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Teacher Education in South Africa: Issues and Challenges

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Introduction

In his book, *Democracy and Education*, Dewey (1946) contends that education, in its broadest sense, is the means to social continuity in life. It is through the educative process that the younger members of a given society are initiated into the ideals, interests, values, purposes, information, skills and practices of the older members; otherwise that society might cease its characteristic life. Whichever way we look at it, education is a powerful means to transform and sustain society. It is a reliable agency of change and an effective means to social mobility, survival and adaptability. In other words, without the educative process, a society faces the possibility of extinction.

According to Archambault (1974), Dewey's philosophy of education revolves around four major issues: (1) the aim of education; (2) the agent responsible for communicating the aim of education (the teacher); (3) the subject who needs to understand that aim (learner); and (4) the means by which it is achieved (curriculum and instruction). Our focus in this chapter is on the second issue, namely the teacher and how he/she is trained to fulfil his/her role within an education system generally and in South Africa in particular.

In most countries, changes in society have usually evoked demands for reforms, and South Africa is no exception. Since the inception of a democratically elected government in South Africa in 1994, calls for reform of the education sector have by no means abated. Major changes in education in South Africa have occurred in response to historical, social, political and economic circumstances in which the country has found itself. As in other countries, educational reforms in South Africa reflect significant periods of history: the colonial era (1800s-1940s);

the apartheid era (1950s-1994); and since 1994 when the first non-racial democratic election was conducted and the first black president came to power. The imperatives, among others, for the new government, according to Sibusiso Bengu (1995) were diverse, but top on the list were: the mandate to create a truly national system of education and training; the need to redress the inequity of the past where schools for the white minority had a well-resourced learning environment, compared to the poorly staffed and underfunded black schools; the need to overhaul and transform the entire education system; and the need to expand learning opportunities for all. This was inevitable because the education system existing before 1994 in South Africa was not only parochial, unjust, abnormal and exclusivist in nature; it was also inadequate for the basic requirements of democracy and incompatible with the postulates and aspirations of a people imbued with hopes for a better life for all.

There exists a vast amount of literature on teacher education in South Africa. It is therefore inconceivable to attempt to treat this in detail in a single short chapter as this. Nevertheless, it is hoped that issues addressed in the chapter would at least provide a miniscule picture of this all-important subject. For ease of reference, the issues have been addressed under the following sub-headings:

- Transformation in the Education System;
- Historical Overview of Teacher Education in South Africa;
- Establishment of a Single Ministry of Education;
- The Development and Establishment of a National Qualification Framework (NQF);
- Curriculum Reform as Part of Transformation;
- Mergers of Education and Training Institutions;
- Impact of Transformation on Teacher Education;
- Conclusion.

Transformation in the Education System

According to Leonard (2004), social critical theory construes education as the means through which societal hopes, aspirations, values and mores are transmitted from one generation to another. However, these values and ideals often mirror the aspirations of the privileged ruling class rather than what would have benefited all the diverse members of that society. For example, during the apartheid era, South Africa had nineteen different education departments to cater for the perceived needs of the various cultural groups (Gordon 2009). Each department managed, so to speak, its own affairs. In addition, there existed in each department a dual educational system – a mainstream and a special education component. Even in the latter, schools for the white disabled learners were better resourced than those for the non-whites.

According to Johannes (2006), apartheid laws and policies, underpinned by the medical model of disability, have succeeded in excluding black learners with disabilities from pursuing careers in the scientific engineering fields. That functional limitation model locates the problems of disability in terms of individual rather than social construct. Based on this view, physically challenged learners have often been isolated in specialized learning environments with little opportunities to maximize their potentials. However, in 2001, the Department of Education (DOE) in its Education White Paper 6 designated “Special Needs Education” spelling out quite succinctly an inclusive education and training system that signalled the move away from the medical to the social model of disability. The medical model of disability focuses on the physical as well as perceived limitations imposed on the handicapped person while the social model focuses on the potential of the handicapped person to perform tasks beyond such limitations when accorded the opportunity and the encouragement to do so. In other words, disability is not only a physical handicap; it is a social construct imposed by society and reinforced by both tangible and intangible contexts within which the disabled person is allowed to function. The consequence of negative perception of disability by society is perhaps more disabling for the handicapped person than is often realized.

