

Democratic Transformation of Education in South Africa

**27–28 September 2000
Stellenbosch Lodge Country Hotel
Stellenbosch**

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Prof. Johann Steyn, <i>Chairperson, Department of Education Policy Studies, University of Stellenbosch</i>	
Opening Remarks	7
Dr Michael Lange, <i>Resident Representative, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Johannesburg</i>	
Education in an Age of Rising Transnationality	11
Prof. Wolfgang Mitter, <i>German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF), Frankfurt am Main, Germany</i>	
Balancing Quality and Equality in Educational Transformation	21
Prof. Johann Steyn, <i>Department of Education Policy Studies, University of Stellenbosch</i>	
Education for Democracy: Revisiting Rortyan Pragmatism	29
Dr Yusef Waghid, <i>Senior Lecturer, Department of Education Policy Studies, University of Stellenbosch</i>	
The Values Underlying Quality and Equality in Educational Transformation	37
Dr Jeanette de Klerk, <i>Department of Education Policy Studies, University of Stellenbosch</i>	
Quality Education and Equal Opportunities in Education: A Current Discussion in Germany	45
Dr Hans Döbert, <i>German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF), Berlin</i>	
Rhetoric and Language Issues in Education in the South African Democracy	51
Prof. Stanley Ridge, <i>University of the Western Cape</i>	
Dealing with the Principle of Equality in East Germany from 1945 to 1990	59
Dr Gert Geißler, <i>German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF), Berlin</i>	
Official Policy Related to Quality and Equality in Education: A Documentary Study	63
Dr Willem du Plessis, <i>Department of Education Policy Studies, University of Stellenbosch</i>	
Educational Research as Democratic Praxis	71
Mr Lesley le Grange, <i>University of Stellenbosch</i>	

Table of Contents

Quality Indicators for South African Schools Against the Background of International Practices	79
Dr Heinie Brand, <i>Eversdal Primary School</i>	
Assessment: Transforming Policy into Practice	89
Dr Riana Hall & Ms Wilma Rossouw, <i>University of Stellenbosch</i>	
A Case for Human Rights Education in an African Context: The Concept and the Practice	97
Mr Tarcisio Nyatsanza, <i>African University, Mutare, Zimbabwe</i>	
Implications of Culturally Based Assumptions of Leadership for the Process of Educational Transformation	103
Dr Johan Schreuder, <i>University of Stellenbosch</i>	
The Need for the Transformation of Religion in Education: Towards an Understanding of Democratic Values	109
Dr Cornelia Roux, <i>Department of Didactics, University of Stellenbosch</i>	
Democratic Values and Content-Specific Language Teaching and Learning: Experiences in the Northern Cape	115
Dr Carol Puhl, <i>Centre for Education Development, University of Stellenbosch</i> & Dr Jeanette de Klerk, <i>Department of Education Policy Studies, University of Stellenbosch</i>	
Language and Democracy	127
Dr Elaine Ridge, <i>University of Stellenbosch</i>	
Can Devolution of Power Enable Transformation in South African School Systems?	133
Mr Chris Reddy, <i>Faculty of Education, University of Stellenbosch</i>	
Shaping and Sizing: Proposed Transformations of the Higher Education Landscape in South Africa	139
Prof. Eli Bitzer, <i>University of Stellenbosch</i>	
Programme	153
Participants' List	157
Seminar Reports	161
Occasional Paper Series	163

Introduction

The conference *The Democratic Transformation of Education in South Africa* was presented by the University of Stellenbosch's Department of Educational Policy Studies, in collaboration with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAF), and was held at the Stellenbosch Lodge Country Hotel on 27 and 28 September 2000. KAF has supported the department's efforts in promoting democratic education since 1998.

The theme of the conference and the papers delivered are highly relevant to the establishment of a deep and sustainable democracy, especially in a young democracy such as South Africa. South Africans experience post-colonial and post-apartheid transformation as part of their daily lives. Transformation explicitly linked to democracy should therefore reflect democratic values. What we need in South Africa is not formal democracy, but *deep* democracy – democracy that would preserve and protect human rights and humane democratic values in a dynamic and responsive way.

With this in mind, South African and German educationists delivered papers at this conference. The various papers covered important aspects of the theme. Some of these papers touched on official policies, others on human rights issue and others still on the need for the democratisation and transformation of education. The aim of the conference was to stimulate educational discourse and to promote the idea of building a democratic culture in education. We are optimistic that this publication will contribute towards harnessing democratisation processes in South Africa.

Prof. Johann Steyn
Chairperson
Department Education Policy Studies
University of Stellenbosch

Opening Remarks

Michael Lange

INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAF), I would like to extend a very warm welcome to you all .

This is the third time KAF has cooperated with the University of Stellenbosch's Department of Educational Policy Studies in organising an event of this nature, and we are delighted at being able to continue our series of workshops in the interests of promoting democratic values in South Africa.

1. BRIEF BACKGROUND

For those wondering what kind of organisation KAF is, allow me to sketch a brief background to the German political foundations in general, and to KAF in particular, as well as to outline some of the reasoning behind its involvement in South Africa.

The German political foundations are, we believe, a unique feature of today's democratic culture in Germany. The move behind their creation, which dates back to the 1960s, was the expectation that political or civic education would help develop and consolidate democracy in post-war Germany.

Both in Germany and abroad these foundations seek to further develop and encourage people to engage in political debate, thereby strengthening democracy and promoting a pluralistic society.

KAF is one of six political foundations in Germany today, and is closely affiliated to the Christian Democratic Union Party, a centrist political party founded after the Second World War. It proudly bears the name of one of its founding members, Konrad Adenauer, who

subsequently became the first Chancellor of post-war Germany.

KAF has been cooperating with partners throughout the world for almost 40 years now. Currently, some 80 representatives oversee some 200 projects and programmes in more than 100 countries. In this manner, the foundation makes its own unique contribution to policies serving peace and justice in international relations.

KAF's international activities aim at enhancing democracy and development, and promoting dialogue across national and cultural boundaries. In this way it is actively assuming a share of responsibility for shaping international relations, while conveying modern German political culture to the rest of the world.

KAF currently has wide-ranging programmes in different parts of Africa , as well as in the different provinces in South Africa. The foundation cooperates not only with centrist political parties and their respective think-tanks, but also with reputable academic institutions, as you will note from today's event.

2. EDUCATION AND DEMOCRACY

As a result of the work KAF has undertaken, especially in developing countries, it has adopted the promotion of democracy as its most essential mission. We have become convinced that the creation and consolidation of a democratic political framework is one of the essential conditions on which any development process depends.

In Germany, political education is one of the focal points of KAF's work. Every year more

than 3000 meetings and conferences reach out to some 150 000 people. Through these educational activities, the foundation aims to explain the fundamentals of a pluralistic democracy from a Christian Democratic point of view and to enhance political competence.

3. THE TRANSFORMATION OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The past five years have seen the formulation of several policies aimed at transforming education at all levels – from pre-primary to tertiary. Central to most of these policies were attempts to effect redress and equity, with the ultimate goal of providing education for all.

The appointment of Dr Kader Asmal as the new Education Minister has been well received by the South African public and it was refreshing to hear Dr Asmal admit from the start, that the education system, especially at school level, was facing great difficulties and that stern measures were required to rectify the ills of the current system.

We are all aware of the fact that when the education landscape was transformed from 19 racially based education departments to nine provincial education departments, large inequalities were found between provinces. Redress was initially driven by redistributing funds between provincial education departments and by equalising learner/educator ratios across provinces.

The first form of redress introduced by the Department of Education concerned the redistribution of funds from wealthier provincial education departments to poorer provincial education departments. This was facilitated by the Function Committee System through which the National Minister could play a direct role in provincial budgetary allocations.

As a result, provinces such as the Eastern Cape and the Northern Province increased spending by 49.4% and 36.9% respectively between 1995/96 and 1996/97. In contrast, there were relatively small increases in Gauteng and the Western Cape, which bore the brunt of redistribution. Changes in the budget process in 1997/98 meant that transfers of funds to provinces were made directly from the National Revenue Fund to the provincial revenue funds, and provinces became responsible for allocating education funding. The drastic increases that poorer provinces experienced in 1995/96

and 1996/97 were checked, because from then on, the education system lacked a national agent to effect redistribution between provinces.

In 2000 the national norms and standards for school funding were introduced to facilitate the redistribution of non-personnel funds between schools.

In 1994 gross inequalities in learner:educator ratios were also identified as an important obstacle to equity, and plans were made to develop national norms for the provision of educators to schools. The new national guidelines for educator provisioning specified a learner:educator ratio of 1:40 at primary schools, and 1:35 for secondary schools.

The most serious problem encountered was that decisions about educator numbers and salaries were made at national level, while implementation took place at provincial level. As a result, these agreements were often unaffordable at provincial level.

The national process of educator provisioning was abandoned, and it was decided that each province would have its own target learner:educator ratio, but a nationally negotiated post-provisioning model would guide its application to individual schools. The attempt at equitable distribution of educators has, however, not been ruined since provincial education departments became responsible for the process. The latest statistics released by the Department of Education suggest that provinces have moved closer to each other in terms of learner:educator ratios.

An area of greatest concern is unequal per learner spending on teacher salaries. This reflects the fact that poorer learners are still subject to less qualified teachers than their more affluent peers, even though learner:education ratios are approaching equity.

The remaining equity instrument in public schools is the National Norms and Standards for Public School Funding, which aims at distributing the bulk of recurrent non-personnel expenditure to poorer schools. However, personnel expenditure in public schools constituted 93.6% of provincial education budgets in 1999/2000, and 92.3% in 2000/01. This leaves less than eight per cent of education budgets available for non-personnel spending. If we deduct capital expenditure from this amount, then provincial education departments have an

average of only 6.7% to spend on recurrent non-personnel expenditure. Poorer provinces generally have even less money available. In the absence of any real growth over the medium term, learners in poor provinces will not see considerable improvements in the quality of education in public schools. Gauteng will continue to spend 100% more than the Eastern Cape and about 150% more than the Northern Province on non-personnel expenditure per learner in 2000/01.

Provinces such as the Western Cape, Northern Cape and Gauteng will continue to spend far more on teacher salaries per learner than poorer provinces. In the current financial year, Western Cape and Gauteng spend between 35% and 40% more than KwaZulu-Natal on personnel. Matric results are not necessarily the most valid indicators of the level of teacher quality because there are critical socio-economic factors that impede the progress of poor learners. Nonetheless, the 1999 matric results suggest that the Western Cape (78.8%), Northern Cape (64.3%) and to a lesser extent Gauteng (57%) have an advantage over other provinces by virtue of their resource base of well qualified teachers. Mpumalanga and the Northern Province, on the other hand, had matric pass rates of 48.3% and 37.5% respectively in 1999, and yet their education departments are budgeting to spend even less on educators. The absence of national mechanisms to effect greater equity between provinces means that these spending patterns are likely to continue for a long time. The reduction of "equity" to a provincial level now means that an entirely new approach has to be found to deal with the inequities of the past.

Persistent inequality in public schools can be understood through unequal spending on educators across provinces and the varying size of redistributive bases of recurrent non-personnel costs within provinces. Provinces are invariably caught between the need to balance demand for larger allocations to recurrent non-personnel expenditure and at the same time trying to improve the qualifications of its teacher corps. Stable and declining education budgets mean that growth in the redistributive base of provinces is now directly dependent on efficiency savings in public schools. The impact of efficiency savings will take time to permeate the public school system, and in the absence of

any other equity plans, the speed with which equity goals are attained will ultimately depend on the success of a more productive schooling system. The one variable that has a direct relation to learner output, namely teacher quality, has not been significantly addressed in current equity plans. Large per capita differences on what provinces spend on their educators remain.

At the same time there are budgetary predicaments. Although the education budget, with a share of more than 20%, has been the largest budgetary expenditure during the past few years, 90% of the money goes to teacher's salaries, leaving little for infrastructure, teaching materials and other physical resources.

We hope that the new administration will eventually make headway in achieving these objectives, bearing in mind how badly South African pupils perform in international competitions.

4. GERMAN EXPERIENCE

I believe that Germany, with all its historical experiences and with all its subsequently established institutions, not least KAF, has something to offer, especially in terms of adult education.

As far as democratic education is concerned, the situation in the former German Democratic Republic – today's eastern part of united Germany – may be compared to that which the "previously disadvantaged" people of South Africa found themselves in after the unification of South Africa into the "rainbow nation". Some German experience might therefore be useful in the context of the transformation process of South Africa's education system.

Comparing models of democratic or civic education implemented in united Germany after unification with the ones currently tested in South Africa might bring about further expertise in view of the dire straits that the South African education system apparently finds itself in.

South Africa has – only a few years ago – set out on a most difficult path towards democracy and prosperity for all its people. This has led, and will for some time to come lead, all of us through difficult territory.

There are indications that the implementation of democracy and the rule of law, together with the transformation of the South African state

and society, cannot be continuously implemented without causing frustrations and disappointment to many who, since the election victory of the governing parties in the recent second democratic elections in South Africa, yearn for delivery of the very promise of democracy.

At the same time, we should remain aware of the fact that the success or failure of the process of democratisation is bound to influence the stability and security of the new South Africa.

CONCLUSION

South Africa is today considered by many observers to be a legally consolidated democracy, in which development towards a constitutional, pluralistic state, ruled by the new law of the land, appears to be irreversible.

But by transforming white minority rule to black majority government, only the founda-

tions for a peaceful democratic society have been laid.

Building and maintaining a strong and enduring democracy on those foundations will furthermore depend on a continuing commitment by all segments of South Africa's diverse population to reconciliation and far-reaching economic and social transformation.

KAF is willing to play a role in that process.

This year's workshop series on the democratic transformation of education has allowed us, as a German political foundation, to contribute in a meaningful way to the development of a democratic culture in South Africa.

This symposium is designed to stimulate debate on the ongoing democratic transformation of education in this country, and I can only hope that you find this conference enjoyable, interesting and worthwhile.

Education in an Age of Rising Transnationality

Wolfgang Mitter

1. EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODERN NATION STATE: RETROSPECT

All over the world formal education is the responsibility of the state, mainly in the form of national education systems. In historical terms this responsibility is rooted in the alliance between the modern state and the ideology of nationalism. It was born at the end of the 18th century as one of the essential corollaries of the American War of Independence and the French Revolution. In Europe the nation state was destined to occupy the political map throughout the 19th century and to reach its culmination with the end of World War I. There it could rely on the attainments of the modern state which had emerged one century before as the manifestation of absolutism. In their efforts to build a well-organised political system, kings and princes had established efficient administrations and armies, controlled the economies and introduced compulsory school attendance, starting with four years and gradually proceeding. The subsequent nation state, in its turn allied with the principles of liberal economy and constitutional legitimacy, continued this development including the stabilisation of national education systems. In this view the aforementioned alliance has laid the ground for the victorious advance of the modern nation state.

