

# M U S T E R

Multi-Site Teacher Education Research Project

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**Discussion Paper**

**30**

**Roles and Responsibilities,  
Institutional Landscapes and  
Curriculum Mindscapes: a  
partial view of teacher  
education policy in South  
Africa, 1990 - 2000**

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## **Multi-Site Teacher Education Research Project (MUSTER)**

MUSTER is a collaborative research project co-ordinated from the Centre for International Education at the University of Sussex Institute of Education. It has been developed in partnership with:

- The Institute of Education, University of Cape Coast, Ghana.
- The Institute of Education, The National University of Lesotho.
- The Centre for Educational Research and Training, University of Malawi.
- The Faculty of Education, University of Durban-Westville, South Africa.
- The School of Education, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine's Campus, Trinidad.

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MUSTER is focused on generating new understandings of teacher education before, during and after the point of initial qualification as a teacher. Its concerns include exploring how new teachers are identified and selected for training programmes, how they acquire the skills they need to teach effectively, and how they experience training and induction into the teaching profession. The research includes analytical concerns with the structure and organisation of teacher education, the form and substance of teacher education curriculum, the identity, roles and cultural experience of trainee teachers, and the costs and probable benefits of different types of initial teacher training.

MUSTER is designed to provide opportunities to build research and evaluation capacity in teacher education in developing countries through active engagement with the research process from design, through data collection, to analysis and joint publication. Principal researchers lead teams in each country and are supported by three Sussex faculty and three graduate researchers.

This series of discussion papers has been created to provide an early opportunity to share output from sub-studies generated within MUSTER for comment and constructive criticism. Each paper takes a theme within or across countries and offers a view of work in progress.

### **MUSTER South Africa**

Revised versions of the South African papers in this series can be found in the book **Changing Patterns of Teacher Education in South Africa – Policy Practice and Prospects**, edited by K.M.Lewin, M.Samuel and Y. Sayed, (Heinemann Press 2003). The book explores policy and practice in Teacher Education in South Africa and their implications for the future, representing one of few empirically grounded, policy orientated studies of teacher education in South Africa. The research presented covers critical topics of interest to those who prepare teachers and study teaching: the evolving histories of teacher education policy, shifting teacher identities, teacher supply and demand, contrasting models of teacher education delivery, college mergers and rationalisation, and the impact of HIV/AIDS on teachers and on teacher provisioning.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ANC	African National Congress
CCERSA	Committee of College of Education Rectors of South Africa
CEM	Council of Education Ministers
CHE	Council on Higher Education
COSATU	Council of South African Trades Unions
COTEP	Committee for Teacher Education Policy
CREQ	Criteria for the Recognition and Evaluation of Qualifications
DoE	Department of Education
DoL	Department of Labour
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
ETD	Education Training and Development
ETDP	Education Training and Development Practitioner
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance
FET	Further Education and Training
GEAR	Growth Employment and Redistribution
GET	General Education and Training
HEDCOM	Heads of Education Committees
HET	Higher Education and Training
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HDI	Historically Disadvantaged Institution
HSRC	Human Sciences Resource Council
INSET	In-service Education and Training
MUSTER	Multi-site Teacher Education Research
NPDE	National Professional Diploma in Education
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NQF	National Qualification Framework
NSA	National Skills Authority
NSB	National Standards Body
NSE	Norms and Standards for Educators
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
PEI	President's Education Initiative
PRESET	Pre-service Education and Training
PSCBC	Public Sector Co-ordinating Bargaining Council
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SACOL	South African College for Open Learning
SACTE	South African College for Teacher Education
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETA	Sectoral Education and Training Authority
SGB	Standards Generating Body
UNISA	University of South Africa

# 1 Introduction

This paper provides a partial overview of teacher education policy and its implementation in South Africa in the period from 1990 to 2000. South Africa's post-liberation government has been confronted with many dilemmas and hard choices in its efforts to transform apartheid education. The story of teacher education from 1990 to 2000, with its integral links to both the schooling system and higher education, provides an example of a policy process and the beginnings of its implementation which throws some light on the state's efforts to transform apartheid education. It must be emphasised that this paper is not in any way a formal DoE perspective. Although the DoE employed the author in 1999/2000 and the paper draws on this experience, this is a personal perspective.

2001 will be a critical year for teacher education in South Africa. The last three years of the previous decade saw a radical re-shaping of the shape and size of the teacher education sector, a fundamental revision of the curriculum objectives of teacher education and a rapidly emerging human resource development and management system. This paper argues that all the policy pieces of the jigsaw are in place. There is a coherent policy framework for teacher education. But, it now has to be implemented. The new system exists on paper and in the activities of a broad range of agents, but it has not yet begun to operate. There are encouraging signs particularly on the curriculum front as many universities and technikons have submitted new programmes and qualifications in line with the Norms and Standards for Educators. It is now a challenge to deliver these programmes and to engage in the research and development that will give flesh to the new curriculum.

This paper provides an overview of the last decade as a way of informing what must be done in 2001 and beyond. The questions raised at the end of the paper look ahead at the next year and are in many ways the starting point of the debate. Looking carefully backwards and understanding the origins of the complex system within which we have to work may help us to discern the parameters and constraints, risks and opportunities that face teacher education.

This paper argues that the DoE has acted decisively in regard to teacher education policy in the period from 1995 to 2000 in those areas for which it has responsibility and that these efforts have been undermined by a broader systemic dysfunctionality linked to the complexity of the governance arrangements within the higher education system and the epistemology that informs these arrangements. The challenges raised by this complexity are apparent across all government spheres and are a consequence of South Africa's post-apartheid constitutional dispensation. I argue that part of the lacuna between policy and implementation lies in the proliferation of "regulatory" bodies and the multiplicity of role players and stakeholders represented on these bodies. This has created confusion over roles and responsibilities and undermined the kind of executive decision-making that is necessary for efficient management and implementation.

This paper is not intended as an apology for the DoE or the government. Rather, it is an analytic device that constructs a perspective of the DoE as coherently and consistently as

possible to see what light this may throw on a process that is still very much in progress. This paper is only tentative as it is too soon to fully understand or evaluate teacher education policy in post-apartheid South Africa but it will provide hopefully some ideas about the terrain ahead.

## **2 A broad contextual framework**

Looking back over the 1990s, it is possible to see three distinct phases and the emergence of a fourth in the "transformation" of the South African education system. These distinct phases, discernible at a macro or holistic level, framed events in teacher education. The first phase, from 1990 to 1994, was a period of structural stasis and cultural malaise. Apartheid legislation and structures persisted with their myriad separate departments, curricula and institutions, albeit with a creeping deterioration. The legitimacy, authority, efficiency and effectiveness of the apartheid system were in tatters from the struggles of the 1980s but as yet no new bearers of the necessary roles and responsibilities required by an education system had emerged. While the old state marked time, education policy development flourished as attempts were made to construct an inspirational and viable vision of post-apartheid South Africa's education and training system.

The second phase, from 1994 to 1996, saw the manifestation of policy in the emergence of new structures, role players and authoritative bodies able to establish commissions and task teams with a legislative authority grounded in the interim constitution. In 1994, the newly elected government began the task of implementing the interim constitution by creating one national and nine provincial education departments and a number of statutory and non-statutory councils: Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), South African Council for Educators (SACE).

The first major new education legislation, in 1995, established SAQA and the NQF. This was followed, through 1996 and 1997, by a number of policy documents (White papers 1 and 2, NCHE Report, Report on the Governance and Funding of Schools), new laws (National Education Policy Act, South African Schools Act) and by a variety of "transformation" programmes guided by the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

The National Education Policy Act, with its principles and frameworks, and the South African Schools Act, with its reorganisation of the schooling system, set clear strategic objectives and determined roles and responsibilities for the national and provincial departments, school governing bodies and other stakeholders. There was a steady reconstruction of state structures as new bodies such as the Heads of Education Committee (HEDCOM), the Council of Education Ministers (CEM), and the nine provincial departments emerged. In spite of all this activity on the policy and structural fronts during this second phase, there was, at the level of schools and classrooms, little improvement in the quality of education available to the majority of the population.

The third phase, approximately from 1997 to 1999, was part of a more general reappraisal

of policy within the context of the Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy and its far tighter fiscal framework. GEAR attempts to address a crucial tension that was undermining implementation of the RDP. On the one hand there was a need to exercise tight control over state expenditure to create the fiscal climate necessary for economic growth. On the other hand, there was a need to redress the inequalities of apartheid and ensure that basic public services (water, sanitation, housing, education, health, security) were delivered to the poor. In this phase, the state sought a stronger impact on the lives of the majority by the delivery of better basic services and, in education, greater access to educational opportunities of better quality and more carefully attuned to personal needs, employment opportunities and social transformation.

GEAR and the subsequent Medium Term Economic Frameworks attempt to overcome the constraints of an austere fiscal policy through an increase in the efficiency and effectiveness of state apparatuses. The Ministry of Finance, the Reserve Bank and Department of State Expenditure (Treasury) have been able to implement an austere fiscal regime and control overall state expenditure fairly quickly because these are national competences and decision-making is concentrated within the tight locus of the leadership of these three bodies.

