

**How Faculties of Education Respond to new Knowledge  
Requirements Embedded in Teacher Education Policies**

***‘Stepping Through the Looking-Glass’***

By

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **How Faculties of Education Respond to new Knowledge Requirements Embedded in Teacher Education Policies**

This study examines how university academics understand and enact knowledge requirements embedded in official teacher education policies. The research probes faculty understandings of what constitutes 'relevant and appropriate pedagogies' in teacher education curricula, and the basis of such knowledge selections in the absence of a stable 'knowledge base' of teacher education.

In teacher education, new national norms and standards are intended to guide curriculum processes in new programmes. However, policies remain open to wide interpretation and assume common understandings among the teacher education community with regard to knowledge, practices and values.

This study, conducted in three university-based Faculties of Education, analyses the curriculum motivations, processes and practices of education academics, in an attempt to understand and explain their responses to policy requirements. The conceptual framework of Paul Trowler is employed to examine the Teaching and Learning Regimes (TLRs) at work in academic contexts. By lifting out the discursive repertoires, identities in interaction, tacit assumptions, connotative codes, implicit theories of teaching and learning, power relations, rules of appropriateness and recurrent practices among faculty members, this research demonstrates how knowledge is mediated in and through institutional contexts.

Three parallel Faculty portraits elucidate stark differences in approaches to curricula and in curriculum processes, a consequence of the lack of a stable knowledge base and the perceived vagueness of policy directives. Significantly, institutional histories and traditions feature prominently as 'shapers' of academic responses to change, factors that, the study argues, government policies have not taken into account.

**Key Words**

- Dominant pedagogies
- Pedagogical knowledge
- Knowledge requirements
- Knowledge base
- Policy directives
- Mediating contexts
- Norms and standards
- Teaching and learning regimes
- Components of TLRs
- Institutional histories and traditions

**FOR**

**TASWELL, ROSCOE AND KAYLA**

**and for SIBUSISO**

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## CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW

### *'Down the Rabbit-Hole'*

#### **The Purpose and Focus of my Research**

Why do dominant pedagogies in the field of teacher education tend to persist in spite of policy change? In this study, I explore how education faculty<sup>1</sup> respond to the curriculum directives embedded in official teacher education policy, particularly as these pertain to pedagogical knowledge requirements. In pursuing this inquiry, I make two critical assumptions, which will be tested by my research: that particular pedagogies are privileged in teacher education programmes and become dominant; and that these dominant pedagogies are enduring in spite of policy requirements and/or intentions. These assumptions drive my research agenda, as I interrogate the conditions in Faculties that enable or inhibit policy intentions aimed at changing curricula.

I explore the 'pedagogical knowledge' component of teacher education programmes for pre-service teacher education, that part of the programme which seeks to build a foundational 'knowledge base' in terms of which teachers understand and explain their practices. While 'knowledge' of teaching has historically been contested, dominant traditions in curricula can be easily identified. My research asks how and why academics tend to conserve dominant pedagogies, and what makes them resistant or amenable to change.

My inquiry will therefore focus on how university teacher education faculty understand and apply official knowledge requirements for teacher qualifications in education programmes, particularly their interpretation of what constitutes 'relevant and appropriate pedagogy' (their dominant pedagogies) for students of teacher education. The term 'knowledge requirements' is by no means

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that I capitalise 'Faculty' to refer to the unit as an entity, and use lower case 'faculty' to refer to members of the academic staff.

commonly understood, but neither are the terms 'knowledge base', 'education theory', 'pedagogical knowledge' and related constructs in education, since they are, in the literature, often used synonymously and interchangeably to describe the theoretical content of teacher education programmes.

In order to understand how academics select 'knowledge' for teacher education curricula, my study will focus on the following key questions:

- What informs the espoused pedagogies in an academic Faculty and where do they derive from?
- How do faculty members understand and make sense of policy directives in teacher education and their implications for curricula?
- What factors influence the selection of knowledge for teacher education curricula and, finally,
- Why do dominant pedagogies in teacher education tend to persist in spite of policy change?

These questions have both fascinated and puzzled me throughout my own development as a teacher and a researcher, as I explain below.

## **Rationale**

During my work in initial and continuing teacher education I was often struck by the inability of talented schoolteachers to understand how their pedagogies and practices are rooted in particular paradigms that appeared to make them resistant to other 'ways of seeing'.

These teachers explained their practice in terms of an almost unquestioned 'body of knowledge'/theory about teaching and learning, which on further probing, it emerged they had acquired largely in initial teacher training and practical experience. While the kind of theoretical underpinnings they expressed could be



located within a strong tradition of ‘Fundamental Pedagogics’<sup>2</sup>, the dominant discourse of the apartheid-driven education curriculum at the time (Baxen and Soudien, 1999), it was not limited to this framework. I theorized that ‘being stuck in a paradigm’ was because pre-service teachers were not exposed to meta-theory, or theories about the theory in their initial preparation programme. Newly qualified teachers especially seemed to accept the dominance of a ‘body of knowledge’ or knowledge base for teaching, which guided their understandings of teaching and learning. I began to ponder on how teacher education programmes in Faculties of Education were being constructed, and upon what knowledge base, more so when teacher education increasingly came in for critique after the democratic government came to power in 1994 and sweeping reforms were proposed.

I questioned the composition and dominance of particular bodies of pedagogy within teacher education programmes, and their legitimacy in spite of new research and scholarship on teaching and learning. If particular pedagogies or theories are being privileged by teacher education faculty, what informs such curriculum decisions? Who decides on a knowledge base for teacher education and on what basis? Is the issue about the content of teacher education programmes or the process, or both?

Recent studies have attempted to analyse the dominant pedagogies and frameworks embedded in curricula, and inquire as to how these ways of thinking are perpetuated in programmes (Bridges, 2000; Crook, 2002; Griffin, 2001; Pring, 1996; Cochran-Smith, 1998). Bridges (2000) found that in spite of powerful pressures for higher education to respond to the trans-disciplinary language of outcomes and standards, universities remained rooted in a traditional

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<sup>2</sup>Fundamental Pedagogics was, broadly speaking, the predominant theoretical framework supported by the apartheid government, for the understanding and propagation of education as a ‘science’ with a strong positivist orientation. A view of education as politically neutral and value-free within this paradigm, was a convenient cloak for racist indoctrination passed off as scientific fact. Generations of teachers and students were subjected to teaching and learning underpinned by this ideology, the effects of which have been an inhibiting factor for curriculum change.

organization of curricula and tended to preserve such traditions. This begs the question as to why the traditional curriculum remains so entrenched, a focal point of my research. Cochran-Smith (1998), in her survey of the literature on this subject, illustrates how teacher education reformists “continue to regard knowledge as the primary source of professional expertise and reflect fundamental faith in objective or true knowledge for teaching” (p.926). The ‘true knowledge’ she refers to has its origins in the ‘scientific’ disciplines from which the field of education has borrowed, and which beginning teacher education continues largely to be based on, in spite of huge contextual differences and beliefs about the purposes of education.

The South African context in particular, was historically rooted in a positivist orientation to education during the 1970’s and early 1980’s, where racially motivated ‘theories’ were often justified in ‘scientific’ terms. This orientation by and large dominated curriculum matters, but resistance politics in the late eighties and early nineties saw a rise in critical and constructivist discourses in teacher education, more commonly at postgraduate levels. The physical reconstruction of education after 1994 therefore, was accompanied by sharply contrasting views on purpose and pedagogy, which would also be played out in teacher education curricula. In view of the overtly social reconstructionist agenda of government policies in education, I was keen to investigate how education faculty were responding, and how they understood the curriculum implications of new policies.

### **The Context of Teacher Education in South Africa**

In its first decade of democracy, the South African teacher education landscape was fundamentally altered. First, more than 100 colleges of education were closed down, thereby shutting down the major provider of qualified teachers. Second, university-based Faculties of Education experienced an unprecedented decline in student enrolments that created severe financial crises for such

academic units. As a consequence, such faculties were closed down completely, scaled down in status (for example, from Faculties to Departments), and/or incorporated within larger faculties such as Humanities. Third, what remained of Faculties of Education was then exposed to sweeping policy reforms that would change forever the scope and character of teacher education in South Africa.

The upheaval in teacher education occurred in the wake of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), enacted by statute in 1995, which itself precipitated a period of rapid reform in education and training policy (Cross et al., 2002; Harley et al., 2000). The South African NQF is a national framework for qualifications and outcomes in all fields of education and training throughout education contexts which include schools, universities, public and private training providers. Institutionally this meant that qualifications across the board were required to be redesigned in a democratic standards setting process, and then registered on the framework as agreed national outcomes. At the same time, transformation of the school curriculum by the new Ministry of Education was proceeding apace. Outcomes Based Education (OBE) as the preferred pedagogy for schools to support the implementation of Curriculum 2005, a set of standardized national curriculum statements for all subject areas, placed teachers under tremendous pressure (Jansen and Christie, 1999).

When teacher education came under government scrutiny, norms and standards for teachers were published (Department of Education, 1998; 2000), followed soon after by a suite of new teacher education qualifications setting broad outcomes (SAQA, 2000) for graduates of teacher education programmes. Given the shifting ground which higher education was on at the time, how were the newly registered teacher qualifications to be addressed by education faculties? In the face of huge internal pressures such as falling student numbers, a consequence of the state's teacher rationalization policy of 1996, and staff retrenchments, could academics even begin to undertake the shifts in curriculum that the new qualifications implied? Indeed, did they even see this as a

necessary or desirable process? And how would they engage these new policy directives that impacted so directly on their knowledge assumptions and beliefs?

The new teacher qualifications set out broad 'exit level outcomes' without specifying programme content or structure. 'Contextually relevant pedagogies' (one of the stated exit outcomes) were to be decided upon by institutions for inclusion in teacher education programmes.

What factors influenced the selection of such pedagogies and where did they derive from? How do academics make sense of policy directives for teacher education and how much curriculum change does it require? Can dominant pedagogies be discerned and why do they tend to persist in spite of policy change?

My research intends, by stepping through the 'looking-glass', to understand how teacher education programmes are constructed in Faculties of Education and to get behind what is reflected, so as to explore the complex realities of curriculum decision-making.

### **Perspectives from the Literature**

There is voluminous literature on the knowledge base of teaching, often from a philosophical perspective (Krechevsky and Stork, 2000; Schubert, 1992; Griffin, 2001; Barnett et.al., 2002) and posited as curriculum advice for teacher education programmes for beginning or in-service teachers.

However, in much of the professional and academic world, there appears to be little common understanding about what constitutes an appropriate knowledge base of teacher education. In most western democracies, for example, policy norms for teacher education are not prescribed, and debates about the nature of outcomes in teacher education persist (Cochran-Smith, 2001). Even in the UK,

where national standards and outcomes do exist, the perpetuation of ‘grand theory’, borrowed from disciplines like philosophy, psychology and sociology, still largely constitutes the basis of teacher education programmes (Thomas, 1997; Meredith, 1995; Davis & Sumara, 2002).

From my survey of the literature, it is apparent that considerable research has been done on issues of teaching and learning for purposes of classroom improvement (Taylor, Vinjevold and Muller, 2003). Research projects point teachers to innovative methods and pedagogies (Meredith, 1995; Huey-Ling, 2001; Thiessen, 2000), but empirical work on what happens in Education Faculties (or Schools of Education) and how academics develop teacher education curricula, is limited. I suspect that the reason for this lies in the fairly universal tradition of academic autonomy, which places the internal activities of faculties and departments above public scrutiny. In this regard, Griffin (2001) avers that in higher education, knowledge selection for curricula becomes, “the private understanding of individual faculty members who provide instruction” (p.37).

To disturb the persistence of idiosyncratic educational foundations in teacher education, Griffin (ibid) suggests that there be “agreement as to the core conceptions of teaching-related phenomena that will guide curriculum decision making” (p.40). This, he argues, would result in the selection of knowledge appropriate for teacher skills needed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There is no empirical evidence offered in this regard though, to suggest why agreed upon core concepts would change the knowledge base of teacher education. In my study, the ‘core conceptions’ for teacher education were, in fact, debated and agreed upon by key education stakeholders in a standards setting process, but I will rely on empirical inquiry to reveal how this has shaped the knowledge base of particular programmes.

Cochran-Smith (1998) on the other hand, argues for a 'process' driven constructivist approach and the use of 'knowledge and interpretive frameworks' in teacher education rather than a 'knowledge transmission model'. She says,

My insistence here is not simply semantic. 'Knowledge and interpretive frameworks' emphasizes that teaching is an intellectual as well as a practical activity and hence that teacher education must address the ways teachers use various kinds of knowledge to make sense of what is going on in the local contexts of their own schools...make decisions about practice but also to build theories, develop perspectives, pose questions and construct dilemmas (p.926).

This is the dilemma posed for curriculum developers in teacher education. Recent teacher education policies of the post-apartheid government propose new roles and outcomes for teachers, structured in terms of 'applied competences' i.e. the knowledge, skills and attitudes contextually demonstrated, which are expected of qualified teachers (Department of Education, 2000; South African Qualifications Authority, 2001). The new qualifications do not prescribe the curriculum content of teacher education, or the lenses through which knowledge about teaching is to be viewed, although a constructivist paradigm can be perceived. Faculties of Education are to interpret the outcomes (knowledge/theory, skills and attitudes/values) and build curricula towards them. More than five years have passed since the national outcomes were registered, and it would be of interest to many to find out what has been happening in teacher education curricula during this period.

My literature review will explore the notion of dominant pedagogies in education which foster heated debate around the lack of a knowledge base for teacher education, critically evaluate where research locates itself in this regard, and seek perspectives on the effects of education policies on teacher education curricula within a general climate of change in higher education across contexts.

## **Conceptual Framework**

How do deeply rooted traditions of pedagogical knowledge and practices within teacher education change? To what extent, can a changed policy environment and new norms and standards for teachers, shift deeply rooted theories and beliefs about teacher education? What kind of culture exists in faculties of education that facilitate or inhibit a changed orientation, and how are continuities in teacher education understandings to be explained?

The concept of ‘Teaching and Learning Regimes’ as explained by Trowler and Cooper (2002) below, creates a helpful overarching framework for the myriad questions posed. In addition, I argue that faculty teaching and learning regimes present a ‘mediating context’ between policy intentions and policy enactment (Muller, 2003) and I deconstruct this mediating context using the conceptual framework, as outlined below.

Paul Trowler and Ali Cooper introduce the concept of ‘Teaching and Learning Regimes’ or TLRs, to explore implicit theories and recurrent practices in education settings. They define TLR as “a constellation of rules, assumptions, practices and relationships related to teaching and learning issues in higher education” (p.222). While their study focuses on the teaching and learning regimes of academics in education self-development programmes rather than the concept of theory per se, it draws attention to implicit theories which, it is suggested, inform how faculty develop curricula for education.

TLRs give an indication of dominant discourses in the faculty that might influence selection of theory for programmes. The developers of this theoretical framework offer the use of the term ‘regime’ to, “draw attention to social relations and recurrent practices, the technologies that instantiate them (room layouts, pedagogic techniques) and the ideologies, values and attitudes that underpin

them” (p.224). We are given some explanation for the resilience of privileged theories within an organizational culture when they aver that,

Departments and sub-groups within them are the primary locations for the growth and transmission of TLRs because it is here that academics engage together on tasks over the long term. In so doing individuals in interaction both construct and enact culture, many aspects of which are invisible to them because they become taken for granted” (p.222).

Components of TLRs, which, it is suggested are mutually reinforcing, are stated as “identities in interaction, power relations, codes of signification, tacit assumptions, rules of appropriateness, recurrent practices, discursive repertoires, implicit theories of learning and teaching” (ibid.). This list, while not exhaustive, provides a helpful analysis of what a teaching and learning regime might encompass, and is indicative of the nature and range of data needed for this study.

In attempting to answer the central research question stated at the outset, I explore the applicable components of TLRs of education faculty in three universities and the way these are expressed in formal teacher education curricula.

This conceptual framework has been selected as an initial guide because it is encompassing enough to capture various facets of academic life in an education faculty. There are, no doubt, many other factors that impact on curriculum selection as other researchers have demonstrated, (Hill, 2003; Muller, 2003). However, my literature survey has shown that the dynamics of faculty response to new policy requirements, is an under-researched area, and I intend to respond to that gap. My research intends to move beyond the rhetoric of ‘institutional autonomy’ and ‘academic freedom’, to examine how institutional histories and character shape the particular ways in which academics respond to policy directives.



## Research Design

The context that I have chosen for this study, is that of South African higher education in transition, compelled by education policy enacted by government, to transform teacher education offerings in line with newly registered, nationally standards-based teacher qualifications. Public sector universities, which are state funded, have been the primary targets of education reform in South Africa, and it is to three of these institutions that I direct my enquiry.

My research approach can be described as a comparative case study, where three institutional cases, fairly similar in size and structure but with quite varied demographics, histories and traditions, are selected. I hypothesise that these three institutions, all with established teacher education curricula, have sufficiently similar programmes to facilitate comparability, but that their particular cultural differences may generate rich data for comparative analysis in relation to my key research questions. Institutions include a contact university, historically regarded as a liberal, English language institution; an institution created for 'coloureds'<sup>3</sup> in terms of the apartheid state, and a traditionally white Afrikaner institution. It could be argued that these three institutions epitomize the diversity of institutional type created by apartheid policies of separate development, and that each of them typify historically racially defined universities found in other provinces across South Africa. For purposes of my study, the three institutions were conveniently located in the same province.

This multiple case study has as its primary unit of analysis the pre-service/initial teacher education academic component of the Faculty/School of Education at each university. I explore the theoretical understandings and underpinnings of the professional teacher qualification/s offered at each institution, as articulated by academics who teach these programmes, as well as the underpinnings

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<sup>3</sup> I use the pre-1994 racist classifications of the apartheid government only for purposes of clarity of description. This in no way implies acceptance of such classifications.

reflected in formal curricula. In new teacher qualifications in South Africa, four components are specified, to which competencies/outcomes are attached. I specifically investigate how competencies relating to teaching and learning theory and epistemologies are indicated by policy and interpreted by faculty.

Since the concept of dominant pedagogies in teacher education is central to my research questions, I test the validity of this construct in two ways. First, the literature illustrates amply that the research community accepts the lack of an agreed knowledge base of teacher education, hence the prevalence of dominant, preferred pedagogies in programmes. Second, I establish through interviews the dominant/preferred pedagogies of education academics in each Faculty that shape pre-service programmes in particular ways, and point to the lack of shared understanding about what should constitute a knowledge base of teacher education. My research investigates the bases of such pedagogies and why it is that they tend to persist.

As outlined earlier, I use the conceptual framework model of Trowler and Cooper (2002) to analyse faculty responses to the curriculum demands of new qualifications. Components of a teaching and learning regime (TLR), as delineated earlier in this Chapter, are often ‘invisible’ aspects of the culture of the faculty. By investigating individual “identities in interaction, power relations, codes of signification, tacit assumptions, rules of appropriateness, recurrent practices, discursive repertoires, implicit theories of teaching and learning”(p.225), patterns of collective responses can be built. While Trowler’s model is not a blueprint for conducting my research, it presents a valuable guide to my investigation. Additional components are identified as the analysis unfolds.

Document analyses illustrate the theories embedded in programmes, and how (if) these are aligned to qualifications and policy. Theories of education, implicit or explicit, have been discerned from curriculum documents such as course guides, student handbooks and faculty planning documents.

While not seeking to generalize in the scientific research sense, external validity is enhanced through my use of a multiple case study approach that illustrates the diversity of higher education institutions within which Faculties of Education are located. However, it must be noted that my study is an exploratory one, which does not set out to 'test' a theory. Interviews were semi-structured to allow participants to express their views comprehensively and not be limited in their responses, since it was anticipated that questions about policy and curriculum would be open to wide interpretation by university faculty.

### **Ethical Considerations**

As information gathered from respondents was of quite a personal and sensitive nature, not intended for public dissemination, anonymity was assured through the use of pseudonyms and coding, so that remarks were not attributed to particular names or institutions in the final report. However, it is possible, given the defining characteristics of the institutions selected, that institutions and respondents might be recognised without names being mentioned. I have striven to avoid this as far as possible.

### **Limitations**

Any social research, I would argue, has limitations since the study of the human condition offers few absolutes. The case study method I chose for this research, focused on three selected Faculties of Education, and the knowledge/theory component of their curriculum for teacher education. While findings are illuminatory, I do not claim to speak for all universities, their teacher education Faculties, or for all university academics.

As Ensor (2001) points out, the restructuring of university curricula is an ongoing process and changes are being made fairly rapidly – my study can only therefore

capture a particular phase at a particular moment. However, it is my proposition that dominant pedagogies and practices are conservative and enduring over time in spite of policy shifts, and that this may be explained by the resilience of faculty teaching and learning regimes. Other methodological and conceptual limitations are set out more fully in Chapter 4 hereof.

### **Significance of this Research**

My research examines the kinds of shifts currently taking place in three university education faculties in order to illustrate how policy demands in a transformative political reality, are being understood, interpreted and applied in the design of teacher education programmes. While the context of my study is local, my research questions have a wider significance in the context of developing countries and new policy frameworks, as well as curriculum making from a faculty rather than a 'consumer' perspective.

Internationally, scholars and researchers have grappled with issues of educational knowledge, teacher education policy and curriculum. While the research literature on the theme is voluminous, the emphasis appears to be on the shortcomings of the outputs of the programme/s in the form of qualified teachers, rather than the inputs (curricula for teacher education), which is where my inquiry is directed.

In South Africa, the four-year MUSTER (Multi-Site Teacher Education Research) project was one of the first attempts at a collaborative, international (5 countries) comparative study of teacher education (Lewin, Samuel, Sayed, 2002). A contention of the project was that teacher education was 'under-theorised' generally, and that in South Africa..."no empirically grounded policy-orientated studies of teacher education had been undertaken since the Teacher Audit in the mid-1990's" (ibid.p xxvi). Still, the study's emphasis and most valuable contribution was in elucidating the waves of education reform, merger policy,

curriculum change and impact on teacher identity, rather than interrogating the work of teacher educators specifically.

I argue in my research that knowledge selection by faculty is based on more than just ‘private understanding’. My research attempts to extend the pool of established literature on change in teacher education curricula by researching a context where education faculties are required to respond to state driven national norms and standards for teacher education, and examining what informs and shapes their responses. I explore the culture of education faculty as located within their “teaching and learning regimes” (Trowler and Cooper, 2002), their values, practices, assumptions and individual understandings which are seldom interrogated, but also how the university milieu shapes faculty cultures.

My research extends the current pool of empirical studies on teacher education knowledge by illuminating the knowledge selection processes of university Faculties of Education as they respond to government policies requiring curriculum change. This it does by highlighting the factors that drive academics individually, and jointly in their construction of programmes and curricula. By building textured, nuanced portraits of each of the institutional cases in my study, I draw attention to the historical and socio-cultural situatedness within which teacher education is being undertaken.

I argue that official policies have taken insufficient cognizance of the complex institutional contexts that loom large in the lives of faculty members and influence the ways in which they respond to policy directives. While the discourse of academic freedom is a powerful rationale for curriculum selections, the aggregated components of teaching and learning regimes, shaped by university contextual factors, could explain particular curriculum responses vis a vis policy directives. Such explanation provides an additional dimension to the policy intentions-policy enactment debate, and goes some way in explaining why dominant pedagogies in curricula tend to persist in spite of policy change.

## Organisation of this Dissertation

It may be useful to explain at this point that I chose Lewis Carroll's classic tales of 'Alice's adventures in Wonderland' and its sequel, 'Through the Looking-Glass', first published in 1865<sup>4</sup>, as a metaphor for my intensely personal curiosity about the state of teacher education, and truly felt as though I were 'stepping through the looking glass' as I embarked on this study. My chapter headings therefore contain references to those works, as themes that encapsulate something of the essence of each chapter.

Chapter One, '*Down the Rabbit-Hole*' (Carroll, 2003, p.13), is an overview of the dissertation and sets out particularly the purpose and rationale for my study, as well as my intended modus operandi within a selected theoretical framework.

Chapter Two, '*What is the use of a book, thought Alice, without any pictures or conversations?*' (ibid, p.13), is a comprehensive literature review which focuses on scholarship and research around the concept of a knowledge base for teacher education and competing discourses on construction of teacher education curricula.

Chapter Three, '*So she went on wondering more and more at every step...*' (ibid, p.211), presents a conceptual framework for analysing the responses of teacher education faculty to policy change initiatives in teacher education.

Chapter Four, '*Alice's Evidence*' (ibid, p.122), sets out the research design and methodology for my study, and the process of data collection and analysis.

Chapter Five, '*The Looking-Glass House*' (ibid, p.143), discusses evolving teacher education policies in South Africa since 1994 that potentially impact on

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<sup>4</sup> Carroll, L. (2003), *Alice in Wonderland*. Parragon: UK

education faculties, and situates faculty curriculum development within this policy context.

Chapter Six, *'Through the Looking-Glass, And What Alice Found There'* (ibid, p.135), sets out the evidence of faculty curriculum processes for three university Faculties of Education and analyses their responses to teacher education policy directives.

Chapter Seven, *'But how can it have got there without my knowing it? She said to herself as she lifted it off and set it on her lap to make out what it could possibly be.'* (ibid, p.256), presents a synthesis of the findings with regard to the key questions posed at the outset of this study in terms of faculty TLRs, and addresses the question at the heart of this inquiry into 'why dominant pedagogies in teacher education persist in spite of policy change'.

## CHAPTER TWO: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE LITERATURE

*“...and what is the use of a book,” thought Alice, “without pictures or conversations?”*

### Introduction

Why do dominant pedagogies in teacher education tend to persist in spite of policy change? This was the deceptively simple question at the start of my foray into the extant literature on teacher education knowledge, curricula and faculty motivations. My assumption was that teacher educators, in their curriculum selections, perpetuate particular theories, pedagogies and paradigms in spite of government policies that require curriculum change. My literature search was therefore geared towards finding out how this assumption might be validated or explained on the basis of studies conducted in this regard.

New policies in South Africa assume a commitment to reconstruction and democracy, and set out curriculum theory and practice requirements aligned with that commitment, in broad brush-strokes only. Faculty planners and practitioners are expected to fill in the detail and design the form and content of curricula using policy ‘guidelines’. On what basis do academics make curriculum decisions and what motivates curriculum change? These questions go directly to debates on the nature of teacher education knowledge, and prompt investigation into the bases of curriculum decisions.

I discovered that the literature is rather limited on the issue of teacher education from the perspective of teacher educators in Faculties or Schools of Education. This is substantiated by Wilson and others (2001) in a report entitled “Teacher Preparation Research: Current Knowledge, Gaps and Recommendations”, where the writers try to find answers from the research to critical questions about teacher preparation and conclude that, overall, the research base on teacher educators is ‘relatively thin’. (p.1).



In my search I was constantly led toward research and scholarship that investigated the subjects of teacher education, teachers, and the impact of their pedagogies and practices in classrooms and on learners. The purposes of education from the learners perspective, were taken as indicative of the pedagogies and practices which should make up the repertoire of teachers, and which, taken a step further, should make up the knowledge base of a prospective teacher. Policy research and recommendations in this regard were therefore largely aimed at what teachers needed to do to improve teaching and learning in the classroom, which was beyond the interest of my inquiry. My research intended to interrogate what was happening at the coalface of teacher preparation. In particular my interest lay in academics' curriculum processes and how/if these were responding to government policies, rather than looking into the consequences of teachers' endeavors.

In this chapter, therefore, I begin by exploring research and scholarship on the notion of 'knowledge' in teacher education, as a first step towards understanding the origin and orientation of pedagogies that exist in Faculties of Education. This takes me into the literature on the idea of a teacher education 'knowledge base' and its association with teacher professionalism, two concepts that are closely linked in official policies, yet neither concept is problematised to ascertain if they are commonly understood in terms of their implications for curricula. A cursory examination of the literature in this regard shows that the vagueness of these and other education constructs, lead to diverse interpretations by academics, with consequences for curricula. Moving onto the terrain of teacher educators in university faculties, I consider factors, highlighted in the literature, that impact on curriculum decision-making. Exogenous factors that shape faculty discourses, such as global and market forces, are well described. What is less well-researched and articulated, are the endogenous forces that influence Faculty processes – the personal and professional histories and traditions, and the contexts within which these are situated. Ultimately this chapter attempts to draw together the literature on important curriculum dilemmas posed by policy

directives in a divided teacher education constituency, and illustrate the need for ongoing research in this area. I conclude that there are gaps in the literature that my study could make a contribution towards.

### **On Knowledge, Competing Traditions and Professionalism**

On the issue of pedagogical knowledge, Buchman's (1987) question, 'what's special about teachers' knowledge?' is still relevant today, nearly twenty years later. Much of the literature revolves around the question of a unique knowledge base of teacher education and teacher education as a discipline, as opposed to being merely an eclectic assortment of borrowings from traditional education disciplines. Contestations around pedagogies in teacher education are indicative of the tenuous nature of the knowledge base of teacher education in spite of assumptions made in government policies.

A teacher education knowledge base is associated, in government policies, with teacher professionalism, but policies fail to realize that the concept of 'professionalism' is itself subject to different standpoints. For some scholars professionalism is linked to the existence of a recognized knowledge base, while for others it is associated with specific cognitive and intellectual abilities against agreed standards within a like-minded peer group. Understandings of professionalism could therefore have implications for curriculum selections, depending on which standpoint is held.

In the standards-based South African context, centralised norms and standards in teacher qualifications appear to be premised on an accepted 'body of knowledge' of teaching, which some theorists maintain is necessary for 'professionalising' what teachers do, similar to other established professions. However, there is little recognition of the contestations around terminology used, and that such terms are not universally accepted. Teacher educators, researchers and scholars are far from agreement on these issues, as the

research literature illustrates the many competing traditions of pedagogy and frameworks that potentially inform curricula and confound the idea of a recognizable knowledge base and a single meaning of the concept 'professionalism'.

The existence of dominant pedagogies that arise out of diverse disciplinary traditions creates tensions with which policy change has to contend, especially when the pedagogies embedded in new policies are incongruent with the dominant paradigms. What is apparent from the literature is that contestations around paradigms and pedagogies contribute to lack of agreement about what constitutes a knowledge base for teacher education, and makes teacher education across Schools/Faculties of Education look very different.

An examination of the research on dominant pedagogies in teacher education takes one directly into debates about the concept of a 'knowledge base' for teacher education. It is here that competing understandings of what such a knowledge base should constitute, abound. The basic question posed by Buchmann (1987) "what is special about teacher knowledge?" is vigorously argued by scholars (Shulman, 1986; Ball and McDiarmid, 1990; Labaree, 2000) as they attempt to carve a niche in academia for teacher education as a discipline in its own right, under pressure from counter-arguments which, baldly stated, aver that anyone who has had an 'apprenticeship by observation' (Lortie, 1975; Flexner, 1930) can teach. Indeed, Flexner's oft-quoted study characterizes (caricatures) education courses as "trivial, obvious and inconsequential subjects, which could safely be left to the common sense or intelligence of any fairly educated person" (p.100). What are schools of education to make of these positions on the question of knowledge of and about teaching, and what implications do these perspectives have for constructing curricula?

The importance of an agreed upon knowledge base and notions of professionalism are closely related in the scholarship on teacher education.

Where agreement tends to founder, is on arguments about deep-seated and competing traditions of pedagogy.

Cochran-Smith (2001) offers an explanation for why consensus around a body of knowledge is important for teacher education. She holds that, "...there has been a major effort over the last 15 years to codify and disseminate the formal knowledge base for teaching and teacher education" (p.7), in order to professionalise what teachers do. The formal knowledge base here is referred to as a broad spectrum of practices, theoretical understandings and beliefs about education, largely borrowed from other disciplines and handed down by education scholars through the ages (Cochran-Smith, 1998; Davis and Sumara, 2002). Yinger and Hendricks-Lee, (2000) argue that the establishment of a unique knowledge base is "key to successful professionalisation of any practice" (p.94). This perspective from the research acknowledges the difficulty in structuring a teacher education curriculum when 'experts' cannot agree on what is important for teacher preparation, and pedagogies are steeped in dominant traditions and histories. But, says Marginson (2000), "there is little to be gained by lamenting the passing of the collegial era, in which the veneration of knowledge was often a cloak for the monopolization of knowledge by closed professional elites..." (p.31).

It is striking that in spite of major advances in knowledge production, debates about the primacy of 'essentialism' versus 'constructivism' in knowledge for teacher education, still rage (Schubert, 1992; Thomas, 1997). Researchers and scholars, generally located along a paradigm continuum from a positivist, behaviourist orientation ('educational knowledge as science') to a constructivist, interpretivist orientation ('educational knowledge as socially constructed') offer copious advice for teacher education programmes from the vantage point of these competing dominant paradigms (Krechevsky and Stork, 2000; Schubert, 1992, Griffin, 2001, Barnett, et al., 2002).

On the one hand, Borg, Langer and Kelly (2001) describe a university education programme as “(professional knowledge)...pertaining to the pedagogical concepts and behavioural science principles teachers need in order to understand and deal with problems related to the pupil and the educational process” (p.232). On the other, Schubert (1992) and Huey-Ling (2001) argue that when student teachers are allowed to construct/infer theory from practice, the quality of their teaching and learning experience is greatly enhanced. What are we to make of these differing orientations to teacher education curricula?

One observation is that the former appears to favour the idea of an unquestioned, scientific, body of knowledge, while the latter critiques such a notion and proposes instead that theory could be inferred from practice. These two positions (and the implications they predict for teaching and learning) represent two poles of an argument, not always explicit, which is a recurring theme throughout the literature on teacher education curricula (Griffin 2001; Shulman 1987; Moore 2000; Cochran-Smith 2001; Thomas 1997; Tomlinson 1999; Meredith 1995; Zeichner and Liston, 1990). Claims made in terms of these arguments are hard to evaluate though, as they are often not backed up other than by anecdotal evidence. The more important question is whether such entrenched theoretical positions can reside within the same curriculum for teacher education, or whether the form and content of programmes which might be based on them, would be vastly different.

If we conclude that teacher education programmes would differ substantively depending on the paradigms and pedagogies which faculty subscribe to, policy initiatives would have a serious problem if their embedded theories were at odds with dominant pedagogies in schools of education, or in the field generally. In South Africa presently, new policies in education are couched in constructivist language, a reaction of the democratic state to pre-1994 positivist dominated policies. While constructivism presents a compelling argument against functional positivism, Taylor (2001) delivers a stinging attack on ‘radical’ constructivism and

the limits of constructivism in achieving outcomes in a hugely inequitable education system, based on research done with teachers in South Africa implementing a new outcomes based curriculum.

Richardson's (2003) critique on the differing interpretations of constructivism and the disjuncture between espoused theories in teacher preparation and theories in use, is important for understanding how policy directives for curricula might easily be subverted. Espoused theories embedded in government policies on teacher education are, in the absence of a recognized knowledge base, subject to various interpretations within theoretical frameworks, and the intentions of policymakers could be lost in the process. The potential for mismatch between the intentions of policies and how these are taken up in curricula, is great. The point made by Richardson is that theories of teaching and learning would be better off given a meta-theoretical perspective, since different paradigms could severely impede agreement on what a knowledge base for teaching might constitute.

By way of illustration, in a study of pre-service teacher education students (Brownlee, Purdie & Boulton-Lewis, 2001), the authors included in their teaching programme a requirement that students reflect on, over the period of the programme, their epistemological beliefs and how these changed. By deliberately focusing on what knowledge is and how it may be gained, students were made to recognize their views on the nature of knowledge and adjust their approaches to teaching and learning in different contexts, thus experiencing the power of different paradigms. The methodology of the study is particularly noteworthy because it shows a deliberate attempt by faculty to challenge dominant paradigms by getting student teachers to interrogate their own epistemologies, rather than prescribing particular theories as though they are universally agreed.

Mostly, though, researchers simply reveal their own epistemologies and slip into implicit assumptions and value judgements about knowledge (see Enslin and

Pendlebury, 2000). Writing on the change processes in South Africa, Enslin and Pendlebury maintain that the teacher education system "...continues to perpetuate a cycle of disadvantage by an inadequate professional grounding" (p.43). What is not spelt out in their paper though, is what constitutes adequate professional grounding and how that might ameliorate a 'cycle of disadvantage', again the notion of an accepted body of knowledge and practice is implied.

It is evident from the literature that education scholars have struggled with designing alternative curricula for teacher education in order to avoid familiar pitfalls in setting up content and methodology. In a study illustrative of this, a critique of the traditional organization of teacher education programs falls short when, in spite of an innovative alternative being offered, familiar old problems manifest themselves. In a series of case studies of newly graduated teachers, Smagorinsky and others (2003) critique the positioning of theory and practice as separate domains and argue for the use of Vygotsky's (1987) concept development path. Without going into the detail of the study, the point that the authors make which has a bearing on the issue of knowledge for teacher education, is that while they advocate the route of concept development in teacher education, this approach is 'easier said than done'. The reason for this, they state, is that,

there is no agreement on the overall purpose of education, making pedagogical concept development a decidedly open-ended process. A conception of teaching is tied to one's notion of what qualities are embodied by the ideal person (p.1409).

Here the issue of purpose enters the discussion, which may or may not be significant for curriculum construction depending on the paradigm that holds sway. In the South African education scenario purpose is overtly stated in policy, at all levels of education and training. Issues of social justice and democratic participation are the ends to which education policy aspires. The expectation is that institutions of education respond to the intentions of policy and design

curricula accordingly. New curricula for public schools, produced by the national Department of Education, have gone this route. It remains to be seen how curricula for prospective teachers are responding, a key question in my own research agenda.

Still on the theme of a knowledge base for teacher education, Daly, Pachler and Lambert (2004) define the notion of a scholarship of teaching as

... not only a complex web of knowledge, understanding and skills that teachers and teacher educators require to be excellent practitioners but also other capacities and dispositions towards learning that take us beyond....and which invoke what in effect might be termed the 'discipline' of teacher education (p.99).

On the other hand, in the United States advocates of deregulation of teacher education by the state, argue against professionalisation on the basis that,

teaching does not rest on a reasonably stable body of knowledge, based on high-quality, replicable research accepted by almost everyone in the field and systematically imparted by its training institutions...much of teacher education has been built on the ideologies and enthusiasms of the faculty... (Berry, 2005, p.273).