The results of decades of segregation and systematic under-resourcing have, therefore, depicted the South Africa education system as a motley assembly of diverse characterizations of the semblance of a court jester. But these jaundiced educational sub-structures created not only an administrative nightmare but bizarre cabaret- cum-slum education systems, with all kinds of products, ranging from the highly trained and skilled white personnel to largely servile and unskilled black labour occupying the lowest rung of the economic ladder. After independence in 1994, the new democratic and populist government had no alternative but to formulate policies that would eradicate the grotesque imbalances that characterized the educational landscape of South Africa. This implied a replacement of the largely exclusivist apartheid system of education with an inclusive one based on the principle of equity and justice for all. In this regard, the Education White Paper 6 (DOE 2001) was drafted in recognition of the fact that all South African learners, regardless of their physical limitations, are able to learn and have equal opportunities to pursue their intellectual interests. In addition, the transformation process begun in 1994 necessitated overhauling the whole education system, from its multiple representations and unwieldy bureaucracy to a single coherent system which catered for all socio-cultural groups in South Africa. As a result, the South African education system can be said to have undergone tremendous reform and transformation in the fifteen years since the demise of apartheid.

The aim of this chapter is to examine critically the impact of the changes that have taken place in the South African education system, as a way to understand the challenges faced by teacher educators. To better understand these changes, the

next section will focus on the historical development of the new education system in South Africa, highlighting the major transformations as:

- a. The reformation and rationalization of education departments into a single and unified entity or ministry;
- b. The development of a single, unified national qualifications framework for education, providing a continuum of credits for achievement from kindergarten to doctoral qualifications;
- c. The adoption of an outcomes-based philosophy and a single, unified national curriculum for the nation's schools; and
- d. The rationalization of higher education institutions (universities and colleges) from more than 240 in the late 1980s, to 23 universities by 2008 (Gordon 2009).

These changes and related developments had far-reaching effects on the teacher education system in South Africa. The next section examines the impact that implementing these changes has had on teacher education. The last section briefly summarizes the literature review and concludes by suggesting some recommendations on the way forward.

Historical Overview of Teacher Education in South Africa

As indicated earlier, the education system in South Africa was structured along racial lines. The white supremacist governments poured immense resources into the education of white learners, while Indian, coloured and black learners were accorded lesser resources, ranging from about two-thirds for the Indians to about one-quarter for the black African learners respectively. In other words, the apartheid government established fragmented education departments, with varying access to resources for the white and non-white learners. Furthermore, most white teachers received pre- and in-service training at well-resourced urban universities, while most black teachers started teaching without even completing their own secondary schooling, let alone the tertiary education that they needed (Keevey 2005). Mission schools provided training for the bulk of the African teachers, who were expected to teach in primary schools.

The situation was further complicated with the entrenchment of the Nationalist Party's apartheid policies in the 1960s and the creation of Bantustans. Thirty-six semi-autonomous universities and technikons provided teacher education along racial lines for mainly white, coloured and Indian teachers, whereas black teachers were trained in Bantustan-based colleges and universities. It is estimated that by 1994, there were more than 120 primary teachers' colleges within the Bantustans alone. Moreover, the stringent controls imposed by the Homeland Department of Education (DET) ensured that Bantustan-based colleges operated more like secondary schools, rather than as tertiary institutions (Gordon 2009).

The rapid political changes of the 1990s had significant impact on the education system in South Africa. For instance, in 1990, it provided significant landmarks. However, in the aftermath of the 1976 Soweto uprising, the South African education system faced increased pressure for transformation from the international community. The National Education Initiative (NEI 1988-1992) was established by the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC), to raise debate on educational policy for a future democratic South Africa. However, NEI was a reformist initiative, focusing mainly on capacity building, rather than transformation.

In 1993, the Centre for Education Policy Development was established to prepare new educational policies for a post-apartheid South Africa. Following wide-ranging consultations with stakeholders, an agreement was reached, which placed educational transformation at the center of educational reform. There was recognition that the legacy of apartheid would be deep and far-reaching; therefore educational transformation would be expected to take time. For example, it was understood that merely expanding the education system and opening access to previously excluded Africans would not solve the debilitating legacy of apartheid. With the coming of a new political dispensation in South Africa in 1994, these developments towards educational reformation set in motion significant systemic transformations identified by the ruling African National Congress as necessary to systematically redress the inequalities that apartheid had conceived. Some of the key transformations were as outlined below.