Making state apparatuses more efficient and effective is a far harder and slower task involving a multiplicity of role players including various state departments, provinces, unions, and other stakeholder groups. For example, the national bodies can determine how much money will be allocated to KwaZulu-Natal but it cannot guarantee that the money will be well spent. Ensuring accountability at the provincial level requires concerted action by a number of bodies: Auditor-General, provincial parliamentary committees, media, unions, Public Protector, national departments, et al. Increasing the efficiency of the public service requires negotiations with powerful trade unions and a massive upgrading and re-skilling of public servants. By the end of 1999, limited progress had been made in these areas.

The success of the one side of GEAR (fiscal austerity) and the failure of the other side (efficient and effective delivery of public services) exacerbated the plight of the poor. The shift from an RDP emphasis on equity, redress and basic needs to the stronger economic market orientation of GEAR impacted strongly on transformation in the education system. The viability of policies developed and legislated in phase two under the aegis of the RDP was undermined by the new austerity of GEAR. There was a need for significant policy adjustment. GEAR's success depends partially on a large-scale human resources' development programme. The primary responsibility for this programme at a policy level lies with the Departments of Public Service and Administration, Education and Labour. But responsibility for delivery rests with other bodies such as the National Skills Authority (NSA), the Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), and the South African Qualification Authority. In the case of teacher education, where the DoE has a responsibility as the major employer of teachers, other bodies such as the ELRC, SAQA, the Education, Training and Development Practitioners SETA, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), and the South African Council for Educators (SACE) also share responsibility and authority.

It was only in the course of 2000, that a number of these bodies became operational

leading to the emergence of a fourth phase in which the focus has shifted strongly to implementation - to having an impact on people's daily lives. This phase is a culmination of previous phases but it is too early to say what will be the substantive shape of this phase. One major challenge will lie in co-ordinating the activities of the multiplicity of role players and bodies with responsibility for and authority over the various aspects of teacher education. The development of a high quality teacher education system in South Africa depends on the ability of these various bodies to act in concert.

### **3 Origins of the landscape**

To understand the evolution of the structure of the system over the last ten years, we have to go back to the beginning of the last century. It was an enduring characteristic of the 1910 constitution that it divided responsibility for teacher education between national and provincial government. Colleges of education and the training of teachers for primary education were a provincial responsibility, while secondary teacher training was a national competence carried out by universities and technikons. The political reasons for this lie in a compromise that has remarkable similarities with the negotiations over the interim constitution. In 1910, the colony of Natal was reluctant to enter the union. One sticking point was control of teacher education. The English-speaking Natalians regarded the schooling system as a key element in the preservation of their culture as distinct from those of the other three colonies. Conceding governance of teacher education for primary schooling to the erstwhile colonies was a carrot for Natal to join the union and also marks the early emergence of tension between centripetal and centrifugal forces within teacher education.

The location of the constitutional competence for teacher education in the 1994 interim constitution was also subject to a contestation between those parties favouring devolution and decentralisation to the provinces and those parties favouring centralisation at a national level. Agreement was only secured "at the last minute" by an important compromise: colleges became a national competence in exchange for permitting private-sector provision of higher education.

As Bantu Education was implemented in the 1950s, and the scaffolding of Apartheid put in place, the centrifugal forces appeared rampant. Responsibility for "white" teacher education remained with the four "white" provinces. "Black" teacher education followed the logic of racial classification: "Indian" and "Coloured" teachers were trained in Indian and Coloured colleges of education and secondary school teachers at the Universities of Durban-Westville and the Western Cape. "African" primary school teachers were trained by the Department of Bantu Education and as the "homelands" emerged, each homeland government was given control over primary teacher education colleges within its "own area."

Building colleges of education to train its "own" teachers quickly became a source of status and patronage for the homelands. In the 1980s, this led to a mushrooming of



colleges reaching a peak of 120 by 1994. These colleges were part of the schooling system and staffed by College/School educators. For those Africans who remained in the “white areas,” the colleges were owned and controlled by the Department of Bantu Education and its successor the Department of Education and Training. By the end of the apartheid era, South Africa had nineteen different governance systems controlling colleges of education, together with 32 partially autonomous universities and technikons providing teacher education.

This has the appearance of a highly devolved system in which responsibilities and authority have been widely dispersed at both national and provincial/racial group levels. In reality, the central government maintained strict control of governance, funding, staffing, curriculum, etc. There were some divergences between the provinces and homelands especially as the homelands went through the three stages to “independence” with each stage giving more control over colleges (albeit with many seconded white officials in key positions). The overall hegemony of apartheid education, however, was pervasive.

In spite of this hegemony and a strong core curriculum, there was a multiplicity of curricula and qualifications, little nationally co-ordinated planning of supply and demand and meagre quality assurance and accountability procedures. There were also vast differences in per capita costs and serious distortions in supply. By 2000, there was a large pool (approximately 50,000) of unemployed teachers (mostly trained as primary school teachers) and a shortage of approximately 10,000 subject specialist teachers (especially in mathematics, science and languages) in the secondary grades.

In addition, the requirements of the rationalisation and redeployment exercise, begun in 1996 and still not completed by the end of 2000, have impacted negatively on the ability of schools to match posts needed for the curriculum with “in excess” teachers from elsewhere. Older patterns of oversupply in urban schools and under-supply in rural schools persisted and newly trained teachers have difficulty in finding posts (even in rural schools). Most posts available to newly entering teachers are “governing body” posts paid for from school funds. As a consequence of these initiatives, the overall teaching corps has declined from approximately 420,000 in 1994 to about 375,000 in 2000.

In 1994, the nine new provincial governments became responsible for more than 120 colleges of education. The 1910 constitutional division of responsibility between national and provincial government remained in effect. The provinces inherited a diverse collection of colleges of education. Each college came with its own particular heritage of qualifications and curricula, which now became “provincial” qualifications.

The 1996 Constitution makes tertiary education a national competence and the Higher Education Act of 1997 (section 21) makes all teacher education and, therefore colleges of education, part of the (tertiary) higher education system. This meant a constitutional “function shift” for the colleges of education (and colleges of agriculture, nursing, military, police, forestry et al) from a provincial competence to a national competence. These seemingly simple constitutional and legislative provisions drove a radical structural transformation of teacher education in the late 1990s.

In 1994, there were approximately 150 public institutions providing teacher education to approximately 200,000 students. Of these students, 80,000 were in colleges of education. Prior to 1994, the supply of teacher was driven, in the main, by the amount of money the various apartheid departments of education were willing to spend on subsidies to universities and technikons and budgets for colleges. One weakness of the multiplicity of apartheid education departments was a poor information system. It is only recently that more accurate statistics have been generated and supply and demand modelling begun in earnest.

At the beginning of 2000, there were approximately 82 public institutions providing teacher education to 110,000 students. Of these institutions 50 were colleges of education with approximately 15,000 students. The number of colleges diminished rapidly during 2000 as the provinces “rationalised” down to 25 “contact” colleges with 10,000 students that were earmarked for incorporation into higher education. The other 5,000 college students were enrolled in two distance colleges: the South African College for Teacher Education (SACTE) and the South African College for Open Learning (SACOL).

In the higher education sector, there were approximately 95,000 teacher education students enrolled in the universities of whom 60,000 were enrolled in distance education institutions. Of these 60,000 students, approximately 40,000 were enrolled in public-private partnerships. Approximately 5,000 students were enrolled in technikons. One unintended consequence of the interim constitution was the emergence and rapid increase of private providers in the mid-1990s within an unregulated climate that became increasingly anarchic during the second half of the decade. It was only with the Higher Education Act of 1997 and the establishment of a Registrar for Private Higher Education that the DoE has been able to exercise direct influence on the private sector. The legal complexity of the field, the usual bodies and the logistical demands of creating a management information system has made regulation a slow process that only began to be effective in 1999.

In this paper, I distinguish between four categories of teacher education provider: public; not-for-profit private; for-profit private; and public-private partnerships. I use the term “public” to mean “state-funded.” Although some mention is made of private providers, the primary focus of this paper is on public providers, specifically the universities, technikons and the erstwhile colleges of education.

A number of universities established financially rewarding albeit opportunistic partnerships with private providers to deliver teacher education qualifications. The major weakness of these partnerships in the 1990s was the way in which public funds received by the universities were not spent on providing students with an adequate service but on maximising profit. A common pattern that emerged in the latter part of the decade was enrolment of a large number of teachers for initial and further qualifications who were “serviced” by the private partners in “off-campus” locations with accreditation from the university. Many of these initiatives were “distance” programmes and students had no access to library or other support facilities. Undoubtedly, public-private partnerships will play an important role in the future of teacher education, but the nature of the relationships and how they are regulated and funded are matters not yet finalised.

One consequence of the rise of the privates was a dramatic decline in teacher education enrolments at UNISA and VISTA (the major public distance providers of teacher education) and the Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDIs). Within the space of four years, twelve traditionally contact institutions introduced some form of distance education. In 2000, the Minister of Education placed a moratorium on new public-private partnerships and new distance education ventures while new policy on the shape and size of the higher education system was being developed.