The fractured nature of the discourse on teacher education points to “the lack of shared technical vocabulary”, (Hargreaves, 1980 cited in Hoadley, 2002 p.47) and “... the way in which teachers define their identity in personal ways that are not always or consistently based on a clearly defined and commonly accepted professional knowledge base” (Hoadley, 2002, p.47).

But how is the 'professional' to be understood in order that an appropriate knowledge base can be agreed upon? Nixon, McKeown and Ranson (1997) look at the changing notion of professionalism over time since the 1970s and 80s, from that of a closed body of specialist knowledge legitimated by society and received over a long period of education, to one of epistemological critique based on a rejection of traditional views on the origins of knowledge. They suggest



alternatively, the idea of ‘emergent professionalism’ where professionalism is seen to involve continuous learning with the focus on quality of practice (p.12). Argyris and Schon (1974), in similar vein, offer a redefinition of professionalism as “theories in use that maximize ‘valid information’, free and informed choice, and internal commitment to decisions made” (p.86-89). Yet another definition is offered by Daly and others, (2004), as...”something that is rooted in both intellectual enfranchisement and actual experience, and how it validates knowledge which has been built collaboratively” (p.207).

In the final analysis it is still the case, as stated economically by Imig (2006) that,

different pedagogies and epistemologies under-gird these separate conceptions of teaching and teacher education as the essentialist philosophy of Bagley bumps up against the progressive ideology of John Dewey or William Kilpatrick (p.177).

The more cynical view would suggest that there is the tendency for essentialist policy initiatives to be cloaked in the language of progressivism as Labaree (2005) maintains, “although progressive rhetoric is everywhere, progressive practice is much harder to find” (p.186). Or is it the case, as Blackwell (2003) eloquently argues, “...that schools of education speak the language of change while holding close to the models of the past?” (p.359).

With such extreme views on the content and value of teacher education programmes, teacher educators as architects of curricula face formidable challenges as they embark on curriculum change. The knowledge they may see as both desirable and useful for the training of teachers, if it is not to be found in an established knowledge base, as appears to be the case, must reside in other motivations for its inclusion. If we accept the contention that curriculum is the expression of particular social and political goals (Moore, 2000), which in South Africa are explicitly stated in new government policies, then it would be

reasonable to ask if teacher education curricula, and knowledge selections, have changed in response to policies, or why they have not.

### **Government Policy Directives and Teacher Education Curricula**

Scholarly and empirical literature (within one or other paradigm) is eloquent about the kind of knowledge that prospective teachers need in their programmes, based on various social or policy directives (Samuel, 2002; Hartley, 2002). The suggestion is that teacher education curricula are somehow lacking, or inappropriate. Surprisingly, the literature is not so clear about explaining where the breakdown between policy intentions and the expression of those in formal curricula, occurs. Neither is the hub of teacher education – the education faculty – sufficiently interrogated to determine whether this is where part of the explanation for why curriculum change does not rationally follow policy, might be located. In addition, there is little empirical research to show how, in standards based systems, the question of appropriate knowledge for teacher education is addressed. One illustrative study (Yinger and Hendricks-Lee, 2000) shows how faculty had to learn to “negotiate the standards” (p.100) in order to overcome disagreement about course content knowledge.

In the South African context, where the government Department of Education has set norms and standards for educators, academics pose serious questions about the assumptions in policy, for example, the premise that beginning teachers are able to demonstrate the same outcomes as experienced teachers (Fraser, 2005). Of foundational (knowledge) competence, the authors aver that: “it is self-evident that professionals cannot perform their roles without specialist knowledge” (p.234). It seems to be understood that there is a positive relationship between teachers’ underpinning knowledge of practice and their ability to perform competently, but who takes responsibility for defining the necessary terrain of that specialist knowledge? The authors take up this issue in their own question: “What levels of foundational knowledge and capacity for

divergent thinking are necessary to support the decisions that must be made when practical competence is being demonstrated by pre-service or beginning teachers?"(p.235). New teacher education policies in South Africa make use of the term 'professional' to describe the ideal teacher together with roles and competencies, but are vague about their definition of professionalism, an omission which could cause faculty interpretations to be undermined, as the following case study illustrates.

In a comparative case study of two pre-service teacher education programmes in England and Canada, Hall and Schultz (2003) use Goodson and Hargreaves' (1996) seven principles of postmodern professionalism against which to measure Schools and Faculties of Education. They distinguish between government 'professionalisation' agendas and principles of professionalism, and argue that the former continues to undermine the latter while assuming that they mean one and the same thing. We see from their study that government is concerned chiefly with occupational interests, whereas professionalism in Goodson and Hargreaves' terms is concerned with quality of practice and continuous improvement. University educators in this Canadian study found themselves limited by the statutory requirements on teachers and unable to adequately model the professional standards that they espoused. In fact, their professionalism as defined by Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) was at odds both with the internal university culture as well as the external vocational discourses. This study exemplifies how terminology, unproblematically stated in official policies, have widely differing meanings in practice, and interpretations which could ultimately undermine policy intentions.

Shalem and Slonimsky (1999) in commenting on South African teacher education policy, critique the use of glibly stated terminology in the qualification outcomes which mean different things to different people, for example 'appropriate use', 'higher level' and one which has particular significance for my own study, 'contextually relevant pedagogies'. They go on to say that: "The

nature of disagreements about what constitutes good practice is a combination of disputes about values together with disputes over 'philosophical assumptions about human nature and the nature of learning' (p.15). This is a key issue for teacher education faculty charged with enabling students to meet the stated outcomes of qualifications, since it involves curriculum decisions about what is included and what is excluded. The Educator Development and Support Project (1999), investigating how teacher educators understand the criteria, cites as a problem "the lack of epistemological clarity" (p.117) in the field of teacher education. Shalem and Slonimsky, agree that the problem is centered on the lack a "shared understanding of what constitutes knowledge" (ibid, p.23). However, this acknowledgement does not indicate how such shared understanding is to be acquired, neither does it fully articulate what the barriers to a common understanding might be. Official policies simply leap over the potentially intervening variables of Faculty contexts and cultures that might cause questions of curriculum purpose and relevance to be answered in any number of ways.

In South Africa, teaching and teacher education have experienced about ten years of cataclysmic changes starting with, inter alia, the dismantling of apartheid education structures, moving through curriculum in schools, the incorporation of teacher education colleges into higher education institutions and the standardization of outcomes for all occupations including teaching (Jansen and Taylor, 2003; Cross et.al., 2002; Harley et.al., 2000; Kallaway (ed), 2002). For example, norms and standards for teachers now form the basis for new teacher qualifications and a major audit of the offerings of education faculties across the country is under way (ibid.). Questions about the nature and relevance of teacher education, its format, structure and content are all extremely relevant at this time. There is evidence of internal review and planning processes in faculties, but little indication of what decisions in curriculum matters are being made, and on what those decisions are based.

New qualifications set broad outcomes and criteria for the training of teachers based on an idealized view of what a qualified teacher is able to accomplish in the classroom and ultimately society (Jansen, 2002), but do not specify form or content of programmes, leaving curriculum choices and knowledge selections to faculties. This, according to the Department of Education is in the interests of flexibility so that faculties can decide on the specifics of contextual relevance for their geographical location. The lack of specification is also an acknowledgement of the constitutional right of universities to academic autonomy, which is jealously guarded by faculty.

What does it mean for policy intentions if the under-specification of outcomes offers no clear direction for programmes? Is agreement across teacher education institutions on philosophy, approach, theoretical underpinnings, necessary knowledge, skills and values also to be assumed? Are such common understandings even necessary and if so, why? If the teacher education programme plays little part in achieving the transformative goals of policy, as some researchers argue (Hoadley, 2002; Zeichner and Gore, 1990), why do programmes even need reform and at a more mundane level, does the selection of knowledge and skills even matter? These questions are not addressed sufficiently in the literature.

Internationally, it seems that “too few research studies have been conducted to make confident conclusions about the effects of policies on the quality of pre-service teacher education’ (Wilson, 2001, p.3). While the literature illustrates the paucity of empirical studies in teacher education, there is a rich tradition of scholarship and intellectual debate on the nature of educational knowledge and its origins, which bedevils the task of policymaker and teacher educator practitioner alike as they struggle to make sense of the form and content of teacher education programmes. However, much of the research studies focus on a ‘resistance to prescription’ mode within fairly stable and homogenous academic settings. My research intends to contribute to the literature on teacher education

curriculum responses within a climate of policy change and in a developing context. In the next section I elaborate on some exogenous factors that, according to the literature, potentially impact on faculty curriculum processes, and examine academic responses to such external pressures.

### **Policy, Markets and Universities: On the Principle of Academic Freedom**

Policy directives for university curricula, in centralised systems, are embedded in the national outcomes that are set for qualifications. Outcomes though, only prescribe the end-points of university programmes, and academics are required to make decisions about the content of programmes that would enable students to meet the set outcomes. Most Western democracies enshrine the principle of academic freedom in their Constitutions, and South Africa is no exception to that. It is this principle that academics most frequently invoke to argue against policy prescriptions in curricula.

The legitimation and preservation of what counts as valuable knowledge in teacher education rests largely with academics in higher education, in their individual or co-operative capacities. In Griffin's words, this remains "the private understanding of faculty members who provide instruction" (p.37). Part of the explanation for this is the fact that universities have always been at pains to protect their autonomy, and avoid being dictated to by 'markets', a trend associated with standards and outcomes driven reform (Enslin et al., 2003; Hill, 2003; Muller, 2003, Moore, 2000). However, debates around the 'work' of universities have challenged the traditional hierarchical organisation of discipline-based selections of knowledge (Bridges, 2000) resulting in what Hill (2003) refers to as an "epistemological crisis" (p.93). Marginson (2000) concurs when he says that "the academic profession in Australia is undergoing a profound transformation...in many respects, the traditional practices of the Australian academic profession are in crisis" (p.24).

The nature of the crisis, according to the literature, is that global and market influences are causing historical and traditional curriculum certainties in relatively stable and enduring structures like universities, to be destabilized. Primarily this refers to debates around trans-and inter-disciplinarity. Faculties of Education in South Africa too, have critiqued the undue influence of market forces on the determination of outcomes of education, with which they have difficulty in identifying. Is the language of standards and trans-disciplinarity impacting on how academics design programmes for teacher education? What are the implications for the traditional teacher education curriculum when academics are forced to question (if indeed they do) whether their selection of theory still applies? Can they still rely on what they know best, or does ‘theory’ no longer “work to provide comforting and apparently stable identities for beleaguered academics in an increasingly slippery world?” (Ball,1995, p.268). Is there merit in the argument within the literature that the university culture, driven by market forces, militates against the kind of postmodern professionalism academics are striving for in their efforts to respond to change? David Labaree (1994, p.591) argues that as a result of the ‘social efficiency’ and ‘social mobility’ demands of the market, efforts to enrich the quality, duration, rigor and political aims of teacher education, have been undermined.

Smagorinsky’s (2003) study of conceptual development as a basis for a coherent (teacher education) curriculum argues that,

achieving this unity is difficult...The principle of academic freedom, for instance, makes any individual faculty member’s allegiance to group goals tenuous; some faculty may dispute the majority view and work to critique the resident orthodoxy from a different perspective (p.1427).

Hall and Schultz’s (2003) work with university academics supports this when they conclude that universities, while speaking the discourse of partnership and collaboration, ‘honours individual over cooperative efforts, and competition over collegiality...’ (p.380). Blackwell (2003), on dissonance in faculties, attributes

competing theories and acrimonious debates to academics locked into 'ideological' differences (p.358).

Emphasising the divisions in higher education, Mbali (2003) argues that the university's twin goals of teaching and research, and the privileging of the latter over the former, has meant that improving the practice of teaching has not been high on the university agenda. To exacerbate matters, teacher education is fairly low down on the food chain, with fewer resources in the Faculty and pressure on teacher educators for published research. When one places into this environment, increased policy demands in the form of teaching standards and curriculum change, the probability of disaffection is high. Teacher educators are being asked to respond to policy in circumstances where there seem to be few certainties or rewards, resulting in a "muddled mission" for many schools of education (Blackwell, 2003, p.360).

Fraser (2005) agrees with Mbali's view but asserts that,

we need a much more robust debate about the politics of teacher education today. We need to open a much wider and richer dialogue about what needs to be defended in teacher preparation and at least as much, what is wrong and needs to be fixed. (p.284)

Labaree (2005) concurs when he describes teacher education as occupying 'life on the margins' (p.186). In his analysis of why this might be an accurate description, he ascribes the low status of teaching and teacher education to 'historical contingencies' (teacher education in higher education is a relatively new kid on the block compared to older university disciplines) and to 'sociological associations' (teaching as a least selective profession, generally catering to low status clientele, children, and employing mainly women). While this analysis may be somewhat tongue in cheek, there is more than a grain of truth in it, as many university education academics will attest. Blackwell (ibid) refers to the 'paradox of change without any actual change' that present day schools of education will



have to resolve if they are to achieve a measure of credibility. She describes the crisis in teacher education as follows:

... an inadequate or weak knowledge base and the inability to agree on a professional knowledge base; research that is related to academic discipline issues rather than research that is focused on schooling, teaching and learning; failure to engage in the reform of schools and teacher education in significant ways; faulty structural designs; courses that lack relevance to the real work of teachers, along with a superficial curriculum that is 'once over lightly' on significant aspects (p.360).

The picture painted of education faculties is bleak indeed, but it conveys the complexity of the enterprise of teaching and teacher education that seems to be satisfying no-one at present. A peculiar lethargy characterizes the system, and the same challenges resonate across contexts in spite of differences in time, space and resources. The 'baggage of the past' (ibid.) weighs heavily on teacher educators but it seems that the imperative is to begin looking inward for answers, to the factors that influence faculty responses to policies requiring change.

### **How Do Teacher Educators Respond to Policy Change?**

What informs the work of teacher educators and how do they respond to change within their university and Faculty cultures as described above? Labaree (2000) maintains that research on teacher education reform is a tale of 'persistent mediocrity and resistance to change' (p.228). The reason for this, he posits, lies in the nature of the teaching enterprise – that of a complex job made to look easy. The impact of this impression of teaching, is to under-value and underestimate what it takes to prepare prospective teachers for such an enterprise. Labaree (ibid) comments on the many uncertainties in teacher education as follows:

We ask teacher education programs to provide ordinary college students with the imponderable so that they can teach the irrepressible in a manner that pleases the irreconcilable, and all without knowing clearly either the purposes or the consequences of their actions (p.232).

Researchers tend to agree that there are significantly ‘under-explored’ areas of teacher educators’ work. In a review of the research on teacher educators, Eltis (1987) notes that little is known of the history, values, goals, responsibilities and motivations of teacher educators. More recent studies in education also tend not to foray into this area of research, hence there is little empirical evidence to cite in this regard. However, some of the studies that follow offer methodological and other insights into the work of teacher educators.

Grundy and Hatton (1995), in a qualitative study of teacher educators that investigated their ideological discourses, found that multiple ideologies were present, and that there was an orientation towards conservatism rather than transformation. Given the relatively stable, apathetic nature of Australian politics and the abiding status quo this is possibly not a surprising finding. Using discourse analysis, the researchers were able to typify the various ideologies in operation, and found no robust examples of a discourse of ‘social transformation’ (p.11), giving rise to concerns about the theoretical underpinnings of teacher education programmes and the fact that programs are “shaped by the unexamined, implicit influence of teacher educators’ ideologies” (p.23).

Hatton (1997) uses a different methodology to explore the process of teacher education itself, as a ‘conservative determinant of teachers’ work’. Her study is set in an Australian teacher education college where there is a “tidal wave of interference and control” by the state. This two-year research process used the methodology of theory testing to interpret the data in respect of the research question “To what extent are teacher educators bricoleurs?” (p.240). Hatton conceptualizes teachers’ work as ‘bricolage’, characterised by conservative work practices, limited creativity, atheoretical approaches to repertoire enlargement

and outmoded or inadequate use of explicit theory. Teacher educators in her study, she posits, reinforced this characterization in their responses to state interference.

Among the 'shapers' of teachers' work, one in particular is salient to my own research: "the failure of educational theory and teacher education to offer real help to beginners" (Hatton citing Grant and Sleeter). This 'failing' in teacher education is attributed to the consequence of there being no agreed body of necessary knowledge. In the absence of such knowledge, teacher educators make 'unsatisfactory selections'. Furthermore, 'the underdeveloped state of theories of teaching simply means that "beginning teachers are virtually left to discover their own useful knowledge about teaching" (ibid. p.245). Hatton sees her research, at the very least, "indicating the importance of ensuring that teacher educators and their teaching are subjected to further research" (p.253).

Moore (2003) points to the paucity of research literature on faculty responses to change in his case study of curriculum restructuring in two university Faculties. His findings agree with those of Ensor's (2002) study, that "institutional rhetoric notwithstanding, responses tended to preserve discipline-based collection modes of curriculum, slightly re-packaged to suggest compliance with the policy" (p.91).

While these case studies deal with the breakdown of traditional subject/discipline boundaries, they suggest at a macro level the conservative resilience of universities and the inability of policies that demand change, to effect the desired outputs. Muller (2003) gives emphasis to this point when he says that, "the generic discourse of higher education restructuring embeds the assumption that universities in general, including their knowledge activities of academic programmes and research, are amenable to exogenous propulsion, that is, they can be pushed by policy and pulled by the market" (p.103). The exogenous (external) forces in this regard are well documented. What is not as well documented are the endogenous forces (or internal factors) that might explain

curriculum change, more particularly in my research, teacher education curriculum. Erchick and Kos (2003) conducting research into teacher education through the medium of 'voice', acknowledge that "even though we enter our teacher education classrooms with certain content in mind, we also know that our own paradigms, our world views, compel us to bring to the table more than instructional strategies..."(p.190).

In a study that focused on deeper faculty motivations and processes, Trowler and Knight (2000) conducted an empirical study into the socialization of new faculty into higher education contexts in Canada and England. The study addressed the concept of 'activity systems' as sites where new entrants to the academy learn the rules and practices of their workplaces, where "recurrent practices become embedded and developing meanings are shaped, as individuals work together on the issues of professional life" (p.28). The suggestion is that while the construction of an identity within the academy is personal and individual, it takes place within a community of practice that shapes it in interaction. The authors hold that, "academics are not simply 'captured by the discourse'. They are aware of the role of discourses and draw on and develop them selectively, or subvert or oppose them..." (p.35). The importance of this study for researchers in higher education, is to make them aware that the rhetoric of 'academic autonomy' may stand proxy for underlying faculty motivations, discourses, ideologies, identities and implicit theories. My analysis of faculty responses illustrates this interplay.

## **Synthesis**

The research literature illuminates the salient debates in teacher education, the dominant pedagogies, disciplinary discourses and the contested terrain in curricula. However, it has not brought me much closer to understanding the myriad of forces within faculties that tend towards ideological and professional conservatism and allow dominant pedagogies to persist. What allows for the resilience of dominant pedagogies in spite of policy change? It is clear from

scholarship in the field that rich philosophical treatises have had this question as the subject, but there are far fewer studies that look to education faculty for answers. The research literature is largely silent on the response in curricula of faculty to official teacher education policies, as I have not discerned any such specific investigation at faculty level. My research is an attempt to understand how, and on what basis, faculty make knowledge selections in their construction of teacher education curricula, in the absence of an agreed knowledge base.

The idea of a body of knowledge appears frequently in debates about the nature and value of education curricula but the discourse is frequently polarized. Zeichner and Liston (1990) caution that,

There continues to be very little cross-fertilization of ideas across traditions of practice, as members of the various subcommunities typically read, discuss, debate and cite work only within a particular reform tradition and frequently dismiss and/or ignore ideas outside of their own particular subcommunity” (p25).

The lack of consensus about what constitutes an adequate, appropriate knowledge base for teacher education, means that knowledge requirements embedded in new teacher education policies, remain open to interpretation by Faculties of Education and increases the prospect of widening the gap between policy intentions and policy outcomes. Yet the dilemma for academics, as we see in the literature, is that closer specification of content could be perceived as an attack on academic freedom.

In South Africa, as discussed earlier in this chapter, education policy changes have espoused a clear social reconstructionist agenda, and it can be assumed that policymakers expect policies in education to influence various levels of the system. For instance, the proliferation of policies in the realm of the content and methods of schooling have implications for teaching, which in turn have

implications for teacher educators – in a rational ‘practice following policy’ model of course.

I have not obtained a sense, from the literature, of how curriculum change in higher education, or more specifically teacher education, is effected at the level of practitioners (faculty), which is where my study locates itself. Is the lack of empirical literature in this arena because, as Muller (2003) suggests, research into higher education is the “under-developed step-child of...more sophisticated school based research” (p.107)? My literature search reveals concerns about power, control, perceptions of institutional autonomy and academic freedom in higher education, but how are these concerns expressed in formal teacher education curricula? There is a lacunae in the empirical literature in this regard.

Muller furthermore (ibid, p.107-108) addresses the lacunae in the research on higher education by means of a helpful schema that attempts to illustrate the gap between policy demands and implementation. A common error in policy research, he argues, “consists in generalizing from policy intent (intended policy) to practice effects (the learnt policy) without taking into account the crucial intervening variable, the mediating context that translates the policy into practice (namely the enacted policy). I have incorporated this into my conceptual framework in the following way: I argue that the ‘mediating context’ (in teacher education policy) consists of the individual teaching and learning regimes of faculty members. My contention is that research into the TLRs of faculty, may explain how policy (knowledge requirements in new qualifications) gets reflected in formal curricula in the way that it does. Samuel’s (2002) chronology of change in an education faculty, towards a more ‘relevant’ curriculum, and the social organizational challenges in the faculty that results, reinforces this point.

I want to argue that insufficient attention has been paid to the ‘teachers of the teachers’, and what drives their construction of teacher education curricula. I intend, by ‘stepping through the looking-glass’, to investigate closely the

processes of curriculum making in the Faculty, to uncover the philosophical underpinnings, private understandings (Griffin, 2001) and assumptions which, Trowler (2002) suggests, are components of teaching and learning regimes. These, I believe, contribute to and reinforce particular approaches to curricula and may be so implicit and insular, as to be unrecognized and unacknowledged. In the following chapter I unpack the concept of Teaching and Learning Regimes (TLRs) in finer detail, and show how it provides an appropriate framework for my research questions.

## CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### *'So she went on wondering more and more at every step'*

*The significant contribution that the study of TLRs can offer to our understanding (and the practice of) change is the fact that they act as filters, conditioning the reception and implementation of change, as well as generating their own changes or acting as a brake on it. (Paul Trowler, 2004).*

### **Introduction**

It would appear from the research literature that teacher education academics are deeply divided on issues central to their core business, the preparation of teachers, prompting a description of them as “an intellectually fragmented group, more divided into ‘sects’ than their 19<sup>th</sup> century medical counterparts” (Clifford and Guthrie, 1988). Such observations serve as a cautionary note to researchers who might attempt to ‘box’ education faculty into a like-minded grouping for purposes of generic description, and provide some justification for the use of a conceptual framework which in many respects sees academics as individuals, albeit acting within a particular academic culture and contributing towards that culture.

The purpose of this chapter therefore, is to elucidate the conceptual framework that will be employed to analyse teacher educator responses to new teacher education policies. More particularly, I intend to show how education faculty Teaching and Learning Regimes (TLRs) mediate the intentions of government policy in curricula for teacher education. I argue that Faculties of Education, while subject to tumultuous exogenous factors in an environment of social upheaval, are constituted by endogenous factors, the TLRs of faculty, which either facilitate or inhibit substantive change in spite of the intentions of policymakers.



## **The Concept of Teaching and Learning Regimes**

The concept of teaching and learning regimes grew out of Social Practice Theory, according to Trowler (Trowler and Cooper, 2002; Trowler, 2003). While aspects of a hegemonic university culture can be discerned, there are “subjectivities in universities which relate both to teaching and learning and to change processes there’ and while cultural components can be disaggregated, they have to be understood as operating holistically within a particular context. Lest ‘culture’ as an over-used term become almost meaningless, Trowler offers the following definition:

The complex of taken-for-granted values, attitudes and ways of seeing and relating which are articulated through and reinforced by recurrent practices in a given context. Ways of thinking, feeling and behaving are both constructed and enacted in local contexts” (2004, p.3).

Trowler’s earlier ethnographic studies (1998, 2000) investigated the experiences of newly appointed academics in universities and how they became socialized into academic life. In this study ‘activity systems theory’ (Vygotsky and Engestrom) was supplemented by Lave and Wenger’s (1991) work on ‘communities of practice’ in order to understand the complex reality of academics’ individual and social professional lives. The two concepts are inter-related and move between individual ‘activity systems’ and more stable community interactions. The concept of TLRs appears to similarly integrate elements that are individual manifestations, for example implicit theories and beliefs, and elements that are formed largely through interaction or intersubjectivity, for example identity or rules of appropriateness.

The TLR conceptual framework lends itself well to my research study as it provides an orderly organizational schema within which to explore what motivates curriculum development in Education Faculties. The framework neatly disaggregates the potential elements at work in a teacher education Faculty,

thereby enabling a credible composite contextual portrait to be developed. Given the background of the research literature, teacher educators face huge external pressures, but are prone to “look for answers that will allay the criticisms rather than address their root causes” (Blackwell et.al., 2003). The root causes, in my view, are arrived at by application of the TLRs framework. However, Trowler et al’s work appears to take place in far more stable political settings and within more homogenous groupings than is the case in my study. An overwhelming feature of my study is the political context of change and the introduction of transformative policies that require change. Trowler does not particularly dwell on the exogenous factors that might shape TLRs in particular ways, whereas my study is unable to avoid such factors.

To what extent can changed policy environments like those in South Africa, and in particular new norms and standards for teachers, shift deeply rooted practices and beliefs about teacher education? What organizational culture exists in Faculties of Education that facilitate or inhibit a changed orientation, and how are continuities in dominant pedagogies and methodologies to be explained? The defining elements of TLRs as outlined below, are constituent of an organizational culture and will be explored more fully in this inquiry.

### **Defining Teaching and Learning Regimes**

‘Teaching and Learning Regimes’ or TLRs, are defined as “a constellation of rules, assumptions, practices and relationships related to teaching and learning issues in higher education” (p.222). Implicit theories, tacit assumptions, recurrent practices, to mention a few of the components, inform how faculty members develop curricula for education.

TLRs also give an indication of dominant discourses in the faculty that might influence selections of theory for programmes. The writers offer the use of the term ‘regime’ to, “draw attention to social relations and recurrent practices, the

technologies that instantiate them (room layouts, pedagogic techniques) and the ideologies, values and attitudes that underpin them” (p.224). We are given some explanation for the resilience of privileged theories within an organizational culture when they aver that:

Departments and sub-groups within them are the primary locations for the growth and transmission of TLRs because it is here that academics engage together on tasks over the long term. In so doing individuals in interaction, both construct and enact culture, many aspects of which are invisible to them because they become taken for granted” (p.222).

Components of TLRs, which, it is suggested are mutually reinforcing, are stated as “identities in interaction, power relations, codes of signification, tacit assumptions, rules of appropriateness, recurrent practices, discursive repertoires, implicit theories of learning and teaching” (ibid.). The following section is a summary of the components of TLRs as described by Trowler (ibid 225-234).

## **Components of Teaching and Learning Regimes**

### *Identities in Interaction*

Personal and professional identities may be fixed or flexible but identities within the group are constantly negotiated, attacked, defended, or sustained. Within a group, identities may also act ‘against the grain’ or out of character with the group.

### *Power Relations*

This component speaks to the autonomy (power) of academics in relation to curriculum, in relation to students, in relation to policy, as the case may be. Also how academics may perceive themselves and their work in relation to outside

initiatives that in my study could be government policy as a powerful regulator of educators' work.

### *Codes of Signification*

This refers to the cultural construction of connotative codes - the attribution of meaning and emotion which could in the university setting deal with the status of knowledge/s. Terms and associations applied to what counts as significant, are loaded and evoke emotional responses.

### *Tacit Assumptions*

Tacit relevance structures, often individually constructed understandings of what is and is not relevant to teaching and learning. Forms of knowing which are not overt but may be discerned from how people express their ideas about teaching, learning, assessment and so on.

### *Rules of Appropriateness*

Received via images and experiences from the past, for example a mismatch between government policy expectations and what academics consider to be relevant and appropriate. Rules of appropriateness 'condition what feels normal and what feels deviant'

### *Recurrent Practices*

Defined as unreflective habitual routines, developed in situ, way academics interact, realized behaviour, ways of doing which become the 'norm' – 'the way things are done around here'. These ways of doing may rarely get reflected upon. It may be new entrants to a group who at first find the practices unusual, but who may later fall into the same patterns of behaviour.

### *Discursive Repertoires*

Discourses in speech or text that are influenced by ways of seeing, ways of representing the world. Words used within the academy can be locally generated and have local significance. Particular discourses may be favoured and shape the practices in a department accordingly.

### *Implicit Theories of Learning and Teaching*

These are 'bigger' than individual or group assumptions. They may encompass theories about teaching and learning which come to inform practice. They may be economically described on a spectrum from transmissive /authoritarian to constructivist /democratic.

While the components of TLRs have been disaggregated for purposes of description and explanation, it is important to note that they are usually in interaction with each other, and are not stable or unchanging. Neither are they associated with a homogenous community. On the contrary, Trowler holds that there may be competing and contested TLRs present in a community, an important distinction from Social Practice Theory where the shared understanding of members is stressed. An assumption of consensus could therefore mask underlying conflicts, especially where only the dominant voices are heard (Trowler and Turner, 2002:230).

### **Applying the TLRs Framework**

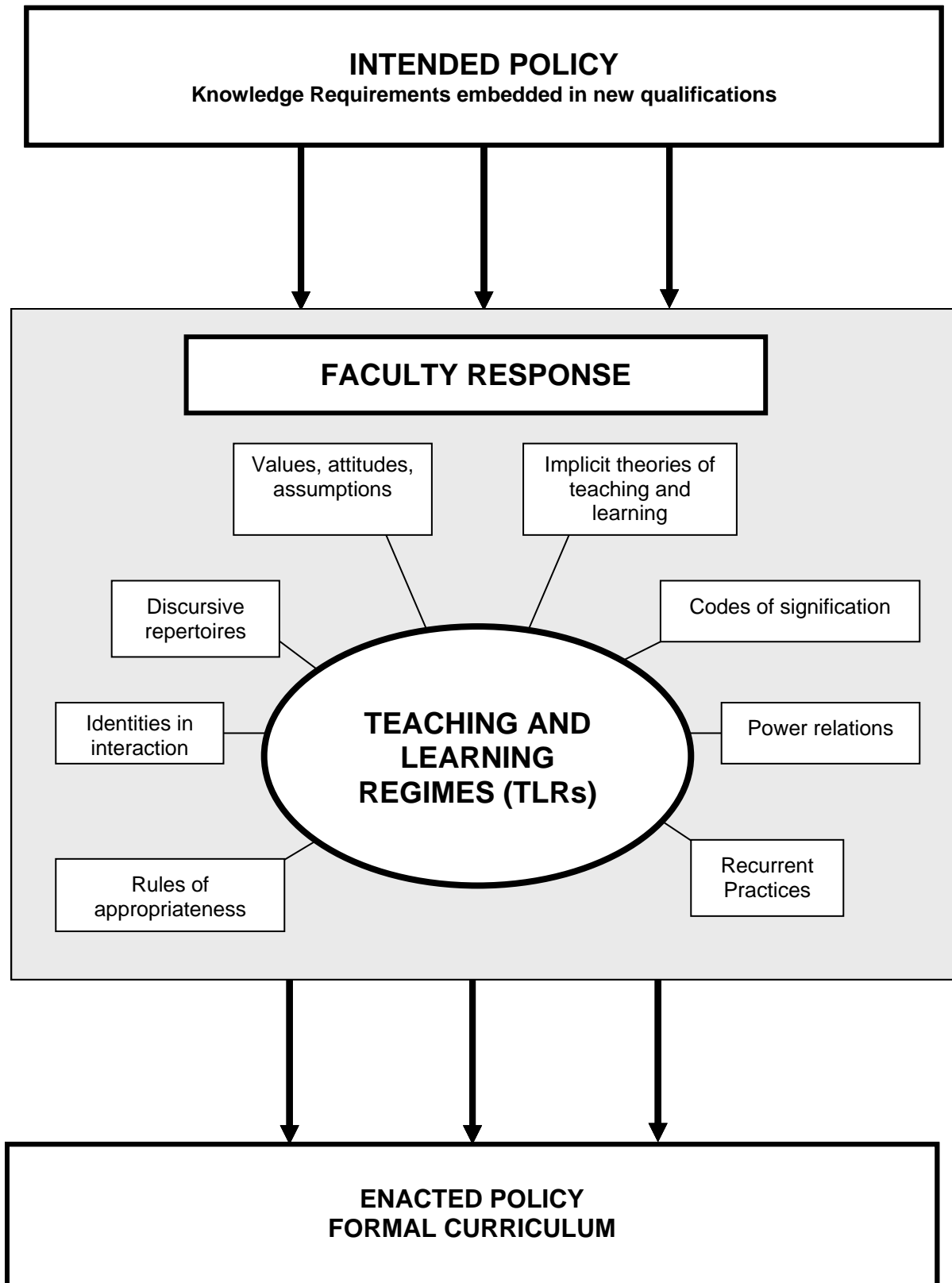
In attempting to answer the central question of my research stated at the outset, I explore the components of TLRs of selected Faculties of Education and the way these are expressed in faculty responses to policy and their curriculum processes. Traditional pedagogies, ideologies, beliefs and frameworks interact in a space characterised by strong academic identities, assumptions of common

purpose, tacit understandings and an unstable education landscape in South Africa at the present time.

Trowler and Cooper's view is that "while (TLRs) are expressed in individual behaviour and assumptions, (they) are primarily socially constructed and located..." (p.222). The explanatory power of the conceptual framework is illustrated in an explorative study of deaf academics in a mixed deaf and hearing community (Trowler and Turner, 2002), where the concept of a 'community of practice' is employed to show the constant interplay between individual and group socialization. These socialisation processes are "predominantly informal, serendipitous and normally invisible to those engaged in them" (ibid.242). Citing Alvesson, Trowler (1999:186) cautions against seeing an organisation's culture as a single hegemonic entity, rather we should see an organization as characterised by a 'multiple cultural configuration at any given time'.

My study examines the pedagogies and ideologies embedded in policy documents on teacher education as an expression of the intentions of policy, and explores how these are mediated by teacher educators in their faculties, to emerge as their enacted formal curricula. This adaptation of TLRs as a conceptual framework for exploring academics' responses, brings the policy element which is not really a feature of Trowler and Cooper's work, into sharper focus for my study. A diagrammatic representation of Trowler's conceptual framework, which I place into Muller's (2003) policy-implementation perspective, follows in Fig.1 below.

Fig.1 Diagram of Conceptual Framework : Teaching and Learning Regimes



The question posed by McLaughlin (1998): “Why are policies not implemented as planned?” and my own inquiry which asks a similar question but from a different angle: “Why do dominant pedagogies in teacher education persist in spite of policy change?” can, I suspect, be fruitfully probed using the above schema. What McLaughlin describes as the ‘implementation problem’ of policy seemed to result from the fact that:

...those responsible for implementation at various levels of the policy system responded in what often seemed quite idiosyncratic, frustratingly unpredictable, if not downright resistant ways. The result was not only program outcomes that fell short of expectations but also enormous variability in what constituted ‘a program’ in diverse settings (1998:70).

In my study, the level of implementation that I examine is that of the teacher educator in Faculties of Education. It is here, I suggest, that policy is interpreted in curricula for the beginning teacher, an interpretation that may in turn affect implementation at the next level, the school. I therefore explore how faculties respond to policy for pre-service teacher education, and what drives their curriculum processes. I argue that Teaching and Learning Regimes can explain how faculty members respond, and are what mediates government policy for teacher education students, so that what emerges as policy implementation might not be fully congruent with what policymakers had intended. I view the TLRs which constitute Faculty responses to policy, as the ‘black box of local practices, beliefs and traditions’, a concept cited by McLaughlin to describe the disconnect between policy ‘inputs’ and policy ‘outputs’ in the Rand Change Agent Study of the 1970s (ibid, p.71).

McLaughlin’s theorizing on the factors that affect teachers’ response to policies aimed at changing classroom practice resonates clearly with my own inquiry. I simply shift the spotlight onto the teacher educators and what affects their responses to policy, and use the TLRs framework as both a lens and an explanatory tool - a multi-focal lens through which to view the context of



education faculty as they construct curricula, and a tool to explain how change happens under the policy conditions to which they are exposed.

Trowler's framework is strongly located in the idea of a 'community' that shapes and defines how academics act and react, which may not be a strong feature of my own study given the fractured nature of education faculties in this context. Barnett (2003) rejects the notion of 'the academic community', holding that "the academic world is composed of a multitude of communities". However, use of the framework is not limited to notably coherent academic units and the authors of it recognize that academic interaction over time may build what resembles a 'community' without exhibiting all associated characteristics. Trowler et al argue that TLRs are enduring because they assume legitimacy by becoming part of the social fabric of the institution. I explore this claim with regard to dominant pedagogies, theories and frameworks in Faculties of Education that appear to persist in spite of substantive and far-reaching government policy interventions. Whether it provides an adequate explanation for how curriculum processes play out in relation to policies will have to be established by the evidence as it unfolds. In the next chapter I proceed to outline my research design and methodology.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### *'Alice's Evidence'*

#### **Introduction**

Scholarship describes the case study method as 'empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context...' (Myers, 1997; Yin, 1994). This description encapsulates succinctly some of the salient features of my study. Given my research interest in exploring how education academics respond to knowledge requirements currently embedded in new policies, and the fact that I wanted to investigate more than one institution, the multiple comparative case study appeared to be the appropriate vehicle for conducting my research.

Arising from my exploratory research interest was a deeper question, namely, *why* certain dominant (privileged) pedagogies tended to persist in education programmes in spite of policies that demand change. By investigating initial teacher preparation programmes in three Faculties of Education, I intended to build an explanation that might cast light on this question as well as elucidate the complexities of faculty curriculum understandings, practices and processes.

#### **Research Assumptions and Propositions**

At the outset of my study I assumed, possibly due to my experience as a teacher and teacher educator in the past, that particular theories, pedagogies and practices are privileged and become dominant in teacher education programmes, and that these pedagogies tend to persist. The nature of these dominant pedagogies, how they had arisen, and why they persisted, would be the substance of my exploratory study.