The Establishment of a Single Ministry of Education

In 1994, the ANC published the Yellow Book, which was entitled, *A Policy Framework for Education and Training*. In this publication, the ANC government took central responsibility for developing and implementing a unitary national education system, managed by a Ministry of Education and Training. Under this policy, all higher education and training institutions (teachers's colleges, universities and technikons) would fall under the same national system of higher education 'to ensure unity of purpose and standards across the sector' (Gordon 2009:15). The focus was on de-segregation and expanding access to institutions of higher education for the previously disadvantaged groups. However, under this policy alone, the higher education institutions (HEIs) responsible for teacher education retained their structure, hierarchy and exclusivity. For example, traditionally 'white' universities continued to attract predominantly white student teachers and continued to marginalize or exclude the other races through a variety of policies and hierarchical selection procedures. Thus, unifying the education system on its own was not enough to bring about transformation.

The Development and Establishment of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

Previous apartheid governments had used education as a tool for repression (*Business Day*, 10 October 1996). For example, the National Party used educational segregation as a means to exclude blacks from full participation in the economic development of the country. Under the pro-democracy ANC government, however, a single education system was no guarantee for benchmarking qualifications, especially as the HEIs remained largely autonomous in their dispensation. There was a need to develop a home-grown system of benchmarking qualifications and developing standards that could be applied across all the institutions of higher learning. In 1995, a national qualifications framework was developed to, among other things:

...provide a set of principles and guidelines by which records of learner achievements are registered to enable recognition of acquired skills and knowledge, and thereby using an integrated system that encourages lifelong learning (SAQA 2000:1).

For the ANC, the NQF was more than just a qualifications harmonization tool. It was deemed to have a particular transformative purpose, as reflected in the five NQF objectives below:

- Create an integrated national framework for learning achievements;
- Facilitate access to and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths;
- Enhance the quality of education and training;
- Accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities;
- Contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large (SAQA 2000).

Through the NQF, it was possible to provide alternate pathways to acquiring skills, thus providing hope of economic redress for previously disadvantaged groups, by way of further training. For example, in 1994, a significant component of the teaching work force was either under-qualified or not qualified. In many cases, teachers had no professional qualifications or had limited subject-specific training, as noted by Mays (2004). Through the provisions of the NQF, under-qualified and unqualified teachers could acquire the same professional skills through in-service training. Various bridging and upgrading qualifications, e.g. medium-term national programmes, such as the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) (Welch 2001) and Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) courses were developed to give such teachers accelerated access to further and

higher education and training. Thus, the NQF was seen as a transformation tool: 'It promised much when progressive forces could think of no coherent and feasible alternative response to the new challenges of power in the era of globalization and the aftermath of apartheid' (McGrath 1997:181).

Introduction of a New Schooling Curriculum

As part of its transformation agenda, the new ANC government also set out to develop a new curriculum in 1994, tagged Curriculum 2005, with the intention of having it fully implemented by 2005. Curriculum 2005 (C2005), henceforth the new curriculum, was underpinned by the constructivist philosophy, which placed responsibility for learning on the learners themselves, with teachers serving as facilitators. The new curriculum has had to be revised a couple of times when it was found to be placing too heavy an administrative burden on teachers. Besides, the national system was not able to provide adequate and timely in-service education and training (INSET) to alleviate this pressure on teachers. However, throughout the revisions, the Department of Education has resolutely remained committed to the underlying principles on which the new curriculum is based. Indeed, the new curriculum is due for another major review to make it more responsive to the education needs of South Africa. Preparations are being made to set up working committees and a reference committee to consult with these working committees.

Deliberative curriculum theory holds that the stakeholders who are invested in the development of a particular curriculum should engage in the development process through a process of mutual deliberation (Curry 1992). The new curriculum has caused much controversy amongst stakeholders, especially the teachers, probably because of the top-down approach in which the curriculum was implemented. For example, teachers who were expected to implement the new curriculum (that required a radically different instructional approach from usual) were neither adequately equipped with the necessary instructional skills nor told why the existing curriculum was to be replaced by a new one (Jansen and Christie 1999; Ogunniyi 1997). The curriculum for the natural sciences presents a vivid illustration of this top-down approach.