During the 1990s, the distinction between PRESET and INSET has become increasingly blurred. For example, under-qualified and unqualified teachers are pre-service students in so far as they are not yet qualified but are in-service students by virtue of their employment as teachers. It is still worth noting, however, that of the 110,000 students enrolled in teacher education in 2000, 15,000 were enrolled in PRESET programmes and 95,000 in INSET programmes. Of these PRESET students, 10,000 were in the colleges and 5,000 in universities and technikons.

Once the provincial rationalisation process was completed, the 25 earmarked contact (face-to-face, full-time residential) colleges of education had approximately 10,000 students and 1,000 staff members and the distance colleges had 5,000 students and 500 staff members giving an overall staff to student ratio of one to ten. The budget for colleges of education in 2000 was approximately R800 million giving an average per capita cost to the state of R40,000 per student. By comparison the per capita subsidy cost of teacher training at a university was approximately R10,000 per annum.

In 1999, HEDCOM requested the DoE to establish a task team to investigate the two distance teacher education colleges: SACTE and SACOL. Together these colleges had a headcount enrolment of 20,000 students. However, their highly flexible registration criterion, with many students registered only for one or two courses per year, translates this headcount figure into approximately 5,000 Full-time Equivalents. These colleges were funded by the provinces in the same manner as the contact colleges and operated at a per capita cost at least double that of the University of South Africa (UNISA). In addition to the 5,000 students enrolled in SACTE and SACOL, there were approximately 15,000 students enrolled at UNISA and VISTA giving a total of 20,000 students enrolled in public distance teacher education institutions in 2000.

There were approximately 40,000 students enrolled in public-private distance teacher education partnerships (for example: University of Pretoria and Success College; University of Port Elizabeth and Azaliah College; Rand Afrikaans University and Lyceum College). In 1990, there were a large number of not-for-profit Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), many with an anti-apartheid history and only a few "for-profit" private providers. The private sector "for-profit" providers grew rapidly in the 1990s with no state regulation in effect while the "not-for-profit" NGOs experienced hard times as foreign funding shifted from support for civil society bodies to direct assistance to the state. In 1994, NGOs were reaching approximately 115,000 teachers with non-formal INSET programmes. The private for-profit providers had approximately 23,000 students (Hofmeyr and Hall, 1996).

Between July 1999 and July 2000, the Minister declared his intention to incorporate the

25 contact colleges as sub-divisions of various universities and technikons and to make the distance teacher education colleges subdivisions of UNISA. It is clear from this brief description that the shape and size of the teacher education system changed dramatically during the 1990s. These changes arose partly from design and partly by default. The major default consequences flowed from the provisions of the interim constitution and subsequent legislation allowing for private higher education providers and prescribing the incorporation of colleges of education into higher education. The interplay of design and default, of intended and unintended consequences, is a key characteristic of teacher education transformation in the 1990s.

#### **4 An overview of curriculum changes**

During the 1990s, teacher education curricula in South Africa underwent equally dramatic transformation. Apartheid education had created a proliferation of curricula in the colleges and in the universities and technikons. After the 1994 elections, college curricula fell under the jurisdiction of the nine provinces. In order to exercise influence over university, technikon and provincial qualifications the DoE exercised its rights as an employer flowing from The Educator's Employment Act of 1994, The National Education Policy Act of 1995 and the Labour Relations Act of 1995. These laws laid the basis for consultation and negotiation between the employer (DoE) and the employees (represented by unions) over conditions of service (including career-pathing, workloads, job responsibilities, remuneration and other aspects of the employer-employee relationship).

The 1995 National Education Policy Act (Act No 27 of 1996), sub-sections (4) (f), (l), states that-

The Minister shall determine national policy for:

- (1) The professional education and accreditation of educators;
- (2) Curriculum framework, core syllabuses and education programmes, learning standards, examinations and the certification of qualifications, subject to the provisions of any law establishing a national qualifications framework or a certifying or accrediting body.

These powers, together with the authority of the Minister to determine "requirements for employment" make teacher education a direct responsibility of the Minister in a rare area where he actually has the authority to act decisively, although this authority is weakened by the conditional clause in (2) above. This is a good example of overlapping roles and responsibilities. With whom does responsibility for national policy on teacher education programmes and qualifications rest? With the Minister or with SAQA? Which legislation has priority: the National Education Policy Act or the SAQA Act?

In the period from 1995 to 2000, teacher education qualifications were subject to the

Norms and Standards for Teacher Education which were declared national policy by the Minister of Education, Prof S M E Bengu, on 8 September 1995. The Committee for Teacher Education Policy (COTEP), a sub-committee of HEDCOM, had to develop norms and standards for teacher education, to accredit teacher education programmes and qualifications, and to advise HEDCOM and the Minister on matters pertaining to teacher education. Membership of COTEP included, inter alia, representatives of all nine provincial education departments, national teacher unions, student unions, directorates of the national Department of Education, South African Council for Educators, Colleges of Education, Universities and Technikons.

All public teacher education institutions were requested to revise their existing teacher education programmes and to submit them to COTEP and HEDCOM for approval. New programmes had also to be submitted in accordance with the 1995 Norms and Standards for Teacher Education. It is important to note that these regulations applied only to public providers. The 1995 Norms and Standards for Teacher Education set in place a national core curriculum and a process for accrediting qualifications based on criteria for the recognition and evaluation of qualifications that supplemented the norms and standards (the “green book”).

In February 2000, the Minister gazetted new Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE) and these were supplemented in September 2000 by Criteria for the Recognition and Evaluation of Qualifications for Employment in Education (CREQ). These two gazettes indicate to all providers (public and private) the kinds of qualifications (and the learning programmes leading to them) that the DoE will consider for employment, and to the public providers, the kinds of programmes and qualifications the DoE will consider for subsidy funding.

The norms, standards and criteria provide a “generic” picture of a teacher and their required competences together with guidelines for the development of learning programmes aligned with the new outcomes-based National Qualification Framework.

De Clercq (1997: 128) uses three concepts to provide a useful analysis of South African education policy: symbolic, regulative and procedural discourses. The Norms and Standards for Educators have a largely symbolic function presenting a holistic picture of an ideal teacher toward which curricula should aim. The regulative functions of teacher education policy are carried by the CREQ and labour law and regulations. The procedural functions showing who is responsible for what and how these responsibilities should be carried out are indicated explicitly in key Acts: The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act of 1995, the National Education Policy Act of 1996, the Higher Education Act of 1997, The Skills Development Act of 1998.

The broad argument in this paper is that the state has carried out the first two policy functions competently in regard to teacher education, but that there has been a breakdown in the procedural function. There is an underlying assumption common to all these Acts about the nature of democratic governance. In the afterglow of the constitutional negotiations, there was a strong belief in the efficacy of stakeholder democracy and the ability of stakeholders with different interests to reach consensus and make decisions in “the best interests of all.”

The overarching legislation referred to above splits responsibilities for the “governance” of parts of the higher education system. A public teacher education provider has to be “accredited” with the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE). This may also involve accreditation with other Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs). The providers’ qualifications must be registered with SAQA through the SGBs and NSBs. The learning programmes leading to these qualifications have to be accredited by the HEQC (or other ETQAs) and “approved” by the DoE for funding purposes and for employment purposes.

These bodies are key decision-making points in the procedural systems of academic policy, qualification registration, quality assurance and funding. They directly impact on education and training providers and their programmes. Unfortunately, in their early existence, the contestation between these bodies and between different stakeholder interests within these bodies has weakened their ability to make decisions and carry through their consequences.

## **5 Curriculum mindscapes**

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act of 1995 laid the foundations for a National Qualification Framework (NQF) and a programme based approach to the regulation of education and training. The NQF has three broad bands: General Education and Training (GET), Further Education and Training (FET), Higher Education and Training (HET). The GET Certificate is placed at Level One of the NQF and is an exit point at Grade 9 of the schooling system. This exit level can also be reached through an Adult Basic Education and Training route. The FET band covers levels 1 to 4 of the NQF. The Further Education and Training Certificate is placed at level 4 and is an exit point at Grade 12 of the schooling system. The FET band includes Grades 10, 11 and 12 of the schooling system and a variety of alternate routes offered by technical schools and colleges, community learning centres and a variety of other public and private providers.

The HET band covers levels 5 to 8 of the NQF, and teacher education programmes are also located on these levels. This programme location reflects the constitutional split in competence between national and provincial governments. Provinces are responsible for public provision in the GET and FET bands. Provision in the HET band is through a variety of “semi-autonomous” public and private providers including the 36 public universities and technikons.

Key role players in education at a national level include the Departments of Education and Labour, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), the Council on Higher Education (CHE), the National Skills Authority (NSA) and the Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). Other state departments also play important roles. The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism has played an active and productive role in developing and promoting environmental education. The Department of Health has played the major role in the Primary School Nutrition Programme and in other

important aspects of health education and increasingly in HIV/Aids education and management. Given the funds generated by the Skills Levy Act, the NSA and SETAs will play a crucial role in the FET band and to a lesser extent the HET band.

