into the "Objectives of Teacher Education" concluded that the work of teaching requires that a teacher should have:

(i) Command of a range of professional skills and techniques.

(ii) Knowledge that provides an essential background to his teaching.

(iii) Certain personal qualities.[10]

The same report makes it quite clear that these are not to be thought of as three separate components.

> "Colleges of education must concern themselves with the personal education of their students as well as with their training as teachers. In our view, it should not be assumed in the planning of courses that the objectives of courses aimed at preparing students for teaching and of those aimed at their personal education will necessarily be very different." [11]

Therefore the distinction between preparation for teaching in terms of the actual work of teaching and preparation in terms of the students' "education" cannot be justified.

What are the personal qualities desired of teachers, and to what extent can colleges and universities be expected to teach them?

One of the finest expressions of the professional ethics which teachers are expected to accept is to be found in the affirmation which graduating student-teachers read at the annual Act of Dedication ceremony at the Johannesburg College of Education.

> "As an entrant to the teaching profession I solemnly declare —
>
> I will be guide and friend to the pupils in my care, and not misuse the authority that I shall hold;
> I will try to know each boy and girl, be alert to individual gifts and needs, and help each child develop his talents and discover the value of knowledge and skill;
>
> I will teach each child to honour family and home, to discern the right from the wrong, and to live with all men in the spirit of tolerance and service;
> I will encourage each child to look beyond himself in wonder and faith to the Author of all Goodness;
>
> I will use study, counsel, and thought to keep my mind informed, my insight clear, my judgment fair, and use with fidelity such personal knowledge of my pupils and their families as may be entrusted to me;
>
> And, I promise that I will be loyal to my school and colleagues, and that I will do all in my power to uphold the honour and dignity of my profession."

The professional attitudes and attributes considered important by those who responded to the questionnaire were:

A sense of responsibility, a concern for the individual pupil, academic and intellectual integrity, a respect for truth, respect for the personalities of pupils, independence in thought and action, openness of mind, a concern for the community and a sensitivity towards the values of the community; a sense of perspective to avoid being professionally confined, a willingness to continue studying, resilence, and a sense of humour.

Niven emphasizes professional commitment which is in his opinion:

> "the subordination of self in the discharge of professional duties and responsibilities. In this the importance lies in the adherence to professional standards and not merely in subservience to employing authorities."

Should colleges and universities purposefully attempt to create the climate which will induct student-teachers into a way of life?

Responses to the questionnaire indicate that some lecturers believe that although professional attitudes cannot be taught by direct cognitive approaches, an awareness of the importance of certain attributes can be developed by the interaction of tutors and students in small groups; it is not considered to be a tutor's function to impose values by precept but rather to encourage the development of desirable attributes by example. Teaching experience situations often provide students with the kind of experience which compels them to consider professional values.

The close contact which the writer has had with his colleagues in colleges of education

training Afrikaans-speaking students has shown a greater concern with the formative values of teacher education. While English-speaking institutions reject the suggestion that they should be held responsible for developing desirable attitudes. Afrikaans colleges accept the responsibility for "die vorming van gesindheid"

Professor Noble has expressed the opinion that:

> "The teacher-trainer may feel reluctant to admit that one of his tasks is the inculcation of approved attitudes. It may seem that this savours of indoctrination but this is only so if such psychological forces as suggestion or conditioning are used to produce right responses automatically and/or information is restricted so that only one side of an argument is presented. Yet, as Hudson (1972) says 'the teacher who leaves his students' minds open, in a state of promiscuous athleticism, is scarcely a teacher at all'." [12]

The evaluation of students in terms of their attitudes, interests, and other personal attributes raises problems. Responses to the questionnaire indicate that, while institutions training teachers attach importance to the achievement of educational goals of an affective nature, evaluating students' attitudes is a complex task.

As Dr Rose points out, reliable tests of attitudes are difficult to devise, not only because of their subjective nature, but because they tend to elicit responses considered professionally respectable and there is no guarantee that the score on such a test will correlate with actual behaviour when the subject is free from constraint.

Niven is of the opinion that evaluation in the affective area should be part of the global assessment of the student in terms of personality and suitability for teaching. Others have suggested that the evaluation of attitudes is possible only in the context of the entire programme of professional education, especially in the context of problem situations and practical experience in the schools, indeed practical teaching cannot be divorced from assessment of attitudes and values.

In the name of academic freedom, which colleges of education in South Africa do not enjoy, the four English universities, the "open" universities, will resist all attempts by other parties to gain control of their courses. Hewitt, however, has reminded institutions of higher education that, although they have a right to intellectual independence, they can never forget their social and professional responsibilities.

McDowell has pointed out that there is a dynamic relationship between the structure of an organisation (in the present context this is the provincial education department controlling the education of teachers) and values. A conflict of values is therefore possible between the explicit values, i.e. the declared aims of the controlling provincial and national authorities, and the implicit values of institutions, especially English-speaking colleges and universities who are responsible for offering courses of teacher training.

Most colleges and university faculties of education consider that the present government's present policy requiring course conformity to detailed national criteria for the evaluation of teaching qualifications has created such a rigid structure that the realisation of goals or values which English-speaking institutions consider important is impossible.

As one lecturer put it,

> "The green book tends to turn teacher education into a factory industry."

The national criteria prescribes so many subjects and courses that the academic content tends to become superficial and this leads to shallow treatment rather than in-depth study. The present policy of attempting to ensure academic standards by imposing an administrative formula is a mistaken one.

The restrictions imposed on colleges by provincial authorities appears to be more irksome to the English than to the Afrikaans colleges. This is because of the English-speaking persons' dislike of all forms of authoritarianism and regimentation and their suspicion of the kind of teaching that savours of indoctrination or encourages convergent thinking.

The Government's acceptance of the policy of Christian National Education is a major controversial issue in South African education today. The English-speaking section cannot willingly subscribe to the "Christian and broad national character" of education as approved by the National Education Policy Act of 1967. Two major objections to Christian National Education from the English point of view are:

1. It is an authoritarian doctrine which contrasts with the Christian liberal approach to knowledge which is characterised by a spirit of free inquiry in the pursuit of truth.

2. The authoritarianism of Christian National Education has led to the presentation of the policy of "apartheid" in South African schools as the only possible policy sanctioned by God. "Children are being subjected to political propaganda in the guise of God-given truth."[16]

There have been conflicting views on the role of the teacher through the ages. Today, as Bantock has pointed out, there are those who view the teacher as Authority while others see the teacher's role as Initiator, a teacher who creates learning situations from which the child can learn rather than a teacher who simply hands on received truth and a fixed body of knowledge in an authoritarian fashion.

That there is such a conflict of views on the role of the teacher in South African schools has been brought home very forcibly to colleges of education tutors when they have visited schools to supervise their students during teaching practice. In some schools, even within the city of Johannesburg, the withdrawal of students from these schools has been considered necessary by an English college because the dominant values of the school principals have been too strongly authoritarian and in conflict with the values accepted at an English college to make the practical teaching period a worthwhile experience.

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