Two main reasons given in the new curriculum for the need to introduce indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) into the science classroom are that: (1) IKS reflect the wisdom about the environment developed over the centuries by the inhabitants of South Africa; and (2) much of this valuable wisdom believed to have been lost in the last 300 years of colonization now needs to be rediscovered and utilized to improve the quality of life of all South Africans. The attempt to include IKS within the science curriculum is not unique to South Africa. Similar attempts have been made in many other African countries, Canada, USA, Australia, the Middle and Far East, as well as Central and South American countries (Garrouette 1999; Michie and Linkson 2005; Nichol and Robinson 2000).

In their rebuttal of the statement made by Cobern and Loving (2001) that school science should exclude most, if not all, of IKS in the way that it excludes the social sciences and humanities, Corsiglia and Snively (2001) argue that indigenous science offers knowledge that modern western science has not yet learned to produce. They contend further that the current environmental crisis largely caused by scientific and technological activities has forced many scientists to pay increased attention to how to ameliorate the situation through traditional environmental knowledge. There is nothing radically wrong in including certain indigenous knowledge (especially those processes with scientific basis) within school science but this presupposes that the teachers have the necessary knowledge or skills to do this. As it turned out to be, most science teachers were abysmally ignorant of what indigenous knowledge (IK) entails.

Whatever might be the justification for integrating science with IK, science teachers' opposition to the new curriculum includes, among others, the fact that: (1) science teachers have been schooled largely in western science and hence are more familiar with that worldview than with IKS; (2) the new curriculum demands new instructional approaches and goals in terms of contextualization and indigenization but that this contradicts the countless assessment protocols associated with the new curriculum; (3) the lack of consultation by the curriculum planners seem to under-rate teachers' role in curriculum planning and implementation; and (4) there is lack of clarity on how a science-IKS curriculum could be implemented (Jensen and Christie 1999; Ogunniyi 1997). As Simon et al (2006) have pointed out, a curriculum which emphasizes alternative goals for classroom pedagogy in a context where conceptual goals predominate is notoriously difficult to implement unless a well-planned and supportive teacher training programme is in place.

It was because of the top-down curriculum approach that Jansen (1997) states, unequivocally, ten reasons why C2005 would fail, as follows:

- The language of the new curriculum is eminently too complex, confusing and sometimes contradictory;
- It is underpinned with the questionable assumption that curriculum development is directly related or automatically implies socio-economic development of South Africa;
- It is based on the false assumption that classroom organizational set-up and transactions, as well as well-trained teachers needed to implement such a sophisticated curriculum exist within the education system; outcomes couched in cognitive terms would automatically transform the dominant behaviourist teacher-centered instructional practices into learner-centered approaches or that competence-based instruction is easily amenable to behaviourally structured assessment protocols;

- The contradiction inherent in advancing specific outcomes in all disciplines or contexts, even in settings where aesthetic values are much more appropriate than the mere demonstration of a given knowledge or skill;
- The capitulation of the ruling party, the ANC, whose ideological stance and political history stemmed from process and dialogues to enacting a policy whose focus was based on pre-determined educational outcomes;
- The instrumentalist view of what learners can demonstrate, given a set of outcomes at the expense of other important values derivable from the curriculum;
- The extra administrative and management burdens placed on schools and teachers in the implementation of an outcomes-based curriculum;
- The trivialization, atomization and fragmentation of curriculum content in pursuit of linear, step-wise and discrete competencies or esoteric outcomes;
- The lack of trained teachers in the face of implementing a curriculum which demands radically different or competence-based assessment strategies and complex systemic reforms;
- The lack of awareness of the curriculum planners of the stranglehold effect of assessment on the entire education system in South Africa.

Besides the above reasons, the new curriculum was introduced at a time when the education system was still reeling from a plethora of reforms, as described above. In addition, individual teachers, many of whom were products of the old apartheid education system, all of a sudden found themselves having to implement a curriculum that required of them a completely new way of thinking and relating to learners. To make matters worse, there was very little support in terms of resources, and even in the tertiary education institutions, few understood the demands of the new curriculum. Critics of the new curriculum argue that the national curriculum was introduced too early and without adequate preparation (Baxen 2001). As will be seen later, the introduction of the new curriculum has had far-reaching effects on teacher education.