Following my initial assumptions, I had several propositions that might be ‘tested’ in the course of my research: First, that the knowledge requirements of new teacher qualifications are linked (implicitly or explicitly) to a transformative, constructivist paradigm that is different from the historical positivist tradition typical of teacher education in South Africa prior to 1994. Second, that faculty members’ individual teaching and learning regimes (TLRs) inform the curricula of teacher education programmes at higher education institutions, rather than the demands of policy, and third, that TLRs of academics are so implicitly rooted in traditional education discourses as to be invisible, and thus perpetuate traditional paradigms in spite of the demands of new policy.

### **A Multiple Comparative Case Study**

The three universities in which I conducted my research have very different histories, student populations and characteristics even though they are situated in reasonably close proximity to each other. Institutions include a contact university, historically regarded as a white, liberal, English language institution; an institution created in terms of the pre-1994 dispensation for ‘coloureds’ with a tradition of anti-apartheid activism, and a white, traditionally Afrikaans medium institution. Chapter 5 sketches the contexts of these institutions and their Faculties of Education more fully.

Apartheid policies of separate (but unequal) development created diverse trajectories for racially defined institutions of higher education. Institutions historically labelled as ‘white liberal’, or ‘white Afrikaner’, or ‘ethnic’ (eg. ‘coloured’) typify the separate trajectories of institutions that are found in other provinces in South Africa. I would argue therefore, though wary of forced generalizations, that my case study of three university faculties, while undertaken in one province, affords a glimpse into similarly established institutions in other provinces and raises the kinds of questions that might be asked of them.

The three institutions, all with established teacher education offerings, are sufficiently similar in terms of their education offerings and their experiences of recent policy change (for example, they were not required to merge with colleges of education as in the case of some higher education institutions), to facilitate comparability of their similarities. I worried though, that their experiences of teacher education would not be substantively different and distinct enough for a comparative case study. Recognising this view as a bias arising out of my prior knowledge of education faculties, I decided to keep an open mind and allow the data to speak for itself on matters of similarity or difference.

A new suite of qualifications for teaching was registered by the national Department of Education on the South African National Qualifications Framework in 2001. These qualifications consist of broad exit level outcomes arranged into four major components, namely, competencies relating to fundamental learning, to the subject and content of teaching, to teaching and learning processes and to the school and the profession. My research focused specifically on how competencies relating to teaching and learning processes, that is, how theories, pedagogies and epistemologies are embedded in the outcomes and are interpreted in curricula by academics. Government requirements of publicly employed teachers also have implications for education programmes and curricula, and these are described more fully in Chapter 5.

### **Targeted Respondents**

As my research was a case study of three selected institutions with a clearly defined respondent pool, it was not appropriate to select a sample. The education faculties were relatively small, and I wanted to direct my enquiry to those permanent staff members teaching or managing the pre-service teacher education programmes, of which there were two main qualifications: the Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), a one-year, full-time teaching qualification which followed a three year undergraduate Bachelors degree

programme, and the Bachelor of Education, a four year degree programme which introduces education modules as from the second year of study.

Education faculties in South African universities, variously also called Schools of Education or Departments within faculties, have shrunk in recent years as fiscal constraints and budgetary cuts have taken their toll on permanent staff numbers. Faculties generally employ small numbers of tenured staff in traditionally well-subscribed initial teacher training courses, and have a host of short to medium-term contract staff who teach on a part-time basis. This in itself has associated problems, particularly for long term planning and envisioning of Faculty programmes.

I deliberately restricted my pool of respondents to tenured staff, as I reasoned that their institutional experiences would be more reliable and their participation in Faculty life and curriculum processes assured. In addition, some of the components of the teaching and learning regimes conceptual framework were more applicable to academics engaging together over a long-term period. However, universities have experienced major upheaval since 1994, accompanied by concomitant staff losses and staff turnover. Consequently academics have been more mobile in recent times though they have tended to remain within the university milieu.

The number of potential respondents within each Faculty varied, as the three Faculties varied in size and number of programmes offered, and hence had fewer or more lecturers who taught pre-service courses. However, proportional to the pre-service component in the respective Faculties, they were fairly representative of each Faculty. Responses to my initial overture indicated that approximately one-third of the academics (in each Faculty) were tenured members engaged in initial teacher preparation, with a number of contract staff members being employed on their programmes. Other academics informed me that they were engaged in professional development or research supervision.

I directed my interview request to the relevant persons and all except a few persons who were away or on leave, agreed to be interviewed. Though mindful of confidentiality concerns, I can say that of the staff members interviewed across the three faculties, 10 were professors, 4 were senior lecturers and 8 were lecturers. All had more than 8 years experience in the institution, with some senior staff having been with the institution for more than 20 years. This extensive combined experience inspired confidence in the kind of information that I would be able to gather from this grouping.

### **Main Research Question and Key Questions for Data Collection**

In order to answer my main research question, '*Why do dominant pedagogies in teacher education tend to persist in spite of policy change?*' I derived three key questions against which data could be gathered as follows: What are the dominant pedagogies in the Education Faculty and where do they derive from? How do faculty members understand and make sense of policy directives in teacher education and their implications for curricula? and, What factors influence the selection of knowledge for teacher education curricula? These key questions formed the guiding framework for my research instruments and protocols. Interview questions were clustered under these key questions.

### **Data Collection Strategies and Instruments**

I conveyed my initial request for interviews to the Dean/Head of the Faculty first. In two cases the Deans indicated that they did not have a problem with my request, and that faculty members could choose to participate. In one case I was asked to submit my ethics clearance certificate to the relevant Ethics Committee, which I did and was given permission to proceed. I then obtained e-mail addresses for the relevant faculty teaching on the pre-service programmes and

sent all of them an electronic letter describing my intended research study and requesting a 60-90 minute interview at their convenience.

It was no easy task to fix interview appointments with academic staff who were pressed for time, had classes at various times or were caught up in meetings and Faculty business. That I managed to get close to two hours of interview time I considered quite an accomplishment. All the interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed. Unfortunately three of the recorded interviews were spoiled by machine malfunction or poor sound quality, and I had to rely on my handwritten notes in these instances. I took extensive handwritten notes at each interview and did a post-interview reflection using a brief reflection schedule.

As stated above, my respondents were lecturers, senior lecturers and professors who teach on the pre-service programmes which they also assisted to plan for, were required to design curricula for, and on which they interacted daily with students. Given this highly experienced pool of respondents, I found in my initial pilot interviews that the interview protocol was too tightly framed and felt somewhat stilted and confined. Upon reflection I concluded that the questions were too rigidly constructed and appeared to interrogate the respondents' knowledge of policy, which I felt they might not take kindly to, especially since many of them were aware that I had been an employee of the South African Qualifications Authority previously. Furthermore, the questions seemed to be restricted to the PGCE qualification, while faculty members taught on other pre-service programmes like the B.Educ. as well.

In adjusting the subsequent interviews I decided to keep the questions more open-ended but still within the ambit of the data I desired to elicit, so that lecturers could speak freely rather than be confined to a question-and-answer mode discussion. I re-designed semi-structured interviews with clusters of questions which served as a general guide to the interviews, but gave respondents the space and freedom to speak to issues they felt strongly about

without being inhibited by a constricting interview schedule. Hatton (1997) speaks of this in her own ethnographic research as “opening up broad areas for investigation by means of grand tour questions, rather than utilizing set lists of prepared questions” (p.241). In the course of my ‘grand tour’ questions, I was able to probe for more information on the issues that I needed data on. This approach worked very well in the ensuing interviews.

Interviews, though semi-structured, were clustered into themes derived from my research questions, namely, the basis of curriculum selections by individual academics, articulation of theoretical underpinnings, understandings of pedagogy; Faculty curriculum planning processes, the ‘logic’ of teacher education programmes; faculty understandings and interpretations of policy requirements and terminology, and faculty responses to education policies. These themes gave me insight into ‘what’ the dominant pedagogies are in each Faculty, how they were selected individually and jointly in the Faculty, faculty ‘ways of thinking and doing’, and factors which had impacted on particular curriculum decisions taken. Taken a step further, I was able to identify the components of Teaching and Learning Regimes that would assist me in my analysis of the findings.

The interview protocol covered a range of questions that faculty chose to answer to a lesser or greater degree, given that I did not follow a rigid sequence of questions. The protocol served therefore as a guideline, to ensure that relevant information could be probed for if it did not emerge spontaneously from the respondent’s answers. An exemplar interview protocol is attached as Appendix A.

I also asked for curriculum documents, faculty calendars, readers or texts which would give me some insight into the pedagogies in use, the theories, paradigms and epistemological frameworks that could be discerned. These were available to varying degrees. In many cases ‘formal’ curricula documents were part of the



individual lecturer's personal collections and were not in a public place. Some lecturers sent me follow-up information by electronic mail. This documentary evidence I interrogated using a document analysis questionnaire, so that I could ask the same questions of each text.

In order to understand the curriculum directives in national policy documents that I would ask faculty members to comment on and interpret during my in-depth interviews, I examined the seminal policy texts relevant to teacher education. This was to establish the intentions of the policy documents and the frameworks/paradigms embedded in them. In addition, I needed to determine the overtly stated or covert implications for the design of teacher education curricula. Policy texts included, inter alia, Norms and Standards for Teacher Education (1998, 2000), which sets out broad roles and competencies for teachers; the 'new' suite of under-and postgraduate qualifications (2000), containing nationally endorsed outcomes for teacher education registered by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA); the National Teacher Education Audit (1996); the National Plan for Higher Education (2001), which determines institutional arrangements for universities and technikons; the White Paper (3) on Higher Education transformation (1997) and the ensuing Higher Education Act (1997) which describe broad policy intentions for education; and The Incorporation of Colleges of Education into the Higher Education Sector: A Framework for Implementation (1998). These documents form part of the legislative and policy environment bounding higher education generally and teacher education in particular, which is set out more fully in Chapter Five hereof, and sketches the context within which teacher education curriculum processes occur.

The protocol I used for analyzing relevant policy documents was designed to discern the intentions of government policies and to uncover the curriculum imperatives embedded in such policies, particularly with regard to knowledge requirements. I interrogated the documents for terminology based on assumptions of common understandings of pedagogy and the like. These

assumptions could then be checked against lecturer interpretations of the implications of policies for curricula.

### **Data Coding and Analysis**

Since interviews were semi-structured into clustered questions that were not rigidly sequenced, I had to closely read and re-read transcripts to find the concentrations of responses which would allow me to code the data sensibly. In-depth interviews with lecturers allowed me to understand how curricula are constructed in the institution, and how the knowledge requirements embedded in new teacher qualifications are being interpreted.

A first level of analysis using the Atlas Ti programme for qualitative analysis was undertaken on the transcripts, to build a comprehensive policy portrait of each Faculty of Education in my study. This included an analysis of data on faculty curriculum processes and responses to policy directives. The Atlas ti table appended hereto as Appendix B indicates the first cut at the data, and shows the range and concentration of responses that, through an iterative process, allowed a set of codes to be determined for the data. These codes match fairly well the clusters of questions that were answered in interviews. In this way data could be traced back to the key research questions, and led back to the main research question of this study.

Through an iterative process with the data, I established the following codes after some trial and error:

#### *Pedagogies, theories, frameworks*

What pedagogies, theories and frameworks are espoused by faculty members?  
What theory selections do they make and what do they base their selections on?

This analysis, I reasoned, would give me insight into the dominant pedagogies, theories and frameworks in the Faculty. I could then investigate whether, and how, policy has impacted on selections and curriculum decisions. In terms of TLR analyses, it would also show the discourses, implicit theories and tacit assumptions prevalent in the Faculty.

### *Faculty Curriculum Processes*

How do academics explain their selections of theory and methodology? What curriculum processes do they engage in for the courses they teach? What do they reference their selections against? What prompted any changes in their selections or process? For the TLR analysis, I envisaged that this data would show the 'identities in interaction' during curriculum processes, their 'codes of signification' (what's worthy of time and effort?) and the 'rules of appropriateness' that were applied during such deliberations.

With regard to faculty communal processes, how do curriculum planning and development processes take place in the Faculty? What propels change if and when it occurs? For TLR analyses – are there 'recurrent practices' which are evident from the Faculty's ways of doing? What are the 'power relations' in the Faculty? What discourses on teacher education exist?

### *Faculty views on and responses to policies*

How do faculty members speak about policy? How do they react to requirements of policy at an emotional level? How has the Faculty responded to policy initiatives, whether individually or as a unit? What changes have occurred as a result of policy? What have been the effects on the Faculty of policy in HE and in teacher education? How have faculty members interpreted policy imperatives in order to respond to them?

*Faculty issues which impact on curriculum*

What other 'faculty issues' do academics use to explain how they operate? What are the 'ways of doing' that contribute to faculty culture? This category, I anticipated, could become a 'catch all' for all the factors that impinge on faculty decisions and processes, and might demonstrate additional TLRs/components that make change difficult, or facilitate change.

*University Context and Faculty history*

What aspects of the Faculty's history and context could help to explain perceptions held by academics or ways of doing in the Faculty? How do wider university issues impact on the Education Faculty and its specific needs? Are there aspects of university ways of doing that are mirrored in the Faculty? What broader university issues cited by faculty members might explain some of the processes in the Faculty?

*Views on what is important for teachers to learn*

I asked Faculty members what they thought was essential for the preparation of teachers, whether currently included in their programme or not. This was to establish what faculty members regard as significant and I could then compare this data to the teacher preparation elements embedded in teacher education qualifications. I reasoned that a mismatch between what academics regard as important and what is contained in the policy, could explain why traditions persist largely unchanged.

*Analysis of TLR Components*

A second cut at the data employs the components of Trowler's Teaching and Learning Regimes to achieve more analytical depth with regard to explaining the

research question at the heart of this study. Coding the transcripts according to the TLR components allowed me to make sense of complex, inter-related data on the faculty pedagogies, theories, frameworks, beliefs and academic identities, to name a few examples, in order to synthesise the findings. Appendix C hereto illustrates the concentrations of responses according to this set of codes.

### **Synthesis of the Data**

The output of the first level of data analysis was used to construct a comprehensive portrait of each Faculty consisting of thick description and using supporting extracts of the respondents' own words. The exploratory 'how' question of my study is thus addressed in three narratives that set out faculty understandings, practices and processes in relation to policy and institutional requirements.

In a second, cross-case analysis, I compare the data in terms of TLR components, across the three cases at a deeper, more fine-grained level. In this way I attempt to build an explanation for the more vexing question that asks *why* particular understandings, practices and processes in curricula tend to persist in spite of government policy demands for change.

### **Towards Validity and Reliability**

Validity, reliability and generalisability are concepts better associated with a positivist, 'scientific' frame of reference in research (Janesick, 1994; Winter, 2000). However, this is not to eschew the responsibility of any researcher to present a credible account (ibid; Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994). Terms appropriate to qualitative research and synonymous with the concepts of validity and reliability (which in qualitative research are contingent upon each other), but without the stereotypical associations, are 'believability', 'trustworthiness' and 'integrity', to name a few (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Scholars have also outlined, for

case studies, various ways of enhancing the accuracy and believability of claims made. A pertinent question by Lincoln and Guba (ibid, p.290) asks, “How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?” I have attempted, as far as possible, to adhere to best practice in this regard, in order to pursue the goals of validity and reliability (or their approximation) through a careful and systematic documenting of the research process towards this dissertation.

To begin with, how valid is the construct (i.e. the existence of dominant/privileged pedagogies) on which I develop my thesis? Teacher education scholarship, as amply illustrated by my review of the literature, is not agreed on the knowledge base of teacher education, hence a proliferation of theories, understandings, pedagogies and practices which are substantiated in terms of one or other theoretical standpoint. The prevalence and persistence of dominant pedagogies, the construct on which my exploratory study rests, is thus validated in the research literature: dominant, preferred pedagogies exist because there is no agreed knowledge base of teacher education. This finding is corroborated in my interviews with teacher education academics, where it is clear that a variety of ideas, theories and assumptions abound on the subject of what aspirant teachers are required to know, do and understand. Of course the matter of *why* such dominant pedagogies persist, is the substantive purpose of this enquiry.

Knowledge base in this instance refers to the broad spectrum of teaching and learning theories or pedagogies that a teacher education programme might include. These pedagogies have their origins in the traditional disciplines like sociology, psychology, philosophy which education has historically drawn on to constitute a ‘field’. Here I distinguish my use of the term ‘knowledge base’ from the subject matter domains that teachers could choose to teach i.e. their particular subject specialism, as some writers also use ‘discipline’ to refer to this. I refer to teacher’s specific subject specialisms as ‘subject matter knowledge’.

Least personal bias influence my reportage in this dissertation, I need also to state upfront my awareness of my personal beliefs about teaching and the state of teacher education throughout the conduct of this research. Having been immersed in the field of education for some time, as a teacher, researcher and university lecturer, I was acutely aware of my own theoretical biases as well as my general knowledge of the institutions in my study. I was therefore careful to avoid these and other presumptions from clouding my interpretation of interviews and my analysis of the responses. Maintaining a 'neutral' stance, and an awareness of where personal biases threatened to encroach on my interpretations of the data were, insofar as it is possible in research of this nature, as much as I was able to accomplish in the pursuit of validity.

How appropriate was the conceptual framework employed for my study? I used the model of Trowler and Cooper (2002) to analyse faculty responses to the demands of new qualifications, in attempting to explain my main research question. Components of a teaching and learning regime (TLR), as outlined earlier, are often 'invisible' aspects of the organizational culture of the faculty. By specifically investigating "identities in interaction, power relations, codes of signification, tacit assumptions, rules of appropriateness, recurrent practices, discursive repertoires, implicit theories of teaching and learning" (p.225), patterns of collective responses could be built. Semi-structured interviews contributed to a rich and textured description of the teaching and learning regimes of individuals.

The conceptual framework I selected is in my view encompassing enough to capture critical internal facets of academic life in an education faculty. There are, no doubt, many other factors that impact on curriculum selection, as other researchers have demonstrated (Hill, 2003; Muller, 2003). While Trowler's model was not a blueprint for conducting my research, it assisted in the synthesis of my investigation and towards developing an explanation for why pedagogies tend to persist.

I attempted to elicit peer comment on my findings as they emerged. This allowed misinterpretations to be corrected while the writing up was in process. However, it must be stated that evidence received in oral interviews is almost inevitably subject to imperfections: respondents could suffer lapses of memory or their recollections could be shaped in ways imperceptible to them. While the fact that I was known to many of my respondents afforded me easier access to them, it might also have influenced them to respond reflexively in ways they believed I expected them to. Yet, in spite of its shortcomings interviews are, "...a way of finding out what others think and feel about their worlds...to reconstruct events in which you did not participate" (Dilley, 2004:129 citing Rubin, 1995). In my study though, I was able to balance versions of events by using the documentary evidence where possible and comparing respondent accounts with each other where applicable. In this regard an adequate 'audit trail' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was maintained throughout my writing process.

My document and curricula analyses yielded critical data that illustrated the theories embedded in new qualifications, and how they were being translated into education curricula. They served also at times as a triangulating device to corroborate (or open to question) the information that I obtained in individual interviews. Interviews similarly provided a counterpoint view of how the new requirements were being interpreted and understood by faculty members, and the dominant theories of education, implicit or explicit, they applied in curricula. The use of multiple sources of complementary data is accepted in qualitative research as important for the reliability of the study (Yin, 1994; Stake, 1995).

With regard to internal validity, I have already pointed out that the status and experience of the academics interviewed, inspired confidence in their ability to comment accurately and authoritatively on teacher education in their faculties. These academics by and large were representative of pre-service teacher educators in their institutions. Their views and understandings reflected an in-



depth knowledge of their field and their institution, and contributed, I would argue, towards the 'trustworthiness' of the data on which I base my claims. Extracts from the data have been extensively inserted into faculty narratives to support researcher interpretations.

While external validity (and generalisability) is not expressly sought in case study research, external validity has been enhanced in my study through the use of the multiple case study methodology, where the findings appear to be reinforced in each case. The same research protocol was observed in each case, as regards procedures for data gathering and analysis. Three comprehensive parallel narratives followed a consistent reporting structure that allowed patterns of responses to emerge and comparisons to be made in the cross-case analysis.

### **Ethical Considerations and the Role of the Researcher**

This was an area of my research project that was a major concern for me. From my first contact with education faculty members, many of whom were known to me through my work in the education arena over a long period of time, I sensed that I was welcomed, in most instances, as a familiar face and voice. I was keenly aware that some respondents had agreed to be interviewed because I had been a colleague, albeit not a contemporary one, but I had been 'one of them', and still moved in the same circles.

It became clear from my interviews that faculty trusted my discretion and would be cautious about making certain statements if they thought they would be quoted by name. They also took for granted the fact that I understood the conditions under which they worked, and that I appreciated the university 'culture'. It was to this empathetic and sympathetic ear that they were prepared to discuss issues that they considered sensitive.

Transcripts contain numerous references to confidentiality and the request that individuals not be quoted. Often information was of a personal and sensitive nature, not intended for public dissemination. I assured respondents of confidentiality and anonymity was assured through the use of pseudonyms, so that remarks would not be attributed to particular names or institutions in the dissertation. Institutions were also coded as University X, Y or Z throughout the writing process. However, it is inevitable, given the defining characters of the institutions selected and the relatively small pool of respondents, that institutions and individuals might be recognised without their names being mentioned. The small world of teacher education academia means that colleagues usually know or know of each other. I have endeavoured to be sensitive to this as far as possible, for example by limiting the biographical data I provide for respondents, so as not to violate the trust that was placed in me. Other than this, I do not foresee other ethical issues arising.

### **Limitations of this Research**

Any social research, I would argue, has its limitations since the study of the human condition offers few absolutes and the study of teacher education is no exception. Labaree (2000) puts it succinctly as follows, “The technology of teaching is anything but certain, and teachers must learn to live with chronic uncertainty as an essential component of their professional practice” (p.232). By extension, teacher education, as preparation for that technology, is similarly uncertain, and that mediating context between teacher education policy and its implementation in Faculties of Education, the education faculty, is filled with ‘imponderables’.

What I have chosen to do is a case study that focuses on three selected Faculties of Education, and a ‘slice’ of their offerings, the pre-service curricula and the academics who teach these programmes. While findings are illuminatory, they do not claim to speak for all university teacher education faculties, or for all

programme levels. In this sense I make no claims of generalisability to other research populations, even if such a goal were appropriate within the research paradigm in which I conduct my research. Qualitative inquiry makes no apology for the fact that it attempts to “pick up the pieces of the unquantifiable, personal, in depth, descriptive and social aspects of the world” (Winter, 2000, p.7). Case study research, by definition, concerns itself with meanings and experiences in a localized culture, and it is the theories generated by the findings that are best generalisable (ibid). As Ensor (2001) points out, the restructuring of university curricula is an ongoing process and changes are being made fairly rapidly – my study can only therefore capture a particular phase at a particular moment. This by no means implies that that this study is not significant, as the section below indicates.

Reliability (concerned with a study’s replicability) in the quantitative research sense could be argued, within that paradigm, to be a shortcoming of qualitative case study methodology. However, as with validity, replicability cannot be defined only in positivist terms and qualitative researchers have argued for a redefinition of these terms, or their substitution. Certainly the same research procedures in a case study, carefully documented, could be replicated, however, one would not expect in a similar study, even where the research population and other circumstances were nearly the same, to generate the same theory. Given the illuminatory power of case study inquiry however, a researcher would be aware of possible avenues to explore and further questions to ask.

My account of pre-service teacher education in three Faculties of Education is based on a combination of documentary and oral sources of evidence. I have already noted the possible shortcomings of oral interview evidence (Yin, 1994). However, it is through the frank interviews in my study that we are given a window onto the world of teacher education academics. “A basic assumption of in-depth interviewing research”, says Seidman (1998, p.4), “is that the meaning people make of their experience affects the way they carry out that

experience...interviewing allows us to put behaviour in context and provide access to understanding their action”.

### **Significance of this Study**

Within the limitations outlined above, my study has attempted to advance knowledge and develop theory by providing insights into the following key areas, stated succinctly as:

- a) how change happens under conditions of government/official requirements i.e. within a centralized legal and policy context;
- b) how change happens under conditions of university faculty autonomy i.e. within the prevailing political context and
- c) how change happens under conditions of institutional change i.e. within the institutional context of the Education Faculty.

The next section of this dissertation, Chapter Five, sketches the unfolding teacher education scenario since 1994 in the light of political and policy developments that impacted severely upon higher education generally, and public university Faculties of Education in particular. It would be difficult to interpret or make meaning of the data gathered from faculty without reference to the historical context of teacher education in South Africa, and the impact of education policies at every level of the education and training system after 1994.

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE CONTEXT OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

### *'The Looking-Glass House'*

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to locate the Faculties of Education in my study within their contexts, outside of which their stories would have no meaning. It is almost impossible to describe teacher education in South Africa today without reference to its origins, and where it is going, a journey inextricably tied to the history of education in South Africa and government policy intentions for its future. In the interests of relevance and brevity I have chosen as cornerstones for this chapter, policy initiatives that have resulted in major structural changes in higher education since 1994, the major curriculum interventions which could affect teacher education (for example schools policy) and interventions which directly affect what Faculties of Education offer (Norms and Standards for Educators, national qualifications for teachers). These areas of policy innovation that are strongly interwoven and inter-dependent, are the backdrop against which faculty have been conducting teacher education, and within which their experiences may be situated.

I intend to elaborate on key policy moments that have had a bearing on teacher education in public institutions and which sketch the context for curriculum processes that have unfolded in the three Faculties of Education in my study. However, South African scholars (Parker, 2003; Jansen and Taylor 2003; Muller 2003; Moore 2003; Kallaway, 2002; Cross et al, 2002; Chisholm, 2002; Jansen, 2002; Samuel, 2002; Ensor 2002; Crouch, 2001; Sayed and Jansen 2001; Taylor 2001; Harley et al, 2000; Hartshorne, 1999; Jansen and Christie, 1999; Skinner, 1999; Sedibe 1998; Enslin and Pendlebury 1998; De Clercq 1997) have written extensively on various aspects of education policy development in the country to date, and I will draw on their analyses and commentary as appropriate.

The foundations upon which teacher education currently stands in South Africa has had a lengthy and arduous construction since the 1910 constitution that split responsibility for teacher education between the national and the provincial governments. This 'dual' control system was to be the genesis of the 'binary divide' in teacher education where higher education under national control trained teachers for high schools, and education colleges under provincial control trained primary school teachers. With the advent of 'apartheid' policies in 1948 teacher education colleges mushroomed as separate development entities to train their 'own' teachers in ethnically delineated parts of the country. By 1994 there were 120 colleges governed by 19 different Departments and 32 universities and technikons offering teacher education (Parker, 2003; Hofmeyr and Hall, 1995).

There have been, subsequent to 1994, several defining government policy interventions which affect teacher education in public institutions, namely, those which re-drew the map of higher education resulting in structural changes to universities and technikons (the NCHE Report, 1996; Education White Paper 3, 1997; The Higher Education Act, 1997; The Incorporation of Colleges of Education in the Higher Education Sector, 1998) and those which inform matters of education curricula in schools and the training of teachers (the SAQA Act, 1995; Curriculum 2005 and its revision, 1997 and 2000; Norms and Standards for Educators 1998, 2000; Criteria for the Evaluation of Educator Qualifications, new national teacher qualifications 2001). Then there are consequences, intended and unintended, arising from the rollout of these interventions and evident from a host of wider university issues (Fraser et al, 2005; Sieborger and Quick, 2002; Jansen and Taylor, 2003; Muller, 2003; Hill, 2003; Samuel, 2002; Lewin et al, 2002), which have also impacted on how Faculties of Education have responded to government policy.

## **Structural Changes in Higher Education after 1994**

The new democratic government in 1994 faced an array of internal reconstruction challenges across a vast spectrum of needs in addition to the pressures of rejoining an international community and globalising imperatives. In education it had to deal with the disastrous effects of separate development, wastage, the inefficiency of bloated bureaucracies, and an eroded culture of learning to mention a few. Sayed and Jansen (2001:251) point out that the new education officials “had the stamp of political legitimacy but lacked the necessary knowledge base and skills to manage the system”. Given the inexperience of officials and the enormity of the task that lay before them, what has been accomplished in the past twelve years is probably laudable at best and understandable at worst.

Once the protracted process of creating a single Ministry of Education and nine provincial Departments had been completed, the policy machinery had to be set in motion to replace racist legislation with laws in line with a democratic constitution. Thus began a flurry of policymaking that, in education, saw the SAQA Act (1995) establish a National Qualifications Framework for all qualifications, the South African Schools Act (1996) and a National Commission report on Higher Education (1996), which kicked off a major overhaul at every level of the system. The National Commission on Higher Education report (1996) described the structural and governance changes envisaged by the Ministry, in pursuit of a ‘single, co-ordinated system’ of higher education committed to principles of equity, democratisation, development, quality, effectiveness, efficiency, academic freedom and institutional autonomy. With regard to the latter principle, the Report noted that:

it stands to reason that neither academic freedom nor institutional autonomy occurs in an absolute or unqualified form. There are other relevant principles and factors that impinge on the scope of academic freedom and the exercise of institutional autonomy. Individual academics and institutions are for instance always accountable to a broader community of interested parties for the quality, ethical implications and efficiency of their academic work (p.73).

In the run-up to a new Act for higher education, the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (1997) stated that: “Higher education must be transformed to redress past inequalities, serve a new social order, meet pressing national needs and respond to new realities and opportunities”. This tall order was accompanied by a ‘corporate’ terminology that was becoming part of the new discourse in higher education and all policy generally, and indicative of globalisation changes taking place in higher education across the world (Ensor, 2002).

In terms of the 1996 Education Policy Act, teacher education became a direct responsibility of the Minister of Education under the National Department of Education. At this stage the 150 or so teacher education institutions were all offering various teacher education programmes to vast numbers of students in the absence of any information regarding supply and demand. New education policies affecting schools curricula and teacher education programmes, would attempt to regulate the form and substance of teacher education.

### **Programme and Curricula Policy Interventions**

During the 1970’s and 1980’s, in spite of resistance politics at several universities, Fundamental Pedagogics, couched in a language of ‘education as science’, was largely the basis for teacher education curricula. Education within this paradigm,



inculcated generations of Afrikaans, Coloured and African schoolteachers with religious and cultural beliefs aimed at creating docile citizens effectively sealed off from the influence of mainstream contemporary debates at a time of dramatic educational change elsewhere” (Kallaway, 2002, p.11).

In an effort to centralize the ‘core’ elements of teacher education curricula under the national Department of Education and establish values appropriate to a new democracy, a Committee on Teacher Education Policy (COTEP)<sup>5</sup> set out Norms and Standards for Educators in 1996, and a Teacher Audit was initiated to determine patterns of supply and demand in the country. The 1996 Constitution had made all tertiary education a national competence, and teacher education, declared part of higher education under the Higher Education Act (1997) was thus put under national control.

Education colleges, which had functioned in fairly insular ways with a strongly practice-oriented culture compared with university teacher education which was seen as too ‘theoretical, were thus part of the higher education system. What in 1994 had been a sector of 200 000 teacher education students, 80 000 of which were in 120 colleges, became by the year 2000, 110 000 students with only 15 000 students in 50 colleges, as provinces, instructed to rationalise their colleges, imposed quotas and capped new registrations. Teacher education bursaries that had been freely available in colleges, some would argue indiscriminately so, were summarily ceased. Between 1999 and July 2000 the Minister took steps to incorporate the remaining colleges into universities and technikons, a protracted process due to the employer obligations with which the Minister had to comply.

Over the same period between 1996 and 2000, teacher education providers were asked to revise their existing programmes in accordance with the 1996 Norms

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<sup>5</sup> The Committee on Teacher Education Policy was a sub-committee of the Heads of Education Committee, a representative body of provincial education heads under the Ministry of Education. COTEP was tasked in 1995, among its other advisory functions, with developing Norms and Standards for teacher education. (Parker, 2002)

and Standards and the 'Green Book', and submit them to the Committee on Teacher Education Policy (COTEP) (Parker 2003). For many faculty members this was the first 'new' policy intervention that precipitated a response in restructuring the teacher education curricula and programmes, as they relate in Chapter Six hereafter.

### **Systemic Changes in Higher Education**

In 2000 new Norms and Standards were gazetted and the national Department of Education, now recognised as the employer of all public school teachers, published the Criteria for Evaluation of Educator Qualifications that set out qualifications to be recognised for employment as a teacher, and which would attract government subsidy funding for public providers. Teacher education was further regulated by the formation of the South African Council of Educators (SACE) in 1996 and the SACE Act in 2000 that gave the Council three key functions – registration of teachers, discipline (in terms of a Code of Conduct) and development.

In terms of the new focus on 'quality' and accountability, a Council on Higher Education (CHE) was established under the Higher Education Act of 1997 and was tasked with setting up a permanent Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) to 'perform the quality promotion and quality assurance functions of the CHE' (1997:7). The CHE was also tasked with informing the Minister on the 'size and shape' of higher education and produced a report in 2000 highlighting the financial crises within which some institutions found themselves mired. Among other recommendations, the 'size and shape' document as it came to be known, suggested a single higher education system with institutions differentiated by their level of programmes offered and broad streams. An approved 'programme and qualification mix' would in the future also determine the offerings of each institution. This report provided the impetus for large-scale mergers in public higher education, reducing thirty six institutions of higher education to twenty one

universities and technikons in processes that at times were to become somewhat messy and acrimonious.

Given equity concerns, the inherited inefficiencies of the system and a commitment by government, through its GEAR<sup>6</sup> strategy after 1996 to more stringent fiscal policies, the high budget allocations to teacher salaries next came under the spotlight. The key to lowering unit costs would be 'increasing teacher-pupil ratios, increasing teacher workload, decreasing the number of substitutes utilised and redeploying staff in excess' (Sayed and Jansen, 2001). In 1996 the Ministry therefore embarked on a teacher 'rationalisation and redeployment' programme in an attempt to address the over-supply in urban schools and the shortages in rural schools. While this reduced the teaching corps from about 420 000 in 1994 to about 375000 in 2000 (Parker, 2003), this would not bring financial relief. As is well described by Jansen and Taylor (2003), a number of unintended consequences arose from this intervention, not least of which was the destabilisation of a profession at a crucial time when a new curriculum was about to be launched. Equalising teacher pupil ratios (which meant employing 40 000-60 000 new teachers countrywide), achieving parity in teachers' salaries (which meant upward adjustment toward former white department scales and of female teachers) and the cost of voluntary severance packages (which excess teachers who refused to be redeployed to areas of need, were offered), did not have the belt-tightening effect that had been envisaged.

While such visible government attacks on the vestiges of apartheid were essential to building political integrity at a broader level, the profession at a grassroots level was in turmoil. Some of the best and most experienced teachers took the opportunity to opt out when voluntary severance packages were offered, and widespread discontent with the idea of redeployment and imposed

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<sup>6</sup> The Growth, Employment and Reconstruction Strategy was a set of economic policies adopted by the new government after 1996 to focus on participation in global markets and human resource development. Broadly speaking, this marked a shift in policy from the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of the incoming democratic government in 1994, which was based on principles of redress, equity and poverty alleviation. The move was widely criticised by social activists. (Kallaway, 2002; Kraak, 2002)

employment lists created an impression of teaching as an unstable and unattractive occupation. In 1997 the Minister abolished the national redeployment project and allowed provinces to decide on teacher numbers based on their budgets. Into this boiling cauldron which was education in 1996, was dropped the announcement of a new Outcomes Based Education (OBE) curriculum for schools, to be rolled out in 1998, with eight integrated learning areas and sixty six specific outcomes. The demoralisation of teachers through the rationalisation process and the general gloom over education did not bode well for this 'ambitious' new curriculum that would be "critically dependent on the motivation and capacity of teachers" (ibid, p.34).

### **The Influence of a New Curriculum for Schools on Teacher Education**

Curriculum 2005 as it came to be known presented a departure from the language and practices which teachers had been trained in and which they were familiar with. The national department of education embarked on a campaign to induct teachers into the new curriculum, relying on a heavily criticised 'cascade approach' which ultimately caused more confusion than confidence. The strongly constructivist mode of teaching and learning (misunderstood to mean 'anything goes') and mystifying terminology gave teachers the mistaken impression that it was 'out with the old and in with the new' and that they had to discard all they knew about teaching and learning.

When classroom evidence of the implementation difficulties of OBE came to light in a Review report requested by the then Minister (Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999), this resulted in a slimmer and simpler version of the curriculum, known as the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) in 2002. Other academics responded to the new curriculum in a volume (Jansen and Christie, 1999) which interrogated outcomes based education, its concepts, implementation and effects on learning, and which rendered strongly worded critique. Taylor (2000) refers to Curriculum 2005 as a 'radical constructivism' and provides an insightful view on

what he terms the 'limits of constructivism'. He argues that, given the impoverished knowledge resources of many of our children, access to learning or 'epistemology' cannot be gained from superficial classroom discussions of everyday knowledge (p.7). 'School knowledge' he maintains, has specific knowledge structures, concepts and skills that cannot be learned by osmosis, they have to be 'taught' sequentially and deliberately.

In the light of the serious implementation problems with the new curriculum, it was not surprising that the Department of Education decided that its priority between 2001 and 2003 should be the in-service upgrading of approximately 80 000 teachers not yet professionally qualified and the numbers of under-qualified teachers who required re-training (Parker, 2003). This intention was also to have implications for providers of teacher education as they swung their attention from pre-service preparation to in-service training.

The foregoing describes in some detail the environment within which Faculties of Education were quietly going about their business while institutional restructuring was under way and the landscape was becoming increasingly unfamiliar. I have tried to limit my commentary to only those policies which were to have significant implications for later curriculum development in public teacher education, but it must be noted that there were many other important policy initiatives taking place at the same time at every level of the education system, for schools, technical colleges (now Further Education Colleges), private education providers and so on, which cannot be included in this chapter. I want to continue now with a closer look at policy that would affect the form and substance of teacher education in Faculties of Education, particularly the Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) and new qualifications for teachers registered on the National Qualifications Framework (2001).