As is the case with overviews, this general design does not indulge in country-based peculiarities and does not take regard of the diachronic character of the development as a whole. In particular, it does not identify federal structures as particular configurations of the modern nation state, nor does it pay special

attention to the conflict between nation building and ethnicity, which has been inherent in most “nation states” and has gained paramount actuality in our days. Stress, however, must be laid on the worldwide dimension of the process of nation building and, consequently, on the emergence of the modern nation state. In this context we become aware of the contribution of liberation movements against their colonial rulers in Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Pacific region as well as of successful efforts to get rid of “hidden” colonialism, as demonstrated by China, Thailand or Iran. Japan had anticipated this step before Western imperialism could exercise its powers in the same way. Though to various degrees, the Latin American countries and, as a result of the Meiji Restoration, Japan established the first national education systems outside the European and North American regions, not without thoroughly studying foreign experiences.

Nowadays national education policy and the establishment or expansion of national school systems are on the agenda everywhere. The political powers with their legislative, executive and judicial bodies have laid the foundations for the organisation of schools and the introduction of compulsory curricula.

Moreover they set the norms for educating the young generation to loyal citizenship and make great efforts to eliminate emerging opposition against these norms. The implementation of all these activities at the macro-level of education policy is affected by provisions made at the micro-level of the grassroots in the form of supervision. Furthermore, it is supported by the appointment of loyal and committed teachers.

Teacher education plays a significant role to ensure this strategy, while there are multifarious cases where governments are engaged in coping with activities of “non-loyal” or even resistant teachers. All these policies directly comprise the sector of “state” or “public” schools. Private schools are also affected, insofar as school legislation, as a rule, includes frame provisions for this sector too.

When speaking of the national form and character of education systems, we associate with it not only all their structural features in order to identify similarities and diversities in the regional or global dimensions. We also think of mentalities of young people as outcomes of the concerted actions at both system levels. These mentalities are related both to citizenship and to attitudes to education and learning per sé. In this context let me remind you of Martin McLean’s accurate attempts at isolating specific knowledge cultures inside Europe¹ that are easy to extend to the global dimension, as can be revealed by comparison of present-day Francophone and Anglophone republics in Africa. It is always the national context that has determined the direction until today, irrespective of its specific colonial legacy and the recent cross-national trends to be resumed later.

Ideally speaking, it is democracy as a political system as well as a way of life that sets the optimum framework for the harmonisation between national loyalty and human citizenship. In John Dewey’s work this interdependence seems to be most clearly interpreted. In his fundamental study *Democracy and Education* (1916), he stated that the “devotion of democracy to education is a familiar fact”. To explain this statement he identifies “voluntary disposition and interest” among the citizens as the important feature of political coherence within the commonwealth that extends beyond the rules of the political system in its capacity as a social subsystem. “Voluntary disposition and interest”, he argues, “can only be created by education”. The “deeper explanation”, however, he finds in the essential quality of democracy as a “mode of associated living, of conjoint and communicated experience”.² Education “to personal initiative and adaptability” appears in Dewey’s conclusion as a necessary prerequisite for the validity of democracy.³

What, however, remains neglected in Dewey’s considerations, is the exposition of

national loyalty to ideologisation resulting from the concrete modern nation state’s claim to demarcate its interests against the “rest of the world”. Realising this intention, policymakers, supported by intellectuals of different status and quality, tend to emphasise, or even exaggerate, certain features of their nations’ mentalities and to devise myths of “national history” according to their own goals and strategies. This phenomenon, characteristic of all modern nation states, even includes stabilised democratic systems with solid constitutional foundations, functioning governing structures and widespread commitment to democratic ways of life. As, for instance, Erwin Epstein observes, that the:

“state’s interest in teaching children to be loyal is so compelling that it cannot allow schools merely to teach objective knowledge. Consequently, schools mix myths with facts to ensure that children gain a favourable view of the national culture. However, democratic states also claim as a hallmark their children be freer both to express themselves and to choose what knowledge professed by others to accept. Unfortunately, the democratic aim of ensuring unfettered access to knowledge is undermined by the universal need of nations to gain political legitimacy and social and economic stability.”⁴

Consequently, education for democratic citizenship and national loyalty ends up in rather a restricted form, especially when linked with those nationalistic drives that have been a permanent concomitant of emergence, development, triumph and decay of modern nation states. In their extreme manifestations, such drives have ended up in unrest, violence, war or even genocide.

2. TRANSNATIONALITY: SHIFT OF PARADIGM

It is true that national education systems dominate the worldwide scene in their capacity as providers of formal education. This paradigm, however, is no longer undisputed, since education seems to be involved in processes which are circumscribed by the “decline of the nation state” and the emergence of “transnational spaces”. The reasons for this recent shift have been ascertained in the worldwide drive towards “transnational mobility”, to quote the German sociologist Ulrich Beck, one of the

prominent representatives of the international “globalisation debate”. According to their analyses, transnational mobility is evident in the following manifestations: increasing permeability of borders for goods and people, migrations caused by economic disparities and socio-political inequity, declining competencies of national governments and authorities, formation of inter- or supranational structures, and disintegration of national ties and identities as part of changes in people’s value structures.

Ulrich Beck relates the emergence of transnationality to the decay of the traditional concept consisting in the identity of space, state and political community, entailing the disintegration of the state as a territorial unit. He argues that nation, democracy and the welfare state cannot remain unaffected by this process, although he adds that the current global scene is dominated by “protectionist reflex actions”:⁵

“The first ones want the nation, the second ones the democracy, the third ones the welfare state, the fourth ones the nature. But everything that is desirable – nation, democracy, the social conscience and the environmental protection – depends upon the territorial concept of the state and is jeopardised as a consequence of its threat.”

In his reasoning, Beck continues that the elements that have constituted the coherence of the modern nation state are decoupled. In this context he refers to Nietzsche who had heralded the “age of comparisons” (*Zeitalter der Vergleichung*) predicting in a visionary way that:

“The less men are bound by their tradition, the greater the internal stirring of motives; the greater, accordingly, the external unrest, the whirling flow of men, the polyphony of strivings. Who today still feels a serious obligation to bind himself and his descendants to one place? Who feels that anything is seriously binding? Just as all artistic styles of arts are imitated one next to the other, so too are all stages and kinds of morality, customs, cultures.

Such an age gets its meaning because in it the various world views, customs, cultures are compared and experienced next to one another, which was not possible earlier, when there was always a localised rule for each culture, just as all artistic styles were bound to place and time ... This is the age of

comparisons! That is its pride – but also by rights its sorrows. Let us not be afraid of these sorrows! Instead, we will conceive the task that this age sets us to be as great as possible ...”⁶

Beck’s and his like-minded colleagues’ analyses and predictions end in stating a shift of paradigm, as regards the concept of the political system in its transition from the modern nation state to transnational units as their constitutive elements. The involvement of education becomes evident even if the shift remains incomplete. May it suffice at this point to think of the consequences to be expected from the decay of the modern nation state’s monopoly to shape and control curricula with their cognitive and affective components.

3. THE PATH TO TRANSNATIONALITY: AN IRRESISTIBLE AND UBIQUITOUS TREND?

There is no reasonable doubt that the present-day ideas concerning the decline of the modern nation state and its replacement by transnationality are distinguished by a great degree of plausibility. They play an essential role within the overarching theories dealing with the pluridimensional trend of globalisation. Does this assumption include the irresistible character of this trend, as Beck and his colleagues argue? Moreover, is this trend discernible everywhere, all over the world and in all sections of the global society? Consequently, is the predicted decline of the modern nation state a constitutive element of globalisation? These are the questions that seem to be legitimate in the present discourse. In this context I do not want to engage in a long-term prediction, for the more the future of human coexistence opens, the stronger the plausibility of the shift shows up. Yet, contenting ourselves with a middle-term view, we notice its ambivalent aspects.

It is true that, compared with the post-World War I periods, the decades following World War II have been characterised by transnational cooperation, although over-shadowed by the Cold War. The United Nations (UN) survived all its critical situations. Interaction in education has been visibly stimulated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco). The numerous programmes and projects of this world organisation are as noteworthy as its reports on essential themes. In particular, we are reminded of the

comprehensive reports *Learning to be* (1972) and *Learning: The Treasure Within* (1996).⁷ Furthermore, the initiatives at regional levels,⁸ undertaken by Unesco's regional agencies have contributed to coordinating global and regional approaches to integrating national interests. In recent years these policies have been reinforced by cooperation between Unesco and the big regional institutions and organisations, such as the European Union (EU), the Council of Europe and the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), let alone the joint projects between Unesco and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Taking regionalisation of national policies into special consideration, the state of the arts is remarkable in many ways too. This assumption can be substantiated by observation of integrative processes in Latin America, South East Asia, Africa and Europe. The EU signals the comparatively highest degree of integration, primarily in the economic area. As regards education, the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) has stipulated for the first time the overall steering competency of the Union for educational politics. Previous initiatives in the sectors of vocational and higher education had pointed this way before. The integrative trend becomes manifest, above all, in the member states' endeavours to harmonise qualification and examination assessment.⁹ In this context one should not ignore the fact either that the multiethnic Russian Federation has survived the collapse of the Soviet Union and the secession of territorial units which had been constituent parts of the Tsarist Empire, let alone the Soviet Union itself. The Chechene tragedy has been, fortunately until now, the only exception to this general change.

The trends towards political regionalisation can be considered as part of the globalising processes, the more as it seems that they are reinforced by efforts aimed at cross-regional cooperation, in particular promoted by UN and the other world organisations. Besides, the proponents of transnationality at the "governmental" level (international and national) are challenged by their competitors in the economic sub-system. May it suffice in this connection to point to the activities of the "global players" and, in particular, of the multinational firms and joint ventures whose number has increased

tremendously over the past decade. It is the electronics industry which directly intervenes in education, both at its macro-level and its micro-level, making "customary" contents and teaching methods obsolete. In principle, governments and schools welcome such intervention as an incentive to modernising education and schooling and preventing them from "staying behind". They behave and act accordingly, as long as they are explicitly involved as authorising and controlling bodies. Yet, that this trend is ambivalent, should be exemplified by the following quotation from an article written by an Australian team of educational researchers:¹⁰

"Markets are not premised on the assumption of fairness or equality. While their proponents make the claim that there is general benefit from competitive self-interest, they also argue that those who play according to the rules and are the best at the game deserve the general rewards. Ultimately, markets operate, according to the logic of profit, only in certain sets of interests and let the 'weak' go to the wall. They work to produce a selfish, individualistic culture in which the main moral imperative is gratification, not the collective good. Of course, critical policy analysts have been making this point for some time, although obviously not to much avail. Nonetheless, the point stands and is supported. However, we are concerned that post-modern markets in education will both generate and obscure forms of injustice that are significantly different from those noted above. We suspect certain of these injustices will be even more difficult to address precisely because the global markets which generate them stand outside the state and therefore outside our normal channels of redress. In many senses this is a devil we do not know. Or do we know it in another form? Do the operations of international money markets give us a hint? In the post-modern financial 'jungle' the market is a predator. It looks around for a vulnerable currency and strikes it, unmercifully like a cobra."

Educators are explicitly reminded of this, admittedly provocative and even exaggerated, comment, when, for instance, becoming aware of the helplessness of national governments to protect schools from "unauthorised" invasion of the Internet into the classroom. Let alone the

economic aspect, this massive mode of intervention turns out to be especially felt in the fields of political and moral education, ultimately when the “invader”, frequently speaking from abroad, propagates intolerance, violence, criminality or racism. On the other hand it should not be ignored that frontier-crossing competitors may also act as agents of transnationality, counteracting to narrow-minded nationalism inherent in national curricula or propagated by chauvinist teachers.

Furthermore, the streams of migrant workers have long been extended and reinforced by those of refugees and people seeking political asylum even in remote countries. In this context it should be also remarked that cross-national and cross-cultural mobility is promoted by tourism that is often underestimated and even depreciated as a component of transnationality. Harsh judgements, often articulated with generalising tendencies are, however, not justified. Against the crowds of unconcerned or even “blind” tourists, one must not neglect those travellers who want to widen their knowledge and experience by contacting near and remote countries and people. Among them we meet young people, equipped with rucksacks, who utilise their holidays or interrupt their formal learning and training. Others connect their “expeditions” with temporary jobs.

All these manifestations, which exemplify the reality of mobility, are increasingly reinforced by the influence of its virtual counterparts, as conveyed by the modern media. This observation shall be elucidated by the following quotation from an article dealing with the “dynamics of cultural globalisation”:¹¹

“Thursday morning at Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin: Having breakfast with Darjeeling tea from the Chinese Province of Yunnan and biologically dynamically grown cereals from Uckermark [a district in the German *Land* Brandenburg, the author] we are glancing over the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* [south German newspaper]: At the ‘Swiss Music Alpine Festival’ in the Japanese town of Norikura, the Korean yodeller Kim Chul Hong has won the first place. Siemens and Fujitsu have announced their joint-venture plans. Then BBC World Service reported upon the new initiative of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. It makes mobile telephones available to its 2.1 millions borrow-

ers, thus catapulting one of the poorest countries in the world into the information age in an unusual way. In Kosovo the first KFOR troops have arrived. Later the same day a Turkish tailor relates the formation of a drug self-help group in his neighbour’s house and his daughter’s decision to go to school veiled from tomorrow onwards. In the letter-box there is a circular letter from the Society for Threatened Peoples entitled ‘Support courageous women in Kurdistan, Tibet, Ethiopia and Bosnia’.”

Beyond this vivid snapshot, sketched by two German ethnologists, it seems to be worthwhile adding the author’s own comment that reminds us of Nietzsche’s visionary prediction:

“While we thought only a decade ago that we might allocate views of life as well as economic and political systems to concrete places, this assumption has become questionable ... While, however, the economic and political consequences of worldwide networking are discussed in the public in differentiated and controversial ways, the impacts on culture and everyday occurrences remain strangely unexposed ...”

In other words, the impact of economic, social and political globalisation on many people’s minds and lives have not yet been reflected by the social sciences. Let me add that education is entirely involved in this mental gap.

This is one side of the coin. When looking at the other side, we become aware that the trend towards transnationality on the whole is not so transparent as to make us disregard certain retarding factors, nor is it so ubiquitous, as is put forth in theoretical debates on globalisation and “second modernity”.¹²

- Regional unions are continually confronted with policies of their member states to retain national sovereignty to the maximum extent possible. Education in the EU exemplifies this observation. It is true that, as has been remarked, there are trends towards harmonising qualification structures in vocational and higher education, and exchange programmes have been considerably extended, for students of different age and school types. On the other hand the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) has emphasised the principle of “subsidiarity” whose legitimacy is given by intentions of the contracting member states to protect local, ethnic and national traditions and

interests, while at the same time it is used as a defensive means against transnational integration. Furthermore, it might be naive to overlook open or subcutaneous desires for stopping integration at the borders of the EU, screening it as a new “supra-state” from the “rest of the world”. Using (or abusing) the World Trade agreements for aggressive protection of national economic interests points to a similar direction.