Mergers of Education and Training Institutions

Another legacy of the apartheid government was a plethora of education and training institutions distributed all over South Africa. A national teacher education audit carried out in 1994-1995 had revealed that the existing teacher training system was fragmented as there was no collaboration between the many different education systems and institutions (Hofmeyr and Hall 1996). Concerns were raised regarding the quality and relevance of the teacher education programmes being provided by these colleges. It was therefore decided to improve the effectiveness of the system by merging a number of universities and technikons and incorporating teacher training colleges into universities and universities of technology.

Following the incorporation of teachers' colleges, all teacher education became located in higher education. Kruss (2007) has identified three major trajectories by which ITE institutions have been restructured; i.e. by incorporation of teachers colleges, internal restructuring and mergers with other institutions. Restructuring has had the effect of reducing the number of formal universities from 35 in 2001 to 23 in 2006. Moreover, faculties of education, being least rated in terms of funding priorities and research outputs, were frequently casualties of internal restructuring, with several being downgraded from faculty to department or school status.

The Impact of Educational Transformation on Teacher Education

The transformation of the South African education system has had several knock-on effects on the training of teachers. As already mentioned, educational transformation took place amid a sense of overwhelming urgency to escape from the legacy of apartheid. Changes in the education system occurred in rapid succession and at various levels in terms of the National Qualifications Framework for the new curriculum and the rationalization and mergers of higher education – all of which occurred almost simultaneously. The combined effects of these systemic changes are summarized as follows:

Increasing access to opportunities for under-qualified teachers to upgrade: The new curriculum encompassed a philosophical framework that was completely different from the traditional approaches to teaching that had been in evidence during the apartheid era. As a result, teacher education institutions found themselves presented with a new challenge – to provide content up-skilling and pedagogical support to teachers in the field (in-service). The National Qualifications Framework provided a unified qualification framework with multiple entry points. This ensured that under-qualified teachers in the field could upgrade and earn higher qualifications whilst on the job. This alternative pathways option acts as an incentive for lifelong learning. Keevey (2005) identifies three pathways to higher education qualifications available to teachers:

- a. Earning SAQA credits through in-service short courses (ACE, other SAQA-accredited in-set short courses, leading to an ACE equivalent);
- b. Earning credits through upgrading and bridging courses (e.g. NPDE);
- c. Formal Initial Professional Education and Training (IPET) courses (B.Ed or a first degree plus an Advanced Diploma in Education).

The new National Policy Framework on Teacher Education and Development which has also been endorsed by the South African Council of Educators (SACE) recognizes and entrenches these pathways into education policy – thus creating a teacher professional development continuum from IPET to CPTD. Multiple professional development pathways enable teachers to take responsibility for

their professional and career development. This also implies that teacher training institutions have to be versatile and flexible, so that they offer services that meet the varied needs of the teachers. However, it is envisaged that SACE, as the principal body responsible for registering teachers as professionals, will develop professional and competence standards that will be used to regulate the teacher education career path continuum (SACE 2007)

Provision of Professional Development Incentives

In order to support multiple pathways to qualifications, funds need to be made available to support teacher career progression. While the government has provided generously towards in-service and upgrading support, funding for initial teacher education has been inadequate (Ministry of Education 2004). The end result has been that certain ITE institutions have had to reduce student teacher intakes, or cease ITE programmes altogether, to focus on higher degrees. Funding subsidies within higher education institutions have likewise been low for education. Gordon (2009) argues that by under-investing in teacher education, the government is shooting itself in the foot. Other researchers (Parker and Adler 2005; ELRC 2005) had already warned of a potential shortage of teachers in critical areas and phases by 2011. On the other hand, SACE insists that the Government, as major employer of professional teachers, should make adequate provision of funding for both IPET and CPTD pathways.

Teacher Supply, Demand and Attrition

At the same time that changes were being introduced into the structure and function of the education system, the demography of schooling underwent further transformation, mainly because of the improved democratic space and opportunities. The opening up of the economy meant more opportunities were now available for previously disadvantaged groups to participate in the economy of the country. As a result, anecdotal reports in the late 1990s increasingly indicated that large numbers of teachers were leaving the profession.

