TEACHER PREPARATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

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TEACHER PREPARATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

History, Policy and Future Directions

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Abbreviations

AME	African Methodist Episcopal Church
ANC	African National Congress
ATASA	African Teachers' Association of South Africa
BMS	Berlin Mission Society
CCE	Centre for Conservation Education, Cape Town
DEIC	Dutch East India Company
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
HPTC	Higher Primary Teachers' Certificate
JC	Junior Certificate
JSTC	Junior Secondary Teachers' Certificate
KAP	Cape Archives Depot
LPTC	Lower Primary Teachers' Certificate
NAB	Pietermaritzburg Archives Deport
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa
NASA	National Archives of South Africa
NEUSA	National Education Union of South Africa
NPDE	National Professional Diploma of Education
OFS	Orange Free State
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate of Education
PTC	Primary Teachers' Certificate
PTD	Primary Teachers' Diploma
RC	Roman Catholic
SA	South Africa
SANAC	South African Native Affairs Commission
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SANROC	South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee
SAOU	Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie
SATA	South African Teachers' Association
STD	Secondary Teachers' Diploma
TASA	Teachers' Association of South Africa

TLSA	Teachers' League of South Africa
TUATA	Transvaal United African Teachers' Association
UED	University Education Diploma
UJ	University of Johannesburg
UNISA	University of South Africa
WITS	University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
ZAR	Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek

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Introduction

As many international, regional and national studies as there are showing that South Africa's schooling outcomes are extremely poor, as many expand on what needs to be done to improve schooling.[1] An international consensus has developed in this literature that is taken up and repeated by most national governments: that the inner core of schooling can only change through paying close attention to what happens inside classrooms. This in turn requires understanding teaching and learning processes and how these are influenced by contexts such as the enabling environment (of infrastructure and resources), what learners and teachers bring with them and how these are combined in practice in the classroom.

Within this overall framework, the role of teacher preparation is seen as playing a definitive role in so far as teachers are seen to be central. The widely-repeated mantra that 'a schooling system can only be as good as its teachers' or that 'the quality of an education system cannot exceed that of its teachers' is one that, when things go wrong, also paradoxically tends to shift the blame to teachers. The defensive response has been to point to the deficiencies of teacher education. And yet it is also considered as having a vital role to play in preparing future generations for a changing world that will include climate disruptions and their catastrophic human consequences, the continued displacement and migration of people and technological change. In addition, it is expected to ensure that teachers embed in their teaching values for a more humane world in which racism, sexism, xenophobia and homophobia have no place. Much is expected of teachers, and teacher education programmes are supposed to prepare them to meet these expectations in very diverse schools. The preparation of teachers is thus indirectly a highly political issue as it condenses perspectives on what a society considers to be important for its future. Tinkering with teacher education and development is thus always important in any change agenda.

South Africa's post-apartheid teacher educational change agenda has been and continues to be deeply structured by both global and local discourses. These shaped South Africa's efforts to achieve the integration of the highly unequal, racially and ethnically divided system that came into being over the preceding centuries. The system's weaknesses were manifest; the principal mechanism for changing it was the integration of all teacher preparation into a desegregated university system in which funding, governance and curricula were also overhauled.[2]

The closure of South Africa's black and white teacher training colleges[3] and incorporation of the larger ones into higher education, six years after the formal ending of apartheid, was one of the most significant and controversial changes that the post-apartheid government introduced. Alongside agricultural, nursing, technical and theology colleges, teacher education colleges had dominated the teacher education landscape for primary school teachers for the greater part of the twentieth century. Many white colleges shared the responsibility for training teachers with universities over the course of the century. Likewise, colleges were not the only location for the preparation of black teachers, but became the principal one during the apartheid period, after the closure of mission schools that had doubled up as schools and centres for the training of teachers and ministers. Despite their purposes, linked to the inequality of apartheid, the reintroduction of colleges has been a persistent refrain in the public discourse.