## **The Influence of Norms and Standards for Educators on Teacher Education**

The Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE) first published by COTEP in 1996 and revised in 2000, is in line with the outcomes based approach adopted by the Department of Education for new school curricula. The NSE provides detailed descriptions of what a competent educator can demonstrate and sets out seven roles an educator must be able to perform, that of learning mediator; interpreter and designer of learning programmes; leader, administrator and manager; scholar, researcher and lifelong learner; assessor; community, citizen and pastoral role; and learning area or subject specialist. The Department of Education has pointed out that these roles together constitute the knowledge, skills and values that a professional educator must possess. It is anticipated that this general picture allows sufficient flexibility for providers to design their own programmes.

In a provocative paper entitled 'What is Teachers' Work?' Morrow (2005) critiques the roles and competences set out in the Norms and Standards for Educators as a 'muddling' of the 'formal' and 'material' elements of the concept of teaching:

It is attempting to do at least two logically distinct things at the same time – to specify the requirements of an employee of the Department of Education...and to provide a formal definition of teaching...as if there is no significant difference between them. (p.6)

While the material elements of teaching are context bound and the formal element not, the Norms and Standards document defines teaching in terms of the former yet fails to acknowledge the reality of the contexts in which teachers in South Africa will teach. Using a definition of teaching as offered by the NSE to design teacher education programmes is to undermine the status of teaching as a profession, and to limit teachers' creativity and initiative when confronted by adverse 'material' conditions. Morrow (2005) contends that,

unless we think of teacher education programmes as providing teachers with a deeper understanding of some field of knowledge – deeper than the current school curriculum – we are setting them up for frustration and failure in their professional careers (p.12).

Unfortunately, and pertinent to my study, ‘some field of knowledge’ is precisely where things come undone, since how this is to be determined and by whom, is not entirely clear. However, this analysis of the problem posed by potentially disparate interpretations of the ‘unrealistic’ expectations of policies and their far-reaching implications, provides another angle on the ‘causes of policy failure’ debate.

The NSE served as guidelines for qualifications to be generated through the Standards Generating Body for educators in schooling, a structure of the new South African Qualifications Authority. The national outcomes which emerged in new pre-service teacher qualifications like the PGCE and the B.Ed., grounded in the new democratic discourse and constructivist paradigm, was intended to bring some coherence to the proliferation of teacher education curricula across the widely differing contexts within which education was taking place. In addition, the barrage of policy demands confronting teachers had a ‘wash-back’ effect on teacher training institutions as Faculties of Education tried to win students in a climate of declining enrolments, competition in a more ‘open’ market and negative associations with teachers and teaching. A lecturer in Faculty Y in my study describes how, in these uncertain times for higher education, his Faculty changed from between 800-1000 pre-service education students in the early nineties, to only about 100 students in 1999. This drop was accompanied by rationalisation of staff and a ‘spectacular’ shift in the Faculty focus to in-service education which within three years had yielded 2200 students doing what he called ‘bits and pieces’ in the Faculty, and funded by ‘soft’ money. The new trend to cope with this in the absence of sufficient full-time staff members, was to employ a variety of short-term lecturers to teach the wide range of disciplines required, an issue I will return to in a later analysis herein.

In 1998 Enslin and Pendlebury wrote with regard to 'education transformation' "important though they are, formal changes cannot guarantee better practice, and where policymakers take little account of the context and agents of implementation, policy may impede rather than enable transformation" (p.42). While this statement was made in reference to schools and teachers as the agents of implementation, it could apply equally well to Faculties of Education and teacher educators. The statement too, anticipated many of the subsequent revisions to earlier government policy because of precisely the charge being made.

In the university, formal changes were proceeding apace as teacher educators battled to make sense of what they were being required to do, and to decide on the most strategic ways in which to accomplish that. To ignore the demands on teachers as a new curriculum was being rolled out would render Faculties of Education impotent in the eyes of students – to pander to policy prescriptions would mean time-consuming curriculum changes that were not clearly marked out in any case. How faculty responded and what informed their response is the subject of my later analysis.

To understand the curriculum implications of salient policy for teacher education programmes, which many of the respondents in my study cited as the NSE (1998 and 2000) and the teacher qualification outcomes, it is instructive to turn to the interpretations of academics responding to the documents at the time. Barasa and Mattson (1998) studied inter alia, the COTEP Norms and Standards for Educators, in terms of its strengths and weaknesses (pp49-52). As strengths they noted that it 'did not prescribe curriculum content or pedagogical processes' and presented a holistic view of the educator, recognising too the complexity of teaching and learning. Weaknesses cited were the taken-for-granted assumptions that 'competences operationalise the roles they describe' and that the values espoused are 'universal and uncontested'. They noted too, a tension between the regulatory and development functions of the policies, since the



competencies were so extensive that it was unlikely that a beginning (or practising) teacher would acquire them all without effective in-service training and development, a matter which was raised again in relation to the competences required to be demonstrated by student teachers, in a study by Sieborger and Quick (2002).

In their study, Sieborger and Quick (2002) found that it was indeed unlikely that the teaching practice component of their PGCE programme would be able to assess the required competences listed in the qualification. They argue that the reasons for this are that there are simply too many competences for each outcome, that all of them cannot be prescriptive when providers cannot ensure an enabling environment in which they can take place, and that the vital link between standards setting and curriculum development has to be acknowledged (p.8-9). Fraser et al (ibid) point out that the intention of the seven roles with 132 competencies listed in the Norms and Standards for Educators is to “encourage providers to develop programmes that integrate the competencies in meaningful ways and focus on the development of practitioners who can function in authentic contexts” (p.237). However, they question how programmes are to be designed so that they deliver the depth and breadth of the knowledge, skills and abilities which define a teacher’s competence and moreover, how such depth and breadth is to be determined in the first instance.

### **The Influence of Wider University Debates on Knowledge in Curricula**

It must be stated that changes to education in South Africa were taking place within a wider global context where debates about outcomes and the nature and value of knowledge in higher education were the subjects of international academic debate. Ensor’s (2002) review of the relevant literature refutes Scott (1984) and Gibbons’ (2000) suggestion that universities are moving to inter-disciplinarity, since, she asserts, the literature provided little empirical evidence of this. Ensor’s investigation into curriculum design and how ‘bits of knowledge’

(citing Bernstein) are put together to form a curriculum, found that even where universities have collapsed traditional departments, curricula is still organised on a strong disciplinary basis.

Moore (2000) argues that curriculum change is historically about social change because debates about the curriculum are often “proxy for broader debates and conflicts around societal changes” (p.19). Certainly in South Africa this has patently been the case, with ambitious education policy premised on the assumption that changing the curriculum must lead to changed social and political goals set by government. This is evidenced by the detailed prefacing of all education policy with persuasive reasons for curriculum change based on social goals of equity, democracy, citizenship and the like. The move to programmes in higher education which are more vocationally purpose-driven than previous single disciplines, is rationalised by the need to be responsive to the needs of society and the moral obligation to assist with correcting economic imbalances.

Moore questions whether participants in education who have, over time, developed an identity embedded in different social goals and practices, have sufficient social support systems to sustain pedagogic practices associated with the new goals. Academics are now being required to work in programme teams rather than as individuals, across discipline boundaries. However, faculties have long functioned as fairly insular and ‘inward looking’ within their own disciplines. Moore (2003) questions what will hold these groups of academics together across their competing interests and suggests that the “policy is silent on the new organisational form to constitute the epistemic community for a multi-disciplinary programme” (p84).

Muller (2003) asserts that universities only make ‘rhetorical’ accommodations rather than substantive changes to calls for interdisciplinary curricula, especially where the discipline and the disciplinary traditions are strong (p108). This, he

holds, is because knowledge ‘forms’ as in the traditional disciplines, are essentially stable and “can only be stably changed at the sharp end of innovation and genuine knowledge growth, not by trying to teach a premature integration of disciplines” (p.110). It may be useful, in the course of my own research, to return to this explanation in relation to how faculties of education have integrated the various education disciplines within their ‘integrated’ teacher education programmes in a Faculty where discipline departments have always functioned separately and in their own interests. Ensor (1998) had, in her earlier study, noted high levels of conflict as a result of difficulties in resolving opposing principles for the construction of curriculum, tied to academic identities defined by disciplinarity.

Moore and Young (2001) argue that knowledge is essentially social in character and derives from particular sets of codes and values pursued systematically within specialist communities and networks that sustain these. In education faculties, traditional education disciplines had their own specialist communities, and faculty functioned in their own discipline ‘towers’. The loss of discipline-based departments within Faculties of Education disconnected faculty from their ‘epistemic networks’ (ibid). Even within stronger ‘single’ discipline faculties, there is limited ideological consensus and Moore finds knowledge production ‘curiously individualised’. Faculty members in my study were without exception concerned about building an ‘epistemic community’ which could establish Education as discipline in its own right, and questioned how such an initiative could be sustained on a long term basis. They argued that a community of teacher educators focused on teacher preparation was sorely needed to build a credible, respected profession that could bring coherence to teacher education.

### **Situating Education Faculties Within their Historical and Policy Context**

The potential external or exogenous forces as Muller (2003) refers to them, on teacher education curricula in diverse Faculties of Education, as can be gleaned from the broad policy brush-strokes provided in this Chapter, are wide-ranging. Globalisation influences, government policy interventions resulting in changed university and Faculty structures, new school curricula, new norms and standards for teachers, new national qualifications – the array of policy directives is vast. Muller notes that accounts of change in South Africa are largely ascribed to policy, and take a typically rationalist view of a relationship between policy and changed practice, which underestimates, in his view, the effect of endogenous factors. He claims that “we cannot conclude that the policy caused the change; secondly we don’t know whether the national policy as represented by the policy documents influenced the new programmes of the various institutions...” (p.109). My research is geared towards finding out, from the three faculties in my study, what caused curriculum change and what has been the role of policy in the unfolding events in their faculties.

I have already referred to the much debated Norms and Standards, and argument about how prescriptive or merely informative they may be for teacher education programmes. What is abundantly clear is that they cannot be taken at face value and that they have to be viewed in conjunction with the new teacher qualifications. The latter have also been interrogated by academics, especially with regard to the validity of demonstrated performance in situations that cannot be indicative of a teacher’s performance in an authentic context. Some faculties are cautious about how new qualifications can be interpreted and what their outcomes imply for programmes.

With regard to school qualifications, a workshop report of the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (2004) reveals that many faculties were conflicted about the extent to which school curricula should influence their

programmes. A participant at the workshop argued that teacher education should be seen as a discipline in its own right rather than it simply being the vehicle for familiarising beginning teachers with the school curricula. His rationale was that school curricula could change while the enterprise of teaching should prepare teachers to deliver any curriculum. It was therefore desirable to 'nurture creative teachers who could improvise'. On the other hand, it appears that some faculties were concerned that, in the absence of notably school-based curricula, potential teacher education students might see their programme as irrelevant and poor preparation for teaching.

The Ministerial Committee workshop report (2004) also gives a fascinating glimpse into the range of views on the composition of initial teacher education. One of the questions to the assembled group of education faculty from across the country's public institutions was, "what is the role of theory in professional practice and what conception of theory should be embodied in an initial teacher education programme?" Answers ranged from theory being used as a tool to understand practice, to theory understood to be generalised knowledge. It was clear from the gathering that there were very few common understandings about the 'discipline' that is teacher education.

The meeting expressed the constraints on teacher education to be the following: the side-lining of pre-service training because of the pressure for in-service re-training; lack of bursaries for pre-service candidates; lack of clarity about demand for and employability of new teachers; poor image and status of teaching; pressure on management by market forces. In my study, a faculty member related how all research in the university had been channelled into the focus areas of the institution in service of 'national objectives', but the exercise in moral rationality was, in his view, only about aligning the university with lucrative research funding. Another faculty member held that in spite of the rhetoric about coherent system-building, he perceived far more competition among universities than before, and less congruence because, "competition means you stick with

what you know best or what you are good at and where you've built a reputation – that gives you an advantage over others”.

## **Synthesis**

This chapter has illustrated the complexity of the political and policy landscape that left Faculties of Education suddenly exposed to a relentless stream of demands from all quarters. Sweeping democratic reform brought with it changing student and staff profiles, funding constraints, interim public registration of all programmes, un-asked for responsibility for all public teacher education as training colleges were closed, new schools curricula, a 'market' consciousness and a new quality assurance regime, to name but a few exogenous factors. How were faculties to respond to this dazzling array of opportunities, or challenges, depending on how one viewed them? I would argue that the volume and quick succession of environmental stimuli due to a government 'policy onslaught' left a traditionally slow and cumbersome higher education system momentarily stunned. As external pressures began to make themselves felt, moving from the central university administration through Faculty structures and finally to programmes and curricula, academics were compelled to respond. Hard questions were being asked by all and sundry – questions of curriculum purpose, outcomes, outputs and the like – how were faculty to respond, and with what rationale/s?

Currently the public system employs about 450000 teachers. With an annual attrition rate estimated to be 5%, the system would need to produce about 17500 new teachers annually. In 2003 there were only 5000 new graduates, most of them white female teachers. (Conference on Higher Education: Rapporteur's Notes, April 2004). These are the stark realities which Faculties of Education face, and with which they feel ill equipped to cope. Successive policy initiatives have attempted to put the architecture in place for teacher education to take place in service of new social goals, but, Parker (2003), cautions that,

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 (p.42).

Chapter Six, which follows, sets out findings that detail how 'procedural implementation and development of teacher education' is being undertaken in three Faculties of Education. The chapter describes how the development of new curricula for teacher education has been proceeding within the political and policy context elucidated above, and how academics have responded to the curriculum directives embedded in teacher education policies.

## CHAPTER SIX

### *'Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There'*

#### **Introduction**

This chapter describes the findings in each of the three university Faculties of Education in turn, as case studies of teacher education in which expressions of knowledge choices and policy dispositions are 'revealed'. I analyse the interview data and curriculum documents gathered from faculty members in terms of the key questions that drive the 'big' research question, and the assumptions, at the heart of this research.

In order to explain why dominant pedagogies tend to persist in spite of policy change, I had to understand first, what currently informs the pedagogies in the Faculty of Education and where they derive from, and second, how faculty members understand and respond to the knowledge requirements embedded in government policy on curriculum. This combination of questions, I reasoned, would reveal the basis of faculty curriculum selections for teacher education programmes, and whether faculty interpretations of the knowledge requirements in government policies have had any bearing on curriculum selections and construction. At the same time, inquiry into faculty curriculum processes and their engagement with government curriculum policy would apprise me of the 'endogenous' factors, internal to the Faculty, that might explain what happens in the space between the intentions of policymakers and the expression of those intentions in curricula for teacher education.

As explained in Chapter Four, I used 'grand tour' questions to allow respondents to speak freely to issues they felt strongly about, within the framework of the required information relating to the research questions. The emergent themes discerned from a collation of the interviews, are used to tell the story of each education faculty. Themes covered individual pedagogies, theories, frameworks



and beliefs; curriculum processes; faculty responses to government policy imperatives for curriculum, and broader environmental issues that impact on pre-service teacher education in the Faculty.

I begin with the historical university milieu within which each Faculty is located, situated within the broader context described in Chapter Five; then I provide an overview of the main features of the pre-service programme and content as reflected in the formal curriculum documents. I proceed to describe the findings from an analysis of the interview transcripts within each of the themes identified. Each Faculty 'story' is followed by a summation which re-states the research questions again succinctly and draws together some of the main findings in respect of them. Pseudonyms have been used to afford the anonymity that certain faculty members desired.

My narrative, told in three parts, thus attempts to systematically build a policy portrait of each Faculty, viewed against the backdrop of policy and higher education developments as set out in Chapter Five. The three-part narrative is followed by a brief overall reflection on the chapter, before I launch into Chapter Seven that follows. Chapter Seven undertakes a cross-case synthesis using the Teaching and Learning Regimes framework, to examine the question at the heart of this enquiry, *'Why do dominant pedagogies in teacher education tend to persist in spite of policy change?'*

## **Part I: The Story of Faculty X**

### **The University Milieu**

University X, established in 1829 as a school for boys that offered some tertiary studies, evolved into a university between 1880 and 1900. In terms of the separate development legislation in force at the time, black students could only attend this university on the basis of a special dispensation if they could prove that the course they intended to do was not offered at an institution created for their particular race group. From personal experience during the 1980s, many students seeking access in the Humanities at University X applied to do a course called Comparative African Government and Law (popularly known as CAGAL), which was not offered at the so-called 'ethnic' universities. University X was widely regarded as a liberal, elitist English speaking institution during the apartheid years. In spite of its traditional conservatism, there were pockets of student resistance to the racist policies of the day. The late 1980s and 1990s however saw a deliberate transformation agenda to meet the challenges anticipated by a new democratic government.

In its mission statement, University X strives to be, among other ambitions, an 'outstanding teaching and research institution which encourages research-based teaching, learning and critical enquiry'. The university also professes a commitment to 'academic freedom, critical scholarship, rational and creative thought, and free enquiry' (University Transformation Forum, 1996). In terms of the streaming of public university 'types' for purposes of differentiation and funding, the University in its mission shows its orientation towards research, considered to be a high status activity for universities in the new higher education landscape.

When the university undertook a restructuring process in the 1990s in response to new policies in higher education, the Faculty of Education became a School of

Education within the Faculty of Humanities and thereby lost its Faculty status as well as its own buildings on a separate part of the campus. The School is now housed within the Faculty of Humanities, a natural home one would assume for education's disciplinary roots in the social sciences at a time when 'inter- and trans-disciplinary' discourses are in vogue in universities (Kraak, 2000). However, the Graduate School of Education, as it is called, still exists as an entity within the Humanities Faculty and largely comprises most of its original education academics. Within this environment, the idea of teacher education as 'vocational' training does not appear to sit comfortably. Faculty members were careful to distinguish between the more 'technical' model of teacher preparation that they did not engage in, and the 'educating of a professional' that they subscribed to.

I refer to the School of Education as Faculty X throughout my writing on it for purposes of consistency with the other two Faculties I describe.

### **Pre-Service Education in the Faculty**

Faculty X offers only the Post Graduate Certificate in Education or PGCE as pre-service teacher education, a one-year certificate programme for students who have completed an undergraduate degree with major courses in a field in which they wish to teach. Students enter the School of Education having spent three years in the University and having acquired, it is assumed, sufficient subject matter knowledge to become a teacher. The PGCE programme is therefore largely an orientation to the teaching profession, students having done little or no 'teacher training' prior to this year. Alan, a senior lecturer in the Faculty, explains how the Faculty sees the PGCE:

...and when they come here, the whole point of the year that they spend here with us is to get them to reflect critically on who they are. And so this is a very formative year in those terms and we're assuming that this process of formation will put them in a position to realise professionally

what kind of teacher it is that they, what we want them to be...all that we're doing is helping them to step into their professional identities with a lot more self-consciousness (Alan X<sup>7</sup>).

This absorption with the 'self' appears to be a key element of the discourse in the Faculty. While references to the context of education are made, it is always in relation to the teacher as a person and how he or she engages with that reality intellectually.

Streams within the PGCE include preparation for teaching the Intermediate and Senior phases (GET Grades 4-9) or the Senior and FET phase (Grades 7-12) of schooling. Subject specialism/s which students have obtained as majors in their undergraduate degree, provide the bases for the Method courses that seek to equip students with skills for teaching those subjects.

The Faculty conducted an internal review of the PGCE programme in 1998 as a precursor to phasing out the B.Primary Education, a four-year undergraduate teaching degree aimed at teaching in the primary school phase. In line with the orientation of the University towards higher degree and research work, the Faculty would only offer the Postgraduate Certificate in Education. They were required, in terms of the National Qualifications Framework regulations, to put forward to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) their programmes for interim registration between 1998-2000. At this stage they deliberated on how to restructure the Higher Diploma in Education (HDE) that was to become the PGCE. The main problem with the HDE at the time was that it was too cluttered with too many little pieces to be done in a very short time. It was decided then to put all the small courses under three large 'umbrellas'. In order to logically conceptualise a new programme structure, they turned to the old Blue Book which contained the earlier set of Norms and Standards for Educators, where there seemed to be a convenient division into two sections, Education Theory and Professional Studies. The PGCE is still organised in this way as it is

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<sup>7</sup> I use the letters X, Y and Z after the pseudonym to denote the institution the respondent is affiliated to.

considered to be close enough to the 'new' Norms and Standards (2000). As a senior lecturer observed: "...the Faculty is a conservative place which doesn't welcome too much change". The two divisions seemed to comfortably accommodate the traditional smaller courses and since the Blue Book did not specify the weighting of the components required, there was a fair amount of flexibility that could be retained.

The question of whether teacher education is a discipline within its own right (with a reasonably stable knowledge base), or simply an eclectic selection of knowledge for enabling one to teach) must have been part of the debates at this time. The separation of the theoretical education 'disciplines' into the 'Education Theory' part of the course and the more 'applied' subject methods into 'Professional Studies' seems to imply acceptance of the latter. Without an overarching logic for this arrangement, it is difficult to see what might bring coherence to the programme, and there arises a natural divide between 'theory' and 'practice' which might not only be an organizational convenience, but a deeper philosophical expression of how knowledge is understood.

Prior to the restructuring of the HDE, the Faculty programmes were organised in terms of the 'Green Book' that set out government policy for teaching under the rubric of Fundamental Pedagogics. There were distinct discipline areas such as Philosophy of Education, Education Psychology, Didactics and History of Education, managed by the Chairs of the disciplines. John, a senior academic who holds a long institutional memory of Faculty X, remarked that the recognised disciplines found expression in the new PGCE programme because faculty who taught modules defended available spaces based in those disciplines. However, faculty tended to vie for spaces while the student numbers were small – if the numbers were too large for comfort, argument for the continued inclusion of one or other module became less vociferous. John observed that some faculty members are of the opinion that the Faculty should move away from pre-service

programmes altogether in favour of in-service and higher degree work that builds the research profile of the Faculty.

With restructuring and the collapse of education 'discipline' departments in the Faculty, traditional disciplinary knowledges simply became part of the Education Theory course, with some parts being taken up in the Professional Studies section. John explains how the programme structure changed, in terms of the Faculty restructuring process: "we took a conscious decision to say disciplines need to exist, education is discipline based". Celia, a younger academic appointed in the late 1990s, too recalls the thinking at the time:

...we said to ourselves, okay, we cannot get away from discipline-based knowledge and so we decided that we will have a course that still maintains that discipline knowledge and then we'll have a course that looks at current issues in education. And so we have a course called Education and a course called Professional Studies (Celia X).

Questions about 'what' this 'discipline base' is and why it is so significant, do not seem to arise. Lecturers appear to rely on their own and a common understanding of what the discipline base consists of.

Ironically, the new qualification specification for the PGCE is still perceived as containing 'bits and pieces' as there appears to be a 'wider spread' of offerings in the new programme. Alan relates why this happened:

It's this professional studies element that came in and forced us to virtually halve what we do in education. And so...a lot of what they would have done in that sociology, psychology, has migrated into, parts of it into professional studies. So in the professional studies the students now do a whole range of things...(Alan X)

Professional Studies, for example, had to include HIV/Aids, Literacy, Diversity Studies and other topical issues of relevance to the school context in South Africa, in terms of the policy requirements. Alan notes that,

...because of the spreading in relation to what the Department has wanted, we've had to slim down how much we put into the programme...now it is a very much bittier programme (Alan X).

While the length of the PGCE programme as a one-year certificate is not regarded as ideal for training a professional teacher, John accepts that as the reality or as he puts it,

that's the nature of the beast – it's not spoken about a lot but we have a sense that you don't get far enough with people in one year at all... but you have no option so you do the best you can (John X).

Celia concurred, citing a query that her student had raised, and her response:

...why on earth do we try to condense everything in ten months, or less than ten months actually. I said that's the policy, what else could I say? (Celia X)

While the teacher preparation part of the programme is considered by some to be too contracted, Alan's view is that teachers do need the longer subject preparation model as we need to send out the best 'educated' people who have the necessary intellectual and creative resources. He explains:

...the kind of capital that these people require...I think that we short-change the children in schools when we imagine that we can send them the worst educated people in our system...and its partly I think why our education system is so poor at the moment, that the teachers out there are unable to cope with the challenge...they don't have the imaginative or intellectual resources to be able to cope with the fact that life and times have changed (Alan X).

What is meant by 'educated' here, appears to be strong subject matter knowledge rather than pedagogical 'how to'. However, for Celia the time is too short to prepare students properly with the necessary practical classroom preparation:

But in a way it almost feels as if we need this discussion about balancing it, because the students have been feeling very unprepared with going into classrooms...the time they've spent with us before they can go in, has diminished...so they barely get inducted into the game and they have to go on teaching practice and they are in panic.

Within the Faculty, there is the familiar tension between what is seen as sufficient 'academic' preparation for teachers and the 'tools' that students need for the workplace. While this is more often voiced by students, (who want the toolkit'), it also plays out in understated tensions between faculty members.

Celia reported that academic expectations of students are high, which conflicts with student expectations that teacher education is easy and undemanding:

We've had students who are just not coping with the expectations. Firstly, because I think their notion of what teaching would bring, they didn't expect or anticipate hard work. Because everybody thinks you just cruise through. And the world out there gives them this view that teaching is easy and it's not something that needs mental engagement (Celia X).

This situation has not been helped by a changing student population after 1994, with many more students entering University X seemingly less well prepared for higher education as they exit the school system. Students who enter the PGCE also come from a wider range of disciplines than were accepted before, where they may have experienced different kinds of academic demands:

The students are finding it very difficult to cope with essay writing for example, because a lot of them haven't written. And reading academic text is something that the students struggle with (ibid).

In addition to unrealistic student expectations, there are differing perceptions in the Faculty about entry-level teacher education per se, and its relative importance compared to other activities like higher degree programmes and research:



And I have to defend the PGCE quite a lot because its not what some colleagues deem the most important thing that they do there...so PGCE is like the step-child in a way...what we have been arguing is making sure that they see it as the beginning of an academic trajectory for people (ibid).

It is noteworthy that Celia feels it necessary to justify the PGCE to her colleagues in terms of it being the start of an academic pathway for students and thereby more 'acceptable' rather than a complete and satisfactory qualification in its own right. Somehow the impression is conveyed that the PGCE does not quite measure up intellectually. It is possible that this might be related to a view of teacher education as not having a sufficiently robust intellectual base in the academy.

In sum, pre-service education in Faculty X appears to be premised on a generally accepted knowledge base, located in the Education Theory component of the programme, and having distinct roots in the traditional discipline departments/domains which existed prior to the restructuring of the Faculty along programmatic lines as suggested by policies after 1994. Dominant discourses within the still-separate discipline domains, remain largely undisturbed and have little to do with the elements of the Professional Studies component, although it is acknowledged that there is no doubt 'theory' embedded in the practical 'method' courses which deal with the teaching of subject matter content.

The next section gives a snapshot picture of the pre-service preparation which graduate students engage in and shows how the formal curriculum has been constructed.

### **A Broad Overview of the Pre-Service Curriculum**

When asked what the basis for the organisation of the PGCE was, and how faculty arrived at the various parts to be included, Celia responded that there had

been discussion about “how we position ourselves ideologically as educators who want to make a difference”, and the “principles that would make a good teacher”, rather than classroom recipes.

The restructured PGCE programme contains eight modules across the two large divisions Education Theory and Professional Studies. The Education Theory component is stated as a broadly based study of issues related to education and schooling in South Africa and draws on the relevant education disciplines – History, Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology and Curriculum Theory. The programme has a fairly conventional arrangement of courses and has no central theme from which the various pieces hang besides the un-stated understanding of what it means to be a ‘good teacher’.

In learning theory and child development theory which are essentially a distillation of the traditional education psychology discipline, grand theories like behaviorism, social learning theory, psycho-social development, attachment theory and constructivism are dealt with and grand theorists include Piaget, Vygotsky, Smith, Rowe, Bruner, Skinner, Pavlov, Bandura, Erikson, Bronfenbrenner. Some contemporary researchers and writers are also included and the educational implications of these theories are explored together with case studies for understanding human development.

Education Policy provides students with an overview of current and emerging policies relating to teachers’ work, with a focus on implications for teachers as professionals. The course reader comprises a contemporary and South African selection of writers on teachers’ work, identity and purposes of education as problematised by policy. Analyses of current state policy documents like the Norms and Standards document by South African and international academics are included in the reader, for example, Shalem and Slonimsky, Judyth Sachs, Nixon, Hoadley, Martin, McKeown. Assessment required is an essay on teacher identity as projected in SA policy documents.

Curriculum theory examines key issues and dilemmas in curriculum construction in SA, particularly school curriculum and critical debates around that. Questions asked include the basis for knowledge selection and organisation in the school curriculum and the relationship between school knowledge and everyday life.

Sociology of Education looks at the process of becoming a teacher and the reproduction of cultural, social, economic and political structures and traditions of society. The course also investigates taken for granted assumptions about education and schooling.

History of Education is dealt with through interpretive renditions of the past as characterised by texts and works of fiction that narrate a particular role and view of the teacher through the ages. Short stories, novels, biographies and poems that have the teacher as their subject, are read and discussed during the course. It is not considered to be a 'conventional' approach to the teaching of this course.

What is apparent from the theory selected, is that the disciplinary traditions continue to exist in spite of the new names assigned to theoretical components of the programme. Alan explains how this happened:

Once the discipline boundaries were gone, some parts of the disciplines migrated into the professional studies component of the course, so students are exposed to a range of theoretical pieces from out of the disciplines (Alan X).

A second reason for ensuring that the theory parts of the programme within particular education disciplines continued, was that academic identity is seen to be tied to one's own training in a discipline – loss of the discipline from the programme would dislocate academics:

What people teach is closely aligned to who they are in the profession that is, their training as sociologists, philosophers, education psychologists and so on...its so intimately attached to their identity...closely aligned to who they think they are in the profession (Celia X).

The other major component of the PGCE programme, Professional Studies comprises three broad strands: teachers and classrooms, current issues in education and language and learning. The goal is to provide students with an understanding of the complex nature of teaching and learning, and to provide strategies to enable them to engage in ways that encourage reflection and reflexive practices. The portfolio required at the end of the course as a final assessment product, is stated to be a reflection on all the learning that has taken place in the course. Celia provides a glimpse into the rationale that accompanied the restructured programme:

...they've got to understand the field of education which is in the education module. And then we said, they've got to understand that schools and learners and teachers and communities ...all influence education...and those current issues go from HIV/Aids to inclusive education, to resourcing classrooms, computer literacy, and OBE...the third component that's compulsory for everybody is school experience (Celia X).

She understands the 'field' of education to be contained in the Education Theory module, that is, the one dealing with education disciplines, while current issues and contexts of education are all lumped into the 'other' professional studies component.

The outcomes of the professional studies course are stated in language that appears closely aligned to that used in government policy documents. Policy derived language such as 'demonstrate understanding', 'analysing and interpreting', 'critically reflect', understanding reading and writing as lifelong processes', are used to give students an overview of the course expectations.

Teaching Practice is regarded as a key element of professional studies and here students are required to keep a journal to monitor their own professional growth and reflect on their experience in schools.

A module on OBE and Resources deals with OBE and theoretical debates around education policy in South Africa, the national qualifications framework and related structures. OBE as school policy is looked at critically in terms of problems with its implementation, method of delivery, preparation of in-service teachers and so on. Included is a short section on using the library and internet resources to design worksheets and do web based research.

Current issues in education includes dealing with classroom diversity, the impact of HIV/Aids and other topical matters which potentially affect teachers and teaching like abuse in and out of school, inclusive education, barriers to learning and so on. Readings include American, British and a few South African writers on these topics.

A module on 'Thinking Teachers' has a concentrated focus on teachers as human beings – how they think about themselves and what they do, their assumptions about their reality. The course interrogates teaching and knowing, and examines what a curriculum for human beings might entail, rather than, the document states, convey abstract ideas on teaching. Readings include writers such as Brookfield, Smith, Greene, Harrington, Pugh, Hicks, Bowers and Flinders. The intention is to get students to examine their own personalities as teachers and the impact they make on the learning situation. Here the introspective, individual focus that characterises the course generally is again fore-grounded.

Some teaching techniques are briefly addressed in a section on Methods and Styles of teaching – the theoretical background for methods and styles of education and conclusions from research and best practice. Teaching strategies

for questioning, whole class, group teaching, visual text teaching are, inter alia, addressed. The method courses, according to a faculty member, are intentionally taught in very different ways to expose students to different ways of learning and pedagogy. Modelling as a strategy for teaching methodologies is accepted in the programme.

Assessment in professional studies is closely linked to school observation and experience, and tasks are geared towards students basing the assignment on their particular exposure to a school or community. The major project for the course is a research essay which tries to bring together the student's performance as a teacher and in which critical reflection on this is demonstrated in the light of central debates about teaching and learning as dealt with in the programme as a whole:

...we try to make them bring together the theory and practice...so its very much a reflective piece of work that has to include an academic component so that they pull together what they've learned in the course for the year (Celia X).

The above then is a description of the formal curriculum as set out in Faculty curriculum documents for students. How have faculty conceptualised the programme and on what basis have they made curriculum selections? In the following parts of the story, I draw on the interview data to show the pedagogies, theories, frameworks and beliefs which have been articulated, the curriculum processes which have been engaged in, and Faculty responses to curriculum imperatives embedded in government teacher education policy.

### **Dominant Theories, Pedagogies, Frameworks and Beliefs in Faculty X**

In Faculty X there exists an 'un-stated' understanding of what good teaching is, which will be conveyed to the student through his/her 'critical conversation' with

the course material. It is not about the ‘mechanics’ of being a good teacher in the classroom, as Celia explains:

The first thing I will say to my students when I see them at the beginning of the year is that we don’t teach you how to teach, we teach you about teaching...and along the way you pick up tips and ideas because they do method courses...but the primary discourse is not about how to be a good mechanical teacher in the classroom (Celia X).

It is acknowledged that ‘some’ theory is important for students to understand the field of practice, but that as education is dynamic and the field is constantly changing, the aim is to teach the student how to engage with knowledge rather than being fixated on pieces of knowledge as if they are unchanging. How ‘some’ theory was arrived at and why that in itself was treated as unchanging had not really been considered, it was just ‘the way things are’. Celia reasons that:

content in our discipline as educators or teachers is produced at such rates that you can’t privilege particular pieces of knowledge. But if you can teach students to think about how that knowledge reproduces particular things...the student can make informed decisions, then I think we’re winning (ibid).

Alan agrees with this view:

...our preference would be to produce a learning teacher rather than a teacher on its own, a technician in that sense (Alan X).

However, he acknowledges that this approach is not always welcomed by the students, who have expectations that the course is not too intellectually challenging, and should provide technologies for teaching. According to Alan,

...we have been for years in a conversation with our students around what it means to be a professional...some of them are very unhappy, they want that toolkit, that box. And it is a tension that we’re having to work with all the time (ibid).

Faculty members grappled with the idea that teacher education ought to have an identifiable knowledge base in spite of them referring often to ‘knowledge’ that they clearly considered to be essential for understanding teaching. The term ‘professional’, from the comments made on this, was interpreted to be an intellectually competent individual who has the skills to make choices and decisions according to the demands of the situation. ‘Professional’ was not further qualified (within a field, for example). I pointed out that much of the literature also associates the term with an identifiable knowledge base that, faculty thought, would not find agreement due to ‘ideological differences’. Teacher education as an ‘entity’ was seen as desirable though, because,

...we still, I guess in terms of knowledge, still understand that there is some knowledge that students need to get a handle on, that makes them understand education as a field of practice (Celia X).

However, the issue of ‘what’ knowledge is important for teaching, is difficult because, she continues, “content in terms of discrete bits of knowledge sometimes, it’s a tricky one...I mean, I know some colleagues are still fixated on Piaget and they haven’t even moved to Vygotsky or...” (ibid.). The suggestion is that colleagues ‘should’ be moving to Vygotsky, but why this might be necessary is not clear.

Celia comments on a conference convened by a Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education which she attended in 2004, where an attempt was made to give teacher educators exposure to programmes in other institutions. With regard to teacher education having a common knowledge base she says it’s,

...very difficult because ideologically people come from such different places...there were about 60 of us around the room and...people were just way back in the 60’s (Celia X).

The reference to the 1960s was meant to imply a time when Fundamental Pedagogics was the dominant paradigm and teacher preparation was mostly



classroom based and 'technicist'. The fact that some of the participants in the workshop were still steeped in this ideology was taken as an example of how agreement on a knowledge base for teacher education would be quite impossible.

Since education has to engage with the current debates, it is felt that the content has to change often, although this did not appear to be the case, certainly in the traditional education theory part of the course. Theories are based on the context students will confront as teachers but theory must also be applied thoughtfully and critically, as education has to correct misconceptions created by the policy. As contexts within the province differ greatly though, it is not clear what context would be taken as the 'norm', or what factors are taken to be constitutive of a context.

Mia, a young academic in the Faculty, explains how teachers, through incorrect training in her view, have misinterpreted what the concept of 'student-centred learning' is about. She says,

If a teacher responds contingently, that's student centred but the teacher is still actually in control. But that control is kind of flexible in my view, that the teacher will listen to a student's interruptions, and will tailor that with his/her pedagogy, to meet that. ...I've heard some strange stories about how it is about learners determining their own learning...(Mia X)

Pedagogy can therefore, in her view, always only be used flexibly, as the teacher has to be prepared to deal 'contingently' with what arises in the classroom. Theory can oftentimes be applied incorrectly, as traditional theories get misinterpreted she says, the work of Piaget for example, caused by "...some people who write stuff, who misappropriate Piaget in terms of education". Teacher education theory according to her has to be a blend of classical and current theories based on research. Lecturers have a 'tacit' understanding of what's important for students to learn and the general understanding is that

education is about 'process' rather than content, and this should drive their selections.

Lecturers also use their own personal theories of education as in 'teach by example' and 'the best practices are better than the best theories', which Vincent, an academic with many years of school-teaching, and teacher-training experience, says are preferred above lecturing students. Vincent reported that he worked on 'instinct' rather than theory and that his instincts were usually, according to the students, correct. He believes that the only way to train teachers is to put them in a real classroom situation with real children and to allow the students to then deduce the theory from that situation. He explains:

...so immediately you are working in a real situation with real children. Then out of that we can pull the theory of how to teach....in such a way that 90% of the children can get 90% of the answers correct within half an hour.

He cited this as an example of 'mastery learning' but insisted that it was not about 'outcomes' (as in school policy), but about 'outputs' since in schools, learning only had to be 'based on outcomes' (his interpretation of OBE policy) which he thought was rather useless.