Apart from the gross indiscipline among learners, the chaotic nature and the general breakdown of the learning culture in many schools and the impact of HIV/AIDS on the teaching population are other matters which warrant a more comprehensive study than space would allow in this chapter. Nevertheless, concerns have been expressed by individuals, government and the public at large about the high level of absenteeism and attrition rate among teachers, particularly in the township and rural schools. All these factors have not only lowered teachers' morale; they have also impacted negatively on the quality of teaching and learning taking place at school. The mass exodus of experienced teachers from the education system (galvanized by the ill-advised retrenchment saga of 1995) has not only done irreparable damage to the reform process, but has also made teaching unattractive to the population of youth now attending higher institutions in South Africa.

In 1997, the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC 2005) initiated a research to determine the supply, demand and attrition trends for the education sector. The resulting comprehensive report has since established the following key realities pertaining to the South African educational environment:

- a. The potential learner population (ages 6 – 18) has been increasing steadily between 1999 and 2003;
- b. Actual learner enrolment has somewhat decreased over the same period. However, the decline has been attributed to more effective teaching, leading to improved throughput (less learners repeating grades), and general increase of vulnerability among learners (e.g. girls), leading to increased restricted access to schooling;
- c. The teacher-learner ratio remained stable at 35:1 for both primary and secondary phases (i.e. lower than the DOE target of 40:1 for primary and 35:1 for secondary teachers);
- d. 29 per cent of active teachers are older than 45 years of age, compared to 21 per cent of the general labour force. Thus, the teaching profession has generally older manpower than the other professions;
- e. Teachers appear to be generally less healthy than other workers, with more incidences of absence due to stress-related illness being reported, compared to the other professions (e.g. nursing);
- f. More than a half (54%) of the teachers surveyed reported job dissatisfaction and thought of leaving the profession. The incidence was much higher among younger teachers (29 – 39 age group). In addition, 66 per cent of dissatisfied teachers worked in the sciences, technology, commerce and business studies areas;
- g. The survey found that reliable predictors of job dissatisfaction were:
 - i. Race – Whites, coloured and Indians tended to be more dissatisfied with teaching than black Africans;
 - ii. Teaching Experience – Younger teachers tended to want to leave the profession;
 - iii. Lack of Career Advancement – Most teachers who thought of leaving were frustrated because they could not advance or get promotion;
 - iv. Recognition – Other teachers felt that teaching effort was un-rewarding;
 - v. Teaching conditions – Teachers also complained of being overworked, with too much administration and less support.

Linked to these harsh realities, some researchers (Gordon 2009; Paterson and Arends 2007) have tried to identify the supply, demand and attrition trends as experienced in the last ten years. Table 6.1 below summarizes their findings:

Table 6.1: Teacher Supply, Demand and Attrition Trends

Supply Trends	Demand Trends	Attrition Trends
<p>Fewer younger teachers are enrolling into IPET courses; Universities are producing approximately 9,000 teachers per year. Distance Education (UNISA) contributes approximately a half of the enrolments.</p> <p>Enrolment numbers for black Africans has declined in recent years and this has been attributed to greater access to black empowerment in other areas.</p>	<p>South Africa requires approximately 15,000 teachers annually to replace resigning teachers and 6,000 teachers are required annually as substitutes for extended leave (e.g. maternity)</p> <p>Teachers' pool (unemployed teachers) has declined sharply, meaning that future employment of teachers will depend more on the availability of newly qualified teachers.</p> <p>There is a predicted shortfall of 15,000 teachers by 2008, using the current teacher–learner ratios of 1:40 (p) and 1:35 (s). This shortfall increases to 32,000 if a ratio of 1:35 is considered for all phases.</p>	<p>The total teacher population in public schools has declined by -5.3% (from 387,000 in 1997 to 366,000 in 2003). Resignations account for 53% of all terminations</p> <p>Retirements account for 66% of older teachers (55 + years) attrition rates. Resignations account for 80% of young 3.0teachers (25-34 years old) attrition rates.</p> <p>Permanent teacher numbers have remained stable, but contract and temporary staff numbers have declined by 44%. Decline is to the assimilation of contract staff into permanent positions.</p> <p>4. Gross attrition has been rising steadily over the years, peaking at around 6%. Attrition due to mortality has jumped from 7% in 1997 to 17% in 2003</p> <p>Teacher mortality is third largest attention factor.</p> <p>The rise in mortality rate is attributed to HIV related illnesses and peaks between the ages 25 – 44</p>