- The second restrictive comment is rooted in deficiencies, as regards the definition of the concept of nation with its range and content. It is true that the original concept which was born in Europe, has been adopted all over the world in the form of constitutional and legal provisions as well as mentally expressed in “national” ideologies. Does this really mean that nationalism is related to the same range, content and understanding everywhere? Are there any clear-cut criteria to classify national self-awareness emerging, let us say, in a small country which has recently gained independence for the first time in its history after the victorious outcome of a liberation process, or in a huge country with a centuries-old – or, as the case of China indicates, millennia-old – history and tradition? Questioning such – supposed or alleged – incongruity does not mean, of course, making qualifying distinctions concerning acknowledgement of sovereignty and respect. Making this comment, however, we remain fully conscious of its ambiguity under certain political circumstances, when contrasting claims clash, as the actual cases of Bosnia and Kosovo intimate. Furthermore, these cases stimulate the question of authorisation: Who is entitled to define the quality of a “nation” differing from an “ethnic group”, the people concerned or an external power such as an inter- or supranational institution?
- Like globalisation, transnationality is confronted with the dilemma of simultaneousness and universal validity. The fact that young people like McDonald’s food, should not be thoughtlessly taken for transnational attitude and commitment. The fanatised soldiers and partisans in former Yugoslavia are unlikely to have been incited by their chauvinism to detest McDonald’s products. In the wider view we become aware of people’s engagement in market-bound thinking and

practice, while at the same time they are active in parties or associations propagating national or ethnic concerns in defence against transnational concepts. Accordingly, this question as a whole must be raised to which extent transnational attitudes, represented among politicians, journalists and intellectuals in general, are shared by the majority of the population. In this context reference to Raymond Aron’s thoughts on the “heterogeneity of civilisations” is worth remembering. It was addressed in 1962 and is easy to transfer to actual national set-ups, the more so as his book in question is entitled *Paix et guerre entre les nations*.¹³ Moreover, this issue can be extended to intra-personal tensions. Let me quote from a finding included in an inquiry undertaken a few years ago by an international team in Croatia, among Croatian youths:¹⁴

“Although the examinees showed significant predisposition for interculturalism, the reader should be warned about the possibility that they might have accepted these values only on the basis of cognitive identification. In practice this does not necessarily mean that the respondents would, in concrete circumstances, respond and act in accordance with their evaluations.”

It should be added that the authors’ conclusion has turned out to be far from restriction to abstract reflections, but has been frequently confirmed by people’s behaviour in the everyday reality of the various wars in post-Yugoslavia during the 1990s.

4. THE MODERN NATION STATE: SYMPTOMS OF CONTINUING VITALITY

Beyond these retarding factors the trend toward transnationality seems to be hampered by substantial and long-range countercurrents. These intimate that in some world regions the modern nation state has not only been retained, but even regained vitality. The following two symptoms are presented to stress this assumption:

- In the Third World, the nation state is still held in high esteem. National ideologies are formed in order to sustain the ties between the liberation from colonial rule and the “normalcy” of independence. Since, as a rule, the young modern nation states are built upon a

multiethnic composition of their populations, nationalism serves the purpose of nation building, national coherence, the formation of people's political and cultural identities and, finally, the nation's defence against particularism, segregation or even secession. The establishment of the modern nation state is, in principle, independent of what degree of coherence is laid down in constitution and governance, be it centralist or federalist. South Africa distinctly demonstrates the latter type under the roof of one nation, whereby the debates about Nelson Mandela's concept of a "rainbow nation" seem to mirror facets only, rather than fundamental variations.¹⁵ In this context it should be added that without any restriction South Africa can be legitimately called a young nation state, because its predecessor, in terms of territory and population, was void of both democratic legitimacy and national coherence. This statement does not disregard the open-end chances of Mandela's visionary concept between success and failure.

- The transformation processes in Central, Eastern and South East Europe as well as in Central Asia reveal similarities to those in the Third World, insofar as nationalism is greatly relevant – as a criterion of liberation, in this case from hegemonial Soviet imperialism, as well as of coherence, i.e. as a means to reconcile national polity and multiethnic reality. As regards the vitality of nationalism, it hardly makes any difference whether the existing nation states are the outcome of revival, such as the Baltic republics, or recent emergence, such as Bosnia, Moldova, Belarus or Kyrgyzstan.

Both symptoms signal discrepancies concerning the act of liberation and transformation, namely by peaceful shift of power, such as in Slovakia or South Africa, or by violence, such as in the majority of the successor states of the former Yugoslavia. Education is greatly involved in these processes. For instance, history textbooks are significant indicators of "patriotic education"; analyses of Serbian and Croatian textbooks, which were used in schools up to the recent shifts to democratic structures (and are likely to be still available), have brought to light passages that reveal feelings of intransigence.¹⁶ On the other hand, the South African case demonstrates the opposite, though

continually endangered, strategy towards reconciliation among hitherto totally separated ethnic (racial) groups. It is true that the two cases are specified by different referential frameworks: in South Africa, reconciliation inside one country; in the former Czechoslovakia, separation between two liberated countries. This difference, however, should not question the legitimacy of this, admittedly uneven, comparison per sé.

In view of globalisation, the current vitality of the modern nation state in various countries and regions may be interpreted as a manifestation of "running fights". It seems yet that there are good reasons to contest the global validity of such assumptions, as far as middle-term predictions permit. Education provides proofs for underlining this counter-argument.

CONCLUSION

The path of humankind into the foreseeable future is likely to be characterised by further advance of the predicted decline of the nation state in the worldwide dimension. This development will be complemented by the steady increase of transnational mobility and transnational spaces. Education systems are already involved in both tiers of this trend as a whole: the macro-level by international agreements and resolutions, the micro-level by the emergence of multinational and multicultural schools, classrooms and training centres. Non-governmental organisations, such as research foundations and associations of university rectors or presidents, contribute to reinforcing this trend. School structures and curricula are necessarily challenged to adjust to what has been already identified as a shift of paradigm – from the nation states to transnational networks with flexible steering competencies. The aforementioned "intervention" of the global market considerably adds further incentives to this global development. Its strength distinctly comes to light, when one looks back to the wide range of responsibilities national governments exercised in maintaining and controlling their education systems only a few decades ago, be it in the form of centralised, federal or, indirectly, local governance. This is one side of the coin.

The other side is presented by our observation that – for the time being and the foreseeable future – the decline of the nation state is neither ubiquitous nor uniform in terms of range and

intensity. In a good number of countries, internal conflicts endangering the formation of national identity, complicate the problematique even more. Consequently, the progress of transnationality has to cope with retarding elements as well as with open opposition, in particular in “young” or “revived” nation states. In this context it is worth quoting Razeen Sally’s conclusion from a comment on the recent G8 Summit Meeting in Okinawa (July 2000)¹⁷ and to accept it as food for thought:

“Literary reflection on ‘global governance’ is no substitute for good governing. It would not do any harm, if the policymakers in Okinawa remembered the spirit of liberalism of the 19th century: one can conceive globalisation as a chance for freedom and welfare and reap one’s fruits through better governing – at national level.”

Anyway, the widespread perseverance of the nation state is mirrored by the macro- and micro-levels of national education systems. I have tried to point to the lights and shadows accompanying this phenomenon. In this respect education is loaded with the paramount challenge to make youths accept the integrative and humanising prospects of transnationality as well as resist its dehumanising concomitants, thus contributing to identity formation.

On the other hand, educators must not neglect or even deny the remaining claims to national loyalty. Disregarding this, admittedly complex, responsibility as a contribution to identity formation includes the danger of strengthening disintegrating attitudes that tend to expose youths to slipping into extremist right-wing attitudes and actions and to losing their identities.

The chances of success depend, of course, upon the commitment of both transnational and national agencies to the basic values of human rights, tolerance and democracy and upon the existence of corresponding constitutional and legal provisions.

Moreover, educators aspiring to balance their responses to both challenges in their educational practice and theory are asked to do so on the basis of reconciling viability and vision. This aim must be regarded as a comprehensive task including science teaching in view of the current ecological and health crisis and the fact that it cannot be solved within “national” frameworks. Of course, this demand must not

diminish at all the school’s task to adjust its curricula of sciences and history.

It seems that John Dewey’s reflections on the interdependence of school and democracy, related to the United States of his period, is still relevant, insofar as it is entirely applicable not only to other national set-ups, but also to the transnational and even global dimension. The focus is laid on the acceptance of democracy as a form of political order and the desirable way of life. Answering the question of how the concrete political order is shaped according to its historical and sociopolitical framework remains irrelevant, as long as the superordinate quality of democracy as a human way of life remains ensured.

SUMMARY

All over the world, education systems have been established as “national institutions”. Their foundations were laid by absolutist princes in Europe in the course of the 17th and 18th centuries. Their expansion can be perceived as a worldwide process continuing through the past three centuries, reflecting a constitutive component of the rising modern nation state. In this overall context it is less relevant to make a distinction between centralised and federalised state structures. The “national” dimension has comprehended the macro-level of educational policies, ideological programmes and curricular provisions as well as the micro-level of the everyday practice at the grassroots of individual schools. The predicted decline of the nation state and the emergence of “transnational regions” result in new challenges to education and schooling on the whole. However, the range of this transitional process, widespread though it is, must not obscure the view on countercurrent trends revealing the survival or even revival of nationalism and, consequently, to diversified educational policies and practices.

The tensions between “transnational” openness and “national” perseverance can be exemplified by recent trends in “education for citizenship” or “education for democracy” on the one hand, and in “patriotic education” on the other. Needless to add that this issue must not be limited to specific school subjects such as social studies or history. On the contrary, it must be regarded as a cross-disciplinary task including science teaching in view of the cur-

rent ecological and health crisis and the fact that it cannot be solved within “national” frameworks of education. Fulfilling this task

presupposes the acceptance of democracy as a form of political order and the desirable way of life.

ENDNOTES

- 1) McLean, Martin. *Britain and a Single Market Europe*. London: Kogan Page 1990. - ditto: *Educational Traditions Compared*. London: David Fulton 1995, pp. 98-105.
- 2) Dewey, John. *The Middle Works 1899-1924*, Vol.1 (1899-1901). Carbondale/Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press 1976, p.93.
- 3) *Ibid.*, p.94.
- 4) Epstein, Erwin H. Filtering democracy through schools: The ignored paradox of compulsory education. In: Kodron, Christoph/von Kopp, Botho/Lauterbach, Uwe/Schaefer, Ulrich/Schmidt, Gerlind (eds.): *Comparative Education. Challenges - Intermediation - Practice. Essays in honour of Wolfgang Mitter on his 70th birthday*. Köln/Weimar/Wien 1997, p. 43.
- 5) Beck, Ulrich. Die “Warum-nicht-Gesellschaft” (The why-not society). In: *Die Zeit*, no.48, 25 November 1999, p.13.
- 6) Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Human, all too Human. Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*. A Book for Free Spirits. Translated by Marion Faber, with Stephan Lehmann. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press 1996, p.29.
- 7) Faure, Edgar et.al.. *Learning to be. The World of Education Today and Tomorrow*. Paris: Unesco 1972. - Delors, Jacques et al. *Learning: The Treasure Within*. Report to Unesco of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century. Paris: Unesco 1996.
- 8) In the context of this paper the notion of “region” is used according to the Unesco concept of “world regions”. It should be added that the notion as such is ambiguous. In the discussion in Europe about integration, it is used to define international or frontier-crossing territorial units and to propose regionalisation as an alternative to the dominance of the modern nation state.
- 9) Cf. McLean, Martin. Bildung und Erziehung in Europa an der Schwelle zum 21. Jahrhundert (Education in Europe) on the Threshold of the 21st Century. In: *Bildung und Erziehung*, 52(1999), pp.461-476.
- 10) Kenway, J. with Ch. Bigum and L.Fitzclarence. Marketing Education in the Post-modern Age. In: *Journal of Educational Policy*, 8(1993)2, p. 120.
- 11) Breidenbach, Joana and Ina Zukriegl. Im Prisma des Lokalen. Die Dynamik der kulturellen Globalisierung (In the Prism of the Local. The Dynamic of Cultural Globalisation). In: *Transit*, 17 (Summer 1999), p.12.
- 12) Cf. Beck, Ulrich. *Was ist Globalisierung? (What is Globalisation?)*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1997 (2nd ed.), p.25.
- 13) Aron, Raymond. *Paix et guerre entre les nations (Peace and war among the nations)*. Paris 1962.
- 14) Domovic, Vlatka, Zlata Godler and Djurdja Juresa Persoglio. High School Students’ Intercultural Dispositions: An Empirical Research. In: Katunaric, Vjeran (ed.): *Multicultural Reality and Perspectives in Croatia*. Zagreb: Intercultura 1997, p.163.
- 15) Cf. Niedrig, Heike. *Sprache - Macht - Kultur. Multilinguale Erziehung im Post-Apartheid-Südafrika* (Language - Power - Culture. Multilingual Education in Post-Apartheid-South Africa). Münster/New York/München/Berlin: Waxmann 2000.
- 16) Cf. Höpken, Wolfgang: Kriegserinnerung und nationale Identität(en), Vergangenheitspolitik in Jugoslawien und den Nachfolgestaaten (War remembrance and national identity(ies). Political retrospect in Yugoslavia and its successor states). In: *Transit*, (1998)15, p.94.
- 17) Sally, Razeen (School of Economics, London). Staaten sind gefordert (States are challenged). In: *Die Zeit*, no.30 (20 July 2000), p.22.

Balancing Quality and Equality in Educational Transformation

Johann Steyn

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the recent past many academic articles, press articles, letters to the press, official reports, etc., have been published in South Africa relating to quality education, equality in education, or to both. Some articles, letters or reports touched on aspects such as unequal education, others on the fears and perceptions regarding the lowering of standards, but it is not my intention to elaborate on any of these articles, letters or reports. I would, however, at this stage state it clearly that the debate surrounding quality education and equality in education is, understandably, a major concern in South Africa, especially within the context of the educational transformation to a democratic lifestyle. The whole issue is complex and may even be characterised as a dilemma (Steyn, 2000).

My aim is not merely to explore the meaning of certain key concepts (e.g. quality, equality) or even to investigate the relationship between these concepts. The sole purpose of this paper is to address a specific question: is it possible to find a balance between quality and equality in education, or to reconcile these concepts, given the historical legacy and cultural diversity in our country?

Quality and equality are the key words in this discussion, but before we reflect and focus on these concepts, we should touch on the present South African context. As democracy and transformation provide the backdrop to our reflection on quality and equality, it is therefore essential first to investigate the constitutive meanings of these concepts.

Democracy is a very popular word all over

the world and virtually everyone would declare themselves currently in favour of democracy, because it is a sound system and it is fashionable to be a democrat. Even totalitarian states and military regimes have been known to call themselves democracies. Victor Hugo once said “nothing is as powerful as an idea whose time has come” (quoted by Van Niekerk, 1999: 111) and it is clear to everyone that the era of democracy has arrived. It seems obvious that democracy should be blooming all over the world, but what seems to be so obvious is in fact not so obvious in the real world! The misuse of democracy is a worldwide problem:

- Hitler used democracy to end democracy.
- In many African countries the ruling party finds it difficult to behave itself, interfering *inter alia* with the courts and the press (O’Connell, 1999). The dominance of the majority and the repression of the minority should never be called democracy.
- Many Western countries are only formal democracies: powerfully administered, but still allowing forms of dominance in all spheres of life (Green, 1999:21,27).
- Even in sophisticated communities “anti-democratic thought patterns” are common (Zecha, 1999: 83) and in his famous book *The open society and its enemies*, Popper illustrates how our “natural” reaction is to silence our enemies or opponents and thus prevent a truly democratic communication pattern (Popper, 1995: 465).