The emphasis on process learning as opposed to content was mentioned often, and the idea that students could learn by being exposed to 'modelling' of various methodologies in their lectures, rather than being given 'recipes' by which to teach. It was also suggested that more of the current debates on teacher education have to be included so that students are aware of what new research is being produced, and faculty have to ensure they engage with this constantly.

Vincent believes that student teachers need to be shown positive role models of other successful teachers, rather than be lectured about what is desired. He contends:

So when I lecture, there is nothing negative in my theory, I am not interested in lecturing about the negative effects of gender differences or cultural differences or anything else, I take a successful black female student and say, this is where she is, she is on the world map...my theory is very simple, there are no problems in education, there are only solutions (Vincent X).

He expressed what he termed a 'radical' idea, which was that student teachers should be treated and paid as full professionals from the beginning of their training and throughout until they are qualified. In his own experience,

That's how I was trained. I was treated as a full professional. And that is why I am still in teaching. I love teaching (ibid).

His view is that student teachers need to publish and be encouraged to share their ideas, that is, they need to focus on what their outputs are.

In order to produce excellent teachers, Faculties also need to have the best lecturers involved in the training of teachers, as Vincent explains:

Well you handpick your lecturers for a start. I really don't want somebody with a PhD who is almost inaudible or invisible...so you must hand pick your staff. But then you reward your staff (Vincent X).

In fact, the view was expressed that given the university calendar that is not conducive to the kind of training teachers need, maybe the university is not the best place to train teachers who need to be immersed in schools and curriculum activity. An interesting question posed in this regard was, "...how do you train teachers for the first six weeks of the year when the lecturers are not here?" While Vincent has been in university education faculties for many years, he appears sceptical about the role that universities can play in delivering teacher education and is scathing about the way he sees teacher education being conducted.

Given the individualist, critical and self-referencing pedagogies, beliefs and theoretical frameworks espoused and in use in the Faculty, I take a look at how faculty go about designing curricula for their courses in the next section. What do faculty members base their curriculum selections on?

### **Curriculum Processes in Faculty X**

Alan reported that knowledge selections change frequently depending on who is teaching the course, as lecturers tend to teach according to their own interests. Alan refers to the previous lecturer who taught the course he now teaches, and remarks of her approach:

...she taught it for a while and she taught it from a particular point of view. I teach it now, I've been teaching them from my own interests...and someone else...would probably do something completely different (Alan X).

When asked how another Faculty might teach the same course and what it might contain, Alan said he often used the external examiner's comments as an indication of what other courses might look like. There were many references by other lecturers to external moderation as providing a benchmark for particular courses but they cited their own background, experience and insights as bases for their own curriculum selections. As there was no prescription in the policy (or the Faculty) of particular texts, knowledge for their courses could be drawn from a wide variety of sources.

Celia reflected on her arrival in the faculty as a newly appointed academic who had to make curriculum decisions for her course, and that she found the responsibility almost overwhelming. There was no existing body of knowledge and she therefore had to create one. She undertook this by basing her course on what previous lecturers had done and then doing lots of reading, but reported

that she always felt a 'bit unsure' as to whether she was doing the right thing. She says:

...I spoke to the previous people, people who had run the course...so the first year I tried to model what people had said and then realised it is not working for me. I just read and read and I spoke to people. But I kept feeling that I was not doing the right thing (Celia X).

The issue of academic freedom is taken seriously in the faculty and lecturers are not dictated to by the Head of Department. Lecturers have independence in their curriculum decisions and are free to choose how they would want to deliver their course. This culture is taken for granted as Celia confirms in her own experience:

...because institutions like X are very individualistic. There was no moment when we spoke as a group. And everybody made this assumption that she is coming to this place, she knows how to play the game...and universities are not places where you question your colleagues...where you go and ask for help, no. You know, you just know (ibid).

John concurs with this view:

...this department takes seriously its academic space. A head of department wouldn't suggest to somebody to do a particular course. A head of department would ask what a lecturer is planning to do (John X).

John takes into account what 'works' with students – student demands and their likes. When asked what his selections are based on, he said: "it gets back to the independence of lecturers...freedom to choose – the other part is being influenced by what works...evaluations of courses are taken reasonably seriously..."

Nobody is told what to cover and their understanding is that selections have to be made because the potential field of education is so wide everything would not be able to be included anyway. Lecturers therefore make decisions about what

students need to know because, "...nobody can cover all of it anyway, some do some things, others do something else".

Vincent described his course as one which gives students as real an experience of teaching as possible, even in the theory contact time which should not be a 'telling' but rather a 'showing or doing'. He believes that, "the worst way of training teachers is to lecture at them. So if I give 3 lectures in the year the students are lucky". He believes too, that one's curriculum repertoire is built by sharing ideas with students because those ideas come back later in improved form so that both student and lecturer benefits. In his words,

two years on so many teachers come back and say, I've taken your idea and here is a new angle on it. And now I put it back into my lesson two years later, in improved form. So I'll have half a dozen new ideas a day and I just share them because they come back richer to me in the next few years (Vincent X).

Individuals, it would appear, have a range of motivating factors for what they put into their own courses. However, I also explored how, as a Faculty, academics together engage and agree or disagree about curriculum issues. How did curriculum change happen in the Faculty and what prompted this?

In the Faculty, the curriculum depended largely on who was available to teach a particular component, and their expertise, because they would teach to that. Disciplinary boundaries were considered to be porous and the faculty moved across those to integrate the curriculum. Alan says of the Faculty planning at the time,

We also took a pragmatic decision some years ago that we would stay inside of those large boundaries (of policy) but that we would play around in them...we developed this very integrated curriculum between education History, Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy...(Alan X).

Celia recalls the initial Faculty discussions as well:

In 97/98 we spent days and days looking at our structure and arguing for things that needed to be put in and arguing for things that needed to be taken out. Things that people had been doing for fifteen to twenty years...(Celia X)

Later in the interview she refers to the motivation for the initial Faculty curriculum processes:

Well, partly because we realised that a new thing was happening in curriculum...secondly ...our student profile was changing. Thirdly our faculty profile was changing. So there were things coming from a variety of places that forced us to change. But we definitely sat for days and days and at the end of the year, we sat and we'd revise (ibid).

Students enter the PGCE program with strong subject matter knowledge, having completed a three-year Bachelor's programme, and the Certificate is therefore a 'top-up' career preparation to their academic achievement. The education programme attempts to get them to reflect critically on their place in education – the course is not 'recipe' or technologies driven. As Alan explains:

This programme here is focused very much on this pretty intense encounter with self. A lot of the courses, a lot of the sociology, a lot of the history and a lot of the psychology is getting them to think about their relationship with this space in which they find themselves...what we would argue is that when our students leave here, hopefully they'll have the capacity to be able to engage critically within that space that they go into (Alan X).

There is an emphasis on self-reflection rather than the conveying of a set of given content, which appears to be accepted by faculty generally. Students tend to arrive with expectations of obtaining a 'toolkit' for teaching, but the aim of the course according to faculty, is to produce a 'learning person', not a technician. The contention by some faculty is that if students have a strong subject matter base, they don't need too much technology for teaching.

Lecturers make individual decisions as to what to teach, but do collaborate from time to time, there being no directives from Faculty management in this regard, as Alan says, “people tend to operate individually, there are some links, most people work in isolation, not really academic groupings...” In response to a question about whether faculty selections were ever questioned in a Faculty curriculum process, Alan replied that that would only happen if there was a complaint by a student. Celia adds her view on the issue of autonomy:

...the thing about institutions of higher education and the way in which they understood what they were doing, made them believe they could autonomously decide what they wanted to teach. Also, it depended on the expertise of the faculty, to shape the curriculum (Celia X).

Pressed about the kind of curriculum process the Faculty engaged in, Alan responded:

We have a process where we try to get people to sit around the table, at least once a year, where they talk about what they teach. So there's a broad give and take, you do this, that's interesting, maybe I'll do a little more of that. So, there's that kind of trading (Alan X).

There does not appear to be an ongoing process of curriculum revision since it was said, this might lead to too many changes. A reason given was that the timetable inhibits substantial change, and since there was great competition for venues in the Faculty, the curriculum had to accommodate this rather than the other way round. John recalls from his many years of experience in the Faculty that:

...courses are taught in different ways, some short, some long. The timetable inhibits wholesale change...if we were in a situation where you controlled your own venues there would be a lot more freedom to make changes (John X).



Celia added that once the initial discussion had happened and the structural changes had been effected, the programme settled into the changes and since they seemed to work, there was no real need for further tampering. She says,

I must confess, the last three years or so...the shape and structure hasn't moved, because the kinds of things that we are doing with students...it just seems that we have got a good working piece...that gives students a holistic picture of what schools might be like when they go in. So we kind of have a structure that is working for us now so we don't mess it up too much (Celia X).

The foregoing provides a glimpse into the curriculum processes that faculty members jointly and individually engaged in, and the ideas that motivated their work. The next set of themes look more closely at how the Faculty responded to government policy initiatives, and how faculty understood the intentions of policy generally.

### **How did Faculty X Respond to Government Policy Directives?**

One of the Faculty responses to new teacher education policy since 1998, has been to ensure that the broad architecture of the policy is in place and for lecturers to then work within that. Alan explains this response:

We have broadly over the years tried to follow the broad prescriptions for professional development for teachers, in a broad way...if our qualification were to be evaluated...will find the broad architecture in place. So, all the headings, all the sections, all the policy requirements...all of that will be there. But people have essentially developed approaches to those kinds of things in very specific ways (Alan X).

External audits would therefore recognise the sections indicated by policy, but lecturers would approach those sections in their own ways:

So people are doing their own things again inside of those containers. People are doing pretty interesting things there but it is broadly following the stipulations but in a very free way (Alan X).

It is felt that policy requirements are wide and gives the Faculty plenty of space to move. Alan wasn't sure if common interpretations of policy requirements were necessary but had not considered too deeply the implications of leaving it open and vague:

The policy is written in a way that says...the student must have x, y and z and yes, the question does arise whether there aren't circumstances that require common background. Or rather a stronger filling of the content on a common basis. I think it is an important debate...to me it will essentially come down to how we characterise what the problem is (Alan X).

His view is that "people are always going to work in a very creative way with prescription" and that faculty could be creative within the requirements since there are currently no common examinations, for example, which might indicate a need for a common syllabus.

Faculty X is resistant to prescription and does not want to slavishly accept policy. Some members regard government policy for schools as strongly behaviourist. Alan contends that:

We've always been resistant to that kind of prescription...I think that there's a recognition of what OBE is all about, but at the same time I think people have been pretty subversive about it, particularly the behavioural bits of OBE (Alan X).

While some members of the Faculty have been involved in government policymaking at various levels, they consider themselves still to be in a critical space in the university, in what Alan refers to as a 'sceptical phase' especially with regard to policy for schools. While the course has been made more compliant they want students to see that the policy is also problematic. Their approach to policy directives like the Norms and Standards document which specifies teacher roles, is to get students to demonstrate how the roles have been dealt with in the programme, rather than using the roles as course

prescriptions and planning to that. They noted that other institutions have used the roles to structure their course rather uncritically – the roles have dictated the structure of the program rather than the process. Celia explains this difficulty with policy interpretation:

Some people, particularly with this COTEP document (containing the 1998 norms and standards)...people can teach to the document rather than teach the process where you get a teacher to think of herself as a community worker (one of the roles specified) or something like that (Celia X). (my parentheses)

The Faculty process for incorporating policy specifics into their programmes was to look at its prescriptions, the hours specified and so on, and to comply with the minimum requirements. The names in the policy for course components were used so that the course could be recognised by the discourse, but after that lecturers made their own decisions and choices. Celia describes the process of matching curriculum to policy:

So that what we did was we complied with the minimum requirements for what the department wanted...I mean we definitely looked at the policy and said okay, we need, first of all we need the nomenclatures so that people can recognise our stuff (Celia X).

John recalls the changeover of the qualification from the HDE as it was known, to the PGCE, as an event that happened with the minimum of fuss and says of it:

(it was) a good example of how policy came in. we had to do provisional registration...not really instructions on how to do it but the norms and standards had been published by then (end 2000). We just copied stuff out of norms and standards...just became the PGCE, painless...label in the book changed and that was that (John X).

Policy prescriptions, it appears, are not taken to kindly, but there are other levers for curriculum change, such as student awareness of the policy. It appears that students, aware of new policy demands on schoolteachers, often prompted curriculum changes in the programme in order to accommodate knowledge and

skills they believed they would need to cope in schools, as the following extract indicates:

Norms and standards created wider awareness...really backward effect of policy coming from students rather than coming from a committee who tells you what you should be doing (John X).

John commented further that faculty members were not intimidated by policy. Academics regard themselves as secure in their own identity, having made their mark in the academic community to which they aspire. Being strongly individualist, academics have increased their status and profile in the wider international community. They refuse therefore to be constrained by narrow interests and local policy. John describes this attitude diplomatically as:

People are...secure in their own status...let policy issues go over their heads...couldn't be bothered by other people...they operate in the wider international community (John X).

Faculty X would like to believe that the curriculum changed because of a number of factors, not only in order to respond to the policy directives. As John comments:

Divisions in the department are of such a nature that if you want to keep the peace, don't go and rock the boat too much...ask how can we do this with the minimum of fuss...don't want to change because the policy says you must (John X).

While policy should not compel change, according to some, there is an almost grudging acknowledgement of its effect:

You know I don't actually necessarily read the policy in order to know what's taught...however, because I read policy and because I am in the education department I can't say that the policy doesn't impact on me. Obviously it does (Mia X).

It appears that policy is not taken too seriously as faculty often disagree with the policy images conveyed by government, for example in the version of OBE espoused in policy for schools:

It is fair to say that policy doesn't get taken that seriously. People take leeway not to comply. There's a big debate about training teachers for OBE – the WCED says we're not training people for OBE but their version of OBE is different from ours (John X).

While policy is not taken as instructions for planning, Faculty members have developed academic responses to, for example, the teacher education qualifications. Because it was seen as really problematic, a paper was written (Sieborger and Quick, 2002) to show how unrealistic the outcomes set for beginning teachers are.

On the whole, faculty reported having little interest in policy, systems and politicians. Vincent described himself as a 'nuts and bolts lecturer' rather than a policymaker. He did not mince words as he expressed little appreciation for the role of policy:

You don't wait for systems, you don't wait for politicians...in other words you don't wait for the education department system to serve you. If you want to do something you do it yourself. You can't expect a slow moving system to keep up with what needs to be done (Vincent X).

## **Synthesis**

*What informs the pre-service teacher education curriculum in Faculty X and how have faculty responded to curriculum requirements embedded in government policies?*

Pre-service teacher education appears to occupy a rather under-valued space within the School of Education. The PGCE seems almost anomalous to the work that the Faculty aspires to do, being the only initial teacher preparation

qualification in spite of it being a postgraduate course. In this sense it is not focused on the higher research interests of the Faculty. It is clear that the nature of the programme, straddling a necessary vocational orientation and a theoretical base that is not well circumscribed, poses some dilemmas for faculty. There is also no clear organisational logic for the course, apart from an unspoken commitment to what it might mean to be a 'good teacher'. While contextual realities are acknowledged from time to time, the scope and enormity of contextual challenges in South Africa, and what that might mean for teacher preparation, seem curiously unacknowledged. For example, the programme is said to give students a 'holistic picture of what schools might be like when they go in'. One might well ask how adaptive this picture is across school contexts, given the disparities that exist in South African schools.

Individualist values permeate, from those stated in the University mission, through faculty interactions, to the intensely introspective 'engagement with self' in the curriculum. Subject matter knowledge through undergraduate study prior to the PGCE is seen as affording the student the cognitive and intellectual skills necessary for teaching, and distinguishes an 'educated' teacher from one who is merely a 'technician'. Knowledge for teaching is not well described or explicitly stated, as teaching people 'how to teach' is associated with technicist approaches to teacher education. Rather, academics prefer to 'model' various teaching methods and expose students to different aspects of the teaching situation. Through critical engagement with the texts in the various parts of the course, students develop the capacity to adapt to the school situation as necessary, and become 'open to learning'. This is taken to be the hallmark of a 'professional'.

Education Theory consists of the well-known education epistemologies which teachers through the ages have been trained in – disciplinary perspectives on education psychology, sociology, philosophy, although much diluted due to the number of requirements jostling for space in the curriculum. Faculty have also

accommodated in their course readers some contemporary research and theorists. The time frame for the postgraduate qualification is still one year, but an assortment of modules have been included to address contemporary challenges in schools, required by policy as stated in the Norms and Standards for Educators and the outcomes of the PGCE. It is little wonder, faced with this smorgasbord of offerings, students report, according to a lecturer, that they feel somewhat 'panic-stricken' about the 'nuts and bolts' of classroom management when they have to enter classrooms for practice teaching. Some faculty members, more recent appointments, are conflicted about the need for a balance between academic preparation and practical applications, but they are wary of being too vocal about this.

The Faculty adapted its PGCE programme, from the old HDE, to two sets of Norms and Standards for Educators (1998 and 2000) without too much 'fuss and bother'. This it did by recognising that 'the architecture' set out in the new policy (numbers of hours and so on) needed to be in place, the 'nomenclature' needed to be recognisable by students and other Faculties, and the education disciplines needed to be accommodated. While there was an attempt to design an 'integrated' programme the PGCE is really multi-disciplinary, since the traditional disciplines are clustered in the Education Theory course and the more practically oriented 'methods' are in the Professional Studies section. There appears to be little overlap of one with the other. In their critique of practice and theory in other Faculties of Education, lecturers convey a sense of what they see as necessary theory for the student teacher, but academics are ambivalent about the desirability of a 'body of knowledge' for teacher education, seeming to fear prescription.

It is recognised that theory in the Faculty often has to correct the misconceptions created by government policy, but what makes Faculty interpretations more valid than that of government is not always clear. There is a tacit understanding that faculty understand and accept certain positions, for example, that 'process' is

better than 'content'. Evidence of intuitive knowledge and implicit theories abound, but academics also report that they take seriously peer evaluations of their course and student feedback to inform what they do.

Faculty curriculum processes occurred in response to policy, particularly concrete demands that programmes be registered and written in outcomes based style and language. There is strong evidence of a pragmatic approach being adopted, 'mixing and matching' to fit the stated outcomes in the Norms and Standards document, and adding in bits that were missing, for example, on HIV/Aids, Computer Literacy and so on. Consultation was done on a 'need to' basis, with people tending to 'operate individually'. There is a 'casual' approach to a curriculum process that is non-directive, civil and non-committal. Once the broader policy requirements had been complied with, things could settle back into 'normality' again.

'People are doing pretty interesting things there but it is broadly following the stipulations in a very free way', Alan contended. It is not clear whether these 'things' have anything in common with the desired policy outcomes. Alan says the question of 'filling the content on a common basis depends on what the problem is'. If we accept that the intentions of policy are in pursuit of a new social order, and that policy intentions might lead to policy outcomes, then the fact that providers of teacher education aren't necessarily concerned with meeting stated outcomes, could be worrying. Certainly the optimism or naiveté of policymakers could be questioned.

Alan thinks faculty might only be concerned with a common knowledge base for teacher education if there were common examinations – a more constraining and prescriptive environment which academics express their disapproval of. Moral appeal in the interests of 'the common good' does not appear to be a driving factor in Faculty X's construction of curriculum. Neither do faculty feel 'threatened' by policy demands, being internally secure in the University and



confident of their profile in the international community. Faculty report that the Norms and Standards document created broader awareness of the policy environment and its potential impact, but this was not because of 'a committee who tells you what you should be doing', rather, it was an effect of the students beginning to question what might be required of them in their future employment, and faculty taking their 'clients' concerns seriously. Even so, faculty questioned the Department of Education's expectations of a university trained 'OBE' teacher, maintaining that the Department's understanding of what this means, differs from the Faculty's. Lecturers consider government outcomes set for pre-service teachers to be problematic and even unattainable, justifying their scepticism of government education policies.

In sum, academics in Faculty X respond to government policies with a mixture of pragmatism and intellectual skepticism. They comply with the broad policy directives that give their programmes a recognizable form, for the sake of external bureaucratic structures and students aware that teachers face new policy demands. However, academics hold the intellectual high ground when it comes to curriculum change, secure (some would say arrogant) in their approach to teacher education, an approach which emphasizes strong subject matter knowledge, an aloof (individualized) critical stance and the teacher as an intellectual with the cognitive abilities to engage contingently, qualities held to be the hallmark of a professional.

## **Part II: The Story of Faculty Y**

### **The University Milieu**

Under political pressure, and in terms of its separate development policies, the apartheid government in 1960 established a 'university college' under the auspices of an older white South African university, to provide tertiary education for 'coloured' students. The institution was referred to as a 'bush' college, partly because of its location on an undeveloped piece of land far off the beaten track, but also to indicate its rejection (by many of those for whom it had been intended), as an inferior facility. Staff members at the time were appointed by the white Department of Education and were largely white, Afrikaans speaking academics within the predominant government paradigm of Christian National Education (Small, 2003).

Students of colour who attended this 'bush college' were therefore compelled to undertake their studies in Afrikaans, including those (and there were many) who spoke English as a first or home language. The university environment was a hostile one, conflicted within because of the polarisation between white academics often unsympathetic to the language barrier students experienced, and without as students who attended this 'ethnic' college were often ostracised by non-white anti-apartheid groupings which rejected the notion of separate development.

Successive phases of resistance and student unrest in the 1970s, particularly the 1976 uprising in Soweto, resulted in the University dissociating itself from its racist ideological foundations, and beginning to align with the movement for a non-racial, democratic South Africa (Smith, 2003). The 1980s, a period marked by protest actions and police brutality on the campus, saw the staff composition gradually changing with the appointment of more critical and activist academics. The University became an autonomous institution in 1983 in terms of legislation,

and under the leadership of the Rector in 1987, redefined itself as the ‘intellectual home of the left’, an openly politically defiant stance and one which was to have reverberations throughout the university structures and curricula (ibid). Given the history of University Y, it therefore comes as no surprise that its post-apartheid Mission Statement includes an overtly political statement: “...Drawing on its proud experience in the liberation struggle, the university is aware of a distinctive academic role in helping build an equitable and dynamic society.” (ibid p.6). The University lays claim to a number of distinguished alumni and academics who have taken up senior positions in the democratic government but acknowledges that it will have to build a new legacy which is future focused and committed to ‘excellence in teaching, learning and research’ (2006:2) in order to build its academic standing.

The Education Faculty in University Y, tasked by the apartheid government with the preparation of ‘coloured’ schoolteachers and steeped in the ideology and frameworks of Fundamental Pedagogics, followed a similar political awakening. After the Rector’s pronouncements in 1987, the Faculty reconceptualised itself in support of the overarching positioning of the university and committed itself to a new role, one of ‘critical opposition’ and a discourse which came to include concepts such as ‘critical analysis’, ‘emancipatory action research’, ‘teacher as change agent’, to mention just a few examples (Meerkotter, 2004). The impact of this discourse on education curricula for teacher preparation will be described more fully in the appropriate sections that follow.

Faculty members spoke poignantly in interviews about the kind of structural changes that the Faculty undertook in response to changes taking place in its environment. The National Commission on Higher Education in 1995 precipitated the structural move from discipline-based departments to ‘inter-disciplinary’ programmes for many institutions. In University Y the Faculty of Education by 1999 was experiencing a huge drop in student numbers as universities ‘de-racialised’ and black students exercised their wider range of options:

they were not racially bound anymore. These students were mobile because they were getting student support and financial support (at other universities)...(Jacob Y).

As student numbers dropped, so the Faculty was compelled to rationalise and junior academics were retrenched. Generally what is described by faculty as a 'reductive' climate for teacher education, ensued. Colleges of Education were to be incorporated into universities, teacher rationalisation was occurring in order to achieve equity, and insufficient university-ready school-leavers were coming through the education system as a result of the eroded culture of learning. Taken together, this caused the Faculty to shift its focus from pre-service training to in-service training of teachers in schools who needed re-skilling for the changing curriculum policy demands. In order to cope with burgeoning numbers of in-service teachers and unable to contract academics into full-time positions, the Faculty employed part-time lecturers, which came with its own set of challenges which I detail later in this chapter. Jacob, a young 'activist' lecturer who joined the university in the early 1990's, describes how successive changes affected the Faculty:

and so the Faculty became a different place. It became an atomistic place. It became a place where people were frayed along the edges. It became a place where people could not ask serious academic questions (Jacob Y).

While other universities saw opportunities in the changing higher education landscape for a variety of programmes and modalities (distance education partnerships, for example) in the name of 'responsiveness', Faculty Y tried to hold onto its historical identity:

We were unfortunately ideologically too strongly committed to a formal notion of a student. That student was a black student, an impoverished student who arrived at our gates and we will give him ...quality, epistemological learning at the university. So we were still animated by that picture while the world around us was becoming less idealistic. Also 'our' black students weren't coming anymore (ibid).

Faculty members feel that they need more support from the University, and recognition for the important role teacher education plays in the reconstruction of the country. The university as a whole needs to commit to the process of teacher education and take cognisance of what such a commitment needs, as Luke, a senior lecturer with many years of university teaching experience maintains: “unless the institution makes the decision, and you know the climate at University Y, it’s very, very difficult to tell people what they must do. It just doesn’t work like that” (Luke Y). Education sits at the bottom of the pile for university funding – pre-service students get the lowest subsidy rate in an unsympathetic university climate:

The amount of energy and resources that are put into the teacher education operation are not extensive. Because you’re in some way running on different tracks to the rest of the institution, they’re not going to give you extra resources to do the things you want to do...you’ve got to do your own thing (ibid).

### **Pre-Service Education in the Faculty**

The model of teacher education at Faculty Y has been the subject of ongoing review by the Faculty since the early 1980s. At the time I conducted my fieldwork there, the Faculty had just been through its internal Academic Review, and I was fortunate to access some of the documentation that had accompanied that process. This gave me important insights into the Faculty planning initiatives that had taken place since the 1980s, information that was not available in the other two Faculties in my study.

The Faculty’s institutional context as one where contestation was commonplace, meant that it became highly politicised during the aftermath of the 1976 Soweto student uprisings and the ensuing breakdown of learning and teaching in black community schools, where many of the Faculty’s teachers would eventually be located. This compelled the Faculty to re-examine its preparation of teachers to

cope with the situation in which they would find themselves, which would certainly not be a 'normal' school environment. A closer link between theory and practice was envisaged to enable pre-service teachers to reflect more critically on practice, and the Faculty experimented with various models of teaching practice/school experience to try and find a workable, practical solution.

Between 1997 and 1999 the Faculty embarked on a restructuring process based on two clusters, a Teaching Cluster which encompassed professional programmes and advanced programmes, and a Research Cluster. This was a move away from the previous organisation of the Faculty according to traditional education discipline departments. The Dean reflected in his Strategic Planning Report of 2004 that this move "acknowledged the fact that much of our work had become multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary over the past two decades, and that it would be a much more appropriate structure to address the aims of the University as expressed in its mission statement from an academic and a managerial perspective" (p.10). The latter motivation stemmed from the fact that the departments had become 'small, isolated islands' with their own management structures which were becoming unsustainable in the more austere fiscal climate for universities after 1997 (ibid).

The downside of the move to interdisciplinary programmes according to some faculty members was a 'loss of identity' that they had had in the discipline departments. Along with this loss of identity was the loss of a 'collegial space', and the disciplinary 'conversation' which was part of that, as Jacob explains: "...by collapsing our departments into, almost a wall-less Faculty – and with that came a lot of changes, some bad, some good". One of the 'bad' effects, he mentions later, is the fact that many academics in the traditional education disciplines (displaced by the changed structures or disaffected with the direction things were taking) left the Faculty, taking their institutional memory and experience with them.

The reorganised structure was also a recognition how policy was defining the two primary functions of universities, being 'teaching and research' (Smith, 2004). As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, the Faculty went through several strategic planning processes which effected changes to the form, structure and content of the pre-service (or 'professional') programmes over a period of about six years between 1998 and 2004 since the initial response to the first Norms and Standards for Educators document of 1998. A Faculty planning document in 1999 stated the urgency for Faculty Y to "maintain, refine and develop its current programme for initial teacher training so that it becomes the best in the country". This was in light of the closure of teacher training colleges and thereby the location of all teacher training in universities which were themselves in a process of rationalisation.

For the purposes of my study I focused on what has been in place in 2004/5 since this was the outcome of a two-year PGCE review process where the Faculty had contracted an external consultant in 2002 to assist with restructuring of the programme. The impetus for the review was the high failure rate of students in the previous year 2001, and the fact that there were new policy developments in teacher education that, it was felt, could impact on the programme (PGCE Review Report, 2002). A number of Faculty team meetings were held to identify the perceived problems, the most notable of which were to ensure that the various parts of the course (theory, subject methods and teaching practice) hung together coherently, that the connection between the various modules were made explicit for the students and that national policy guidelines were incorporated.

Presently the Faculty offers as pre-service teacher education programmes the one-year Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), the four-year undergraduate B.Ed Degree and what is called the 're-sequenced' B.Ed Degree, a programme for pre-service teachers already working in schools as teacher assistants, the so-called 'school based teacher education' programme (SBTE).

Generally the PGCE and the fourth year B.Ed Degree students follow the same curriculum, referred to as the Final Year Teacher Education programme (FYTE). PGCE students only encounter education theory courses in the one-year postgraduate programme whereas B.Ed students are exposed to education theory as from the second year of their undergraduate programme. Both the PGCE and the B.Ed programmes prepare teachers for high schools, which spans the General Education (senior phase) as well as the Further Education phase in our current system of education.

The school based 'learnership' programme arose in 2003 as an initiative of a local rural community that had employed teacher assistants in high schools in an attempt to deal with large classes. The training of these assistants as teachers was to be subsidised by the Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) via skills development legislation under the national Department of Labour. In terms of this funding, trainees could be employed in schools but had to receive professional training through an accredited provider, being University Y in this case. Because students would be 'working' in schools, the university programme would have to be negotiated so that classes could be scheduled conveniently. This necessitated a shift in the organisation of the B.Ed programme, as the Faculty had not had such a student cohort previously. The challenge was how to fit all the components of the B.Ed degree into a four year programme where students also had to be based in the school for a considerable portion of the learning time, hence the degree having to be 're-sequenced' to accommodate the students' availability. Interviews with faculty also reveal the curriculum shifts that had to be made in order to construct a meaningful course for students immersed in the day-to-day reality of schools where theory often made little sense.

Review discussion documents on the PGCE in July 2004 express the commitment of the Faculty to a 'social reconstructionist' approach to teacher education, but also articulate questions regarding the theoretical underpinnings of the programme and the familiar dilemma of how to schedule school



experience so that students get the maximum benefit from their time in schools. “How”, it was asked at the time, “do we align core, fundamental and elective components in a conceptual and structural way that is sensible, critical and legitimate?” (Proposed Model of PGCE, 2004).

### **A Broad Overview of the Pre-Service Curriculum**

The student guide to the FYTE programme (2004) contains a message from the Dean that is indicative of the general thrust of teacher education in the Faculty and is sharply reminiscent of how the Faculty has evolved within the institution. It reads, *inter alia*,

...the idea of the teacher as transformative intellectual and agent for change with regard to the quality of life for everyone in a democratic society remains central in what we teach and discuss...we expect you to work very hard...so that you could continue the struggle against poverty, classism, racism, sexism and other forms of marginalisation in the field of education...these issues will remain the key areas of focus (p. 2)

In keeping with this overarching theme, the guide goes on to explain the basis on which the programme has been constructed. It locates teaching in South Africa (based on its earlier theme ‘Preparing to Teach In the South Today’) within a developing context and acknowledges the inadequate resourcing teachers will face in a South African reality where the economic disparities are overwhelming. The course attempts to address the realities of teachers in the South and uses as an organising thread the question “How can I as a teacher construct a good learning environment?” This multi-dimensional question, the Faculty reasons, lends itself to dealing with the many facets of teaching and learning in all their complexity. An important caution to the student is that this construction of the course is one way to approach a curriculum for teachers, and that this course is only the beginning of a lifelong process of becoming a professional teacher.

'Constructing a good learning environment', explains the student guide, is an attempt to look at both the implicit and the explicit factors which impact on teaching and learning, taking the micro context of the teacher and learner and placing that within the macro context of the curriculum, institutions and the wider environment. Six modules make up the teacher preparation programme, namely: Conceptions of Teaching and Learning; Organising Learning; Managing Classrooms and Schools; Teaching a Diversity of Learners; Practices: Orderliness and Chaos; Education and Development: Optimism and Realism. The six modules attempt to integrate a number of themes spread across the more conventional subjects referred to in the university calendar by their subject codes as Education Practice, Education Theory, Subject Didactics and Language Communication (necessary for employment as a teacher in our system). In terms of the official structure of teacher education qualifications, there are Fundamental Modules (languages, lifeskills, numeracy, computer literacy), compulsory Core modules (Education Theory and Education Practice) and Electives (a choice of subject specialisations which students intend to teach, and will do method courses within).

A glance at the content of the abovenamed modules shows that it has attempted to respond to government policy for schools as the school Curriculum 2005 and its outcomes feature prominently. The six modules cover a range of theoretical orientations such as critical theory, and practical skills for teaching which include dealing with diversity, issues of discipline, lesson planning and the like. The seven teaching roles set out in the government Norms and Standards Document (2000) also appear within sections of the modules.

The module 'Conceptions of Teaching and Learning' addresses the role of the teacher as mediator and includes Feurstein's ten criteria of mediation as a theoretical base. The module looks at curriculum orientations, in particular at theorists like Stenhouse, Grundy, Kemmis, Cole and Sugget's views on curriculum and their relationship to Outcomes Based Education. An external

examiner's comment, in relation to the choice of a theorist like Stenhouse on curriculum, asks whether more recent work in this regard should not be sought. What rational justification could be supplied for whatever choices of theory and theoreticians are made?

Organising Learning serves as a preparation for the school experience/teaching practice period and introduces practical lesson planning skills, managing classrooms and using teaching resources. Haberman's 'pedagogy of poverty' is used as the underpinning text in this section along with other local and international writers.

Managing Classrooms and Schools considers educational management and classroom theories, with a view to creating an environment conducive to teaching and learning. It includes policy applicable to schools such as policy on discipline and corporal punishment, codes of conduct, inclusivity inter alia.

Orderliness and Chaos, is described in the student guide as being 'concepts, ideas and suggestions for practice in order to develop capacity as change agents in educational institutions...and on how teachers can participate in implementing and institutionalising change'.

Education and Development introduces the student to the traditional foundations of teacher education in education history, sociology and philosophy from a critical perspective. Concepts of teacher professionalism, the teacher as knowledge worker and globalisation are addressed in this module. The module uses as a basic text, the South African Institute of Distance Education (SAIDE)/Oxford Learning Guide and Reader "Being a Teacher: Professional Challenges and Choices". A wide range of complex questions relevant to South African education but also education systems generally, for example on education and society, education policy, educational change, are posed in this module.

From what can be gathered about methodology, the SAIDE text uses a range of interactive methods for engaging students in discussion and debate on challenging questions relating to schools and broader societal issues. There is contemporary video material for viewing and discussing, and a selection of readings by South African academics (eg. Soudien, Morrow, Christie, Potterton, Kallaway) and international writers like Hargreaves, Kohl and extracts from UNESCO reports.

Students spend an entire term at a school for their teaching practice, for observation of the classroom teacher, observation of their peers as well as planning and teaching actual lessons. They are assessed through continuous evaluation on the basis of their lessons presented and a workbook in which they are expected to reflect critically on their experience in all aspects of school life, keep a journal and file the materials they have developed for lessons. Faculty members responsible for practice teaching organise workshops with the relevant school principals and teachers to engage their support and participation, as class teachers are also required to assess the student teacher. In the words of a faculty member, “currently a competent student teacher is regarded as one who can, in addition to managing a classroom effectively...is also able to reflect in a meaningful manner on his/her practices, with a view to improving practice” (Teaching Practice Report, 2003).

What lecturers find problematic in the pre-service programme, is that the subject matter disciplines which students do in other Faculties on the campus, have little to do with the fact that some students are on a career pathway to teaching those subjects. The result is that students feel ill-prepared to teach the school content in that subject area, and in some instances the Education Faculty ‘teaches’ the school content in an attempt to assist the student, as Amy, a newer Faculty member relates: “especially with the new curriculum at schools...I really think there must be space, more space for student teachers to be exposed to what the curriculum is expecting of them” (Amy Y).

Amy was outraged when an academic in another Faculty who was challenged on this issue, responded that students should not be ‘trapped’ into a teaching career. This, for her, was indicative of the low regard for teaching which is generally displayed in the rest of the university: “...it really reeked of education or being an educator as a lesser kind of career, which I find very damaging” (Amy Y). The new school based teacher education programme, it is felt, forces ‘conceptual streaming’ around teacher education and makes no apology for the fact that the qualification is aimed at preparing teachers for a career in teaching: “the proposed B.Ed is designed for the student who wishes to qualify as a teacher...the bottom line is if you choose this degree then you are in fact choosing to become a teacher”(ibid).

### **Dominant Pedagogies, Theories, Frameworks and Beliefs in Faculty Y**

Academics in Faculty Y often mentioned the idea of the teacher being a ‘professional’, but were unsure whether this implied a common knowledge base for teaching, or if such a common base were necessary. Most seemed not to have thought about whether the various approaches and programmes across institutions could result in different interpretations of the term ‘professional’, and appeared surprised when they found themselves considering some of the possible implications.

There was general agreement that theories need to inform practice, and that theory must be connected with teaching and learning but the question of ‘what’ theory, was dependent on faculty understandings of teaching and learning, and what they perceived as classroom learning needs. It was said that academics could use the same theories or theorists, but they could ‘apply’ it differently from within a critical or conservative paradigm, Christine, who has a long history in the Faculty, avers:

you can have the same things...but the way that we approach it is different...we look at things much more critically in the sense that we see the teacher also as a learner in the process (Christine Y).

The belief was expressed that students could only make meaning of abstract theory when they encountered the 'real' situation. While the orientation of the teacher education programme, as seen from the programme descriptions above, is towards constructivism, this framework was criticised as being populist in the way government policy utilised it. Outcomes Based Education was cited as an example of 'populist' constructivism, and was critiqued because of its numerous shortcomings in implementation. It was argued that the role of a university is to encourage a critical disposition towards theories and models, at times, even if they are 'classical'.