College and University Teacher Preparation

The incorporation of the task of teacher preparation into the higher education system has produced misgivings: the closure of colleges is often blamed for the failure of the system to improve learning outcomes of black students, a major priority for the post-apartheid government. In this view, the colleges prepared teachers with the basic skills needed for teaching, whereas the universities tend to instill in them only abstract theory with little practical knowledge. The call for the re-opening of colleges is thus heard whenever South Africa's low performance on international literacy and numeracy tests surfaces. Re-opening the colleges, it is argued, will enable teachers to be trained in the more focused way that their preparation requires and that cannot be provided in a university. This debate about the location and space of teacher preparation is a very old one in South Africa however and proceeds in the absence of any understanding of the history of teacher preparation in the country.[4] A major aim of this book is accordingly to look more closely at the nature of teacher preparation in the colleges and universities over the past and earlier centuries.

The debate about whether teacher preparation should occur in either colleges or universities obscures not only the historical reality of often-intertwined provision but also the way in which the location of teacher education also determined greater or lesser degrees of control over what teachers thought and did. Who controls teacher education and training is important today, as it was in the past and will be in the future, because of the importance of teachers to nationalist projects. Control over teacher education was important during the inter-war years for those in power seeking to build on the one hand a greater white unity through reconciliation of Afrikaans and English-speakers and on the other a narrower Afrikaner nationalist consciousness that would promote the ethnic interests of Afrikaans-speakers. Preparation of black teachers remained primarily a mission concern as long as it was not a major priority. During the apartheid period it was important to control teacher education in all institutions, in order to ensure that teachers subscribed to dominant racial and ethnic assumptions about the superiority of whites and

inferiority of black people and would unquestioningly prepare their students to take their appropriately prescribed places in the racial hierarchy of the country. But such control was tighter in colleges than it was in universities where, despite prevailing segregation, more universalist ideas were also promoted.

Universities have throughout the twentieth century played a critical role in preparation of both primary and secondary school teachers. From the beginning, several were centrally involved not only in preparing white, male secondary school teachers but also women as primary school teachers. The overall number of black graduates at these universities, including in education, were extremely small and no relationship existed between them and black missions or colleges where teachers were trained. Although Fort Hare was established in the second decade of the twentieth century with one of its major purposes being the training of African teachers for secondary schools, numbers so qualifying remained negligible. This remained the case until the latter quarter of the twentieth century, despite more universities coming into being for this purpose in 1959.

An important theme in this history is contestation between different centres of power over who controlled teacher preparation and with what consequences. Important players in the first half of the century were provinces, missions and universities, the latter as representatives of national government; in the second it was provinces and central government, which controlled racially segregated provision. As provincial power became increasingly fragmented over the apartheid period between racially and ethnically-based departments within the provinces as well as the bantustans,[5] so too the authority of provinces weakened. The power of the provinces established by the Union in 1910 was dissolved with the new Constitution of 1995, which also incorporated the bantustan system that had come into being from 1959 into nine new provinces. A strongly university-based policy-making elite entered the space of decision-making over the location of teacher preparation – the victory of the university sector in the area of teacher preparation was assured, at least in the short term. As in the past, however, the jostling between different centres of power vying for authority and control over teacher education has continued. In the post-apartheid period, a strong new voice has been added – that of the unions. Continually blamed for poor learning outcomes in schools, their persistent response has been the need for teacher development.