The changes depicted in Table 6.1 above and related developments have had far-reaching effects on teacher education in South Africa. Apart from the significant rate of attrition due to a number of socio-economic factors, the current devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, especially among black South African teachers, cannot be easily discounted. However, this worldwide phenomenon is worthy of fuller treatment than space would allow in this chapter. Table 1 also shows that the education system in South Africa is bleeding and, if the trend continues, there will be huge shortages of teachers. While school-level remedies have been suggested (Delannoy 2008; ELRC 2005), these remedies were more concerned with raising the profile of the profession and increasing its attractiveness. However, at the supply side, the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (2005) has recommended that teacher education institutions can also play their part through:

- a. Providing upgrading and broadening skills bases to enable teachers to progress within their careers;
- b. Providing practical training and mentorship to newly qualified teachers to reduce stress and frustrations resulting from inadequate pedagogy and content skills;
- c. Facilitating access to funding for CPTD and IPET activities;
- d. Moving beyond the lecture room to provide on-the-ground support through school-based mentorship, thus ensuring that practicing teachers have pedagogical and professional support when they need it most.

One can add to the list above. For example, the quality of teachers in South Africa, and perhaps elsewhere, to a large extent, depends on:

- a. Quality of training programmes to which they have been exposed;
- b. Periodic review of curricular offerings in teacher training institutions;
- c. Provision of adequate facilities to equip prospective and in-service teachers with knowledge and skills for curriculum implementation;
- d. Supervision of teachers based on formative and guidance-oriented principles, rather than as summative or punitive measures;
- e. A good relationship between training institutions and professional bodies;
- f. Support by stakeholders such as school administration, school board, parents and teachers association, policy makers, etc.

All the above points, in one way or another, do impact on the quality of teachers working within an education system. But whatever resources are made available to support beginning or practicing teachers, each teacher must have the needed space for reflective practice. Good teaching is neither accidental nor a *déjà vu* experience; it is a deliberate endeavour which attempts to identify the problem at stake, reframe the problem and enact an effective strategy to solve it. Effective

instructional practice ultimately involves the mobilization of internal and external resources on the part of the teacher to effect a meaningful behaviour change in the learner. But even at that instance, both the teacher and learner do learn what works or does not work in a given situation and what to or not to do in the future if confronted with the same or similar contexts. According to Russell and Martin (2007), reflective practice is a more effective learning approach than simply relying on a default instructional repertoire. In this regard, Russell and Martin have identified a number of helpful issues relating to: narrowing the gap between theory and practice; whether or not reflection can be taught; whether or not learners are able to identify the major goal(s) for a teaching activity; whether or not a teacher can identify his/her own default teaching style; and whether or not a teacher is aware of the importance of coherence in teaching. They have also suggested the following questions with respect to reflective practice:

- How do you as a teacher react when asked to ‘reflect’?
- Do you have enough classroom experience to reflect about? Would it help if someone undertook to teach you how to reflect?
- What specific meanings do you associate with the words ‘reflect’ and ‘reflection’?
- Do you see reflection as something that can be taught? Is it possible to reflect during teaching as well as after?
- What major values do you hold for your teaching that will require you, as a teacher, to act in ways that differ from the norms of teacher behaviour?
- Do you find it helpful to think of your own teaching behaviours in terms of default styles (i.e. do-it-without-thinking) and deliberate efforts to modifying them to enact teaching moves that will enhance the quality of student learning?
- How coherent are the many messages conveyed by teacher educators to learning to teach a subject matter? (Russell and Martin 2007).

A detailed treatment of the questions above would certainly require a larger space than is available in this chapter. Nevertheless, it is worth stating that teacher education is a multifaceted subject that impinges various aspects of society and its survival mechanisms. It is not an overstatement that no society is greater than the calibre of its teachers.

Moving Beyond the Rhetoric of Transformation

South Africa, as a new democracy, has certainly made a giant leap in various sectors of the economy, no less the education system. It has transformed the former variegated and segregationist form of education to a single Ministry of Education or recently two Ministries of Education, namely Basic and Higher

Education. The new arrangement is to pay a closer attention to basic education as the minimum form of education a learner must have before leaving school. The ultimate aim is to make basic education free and compulsory for all learners. At the same time, government is aware of the importance of higher education in terms of knowledge production and skill development. As indicated earlier, the dearth of teachers in certain key areas such as mathematics, science, technology, language and commercial subjects has been a major concern. Hence, government bursaries and loans have been made available for students to pursue higher education in these areas. The ideal would have been to enact a system of free education for all children, especially children of the previously disadvantaged communities under the apartheid system of government, as a way to redress the inequality of the past.