Jacob was concerned that while the traditional education disciplines may have been seen as elitist by some of his colleagues, the disciplinary foci could not be discarded as students needed conceptual scaffolding on which to build relevant theory. The disciplines, it was said, enabled students to engage with 'what knowledge for education is'. Education discipline structures within Faculties though, had tended to divide faculty in teacher education. He thought that there should be a 'conversation' that frames teacher education and gives it some coherence. In Jacob's view, "...there isn't a conversation that frames our work, and therefore people's research is all over the place...there is too much of this where we advocate, we don't academify" (sic).

Jacob refers to the disciplinary divisions which have resulted from a Faculty not "conceptually streamlined around what the core identity of the Faculty ought to be, and that is teacher education". Education academics have tended to research within their disciplines, not from a teacher education perspective or research that informs teacher education. Jacob's view is that in spite of the programmes having cross-cutting themes, teacher education has to be treated as a discipline and be framed by a conceptual base albeit it more contextually located:

...I argued that if you don't frame these things properly they become mish mash...and there isn't conceptual scaffolding in terms of which you make sense of these. This conceptual basis was often in the past provided by the disciplines. Our world in any case is a much more trans-disciplinary world, but the argument is that if you don't develop a kind of disciplinary perspective to it, you can't make sense of it (Jacob Y).

While the subject matter knowledge base of student teachers was thought to be weak, the other problem was that students in teacher education learn their subject matter knowledge (in other faculties on the campus) in the absence of how to teach that subject, or what the school syllabus in that subject matter looks like. Other faculties argue that they're training 'pure' mathematicians or historians, "so what we're trying to say to them is listen, half your class is going to become history teachers, at least they've got to be framed around that" (Jacob Y). The students' subject matter knowledge for what they would be required to teach, was therefore likely to be inadequate, in Jacob's view, and the gaps in this knowledge would have to be dealt with in the Education Faculty, which did not have the resources to do so.

Jane, who was a relatively newer member of the Faculty, reflected on her previous education experience which had used more deductive and higher order questioning methods, which she felt was not always practised in the Faculty. She explains:

I prefer to start with classroom practice and build out to what does this mean about theory...so I always work the other way to most people in fact, which is also very frustrating. But I still think from a Freireian point of view, and even Vygotsky, I believe that if you start with concrete experiences you're much more likely to hook the theory into that rather than just presenting them with chunks of theory and then...(Jane Y).

When asked which theories lecturers subscribe to, Louisa, who has been in the Faculty for many years, replied that academics often operate within a tradition that they are unaware of. Faculty members could therefore engage with the same ideas in very different ways and would have different priorities that

motivated their selection of theories. She reasoned that there was no agreement about content because there would first have to be agreement on the purposes of education. This was why, she thought, there is no 'core' of education knowledge:

...and we engage with the same ideas in different ways and in different contexts and we hope that we make the right choices for the specific contexts that we are living in (Louisa Y).

While some forums had been started across institutions, discussions about teacher education, it was felt, had been vague and inconclusive because, "the trouble is that people in teacher education are such a variety of things...very seldom is there a concerted discussion about teacher education. Or it's so vague that it doesn't really go anywhere" (Luke Y).

The idea of reflective practice, the dialectic between theory and practice and a 'critical' approach appeared to part of a common discourse which faculty embraced. Theory must have something to do with the practice, otherwise it was useless, Christine explained:

We tried to look at those things (theory) in a critical way, not just teaching it in a very scientific way but to connect it with teaching and learning (Christine Y).

Luke agreed with this view:

and my whole argument then and still is, unless you're going to introduce it and its got something to do with the practice, forget it. If you're just teaching them sociology of education whatever, that's what we do, that's just a waste of time. I mean, inevitably those things only mean something to you when you're a teacher already (Luke Y).

Luke expressed regret at the loss of the teacher training colleges since, in spite of shortcomings, students were more immersed in the 'mundane' details of day to day activities of schools, whereas universities tended to believe that students



would pick up the ‘how to teach’ along the way. He says that he in retrospect has a lot more appreciation for some of what colleges used to do:

...I used to look down my nose at colleges of education and I bite my tongue these days because, okay, there were lots of things wrong with (them) but at least they had that right. At least they knew that people had to be immersed in the details of day-to-day life and maybe the boring details of how to prepare a lesson, it just doesn’t happen here (Luke Y).

According to him it is a misguided notion that as long as students know their subject matter at a fairly high level, they will be able to teach. Other lecturers also commented on the loss of the teacher training colleges that, despite their apparent lack of ‘critical engagement’, had taken the enterprise of teacher education seriously: “at least there was something going on there that was teacher education”. Jacob feels the problem with university teacher education is that it is not ‘conceptually framed’ around teacher education as a discipline, instead it is “rhetorically framed around questions of critical thinking, open learning, child pedagogy, action research – anything but teacher education”.

Luke thought that it was important for lecturers to keep abreast of changes within the disciplines that they taught, which could only happen through engaging in international debates and exchanges, otherwise they could teach education knowledge as if it were static. However, this seldom was brought back into the local conversation, partly because of a lack of leadership and general apathy. The Kenton<sup>8</sup> conferences though, had achieved some of this rallying of education academics in the past.

A new dimension in Faculty Y that prompted a re-think of pedagogies and frameworks was the introduction of the ‘site based teacher education’ programme (SBTE), a qualification for teacher assistants employed by local rural

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<sup>8</sup> The Kenton Conferences comprised anti-apartheid educators who met annually from the late 1970s to conduct ‘alternative’ debates on education. The conferences provided forums for more critical and analytical responses to the policies governing education at the time (Kallaway, 2002).

community schools. Jacob argued that this was an exciting initiative that was testing the notion of 'situated learning' in an actual workplace. He explained how faculty had been battling to formulate a suitable pedagogy for such an authentic environment:

the way in which we have been framing it, has been to suggest, a lot of the learning needs to take place around building reflexivity amongst these kids who are going to become teachers, as they experience those contexts...cause these work contexts are not often functional contexts. There are struggles for education to happen. But our argument is that that is exactly the kind of environment that teachers will be in (Jacob Y).

A belief was expressed that student teachers need to be exposed to excellent role-models of teachers, because many would have had appalling teachers and teaching in their own experience. While the student might be well-prepared on paper, having achieved a qualification, mentoring and induction was still seen as critical to being sufficiently ready to enter the profession.

### **Curriculum Processes in Faculty Y**

How have faculty members developed curriculum for their courses and what does this reveal about the motivations for curriculum processes and selections? Interviews with faculty provided a window into some of their experiences.

Amy found that trying to develop and nurture a new course, was quite a lonely journey:

...this can sound egocentric...until about two months ago it felt like a very individualised exercise, with consultations between myself and people at points, but I felt it was something I held very much on my own (Amy Y).

Lecturers have traditionally made their own decisions on content and methodology, but the introduction of module descriptors, Amy feels, makes people more accountable for what they teach, and helps to build quality,

especially in a situation where many part-time lecturers are employed and they “just go off and do whatever they want” (Amy Y). When asked what she used to develop curriculum for her course, she answered:

copies of course outlines from before, my own sense of what this needed to be about, my own area of expertise, all of those things...because there was no module descriptor that existed. And in the end I suppose it turned out fine...but we can't assume the same about anybody and everybody who comes in as a part-time (Amy Y).

The issue of part-time lecturers who teach on the variety of in-service programmes is a difficult one for faculty, since part-time staff members were not required to get involved in overall curriculum development. Part-time staff cannot commit to longer term developments in the Faculty, and are not remunerated for such commitment anyway:

The brutal reality is that many of our professional programmes are serviced, taught by contract people. And these people don't have the same commitment that full-time people have. They feel shoddily treated. We don't make promises to them but they still feel shoddily treated (Jacob Y).

Trying to ascertain workload with all the bits and pieces of teaching is an administrative burden for faculty members responsible for this. Neither does the bitty-ness of the programme contribute towards a culture of engagement – everyone is busy doing their own thing and have neither space nor time to get involved in what they feel is not their area of work: “There aren't sustainable academic conversations in the faculty. We don't have the space, time, people sitting down... (ibid)”

Lecturers make their own choice of theories based on the time available and assumptions of what students need to know. Amy acknowledged that this meant inequalities in the depth and breadth of theoretical grounding that students received, for example, in the PGCE programme the same lecturer had effectively

a third of the time she had in the B.Ed programme, to teach the same section of work – it was therefore inevitable that in the PGCE there would be less time for discussion, debate and conceptualisation. She related how the curriculum emerged in piece-meal fashion because she wanted to include all the bits and pieces she felt were important for students to get an introduction to.

Academics seemed reluctant to admit that they included schools policy in their curriculum. Students, Christine explained, needed to be aware of schools policy, but it was not given to them in an uncritical way:

...here we have moved...to a more progressive stance...a more social critical kind of stance...so the student teachers are also being prepared for reality and how you would change the curriculum and also allow learners voices to be heard in the process (Christine Y)

Pedagogies and theories have to prepare students for the reality of teaching, which could be a reality far from the ideal, so assumptions are built in as to where the student will find him/herself. Faculty members attempt to contextualise based on the needs of schools.

Curriculum choices also depend on the lecturer's own background and academic experience, that is, their own histories and traditions: "...so it's a common understanding we need to have perhaps, but it depends on our background, the way that we have been taught, the things that we have been exposed to" (ibid).

The collapse of the disciplines did not necessarily mean integration of ideas, as academics are still in very individual spaces. Jacob explains how he designed curriculum for his course:

I designed it fairly autonomously, I went back to the basic sociology of education text books and I went to the basic theories of consensus theory, conflict theory, functional theory, reproduction theory...(Jacob Y).

Jane worried that the pre-service curriculum was too bound by the present and that it needed to step beyond the current reality, but this required guidance and leadership, and someone to drive the process, to be 'looking ahead'. She often relied on her own initiative to integrate what she assumed others were doing, into her work, but this has led to wrong assumptions being made in the past. As a relatively new lecturer coming from a very different teaching and learning experience, she experienced frustration with the different way of working in the Faculty, where notions of accountability and transparency were not always welcomed. Her view was that she should consider the classroom reality that teachers would face, and link that reality to relevant theory rather than the other way around:

I don't know what other people do, a lot of it is expertise driven. I tend to work very much from what I've seen going on in classrooms and decide on what I can do to stop that happening (Jane Y).

Louisa, when asked what prompted her choice of literature, said she selected her texts to be appropriate to the level of the students as in her opinion, there were many unnecessarily obscure readings in the name of 'academia': "I think we've had far too much unnecessary dense stuff, giving our students impossibly difficult things to wade through". She has also included input on what teachers need, obtained from the education department as the future employer of students, and whatever feedback she receives has been taken seriously, because "...that is part of one's reflection and introspection on your course" (Louisa Y).

The issue of a knowledge base simply depended on who was teaching a particular course but teamwork was acknowledged as being valuable for discussion and growth. In this regard Luke had found forums such as the Kenton conferences useful for giving some direction to new ways of thinking. In his view, Faculties were not always clear what the old curriculum should be replaced with and tended to base it on common sense and theories gained from their own education as a teacher. Luke comments that: "as people threw out the

Fundamental Pedagogics stuff, they cast around for other things”. Later he makes an even more telling statement:

...I do think there's a sense of people not knowing what it is they believe. But the kind of residual common sense which they probably inherited from the people who taught them, without even knowing that they had carried these ideas (Luke Y).

A common discourse is that the curriculum has to be rooted in reality but there is also the sense that education needs to get some 'real debate going'.

Faculty members have for a long time been engaged in a review process, especially of the PGCE. The latest round of changes was to determine compliance in respect of the Norms and Standards Document (2000) and the requirements of the Department of Education. Amy feels as if the Faculty has been 'talking' for a very long time:

I think we talk and deliberate a lot, I think we think very deeply about things. One of my frustrations is that sometimes...action is something that we struggle with (Amy Y).

The Faculty has been under pressure to respond to the external need (eg. the school based programme) and because this was a different kind of student (already teaching in schools) the curriculum had to be developed and taken through the normal university processes for approval. Amy's view is that she would have liked some time to take stock and 'do things properly', but she understood the Faculty's pressure to develop and implement simultaneously, without the 'luxury' of reflection: "...the metaphor used was, we can't just stop the train and go into the dining car for a year ...because actually there are people on the train who have to get somewhere" (ibid).

One of the major challenges for developing a new programme, has been around collaboration, both within the Faculty and with other Faculties in the university,

especially where the vision about the intentions of the programme were not always shared. In an attempt to avoid duplication, parts of the programme had to be negotiated with other Faculties which already taught elements of the course, but the request that the course taught in that Faculty be tailored to the needs of prospective teachers, was not well received. Faculties were reluctant to sacrifice subject matter knowledge for educator content or to tailor their subject matter courses to the needs of teachers or the school curriculum.

Interaction with other Faculties is complicated given the fact that although the degree is housed in the Education Faculty, other Faculties have to teach subject matter courses on it. Time-tabling is often difficult and collaboration strained:

So there's all of the tensions around other people willing to let go, what's this mean for FTEs etc. On a different level there's been such a tension around resources – human resources, time,...venues, printing and that kind of thing...there's an expectation that other departments teach on the programme...why should I be doing it when somebody else is doing it already? (Amy Y)

Education faculty feel that they have to convince colleagues that the education qualification is about training teachers: “we need to be clear that our goal, our mission is to train quality educators. That's what we're saying we do best”. Apart from this, it is expensive for the Faculty to also teach the subject matter knowledge that teachers are going to need when they enter schools, as what they do in intended teaching subjects have little to do with the school syllabus: “...academic departments are not inclined to do things like this. Most of them settle for doing their subjects and not relating it to school teachers.”

In explaining how the Faculty arrived at the content for the new curriculum, Christine says that they tried to look at the realities in schools and match those needs to the legislation, but at the same time try to retain the education discipline traditions. In effect then,

...those disciplinary areas were blurred...despite the fact that it was inter-disciplinary kind of modules that were offered, it had its base within a particular discipline and those people taught that particularly (Christine Y).

This was sometimes the result of strong voices in the Faculty who wanted to retain their expert fields. While the intention of the Faculty was to create a more inter-disciplinary and efficient unit,

Universities and Faculties and people work to a certain extent autonomously. Although we consult with one another in that regard...we assume that we have the same kind of philosophy towards what we are teaching (ibid).

However, there has been consultation, especially in response to student complaints about overlaps of content, and changes have been negotiated to eliminate these.

Jane cast a different perspective on how the Faculty operates on curriculum processes. She held that while there were many good intentions, the reality was a bit different. In practice there was little teamwork and people still tended to work in very isolated ways: "I share a course with two people, and we can hardly every manage to meet – so the course is meant to be integrated but in fact its not – I find it incredibly frustrating..."

In her opinion programmes did not substantively change, rather they continued to be tweaked to fit this or that requirement. While the Faculty was sincerely committed to a critical approach, this often could not happen because of the volume of work to be completed in very little time. She expressed feelings of inadequacy in relation to preparing students to cope with the real issues in schools. The Faculty, she felt, needed a sustained joint process rather than once off responses to immediate issues:



Its not a once off planning session, no, it needs a research agenda attached to it but part of the problem in the Faculty is that everyone's working in a corner and there's not coherent pulling together around the PGCE...a lot more energy goes into Honours and Masters because its easier (Jane Y).

People in the academy seemed reluctant to share or expose their work to scrutiny, preferring a strongly individualist culture. What she called 'ideological' debates around, for example, the emphasis in the teacher education programme seemed to occupy much of the Faculty collegial space, and the same debates appeared to arise from time to time, with very little follow up action, to the extent that she felt that she was missing some obvious problem which was clear to everyone else: "...then you never move forward, and you never engage with the knowledge base...you're always fighting the same abstract debate". Personal agendas were often masked as obstacles that could not be overcome, and she admitted her own reluctance to pursue big changes that she did not feel able to undertake.

Louisa emphasised that in spite of the differences within a Faculty or between the approaches of lecturers, "that is a challenging thing and not something that impedes discussion". It seemed to her an ideal that common forums and common understanding should be sought, especially through peer and self-review, although she acknowledged that, "getting people together is not always easy".

Luke answered somewhat tongue in cheek when asked about Faculty curriculum processes, that they don't exist, and certainly hadn't even when he had worked in other faculties in the 70's and 80's: "everybody more or less did their own thing". In his view faculties don't question themselves too much. When the discipline department boundaries disappeared there were more joint conversations in committees, but these were to facilitate central planning - changes were more structural than curricular.

## **How Did Faculty Y Respond to Government Policy Directives?**

Amy related her dilemma in trying to respond appropriately to policy on an intellectual level, but also having to deal with the 'mechanics' of its requirements:

On the one hand I found myself needing to think deeply and philosophically about this new curriculum, is it educationally sound, is it morally right, all of those things and on the other hand I have to sit with a calculator and add...the credits, which is completely the other side of what I've been doing (Amy Y).

The language of policy is wide open to interpretation, for example, Jacob felt that 'contextually relevant pedagogy' (one of the curriculum statements in the qualification) could be debated in conferences and research for many years. Was a standardised curriculum and pedagogy that is contextually relevant not ultimately contradictory terms? This, he thought, required a teacher education fraternity to undertake the intellectual scrutiny which curriculum requires, but such an initiative would need leadership. Jacob's view is that lecturers need a network of teacher educators that can deal with the hard questions around common interpretations. It was felt that leadership was needed on vague policy matters, where various interpretations were being made for the sake of expediency. Leadership is also needed to ensure that faculty in education commit to their core business and make tough decisions about this, for example, research must be based in teacher education, not in discrete and disconnected subject disciplines:

There's lots of research going on in the Faculty. But the research isn't around teacher education issues and the research in teacher education...is very scrappy...(Jacob Y)

Lecturers also felt that certain policy interventions had been shortsighted, for example the closure of teacher education colleges, which lost the good along with what was bad in colleges. Jacob felt that universities were expected to do a

better job of teacher education, when they were themselves not properly clear on what needed to be done to make it better. He states it bluntly:

You toss them out and then you give the responsibility to faculties of education, but you somehow base that on the assumption that faculties of education can do this any better – and faculties of education that haven't been properly framed (Jacob Y).

University autonomy allows it to a certain extent to ignore prescription, policymakers therefore cannot dictate what faculties ought to do. Lecturers felt this was an important protection because there was cynicism about government policy as being a 'hit and miss' affair. In Luke's words:

I've never heard anybody coming and saying here's the policy you must use because you see, in a sense that's antithetical to a university's way of doing things. So you can ignore it because its something you don't really want to acknowledge (Luke Y).

The irony of government policy on teacher education is, he maintains, that teacher education is marginalized in universities in spite of its supposed significance for the country, and Faculties of Education are battling to survive on their low funding norms. While government is seen as wielding a 'big stick' at higher education in the form of performance benchmarks and deliverables, academics see teacher education in University Y as critical to the country because historically it has served marginalized groups, which it still needs to do for a variety of reasons, as Luke explains:

How do you put a Faculty of Education out of business when there isn't another place where you can train as a 'coloured' or 'black' teacher and feel comfortable...in a way, the government has backed itself into a corner. It has to see that we work (Luke Y).

Faculty Y believes that it needs to produce the teachers who are needed in the country's most under-resourced schools. Faculty members are confident that the people they train will go where they are needed as opposed to the older white

universities where the student teacher cohort is largely white and unlikely to be inclined to service the schools which sorely need them:

What you confidently know is that the people you are teaching are actually going to be the people who teach in the townships...its these people or nobody...I think in that way we're probably quite different from any other of the older, white universities...(ibid)

At a curriculum level faculty responded to the first set of policy requirements by identifying the gaps in their current programme and then putting in the missing pieces. Lecturers felt that the prescribed time frames in terms of the number of credits assigned, set limits to what could be achieved. Amy, who was closely involved in the policy compliance exercise, spoke about the technical activity of trying to fit the components of the programme into separate outcomes that were very 'fluid'. Dividing the content of the course into assigned credits seemed to break up the components artificially, and was at odds with attempts to design a more 'integrated' curriculum, for example, education theory and the method subjects are separate credit components yet in practice they are inter-connected. Complying therefore became a 'mix and match' exercise where parts of the old disciplines could be fitted into any of the modules, as she describes:

...what I struggled with was the fluidity...that existed between...the different components in the DoE's requirements. Because even though it stated supposedly very clearly, this is the exit level outcome and these are the competencies, there's a lot of movement and play between one and the other. So it wasn't always easy for me to be able to do the sums and say well, this component is ...for this particular thing and therefore these credits belong there...(Amy Y).

What resulted was compliance at a macro level followed by a closer check-listing to ensure that all the bits and pieces appeared there. Faculty feel that the roles specified and the approach to teaching and learning are too technical and do not take the realities of classrooms into account. The Faculty programme therefore intended to foreground the context and the values of the school system. Weighing up parts of the course in terms of the available credits meant that

decisions had to be made about how much subject matter knowledge, education theory and supplementary modules could be fitted together. As Amy says of the undergraduate programme, “there’s just so much that you can actually have happen over four years”. Jacob thought that the Faculty had constructed all the different pieces without having a common base from which the parts could flow logically. There were ideas for streamlining in the future but he doubted that it would actually happen because it would need sustained time and commitment which was often in short supply in the Faculty.

Jane deliberated on her disappointment with the effects of some government policies that seemed to have ‘lost the plot’ and appeared to no longer recognise the problem areas that had intended to be addressed at the outset:

...I think it’s (the policy intentions post 1994) just disappeared, got out of hand and in the way its being interpreted, its destroyed the initial theory behind it (Jane Y)

Schools seemed to continue to be chaotic places where it was a struggle for learning simply to take place in spite of government election promises and early policy design to overcome the legacy of dysfunctional schools. How were teacher educators then to prepare teachers for such schools? In spite of attempts to foreground the contexts of schools, it still felt as though teachers were being prepared for a ‘default’ school which faculty did not believe resembles the reality.

Faculty seemed not to be sure about how far they had to move: ‘How much change is necessary?’ was the question. There was some scepticism about the likely impact of policy and whether the goals were realistic, in fact, Luke thought that there were many (policymakers) who were pretending it could work, and some were even naïve enough to believe that it could. He expressed this graphically:

In reality I think many people in our Department of Education, because they are so new to all of this, imagine you just make these pretty pictures and they just happen somehow or other. Anybody could tell them, look, that's not going to happen. So the poor teachers on the other end are just completely despairing of the...weight of paper that they all know is undoable (Luke Y).

## **Synthesis**

*What informs the pre-service teacher education curriculum in Faculty Y and how have faculty responded to curriculum requirements embedded in government policies?*

University Y has a history of struggle, and it appears that this legacy is infused with the evolution of teacher education in the Faculty of Education to date. The 1980s marked a turning point in the Faculty, when the discourses of critical pedagogy, emancipatory action research and 'the teacher as change agent' took root and produced a cadre of intellectuals brimming with anti-establishment fervour. Resistance politics gave a particular flavour to the academic enterprise, and this is still much in evidence in the dialogues and responses of academics in the Faculty, most of whom (the tenured staff anyway) have been through this life and times with the Faculty. More recently appointed staff (within the last 10 years or so) came into the Faculty with a similar mindset and ideology. There are numerous references to this 'commonly assumed' social consciousness within which faculty act and interact.

It is important to state this background for Faculty Y, because so much of this lived experience is evident in faculty ways of thinking and seeing. In the 1980s when teacher education bursaries were freely available and black students had few occupational options (teaching being regarded as a 'respectable' one), lecture theatres were packed to capacity and teachers were turned out at a heady pace. By 1998 when the tide turned, staff had to be retrenched and pre-service education started to look decidedly unattractive. The Faculty then turned

its attention to in-service education, both to preserve faculty jobs and recognising a market that required upgrading of skills to cope with a new school curriculum. The students which Faculty Y (and the University) had sought to nurture in a 'critical consciousness' mode were no longer arriving at its doors – in fact, the Faculty was being encouraged to go out to where the students were, leading to programmes delivered further afield on community sites.

Teacher education curricula underwent several changes in response to the requirements of 1998-2000 policies. 'Preparing to Teach in the South Today' was an attempt to bring the various parts of the course together under a more 'cross-disciplinary' umbrella, together with a recognition of the contextual and current knowledge which teachers might need. A later revision broadened the organising theme to 'what makes a good teaching environment' and unpacked what this might mean into constituent components of the programme. The 'context' of teaching and 'classroom realities' are said to guide what goes into the curriculum, underpinned by a 'social reconstructionist' paradigm and pedagogy. This context is understood to be that of the majority of South African schools – socially dysfunctional, poorly resourced and not conducive to learning - where the students of Faculty Y, black, working class students, have largely come from and will in all likelihood go as beginning teachers. The module entitled 'Orderliness and Chaos' is indicative of this predisposition on the part of faculty. The kind of context students will be exposed to as described above, is assumed to be generally accepted and does not appear to be problematised in terms of its basis or its accuracy.

The School Based Teacher Education programme (a B.Ed. undergraduate programme, the SBTE) brought the contexts of schools sharply into focus, as the students on this programme are employed by schools as teaching assistants and are required to obtain a recognised teaching qualification. The Faculty, compelled to respond to an opportunity that would bring viable numbers of students into their programme, subsidised by the Sector Education and Training

Authority (ETDP SETA) of the Department of Labour, had to adapt their programme to suit the available learning time of the students. In the process, policy requirements and the relevance of the programme content were interrogated. With the 'work' contexts of these new teacher education students so starkly exposed, faculty had to "frame those work contexts very rigorously and very carefully because these work contexts are not often functional contexts. There are struggles for education to happen" (Jacob Y). In fact, the learnership as it is known (a workplace based qualification) has had a major effect on the thinking about teacher education curricula for some faculty members but also for other faculty in the University.

The four-year undergraduate SBTE has resulted in a restructured B.Ed. Degree taken through the University decision-making structures, to effect changes to the calendar. In doing this, there has been a struggle to get other Faculties on the campus to participate in the teaching of the programme to avoid duplication, and to recognise that this degree commits students to a teaching career at the outset of their studies: "...the proposed B.Ed is designed for the student who wishes to qualify as a teacher. So we're not making any bones about it at all" (Amy Y). Amy relates how hard it was for other faculties to understand that these students are prospective teachers who need some induction into 'school knowledge' as well as the broad subject matter knowledge they receive in the Faculty: "and it doesn't necessarily mean that we want to teach 3<sup>rd</sup> year students everything they have to teach their learners, but it does have to do with perspective and exposure and how it is that they think things through..." (Amy Y).

Those driving the 'learnership' programme in the Faculty are enthusiastic and excited about the possibilities of this teacher education model. They maintain that taking it through the system has forced them to re-think how knowledge for teaching, subject matter knowledge and other components required by the policy can be fitted together in a coherent and thorough preparation programme for teaching. In contrast with the contracted PGCE, the new B.Ed allows sufficient



time for the student to be immersed in both the theory and the practice of teaching, in an authentic context that enables reflexivity to be built in. Jacob responds that the programme allows for 'conceptual scaffolding' and a strong disciplinary base to be established. He strongly believes that the students will benefit from being exposed to the hierarchical constructs of a sequentially presented education discipline through building a 'critical disposition', in spite of policy and Faculty shifts to collapse discipline boundaries.

The changes wrought by government policy interventions have been difficult for faculty. Moves towards programmes and inter-disciplinarity in the structures of the Faculty meant a loss of peer groups and identity as staff members left to take up positions in the new government, and others became displaced in the Faculty and went elsewhere. While new market opportunities (the learnership, for example) created by skills development policy and the downturn in traditional student numbers have been responded to, faculty have expressed their confusion with regard to what is being expected of them. An irony in the system according to faculty is that new qualifications are resulting in innovation, in spite of fewer jobs in teaching, fewer Faculty full-time staff and lower subsidy. Lecturers therefore feel they are being asked to keep more bits and pieces afloat with much less. The result of rationalising policy interventions, in their view, is that there are fewer institutions and fewer students of the demography, race, gender and language needed to transform the profession, which they understand to be a policy intention.

Those who have worked closely with policy relating to curriculum in the Faculty and have been innovative, feel somewhat isolated as they perceive a lack of commitment by colleagues who are content to 'let them get on with it'. Jane describes her unease with what she sees as a mismatch between the discourse in the Faculty and the lack of integratedness in the curriculum that she often experiences. Furthermore, there are tensions within the Faculty because of

different ways of doing and of understanding the business of the Faculty characterised as a 'professional versus academic debate'.

Lecturers make their own decisions about content and methodology, although some faculty who come from a different collegial environment, are not comfortable with what they see as a lack of accountability and transparency which they find to be at odds with the principles espoused in the Faculty. Amy thought that module descriptors, which some people found constraining, were useful for setting boundaries for what had to be included, while lecturers could be flexible about the methodology within that. However, she had found the exercise of matching modules to the qualification outcomes a 'technical' exercise, having to 'balance the sums' of course credits on the one hand, and the 'soundness' of the curriculum on the other, as outcomes were at the same time too 'fluid' and too artificially compartmentalised.

Faculty are of the view that government policies for schools and teachers are unrealistic and decontextualised. While policy prescription could at times be ignored and considered inapplicable, faculty have, in spite of their scepticism, complied with policy requirements in the interests of expediency, with what seems to be almost unanticipated positive effects on their curriculum.

In sum, academics in Faculty Y have responded to government education policies with a strong sense of commitment to the social goals of policies, but there is disappointment that some of the ideals that the anti-apartheid struggle fought to realise seem to have been forsaken.

Part III takes up the story of Faculty Z, whereafter a general reflection on the chapter is undertaken before the cross-case synthesis in Chapter Seven.

### **Part III: The Story of Faculty Z**

#### **The University Milieu**

University Z is situated in a tranquil valley among some of the best wine estates in the country. The University, which became an independent entity by an Act of Parliament in 1916, is one of the oldest universities in South Africa, has a proud Afrikaner heritage and a tradition of Afrikaans as the predominant language medium. It distinguished itself by counting among its graduates many of the politicians and prime ministers within the old nationalist government. As a traditional home for white Afrikaans speaking intellectuals in the province and beyond, the institution has had prominent family connections that extend across generations.

The University currently finds itself in the throes of political transformation and under huge pressure to become more representative of the cultural, linguistic and demographic diversity of the province and the country. A major sticking point in this endeavour is the issue of Afrikaans as the language of teaching and learning at the university at a time when South Africa has constitutionally recognised eleven official languages. The university has through the years had major benefactors committed to upholding its traditions, which it cannot afford to alienate. The white community within which the university is situated moreover, is a wealthy Afrikaans speaking community who perceive the university's attempts to diversify and create a multi-lingual environment, as an encroachment on a language and culture that they hold dear.

The University's Strategic Framework of 2000 obtainable from the website, in its Vision 2012 statement speaks to goals of diversity, tolerance, mutual respect and the like. It contains a statement about language, the seeming simplicity of which belies its heated contestation: "Afrikaans is accepted as a language of teaching,

scholarship and science, successful in giving students access to world-class scholarly and scientific practice in a uniquely multilingual context". Currently, the University is running a public campaign in the country's major newspapers outlining and arguing the case for a multi-lingual approach that does not threaten the cultural heritage of which the Afrikaner community is so fiercely protective. How this campaign will play itself out and the outcomes that will be reached remain to be seen.

The University also states that it prizes as one of its values, its 'academic freedom' and asserts in no uncertain terms that, "we reject unreasonable strictures of any kind on our endeavours". Of course the evaluation of what may be considered 'reasonable' or 'unreasonable' in the present context is open to debate.

Faculty members interviewed were concerned about attracting black students to the University in order to diversify the student population. Especially in education, the greater majority of students are white and female who, it is said, are not going to enter black schools in significant numbers. Herman, a faculty member appointed in the early 1990's, said he was aware that many of his students, of which the cohort is 98% white, will go abroad for some time:

And for me, that is a moral dilemma, because in the first place this country has a real need for trained teachers...the country supports them, subsidises their education, and gets very little out of them. I would want to say that we have to look at that aspect of teacher education, because who are we training these teachers for? Shouldn't our priority be to train teachers that will enter the South African market? (Herman Z)

On the other hand though, the view was expressed that a black student who was not Afrikaans speaking would feel 'entirely alien' on the campus because of the 'inaccessibility' of campus life. The university social structures were largely tied to language, which are accompanied by culture and traditions.

For teaching in Mathematics and the Sciences, Ben, an established Faculty member, thought that the academic requirements for entry were too high in the first instance, given that very few black schools offer higher grade Mathematics, and black students are thus excluded anyway. To address the shortcomings in Maths education, the Faculty was restructuring the programme to build in a foundation year and also trying to get funding for bursaries. Without bursaries, Ben thought few black students could afford to attend the University, as he said: “you can’t try and get students here if you can’t help them to fund their studies”.

Black academics feel the race and cultural issues keenly in more insidious ways among the student population: “...if you are a black academic it means that you cannot be a good teacher (student perceptions)...so you have to ...prove yourself to students and they will be very critical”. Frank, an outspoken lecturer who wants to see the Faculty transform, described the Afrikaans culture as one of “beleefdheid” (politeness), where a benign didactic style is employed and there is a ‘respectful’ relationship between student and lecturer. Lecturers from a different paradigm who adopt a challenging, provocative style are not popular and “students are highly critical of you in their reports, it’s not something that they are used to”. Students appear to feel more comfortable in classes where the lecturer is from a similar (white and Afrikaans) background. Frank felt strongly that race is still, and will be for some time into the future, a defining characteristic in the institution. Relationships between faculty members have slowly begun to improve, building trust and respect based on excellence in the academic enterprise rather than where people are from, but this had been hard won.

The many barriers are seen as a historical consequence, ‘baggage’ which cannot just be wished away, since the University could not alienate its traditional target groupings either. Lecturers say they are making efforts to accommodate student preferences by ensuring that lecture notes are in one of two languages at least.

## **Pre-Service Education in the Faculty**

Faculty Z has a similarly long history, being established with its first Professor of Education in 1911 even before the university became autonomous. The vision of the Faculty is ‘to take a leading role in the creation of quality educational opportunities for lifelong learning through its research, teaching and other services, where both individual and social development are well served’ (Faculty Calendar, 2005). Skills the Faculty aims to develop in its students are stated as the following: communication, conflict management, critical and creative philosophical thinking, time management, enthusiasm, leadership and teamwork. The Faculty recognises that its students of education may make inputs in a range of other professional areas, and this appears to be encouraged. With particular reference to government policy, the Faculty calendar states its intention to ‘make the concept of outcomes based education effective both in subject contexts and in the school context’ (2005).

The Faculty is structured into four Departments – Curriculum Studies (previously the Didactics Department), Education Policy (which includes Philosophy and Education Administration), Education Psychology (including a special education unit) and Sport Science. There were previously ten departments that were rationalised to four. Don, an experienced lecturer with more than ten years in this Faculty, explains that in the 1970s, academics built departments, ‘empires’, around their research and theoretical positions because, “higher education was allowed to grow very fast and...bodies of knowledge...were given legitimate space in the curriculum”. In those days, he says, one simply asked for more lecturers in order to grow your area of work. A rationalisation climate brought about by policy after 1994 therefore, in addition to reducing the faculty structurally, was also rationalising ‘knowledge’ in his view:

So we mustn’t underestimate how the economic and financial constraints have now impacted on the need to rationalise knowledge as well at higher education (Don Z).

The amalgamation into four departments, particularly the education philosophy and the management merger, threw together people with very different orientations “there were people who wouldn’t talk to one another here. They said, what has a philosopher got to tell me about education management?”

Faculty Z offers a PGCE which prepares students for the Senior and FET phases of schools, the objectives of which are stated as relating directly to current developments in the school syllabus and offering an ‘outcomes based approach’ to the initial training of teachers. Compulsory modules are Didactics, Education Psychology, Philosophy of Education, Education Management and Teaching Practice. Curriculum studies (Didactics) have three focus areas that the different subject matter methods have to fit into: Mathematics, Science and Technology, Languages and Social Sciences.

The B.Ed. (General) is a four-year degree programme that allows for specialisation in the Foundation, Intermediate or Senior phases of the General Education band of schooling. The student guide offers students an ‘outcomes based education programme’ which, it says, will prepare students well for the OBE programmes being offered at schools. There are also two programmes called ‘integrated programmes’, one of which is situated in the Faculty of Natural Sciences (the B.Sc Ed.) where students do science modules in that Faculty and PGCE education modules in the Education Faculty, and the B.Psych. programme which is a combination of Arts and Education modules spread over four years.

Faculty Planning documents (2005) outline four factors that have influenced the planning of a ‘new’ teacher education programme as follows: non-statutory factors (university priorities, roleplayers’ perspectives, South African realities and education needs, international research perspectives on teacher education); statutory factors (SAQA and the NQF, registered qualifications, level descriptors); Norms and Standards for Educators (SA Council of Educators, Curriculum 2005,

DoE project); Integrated Assessment requirements (Foundational, Reflexive, Practical competences). In spite of this, a faculty member feels that the programme 'hasn't changed much in 20 years'.

Faculty Z makes use of part time staff to teach on some of the programmes and acknowledges some of the difficulties associated with this, for example, the building of intellectual capital and experience in the Faculty is problematic when lecturers are not long-term employees.

### **A Broad Overview of the Pre-Service Curriculum**

The student course guide describes General Didactics as an introduction to the field which includes 'didactic principles of teaching and learning', micro-curriculation, basic forms of methodology and delivery such as dialogue, group work, experience based teaching methods and evaluation and assessment. It focuses on the teacher's role and functions in curriculum development, within an outcomes based approach.

Education Psychology deals with personality psychology and personality theories of Freud, Adler, Jung, Bandura, Rogers, Maslow, Allport. The aim of the course, it says, is to enable students to judge for themselves what a given theory implies for classroom practice and to then cope with such implications.

Education Management and Policy studies provide perspectives on the education system and look at classrooms in local, national and global contexts. The course examines contemporary management challenges for teachers with regard to discipline, change, community relations, accountability, diversity and the law as it affects educators.

Philosophy of Education deals with the concepts of education, teaching and training, and traditions of analytical and critical thought in education philosophy.



Issues of ideology, values education, multiculturalism, democratic education and other socio-pedagogical perspectives on knowledge are also covered in the course. The rationale of the 'Philosophical and Sociological Perspectives on Education' module is stated as "To engender a critical, self-reflective teacher who can contribute towards the democratisation of whole school development". A volume of readings from the International Handbook of Methods in Philosophy of Education edited by Burbules and Warnick, is provided as part of the students' reading material, chapters on critical thinking from Blackwell's Guide to Philosophy of Education and writings by some of the professors in the Faculty.