Greater control over teacher education, and its relocation in colleges, is advocated in order to ensure improved quality of learning outcomes in schools. The latter are important as a broader signal of national prestige or disgrace in international ranking systems and serve as a mechanism to frame teachers' priorities in classrooms and therefore also teacher education programmes. Control remains important, although its location is now currently firmly at the national level and linked to university development. But new questions arise: can teacher education on its own improve quality, wherever it is located? There is some evidence that it can and does in developing countries.[6] However, there are specificities relating to South Africa. While it is clear on the one hand that length and number of years of teacher education is important, these are often a proxy

for the kind of racially-based provision to which teachers have been exposed.[7] And while qualifications are important, they are not decisive. Rather than a teacher qualification, teacher knowledge, of both subject matter and pedagogy, is considered to be the most critical factor in determining learning outcomes in South Africa today. Without improved subject knowledge and competence, it is argued, learning outcomes will not improve, as it places'[…] an *absolute cap* on the attainment levels of students'.[8]

In this context, greater attention can and should be paid to teacher education, but three points are worth highlighting. First, the landscape of institutional provision and patterns of access in South Africa have over time been deeply marked by racial geographies of inequality and poverty. These contexts have structured not only the nature of the systems but also who has had access, when and to what. To understand the present we therefore need to understand the past, which will continue to shape the future. Second, the ideological goals of teacher education in preparing 'the nation' has defined its contours, whether implicitly or explicitly. Historically, both the state and teacher unions and associations played a vital role in determining what kind of 'nation' and for what kind of society they would try to educate. Although these goals are somewhat muted in contemporary statements about teacher preparation, they are not absent and find expression in the official broader goals and vision of the education system to achieve equity and redress and to create an inclusive society. Competing visions also find expression within different political parties and teacher unions, and so in schools. And third, the more recent trends of financialisation of the economy and society, and the simultaneous marketisation and massification of higher education, have had profound implications for the quality of provision at all levels, including teacher education.

Changes in the higher education sector more generally have impacted teacher education, now a part of it. South Africa has 26 public universities, differentiated into 11 general academic universities, nine comprehensive universities and six universities of technology. In 2016, 638,001 students were enroled in the contact mode and 337,836 in distance education. Although 90 per cent of students enroled in distance education study through University of South Africa (UNISA), universities enroling students in the contact mode are making major shifts towards online, blended learning. In 2016, the majority of graduates (comprising 43 per cent) were in the Humanities, which included Education students.[9] Private provision of teacher education, although not a new phenomenon, expanded rapidly in the immediate post-apartheid period. It was regulated by the Higher Education Act of 1997 (Act No 101 of 1997) and the Registration of Private Higher Education Institutions of 2016. Private institutions are now a small but significant element in the higher education landscape, consisting of 123 institutions and 167,408 students in 2016. Between 2011 and 2016, the number of students enroled in private higher education grew by 62.5 per cent.[10] However, only 7.8 per cent of students were enroled in Education programmes. Although there is some research on private higher education, there is comparatively little research on their specific role in teacher education.[11] International literature on private provision in the sphere of teacher preparation warns against

their tendency to employ cost-effective and profit-generating approaches that have negative consequences for quality.

As higher education institutions have become increasingly managerialist in approach and pressurised to graduate more students with less resources, new modalities of provision have emerged that rely on distance and digital education. Scarce resources have furthermore impacted negatively on the ability of university education schools and departments of education to adequately mentor and monitor students in their practice teaching, a crucial aspect of their preparation. In response to the demand for the re-opening of colleges, the presiding Minister promised three new colleges in 2008. Far from re-instating the past, they are part and parcel of the contemporary world in their modalities of delivery. Whether they can be anything else is a moot point. Focusing on the priority areas of African languages and the Foundation Phase, they are no longer the small, intimate, tightly-controlled semi-high schools of the past, but institutions of the twenty-first century in their mainly distance and digitalised orientation with little student opportunity for or experience of supervised teaching practice or college community life.

The debate about the colleges provides important insight into the ways in which the past continues into the present and will do so into the future. It is part of a broader history, however, that is poorly understood and little taught. Research into it is negligible and usually forms part of wider enquiries into schooling. There has been no sustained and focused attention to the history of teacher preparation in South Africa that can help to cast light on contemporary dynamics. That is the intention and purpose of this book.

I have, in bringing together this history, tried to balance the chronological and analytical. In trying to build a basic framework, based on very mixed kinds of sources, themselves the product of selection, it is likely that there is some unevenness of treatment of specific areas. Here it becomes necessary to say something about the strengths and limitations of existing secondary sources.