From the examples mentioned it is clear that democracy is a fragile system, and can only survive where democratic values are deeply entrenched (O’Connell, 1999). What we need

is not only formal democracy, but *deep* democracy (Green, 1999). Deep democracy would mean to preserve and protect human rights and humane democratic values in a dynamic and responsive way. Furthermore it should equip people to respect, to understand and to value, for example, a diversity of cultures and a diversity of opinions. We should value democracy first and foremost as a way of life, and school education should be the breeding ground to nurture these values.

What is the reason for the failure of the democratic ideal in young democracies? In my opinion it is because democracy is often defined and interpreted in a simplified, artificial, superficial and one-sided way.

What then are the two sides (cornerstones) of democracy? Philosophers are in agreement that freedom and equality are cornerstones in any democracy. A distinctive feature of freedom is emphasising typical liberal democratic values such as human rights, including personal freedom (freedom of speech, conscience, etc.). One of the typical liberal freedoms in education is the freedom to compete and achieve, and by doing so to strive for quality. On the other hand, equality is more closely linked to the community emphasising equal opportunities, equity and communality. Democracy is not possible within the context of great inequalities and disparities. Unjustifiable inequality will always be damaging not only to democracy, but to quality education as well. Although both quality and equality are closely linked to democracy, there may be an underlying conflict between these two concepts.

South Africans experience post-colonial and post-apartheid transformation as part of their daily lives. Transformation is explicitly linked to democracy and education should be transformed to reflect democratic values. This is the message in nearly all recent official policy documents on education (the South African Schools Act of 1996; the Higher Education Act of 1997, etc.). Although policy transformation is necessary, it is not sufficient to ensure real educational transformation.

(By the way, South African history had its fair share of significant educational transformations. In 1815, transformation in government occurred from Dutch colonial rule to British domination; in 1902 the education system was transformed from Boer domination, in the pre-

vious Boer Republics, to British imperial rule, and after 1948 the education system was transformed into a statutory segregated system. Since 1994 educational transformation has been linked to our new democratic dispensation.)

What do we mean by transformation?

Although different writers and commentators have different views on transformation, in my view, educational transformation, is a form of radical change. In the South African context it refers to:

- the removal of inequalities and the move towards equal education
- the shift away from a monocultural educational system
- the shift from content-based education to outcomes-based education
- the democratisation of education and
- the improvement of the quality of education.

Transformation is being considered as a feasible way to bring meaningful and positive change in the education system. Transformation is an ongoing process and not a goal in itself. In the light of this background, we will now focus on the concepts of *quality* and *equality*.

1. A PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION ON QUALITY AND EQUALITY

Broadly speaking, it is possible to distinguish two main approaches regarding the case quality contra equality. According to the first approach there is an unbridgeable gap between quality and equality. The other way of thinking – and that is the approach that I would rather support – is that quality and equality are not separate entities, but two sides of the same coin called democratic education. I will return to these different views later in this paper.

Quality is a buzzword not only in commerce and industry, but it has also become part of our educational vocabulary. In an educational context, quality has been interpreted differently. We may, for example, distinguish between quality as:

- excellence
- perfection
- fitness for purpose
- value for money and
- transformation.

In the latter meaning, quality of education should be firstly linked to the improvement and development of processes of change. In other words, to enhancing transformation processes.

Before offering a tenable explanation of quality, a few questions should be asked:

- Is the aim of quality education to raise the standards of the high achievers even further in preparing them to compete globally?
- Is the aim of quality education to raise the standards of the low achievers and the masses?
- Does quality education involve universal standards, local standards or individual standards?
- Do we have the individual learner in mind or the learning community in general?
- Is quality education aimed at raising the level of achievement of under-achievers equally to those of the achievers?

The answers to these questions presuppose a certain point of departure which could lead to a better understanding of the critical question: are these two concepts reconcilable within a democracy?

It is not easy to give a definite answer to all these questions or to give a clear definition of quality. To some people, quality means raising the standards, which means “increasing the amount of material students are supposed to be capable of reciting on command” (Zecha, 1999: 107-108). To my mind the following working definition of quality is quite acceptable and useful:

“Quality education should bring about positive changes; outcomes that fit with the goals valued by those participating in the educational process” (Van Zyl, 1992).

Quality education should provide for opportunities to enable learners to develop their (full?) potential and at the same time it should make sense to all the relevant stakeholders. It envisages institutions that can provide for the “best” development of each learner. Quality is therefore not merely about achieving levels or standards, but rather a matter of empowering learners. All good education is per definition quality education.

Within the South African context, equality is an even more contentious concept than quality. Again it is inevitable that we should examine the concept by asking the question: what do we mean by equal education? Do we mean:

- an equal amount of education for everyone
- education to bring everyone to the same standard or
- an education which permits everyone their given potential? (Potter, 1995:322).

In other words, do we mean equality of opportunity or equality of outcome? The latter is a more radical approach and, to my mind, not at all compatible with quality education in a democracy. On the other hand, the equality of opportunity approach is in fact more liberal and may be viewed as compatible with quality education. The question still remains: is it possible to bridge the gap between quality and equality in democratic education?

At this stage it is clear that there seems to be a tension, due to the fact that the quality/equality issue is considered from different frames of reference or two different paradigms – what I would like to call the liberal democratic paradigm and the social democratic paradigm. Both these paradigms are rooted deeply in South African history. The distinctive feature of liberal democracy is *freedom* and the distinctive feature of social democracy is *equality* (Steyn et al., 1999:6-12). It is an open question which of liberal education or social democracy can best serve the interests of South African education. Hard debates in this respect are still on our agenda. My own feeling is that South African education needs both to survive as a stable and sustainable democracy.

Part and parcel of the liberal democratic paradigm is the emphasising of the typical democratic values that we may call human rights, although these rights are endorsed by social democrats as well. These well-known values or rights may include the freedom to work, the freedom of speech, the freedom to own property and, of course, the freedom of competition, the freedom to strive for quality.

Social democracy aims basically for equality in education, the strengthening of communal values, equal access to educational institutions and equal educational opportunities.

Clearly there can be a strong case for liberal democracy (the case for quality in education) and the case for social democracy (the case for equality in education), as I will explain later. Democratic education, in a young democracy such as South Africa, should be able to accommodate both quality and equality in a meaningful way as part of our educational transformation process to build a culture of democracy.

2. PRESENT PERCEPTIONS AND MISCONCEPTIONS ON QUALITY AND EQUALITY

At this stage I think it is necessary to touch on

perceptions (and, of course, misconceptions) regarding quality and equality in education. These perceptions may indeed in some cases be misconceptions, and I do not necessarily agree with all the popular views on quality or equality, but I think in the context of the debate on balancing quality and equality, these views are relevant and should be raised.

It goes without saying that ordinary South Africans experience our educational history of colonialism and apartheid as a history of gross inequalities. The vast majority of the South African school population had in the past no access to quality education and still has (despite laws and policy statements) no access to this kind of education. Given the long history of inequality between white and black education, there is the perception that the abolition of all distinctions is the only acceptable solution. According to this perspective it is only through state control and state intervention that equality can be promoted, assured and become a reality. Against this backdrop we should understand the slogan: "Equality before quality".

On the other hand, there are strong feelings and concerns by many other South Africans on the present state of quality education. There is a general perception that South African education is on a slippery slope of declining standards due to:

- insufficient state funding
- the system of massification
- the lack of a teaching culture and work ethic among teachers and
- the lack of a learning culture among learners.

To illustrate this point we may refer to the poor Matriculation results of the past couple of years; our poor performance in the so-called TIMS-project (Third Mathematical and Science Study) where South African learners have done the worst of all out of the 41 developed and developing countries that took part in this project (*Sunday Times*, 24 November 1996). We may also refer to the mushrooming of private schools to illustrate the perception that educational standards in public education are dropping. The flight of black and white (Afrikaner!) learners from middle class backgrounds to private schools is evidence of an attempt by parents to provide their children with a head start of quality education (*Financial Mail*, 14 January 2000).

There may be the perception that the previous

government was merely propagating quality, excellence and elitism in education while it ignored the problem of equality. The other perception is that the present government is undermining excellence and that it is only interested in addressing inequalities. Both perceptions are somewhat naive, misleading and a oversimplification of the true situation. I would even view them as misconceptions. In this regard I can refer to discussion documents or official documents such as:

- the De Lange Report (1981)
- the Curriculum model for South Africa (1991)
- the Educational Renewal Strategy (1992)
- the NEPI Report (1993)
- the South African Schools Act (1996) and
- the Higher Education Act (1997).

In all these documents both quality and equality are emphasised. Whether this is merely lip service and official rhetoric, remains to be seen. In any case, policy documents and laws can only articulate possibilities which allow for the promotion of quality and equality.

There is also the perception that the quest for quality education is only a strategy "to slam doors" in the faces of black learners (Hartshorne, 1992: 7) or in Christie's words, the pursuit of quality education "... has become a catch cry limiting the influence of black students on the existing practices of historically privileged schools" (Christie, 1993:11). Quality is viewed as an attempt to maintain standards in white elitist institutions. I will return to this perception later.

The question still remains: Can we balance quality and equality in educational transformation? Before we attempt to give a provisional answer to this question it is necessary to reflect on, and consider, the relative importance of quality and equality respectively.

3. THE CASE FOR QUALITY EDUCATION WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

My views on the importance of quality education may be summarised as follows:

- It goes without saying that quality education is a primary function of any sound democratic government. It is unthinkable that any government, and for that matter stakeholders such as teachers, parents etc., should not value quality education as a high priority, because it is not only in the best interests of

learners, but also of the country and nation as a whole.

- The lack of quality education in South Africa remains a major concern to all responsible citizens, as mentioned earlier when referring to some general perceptions regarding the quality of our education. The term “collapse” of our education system is even used in responsible circles. We should clearly improve on the quality of South African educational performance if we wish to survive in a competitive world. (By the way, it does not rest only with the government to tackle this problem.)
- Earlier I referred to the comments by Hartshorne and Christie that the quest for quality is only an attempt to defend elitist institutions. I think their perceptions and sentiments are wrong. Responsible educators and educationists (and there are many of them) are serious about the improvement of quality education for all learners, irrespective of colour or creed. There is a general feeling that our education system should provide, and not neglect, quality education for all. Any hope of becoming a stable and sustainable democracy depends on our ability to improve on our educational performance in general. That means developing the (full?) potential of each and every learner.
- Although I have argued in the previous point for individual development as an indicator for quality, preparation for participation in the global playing field is an unquestionable priority as well. It is clear that quality education depends on internationally accepted factors such as available resources, the quality of teachers, the relevance of learning material and a sound learning environment (Hartshorne, 1992).

4. THE CASE FOR EQUALITY IN EDUCATION WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

As in the argument for quality education, I would also like to articulate the case for equal education point for point:

- Equality is a cornerstone of democracy and as such should be regarded as a top priority. “In a truly democratic society there are no unimportant people. Because of their humanity, all people as human beings have equal dignity” (Du Plessis in Steyn et al., 1999:55). Class distinctions and all kinds of gross dis-

parities create alienation in a democratic society and democratic values and relations can hardly be fostered in such a climate.

- Given our history of unequal education and the backlog that developed as a result of previous policies and due to such factors as colonialism, imperialism and racism, the striving for equal education should be considered a matter of urgency.
- Right from the start of our new dispensation, equal education was one of the top priorities of the government and it remains part of the ongoing educational debate. Equality in education is seen as part of the reconstruction of our divided society and as part of the process of establishing a just society. The principle of equal opportunities for education – irrespective of colour, creed, etc. – has been clearly spelled out as a matter of high priority. Without equal opportunities, the overwhelming majority of learners in South Africa will remain poor and powerless.
- There is another reason why the drive for equal educational opportunities should be supported. As a result of the rapid developments in the field of information technology, there is a tendency for the gap to widen between the “haves” and the “have-nots”, in terms of the possession of knowledge and the ability to gain new knowledge. If the quest for equal opportunities and equal access to institutions and knowledge power are not accelerated, this gap is going to widen even further, and the possibility of any reconciliation between quality and equality will become extremely difficult.

5. ARE THESE CONCEPTS RECONCILABLE IN A DEMOCRACY?

Thus far we critically reflected on key concepts such as democracy, transformation, quality and equality. We drew attention to some popular perceptions on quality and equality, before considering the relative importance of these concepts in our education.

Now we should return to the key question: is it possible to find a balance between these concepts? Rephrasing the question: *can quality and equality co-exist in a young democracy like South Africa?* Three responses will be given to this question:

- The NO-argument usually views these concepts as two opposites that can never meet.

There is “... a gaping chasm yawning between two cliffs marked Quality and Equality”(Riley, 1994: 1X). There is the opinion that quality and equality are mutually exclusive concepts. The argument is noted as follows. If you are free to perform, achieve and compete, you are free to raise your performance to a certain level or standard. Let us call that standard (for argument’s sake) quality. If people are free in this sense, they are not equal in performance. Equal outcomes are not possible where freedom is at stake. The freedom to achieve and the freedom to attain a certain standard, or a certain quality, is not reconcilable with equality. In this sense excellence (high quality) and equality can be considered as mutually exclusive. The elitist view on quality is not in accordance with the populist view on equality. From the other end of the spectrum it is argued that the vast majority of the South African school population still have no access to quality education and therefore it is premature to even think about a reconciliation between these concepts. The quality/equality problem is considered from opposing frames of reference (paradigms) and no reconciliation is possible.

- The YES-argument emphasises the fact that we should actually destroy the democratic aim unless a solution is found to reconcile quality and equality in education. This reconciliation is a precondition for a stable and sustainable democracy. Quality and equality are already part of all major educational debates in South Africa and part of our educational transformation is the search for the balance between these two. They are two sides of the same coin, namely democratic education. It is inconceivable that we cannot accommodate both quality and equality in a meaningful way as part of the process of building a culture of democratic education. Even official policy documents favour the accommodation of both in our education system. There should surely be overwhelming support for the YES point of view.
- I call the third response, the COMPLEMENTARY-argument. The problem with the first two arguments is that they tend to give simplified answers to a complicated issue. There is no easy “yes” or “no” answer to this question. And that is my final answer.

Yes, the two concepts are interconnected and

interrelated and not two hostile entities per se. Also, it is essential to investigate the possible reconciliation between quality and equality within the South African context. But it would not be an easy or obvious route given the inherent tension between the two, for example:

- the extreme elitist and populist viewpoints
- the different paradigms (liberal democracy and social democracy) underpinning these two concepts
- our historical legacy and
- the different interpretations of quality and equality.

Quality education and equal education (equal opportunities, equal access) should complement each other in a democratic system. Finding the “fine balance” seems to be the crucial issue. At this stage I would like to tackle the problem this way: equal education (equal opportunities, equal access, etc.) initiates (“kick starts”) the process of educational transformation, while quality education promotes educational transformation to such an extent that it should lead to a stable and sustainable democracy. It is not a matter of “equality before quality”, but rather two simultaneous processes on the road to transform our education to a “true”(or should we rather say “deep” democracy) and not a pseudo or sham democracy.