The Department of Labour had a strong influence on the development of the SAQA Act and the Skills Development Act. Although the Minister of Education was given primary responsibility for SAQA, the content of the Act indicates the strong influence within education policy of the labour movement and the DoL which has had two major consequences: an increasing emphasis on labour relation procedures and mechanisms as a means of implementation; and a strong emphasis on the integration of education and training within an explicit outcomes-based epistemology more usually associated with training. Much of the thinking behind the NQF can be traced in earlier documents such as COSATU's skills development plans, the NEPI Human Resources Development report, and in work done by the National Training Board and the HSRC between 1990 and 1995.

The SAQA Act of 1995 was followed by regulations setting out a complex stakeholder governance approach to the development of learning programmes and qualifications. The Skills Development Act puts in place a similar array of stakeholder bodies to promote skills development throughout the public and private sectors. The SAQA structures include two layers of stakeholder bodies for the development and registration of qualifications: the National Standards Bodies (NSBs) and the Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs). There are twelve NSBs corresponding to the 12 organisational fields of the NQF and a multiplicity of SGBs within each NSB field. There are approximately 30 SETAs. All these stakeholder bodies must have a minimum number of representatives from six key sectors: state, business, labour, critical interest groups, providers, and NGOs

SAQA also has primary responsibility for quality assurance of the learning programmes leading to the registered qualifications. SAQA is putting in place a structure of Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) bodies. Higher Education and Training has approximately 40 bodies involved in quality assurance. The Higher Education Act creates a statutory body, the Higher Education Quality Committee, as a sub-committee of the Council on Higher Education, to take responsibility for the accreditation of higher education providers and their programmes. The HEQC has to work with the DoE, DoL, SAQA, the SETAs and professional bodies (for example the Health Professionals Council) in fulfilling its quality assurance responsibilities. In addition to their skills development responsibilities, SETAs are also ETQAs. This large number of role players with different responsibilities and objectives leads to conflicts of interest which are hard to resolve and undermine the consensus model of stakeholder governance that underlies the new regulatory policy and structures.

Teacher education programmes and their providers are regulated within this broad framework. In regard to teacher education, there are key linkages between these various bodies: the DoE has to operate in partnership with the CHE, SAQA (and NSBs and SGBs), the NSA (and SETAs), SACE, professional bodies, critical interest groups, labour, public and private providers and their associations. In crucial areas, in the public and private sectors, there are key responsibilities that the DoE can discharge if and only if other authorities and bodies have already performed their responsibilities.

The DoE, as the employer of a large number of public educators and primary funder of public provision, has specific functions for which it is responsible include, inter alia:

- allocation of public funding,
- development of national norms and standards
- recognition and evaluation criteria for purposes of employment under the Employment of Educators Act
- development and implementation of a rolling national plan
- regulation of the private and public sectors

In order for the DoE to fulfil these responsibilities in an accountable and transparent manner, certain pre-conditions must be met. These include:

- an effective system for the registration of qualifications and standards through SAQA, the NSBs and SGBs; and,
- an effective system for the accrediting of providers and their programmes through the CHE, in co-operation with SAQA, professional bodies and SETAs for accrediting providers and their programmes within the higher education band of the NQF.

From the perspective of the DoE, a public institution and its programmes will only be considered for funding once the institution and its programmes have been accredited by the CHE and its partners and its qualifications registered by SAQA. The DoE can only perform its “funding” role in a responsible manner if SAQA, the CHE and NSA registration and accreditation bodies and procedures are functional. This is also true of the SETAs which can only fund an employer for a training programme that is registered on the NQF and delivered by a provider accredited by a relevant ETQA.

In regard to private providers, the DoE has responsibility for developing policy and legislation, and for the registration of private providers. Once the Higher Education Act was in place, the DoE had a mechanism for regulating private providers through their registration with the Registrar of Private Higher Education (the Director General of the DoE). This registration process is linked to the qualification registration procedures of SAQA and the quality assurance and accreditation procedures of the CHE. At the end of 1999, the first provisional registrations for private providers were issued. However, the process remains flawed because the Registrar is dependent on SAQA registration and quality assurance structures which, at the end of 2000, are still not operating effectively.

The complex maze of organisational structures, processes and procedures which together make up the various facets of the higher education band of the NQF have to be carefully put together and aligned to ensure coherence, efficiency and effectiveness. It is only once these regulatory structures and bodies are operating in alignment that implementation can move firmly onto the agenda. Unfortunately, the dispersion of responsibilities and division of authority has produced a decision-making gridlock exacerbated by a general lack of human resource capacity in the system; a classic case of too many cooks spoiling the broth. By the end of the decade it was clear that a weak system riddled with ambiguities and overlaps in roles and responsibilities of different authorities was impeding the implementation of an “outcomes-based NQF.”



One major source of disagreement lies in different interpretations of what is meant by “curriculum or learning programme” and “teaching and learning”, and other key concepts embedded in regulations such as “applied competence,” “integrated and applied assessment,” “Recognition of Prior Learning,” et al. These concepts are given radically different interpretations by the different role-players.

The basic principle of the NQF espoused on many occasions by Samuel Isaacs, the Executive Director of SAQA, is that the qualification road will be built as we go along. In other words, the design and development of national qualifications will be a collective process involving stakeholder representatives at all levels. Central to this vision of “construction” is a strong constructivist epistemology that sees learning as an exercise in “knowledge construction.” This epistemological base has been subject to rigorous criticism elsewhere, most recently and illuminatingly by Johan Muller in “Reclaiming Knowledge” (Muller 2000), and in a number of the articles contained in “Changing Curriculum” (Jansen and Christie 1999).

On the constructivist view, knowledge can be learnt in discrete little bits by a learner constructing their own knowledge. An alternative, non-constructivist, view holds that knowledge is acquired through a sustained process of inculcation and initiation into an academic discipline that requires the learner to engage with an educator and subject content. One example of this difference is that constructivists favour discrete “Unit Standards” that have very specific outcomes with weak rules of combination that can be assessed by a checklist based on observation and measurement. By contrast, non-constructivists favour much longer “whole qualifications” that have strong rules of combination and complex outcomes that are assessed in far more subjective and inferential ways.

Such a simple bifurcation tends to caricature, but the differences are sufficient to lead to contestation over the natures and roles of knowledge, assessment, teaching and learning. This contestation is exacerbated by a lack of capacity, with too many roles and responsibilities and not enough skilled people to undertake them competently, as well as there being not enough money or time to commit to a time-consuming and expensive processes of consultation and negotiation, and confusion over a highly complex policy framework.

For our purposes here, we need only note that the vision of lifelong learning of value to all, with maximum access, mobility, portability and the development of “competent learners” has as yet made very little impact on the higher education system. One example of the immense difficulties of putting in place such a complex system of bodies and procedures is provided by higher education qualifications. The goal of the NQF is a set of national HET qualifications that are then provided by public and private providers if accredited to do so by an ETQA. Unfortunately, after five years, there is still no new outcomes-based qualification framework for HET. By 2000, key questions had still not been resolved. Is a Master’s degree on level 7 or level 8? Is the technikon Bachelor of Technology on Level 7 or Level 6?

One reason for this immobilisation is the pattern of “stakeholder democracy” that infuses

the system resulting in a dispersion or receding of the locus of control within the system. Underlying stakeholder democracy and constructivist epistemologies is a common assumption about truth, reason and consensus. At a risk of caricature, I want to present this in simple form: Truth is a social construction, so if we all agree on something then it is true. Stakeholder forums is a method that enables us to reach the truth/agreement by “rational/logical” debate/discussion. Hence, truth, reason and consensus are interwoven: we reach consensus/agreement on a decision/truth through reasoned agreement within the stakeholder forum and make decisions on this basis.

In a stakeholder structure like SAQA, a failure to reach “agreement or to build the truth” produces no decision. A battleground between contesting stakeholders with competing interests is unlikely to produce the kind of decision-making, executive action and management required to create a viable NQF. This dispersion of control within both the landscape and curricula of teacher education has seriously undermined attempts to implement a highly complex set of policies. By multiplying decision-making bodies and regulatory processes within a context of scarce human and material resources, albeit under the legitimate banners of democracy, equity and redress, South Africa has made reconstruction and transformation of the institutions and curricula of teacher education a very difficult process.

## **6 The Norms and Standards for Educators**

The development of new curricula for teacher education in the latter part of the decade took place within the overarching context described above. In September 1997, the Department of Education appointed a Technical Committee that was commissioned to examine and revise the *1995 Norms and Standards for Teacher Education* within the parameters set by SAQA, the NQF, Curriculum 2005 and the regulations regarding the employment of educators. This process was overseen and managed by a sub-committee of COTEP, and entailed the following main steps:

- Review of relevant literature;
- Development of a generative model for norms and standards for teacher education;
- Development of an implementation framework; and
- Consultations with stakeholders throughout the process.

The Technical Committee engaged in a variety of activities over a period of nine months culminating in the publication of a *Discussion Document: Technical Committee on the Revision of the Norms and Standards for Educators for Teacher Education, November 1997*. Besides literature and policy review, the committee consulted intensively with a range of stakeholders and drew heavily on the work of other people, including the final draft report of the Education, Training and Development Practices Project, Adult Basic Education and Training Standards Senerating Task team, and the Early Childhood Development Interim Accreditation Committee. The report was circulated broadly as a discussion document and all interested persons and bodies were invited to comment on it.