Literature and Sources

The demand for teacher education has historically arisen in relation to the rise of mass schooling and particularly of state education. But the rise of mass schooling and the history of state education in South Africa emerged highly unequally and in a staggered fashion over time for white and black children.[12] While white children were drawn into a compulsory state-provided system at the beginning of the twentieth century, this happened half a century later for Indian and coloured children and a century later for Africans. Teacher education for those white children in fully state-supported schools and those African, coloured and Indian children in partially state-supported schools run by missions thus also differed from one another. If less was expected of and for children of different classes and races, less was also expected of their teachers.

The historiography of teacher education is less extensive and patchier than that for schooling. Teacher education usually forms a section within general works written within the dominant historiographical trends. The latter have been differentiated into conservative, liberal and radical approaches. These provide insights into different aspects of the system, but relational histories linking both the transnational and the different segregated components of the system are rare. In the main, within all types of historiography, the focus is on teacher education for either African, or Indian or coloured or white teachers.[13] The educational historiography thus broadly reflects the racially staggered and divided process of the development of mass schooling in South Africa. Although social historians have focused on the gradual feminisation of the African teaching profession during the early twentieth century and institutional histories have shown how gendered and racialized teacher preparation was during the nineteenth- and twentieth-century South Africa, the information about curriculum is sketchy, particularly for the inter-war period, and the focus remains either on black or on white teachers.[14]

Earlier conservative and liberal approaches relied heavily on accounts of education in South Africa whose starting point was that what counted and mattered was the history of the system of education for whites in South Africa. Indeed, the majority of texts were written with the education of prospective white teachers in mind. They were published either in the decades immediately after the Union of South Africa,[15] a period when the state was focused on building a system of public schooling for white children, or during the 1970s and 1980s,[16] when there was a growing awareness of black education. They express the "white conservative consensus" that came to dominate settler-colonial history in South Africa[17] before the advent of a social history that emerged during the 1970s and that sought to account for the history of black education from the 'bottom up' rather than the 'top down'.[18] Within conservative accounts, teacher education normally comprises a separate chapter, black education a marginal appendix and teacher education within black education a tiny component thereof. They very much share the dominant approach to history of education dominant in the United States and United Kingdom until the 1970s as the triumphal unfolding of a system of public education.[19] Present in their writing are the prevalent prejudices and racialized assumptions of their time.

A more radical and progressive approach arose just before and after the transition to democracy in 1994. Not surprisingly, the focus now fell on the history of the education and preparation of black students and teachers by mission societies and during the apartheid period. The political economy approach provides a helpful conceptual orientation and contextualisation for a study such as this. The approach is represented most strongly by Kallaway and his authors who viewed 'the schooling of the colonised, whether conducted by missionaries or by agents of the colonial government, (as) part of the process of colonisation – the co-optation and control of subject groups' and their appropriation by colonised peoples 'to become sites of struggle'.[20] The historical-sociology developed by Jon Hyslop is also extremely useful for the apartheid period, tracing as it does the changed purpose, structure and nature of schooling and teacher politics

around it. Much of Hartshorne's chapters on teacher education in his history of black education draw on Hyslop's work – he is most insightful when drawing on his own experience in the administration.[21] The work of this school of thought is vital in the attention it gives to responses to policy. Although the literature on resistance within higher education is more substantial than within colleges, it suggests that a history of policy cannot be understood outside of responses to it.[22]

Books and theses on particular institutions exist, but are not numerous. These normally focus on the history of a particular institution and reflect their time. They are often written by former students, or participants in the system in some form or another, and have corresponding strengths and limitations.[23] There is a need for more such institutional histories; they provide unparalleled insight into the intersecting worlds of which teacher education is a part, especially when this is a conscious aim.