CONCLUSION

In the introduction I mentioned the hypothetical possibility to reconcile quality and equality in a democracy. My final conclusion is that it is possible on the precondition that we view equality as the initiator and quality as the promoter of democratic values in education. But even then the path is not without stumbling blocks. A serious stumbling block, for example, is how to narrow the gap between the achievers, on the one hand, and the under-achievers and low-achievers, on the other. The fast running athlete should persist with running fast. However, the athlete who cannot keep up should not drop out of the race, but should – through quality training – improve his/her performance in order to narrow the gap between himself/herself and the fastest runner.

In essence: within a democracy and within the context of transforming education in South Africa, quality and equality should complement each other, although the whole process is not without serious problems.

ENDNOTES

- CHRISTIE P. 1993. Equality in curriculum in post-apartheid South Africa. *Journal of Education*. 18(1) 5-18.
- FINANCIAL MAIL. 14 January 2000.
- GREEN JM. 1999. *Deep democracy*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- HARTSHORNE K. 1992. Educational standards in a future education system. Pretoria: HSRC conference.
- O'CONNELL B. 1999. Education and democracy in South Africa: concerns and challenges. Stellenbosch: Conference on nurturing democratic values through education.
- POPPER KP. 1995. *The open society and its enemies*. London: Routledge.
- POTTER J. 1995. Does Walzer's theory of complex equality illuminate current issues in South African education? *Perspectives in Education*. 16 (1) 319-329.
- RILEY KA. 1994. *Quality and equality. Promoting opportunities*. London: Cassell.
- STEYN JC (ED.), WS DU PLESSIS AND J DE KLERK 1999. *Education for democracy*. Durbanville: Wachwa.
- STEYN JC. 2000. Quality education and equality in education: a dilemma for democratic South Africa? *South African Journal of Education*. 20(1) 46-49.
- VAN NIEKERK AA. 1999. Gesigspunte oor demokrasie in 'n transformerende Suid-Afrika. *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe*. 39(2) 111-117.
- VAN ZYL C. 1992. What is quality education? Pretoria: HSRC conference.
- ZECHA G (ED.) 1999. *Critical rationalism and educational discourse*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Education for Democracy: Revisiting Rortyan Pragmatism

Yusef Waghid

ABSTRACT

In this paper I reflect on some of the democratic moments which were opened up by educational discourse with reference to workshops held at an institution of higher learning in collaboration with educators in the Western Cape region. I contend that educational discourse such as the six “Democratic Transformation of Education 1999–2000” workshops held at the University of Stellenbosch over the past two years is constituted by Rortyan pragmatism, which holds much promise for a developing democracy.

Delving into Rorty’s (1999) understanding of the role of education in a democratic society and with specific reference to democratic education workshops, I argue that pragmatism guides educational discourse, which can deepen democracy in institutions such as schools and universities. The unique philosophic perspective that undergirds Rorty’s understanding of education, and the way in which his philosophy is a philosophy of education, can prepare one for participation in a democratic way of life.

INTRODUCTION

My account of democratic education workshops held at the University of Stellenbosch during 1999 and 2000 will be divided into two parts: the first emphasises the importance of pragmatism for educational discourse; and the second takes its point of departure from the account of pragmatism offered by Richard Rorty in his recent book *Philosophy and Social Hope*, and its implications for democracy which can lead to greater social cooperation

and trust, increasing equality as well as tolerance and responsiveness. In a different way, I shall show how Rortyan pragmatism can engender an education for democracy.

Certainly, over the past years Rorty’s work has met with largely unfriendly response from fellow philosophers, to the extent that Richard Bernstein (1990: 34) was led to declare that “the antagonism, hostility and polemical attacks that Rorty has generated during the past decade have increased dramatically”. However, like many of his sympathisers such as René Arcilla (1990: 35) who perceives Rorty’s writing as providing new hope for education in the light of the “crisis of modernity”, and Carol Nicholson (1989: 200) who emphasises the importance of Rorty’s work for “educating students into a sense of community”, I want to use Rortyan pragmatism as a philosophical support for my arguments that favour education for democracy.

1. “DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION OF EDUCATION 1999–2000” WORKSHOPS THROUGH PRAGMATIST EYES

During the years 1999 and 2000, academics from the Department of Education Policy Studies at the University of Stellenbosch presented a series of workshops aimed at enhancing democratic educational practices in institutions, particularly Western Cape schools. The project, funded by the German-based Konrad Adenauer Foundation, involved academics, educators and education managers from Western Cape institutions, senior post-graduate and undergraduate students. Almost 500 people attended these workshops over a two-year peri-

od. The major themes at these “Democratic Transformation of Education 1999–2000” workshops included:

- Balancing quality and equality in educational transformation
- The values underlying quality and equality in educational transformation
- Children’s rights and education: a broad perspective
- Democratic education through decentralised governance
- Implementation of decentralised school governance and
- Participatory school management.

The names of these themes indicate that the workshops were aimed at socialising participants with knowledge of educational discourse and democracy, as well as engaging them as “full participating members of a free community of inquiry” (Rorty, 1999: 11). Participants had to be initiated into an inherited tradition of human activities, aspirations, sentiments, images, opinions, beliefs, modes of understanding, customs and practices, that is, “states of mind” (Oakeshott, 1998: 284-287) about education for democracy. To be initiated into an inherited tradition of knowledge, what Oakeshott (1998: 287) refers to as a “world of meanings and understandings”, is for participants to have engaged with knowledge about education for democracy. This implies that one not only does certain things but also understands and learns to understand what one is doing. And, when literate participants engaged with knowledge about education for democracy, they were encouraged to question and challenge the prevailing meanings and understandings about education as “self-creating individuals” and critical inquirers (Rorty, 1999: 118).

This latter thought of human engagement through both socialisation and critical inquiry/ “individuation” (Rorty, 1999: 118) is at the core of Rorty’s treatise on pragmatism; a habit of action or inquiry aimed at improvement and utility. It states that the point of socialisation is to encourage people to inquire critically, which will help them realise that they can:

“reshape themselves – that they can rework the self-image foisted on them by their past, the self-image that makes them competent citizens, into a new self-image, one that they themselves helped to create” (Rorty, 1999: 118).

The culmination of this line of thought – that people have to “reshape themselves” relevant to emerging historical situations – comes with pragmatism’s concern with venturing into novelty, openness to the unfamiliar, the unimaginative, the new, that which Rorty (1999: 34 & 120) describes as the demand for hope – “the ability to believe that the future will be unspecifiably different from, and unspecifiably freer than, the past”. In his words:

“To say that one should replace knowledge by hope is to say much the same thing: that one should stop worrying about whether what one believes is well grounded and start worrying about whether one has been imaginative enough to think up interesting alternatives to one’s present beliefs” (1999: 34).

This is exactly how I as a facilitator of some of the workshop themes wanted participants to conceive of pragmatism: a deeper understanding of education out of which could emerge unfamiliar possibilities for future democratic action in educational institutions.

To see this last point I shall refer to a discussion which occurred between participants during a workshop session on “Democratic education through decentralised governance”. It was argued that decentralised governance at school level demands that a “reasonable consensus” should be achieved among educators, parents, learners and school managers. Significantly, participants concurred that agreement in meetings should not be based solely on majority decision making, but rather through “reasonable consensus” based on rational deliberation and critical justification of points of view. This is different from the kind of decision-making procedures which currently dominate meetings in the public sphere and which, participants at these workshops agreed to, “might with luck, be unimaginably better” (Rorty, 1999: 30). In other words, pragmatism wants to replace understandings of the world and us, which are less useful and which, in Wittgenstein’s words, “hold us captive” (such as majority decision making, which might not always be informed and reasonable) by understandings based on “reasonable consensus”, which are more useful and that allows more space for growth, stimulation and hope.

This is very much faithful to the thoughts of Rortyan pragmatism as the priority of the need to create new ways of doing things (“better

habits of action”) over the desire for stability, security, routine, order and a state of mind seeking to get in touch with a reality outside itself (Rorty, 1999: 88). For pragmatism, new ways of doing things involve the extent to which we intelligently participate and independently think, rather than passively respond. We are reasonably doing things when our activities are guided by the outcome of intelligent reflection, when we do not let ourselves be passively pushed this way or that by external factors bombarding us, but can take what comes to us, reconstruct it through intelligent inquiry, and direct our activity by creativity and imagination. In this way, we can begin to live education for democracy from “inside”.

I now want to turn my attention to the point that these workshops also made it possible to realise that pragmatist philosophy is a necessary condition for the development of education for democracy. In other words, for people to critically inquire and to think the unimaginable together with the hope that they can bring into being understandings that will assist us to cope with educational situations/problems intelligently and effectively, bring into play the notion of education for democracy.

What is education for democracy in a Rortyan sense and how did these workshops point out that pragmatism is a necessary condition for such an aim of education? By far the majority of participants who attended the workshops felt that the real point of engaging in such social activities was the hope that their creative capacities would come to the surface and that they would depart from the workshops with new forms of human freedom to solve educational problems and to react to unpredictable situations at their schools. They knew what was being hoped for could not be dictated to by prescribed guidelines, proven recipes and final blueprints. As one participant remarked: “It’s not good enough merely to negotiate by living up to pre-existing criteria. We should also be prepared to take risks”. In a different way, our practices should also embolden hope, by seeking new ways of solving educational problems and reacting with courage to unpredictable situations. Rorty (1999: 125) posits that to hope that our social activities can make a difference is to hope that people “will remain reformist and democratic”. In his words:

“To hope that it (educational discourse) will

nevertheless be perceptibly different is to remind oneself that growth is indeed the only end that democratic higher education can serve and also to remind oneself that the direction of growth is unpredictable” (1999: 125).

The link between pragmatism and education for democracy is clearly visible in such a Rortyan understanding of hope. To further elucidate the link between pragmatism and the development of education for democracy, I once again refer to Rorty’s (1999) *Philosophy and Social Hope*. Rorty’s version of pragmatism is devoted to ensuring that education is/becomes democratic. Viewed with pragmatist eyes, Rorty believes that an education for democracy should be constituted by social cooperation and trust (1999: xiii), “increasing tolerance and increasing equality” (1999: 16) and “increasing responsiveness to the needs of a larger and larger variety of people and things” (1999: 81). I shall now deal with these constitutive meanings of an education for democracy in detail, with specific reference to democratic moments in our workshop discourse.

2. SOCIAL COOPERATION AND TRUST

People with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds as well as differences in aspirations, values, dispositions, and points of view who attended the workshops were organised in groups whereby they were encouraged to consult with one another and to share their understandings of knowledge constructs and diverse patterns of meaning *vis-à-vis* education.

Rorty does much to support claims for the possibility of social cooperation and trust. His *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* is largely devoted to showing how people can come to acknowledge universally the “real shared problem” of alleviating human suffering while preserving a place for diversity in conceptions of a good life, in this instance, education for democracy (Rorty, 1989: 83). However, in *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth* he emphasises that if we come together in a collaborative effort to deal effectively with conceptions of a good life (education for democracy) we must be able to talk about them in a similar way through sharing and consultation (Rorty, 1991:103). The point of consultation and sharing was to encourage the widest possible social cooperation and trust among different critical inquirers

on matters related to quality, equality, rights, centralised and decentralised governance, accountability, development and transformation. For instance, on the issue of governance one group believed that centralised control is necessary for effective schooling to occur, whereas another group accentuated its concern for decentralised governance as a way to democratise schooling. Yet, participants of the two groups with contending views were prepared to listen to one another with the aim to achieve agreement among themselves about what constitutes or does not constitute effective schooling.

Rorty (1999: xxv) makes the claim that the goal of social cooperation and trust “is to achieve agreement among human beings about what to do, to bring about consensus on the ends to be achieved ...”. And, if the groups’ consultation and sharing did not achieve a sense of social cooperation and trust, their critical inquiry would have been tantamount to “word-play” (1999: xxv). In fact, in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty (1979: 372) distinguishes mere conversation or “wordplay” from critical inquiry. For him, conversation has its own end because people can agree to talk and benefit from exchanging views, even if that benefit is not in the sense of having made progress toward some shared understanding of a particular subject matter. Critical inquiry aims at consensus through rational argumentation with agreement as a goal, rather than a prerequisite.

Hence, as a corollary of the social cooperation and trust that occurred among many participants during the workshops, one can plausibly claim that participants during the workshops were devoted to the project of education for democracy. And, the fact that there were many different people who repudiated the idea of absolute uniformity in understanding, made the democratic education workshops even more compelling. Pragmatism does not involve the learning and following of rigid (absolute) rules, regulations, or principles passed down. Rather it opens the way for human engagement, which presupposes an initiation into an experimental, curious and open community; one that can harness an education for democracy.

3. INCREASING TOLERANCE AND INCREASING EQUALITY

During these workshops participants were

asked not to think of themselves as homogeneous, but as equal. In other words, during discussions and deliberations within and outside of the groups, participants were not considered as superior to one another such as to prevent marginalisation and exclusion from critical inquiry. Although many participants may not have preferred or perhaps did not have a chance to articulate their individual subjectivities, group discussion created sufficient space for individuals to have made their rejoinders. In this way, increasing equality during the workshops and within diverse social spaces made the education for democracy agenda unavoidable.

(Perhaps, insufficient time was allocated for workshops that would have allowed more opportunities for other diverse voices to have been heard.)

The level of human engagement that was made possible during these workshops also cultivated in people the capacity for tolerance and mutual respect for “reasonable” differences of opinion. Here I wish to paraphrase the remark made by one participant in a private conversation during a lunch break:

“I do not necessarily agree with one of your facilitator’s reference to the past system of apartheid education as having been concerned mostly with quality at the expense of equality, but if it weren’t because this forum allows us space for exchanging views aimed at reaching consensus, I would have been in a position to claim that people still consider a past discriminatory type of education as better.”

To my mind, this corroborates the increasing levels of intellectual and social tolerance that prevailed, considering that the statement might have been interpreted as lending itself to the fact that segregationist, discriminatory education was necessarily of a good quality. In this regard it is worth noting Gutman’s (1998: 31) defence of achieving an education for democracy through pragmatism and increasing tolerance:

“A necessary (but, of course, not sufficient) condition of living well in a society where people differ in their moral convictions is effective teaching of the liberal virtue of *toleration*. A more distinctly democratic virtue that a good society must also teach effectively is mutual respect for reasonable differences of moral opinion. Mutual

respect demands more than the attitude of live and let live; it requires willingness and ability to accord due intellectual and moral regard to reasonable points of view that we cannot deem ourselves as correct. In the political realm, toleration is a precondition for peaceful competition and *pragmatic compromise*; mutual respect is a precondition for democratic deliberation (educational discourse) and moral compromise” [Emphasis added].