The Department of Education also conducted provincial consultative workshops in 1998 in each of the provinces with the aim of engaging with teacher educators and other interest groups, including the teachers' unions.

The Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE) uses an outcomes-based approach to teacher education and provides detailed descriptions of what a competent educator can demonstrate. The emphasis of the policy is on performance in the schools, classrooms, management and support services of the schooling system. The new policy is intended to contribute significantly to the implementation of Curriculum 2005 by training educators who have the knowledge, skills and values to make learning in schools more relevant to the economic and social needs of South Africa.

The policy defines seven roles that an educator must be able to perform, and describes in detail the knowledge, skills and values that are necessary to perform the roles successfully. The seven roles are: Learning mediator; Interpreter and designer of learning programmes; Leader, administrator and manager; Scholar, researcher and lifelong learner; Assessor; a community, citizenship and pastoral role; and, a learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist role.

Together these roles are seen as constituting a picture of the knowledge, skills and values that are the hallmark of a competent and professional educator. The roles are linked strongly to developmental appraisal, to career pathing and grading and to performance management. There are also strong commitments to ethics and values education, to environmental education, inclusive education and HIV/Aids education.

The Norms and Standards for Educators are seen by the DoE as a flexible instrument that provides a basis for the generation of qualifications and learning programmes. The February 2000 gazette has already been supplemented by Criteria for the Recognition and Evaluation of Qualifications for Employment in Education (CREQ) published in September 2000. These policies will be revised in the light of new academic policy for Higher Education, once this has been developed by the DoE, CHE and SAQA through a joint implementation plan on which work began in the latter half of 2000.

The NSE are an attempt to navigate a middle path between the constructivist ideology of SAQA and the more nuanced non-constructivist approach on universities. The NSE do not provide specific criteria but rather a general picture on the basis of which universities and other higher education providers can design their own programmes and qualifications. Hence, the NSE and Criteria do not provide actual qualifications. These are being developed both by the SGB for Educators and by public and private providers who then submit their own designs to the registration, accreditation and approval processes described above.

Examples of this flexible generative approach can be seen in the work of the SGB for educators in schooling which produced draft national qualifications for a four year initial Bachelor of Education in 2000, and in the development and approval of a new National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) to be used to up-grade and re-train the 80,000 teachers who do not meet the grade of being professionally qualified (a minimum of three years full-time equivalent training).

One crucial feature of the NSE is their strong emphasis on the importance of the subject or content knowledge of the teacher. Research has shown this to be a major weakness of South African teachers. Nick Taylor and Penny Vinjevold (1999) show this clearly in "Getting Learning Right", the synthesis research report that brings together research carried out under the President's Education Initiative (PEI). This research shows that many teachers lack the basic disciplinary subject content knowledge that forms the foundation of the school curriculum. For example, many teachers are fairly skilled in conducting group work, managing a class and in basic assessment and record keeping and yet lack the basic content knowledge required by the learners. The NSE directly addresses these weaknesses by linking strongly the development of subject knowledge competencies to inculcation into higher education disciplines.

The NSE lays great emphasis on the importance of the over-arching purpose of a whole qualification - a purpose which could not be met by a combination of unit standards. Hence, while adopting the language and concepts of SAQA, the NSE uses the SAQA distinction between reflexive, practical and foundational competencies to place a strong emphasis on the importance of foundational knowledge and the whole purpose of the qualification.

The PEI research is taken further in the Curriculum 2005 Review Report commissioned by the Minister to examine the implementation of Curriculum 2005 and to recommend improvements. The report was presented in mid-2000 and indicates serious shortcomings in the preparation of teachers for the implementation of the new curriculum.

When introducing Curriculum 2005, the DoE and the provincial departments undertook various orientation programmes and In-Service Education and Training (INSET) workshops, often with foreign funding and using NGOs to provide assistance. It may seem naive to undertake a massive curriculum change at such speed and with so little attention to preparation of the teachers who would be responsible for its manifestation in the classroom. One reason for this was the lack of focus on the teacher that pervaded South African education policy in the early and middle 1990s.

South Africa's outcomes-based NQF has been projected as strongly learner-centred. Learners construct their own knowledge, skills and values and the role of the teacher is diminished to being a facilitator to the learners' self-driven search. Not only is there a strong emphasis on performance (on what the learner can demonstrate), but the origin of these performances lies in the learner and in their socially constructed knowledge of the world. The teacher is merely a facilitator who helps create an environment for the learners to build their knowledge. This aspect of education policy has been well covered in Muller (2000) and Christie and Jansen (1999). This ambivalence toward teachers was expressed through changes in terminology. Teachers were no longer teachers but educators and pupils or students were now learners. There was strong pressure to see Adult Educators, Early Childhood Educators, Workplace Trainers, Community Developers, et al, being included along with teachers as a fairly homogenous group of "ETD Practitioners."

These changes signify a key shift in the concept of an educator. In 1994, teacher

education was directed at the schooling system, with little funding going to ABET or ECD. There was even less funding for development of trainers in occupationally oriented skills. The overall thrust of policy in the mid-1990s was toward an all-inclusive concept of an educator/trainer/developer. To talk of teachers was regarded as exclusionist and was seen as an attempt to privilege the schooling sector, universities and technikons (education) over training. Despite this policy orientation, teachers have remained at the centre of DoE policy, albeit primarily in the realm of labour legislation where there are only two categories of stakeholder: employer and employee.

By 1999, the curriculum of teacher education was no longer the responsibility of a small group of college and university teacher educators but a field of contestation between very distinct interest groups: unions, NGOs, governmental bodies such as the Departments of Labour and Education, SAQA and the CHE. For the DoE, there was a distinct tension between its responsibilities as an employer (the development of an employer-employee regulatory framework) and its position as a role-player in the development of an outcomes-based NQF. Increasingly, as the decade drew to a close, the DoE used the simpler and more efficient labour relations mechanisms to implement crucial changes in what it means to be educator.

The NSE and CREQ are promulgated as “employer and funding requirements”. They represent the position of the employer in regard to requirements for the education, training and development of educators. Although focused on teachers in the schooling system in the GET and FET bands, and permeated by a strong labour relations perspective, the NSE were developed in consultation with other SGBs and can easily be amended to include requirements for ECD, ABET and HET practitioners. The NSE are also aligned with the work of the Occupationally Directed SGB and the unit standards developed for work-based practitioners. The common element is the use of “roles and applied competence”. This will enable portability and mobility between various kinds of educators and provide a holistic coherence to the basic or core curriculum for all the various aspects of human resource development for educators.

The strong connections of the NSE to other aspects of human resource development such as career pathing and grading illustrates the way in which the NSE are grounded in labour law regulations. The DoE, through the nine provincial governments, is the employer of nearly 400,000 teachers. The DoE, in co-operation with the unions in the national bargaining chambers such as the Education Labour Relations Council and the Public Sector Co-ordinating Bargaining Council, has created a systemic approach to human resource development that defines roles and responsibilities, workloads, grading and career pathing, conduct and misconduct, capacity and incapacity. In the role of employer, the DoE has been able to exert a strong influence on what it means to be an educator within the public education system and put in place the symbolic and regulatory elements of a policy aimed at creating an “ideal educator.”

The failure of the overall governance system to produce meaningful change over the last five years has led the DoE to work in the “bi-polar forums” (employer-employee) of the ELRC and PSCBC to attain the kinds of regulations and procedures that will give definition to “being an educator” and create the kinds of professional development and disciplinary procedures needed to steer transformation.

There are many different forms and kinds of teacher education, development and support programmes being provided in South Africa. The legislation enacted in 2000 will bring, for the first time in South Africa, a coherence to a wide variety of efforts to improve teaching. The NSE provides benchmarks against which the quality of teacher education programmes can be measured. In future, only those programmes that meet these benchmarks will be recognised by the Department of Education for purposes of employment and for funding. The NSE provides guidelines for providers to develop teacher education programmes leading towards SAQA registered and accredited qualifications. The CREQ provides the detailed substance of what the DoE, as employer, will recognise for employment in education and by which qualifications are evaluated for grading purposes.

The NSE and CREQ form only a part of the legislative and regulative framework that is shaping the curriculum of teacher education. Other regulations cover job descriptions, workloads, misconduct and incapacity, et al., for the first time giving the employer the legal means to demand accountability, competence and performance from its employees. Prior to 1998, the DoE as employer could only take action with great difficulty against a teacher who, for example, arrived late and left early, given that there was no job description or workload against which they could be held accountable.

The DoE and the unions, in partnership, have taken a dual approach to the regulation and development of school teachers. The first has been through conditions of service regulations around “dismissal” for misconduct or incapacity. The second has been through the promotion of professional development including a developmental appraisal system and an emphasis on professionalisation. A key example of this was the establishment of the South African Council of Educators in 1996 and the promulgation of the SACE Act of 2000. SACE has three key functions: registration, discipline and development. All teachers must be registered with SACE in order to be employable in a public school. The disciplinary function depends on a code of conduct and the penalties that can be imposed by SACE for misconduct. If SACE de-registers a teacher for violating the code, that teacher may no longer be employed in public education. A third dimension of SACE activities is professional development and specifically the ethical dimensions of professional development.