To produce high quality teachers for the education system in South Africa and perhaps elsewhere, the questions above and similar ones cannot be ignored. But moving beyond the rhetoric of education reforms, the issue of preparing a cadre of teachers who are able to fulfil the aspirations and mandates of the new South Africa is not negotiable. It certainly warrants a closer consideration by teacher training institutions and other stakeholders. It is a well known fact that the quality of teachers at basic education level, to a large extent, is determined by the quality of training they received at higher education institutions.

The new curriculum in South Africa certainly demands new instructional strategies that go beyond the chalk-and-talk approach within which most teachers have been groomed. The new outcomes-based education policy underpinning that curriculum envisions teachers who are not only knowledgeable in their subjects but who are also able to function effectively in a holistic, learner-centered, well-integrated, activity-based and multicultural classroom. The new curriculum aims at developing the full potential of each learner to become a productive member of a democratic society. The challenge of achieving this aim, of course, rests heavily on teachers. As purveyors of societal values, teachers in South Africa as elsewhere have the unique role in building a society where oppression of people on account of gender, religious beliefs, colour of skin or other socio-cultural differences would never again be allowed. The curriculum envisages teachers who are capable 'mediators of learning, interpreters and designers of learning programmemes and materials, leaders, administrators and managers, scholars, researchers and lifelong learners, community builders, citizens and pastors, assessors and learning area or phase specialists' (DOE 2002:3). The list might seem a tall order but, in reality, it depicts the complexity of the teaching-learning process of which the teacher is a key player. In other words, teaching goes far beyond the transmission or affirmation of well-worn clichés and rhetoric; it is a transaction between people seeking to share mutually some knowledge, experiences and values of critical importance.

The kind of teacher envisaged by the new curriculum is certainly different from most teachers entering into or already in the teaching profession. Nevertheless, the curriculum construes teaching as a complex and multifaceted activity. Whatever training a teacher might have, it is the school context, the teacher's understanding of that context and the belief he/she holds about teaching, learning and education as a whole that will ultimately shape his/her instructional practice. Unless teachers have a functional understanding of what teaching and learning entail and the socio-cultural context in which such endeavours are embedded, they might fail to move beyond the performance act of knowledge dissemination.

Conclusion

In the fifteen years of independence, the South African education system has undergone tremendous transformation. In terms of initial teacher education and training, a single ministry was created out of a fragmented and segregated education system. A single unified national qualifications framework was established to bring logic and coherence to the plethora of courses and qualifications prevalent during the apartheid years. In terms of teacher education, entry points for initial teacher education were delineated, provision was made to upgrade and up-skill those teachers whose training fell far short of the new qualification standards (see DOE 2000). A new unified Curriculum 2005 was introduced into the school system, providing a common pathway in primary and secondary education provision.

However, these changes, though urgent and necessary, overhauled an already entrenched system of segregation and racism when they were introduced. The deep fundamental changes resulted in a lot of stress and strains on the whole system which affected education quality, and teacher supply and demand. The teacher training institutions are challenged to respond to the increasing demands for new teachers, and also for upgrading and re-skilling teachers existing in the field, in order to meet the growing needs of an increasingly stressed education system.

Educational transformation has resulted in the need to attract new teachers to the profession and, above all, it also requires teacher training institutions to refocus their efforts to, not only provide IPET services, but also CPTD and school-based support services (see Delannov 2008) to enable teachers to cope with demands of teaching a highly innovative school curriculum in a democratic society.

Other challenges faced by the education system include the need to improve the quality of the teaching force, bearing in mind the negative effects that low teacher morale and commitment has on the said quality. Teacher quality issues have been linked to increasing the capacity of teachers to deliver educational programmes. In turn, teacher capacity is linked to various forms of teacher knowledge. It is suggested that if teacher education programmes are to provide improved service, they need to step out of the box and look at teacher education with lenses that include contextual factors such as multicultural classrooms and social justice.

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