Teaching Practice or school experience is a compulsory element of the professional programme but it is also here that the race factor bedevils the intentions of policy. Herman spoke of his disquiet at the practice, unstated but observable, that white students generally went to white schools for practice teaching and black students went to black schools. The problem he says is, "we are not exposing prospective teachers to the world out there, to the real South Africa". He adds:

We have an obligation to send people out during the course of their training, to as many different school contexts as possible...because many of our students come from privileged backgrounds in any case...so during the course of their training they should be exposed to others (Herman Z).

### **Dominant Pedagogies, Theories, Frameworks and Beliefs in Faculty Z**

Ben felt that research in the Mathematics Education programme was too far removed from the needs of South Africa and its current problems, hence his interest in a teacher education programme which could assist to make a shift. He referred to international examples where a very 'practical' approach was followed, an approach he was trying to infuse into his curriculum here. While Outcomes Based Education was attempting to foster more problem based learning, there were still many myths, according to him, which teachers had to

work through, for example, their group work techniques, generally associated with OBE in South Africa, which often did not result in much learning:

...when you do it (groupwork), problem-based and you try and get the students involved, you have to shut your mouth but you have to prepare much better in the way in which you ask the questions, and what you ask (Ben Z).

Academics have 'personal epistemologies' which are shaped by their experiences, their own schooling, the era they lived through and their peers. This means that a knowledge base might not be a reality because,

...I experience academia as quite isolated in terms of individuals. There is very little discourse. One lecturer can be passionate and moved by a personal meeting...you can read a book that changes your outlook...(Don Z)

Curriculum, Don adds, might only change when the old order leaves through natural attrition, since often they are simply unable to change their long-standing, established ways of doing. People have traditionally worked in areas that serve their interests and which have brought them personal satisfaction and, "whatever debate and vigour there is, there are some boundaries which people are not willing to cross".

Newer lecturers are trying to introduce a more critical culture and different lenses, for example, the lenses of empowerment as theorised by Derrida and Foucault into a relatively conservative course like education management. Don explained how this could revitalise a course which might otherwise stagnate, but this kind of initiative was not always possible: "you need the kind of people who have been reading across the other disciplines to maybe read right out of management and then bring back into management new challenging thoughts". In spite of the language of an inter-disciplinary approach being spoken however, the reward system in the University was still based on publishing 'within a discipline', "so at the end of the day you've also got to serve your own discipline,

under pressure for National Research Fund (NRF) ratings or whatever, people have got to do that kind of thing” (Don Z). However, the course aims to produce a ‘student’ of education, one who is empowered to understand and reflect critically on his or her role as an educator within the context of classroom practice and the rules of society: “so our departure point is sociological and political. We’re not coming along with management as if it is just a performance of skills” (ibid).

This approach at times clashes with the student culture that is generally not a questioning one. Students have worked in a different paradigm, largely passive and subservient, which makes curriculum change difficult. Some lecturers also speak the language of critical reflection and attempt to deal with issues of knowledge, power and authority, but are in their own practice more ‘conformist than critical’, preferring to ‘implement rather than critically evaluate’. Don explains:

Here I think academia lets students down in the sense that they have managed to get by passing exams, reproducing knowledge, working the system in their own way, and then you come along (making different demands)...(ibid).

Theory, it was said, needs to reflect the debates within practice rather than giving students a mechanistic view of teaching which they appeared to want in more ‘practicals’. The term ‘deliberative’ was used to describe how students need to become more critical and ‘thoughtful’, a stance which was not encouraged by the University rote-learning system and exam preparation. This attitude, Frank avers, leaves very little room to explore ‘imaginative possibilities’ in education, as “structure and conclusiveness (the exam) seem to dominate our programme, and there is no openness, no open-endedness about our texts and how we relate to them” (Frank Z). Student attitudes in the Faculty were ‘recipe focused’ and were resistant to the lecturer’s critical reflective approach, which was contrary to their expectations. Jeff, a long-standing Faculty member, agreed, saying that to some students, “thinking is a new experience. So you have your ideal but you have this

conflict also with what they have been exposed to over a number of years” (Jeff Z).

While ‘grand theories’ such as positivism, interpretivism, critical theory and constructivism laid a ‘theoretical grounding for teaching practice’, the discourse had to be critical and integrative, linking concepts with school practice and being expressed in the language of the student. The idea being conveyed to the students was that one could argue a position from any of the theoretical perspectives, and that they should be able to recognise which perspective was being used.

Herman spoke about his leaning toward analytical philosophy as a result of his own university experience, the influence of the Kenton conferences and because this framework seemed to explain education policy development in the country well. Pedagogy, he argued, is closely tied to an academic’s research interests, ‘it has to be because this is what defines them’. As a post 1994 appointee to the Faculty, and from a tradition of critical theory, his view was that Faculty Z has a different mindset. This is why it is important for education to have common denominators, since people’s choices of theory might only reflect what they value:

For the good of the country we need a common denominator, there must be some common understandings about education and the needs of society out there...because in the absence of that we will never be able to move forward (Herman Z).

Irma, who has many years of experience in this University, argued that teacher education should rather focus on making a difference in students’ teaching techniques, because she doubted if it could change their perceptions or paradigms in the short time they spent in the Faculty. Students needed to gain experience in order to deepen their understanding of the philosophy and this would take time. She saw her role as educator to make some links for them that

they could adapt as required: "...to help them to understand change so that is also the sort of emotional element in the curriculum". Her view is that teacher education should not only prepare students for teaching, as there were a range of other options open to teachers, for example, publishing, private tuition and so on, hence she brings additional business skills into her course.

Marie, with many years in the Faculty and a strong school-teaching background, thought that providing 'some' theory is important although she was not sure where the particular selection for her course had derived from. Possibly it had to do with the personal interests of the previous lecturer. Her opinion was that lecturers generally decide on what's important in order to look after their own interests in the Faculty. The most important element of the teacher education programme, she thought, was finding the balance between theory and practice. Jeff referred to the micro-teaching environment created whereby the Faculty bused in school pupils to the campus so that students could do practice teaching in a controlled environment. While students criticised this as 'artificial', Jeff argued that 'it is a clinical situation where you can analyse and you can concentrate on this. And it has helped students'. The learning, he said, lay not only in the teaching experience, but in the discussion with peers afterwards.

'What makes our students teachers and not plumbers?' This was the question posed by Roger, a younger 'activist' academic, as he considered the issue of what a body of knowledge for teacher education ought to be. He used the term 'front-load' to describe what teachers are taught up-front in the university, "a bit of the basics" before they actually went on to acquire the 'real' learning as they taught in schools. He argued that even though it was difficult to decide upfront what teachers needed to start teaching, the poorly defined knowledge base of teacher education made it difficult to defend the professionalism of teachers. The reason for the poorly developed knowledge base in his view, was the low status afforded to teacher education and people involved that research. He also got annoyed with people who thought that teachers didn't need training, and that

anyone could teach based on his/her own experiences of school. The fact that education could be framed in many ways exacerbated the problem:

And everybody has their own ideas of what a good teacher is. That's got to fit in with your own lens, your own framework or choice or preference, whatever you privilege (Roger Z).

When asked about his own framework for teacher education, he said that he tended towards social constructivism, which he linked to Zeichner's work in the United States. One could only do a limited amount of input up-front he said, informed by policy or what one considered theoretically sound, but then one needed strong partnerships with schools so that teachers could inform successive curriculum decisions. Irma's view was that licensing via a professional board for teachers, as in other professions, would be the only way to bring some uniformity to the way in which teachers are being trained.

### **Curriculum Processes in Faculty Z**

What informs the curriculum processes of individual lecturers in Faculty Z?

In the Mathematics Education programme, Ben was clearly focused on the needs of mathematics pupils in schools, with regard to the new school curriculum. This, he said, should inform what the pre-service educator was exposed to in the teacher education programme. It was particularly necessary in view of the fact that the subject matter departments rarely changed their curriculum to suit the needs of beginning teachers, and the Education Faculty often had to teach the more specific 'school syllabus' parts of the subject matter. This had to include the pedagogies and theories of 'functional' mathematics and teachers had to learn how to make pupils use and love the subject rather than being fearful of it. Problem solving approaches, practical situations and 'realistic' mathematics were ways in which this could be made possible. Theory should be deduced from the mathematical situations:

We try and start from a practical situation and develop the maths in this practical situation and then afterwards we try and formalise it, the principles and say okay, we have done that now, we give it a name afterwards (Ben Z).

In the education management course, Don had searched for a body of knowledge that was critical of the traditional approaches to management, and borrowed from the critical interpretive approach of the Philosophy course so that the management course could be located within a broader social discourse. The traditional base of education management no longer seemed satisfactory, but there was not yet an alternative body of knowledge to replace it with. The course is still in its 'incubus', experimenting with a different format based on the interplay of themes rather than discrete items.

The Philosophy course uses a narrative approach to encourage students to articulate their own theories and conclusions, and teaches students to analyse policy from different angles using more than one methodology. Philosophy is seen as a theoretical tool to help students understand the classroom situation. Students are more comfortable with some theories than with others depending on their experience and the cultural baggage that they carry. Herman says of his course:

What we try to emphasise is that the educator needs certain tools to make meaning of the school situation. And whichever of those methodologies work at a given time, should then be applied...its up to the individual to decide because some people feel more comfortable with certain theories. And if the theory can have an impact on the improvement of educational practice then we would like to encourage that (Herman Z).

When asked how a lecturer might interpret a particular outcome in the teacher education qualification and what it required in the curriculum, Herman answered:

It has always been interpreted via the established subject discipline. That is what I do because that is what I have been trained for...so when I interpret policy I do it from that angle, and other people, I assume, do it in a similar fashion. Otherwise what would we be? (Herman Z).

Lecturers stated that they thought in discipline terms based on their own training as a specialist in that field. They built the curriculum around their own strengths and interests and used research to inform their curricula as well. In some instances Irma had found that PGCE students because of their broader academic training, coped better with more advanced theories in education, or with doing more independent work than the B.Ed students. In Irma's course, her programme was very much based on current international research being done.

Various resources such as books, articles and other academic inputs are used to construct curricula, and policy appeared to play an important guiding role. Marie said she had used her own interests to add to an existing module. In her experience lecturers held diverse views on what was important and could argue for what they believed as long as they kept the broad framework in place. The content of a course would only be interrogated or questioned if there was a complaint from the students:

So if they complain about a lecturer or a module then we go into that and then see what to do about it, but I would say we are very much free in deciding what we are to do (Marie Z).

In her considerable experience in the Faculty, a lecturer would not intervene in the curriculum decisions of a new lecturer unless the person requested assistance, which was not often, as people preferred to do things their own way. Marie's curriculum process was to base her course on her own experience as a classroom teacher, but also to listen to the input from teachers when she visited schools to supervise students on teaching practice. She maintained that student feedback was also important to her. Even though she tried to keep up with new research, 'time was an issue' given all a lecturer's obligations.



Jeff felt that too much independent decision-making was not always good for the coherence of the program. In trying to coordinate a programme, he found it hard to get lecturers together to agree on selections as “once again the different persons had different views on what should be included”. Curriculum choices were made in terms of the lecturers’ own lens and selections were privileged in this way. There was not always a common vision of teacher education and its purposes. When asked whether, and how, more consistency could be achieved in teacher education, Irma questioned whether this should be the goal, because otherwise how would one university have the edge over another’s training? What would distinguish University X from University Z in the minds of the client?

Roger felt that ‘people drove the programmes’ and defined their character. He worried that faculty members did not all accept their core business to be teacher education. He developed his own curriculum by doing a literature review on the relevant theory and then consulting the policy guidelines.

A plethora of new faculty structures and processes were put in place to restructure curriculum in response to new teacher education requirements. While programme committees were supposed to oversee developments, they were often seen as merely bureaucratic and compliance focused rather than serious about change. A lecturer felt that all the bureaucracy could stifle innovation and flexibility, and become unwieldy.

Modules are limited to available staffing, which are still located in education disciplines and ‘separate’ subjects. In spite of mergers of education discipline departments, there has been fierce protection of disciplinary knowledge domains because departments are evaluated for their research output, which has made renegotiating a more cross-disciplinary knowledge base for teacher education difficult. Academics have been unable to deconstruct their own discipline in order

to build something new. Programmes work in isolation and seldom connect, as Frank explains:

The only time that those people will really meet and talk to one another is when they conceptualise curriculum, as we have done now, and never after that (Frank Z).

Some faculty members are critical of the Faculty's response to a market driven culture and say that change is not driven by intellectual endeavour but by turf protection concerns, "programmes have to be marketable...so the market oriented logic seems to be the driving principle rather than the pedagogical" (ibid).

Programme committees were critiqued as being consumed by technical issues and pedantically 'paper driven' rather than getting involved in substantive engagement. Departments tended to cooperate only to respond to immediate issues and then lapse.

Expertise in the Faculty drives the curriculum content. Recent curriculum development was an opportunity to include current developments, but the course still needs integration. There are intentions to streamline the programme around particular themes, particularly in the Philosophy department. Don describes how the resultant four modules in the department reflect a changing approach to a more integrated curriculum:

It's a changing theoretical approach, a far more critical interpretive approach where any student who studies those four (modules) is going to find a lot of resonance between them, even though they are 'disciplinary separate' (Don Z).

Marie described some heated debates about changes to the programme when they tried to decide what knowledge should be included and for what specific context. Lecturers generally deal with their own course content after they have

decided on the overall structure of the course. Marie feels this is appropriate, as programme committees have enough work without being bogged down in issues around content.

Roger thought that curriculum conversations were superficial and not sustained due to limited interest from academics as colleagues are not all agreed on the value of pre-service teacher education. While opportunities are created for structured conversations, people don't take it because "somehow people are busy, so busy with doing lots of things".

There appears to be sharp divisions in the Faculty between lecturers who teach on the pre-service teacher education programmes (largely newer faculty members) and more established academics who work with postgraduate/higher professional degrees and produce research:

We'll (academics in the Faculty) write ten publications on (a) particular topic and it doesn't reflect at all on how teachers might benefit from that or how we actually are making that impact on our programmes...and of course, if you teach on the B.Ed. programme that's really not the best programme to teach on, you'd rather do postgraduate stuff and other kinds of research. So there's that divide here as well (Roger Z) (my parentheses).

Teacher education lecturers feel there is little regard for the pre-service component as academics build their profiles, and their power bases, within their own research interests:

It's the way things work in the Faculty. You become powerful through your number of publications, that's your power base. So you can say...teacher education is trivial stuff. We all know that, why do we need to research on it...we must do research about teacher education, but we mustn't prepare teachers, that's not our work (ibid).

Given the University emphasis on research, teacher education is seen as mundane and not worthy of 'big' discussions:

...the only thing that matters is research publications so you need to start churning out publications on teacher education and then we can take the whole debate seriously...so the debate gets to a point and that's where it disappears. We've got lots of ideas around practice teaching...so that's done by 3 people ...(ibid).

Frank emphasises that there is a strange dichotomy between teaching and research, whereas his view is that research in teacher education should engage with issues of teaching and learning otherwise “you cannot expect more challenging moments to happen in the teacher education arena”. Furthermore, he asserts, “there has to be a complementary relationship between the two. What you publish has to do with what you teach and what is being learned” (Frank Z). Since the reward system at University privileges research, “you basically sentence (some lecturers) to a low level job (teaching) and remuneration and no opportunities for promotion” (Roger Z). Roger feels that the Faculty needs to commit to teacher education as its core business so that ‘it becomes an important issue in the Faculty’ worthy of an investment in time and effort. As he says, “you may be doing philosophy, you may be doing policy, but you’re all involved in teacher education”. There is pressure on academics to publish and this keeps them publishing in the disciplines that they are comfortable in and can get recognition for, rather than teacher education per se.

Policy has been a key driver of change initiatives, but individuals have interpreted requirements in their own ways. Curriculum change tends to be done within departments rather than being ‘formal conversations’ which involve the whole Faculty. Department discussions can only ever reach a certain point before they fizzle because all the right people are never present, which results in protracted timeframes and little action:

There's still the problem of people of departments being very territorial, so that's where we end up, our debates, they don't go beyond a certain point because of that. And then getting everybody together is your biggest problem...I think those are genuine impediments to progress and to having good debate (Roger Z).

Jeff was more upbeat about the changes that have occurred thus far. He describes it as not just "thumb-suck, we researched it, we talked to teachers..." Where the name of the course changed, he says, they tried to change the content as well so that it wasn't just a structural adjustment.

### **How Did Faculty Z Respond to Government Policy Directives?**

Faculty members are of the view that government policies have over-regulated education, the implication of which is that there is no trust in the system. For example, teachers are buckling under the weight of evidence they are required to keep in portfolios, the initially sound assessment principle getting lost in the process. Ultimately, Ben averred, at any level of the system, those who want to subvert the regulations will do so while others will do a good job irrespective of regulation.

The Faculty attempted to respond to policy by reconceptualising the curriculum for the PGCE in line with policy developments. Frank critiques just 'going through the motions':

...so you can change all those titles and the names so the content can also be different, but the kind of vigorous, critical enquiry cannot happen in the classroom...we are responding symbolically perhaps also to the new policy changes in teacher education but whether actual change happens in the classroom, that remains debatable (Frank Z)

He thinks it unlikely that there are many 'transformative moments' in the classroom at present given the predominantly subservient lecturer-student

culture. Unless that changes, he maintains, not much substantive change will happen.

Higher education has not played a leading role in policy guidance, as policymakers engage higher education but do not appear to want criticism or challenge. What contributed to this problem Don rationalises, was the fact that there were more 'critical intellectuals' in universities who could render credible critique prior to 1994 when there was opposition to the apartheid government. After 1994 when many of these intellectuals were taken into government positions, higher education experienced a paucity of critical responses as former Afrikaner universities could not suddenly become critical voices, at risk of being labelled reactionary. Erstwhile more radical colleagues, while still highly respected, could no longer render the kind of critique as before because, Don says

you can't remain critical with the best will in the world when you are part of implementation...because it is a political programme planned by the government. So you occupy a totally different space, and I think that what that left was a vacuum (Don Z).

Now a few years after policy development and rollout, he feels that it is becoming more possible to bring sound critique to bear again, as people are ready to be more reflective. Critique, he feels, should play a more constructive role, it should invite collaboration and bring problems into focus:

If you render critique about the problems with something, you're also acknowledging that even if you haven't got an alternative solution, that a solution is to work on the problem together...the first step to a solution is to problematise...you're maybe just rearranging it or refocusing it (ibid).

The Department of Education however, as the employer of teachers, tends to treat policy as prescription rather than guidelines or opportunities. With regard to school policy, it seemed that departments of education believed that by exposing teachers to the same training, one 'model' of OBE could be created, which Roger

described as expecting a “homogenised programme to churn out clones of the OBE teacher”. Some lecturers have responded to this by saying “they (the education department) can’t tell us what to do, we don’t work for them”. Some faculty members feel that they have to be critical and challenging, not just implement blindly. These different ways of seeing have caused divisions between policymakers and the various implementing agencies (departments of education, education faculties, schools) resulting in tension, which Herman feels is inevitable and healthy:

If you look at different facets of policy there has to be a tension, because...the people who draft the policy are not the people who have to implement the policy at school level (Herman Z).

Faculty members are optimistic about audits which policy has initiated, since audits will open institutional issues for inspection. Peer reviews have already resulted in valuable feedback. Benchmarking programmes could bring some commonality. People are still operating in their comfort zones, too ‘trapped within their historical context’ and don’t want to move too far from that. Some institutions have become too insular and comparison with others could assist them to make more realistic assessments of their own programmes:

we become so self-contained that you, eventually you believe yourself. If you say that you are the best then eventually you believe that...that is where the HEQC process will I think help us to get out of that (Jeff Z).

Some lecturers are confident that they have always been ahead of policy, so they have not had to change ‘too much’, as in Irma’s view her, “curriculum content will not be influenced, not at all, by policy...I changed long before any policy”.

As the social context varies so greatly for policy implementation, institutions should not be confined by having to do similar things. Academic freedom as a principle must be upheld and not ‘interfered with’:

my worry is what about my academic freedom and the responsibility to say, you are putting me in a box...I would be very worried if you want to take away my academic freedom (Irma Z).

While a constructivist perspective means that there will always be different ways to see reality, academics do see value in having some common starting points. They were not sure as to the exact intentions of policy, whether they were prescriptions or criteria for process.

Don stated that he advocated a pragmatic approach and cautioned his students about sticking too closely to policy, since policies 'come and go' and one could not change constantly:

I would say to my students be very careful either in committing yourself to belief in a particular policy at a particular time, as if that defines education. That is the policy for now. Just as that policy wasn't there ten years ago, that policy will change (Don Z).

While policy has certainly caused some useful introspection, lecturers were not fully convinced that policy was proceeding down the right pathway and therefore could not follow if they did not completely believe it was correct:

I think its technician,, the policy, the requirements aren't right and I don't want to slavishly follow that...we're not believing in the direction in which people are going (Roger Z).

Academics maintain it is important to keep a critical stance. The scramble to align with policy, Don argues, has been for market-oriented goals, which has started to define what knowledge is worthwhile:

So everything becomes one of coordination, of streamlining, of accountability, of people being clustered, topics being clustered, everything being orientated towards those performative and financial goals...people don't recognise how powerfully that operates in their own choices (Don Z).



Because of this orientation, policy could have window-dressing results and not result in genuine change. In any case, as Don explains, there are other bureaucratic inhibitors of change in a University, such as annual calendars where things have to be in print a year before the time, so that any changes would have to fall in line.

Policy should be seen as an outcome of contestation and open to change and debate, not imposed as if unproblematic. In the present system policy has set up 'policing' structures rather than relying on moral pressure. School policy has emphasised procedures and has resulted in technicist compliance where people don't engage critically with it. While teacher education academics have been resistant to policy changes they are under pressure to be relevant as students might not be able to cope in an environment that they have not been prepared for.

Policy compliance can be from within a critical stance, as policy also provides the space to be creative, but, Frank said, this was a view not shared by all his colleagues:

So we comply with regulation X and policy Y but not seriously engaging with how we can internalise the curriculum or the national curriculum statements or what we can do to improve on it. (Frank Z)

Lecturers admitted that it was difficult to decide what a common interpretation of the policy might be across institutions. Faculty Z had therefore made changes to their course structures and modules but had managed to keep everyone's specialisms within that and had shared out the available time to accommodate lecturers. They had also conducted an exercise to 'fit' the content to the outcomes but did not go into the detail of each lecturer's content as that was the individual's responsibility. Policy had tended to drive the structural issues, but had not driven 'formal discussions on teacher education. In any event, policy requirements were found to be too vague and open to interpretation. While

faculty did not welcome prescriptiveness, they thought there needed to be a balance between open interpretation and clear guidance, as Roger says, “there’s not absolute clarity, people want space, but I don’t know where the balance is”.

Academics were also challenged by students who regarded the expectations of teachers, given the context of schools, as unrealistic. In the absence of closer guidance, lecturers had argued about the weighting of ‘general principles’ as opposed to more specific requirements teachers faced, for example, assessment procedures:

There are people who argue about general principles of education but not about how you are going to implement for example continuous assessment in your subject. In that case when the students go to the schools they have to sort it out themselves. I think it is a bit far-fetched to expect that from the students (Ben Z).

Herman anticipated that even though the Faculty might presently be constructing the programmes around existing infrastructure and personnel rather than seriously considering the needs of society, this would probably shift over time as staff changes gradually brought in more diverse perspectives, and as the student profile gradually changed. Academics claim to just be doing what they think best:

some people are trying to make the policy work, others are engaging with it critically and then we have this other sword of Damocles, the audit...we are going to have to show delivery on the outcomes and I don’t know if we really have been doing that or have we just rewritten our frameworks in different jargon (Roger Z).

In sum, Faculty Z has responded to government education policies with a compliant bureaucratism that is contested ideologically by newer ‘activist’ academics speaking a language of transformation within a strong critical philosophy.

## Synthesis

*What informs the pre-service teacher education curriculum in Faculty Z and how have faculty responded to curriculum requirements embedded in government policies?*

It would be difficult to write about Faculty Z without describing the keenly felt tensions arising from a divided history where issues of race, language and culture are still starkly evident. Across the four departments in the Faculty are staff members who were appointed in the late nineties in terms of transformation initiatives, and who come from different traditions and backgrounds to their established colleagues. These lecturers speak in a similar political tone and seem to share ideologies and frameworks. They still experience struggles due their activist, critical pedagogies which are not mainstream in this location, but feel they have made headway in establishing their academic 'worth' and credibility in the Faculty, more so among their colleagues than the student body. The latter is largely white, Afrikaans and fairly well-off financially. Many come from homes with strong emotional and family ties to the University, which is part of a rooted, stable community.

Education students appear particularly conservative and sheltered within a comfort zone where the expectation of shared values with their lecturers is high. When this expectation is not met, faculty members concerned are criticised and made to feel alienated. These faculty members are frustrated that their attempts at building a more critical discourse that they feel teacher education needs, are met with resistance and confusion. It would seem that considerable advocacy would be needed to meet the stated skills which the Faculty aims to develop in its students, critical, creative thinking and conflict management to mention a few.

Established white faculty appear concerned at student reactions, but find them completely understandable given where the students come from and the

influence of their schooling, homes and religious affiliations. They argue that student perceptions are unlikely to be changed in the limited timeframe of the PGCE for example, and it would therefore be sensible to prepare them properly for the job of teaching rather than attempt to change their mind-sets. While the Faculty sees the necessity for attracting more black students, they acknowledge that there would be many hurdles for these students to overcome, not least of which are the language, culture and social practices in the broader institution. Other constraints are the poor school leaving achievements of black students, especially in mathematics and science, and the problem of affordability in the absence of state bursaries. The Faculty thus faces formidable challenges in diversifying the student body. While this is the case though, the current student profile perpetuates the attitudes, understandings and pedagogical practices which policy, one gathers, is attempting to shift.

Noteworthy in Faculty Z were some lecturers' views on the role of teacher education in preparing not only teachers, but building in options which could take students beyond the confines of the classroom. Irma, for example, felt that it was incorrect to pretend (as education qualifications in the Faculty do) that all students are going to teach in schools. She brought business skills into her course because students might desire to go into teaching-related careers like home-schooling, child-minding overseas or the educational publishing business. One wonders what this diversified orientation does to the idea of the teacher as a professional in a long-term career and developmental pathway.

Another strongly emerging theme was the division between 'research' as in discipline based research not necessarily related to the practice of teaching, and teacher preparation as a 'hands on', rather mundane activity. Perceptions in the Faculty, especially among the pre-service lecturers, were that the initial preparation of teachers was marginalized and under-valued. The preparation of teachers they felt, was not a 'faculty project' or seen as its 'core business', strange, as the Faculty offers a range of programmes for teaching in all the

phases of schooling from foundation (junior primary) to the senior and FET phase. They do not appear to be struggling to boost numbers or phasing out programmes, although there are a number of part-time lecturers employed because of the variety of subject methods offered. There is also a dedicated unit for education in Maths and Science teaching. The Faculty would therefore seem to be running a successful teacher education enterprise which would require involvement by many of its members, however it seems that pre-service education is left to a small number of ‘worker bees’.

There are differing views of what beginning teachers need, for example some lecturers held that the course should be about ‘general’ principles for teaching while others argued for methodological tools which would help students cope with OBE in schools. Personal epistemologies feature strongly in faculty curriculum development initiatives, within the broad framework created by policy requirements. Traditional education disciplines were necessary to develop critical tools and skills, in fact, it was asked ‘without these discipline traditions what would teacher education faculty be, what would they use as their frame of reference?’ Don’s explanation was that in order to construct ‘something new’, academics would first have to ‘deconstruct their own discipline’, which was often not possible for lecturers steeped in the ways of thinking in their discipline.

While the discourse in the Faculty tends to speak the language of policy and social reconstruction, it is clear that terminology is understood very differently and that practices are not always congruent with espoused theories. Voices in the Faculty often contradicted each other and there were some sharply critical remarks with regard to colleagues’ motivations. For instance, some lecturers were said to be ‘recipe focused’, while others remarked that there were ‘no recipes for teaching in the Faculty’.

Some lecturers expressed their cynicism towards policy changes in teacher education and schooling as inevitably the result of political change in the country,

and not to be taken too seriously. It was mentioned that if one had to change one's programme every time there was a new policy, one would be constantly changing. As in Faculty X and Y, lecturers often reflected on, with some perplexity, the relationship between policy intentions and the development of a body of knowledge for teacher education, and the implications of differing interpretations of policy directives for teacher education across the country. They tended to vacillate between the need for tighter specification of content as necessary for a knowledge base, and an aversion to any form of government prescriptiveness and curbs on autonomy. Autonomy, it was thought, allowed healthy competition between universities to flourish, and faculties could 'get the edge' on another's programme by being more creative.

Structures required by policy in the interests of quality assurance and accountability were seen as pedantic and bureaucratic, necessary only for administrative tasks. While inter-departmental discussions sometimes occurred, departments interpreted requirements in their own ways and undertook changes to curricula within their own departments without this becoming a 'faculty conversation'.

In spite of disagreements in understanding across a range of issues in the Faculty, there is an underlying optimism about the direction in which the University is going and the recognition that deep and abiding change will be a slow and painstaking process.

### **Reflection on this Chapter**

The data, I believe, weaves a rich tapestry of the lived experiences of education faculty in the institutions in which they find themselves, in relation to external pressures beyond the university, government policy directives and matters of curriculum. As the portraits have unfolded, it has become increasingly clear that knowledge and practices in teacher education, as illustrated by faculty curriculum

processes and responses, flow from a mixture of policy consciousness, practical contingencies and personal beliefs. What are the implications of this realisation for understanding policy and the intentions of policymaking vis a vis its outcomes? Chapter Seven that follows will take a closer look at this question.

For purposes of reflection at this point though, let me return to where it all started for me, the prospective researcher. At the outset of this research, I was driven by the desire to understand why, on the face of it, teacher education programmes appeared to have undergone no dramatic shifts in theoretical content, in spite of overwhelming waves of government policy reform affecting classroom teachers. My assumption was that a shift in the outcomes of teacher education as implied by government policies, would have to be accompanied by change in the knowledge base, as form and content based on the previous Fundamental Pedagogics orientation ran counter to democratic principles. This was not to pass judgement on what was (and largely still is) being offered, rather it was to question whether 'social reconstructionist' education policies would require new knowledge and skills of teachers, and by extension, teacher education programmes. If policy intentions were to reconstruct South African society, how were such intentions to be realised in the training and re-education of teachers, and what would this reorientation entail in Faculties of Education?

I reasoned that teachers had to acquire new ways of thinking about knowledge, outside of the old Fundamental Pedagogics paradigm that had locked generations of teachers into patterns of behaviour incommensurate with a participative democracy and all that this implied for its citizens. My bias towards seeing this (knowledge) aspect of teacher education as key to the development of a 'new teacher for new times' no doubt stemmed from my own education in 'liberatory' pedagogies during the 1980s. Of course other assumptions I made at the outset were that exposure to multiple (and contesting) frameworks and pedagogies (rather than traditional, conventional teacher education knowledge) would lead towards the 'new teacher' ideal, and that if government policy

directives (couched in democratic rationales and oriented towards more 'open' and constructivist pedagogies) were followed, teacher education curricula could lead the way towards constructing a new democracy.

That I was assuming a rational, linear relationship between policy intentions and policy outcomes was not immediately clear to me. I was more concerned with the implications of ignoring government curriculum directives in teacher education and the consequences for teachers and teaching. If pre-service teachers were not being educated for participation in the new curriculum and its social reconstructionist outcomes, or the outcomes stated in qualifications were being interpreted differently at different institutions, what frameworks, knowledge and understandings would teachers be emerging with and how would that facilitate or inhibit the kind of social change being envisaged by government?

Before I could continue on this convoluted pathway, I had to stop and consider my assumptions. What exactly had taken place in Faculties of Education since 1994 and how had government education policies generally impacted on public universities? Was curriculum for teacher education, in particular its 'knowledge base' changing in any way and if so, what was driving this change? If it was 'business as usual' for faculty what were the reasons for this? How were academics responding to government policies, particularly in curriculum development (since they were certainly being required to do so)?

Delving into the literature on teacher education quickly disabused me of some of my presumptions and highlighted deep divisions. The scholarly teacher education 'community' was by no means agreed on what constitutes a knowledge base for teacher education, and approaches ranged from an emphasis on process type methodologies in faculties, to more tightly circumscribed recommendations on the form and content of programmes. Contexts of teacher education varied from strong centralised systems of teacher education, to looser, institution controlled arrangements for certification. Across



these contexts though, the principle of autonomy in higher education curricula and the right of faculty to exercise their academic independence in curriculum matters seemed to be generally accepted as the explanation for the lack of a stable knowledge base in teacher education. This was in spite of the association, in the literature, of a stable knowledge base with teacher professionalism, a universally agreed goal it seems.

Faculty members in my study also invoked the principle of academic freedom, either to defend the right to make curriculum decisions, or as justification for why there could be no agreed-upon knowledge base for teacher education. What was difficult for faculty though, was explaining the basis on which curriculum decisions were made, a matter that held a peculiar fascination for me in view of my interest in the outcomes of policy interventions. In fact, the concept of academic autonomy appeared to stand proxy for a host of internal, taken-for-granted aspects of faculty operations. The conceptual framework of Trowler and Cooper (2002) therefore seemed absolutely appropriate for exploring what I perceived to be a tendency to conservatism in spite of tumultuous events all around. The TLRs framework afforded me the methodological tool for lifting out the various aspects of Faculty life which could assist in explaining, empirically, the ways in which faculty were making sense of what they were being required to do, but under extreme conditions of socio-political change, an additional dimension.

In fact, I had not started out my study with the intention of looking closely at the institutional dimension, as I believed that teacher educators across faculties would be sufficiently similar in characteristics and outlook, to make fairly generalizable observations across institutions. What became much clearer to me during the course of my data gathering, was that the 'look and feel' of each Faculty was so significantly influenced by the institution within which it was located. This was evident from the number of 'University issues' and 'Faculty issues' that I noted as categories of responses that fell outside of the neat TLR

components I had derived in the categories that had guided my interview questions. The 'additional issues' had not arisen because of particular prompts or probes from me as the researcher, in terms of relating questions to the specific institution of which the academic was a member. Rather, responses to questions of curriculum restructuring, of form and content, and Faculty 'ways of doing', were spontaneously framed more often than not, with reference to the institutional history, traditions and culture, in which the lecturer found him/herself, particularly where there had been notable ideological or other battles that cast long shadows over the institution. These institutional 'shadows' manifested themselves time and again in the pedagogies, processes, power relations and practices of each Faculty. While discourse analysis was not a methodological feature of my research, it would be fascinating to undertake a study of how responses were articulated, in the light of the institutional characterisations that have emerged.

The final chapter, Chapter Seven that follows, superimposes the Teaching and Learning Regimes framework upon the data in an attempt to illuminate that set of factors, the endogenous factors, which occupy the space between the intended policy (the requirements embedded in new qualifications) and the enacted policy (that which emerges in formal curriculum, and which I argue affects the output of the teacher education programme, the beginning teacher) (See Muller, 2003).

## CHAPTER SEVEN: SYNTHESIS

***‘But how can it have got there without my knowing it? She said to herself as she lifted it off and set it on her lap to make out what it could possibly be.’***

*Why do dominant pedagogies in teacher education tend to persist in spite of policy change?* I believe that the Teaching and Learning Regimes framework (see Chapter 3 herein) provides a helpful schema to bring me closer to answering this question. As explained earlier, education academics were subjected to a barrage of government policy interventions that undoubtedly impacted on Faculty structures and processes, as the evidence shows. The portraits of Faculties X, Y and Z reveal distinctive trends in theories and practices of teacher education, but also beliefs, attitudes and responses to policy that amount to more than can be explained away by a commitment to academic autonomy.

That there have been significant shifts in curricula in response to policy developments is unquestionable, but policies do not appear to have provided the kind of guidance that policymakers in a new democracy might have anticipated. Policy appeals to moral accountability and transparency in education, to democratic practices, to education in pursuit of social goals and ideals are, according to my findings, not receiving the empathetic response which government might have desired. Where has the breakdown occurred between policy intentions and curricula?

This chapter takes a cross-sectional view of the three Faculties of Education to identify and compare emergent themes from an exploration of my research question. I employ the conceptual framework of Trowler and Cooper (2002), referred to as Teaching and Learning Regimes, as an organisational tool to assist in the comparison and synthesis of cross-cutting themes which, taken together, explain the resilience of dominant traditional pedagogies in curricula in

spite of policy change. Moreover, faculty TLRs reveal the complex workings of institutions in transitional contexts and how faculties come to terms with the multiple demands being thrust upon them. In closing the chapter, I return to some of my initial assumptions, and set out what has been learned about institutional responses to government policies in centralised systems, during a period of dramatic political change.

Teaching and Learning Regimes are concerned with what teacher educators bring to the teacher education process, aspects of which are ‘invisible to them because they become taken for granted’ (ibid, p.222). Aspects such as identities in interaction, power relations, codes of signification, tacit assumptions, rules of appropriateness, recurrent practices, discursive repertoires and implicit theories of learning and teaching have all been articulated in various ways by faculty members in my study. However, these constitutive aspects of Faculty cultures are at work within a harsh external environment – the political and policy context, the University context, student demands and expectations – placing academics under enormous pressure. By drawing attention to the exogenous factors that have impinged so visibly on the inner workings of Faculties I extend Trowler’s TLR components to make them relevant to my own inquiry, that is, I ask how these components relate to matters of pedagogy, curriculum and policy directives in contexts affected by dramatic and tumultuous change processes. How do faculty respond to government curriculum directives in these circumstances, and are their responses sufficient to explain why dominant pedagogies in teacher education persist in spite of policy change?

We can probably state at this point that government policies for teacher education assume a commonly understood democratic discourse, general commitment to reconstructionist ideals and curricula in support of broader social transformation goals (Chisholm, 2004; Morrow & King, 1998; Jansen & Christie, 1999). Norms, standards and outcomes for educators are wide-ranging and vague, but are being taken as curriculum blueprints by some faculty, and

critiqued as unrealistic by others. Academics report that government curriculum policies leave them unsure of 'how much change is necessary' or 'how far they should move'. Knowledge requirements embedded in teacher education qualifications are to be selected as contextual relevance dictates, and are to be distilled from the kinds of activities teachers are expected to perform that demonstrate their understanding (knowledge) of teaching and learning processes. On what basis are such directives - if they are decisive enough to be called that - being interpreted?