4. RESPONSIVENESS

Central to the idea of an education for democracy through pragmatist eyes it “is best to think of moral progress as a matter of increasing sensitivity, increasing responsiveness to the needs of a larger and larger variety of people and things” (Rorty, 1999: 81). Just as Rortyan pragmatism sees education for democracy (also articulated by Rorty as hope) as “the increasing ability (of people) to respond to the concerns of ... more inclusive groups of people” (Rorty, 1999: 81), so did organisers of these workshops see an education for democracy as a matter of expanding and applying university research into the community. In other words, education for democracy means that universities should not be disengaged from the real problems in society, but rather, should open up possibilities, through research, for greater social relevance. In this way, theory is not sacrificed for practice; rather, theory embodies practice, and the operation of responsiveness cannot be isolated from the context in which people find themselves. In a different way, our understanding of pragmatic engagement links strongly with Byrne’s (1999) notion of “The Engaged Institution”. For Byrne (1999), engagement on the part of universities is more than outreach or uni-directional extension of the universities’ research to the people or organisations they serve. Engagement includes the mutual development of goals and the two-way sharing of expertise with elements of society.

“Engagement involves transfers in two directions: a partnership of exchange between the university and its constituents ... (which) includes working together and sharing expertise to solve problems. Engagement is both outreach and ‘in-reach’ into the university. Engagement is a way universities enhance society, by providing

scholarly creativity and research; it also includes community participation in the functions of the university” (Byrne, 1999:75).

Considering that the work of the Department of Education Policy Studies in collaboration with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation through these workshops has been contextualised, I contend that our education for democracy project focused on being more responsible to the emerging educational changes and challenges in society, particularly schools. In fact, time devoted to university service through the democratic education workshops, also included the development of flexible course material, problem resolution and data analyses – all pragmatic activities constituting the notion of education for democracy. In turn, school communities (educators, managers and learners) developed organised ways of improving their educational levels, or gaining knowledge, and of applying that new knowledge for the benefit of their constituencies. An evaluation of the responses of participants to workshop themes also vindicates their optimism that their acquired knowledge about education for democracy gave new impulses of hope that stimulated their creative drive within their institutions. A secondary school principal in a rural area in a letter to me lamented about his “new ways of being human” in relation to his staff and school governing body after he attended the workshops. Other respondents wanted more “regular engagement” between ourselves and their institutions in order to do collective research on topics of great interest for the South African nation, as well as reflecting, reinterpreting and reinforcing the “good” in educational communities. In essence, these democratic education workshops were, in the words of Rorty (1999: 119), “a promising experiment engaged in by a particular herd ... (who) put their faith in the utopian hope characteristic of a democratic community”.

CONCLUSION

Every participant who attended the democratic education workshops had in mind the hope that he/she would gain new insights and ways of doing things with the aim to make his/her situation better. Likewise, participants were also aware of the educational challenges that lie ahead in the light of emerging policy changes

in South African education. The fact that they agreed to participate in these workshops with the aim to acquire new ways of doing things is sufficient evidence to suggest that the demands and challenges posed by a new education dispensation are too daunting to be tackled without being imaginative enough to think up new and interesting alternatives. For this reason I can safely claim that participants knew that the current educational scenario needs people who can lead, who can produce new knowledge, who can see new problems and imagine new ways of approaching old problems. In my conversations with several of the participants I inferred that for most of them, an education for democracy should prepare people to go beyond the present and be able to respond to a future which cannot be imagined. In short, education for democracy should deepen a desire for permanent change or transformation.

I have learnt quite a lot, in the course of the past two years, about how pragmatism and an education for democracy can live in comity with one another, in particular creating spaces for social cooperation and trust, increasing equality and tolerance, as well as responsive-

ness through university service provision. I have argued that an education for democracy through pragmatist philosophy is not only possible but also desirable, as we as academics at higher education institutions attempt to attune our practices to the dictates of transformation. This means that our practices have to be consistent with establishing an environment where people gain access to information, and where they develop the willingness to want to engage. In such a transformative environment, people (like our workshop participants) are accountable to think for themselves and try to interpret before being told, that is, by becoming aware of their own understandings and one another's understandings – a matter of participants learning from one another, evoking their potentialities and, in turn, imagining new ways of doing things; of deepening educational transformation. In this regard I can unequivocally say that academics from the Department of Education Policy Studies in collaboration with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation have ventured into such a pragmatic mode, intent on enabling an education for democracy and making a difference within an education community.

REFERENCES

- ARCILLA, R. 1990. Edification, conversation and narrative: Rortyan motifs for philosophy of education. *Educational Theory*, 40(1): 35-41.
- BERNSTEIN, R. 1990. Rorty's liberal utopia. *Social Research* 57(1): 34-35.
- BYRNE, J. 1999. Taking charge of change: a leadership challenge for public higher education. *Higher Education Management*, 11(1): 69-79.
- GUTMAN, A. 1998. Undemocratic education. *Philosophy of Education: Major Themes in the Analytic Tradition*, Volume III Society and Education. Hirst, P. & White, P. (eds.). London and New York: Routledge, 28-43.
- NICHOLSON, C. 1989. Postmodernism, feminism and education: the need for solidarity. *Educational Theory*, 39(3): 200-206.
- OAKESHOTT, M. (1998) Education: the engagement and its frustration. *Philosophy of Education: Major Themes in the Analytic Tradition*, Volume I Philosophy and Education. Hirst, P. & White, P. (eds.). London and New York: Routledge, 284-310.
- RORTY, R. 1979. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- RORTY, R. 1989. *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- RORTY, R. 1991. *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- RORTY, R. 1999. *Philosophy and Social Hope*. Suffolk: Bury St Edmonds.

The Values Underlying Quality and Equality in Educational Transformation

Jeanette de Klerk

INTRODUCTION

“Education is not merely a boon conferred by democracy, but a condition of its survival and of its becoming that which it undertakes to be. Democracy is that form of social organisation which most depends on personal character and moral autonomy ... Democratic education is therefore a peculiarly ambitious education” (Perry, 1954: 431-432).

At this workshop, we will look at this “peculiarly ambitious education” and particularly at the importance of instilling values in schools in order to prepare learners for living productively and constructively in a democratic society.

Many important questions can be asked: Which values are of major importance in the education for a democratic society? Are these values in line with the Constitution? Are there limits to these values or are they to be maximised at all cost? Are any of these values in conflict with one another? Can schools carry the whole burden of moral and character education in a democratic society and if not, what other institutions are also involved in this moral challenge?

In order to address these questions, I will try to clarify several key notions of democracy and values. The importance of *quality* and *equality* in a democratic school will be discussed as well as the values underpinning quality and equality. The limits of values as well as the other institutions also involved in instilling democratic values will also receive attention.

1. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

The origins of democracy can be traced back to

Athens a few centuries before Christ. The democratic ideal is therefore nearly as old as Western civilisation. There are many different viewpoints on the essence of democracy. Zecha (1998) describes a democratic society as:

“a socio-political form of living for people in a certain community who enact, acknowledge and control on a majority basis via general elections, representative government and legislation rules or laws that are conceived to direct a socially peaceful, economically prosperous and just life with equal opportunities for each member of that community.”

The concepts of quality and equality are both included in this definition of democracy.

The democratic ideal can be described as: “that of an open and dynamic society: open, in that there is no antecedent social blueprint which is itself to be taken as a dogma immune to critical evaluation in the public forum; dynamic, in that its fundamental institutions are not designed to arrest change but to order and channel it by exposing it to public scrutiny and resting it ultimately upon the choices of its members” (Scheffler, 1987:123).

There are different ways of defining democracy and also many misconceptions of democracy. Joseph Leighton (Steyn et al, 1999:10) warns against a false perception of democracy:

“It is that democracy consists in the abolition of all distinctions: that its main aim is to level all to the same standard, to make us all as two peas in a pod. This means inevitably levelling down in place of levelling up. It means the rule of the dead level

of mediocre uniformity. It means – the tyranny of the crowd mind”.

Another misconception is that democracy is only about rights, without any consideration being given to responsibility and accountability. The Bill of Rights may give the impression of an overemphasis on individual freedom and rights, because it fails also to emphasise the individual’s responsibility and obligation to respect the rights of other people. In the limitation of rights (South African Constitution, 1996:18) the rights of others are not even mentioned. This distorted view of democracy may lead to an egoistic, narcissistic view in which me and my rights are all that is important.

The cornerstones of a democratic society seem to be:

- *Equality*: The right to a fair and equal chance in life. “Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms” (South African Constitution, 1996:7). There may be no discrimination against anyone on the grounds of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth. Equality is not similarity, uniformity or sameness. Equal opportunities do not imply the same opportunities, because people differ.
- *Freedom*: This includes the freedom of religion, belief and opinion, freedom of expression and association, freedom of movement and residence, freedom of speech and of making choices, the freedom to affiliate with the social, cultural and moral norms of the group of your choice, freedom of deliberation, i.e. people can publicly debate difference.
- *Responsible participation* by all members of the democratic society to build an affluent society where people can prosper and develop their abilities.
- *Respect for authority* and the rules set by the majority of the democratic society.

How can we define values?

“Values represent the emotional rules by which a nation governs itself. Values summarise the accumulated folk wisdom by which a society organises and disciplines itself. Moral virtue is a most essential element of a just society” (Haggerty R., 1995: 70).

Values can only be found on a personal level

and human beings are not born with specific values, but with the potential to assign value. Values serve as guidelines for behaviour and as criteria for the evaluation of people, events and objects. Values give meaning and direction to a person’s life and the values of individuals are in turn influenced by the values of their culture. Zecha (1990) emphasises the particularity of values: “Values are something real in regard to a particular person within a particular society under certain circumstances.” According to Bloom (1987:201), “a value is only a value if it is life-preserving and life-enhancing”.

Moral education is essential for the success of a democratic society because democracy places heavy demands on the moral fibre of the people. It is the people who are responsible for ensuring a free and just society and they must be committed to the moral foundations of democracy. Jefferson believed that loyalty to democratic virtues ought to be instilled at an early age. Furthermore, teaching is moral activity and morality is part and parcel of education.

Zecha (1995:11) argues that moral values for education can be rationally justified:

“...all members of society prefer freedom to slavery and oppression, equal dignity to discrimination and exploitation, justice to injustice and poverty. Exercising and enjoying the freedom of speech, of movement, of social gathering or of political activities require the citizens to trust each other. Trust presupposes communication, communication is impossible without understanding and mutual understanding requires listening, while listening demands respect for others which in turn can be realised only with self-appreciation and unselfishness.”

They are means necessary or sufficient for reaching the goal of a good life in a democracy. To rationally justify a moral value in education, one can highlight the means-end relationship between the value that serves as a mean and the desired goal.

In the book *Education for Democracy* (Steyn et al, 1999) the authors name the following values that are of importance in the education of a democratic society: Freedom, equality, communication, respect for others, sensitivity for others, empathy, adaptability, openness, honesty, team work, unselfishness, loyalty, self-realisation, critical thinking, responsibility, self-discipline, recognition of human dignity, individual-

ity, self-respect, firmness, independence, cooperation, tolerance, integrity, trust, consideration and kindness. They believe that “a democracy can only flourish if certain democratic values and certain virtues are cultivated” (1997: 92).

This may sound logical and unproblematic. Unfortunately, however, it is not so easily achieved.

In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle observed that “virtues are ruined by excess and deficiency but preserved by the mean, like too much or too little eating or drinking ruins health, while the proportionate amount produces, increases and preserves it”. We have to be aware of the limits of moral values and carefully examine the “amount” of value we create, in other words: the actions with which we produce or fail to produce things conducive to a good life. The limits of values must not be overlooked otherwise they might harm our personal and public life. The only exceptions are love and justice (Zecha, 1990:12).

Popper (1962/1:265) speaks about the paradox of freedom and the paradox of democracy: “... too much freedom is liable to change into nothing else but too much slavery, in the individual as well as in the state. Out of what I believe is the greatest possible excess of freedom springs what is the hardest and most savage form of slavery.”

He argues in the same way about an excess of tolerance:

“Unlimited tolerance must lead to the disappearance of tolerance. If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them” (Popper 1962/1:265).

These words have far reaching implications for democratic schools.

Morality is fully part of the fabric of schooling and one of the fundamental tasks of teachers is to instill values and thus to build character. On the one hand, schools ought to reflect the democratic values of society. Schools therefore have to be purged of practices that contradict the democratic values of society. On the other hand, moral education is essential for the survival of democracy. As the rights and responsibilities of democratic living become

more and more complex, so too must our input into and efforts for the moral education of our learners increase. Changing our schools also implies changing our teacher training programmes. Only then will we be involved in substantial, long-term changes in education.

There are two different kinds of democracy deeply rooted in South Africa: liberal and social democracy. Liberal democracy rooted in liberalism evolved mainly from individualism, while social democracy evolved from socialism. Liberal democracy is characterised by personal freedom, decentralisation and individual competition, whereas social democracy is characterised basically by equality, communality and centralisation. The emphasis in liberal democracy is on the individual, whereas the group or society as a whole is emphasised in social democracy (Steyn, 1999:5-7). One may safely conclude that liberal democracy will tend strongly to defend quality education, based on the right and freedom of individuals to compete and achieve, whereas social democracy will accentuate equality in education.

There tend to be two broad categories of responses in the quality-equality debate, depending on one’s perspective. One group are those who prioritise quality. They value quality with conviction because they have experienced quality and their interests have been advanced by a quality education. They also value equality because they know it is just, therefore they want equality to be sinergised with quality. The other group are mostly the underprivileged majority who feel that their opportunities and aspirations have been thwarted. Equality is therefore a higher priority for them than quality.

Are quality and equality two comparable concepts? Are they not on two totally different continuums? Perhaps quality can be viewed as a vertical axis measuring quality from low or poor quality to excellent quality. Equality is more a state of being. Unfortunately equality is often associated with mediocre quality and not with excellence. Why is this so?

Quality and equality can be viewed as two important core values in education in a democratic society, each with a cluster of supporting values.

2. VALUES UNDERLYING QUALITY

Quality is the texture of something. A school, for instance, must be measured against certain criteria. The values undergirding quality are, among others, excellence, diligence, punctuality, self-control, independence, critical thinking, creativity and discipline.

According to the *World Competitiveness Yearbook* (1997), compared with 46 other countries, the South African education system ranks 45th, and regarding the qualifications of South African citizens for participating in a modern competitive economy, the country ranks 46th.

There is considerable overlap between the concepts of quality and standards, but they are not the same. Standards are specified and usually measurable outcome indicators used for comparative purposes. Harvey (1996:205-212) distinguishes five different approaches to quality namely:

- The *exceptional approach* which emphasises the maintenance of academic standards. Emphasis on assessment of knowledge and some “higher level” skills. It presumes an implicit, normative “gold-standard” for learning and advocates elitism or merit, even within a mass education system.
- The *perfection or consistency approach* emphasises consistency in external quality monitoring of academic and competence standards. Their aim of producing a defect-free output is, however, not consistent with the nature of learners, because learners are not perfect.
- The *fitness-for-purpose* approach relates standards to specific purpose-related objectives. The approach tends towards explicit specification of skills and abilities and requires clear evidence by which to identify threshold standards.
- The *value-for-money approach* places emphasis on a “good deal” for the customer or client, usually government, employer, learner or parent. This approach prioritises efficiency and accountability to “clients” and “customers”. At the heart of the value-for-money approach in education is the notion of accountability.
- The *transformative approach* emphasises quality as a process of change and therefore accentuates academic knowledge accompanied by a broader set of transformative skills

such as analysis, critical thinking, innovation and communication. It has to do with enhancing the learner and also empowering him/her so that he/she may be able to make a meaningful contribution to the process of transformation.