Important research in the post-apartheid period focused specifically on teacher education and development that I also drew on has included institutional histories, such as that by Sarah Duff on the Huguenot College in the Western Cape, and Meghan Healy-Clancy on Inanda Seminary in Natal,[24] the work of Salmon and Woods at the end of apartheid on colleges of education, the overview by Robinson and Christie, which analyses the history of teacher education within a broad contextual-analytical political and economic framework, and the studies by Lewin, Samuel and Sayed, and Kruss and Jansen, that all provide a singular focus and insights into a period of dramatic policy change for teacher education.[25] Wolhuter provides a useful outline of developments up to Union in 1910; and Robinson and Christie for the segregation, apartheid and post-apartheid periods (1910–1948; 1948–1990; 1990–2008)

All the writers, in each school of thought, pay due attention to the international dimensions of policy. 'To a very large extent', Malherbe wrote, '(South Africa's) educational system has been the resultant of successive superimpositions of systems or bits of systems from without'.[27] In tracing the development of state control over education, he seeks to understand the influences and parallel developments in other parts of the world on South Africa. For those such as Behr and Macmillan, writing almost 50 years later, it is also important to situate the development of teacher training in Europe in order to contextualise developments in South Africa. A 1988 study on history in teacher education curricula emphasised the colonial character of curricula from their inception, both in their adoption and reception, arguing that they 'slavishly mimicked' those in England and the United States throughout the twentieth century.[28] Likewise, both Peter Kallaway's political economy and Crain Soudien's post-colonial approaches emphasise that 'any attempt to grasp the history and dynamics of education for the indigenous peoples of South Africa must be located within the context of European imperialist expansion and the drawing of most of the world into international capitalist development during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries'.[29] These more recent studies differ from the earlier in highlighting and problematizing the close link between imperialism, colonialism and racialisation of education.

More recently, the turn to transnationalism has questioned both the boundedness of single nation-state studies and the hierarchical, top-down emphasis of colonial-domination and adoption or borrowing and lending approaches, stressing instead the lateral, 'criss-crossing' transnational connections that emerge through the 'entanglements' of ideas, people and processes across boundaries.[30] This approach 'puts relationality at the center […] and aims to surface the entangled complexity of sometime disparate educational actors, devices, discourses, and practices. (It) recognises that we construct knowledge from and through relationships, and it additionally recognises that the production of comparison is itself a way of relating to other people'.[31] This book takes the centrality of the notion of 'relationality' from this approach, but in order not to dissolve the relations of power and political content of relationships within and between local, national and international contexts, it works with the notion of relationality with reference to colonial inequality.[32] These need not be mutually exclusive approaches: colonial entanglements of and relations between those engaged in preparing teachers in particular national contexts elsewhere help explain the common but unequal world created in and through colonial teacher preparation. A history of teacher preparation would need to take into account the connections between all dimensions.

A Relational Understanding of an Entangled and Unequal System

In preparing this book, I have tried to develop a relational understanding of this history of the development of South Africa's system of provision of teacher preparation.[33] As Swartz has pointed out, a focus on colonial education provides 'a way into thinking about the construction of difference in the settler colonies, not only in terms of race, class and gender – although these were of course significant lines of demarcation – but also in terms of age'.[34] How the system of teacher preparation structured access and quality to ensure unequal outcomes in terms of teacher qualifications and knowledge through a specific gendered and racially and ethnically-defined structure, and how this changed over time, is dealt with historically by placing these features in relation to four main structuring dimensions. The reader looking for neat demarcations between white, Indian, coloured and African parts of the system as a structuring tool will not find them as this is to read the last 50 years of the twentieth century into the history of South Africa as a whole, when these categories in earlier periods were much more slippery and in the process of being given the hard shape they attained after 1948. Since racial division is a major cleavage in South African society, I do however pay attention to how segregation is brought into being through different systems developed for people who were mostly but not always categorised as 'white', 'Indian', 'coloured' and African even though their heritages might have been much more mixed than these categories might suggest. However segregated, these always developed relationally, however. The book tries to capture these entanglements and separations in different ways.