I want to turn now to the evidence of faculty Teaching and Learning Regimes, to get an indication of the kind of soil the seeds of policy intentions have been thrown onto. In-depth interviews probed academics' responses to the curriculum implications of teacher education policies and the curriculum processes, individually and jointly, that faculty had engaged in.

In spite of the open-ended nature of interview questions, responses spontaneously highlighted TLR components and could be categorized within them. While I disaggregate the components here for purposes of explication, it must be borne in mind that the *'identities in interaction'*, *'power relations'*, *'codes of signification'*, *'tacit assumptions'*, *'rules of appropriateness'*, *'recurrent practices'*, *'discursive repertoires'* and *'implicit theories of teaching and learning'*, are constantly acting upon and interacting with, each other. Taken together, these components weave the internal fabric of Faculty life - that space in which teacher education curriculum is constructed.

### ***Discursive Repertoires***

Evidence from the three faculties in my study show distinct patterns of discourse revealed through verbal articulations of curriculum processes as well as curriculum selections. In Faculty X, pedagogies and practices in teacher education appear rooted in critical, English, humanist traditions where the focus

is on the teacher as an individual, an intellectual being, engaging critically with the text. Introspection, self-consciousness and the acquisition of high levels of subject matter knowledge are valued and these core values inform the structure and content of the PGCE programme. While cognisance is taken of the highly politicised environment in which teaching occurs, the most overt recognition of this was when faculty had sought an overarching framework for their course and had discussed how faculty could position themselves 'ideologically as educators who want to make a difference'. The anticipated goals of such a pursuit were not elaborated upon.

By way of contrast, the discourse in Faculty Y is politicised, rhetorical and overtly activist, appealing to the development of a teacher who is a 'transformative intellectual and agent for change' and describing the social struggles that teachers will be called upon to engage in. These discourses have their roots in the political positioning of the Faculty during the 1980s when the work of scholars like Paulo Freire, Giroux, Grundy, Stenhouse and other critical theorists resonated with the resistance politics of the day. In Faculty X, scholars like Bernstein, Bourdieu and Young drive key sociological debates on questions of knowledge and curriculum differentiation. A striking indication of Faculty X and Faculty Y's differing discourses, are the questions around which programmes in each of the faculties are organised. Faculty Y asks, 'how can I as a teacher construct a good learning environment?' whereas Faculty X asks 'what are the principles that make a good teacher?' We can discern from the two questions, the latter's preoccupation with the teacher and the self, and the former's preoccupation with the 'context' of teaching, which play out in curriculum selections in both faculties.

A goal of the programme in Faculty X is to turn out well 'educated' teachers, which is why the top-end model of teacher education is preferred. Students who come into the PGCE are already steeped in the discourse of the subject majors that they hope to teach after they have acquired the pedagogical 'top-up'.

Academics stressed that their course was not about 'teaching the students how to teach', rather, the students had to be encouraged to 'get a handle on' the knowledge required for teaching. In Faculty Y, the recently developed undergraduate four-year programme is seen, generally, as an exciting initiative that will give students exposure to the gritty realities of schools where 'there are struggles for education simply to happen', and strive to build the conceptual scaffolding necessary for gaining the necessary knowledge and understanding of teaching practices. The new programme promises to re-commit the Faculty to the business of initial teacher preparation after its post-rationalisation shift to in-service training of teachers. This is not to overlook the battles that faculty have fought within and outside Faculty Y, to convince colleagues across the University that what it proposes is the 'right' thing to do, given their target market and the perceived needs of teachers in the schools they have historically served.

The traditional discipline foundations of education in Faculty X, found in the Education Theory component, namely education Philosophy, History, Sociology and Psychology, fall into a natural divide with the more 'hands on' professional studies component of the programme. Academics suggest though that the emphasis is on a 'process driven' approach that overcomes structural separations. They are keen to overturn the expectation of students that teaching is 'easy' and does not require extensive intellectual engagement. In fact, academics in the Faculty appeared to take a view of the pre-service qualification as too 'vocational' and not as intellectually challenging as preferred higher degree research programmes. This strong research focus is evident too in Faculty Z where the Faculty has aligned its research agenda with that of the University's research focus areas. This move appears to have fuelled sharp differences in understanding of the Faculty's mission, with academics involved in initial teacher preparation sceptical and cynical about the motives for this reorientation of the Faculty.

Discourses in Faculty Z are indicative of the contestations in the Faculty around perceived managerialist tendencies, market opportunism and manifestations of race, cultural and linguistic divisions. Conservative epistemologies of traditional Afrikaner theorists are evident in surviving structures and frameworks, but these are contending for prominence in a changing curriculum, spearheaded by a 'new guard' of younger academics out of an era of radical pedagogy and critical theory, who have their academic roots in very different, politicised social contexts. Students in Faculty Z also appear more resistant to the challenging paradigms of newer faculty than students in Faculty X or Y. This, lecturers in Faculty Z, attribute to a culture where 'politeness' precludes the right to question or be provocative and traditions of a more homogenous student-faculty culture.

In all three faculties, varying degrees of individual decision-making manifest, but there is a commitment to a strong theory-practice interrelationship, with an emphasis on reflective practices. However, in Faculty Y this translated into a sharper focus on action research as a strategy which makes the teacher an 'agent of change' in education which is a 'site of struggle'. In Faculty Z the reflective practitioner discourse appeared to be located in the cohort of newer faculty members who had been exposed to critical pedagogies in the 1980s. Their established colleagues in the Faculty expressed themselves in more conservative and measured tones, albeit using the language of new policies.

### ***Identities in Interaction***

The data across the faculties shows that disciplinary traditions of pedagogy and theories in education are strongly associated with the academic identities of faculty, the 'community' in which they receive acknowledgement and recognition and the institutional traditions of their respective faculties. International academic debates are followed with interest, and academics, particularly in Faculty X, pride themselves on their stature in the global academic arena. The lack of a knowledge base in teacher education and the fact that education has historically



consisted of an assortment of knowledge from other discipline fields, means that academics in Faculties of Education have trained in particular disciplines and locate their knowledge and understanding within those fields and among their peers. As a lecturer commented, “the trouble is that people in education are such a variety of things. (Luke Y)”

Moore (2003) notes the organisational communities (epistemic networks) that have sustained traditional knowledge domains and the fact that new policies in higher education ask for inter-disciplinary approaches without considering how such new forms are to be sustained. The lack of a stable and recognisable knowledge base in teacher education compounds the problem, as the move towards programmes and trans-disciplinarity in new policies attempts to create cross-disciplinary communities of academics in a context where the rationale for co-existence has never been very clear.

Muller (2003) argues that disciplines with a strong internal coherence (eg. Science) can only be changed “at the sharp end of innovation and genuine knowledge growth” (p.110), that is, when new ‘vertical’ knowledge is generated through research. Weak knowledge forms, such as those in the Humanities, on the other hand, are more malleable, and amenable to ‘horizontal’ change. Education, traditionally an eclectic arrangement of knowledge borrowed from disciplines with varying degrees of internal strength or coherence (eg. Psychology, Sociology, History), would probably itself be classified as a weak knowledge form in terms of Muller’s argument. The relevance of this discussion is that it offers a partial explanation for why academics struggle to assert Education as a discipline in its own right, when it comes up against stronger knowledge forms such as Sociology, Psychology and Philosophy, where academics have historically had a strong epistemic identification and networks.

Within Faculties of Education there have always been competing interests located in discipline departments and the importance that departments attached

to 'their spaces' in the teacher preparation programme based on little other than their power bases (student numbers predominantly). As we see from the data in my study, the collapse of discipline departments have not weakened dominant discipline traditions in the teacher education programme, but academics have felt displaced and isolated as a result. In some instances, for example in Faculty X, this has resulted in academics' firmer identification with external epistemic networks, for validation and recognition within their disciplines.

Conflict with other faculties in all three institutions in my study, appears to arise from strong discipline identification within other faculties. Education academics across the board report that other faculties are reluctant to participate in the business of preparing teachers and therefore do not tailor their courses in the subject matter which some students will teach, to this purpose. They claim to be training students in the subject matter discipline, whether Mathematics or English or Science, rather than as teachers of that subject. Consequently, education academics arrange for education students to receive those parts of the subject matter for purposes of school teaching, so that students do not entirely flounder as beginning teachers, but they do not have the budget to do so, given that funding norms for teacher education are particularly low. Education does appear to be living life on the 'margins' of the university (Labaree, 2000).

The issue of identity occurs at a more mundane level in the faculty as well. In Faculty Z in particular, the question of 'who you are and where you come from' has major implications for how students regard lecturers and the confidence they place in their academic work and standing within the Faculty. Furthermore, students identify with academics from similar backgrounds and religions, comfortable in a familiar, historical transmission-teaching mode that alienates faculty who attempt to shift them from their comfort zones by adopting a more challenging, confrontational style.

### ***Power Relations***

In the education faculties in my study, power struggles are evident at a number of levels of the system. Academics who teach on the pre-service programme struggle to assert themselves in a hostile environment that does not seem to take the enterprise of teacher development seriously, or accord it the respect it deserves. Teacher education suffers from system-wide low esteem, and is regarded, by students and other university colleagues, as an inferior intellectual activity that does not require cognitive engagement.

Subject matter knowledge in other faculties on the campus asserts its superiority over pedagogical knowledge, and education faculty have to plead for recognition by other faculties that some students will become teachers and need exposure to subject matter knowledge that is also relevant for school teaching. Faculty planning continues to be determined by the wider university timetable where venues and hours determine the content that the programme can accommodate and limit creative changes to curriculum.

Within the Faculty, academics engage in discipline-specific research that has little bearing on the theorising and practice of teaching and learning, but their research projects, it is felt, are given space and are rewarded at the expense of teaching. Financial gains for these units within the Faculty encourage the output of such research, while faculties have to 'buy in' contract lecturers to teach on mainstay programmes. The debate around this is characterised as a 'professional versus academic' debate.

Government education policies exert considerable power in all three of the faculties in my study. However, how academics react to policy impositions and directives are largely in keeping with their discursive repertoires. In Faculty X academics rationalise that policy is not deserving of too much attention, and they offer administrative compliance so as not to 'rock the boat' unduly. In Faculty Y

there is a stronger identification with the language and goals of government policy, but also an awareness that a critical stance must be maintained in higher education. Faculty Z has adopted some of the language of policy and academics report that management tends to be 'pedantically' compliance driven. Faculty responses to policies veer generally between compliance for the sake of pragmatism and/or expediency.

In relation to curriculum selections, it appears that academics have the power to decide on what to include and what to exclude depending on their interests, point of view, background, experience, international academic exposure, insights, reading and exemplars of previous lecturers of the course. Yet, for new lecturers the responsibility of planning their courses proved overwhelming. In the absence of a circumscribed 'body of knowledge' new lecturers related their feelings of insecurity and uncertainty about whether they were doing the 'right thing'. In spite of managerialist tendencies within faculties in response to policy requirements, very little guidance is given on the content of any course, a practice that appears to be based on respect for academic freedom. Faculty themselves vacillate on the issue of more, or less, prescriptiveness, feeling the uncertainty associated with vague policy outcomes yet unwilling to invite more interference. The middle ground here appeared to be building a respected standing/structured teacher education network or peer group that could ask serious curriculum questions and argue curriculum positions convincingly, and give leadership to finding answers to the many confusing questions.

However, academics report that they do take feedback from students very seriously. Revisions to a course would happen in response to student complaints of overlap or repetition. All three faculties in my study had asked students for written feedback at various points in the delivery of their modules, mostly at the end of their course, so as to correct any concerns before the next cohort. However, students would usually not be in a position to comment on content selections for a module unless poor performance was attributed to curricula. In

the case of Faculty Y, for example, the programme was reviewed after a high failure rate in the theory sections of the course the previous year. This had been, according to a faculty member, due in part to the ‘unnecessarily obscure and dense texts’ that students had to engage with, and some of the educational deficits students with inadequate university preparation tended to arrive with.

### ***Tacit Knowledge, Implicit Theories and Assumptions***

Tacit knowledge and implicit theories abound in Faculties X, Y and Z. A huge assumption in faculties across the board, it seems, is that new faculty entrants to the academy ‘understand’ the way things work without having to ask too many questions. New academics are assumed to ‘just know’ what they are required to do and inductions are not about telling people what they should do or how they should perform their tasks. The implication of this tacit understanding is that ‘recurrent practices’ may simply continue to recur, as new academics eventually take on the implicit assumptions of the ‘way things are’.

There appears to be a tacit understanding that programmes do not change (and should not) unless there are compelling reasons for them to do so. In this regard policies presented a challenge to the tacit knowledge and implicit theories in the faculties, and compelled faculty to make these explicit, as in the case of module descriptors in Faculty Y, and the intensive curriculum discussions in Faculties X and Z. Assumed pedagogies and practices, in the light of policy requirements, needed to be justified, however, in the absence of a recognisable knowledge base and the vagueness of policy directives for curriculum, faculty tended to fall back on their training in the traditional education disciplines, and add to, rather than deconstruct, what had always been offered to students.

Faculties assumed a common philosophy towards teacher education, in spite of academic freedom in curriculum development. In each of the three faculties this certainly seemed to be borne out by the common discourses among academics

within them. Even where there were dissenting voices, these voices acknowledged that their concerns fell within the overarching Faculty paradigm and did not necessarily challenge that, except in Faculty Z where newer faculty thought that dominant paradigms were still steeped in outdated traditions of pedagogy and practice.

In Faculty X, modelling as a strategy for teaching various methodologies to students was deliberately employed by faculty for teaching different modules of the course, on the assumption that an intellectually critical stance would enable students to separate the desirable from the not-so-desirable features being modelled. In my view this could be a dangerous assumption as impressionable students might simply adopt a particular model uncritically. In Faculty Y there was the assumption that students needed excellent 'role-models', not necessarily in the academy, but in the form of mentoring and induction experiences at schools because of the poor personal experiences of schooling students were assumed to have had.

While academics appear to accept that a social reconstruction paradigm is what education policies are located within, they are critical of what they refer to as the 'populist' constructivist tendencies they perceive in curriculum policies. Several faculty members referred to the 'misconceptions' and 'misinterpretations' which vaguely worded policies had resulted in and which teacher education would have to correct, but they had not really questioned why their own interpretations would be any better, or on what bases they would be made. Academics also could not explain why their theory selections appeared to be well-worn 'classical' selections of knowledge that are returned to over time, in spite of the fact that they allege an agreed knowledge base would be impossible because of academic freedom and differing ideologies. The assumption they made was that how the material was mediated (the process) for prospective teachers made the difference – that the beginning teacher would become sufficiently intellectually competent, through the learning process, to make contingent decisions in practice irrespective of the

‘content’ he or she had been exposed to. However all faculty believed that there was ‘some’ knowledge of the field that students needed to get a handle on, and that teacher education constituted a ‘field’ or a discipline in its own right. This view was contradicted at several points as faculty discussed the implications of such a view in the light of their doubt that an agreed knowledge base could exist because of ‘ideological differences’ that were still prevalent.

‘Personal’ theories of education were articulated, as in the belief in teaching by example (modelling) and that the ‘best practices are better than best theories’. A lecturer held that he worked mostly on instinct and that these proved to be correct on countless occasions. He did not say though, if such an approach would be dependent on the student already having some theoretical frame of reference within which to situate the observed practice. The assumption was that students would be able to deduce the theory from the practical situation and make sense of it.

Academics tended to disregard government policy directives, where the policy images conveyed were at odds with those held by faculty. For example, the Department of Education was criticised across the board for expecting faculties to train an ‘OBE’ teacher where faculty considered the Department’s ‘version of OBE’ to be different from theirs, although what made theirs different was not clearly articulated. Similarly, the Norms and Standards for Educators document was roundly regarded as unrealistic and unattainable, as it was unlikely all the roles would have been acquired by a beginning teacher prior to his/her gaining the lived experience that the roles might require. The Norms and Standards were therefore largely ‘humoured’ by academics who acknowledged the need to incorporate a major prospective employer of teachers’ requirements into their curricula in a recognisable way.

Faculty members were concerned with student assumptions that teaching is easy and does not require hard work, an attitude they feel has permeated from a

systemic disregard for the role of education and educators in society and which has devalued the profession. Academics perceive mixed messages in this regard – on the one hand there are major policy initiatives in respect of professionalisation of teaching, and on the other, budget cuts, discontinued bursaries and rationalisation of staff make teaching a decidedly unattractive option with a negative impact on the work ethic of prospective teachers. One internal measure that would alleviate the negative image, several academics mentioned, was for the university to ‘commit’ to teacher education and recognise that part of its operations was teacher preparation. This, it was felt, would enhance the profile of the Faculty in the academy.

Lecturers in Faculty Y seemed to have a common understanding around what it might mean to ‘conceptually streamline’ or ‘conceptually frame’ the Faculty around teacher education, but were not able to expand on the conceptual foundations that such streaming or framing might require. Given the contestations across faculties with regard to elements of their TLRs, and the lack of an acceptable forum where such discussion could take place, it is difficult to see how this might occur.

There were also assumptions around the term ‘professional’ and what membership of such a profession might entail. A common assumption in Faculty X was that a well-educated person, cognitively competent (though at what exactly was not specified) would be able to cope with the vicissitudes of the education environment and adapt pedagogy and practice to circumstances as needed. In Faculty Y professionalism seemed to connote esteem and respect while in Faculty Z professionalism was associated with fulfilment of prospective employer expectations, which might be broader than that of the Department of Education only. Views on professionalism seemed to correspond to approaches to policies (outside interventions) in the faculties, that is, an intellectual approach, a political approach and a managerialist approach.



Assumptions are made about the 'reality' of schools, with the majority of faculty members assuming that schools would be negative places for beginning teachers. However, there were concerns that common agreement had not been sought (or found) on the needs of society and schools, agreement that was future-focused and not only to do with the 'here and now' needs posed by OBE and dysfunctional schools.

The feeling was expressed that faculty often acted from within traditions they are not aware of, or out of a residual common sense set of ideas they had inherited without them even knowing it.

### ***Codes of Signification***

There were many instances as is shown by the data, of the negative dispositions academics displayed towards, for example, 'technicism' vis a vis thoughtful, critical practice, which exposed what faculty regard as 'significant' knowledge in the academy. Numerous references were made to teaching being 'vocalised' and that this implied a 'dumbing down' of teachers. However, the university tradition of turning out teachers who were 'too theoretical' and unable to cope with day-to-day classroom activities was also acknowledged and it was recognised that a 'balance' between 'theorising' and 'practice' had to be found. The closing of teacher colleges, it was acknowledged with hindsight, had meant the loss of many positive, practice-focused characteristics in the training of teachers. This tension was replicated in the divisions in education faculties between those involved in 'research' and those involved in 'teaching', with the former activity being signified in the academy through its reward system, as more important.

### ***Rules of Appropriateness***

Internalised rules of appropriateness are evident in the recurrent practices observed in the section below. Newer faculty members in particular, struggled with what was considered appropriate for them to do in established situations which appeared resistant to change and comfortable about the way things were done. For example, excessive insecurity about delivering a new course, asking for help and so on, were regarded as inappropriate in the Faculty, where it was assumed that whoever came in to teach a programme, just knew what they had to do. In other instances established academics were prepared to offer help, but considered it inappropriate to be overly prescriptive to a newer colleague and would wait to be approached. Programme managers, in spite of policy requirements, would be reluctant to question the content selections of lecturers, rather asking what they 'intended to do'. A programme manager suggested that faculty would find it 'strange' if their content selections were questioned, and take it as an affront to their academic freedom.

### ***Recurrent Practices***

By all accounts, curriculum practices in university faculties are individualised 'own' affairs. Policies are attempting to create new communities across traditional boundaries, but faculty members report a host of constraining factors in this regard. For example, complacency, apathy, workload and course administration were cited as some reasons for curriculum work, desired by most lecturers, being left in the hands of a few lecturers only. "There aren't sustainable academic conversations in the Faculty. We don't have the space, time, people sitting down", was a familiar refrain. In the case of Faculty Z though, lecturers felt aggrieved that spaces that were made available for discussion and debate, were not taken up by faculty, who were too busy with 'other things', the impression being created that teacher education was considered to be 'unimportant'.

Newer faculty members felt that they were often observers of practices in the Faculty that they could not fully appreciate or understand and that was 'just the way it is'. The view was expressed across faculties that academics seemed to constantly discuss, deliberate long and hard, frustratingly so, and that action was not often forthcoming in the timeframe desired, even that extended discussions might be an avoidance of taking action. Newer academics reported feeling inadequate at attempts to change such practices or try other ways of doing, fearing that it might be their own inability to grasp the 'problem' adequately. They were therefore reluctant to call their own intellectual capabilities into question by appearing not to understand what was 'obvious' to everyone else.

### **What has been Learnt about Institutional Responses to Government Policy Directives under Conditions of Political Change?**

My initial assumption was that dominant pedagogies in education tend to persist in spite of policy change. While my underlying concern was that the dominant pedagogies in question might still be steeped (post 1994) in narrow and oppressive Fundamental Pedagogics paradigms and therefore be at odds with espoused curriculum directives in new government policies aimed at social transformation, the focus of my inquiry quickly shifted to the bigger question of why dominant pedagogies persist, rather than the precise nature of such pedagogies.

Embedded in the above paragraph is the assumption, borne out in the relevant documents and surrounding literature, that government education policies are in support of social transformation goals and that curriculum directives are seen as a means to those ends. Teacher education policies are meant to inform the development of new curricula for the training of teachers, as various instruments of quality assurance such as government instituted programme audits, currently under way, illustrate. Policy documents state clearly the intentions of policies, the language of which can be seen taken up in Faculty documents in my study.

However, between the intentions of policy and their enactment in curricula, lies a vast, largely uncharted territory according to the literature, upon which teacher educators conduct their business. How do academics respond to the challenges and demands posed by government policies in curricula for teacher education, and what are the consequences, for the system and for prospective teachers, of responses that may not have been anticipated by policymakers?

We can probably refute already, on the basis of the evidence gathered, Griffin's (2001) assertion that knowledge selections are based on 'the private understanding of individual faculty members who provide instruction' (p.37). It is, I would venture, far more than this. The social context factors, both historical and current, appear to have impacted greatly on the curriculum processes in the faculties in my study. Dominant education discipline traditions, within the distinct historical epistemological orientations that have evolved in each of the faculties over time, remain the classic foundational pedagogies (on a continuum from liberal positivist to critical analytical) that faculty refer to as 'education theory'. Policy directives appear only to have implied additional contemporary scholarship and research, and expanded 'lenses' (especially in places where these were conservative and narrow) through which to view and approach theory in education.

While education discipline boundaries have shifted structurally and moved previously separate departments together in various configurations, the deep disciplinary roots remain visible in programmes – erstwhile 'departments' are simply smaller units, and academics within those domains more isolated. Education Sociology, History, Philosophy and Psychology appear in diluted forms within various parts of the PGCE and the B.Ed. programmes, mostly lumped together into obvious 'theory' sections and still teaching largely the same theorists and theories which teachers through the ages have learned.

An explanation for the resilience of this loosely identifiable ‘body of knowledge’, albeit eclectic and uncodified under a ‘teacher education’ banner, resides in the inability of education academics (as I argued earlier in this chapter), to boldly and confidently define the scope of teacher education as a ‘discipline’, although this appears to be a desired goal. New education policies do not take this debate any further, as it is largely left to Faculty curriculum planners to decide on the form and content of teacher preparation programmes, based on vague descriptors of what teachers ought to be able to demonstrate, and what ‘knowledge’, useful to the understanding of teaching practices, might be implied by such demonstrations. Once these broad parameters have been determined, individual academics select the knowledge, pedagogies, theories and theorists that students will be exposed to, the general understanding being that a focus on the ‘critical engagement’ of students with the text, will build necessary knowledge of teaching irrespective of precise knowledge selections.

As stated before, this line of inquiry fascinated me, but more puzzling was why dominant pedagogies and practices tended to persist in spite of the kind of dramatic change processes Faculties of Education experienced. A search for answers in the literature took me off in different directions, where explanations (in more stable contexts) ranged from the lack of a knowledge base in teacher education to essentialist debates and questions on education’s purposes. However, the literature did point out the paucity of research on teacher educators, and the need for studies focused on education faculty and their curricula. In particular, I was introduced to a conceptual framework that could assist me to make sense of the multiple factors that mediate education policy intentions in Faculties of Education. The mutually reinforcing components of faculty teaching and learning regimes highlighted the complex nature of faculty decision-making under conditions of extreme pressure in their external environment, and required to make visible changes.

In spite of government policy discourses in support of social reconstruction, faculty discourses tend to align with the university discourse that has its roots in the socio-political history of that institution. However, newer faculty members pose challenges to established Faculty discourses and push for changes, although they come up against the 'rules' for what is considered appropriate in the Faculty. Discourses appear to be strongly informed by ideology, whether political rhetoric or Bernsteinian ideas on the nature of the academic enterprise.

Through commission or omission, academics perpetuate particular discourses in the form and content of their programmes, by the pedagogies and practices they choose to emphasise, and the way programmes are structured to deal with theory and practice components that connote how theory and practice are viewed (their connotative coding). In order for pedagogies and practices to change in response to policy directives therefore, academics would have to cultivate new discourses aligned with new values, but this would require making explicit factors that sustain prevailing practices, such as their own TLRs, as a first step.

Academic identities were rooted in traditional discipline departments in faculties, where faculty understood their area of practice as distinct from other areas of practice in the Faculty. Teacher education was thus fragmented and its constituent parts came together only in the conferring of the qualification. Strong academic 'epistemic' networks in the Faculty sustained discipline discourses and provided a supportive intellectual space. With the collapse of discipline boundaries/departments and an attempt at creating programmes which are cross- and inter-disciplinary, academics have been left unsure as to how to re-invent themselves within this new terrain, given that their training as a discipline specialist prepared them for discipline based roles specifically. The lack of an agreed knowledge base from which to create a more unified teacher education discipline, and insufficient institutional commitment to work towards such a discipline, left many faculty rudderless. They appear to have retreated to their

own spaces where they continue to hone their skills through their identification with, and with the approval of a more physically distant epistemic community. This has not contributed to building teacher education internally in the Faculty, and has placed faculty at loggerheads with each other depending on the value that appears to be attached to building esteem outside of immediate teacher education concerns. Given that there are additional 'dislocated' faculty through the disbanding of teacher education colleges, teacher education appears more fragmented than ever before, as academics perpetuate individualist cultures without any incentive to behave differently.

Unlike schools, universities have responded to government policies based on a wider range of imperatives which position them between autonomy and control, state and markets, institution and community, policy and professions. How these institutions respond to competing pressures appear to depend as much on external pressures as where they are coming from, and how their histories, traditions and values have shaped them.

### **Implications of This Study for Theorising Change in Teacher Education**

This study of education academics' curriculum responses to government education policies benefited significantly from the use of Trowler's (2002) Teaching and Learning Regimes framework to lift out and disaggregate the endogenous factors that tend to inhibit policy change and, given the focus of this study, begin to explain the persistence of dominant pedagogies and practices. The accumulation and explication of internal factors opened a window on the dense and complex nature and culture of Faculty life that takes place between the intentions of policy and the enactment of those intentions in curricula.

While Trowler notes that TLR components are not exclusive and should be viewed holistically rather than in a fragmented way, the framework is intended to be 'inward' (rather than outward) looking, affording a close-up view of interactions

and responses. This allowed me to build richly textured Faculty portraits, but my data also brought to light how academics, within the culture of their respective faculties, were so much a product of their external institutional histories, traditions and value systems. The illumination of the institutional factor, as an additional TLR component, gave a more nuanced picture of academic responses. In the absence of this component, and given the many common issues in teacher education (for example, academic freedom, status of teacher education and so on) raised by academics, one might have erroneously treated teacher educators, and education faculties as homogeneous entities, thereby greatly impoverishing the policy-practice debate.

In addition, by positioning Trowler's construct within the gap between policy intention and policy enactment, Teaching and Learning Regimes take on greater explanatory power than its authors may have initially intended. In this way, change in Faculties of Education is theorized by looking inward to faculty processes and practices, but also by looking outward to the impact of history and tradition on institutional responses to exogenous factors such as government policy interventions.

### **Implications of this Study for Future Research**

My study took place at a particular point in time and afforded insight into a 'slice' of Faculty processes within an unsettled, volatile climate. Longitudinal studies could fruitfully probe whether faculty Teaching and Learning Regimes shift and change over time or how policies themselves change in the implementation, as policy processes in higher education become stabilized and as academic membership of institutions such as X and Z transform under employment equity imperatives.

Historical studies might explore further where knowledge regimes originate, and how they become embedded in institutional life. Studies in institutional culture



could investigate how institutions with various histories define and understand knowledge, identity and change.

Political studies could examine exactly how contestations in institutions with mixed and divided memberships play out in the knowledge domain, and with what consequences.

My study did not specifically look at student experiences of teacher education programmes in relation to the knowledge that students perceive they have acquired in the programme. Further studies could research how beginning teachers reflect on the knowledge base acquired in initial teacher preparation, and their perceptions of what theory/understandings teacher preparation curricula ought to include. Longer-term studies in this regard would benefit by teachers' hindsight with regard to the knowledge they found to be valuable, based on their experience in the classroom. Other studies could compare student understandings and experience of university teacher education curricula, with the espoused faculty intentions and rationales for particular curriculum decisions.

In sum, there are many more questions in the field of teacher education that have been prompted by this study than those that could be addressed within its ambit.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study has highlighted three main and interrelated areas of concern, namely, policy implications for teacher education curricula, faculty curriculum decision-making processes, and the factors that influence how academics respond to policies. Based on the findings in my study, I offer the following tentative reasons for why dominant pedagogies in teacher education persist in spite of policy change:

- teacher education policies rest on the tenuous (and shown to be false) assumption of an agreed and stable knowledge base of teacher education, that is, that the teacher education community is in agreement as to what constitutes a ‘good’ and ‘professional’ teacher, and ‘good’ teaching, as a basis on which curriculum decisions can be reliably defended;
- teacher educators rely on their own teaching and learning regimes, components of which are rooted in personal histories and other components developed over time, through interaction with their fellow academics, within their institutional culture;

Strong evidence in faculties points to theories and practices located in Faculty discourses that include ‘grand’ theories in education, implicit and tacit understandings, personal theories and beliefs, power relations on a number of levels, connotative codes of significance that impact on the dimensions stated here, academic identities, recurrent practices and rules of appropriateness within the academy.

- teacher education policies underestimate the power of institutional histories, traditions and understandings in shaping policy responses.

Government teacher education policies appeal to common social understandings of the need for social reconstruction and curriculum change in support of socio-political goals. However, the multiple and mediating institutional contexts in which teacher education takes place, which exhibit deeply ingrained histories, ideologies, traditions and identities, are largely ignored by policymakers. There are no assurances whatsoever, that teacher education policies are likely to lead to curricula that change teacher practices, and ultimately bring about societal change

encapsulating the values, understandings and practices espoused in policies towards a new democracy.

In spite of the diversity of teaching and learning regimes, education academics are agreed that there needs to be a serious attempt at bringing coherence to teacher education programmes in the light of new policies. They hold that this requires a ‘conversation’ that ‘frames’ teacher education appropriately – where the likely impact of teacher education programmes on beginning teachers, and ultimately its social value in an emerging democracy can be realistically appraised, I would add – by teacher educators fully aware of their own Teaching and Learning Regimes, their powerful historical contexts, and how these impact on curricula.

### **Postscript**

Writing this thesis took me on a fascinating journey, a ‘grand tour’, characterised by false starts and many slippery slopes where, like the fictional Alice (see Chapter One), I wandered and wondered. It was only by ‘stepping through the looking-glass’, that I saw what I had been taking for granted in my deceptively simple research question. ‘Dominant theories’ in teacher education, for example, were not necessarily ‘grand theories’ (as I had initially suspected), but were also, inter alia, the personal epistemologies, implicit theories and tacit assumptions of academics, forged in a particular historical and cultural institutional milieu.

Asking, as I did, why pedagogies tended to persist ‘in spite of policy change’, was a loaded question containing the suggestion that government policies might result in curriculum change irrespective of context and culture. What I found of course was that policy requirements, being too under-specified to be directive, could not compete with the myriad of other (internal) factors impinging on faculty decisions, and that academics’ teaching and learning regimes, shaped by their

historical institutional contexts, by far outweighed the intentions of policy as a driver of change.

Let me end, as I began, with Lewis Carroll's (1865) tales of Wonderland:

*A tale begun in other days,  
When summer suns were glowing –  
A simple chime that served to time  
The rhythm of our rowing –  
Whose echoes live in memory yet,  
Though envious years would say “forget”.  
(Carroll, 1865, p. 140)*

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Interview Protocol

**The purpose of this interview is to elicit information about how faculty members interpret knowledge requirements embedded in new teacher education policies, and what informs curriculum development processes in the Faculty.**

*Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. Your time is valuable, so I will try to keep this interview within the limits we have set. The information shared in this interview will be entirely confidential. Respondents will be coded to allow for anonymity.*

1. What teacher preparation programmes do you teach on?
2. How long have you been in this Faculty? And at this university?
3. What particular course/s do you teach?
4. How do you plan the content for your course, particularly, where would that arise from?
5. How do lecturers in the faculty design a curriculum for any course?
6. On what basis do you, and your colleagues, make curriculum selections?
7. And what would you say you base your knowledge selections on?
8. The body of literature is vast, so what prompts that choice? On what basis did you decide on this model and these theorists?
9. And where did your content come from for that (your course)?
10. When the discipline departments disappeared, how did people decide what went into the program then?
11. What were the theoretical underpinnings of the old HDE?
12. What are you confident about that students go away with?

13. What in your view constitutes preparation for teaching? What combination of things does a beginning teacher need to be a confident practitioner?
14. Do you believe there is a body of knowledge that all teachers should be exposed to?
15. Do you regard education as a discipline in itself?
16. How do we arrive at a common understanding of what teacher education is?
17. Did the new teacher education qualifications influence the planning of the faculty? How is it different to what you had previously?
18. Who determines what lecturers actually do in their courses?
19. Do you as a faculty have a common understanding of what particular requirements in the new qualifications might be asking for?
20. How do lecturers understand contextually relevant pedagogies (a term in the new qualifications)?
21. What is the 'common denominator' for teacher ed across university Faculties?
22. Is a standards-based qualification assisting people to move in the same direction?
23. What logic is your programme organised around – what concepts or themes?
24. And how do you make decisions about who teaches particular parts of the programme?
25. Is there something that underpins the theories of learning selected for inclusion?
26. Is there a curriculum discussion about the basis for selections, or is it largely left to the lecturer?
27. Can one say that teachers at other universities are prepared in the same way that teachers in your institution are prepared?
28. When the qualification has broad outcomes, how do people actually weight the various constituent parts?

29. What kind of guidance is there for curriculum developers of teacher education? What do you think is needed in this regard?
30. When faculties review their programmes, on what basis do they do this? What informs them?
31. Is there a standard curriculum process in the faculty? What form does it take? How does the curriculum planning process happen?
32. How has the Faculty responded to the curriculum implications of new education policies and legislation?
33. How has the Norms and Standards document impacted on the way you design your curriculum?
34. In your view, does it prepare students for the practice, where they are going?
35. How does one get common conversation going around what is needed, and how academics interpret the needs of teachers?
36. Does the policy actually change what lecturers do?
37. Should there be a common understanding of what teaching and learning is?
38. How has the Faculty dealt with new policies in education? What does it see as directly affecting it?
39. Have you compared your course with other universities? How is it different, or similar?

**Appendix B : Illustrative Table 1 : Atlas ti Coding and Analysis of Interview Transcripts**

HU: Coding Interviews 2  
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 Codes-Primary-Documents-Table  
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Code-Filter: All  
 PD-Filter: All

CODES	PRIMARY DOCS																			Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
faculty history	0	2	3	0	0	0	3	7	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3	2	0	23
Faculty issues	1	4	4	0	0	8	0	6	4	5	8	8	0	5	3	1	4	0	7	68
faculty views on pol	0	0	3	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	5	2	2	2	5	8	6	1	3	42
program structure	3	3	1	1	0	3	1	2	0	3	1	4	0	0	3	0	3	1	0	29
RQ1 faculty curricul	7	6	6	0	0	12	9	3	13	5	5	2	2	10	8	6	8	3	10	115
RQ1 important for pr	1	2	1	0	5	2	2	1	0	2	3	2	0	0	3	6	3	1	2	36
RQ1 individual curri	4	7	4	1	5	4	8	1	7	4	4	8	2	3	12	9	3	11	4	101
RQ1 Pedagogies,theor	0	9	2	6	7	2	7	6	6	6	7	8	10	8	17	11	9	4	7	132
RQ2 faculty response	6	5	7	2	0	6	4	5	1	2	4	3	3	3	6	4	7	2	6	76
wider univ issues	2	0	1	0	2	2	0	2	0	1	4	4	2	1	2	0	1	0	2	26
Totals	24	38	32	10	22	40	34	34	31	28	41	42	23	32	59	45	47	25	41	648

**Appendix C : Illustrative Table 2 : Atlas ti Analysis of Teaching and Learning Regimes Components**

HU: TLR components  
 File: [C:\Documents and Settings\Joy\My Documents\PhD files\Data Analysis 1\TLR components.hpr5]  
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 PD-Filter: All

CODES	PRIMARY DOCS																			Totals
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discourses	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
identity	2	13	3	4	0	3	2	6	3	5	9	6	7	6	13	7	2	2	12	105
ideologies	0	1	0	1	0	0	3	3	2	1	2	1	4	3	2	1	3	0	1	28
implicit theories	0	0	1	3	7	2	6	3	7	5	4	9	2	5	5	5	1	2	2	69
power relations	4	6	9	2	0	5	2	3	3	1	6	7	11	5	4	4	5	3	10	90
recurrent practices	0	5	4	1	0	5	2	5	10	2	2	1	1	8	3	2	3	4	7	65
rules of appropriate	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	11
signification	7	7	2	2	8	5	1	1	1	4	2	3	4	1	1	6	2	7	10	74
tacit assumptions	0	2	0	1	2	6	3	4	3	6	10	2	2	2	4	6	3	3	3	62
Totals	15	37	20	14	17	28	22	35	31	28	43	31	37	36	41	36	24	24	48	567