The dangers of such an open and complex system for the development and implementation of a “national” teacher education curriculum with its panoply of governance bodies and stakeholders ensures that regulation will be slow, ambiguous and administered by a confusing variety of “regulators”. Within this context the employer powers of the DoE and its control of public funding become critical to its ability to steer and regulate the public and private providers of teacher education

I have only described the key pieces of educational legislation that impact on teacher education, but there is other legislation that impacts on teachers, for example the Bill of Rights, the Child Care Act of 1983, the Occupational Health and Safety Act of 1993. This panoply of legislation impacts in one way or another on the institutional landscape and developing curriculum of teacher education. Given the legislation described above, the broad curriculum of teacher education is clearly mapped out - but not in a prescriptive

manner. There is a strong emphasis on research and curriculum development and providers are expected to engage actively with the working contexts of their learners.

On the basis of their research, providers design and develop their own learning programmes/curricula in consultation with the DoE and other role-players and are then channelled through the procedures of registration of qualifications, accreditation of providers and programmes, approval for public funding, and recognition for employment.

## **7 Colleges of Education**

I have already described the proliferation of colleges of education under apartheid. In the first half of the 1990s, teacher education was not a central policy concern of the state. Attention and energy were focused on the massive changes presaged in the integration of education and training through an outcomes-based NQF and on the urgent demands of an expensive but dysfunctional schooling system.

The NEPI teacher education report made recommendations in regard to the institutional landscape, arguing that colleges of education should remain, and proposing three models for their continued existence: a collegiate (a regional cluster of colleges), an Institute of Education (a single regional institution) and an education development centre.

The NEPI process led to the ANC Policy Framework for Education and Training and the Implementation Plan for Education and Training both of which had active teacher education groups. Although there is some discussion of curriculum issues in these documents, the possibilities floated are largely bypassed by the labour movement process leading to an outcomes-based NQF that I have described already. The discussions of the structural location of teacher education did not decide on a particular option.

The white paper on education and training (1995) recommended an investigative process that came to be known as the Teacher Audit. In the synthesis report of the audit (Hofmeyr and Hall 1996), the focus is primarily on supply and demand considerations and not on curriculum or structural issues. But it was assumed that colleges of education would become part of the HET sector and therefore become a national competence.

In April 1996, the DoE released the report of the National Commission on Higher Education in which it proposed that colleges of education be incorporated into existing universities and technikons – creating a public higher education system of 30 to 40 multi-campus institutions.

This was followed in July 1997 by Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education. The White Paper recommended a comprehensive review of the college sector within the broader goals of a single system of higher education regulated through programme-based funding and rigorous quality assurance of providers and programmes.

The Higher Education Act of 1997 enables the Minister of Education to declare the incorporation of a college of education into the national public higher education system either as an autonomous institution or as a subdivision of an existing university or technikon. The Act lays down a crucial requirement that the Minister must fulfil before making a declaration: Clause 5 of section 21 of the Higher Education Act states that “an education institution may only be declared a public higher education institution after the employer has complied with its obligations in terms of the applicable labour law.” Once again, the centrality of labour law to teacher education becomes apparent.

In order to effect this process and locate all teacher education within the higher education system as a national competence, a task team was appointed in August 1997. The final report of the task team was presented to HEDCOM and CEM in mid-1998 as A Framework for the Incorporation of Colleges of Education into the Higher Education Sector.

The framework document envisages the possibility that some colleges of education may become autonomous higher education institutions if they can achieve a minimum enrolment of 2,000 Full-time Equivalent students, while others would become part of existing universities and technikons. On the basis of this report, provinces began restructuring their colleges and identifying those colleges of education suitable for incorporation into higher education. It was generally assumed that a process of consolidation of students and staff into approximately 30 multi-campus colleges would create institutions that could meet the criteria to become part of the public higher education system.

Within the college sector, there was a strong belief, presented in a comprehensive manner through the Committee of College of Education Rectors of South Africa (CCERSA), that colleges should become autonomous higher education institutions. Some people believed in a simple fallacy based on a false equation of colleges of education and teacher education: colleges of education are the primary providers of teacher education and teacher education is part of tertiary education, therefore colleges of education are part of tertiary education. Hence, many college educators felt strongly that colleges were already the responsibility of the DoE and not the provinces.

The fallacy is exposed by labour law and when we look at the numbers: only twenty per cent of teacher education students were enrolled with colleges. The expense of colleges, their low enrolments, under-qualified staff (from the perspective of higher education) and lack of management capacity all mitigated against the survival of colleges of education. In addition, the colleges had developed a particular culture and ethos that was strongly embedded in their curricula. Colleges were run like high schools with crammed timetables and a strong emphasis on “practice.” College personnel were not expected to produce research. By contrast, university education faculties had become extremely “theory-oriented.” It was as though the constitutional divide was reflected by a strong theory-practice institutional divide. As the Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, pointed out in a speech to CCERSA on June 1, 2000:

Colleges of education have had a strange institutional existence – stuck somewhere between the schooling system, the provincial department and their



colleagues in universities and technikons. This has not always been healthy. I was reminded recently of the Chinese mythology of the Middle Kingdom. China was located between Earth and Heaven. Thus, the Chinese could look down on the barbaric people of earth. I fear sometimes that the college sector believes that colleges are superior to schools but not quite yet in the heaven of Higher Education!

The Minister, then reminded his audience that higher education was certainly no heaven at this point in time. While sympathetic to the college educators, there was, in practice, little that the DoE could do with or for the college personnel while they remained under the control of the provinces. The DoE had to play a “facilitating” role between a wide range of stakeholders. The dispersion of the locus of control for governance in higher education had effectively tied the hands of the DoE. Whereas in the realm of the curriculum of teacher education, the DoE had made considerable progress through its labour relations and professional development approach, in the realm of institutional landscape there was no such point of leverage.

By 2000, it was clear that declining enrolments in university faculties of education, an even more rapid decline in college enrolments due to stringent quotas imposed by provinces from 1997 and the rapid growth of the private sector had changed the face of teacher education dramatically - mostly in ways that had not been intended nor predicted. This led to uncertainty and demoralisation in the public sector and a state of near-anarchy in the private sector. The impact on the morale of college educators was traumatic. For many college educators, exposed to extreme uncertainty and tightening quotas on enrolments, the future looked bleak.

From 1998 to 2000, the public higher education sector as a whole experienced declining enrolments partly as a result of declining matriculation exemption numbers. This, together with weak management and inefficient administration, had placed a number of universities and technikons in a position where their viability was threatened. In order to address this situation, the Department of Education in partnership with the Council on Higher Education engaged in a major planning exercise in regard to the restructuring of higher education. The large number of students enrolled in teacher education (approximately twenty percent of public higher education enrolments) ensured that the restructuring of teacher education was one key component of this broader process of restructuring.

The overall dramatic decline in university students was partly masked by the rapid growth in teacher education students enrolled in public-private partnerships for “up-grading” qualifications. These students were included in the headcount of university and technikon students and generated government subsidy funding. They were taught “at a distance” by a private provider in partnership with a public provider who provided the “recognised and registered qualification” and received government subsidy. In effect the government was both subsidising the private sector and rewarding public universities and technikons for offering courses which in many case had low through-put rates and were of dubious quality. Although aware of the possibility of “abuse” of the subsidy system, there was insufficient capacity in the DoE to gather the necessary evidence and take “remedial” action. During 1999, this capacity began to develop rapidly. By 2000, the

DoE was able to attach a rider to subsidy allocations to HEIs informing institutions that subsidy allocations are subject to investigation into prior subsidy claims.

From 1997, the provinces placed increasingly stringent quotas on new enrolments leading to a very rapid decline in college enrolments from a high of 80,000 in 1994 to 15,000 in 2000. Apart from the declining enrolments in colleges, universities and technikon, there were serious concerns about the quality and relevance of many programmes. Against this background, it became clear that it was not feasible for any college of education to be incorporated into higher education as an autonomous institution and that the only viable route was incorporation as a sub-division of an existing university or technikon. It may have been the case that some colleges (possibly 3 or 4) could have become autonomous higher education institutions if given sufficient funding and assistance to develop over a five-year period. But the overall situation had deteriorated so far by 2000, that the kind of funding and assistance required to increase enrolments dramatically and to “develop capacity” of personnel was not sufficient.

In April 2000, the CHE released its first draft of a report on the Shape and Size of the Higher Education system; the final report was presented to the DoE in August 2000. The CHE report confirmed the serious plight of many institutions, particularly Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDIs), and recommended a single higher education system with institutions differentiated by the level of programme they offered and by the broad streams of their programmes (general-formative/professional-career/technological-scientific). Only a few institutions would offer all levels of programmes.

The two key challenges facing the DoE in the process of incorporating colleges lay in the labour relations provisions and in the difficulties of transferring funding from provincial to national budgets.

Initially, it was thought that the process could use Section 197 of the Labour Relations Act to enact a transfer of employer by transferring the “college” as a “complete entity” or going concern: the staff and students, the programmes and the plant. Unfortunately, it soon became clear that this was not possible. College educators enjoyed far more favourable conditions of service under the provinces than they would with a university or technikon. The expenses of colleges were beyond the normal subsidy and fee income levels within higher education.

The public higher education system has experienced ten years of financial constraints and many other challenges. One result of this has been a decline in the conditions of service of higher education personnel and a strict fiscal austerity in those institutions that remain financially stable. By 2000, only a minority of institutions were financially healthy and there were very few institutions on an enrolment/economic growth path. In addition, overall research capacity was weak.

The vast bulk of activity during the process of incorporation was focussed on labour issues. Apart from rhetorical reference to the importance of teacher education’s future, most time was spent on what happens to the conditions of service of college educators. In a stakeholder system, those most capable of making their voices heard are the ones who drive the agenda. The vast majority of college educators were tolerant of the messy

process. Obviously unhappy with the uncertainty and anxiety of their present situation, they understood that something had to be done. Their main concern was that it should be done more efficiently and quickly. A small group of rectors from erstwhile “privileged” colleges did resist and, in one instance, threatened litigation. This had the unfortunate consequence of diverting attention away from issues such as equity, redress and Africanisation.

Increasingly the question arose as to what is teacher education – is it the buildings, the staff, the students, the curriculum? This was not an idle question because the process involved real human beings, and large sums of public money, and described a key element in our collective social investment in the future: the training of the teachers of our children.

For the constitution it is the function of teacher education, as part of tertiary education, that is marked out as a national competence. During the period from August 1999 to March 2000, a team from the Department of Education visited each province and met with the relevant provincial directors, colleges, universities and technikons. In February 2000, a national workshop was held with all the provincial steering committees and unions. The crucial challenges facing the process were quickly identified:

- Personnel – what happens to existing college personnel presently employed by the province?
- Students – how to ensure that existing students are not be financially or educationally disadvantaged by the process?
- Curriculum - how to cope with the diversity of curriculums being studied by existing students when they transfer to the new institution?
- Funding – How to increase the Higher Education Budget to cover the costs of the “extra students,” the new staff to teach them and infrastructure costs?
- Legal – the process requires a constitutional shift of function from provincial to national competence and there are various legal steps to be completed.

In April of 2000, HEDCOM and CEM agreed to a shift from a Section 197 approach where colleges are transferred as a going concern to a more flexible approach in which the staff could remain in the employ of the provinces while being offered an opportunity to join the staff of a university or technikon. The students, programmes, plant and as many personnel as could reasonably be employed would become part of the university or technikon. Once agreed by these bodies, this then had to be negotiated and agreed upon at the Public Sector Co-ordinating Bargaining Council.

It was agreed by HEDCOM and the CEM that the Department of Education would develop a national framework within which provinces would manage the agreements for incorporation of earmarked colleges in negotiations with the unions and the receiving university or technikon. An external facilitation agency (the Joint Education Trust) was appointed to assist the provinces and institutions and produce reports for the DoE on each

incorporation. These reports covered the relevant academic, administrative, legal and financial matters, including the transfer of land and conditions of service. To facilitate this process, the provincial departments established steering committees consisting of the Directors of Teacher Education, Labour Relations and Finance to work closely with the Department of Education.

In each of these processes, large numbers of intricate steps had to be followed carefully. The agreement over personnel, for example, had to be agreed upon in the PSCBC of the public service. This involved a long process of negotiations between the state and unions that finally produced an agreement on December 13th, only two days before the incorporations were formally gazetted by the Minister. This agreement left college-based personnel in the employment of the provinces. Any personnel required by the receiving institution could be seconded for up to two years from the province to the university or technikon. Those not seconded were redeployed to other posts in the schooling system. Funding arrangements required a process of consultation and the development of indicative budgets with each institution. These then had to be submitted to Treasury followed by negotiations with both national and the nine provincial treasuries. Budgets were only finalised in December and were considerably less than originally anticipated.

## **8 Towards a new teacher education system**

In a number of documents, the DoE has made clear that the highest priority in teacher education in the period 2001 to 2003 is not the pre-service training of teachers, but the in-service up-grading and/or re-skilling of teachers. There are approximately 80,000 teachers not yet professionally qualified. There is also a large pool of unemployed educators (possibly as many as 50,000) who need re-training and/or up-grading if they are to be employable. There is also an urgent need for comprehensive re-training of teachers to implement Outcomes-based Education as was made clear in the Curriculum 2005 Review Report. To achieve these objectives requires a “delivery” system that can provide education, training and development, much of it on-site, to more than 300, 000 educators.

Throughout the 1990s there has been a strong INSET movement operating at provincial level. The Teacher Audit indicates that provincial departments and NGOs provided non-formal non-qualification-bearing INSET to approximately 238,000 teachers. With all the re-orientation and training around the introduction of Curriculum 2005, it is unlikely that this figure will have declined. Most of this development work is non-formal and does not lead to any qualification.

It is hard to assess the value of this non-formal work. In 1996/97 the DoE commissioned the Teacher Supply Utilisation and Development project. Later, as part of the President’s Education Initiative, in 1998 the DoE commissioned research into Educator Development and Support. The broad picture that emerged was of a sector with pockets of innovation and excellence within a general picture of mediocrity and poor quality. However, given the lack of regulation and quality assurance throughout the 1990s, any evaluation of the

overall quality of the sector is tentative at best.

South Africa has benefited from considerable foreign funding for education. In 2000, this amounted to approximately 300 million Rand. Although donor funding is a small percentage of an overall budget close to 50 billion Rand, it does have a high strategic value, falling as it does outside the committed budget which is largely consumed by personnel costs. It can support DoE efforts to find the most efficient and effective implementation strategies that will have maximum impact. Unfortunately, the possibilities of replication on a large scale are limited by the scarcity of human and financial resources.

The ability of the South African state to co-ordinate these efforts has increased through the 1990s and there is a keen awareness of the risks and opportunities that come with donor funding and intergovernmental agreements. The capacity of the DoE to manage this assistance is directly affected by the constitutional division of responsibilities between the DoE and the nine provincial departments. This has created serious challenges of management, coordination and communication. There has been a tendency, in the past, for technical and financial assistance to be decided on at national level through a bilateral agreement which is then implemented at provincial level. There is often little feedback to the DOE once the project is being implemented at provincial level.

A cascade of subcontracts stretches the chain of accountability. A common pattern is for the first tier to be the foreign donor. The second tier could be a "foreign" agency as project manager. On the third tier may be a South African NGO, consultancy or consortium, which takes responsibility for delivering the service on a national basis. A fourth tier may then be contracted to take responsibility for delivering the service (usually an NGO) on a provincial basis which in turn subcontracts, on a fifth tier, to the individuals who actually deliver the service at district, school or local level. This is an extreme example, but it demonstrates clearly the pattern of assistance. Such a pattern makes it difficult to manage donor-funded assistance in a cohesive and consistent manner to maximise the value of the assistance.

The devolution of significant decision-making powers has meant that much of this assistance has to be managed at the district and school level. The lack of administrative and managerial capacity inherited from apartheid and the difficulties of constructing new organisational systems, let alone new curricula and pedagogies, while maintaining the old, has put severe strains on the cohesion of the system and the ability of districts and schools to manage their own transformation within the principles and frameworks of national and provincial policy, funding and governance. One possible consequence of this is a systemic fatigue, which impacts on the classroom. Teachers end up attending weekly "training" workshops, which are not co-ordinated, or of particular relevance and serve more to disrupt teaching than develop it.

Most of the efforts at reform of the schooling system have been concentrated in the GET band. But this changed towards the end of the decade when the DoE released its FET Implementation Strategy. In 1999, the Business Trust and the National Business Initiative allocated R100 million to develop occupationally-oriented training. The 160 or so existing technical schools and colleges will be consolidated into approximately 50

institutions and there will be active stimulation of a private sector servicing workplace-oriented skills development. Broadly, the plan implies a shift away from the present strong emphasis on academic secondary schooling for Grades 10, 11 and 12 to a far more skills- and employment-oriented curriculum with multiple pathways towards a Further Education and Training Certificate as the Grade 12 exit level. This has significant implications for the kinds of teachers that will be needed to provide this workplace-oriented curriculum. Most primary and secondary schools are still absorbing the impact of Curriculum 2005 and are bracing themselves for the changes that will come from the Review Report and the new National Curriculum Statement to be completed in 2001. The structural and curriculum changes of the FET plan will create further challenges for secondary schools.

In early 2001, a joint working committee of the DoE and DoL developed a draft national human resource development strategy placing a strong emphasis on the role to be played by SETAs. In September 2000, the ETDP SETA released a draft Human Resources Development Plan for the whole of the Education, Training and Development sector. The SETA is focused on the personnel providing education, training and development to others. It has a public chamber, with national and provincial government and national union representation, and a private chamber which includes universities, technikons, private colleges and schools. By the latter half of 2000, the ETDP SETA was already receiving significant revenue from the skills' levy fund. The DoE has a strong working relationship with the ETDP SETA and strongly supports an integrated and inclusive approach to quality assurance of educator providers, programmes and qualifications for the private and public sectors.

Hanging over all the deliberations around teacher education in the second half of the decade was a growing awareness of the implications of the HIV/Aids epidemic for teachers and learners. By 2000, although the impact of HIV/Aids on the attrition rate for teachers was already apparent, and it was clear that many teachers would die of HIV/Aids over the next ten years, there was a paucity of fine-detailed information on which to make shape, size and funding decisions. The general trajectory is clear: high attrition rates. But it is not clear if, for example, primary teachers will be more vulnerable than secondary teachers, rural teachers than urban teachers, mathematics teachers rather than history teachers. In addition, the effect of HIV/Aids on the cohorts of students is also not easily predicted, making the demand side equations difficult to refine accurately.

The DoE has initiated a number of projects to produce better information on HIV/Aids and more generally to improve its management information systems. What is already clear though, at a strategic planning level, is the need for a highly flexible teacher education system that can expand and contract to meet specific needs quickly and that can deliver its programmes in a variety of modes, many of which will have to reach teachers in their schools and classrooms. Given the lower vulnerability to HIV/Aids of the 40-plus age groups, there could be an emphasis on re-training and up-grading of older teachers, many of whom will teach beyond the "normal" retirement ages.

Pre-service training must be geared towards actual needs and allow for the possibility of significant parts of the course taking place in schools where the students are placed in "learnerships" enabling them to act as assistant teachers while continuing their studies

part-time. For example, there are already shortages of secondary school teachers for subjects such as mathematics, science, technology, languages, economics and management. Given a current oversupply of “general” primary school teachers, there are again opportunities to “re-train” these teachers in these subjects.

Teacher education in South Africa has suffered from a variety of malaises in the 1990s. The colleges of education have been subject to a brutal withering as a result of the constitutional provisions leading to the consolidation of public teacher education in universities and technikons. These higher education institutions themselves have experienced severe declines in enrolments and organisational viability. At a structural level, there has been a radical down-sizing and re-shaping of teacher education. From 2001, there will be approximately 25 public institutions providing teacher education and approximately 100 private providers, although it is hard to predict the number of NGOs and for-profit providers as this sector is undergoing a significant transformation as it becomes aligned to the new regulatory system.

At the time of writing, in January 2001, it is hard to take this narrative any further. It is likely that there will be considerable planning activity in regard to teacher education in the first half of 2001. The DoE will host a national conference in 2001 to consolidate the process of developing a national agenda for teacher education, development and training. This national planning process will include a careful analysis of supply and demand, of HIV/Aids, of equity and redress issues, funding, institutional and curriculum development strategies, public-private partnerships, etc.

New academic policy for the whole of higher education will be in place and many of the key role players will be engaged in implementation as they start to fulfil their legislative and policy responsibilities. The curriculum of teacher education as outlined in the NSE and the CREQ and other regulations (SACE, ELRC) will begin to emerge in new programmes as providers align with the new regulatory system.

The DoE has made clear its intentions to have a new teacher education system that can respond rapidly to the needs of the country, addressing issues of supply and demand, financial aid, and subsidy funding for public institutions through a national delivery system consisting of a network of public higher education institutions, private providers, unions, the South African Council for Educators, business, NGOs and community organisations. It is not possible to predict what the impact will be of this policy and the new bodies and processes. If the last ten years have taught us anything, it is that the unintended consequences of policy are likely to be more influential than the original design.

## **9 Some tentative conclusions**

It is too early to be talking about conclusions and I can do no more than indicate some possibilities for further research and analysis. This has been a largely descriptive narrative of a particular view of the policy process in South African teacher education in

the 1990s. The relationship between this policy process and what was happening with providers, their programmes and their students have not been explored. Many of the MUSTER case studies will cast more light on this relationship. Nor has this paper analysed this policy in, for example, discursive terms. Fortunately, the ideological, political and other uses to which teacher education policy has been put have been explored with insight elsewhere.

The 1990s changed South African teacher education irrevocably. But the institutional landscape and curriculum policy that has emerged has no single obvious source. The powerful influence of the labour movement has had a dominating symbolic and regulative influence within teacher education influencing the way in which the DoE has approached teacher education, training and development. Within the broad human resources development field, SETAs, with their assured funding from the Skills Levy Act and the combined power of unions and employers, will impact strongly on skills development for those in employment - including teachers. The influence of policy has been undermined in the case of schooling and teacher education by overwhelming financial constraints and a lack of well educated and trained personnel. The large expenditure on educator personnel (more than 40 Billion Rand in 2000) has put immense pressure on the state to cut down on personnel expenditure and to improve access to basic resources such as a decent building, water, toilets, electricity, telephones, textbooks, etc. Under these circumstances the vision of the Reconstruction and Development Programme, with its expansive lifelong learning system and an integrated system of education and training, has been displaced by a pragmatic approach that manifests itself primarily in labour relations regulations and fiscal austerity.

In those areas where the DoE, as employer, and the unions, as employees, have both responsibility and the will to work together, they have been able to make good progress on issues like work-loads, career pathing, the norms, standards and criteria, conduct and capacity. The DoE and the unions are able to cooperate on these “professional development” issues while engaging in fierce contestation over remuneration and rationalisation.

Looking back over the last half of the decade, one can see two distinct forms of co-operative governance operating in teacher education: a “bilateral” form in employer-employee relations, and a “multilateral” form in regard to system governance. In the areas of academic policy, qualification registration, provider and programme accreditation, different bodies with overlapping responsibilities have to create a consistent coherent system. Most of these bodies are comprise representatives from at least six distinct interest groups. It is those domains where there is “multilateral governance” that are most vulnerable to “immobilisation” as conflict between different interests hinders agreement and decision-making.

The expenditure of public funds is a government responsibility in which decisions around teacher education funding are taken at a number of levels including the Departments of Finance and the National Treasury. To further complicate matters, the DoE is faced with situations where it can only make rational decisions in regard to funding once other role players have fulfilled their responsibilities.



For example, in higher education, funding must be programme-based. The DoE, however, can only design and manage a programme-based funding formula if SAQA is registering qualifications and the HEQC, in co-operation with other relevant ETQAs (including SETAs and professional bodies such as SACE), is accrediting providers and their programmes.

In addition, public expenditure on the education budget has to be strategically aligned with other sources of public funding, especially the funding flowing through the SETAs. Public funding as a whole should, optimally, be aligned with private sector provision. It is only if these three broad sectors are aligned that one can talk about a single coherent higher education system. There is some irony in noting that, procedurally, the DoE is responsible for funding “programmes” and yet control over programmes has been vested in other bodies. It is a classic case of responsibility without authority, which impedes effective management. It is only within the area of teacher education funding, programmes and qualifications that legislation enables the Minister and DoE to directly influence design and implementation. But these are symbolic and regulatory instruments. The procedural implementation and development of teacher education will lie primarily in the hands of the providers responsible for delivering teacher education. It is absolutely crucial, therefore, that a strong partnership develop between the DoE, public and private providers, unions and other role players.

## 10 Questions for the future

- Assuming high attrition rates for teachers over the next fifteen years raises serious challenges for supply. How best can we prepare for this rapid increase in enrolments? What are the most appropriate forms of delivery in this situation? Should we expect a rapid increase in the number of unqualified teachers at schools seeking in-service initial training qualifications?
- A major responsibility of the DoE is to provide adequate funding to the public higher education institutions providing teacher education. This should include adequate subsidy funding and a financial aid system. Although the DoE has a strong commitment to this, it requires support in securing the funds. What is the best funding mechanism for financial aid to teacher education students? Should this remain a responsibility of the NSFAS?
- Higher education subsidy funding is linked to research. There is a desperate paucity of fine-grained research on all aspects of teacher education, of the impact of HIV/Aids, on supply and demand, on modes of delivery, integrated and continuous assessment, Recognition of Prior Learning, curriculum content, etc. Universities and technikons with their expertise in this area can make a major contribution to this research (and, thereby, improve their own programmes). There are exciting opportunities for a national research programme involving the DoE, providers, agencies such as the HSRC, NGOs and the unions. How can a nationally co-ordinated research programme be created that addresses the “public” interest?

- A key challenge facing the design and development of new teacher education programmes lies in the notions of integrated assessment, applied competence and recognition of prior learning. The NQF requires that a learner demonstrate the ability to integrate the reflexive, practical and foundational competencies in an applied context. How can one evaluate and assess such a demonstration with limited resources?
- The NQF places a great deal of emphasis on values but there is no clear indication of how values are to be evaluated and not a great deal of information on how they should be taught. What approaches to ethics and values in education should we promote? Could one fail a student teacher and prevent them from becoming professionally qualified on the grounds that they have the wrong attitude? What counts as evidence of bad character?
- Private providers have an important role to play in teacher education. How can productive relationships and partnerships be nurtured between public and private providers?
- Given the crucial role that will be played by the ETDP SETA in regard to funding and quality assurance how best can the public providers nurture a strong working relationship with the ETDP SETA?

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## APPENDIX

### Key Acts:

- Educator's Employment Act of 1994
- Labour Relations Act of 1995
- South African Qualification Authority Act of 1995
- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996
- National Education Policy Act of 1996
- Higher Education Act of 1997
- Employment of Educators Act of 1998
- Skills Development Act of 1998

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