The exceptional approach – where quality is emphasised – is important for South Africa if it wishes to compete in the global market. Even if it sounds like intellectual elitism, pockets of excellence in a mass education system are needed.

The fitness-for-purpose approach – where quality is judged in terms of the extent to which schools meet their stated purpose – should also play a role. The fitness-for-purpose of different schools will vary and differ from one another. The fitness-for-purpose approach brings us to the debate on the real purpose of schools, which impacts also on the values being emphasised. There is a growing feeling that schools in South Africa are not preparing learners adequately for the world of work, that they lack even basic skills of literacy and numeracy and that they are also not prepared for handling the unpredictable future in a struggling democracy. One of the main purposes of education is to prepare people for the world of work, to be able to earn a living. Without a certain amount of knowledge, understanding and skills, learners have a very small chance to become independent, proactive and productive citizens who can meaningfully participate in a democratic society. But vocational preparation is not the only purpose of schools.

“A concern for the economically useful can jeopardise those activities which, however educationally valuable, have no obvious occupational relevance” (Pring, 19:110).

The value for money approach as measurement of quality is being emphasised more and more by business leaders and parents. This tendency is mirrored by the shift in language through which education is described and evaluated. The language of specific outcomes implies that teaching becomes the relation between input invested and output expected in measuring quality.

The efficiency movement unfortunately often rests on the idea that both individual worth and the worth of education can be reduced to economic terms. It often masks an economic, technicist conception of education with no

regard to criteria of equity or social and individual development. Thus:

“The current imposition of business and market principles of efficiency upon schools and universities results in predictable distortions of the principles of social justice and equality” (Welch, A.R., 1998:18).

But this measure of quality cannot be ignored, especially in South Africa where the reality is gross unemployment and consequent poverty and crime. The unemployment rate in South Africa of 25.2% is the fourth highest in the world, after Algeria, Réunion and Macedonia. This compares unfavourably with other developing countries where the average unemployment rate is under seven per cent (*Die Burger*, 27 May 2000).

Breytenbach (1998:113) found that a higher per capita income in a country tends to be positively associated with democracy and lower per capita incomes are negatively associated with democracy. Breytenbach confirmed the hypothesis that the higher the per capita income of a country, the better the conditions are for democratic endurance and sustainability. If we ignore the fitness-for-purpose and the value-for-money approaches for quality and only concentrate on equality in education, we will in the long run not be able to compete internationally and because of the resulting financial instability, our democratic values will be at great risk. Furthermore, the state’s financial capacity to provide both equal access to education and education of good quality will be undermined in low income countries.

The transformative approach is also important in the light of the fragmentation and discrimination of the past. Learners in this young democracy need to be enabled and empowered to think rationally and critically for themselves to be able to challenge and change undemocratic practices.

3. VALUES UNDERLYING EQUALITY

Equality is more a state of mind that one chooses because one believes in the equal dignity of people. Equality implies equal opportunities for everyone, it does not necessarily imply equal outcomes. The need for equality of opportunity is a perspective that educators must bring to bear on the learning environment and must therefore be a central part of the pre-service and

in-service training of administrators and teachers, as well as the curriculum offered to learners.

Equality of opportunity has to do with:

- equal access to educational institutions with non-discriminatory entrance requirements
- equal per capita expenditure on education
- equal access to knowledge
- equal career opportunities
- equal access to quality education.

The concept of equity should be placed alongside equality in a discussion such as this because equity conveys a stronger feeling of fairness and justice and implies treating people differently because of their uniqueness as human beings.

The cluster of values undergirding equality is: respect for others, openness, empathy, recognition of human dignity, gentleness, cooperation, tolerance, partnership, sharing, kindness and peaceful coexistence.

Democracy implies a strong commitment to gender and racial equality. Despite the fact that non-sexism is one of the principles of education in South Africa, the democratic ideals of gender equity and justice have unfortunately not been manifested in the teaching profession.

Because of the strong emphasis on the elimination of racial discrimination, discrimination against women – which is perhaps even more deeply rooted than racial discrimination – has not received serious attention in South African schools until recently. The subtle but powerful message of the hidden curriculum in schools is that of gender inequality.

The question about equality and difference is most relevant in this regard. Although they are different, males and females are fundamentally equal human beings. Equality and difference are thus not mutually exclusive. Both genders are harmed by sexual stereotyping and gender discrimination.

Despite the fact that teachers profess to treat boys and girls equally, studies (Lemmer, 1993: 15-17) have revealed a different reality:

- Teachers tend to address boys more often in the classroom. Approximately two-thirds of classtime is spent talking to boys.
- Boys are allowed two-thirds of pupil-talk. They have more interaction with teachers and therefore receive more individualised tuition.
- Teachers tend to take male learners more seriously than females. They comment and nod

more often in response to boys' questions and comments. They ask boys more often than girls to answer questions and ask more higher-order questions to boys than girls.

- Teachers give boys specific feedback, constructive criticism and remediation. Because boys "dominate the classroom airwaves", they receive more attention than girls.
- Boys are eight times more likely to shout out questions or answers and not be reprimanded by teachers, while teachers are more likely to reprimand girls for the same behaviour.
- There are also various forms of gender discrimination in text books, e.g. stereotyping, the invisibility of women in history books and the fragmentation of the contribution of women.
- Boys receive more praise than girls as far as their academic work is concerned and their failures are often attributed to a lack of effort rather than a lack of skill.

The consequence of the preferential treatment of boys during their formative years is that boys have a healthier conception of their own general and intellectual abilities than equally intelligent girls have. Boys are therefore schooled to see themselves as having a superior performance.

Gender stereotyping and a patriarchal structure can be found in many "democratic" schools. The atmosphere in the school, the subject matter and the way it is taught does not enhance the female student's capacity for free choice, nor her ability to speak with a voice of her own and thus to participate in a democratic society.

Equality should never be regarded as demanding similarity, uniformity or sameness. People differ culturally and historically as well as concerning their interests, ability and talents. Owing to this, equal opportunities do not imply the same opportunities. Two thousand five hundred years ago, Aristotle noted that, "the greatest inequality of the present age is the equal treatment of unequals".

What are the dangers if the values underlying quality (such as competition, excellence etc.) are overemphasised in a school?

What are the dangers if the values underlying equality (such as tolerance, empathy etc.) are overemphasised in a school?

4. INSTILLING VALUES

The concept liberal democracy can be strongly linked with *quality* and that of social democracy with *equality*. These two concepts are in a relationship of tension with one another. In South Africa's current transition phase, we are experiencing a large degree of that tension.

Both the previous and the present governments in a way paid lip-service to both quality and equality. The gifted child project of the 1970s is a typical example of the emphasis on quality whereas the inclusive movement is geared towards equality. Every teacher and lecturer standing in front of a classroom experiences this tension daily and they have to grapple with the problem of balancing these two sometimes seemingly opposing values, quality and equality.

The reality in some South African schools reflects a disturbing absence of both quality and equality. The erosion of a culture of teaching and learning is reflected in various news reports:

"Gun-toting pupils, rampant gangsterism, rape on schoolgrounds and intimidation are all part of an ordinary day's work for teachers in South Africa's township schools ... For pupils the situation is just as bad, if not worse – teenage pregnancies, demotivation, and violence by fellow pupils and teachers who have given up ... [M]any children want to learn, but they have to cope with what is called the PHD syndrome – 'pull her or him down'. It means that if you do well at school you are resented in your community" (*Sunday Times*, 31 January 1999).

Both quality and equality are important and ought to be stressed in this period of transformation in South Africa. Both are indispensable for the enhancement of society, for the progress of our country, for harmonious coexistence and for making our country a "winning nation".

Without quality we cannot be competitive in the international context and without equality there will be suspicion, unrest and disharmony. We want learners who can think critically for themselves and who have developed assertive individuality and their own talents, but who can balance their self-interest with what Tocqueville called the "habits of the heart", the responsibilities of democratic citizenship.

At this moment in our history it seems as if equality is being most strongly emphasised in

our schools. This is clearly illustrated by the six values that were recently identified to be taught in schools, namely: equity, tolerance, multilingualism, openness, accountability and social honour (*Cape Argus*, 9 May 2000:1). Only accountability and perhaps social honour have links with quality, whereas the motivation for the other values is mainly the goal of equality.

The quality of value education depends on the quality of the teacher's example. Learners will not learn democratic values if teachers do not live and model it. How often does it happen in classrooms that teachers profess and truly believe in values such as cooperation and appreciation of differences but in their day to day lives in the classroom, they fall back on fierce competition? Or they value academic excellence but because of teacher burnout and exhaustion, settle for mediocre work? Or theoretically they fully agree with the merit of a democratic, interactive, bottom-up leadership style, but the reality is that of a hierarchical, autocratic, top-down leadership style. Teachers have to develop a sensitivity about the tie-up between their professed values and the hidden values underlying their actual behaviour. "Preferred values" and "operative values" have to be in line with one another to strengthen one another.

The above section did not answer the question about the different ways in which democratic values can be instilled in schools. Think about the numerous ways in which this can take place, intentionally and unintentionally.

5. PARTNERS IN INSTILLING VALUES

"The values that make up the core belief system, or the 'founding myth' of a free society are communicated to all citizens in hundreds of ways: by families, teachers, priests, fellow workers, friends, wise neighbours, and so on. They are laid down in traditions, customs, books, poems, songs, habits, manners, sayings, the law, and ideally they are reflected in the many social and political institutions of the nation" (Gairdner, W.D., 1992:20).

It is clear that teachers are not the only people

responsible for instilling values. Home is the moral nursery of values, but parents as primary educators of their children are often too busy or exhausted to instil values. Unfortunately, they are sometimes negative role models for their children.

Schools do not only need parents as partners in character education, but the values imposed by the media also have to be in line with those of the school and the home. Unfortunately, the values affirmed by the media are materialistic values focused mainly on the short-term self-gratification of a narcissistic consumer. Values such as integrity, diligence, resiliency, excellence, responsibility, fidelity and honesty are often "kitchified" and belittled by the media as old-fashioned values with no relevance in a fast changing post-modern world. The values most children learn through the media today are as nourishing for their humanity as popcorn and diet coke are for their bodies.

The question of moral conduct in a democracy must not only be asked in schools but also in the different realms of institutional conduct.

"Are political policies and arrangements genuinely open to rational scrutiny and public control? Do the courts and agencies of government operate fairly? What standards of service and integrity are prevalent in public offices? Do journalism and the mass media expose facts and alternatives, or appeal to fads and emotionalism?"

(Scheffler, 1987:125).

Moral education thus presents a challenge not only to the schools, but also to the other institutions of society.

CONCLUSION

Gairdner (1992:20) wrote: "No nation in history has survived for long without a basic consensus on values". And Phiper (1996:16) commented about the American society that "we are a pluralistic culture struggling to find common beliefs, and unfortunately, our most central belief system is about the importance of money". In South Africa there is an urgent need for consensus about core values. Quality and equality in deliberate and healthy combination, ought to be included in those shared core values.

REFERENCES

- HARVEY L. 1996. *Quality monitoring and student learning in quality assurance in South African Higher education: national and international perspectives*. Strydom et al eds. The University of the Orange Free State: Bloemfontein.
- PERRY R.B. 1954. Realms of value, In I Scheffler, ed. *Philosophy and education*, 2nd ed., Boston: Allen& Bacon, 1966.
- SCHEFFLER I. 1987. Moral education and the democratic ideal, In *Value theory and education*. Carbone, P.F. ed., Florida: Robert Krieger Publishing Company.
- ZECHA G. 1998. On values for education in a democratic society: Foundations and limits. Unpublished lecture 1998, University of Salzburg, Austria.
- STEYN J.C., W.S. DU PLESSIS & J.DE KLERK. 1999. *Education for democracy*. Durbanville: Wachwa Publishers.

Quality Education and Equal Opportunities in Education: A Current Discussion in Germany

Hans Döbert

INTRODUCTION

A major pedagogic controversy is taking place in the current discussions on education in Germany, concerning the improvement of the quality of education, in guaranteeing equal opportunities for all children and young people. While the debate on quality has been very positive thus becoming powerful, “equal opportunities” as an educational role model have only played a subordinate role in recent years. In the discussion on education, its penetration as a concept has been described as neo-liberal. Demand is therefore growing to combine the political and educational steps regarding the new offensive on quality with the improvement of equal opportunities. Through the discussion, questions concerning lesson format (direct instruction as a new method of teaching) and the competence of the teacher (subject and class leadership competence, diagnostic and didactic competence) have again become the centre of attention.

1. DEVELOPMENT, GUARANTEE AND MEASUREMENT OF QUALITY

Questions concerning the development, guarantee and measurement of quality within the education system are currently determining the political agenda on education in most European countries.

The main discussion is: Which role should be attached to different quality development stages and how can a national “quality and evaluation policy” be formed? Whereas, for example, pupil performance in subjects is seen as the central result of the education process in Anglo-Saxon countries, German-speaking

countries face a different structural situation. Tasks and aims of the school also involve educational functions, the conveying of values and so-called cross-curricular competencies (CCC). These complex skills are more difficult to ascertain within the framework of leadership measurements.

The current discussion on quality in the education system is being carried out in a more polarised fashion in German-speaking countries as a consequence of this educational understanding and the less distinctive culture of the testing and measuring. In addition to this, the German discussion on quality is considerably influenced at present by the political aim of education to guarantee equality. As a result of the term “equal opportunity” as an educational and political ideal having played a mainly subordinate role in recent years in Germany – having been neither an explicit subject in teacher training or school research nor concrete education policy – the constant reference to the political and educational steps regarding economic and social inequality is again being taken as a theme within the context of the debate on quality.

Today, however, equality implies a form of equal opportunity. In other words, every pupil should have the chance to receive an education and training suited to his/her interests and talents, independent of the economic situation of his/her parents.

Even if most people are in agreement on this point, the relationship between the improvement of the quality of education and guaranteeing equal opportunities is being fiercely discussed at present.

2. MAJOR PEDAGOGIC CONTROVERSIES

There have always been major pedagogic controversies in the German education system. Examples which can be cited are the discussion concerning the length of common primary school time, the question regarding the introduction of comprehensive school as a new form of secondary education in the 1970s, or dealing with the democratic principle of equality in East Germany from 1945 to 1990. The current controversy concerns the improvement of the quality of education, about the sense and use of national and international school performance comparisons and guarantee of equal opportunities.

Weiß (1999:9) only recently pointed out that substantial differences in the provision of resources in schools manifests itself in their performance level. American follow-up surveys to SIMSS, the forerunner to TIMSS, show that performance-wise, the United States (US) would have achieved the second best result, had only school districts with high provision of funds and low child poverty been included in the survey. Regions with low allocation of finance and high child poverty, on the other hand, found themselves on the level of developing countries as far as performance was concerned. A regulation of the school system from a market oriented point of view as in the US would therefore, also in Germany, lead to a growth of social inequality – according to one of the most important arguments for the guarantee of equal opportunities in the current discussion on education. Several factors (cf. Klemm, 1998) are supposed to prove that unequal opportunities are in fact a problem in the German education system.

3. UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

At the end of the 1990s in Germany, almost 17 million children, students and young adults attended educational establishments: kindergartens, schools, colleges and universities. There they encountered 1.3 million full time advisers and teachers. If the large fields of general and vocational further education and the trainers and trainees in companies are included, it can be ascertained that at the end of the 1990s, every fourth citizen in Germany was either being supervised in educational institutions, was learning or teaching. Thus, on average, pupils spend 11 years in general education

schools; apprentices, three years in companies and schools; and students, more than six years in colleges and universities.

The necessary time investment is accompanied by a considerable financial cost: in 1996 in Germany, DM170 000 million of public funds were spent on education, of that DM87 000 million on schools.

The returns for young people on this considerable time and economic outlay, continue to be highly unevenly divided. If these returns are measured, for example, on the chance of achieving a higher educational qualification, it turns out that educational opportunities are still to a large degree influenced by social, regional and ethnic origin.

In view of the socially unequal opportunities, current analyses (cf. Klemm, 1998) confirm that in 1995, 19% of children from working class backgrounds reached the upper forms of grammar and comprehensive schools as well as technical colleges – i.e. upper schools – whereas the figure for children from civil service families was 61%. A study carried out in 1997 at Hamburg schools contributed to an explanation: It was proved that a child whose father had no school leaving qualifications had to perform considerably better at school to achieve a primary school recommendation to a grammar school than a child whose father had A-levels.

A glance at the regional distribution of opportunities in 1996 also reveals remarkable inequalities: In Bavaria with 20% and the Saarland with 22%, the proportion of those achieving the general certificate of higher education was extremely low in comparison to the other federal states, whereas Brandenburg (34%) and Saxony (32%) were extremely high. The national average was 28%.

Least surprising are probably the findings in the area of inequalities within the ethnic groups: The chance of being able to successfully participate in education and training are unrecognisably worse for the children of working migrants than for German children of equal age. In 1994, seven per cent of German children left school with no qualifications, whereas the figure for young foreigners was 17%. The acquisition of the general certificate for higher education presented the following picture: In 1994, seven per cent of young foreigners, but 31% of young Germans, acquired the general certificate of higher education. The obvious

inequality in educational opportunities which exists between the classes, regions and ethnic groups, becomes the starting point of unequal opportunities in life. Those who leave the education system with no or very poor school leaving certificate results, face a permanent struggle in life. The consequences of their discrimination in the participation of education will be felt by both them and society in the economic as well as cultural areas.

4. DEFINING QUALITY

On the one hand, the current debate on quality in Germany is embedded in two general trends which are part of the criticism aimed at the public service as a whole. "Society" questions the quality of services which it finances and whether the funds provided are being used effectively (purposefully) and efficiently (in an acceptable relationship between means and purpose).

Secondly, an increasing number of concepts described as "neo-liberal" are now penetrating the debate on education. This is reflected in the increasing use of such terms as education market, privatisation, co-financing by beneficiaries, deregulation, institutional competition, education as a service, to name just some.

On the other hand, the term *quality* is characterised by two general features: it is to a very large degree general and secondly, has very positive associations. In this sense it is "powerful". Who ever had anything against quality?

Additionally, with the current debate on quality, a change in the basic orientation in school research and school policy is beginning to emerge. Until the recently, school was seen as a "black box" in the eyes of the majority of the public. Scholarly output was described using few and very general units of measurement (e.g. number of graduates).

The new discussion on quality, however, signals something of a "change in paradigm" to a process and output orientation on the one hand, and to a stronger evaluation of qualitative description and analysis on the other. In this respect, we are concerned with quality, which includes training and education, process and product, input and its preconditions in the same way as output and its effects.

Empirical surveys on the performance ability of different types of schools in the late 1970s have produced little evidence of school type

differences. However, very clear variance differences between schools of the same type have been brought to light. Under the same framework of conditions, schools perform differently. Also, the differences cannot be purely explained by the fact that pupils have varying starting preconditions (cf. Fend, 1998). The same framework of conditions therefore leads to unequal educational performance and quality. The decisive point is far more a bundle of factors: clarity of demands and financial support related to pupil performance, the agreement of teachers on fundamental educational intentions and concepts, clear rules and regulations for every day school life, competent school management, etc. (cf. Fend, 1996; OECD, 1989; Mitter, 1991; Steffens/Bargel, 1992).

Much space is taken up in the discussion by strategies on the examination of quality. The following strategies are currently applied in Germany:

- Centralised final examinations are held in Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia.
- In the majority of the federal states, identical testing in any given subjects for all pupils in the same year (e.g. in mathematics, natural sciences, German and English) is being instituted for the first time.
- Different ranking procedures are gaining in significance, to which international comparative surveys such as TIMSS and PISA belong. With the current PISA survey, many social and cultural context variables are simultaneously recorded, something which is lacking in the TIMSS study.
- In Germany, external evaluation is only applied within the framework of research projects.
- Inspection models are only found in Bremen.

5. TEACHER-CENTRED TEACHING VERSUS DIRECT INSTRUCTION

Triggered by international comparative studies, the lesson has again become the centre of attention. The most commonly used type of lesson is the most widespread, traditional form, namely teacher-centred teaching.

In teacher-centred teaching, the teacher imparts a certain amount of material (syllabus) to all pupils at the same time. This lesson is

centred around the teacher and syllabus oriented; the pupils are passive and partly uncomprehending.

According to German and international surveys, however, another type of lesson – that of direct instruction – guarantees the greatest average and individual pupil learning success, when the matter in question is to build up correct knowledge and essential skills in a systematic manner.

Although direct instruction is teacher controlled, it is centred around the pupil. The teacher takes full responsibility whereby despite different learning preconditions, pupils acquire in an active form the most important syllabus contents with an in-depth understanding of the matter. This presupposes that the teacher knows and is aware of the learning and performance differences of his/her pupils, diagnoses these in a competent manner and takes them into account in his/her pedagogic behaviour.

The difficulty of varying lesson discussions, relatively long periods of silent work (with active support of individual pupils) and varied exercises, characterises direct instruction. It requires the teacher to be thoroughly prepared, involves great pedagogic effort during the lesson (active teacher and active pupils) as well as a thorough analysis of each lesson.

The most important precondition for an improvement in the quality of lessons within the current debate, is once again teacher competence. According to this, teachers are supposed to dispose of certain personality and behavioural features that are of great significance in the execution of the teaching profession. For instance, knowing how to handle children and young people, furthering them and taking pleasure in their progress, and being socially competent – thereby enabling teachers to react appropriately to different pupils in different situations. A certain degree of tolerance is required so that frustration can be controlled, especially in terms of those children who have behavioural problems or who perform poorly. Such children should not elicit anger and a pedagogically dysfunctional manner of behaviour, rather, the teacher should be able to cope with difficult situations in a productive way.

This requires profound and professional teacher training. The discussion makes it emphatically clear that what matters in initial

and further teacher training, is the acquisition of different forms of competence in a theoretical, yet at the same time, practical and easily applicable form. Such forms of competence include above all:

- *Subject competence.* This means the individual teacher must have a thorough understanding of what is being taught. It implies both a scientific understanding of the content, as well as a curricular understanding (i.e. the scientifically serious, but adapted to development transformation of the material to different age groups and ability levels).
- *Class leadership competence.* There can be no successful lesson without a maximisation of the active learning time of preferably all pupils in the classroom. For this, class leadership techniques are necessary, which the teacher has to master and be able to apply as difficult classroom situations arise.
- *Diagnostic competence.* This means the regular observation of the learning and performance development of individual pupils to enable early recognition of problems and difficulties. This is the precondition for individual pedagogic help.
- *Didactic competence.* This involves every teacher having a certain repertoire of varying teaching methods at his/her disposal.

CONCLUSION

The current discussion on the improvement of quality in education is ambivalent. Present developments promise, on the one hand, more creative scope for internal school reform, more teacher professionalism, as well as a de-bureaucratisation of the state administration of schools without weakening the state. On the other hand, it includes the danger of the expansion of the market economy into schools, which inevitably leads to a loss of equal opportunities. Yet without this debate, school development and school policy would hardly have any impetus or prospects in Germany today.

Discussions on the quality of education inevitably lead to debates about de-bureaucratisation, models, school curricula and school concepts being held to account, as well as school supervision and, of course, teaching and leadership roles. In this manner, the entire concept of school development is taken as a theme and prompts public attention. Even the realistic fear of the endangering of equal opportunities

has at least the consequence that, after a long break, the debate on equal opportunities has been taken up again – and not only in the case of socially disadvantaged, handicapped or for-

eign children, but also in the case of children with different talents.

This too is an important result of the current debate on education in Germany.

REFERENCES

- BÖTTCHER, WOLFGANG. 1999. Für eine Allianz der Qualität. In *Die Deutsche Schule* 91, 1, S. 20-37.
- FEND, HELMUT. 1998. *Qualität im Bildungswesen. Schulforschung zu Systembedingungen, Schulprofilen und Lehrerleistung*. Weinheim u.a.: Juventa.
- FEND, HELMUT. 1996. Schulkultur und Schulqualität. In *Die Institutionalisierung von Lehren und Lernen*. Weinheim: Beltz, S. 85-97.
- KLEMM, KLAUS. 1998. Lohnt sich Schule? Hoher Aufwand und ungleiche Verteilungseffekte. In *Schulverwaltung*. Ausgabe Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg und Bremen, 1, 9, S. 143-144.
- MITTER, WOLFGANG. 1991. Europäische Wege zu einer "guten Schule". In *Schulqualität und Schulvielfalt*. Wiesbaden: HIBS, S. 85-91.
- OECD. 1989. *Schools and Quality. An International Report*. Paris.
- PREUSS-LAUSITZ, ULF. 1997. Soziale Ungleichheit, Integration und Schulentwicklung. In *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik*, 43, 4., S. 583-596.
- STEFFENS, ULRICH/BARGEL, TINO. 1992. *Erkundungen zur Qualität von Schule*. Neuwied: Luchterhand.
- WEINERT, FRANZ, E. 1999. Qualität und Leistung in der Schule - brauchen wir eine neue Lernkultur? In *Forum E*, 10. März, S. 8-13.
- WEIß, MANFRED. 1999. Steuerung über Finanzen. Unveröffentlichtes Manuskript. Frankfurt.

Rhetoric and Language Issues in Education in the South African Democracy

Stanley Ridge

“Philosophy, as we use the word, is a fight against the fascination, which forms of expression exert upon us.” – Ludwig Wittgenstein

INTRODUCTION

None of us is likely to be surprised at the priority given to rhetoric in South Africa. First of all, the country suffered over 40 years of rhetorical assault under apartheid. Great damage was done – perhaps because the powerful words (separate development, self-determination, homeland, total onslaught – to name a few) bore at best an oblique relationship to reality and were used with increasing cynicism. Rhetorical assertion conveniently substituted for reality. We thus have a model firmly established in our national repertoire, and it is not a particularly helpful one. Secondly, we have been through a kind of revolution. An essential feature of revolution is that there has to be a major change in publicly articulated values. This has largely been achieved. The people have broadly been persuaded, and the rhetoric which persuaded them has been given institutional form. We have a dramatically different constitution. Legislation and institutions in accord with the constitution provide a structure supportive of real change. And the people are being educated, through the rhetoric of public life, in the potential meaning of what has happened. Actual change is not, however, achieved by legislation or by wider public understanding, though these things may help. Actual change is the product of a complex historical process which is often frustrating in its obliquity and slowness. Problems of delivery change

the status of rhetoric. They make the rhetoric valuably used to capture attention for new possibilities in the real world into rhetorical assertion of high ideals as a substitute for historical engagement. Thereby, the inconveniences of historical process are avoided. (See Ridge 1998, 1999, for fuller exploration of this theme).

I wish to comment on four tendencies, unhelpful to the flowering of a democracy – and particularly to education in a democracy – which rhetorical assertion demonstrably encourages.

1. RHETORIC AND REALITY: NGUGI AND VERWOERD

The first tendency is take rhetoric at face value. This is to ignore the political or historical process to which the rhetoric refers. In his well-known book, *Decolonising the mind*, the Kenyan writer, Ngugi wa Thiong’o makes a passionate plea for respecting the African languages as media of African identity and the major means of extending literacy unencumbered by a colonial heritage. His ideas are progressive. However, anyone knowing the work of Dr Verwoerd, the architect of grand apartheid, will know that he used the identical formulations in support of a thoroughly repressive, late-colonial order. What separates Ngugi and Verwoerd is not their rhetoric on this issue, but the purposes which the persuasive ideas serve.

The same danger applies to a great deal of rhetoric about language in South Africa. It is largely used for phatic communion, creating the impression of a binary divide between

those who are for us and those who are against us, the enlightened and the irredeemable. Shared rhetorical formulations – enlightened or irredeemable – obscure the great range of political agendas evidenced in practice. This comfortable blanketing of strange bedfellows might be called rhetorical accommodation. We would do well, particularly in education, to heed the warning of that cold-eyed 17th century observer, Thomas Hobbes (1985: 106): “Words are wise mens counters, they do but reckon by them: but they are the mony of fooles”. Or, as Job found out, “words without knowledge” obscure the truth in “empty talk” (Job, 35.16; 38.2).

2. PLATONISM AND PRACTICE: MULTILINGUALISM AND A MULTILINGUAL SOCIETY

The second tendency is idealist. This means that important, but contingent, factors are treated as absolutes. In 1850, Flaubert was satirising this tendency in his *Dictionary of received ideas*, or phrases to be tossed into conversation to create the impression that you are a profound thinker. One of these flatulent ideas to be mouthed with an air of profundity was: “Our country’s ills are due to our ignorance of languages.” He would have loved the headline in the *Argus* of 25 September 2000: “Language – the final hurdle” (Lund, 2000). The subheading continues in the same vein: “Cross-cultural relations in South Africa will warm up substantially between fellow South Africans who’s [sic] only real barrier is a linguistic one.” All the other hurdles have been crossed. All the other barriers of poverty and education and culture and oppressive history are not really substantial.

The danger with formulations like this is not so much the importance given to language as the lack of importance given to anything else. This falsifies the position of language and diverts attention from pressing issues which must be addressed, along with language issues, if some of the promise mentioned is to be realised.

The example I have chosen is from a newspaper headline, notoriously the least reliable part of any press report. Yet this time the sub-editor is not at fault. The national debate itself is to blame. Language is repeatedly given agency in it, and other issues are repeatedly occluded. I

shall discuss two instances from the same report:

- “Ensuring that white South Africans learn an African language is the best way to overcome racism.” How is this learning going to be “ensured” democratically? Making the study of an African language compulsory for white learners (and presumably for the “black” majority of Afrikaans mother tongue speakers) is fair enough as a matter of policy in general terms, subject to a number of practical constraints. But ensuring learning is quite another matter. You can take a horse to water, but if it has a rooted prejudice against the water you can’t make it drink. Besides, assuming that the language is learnt, how is gaining a knowledge of the grammar and idiom of an African language and something of the culture within which it is used, in itself going to combat racism? The hard fact is that some of the most hard-line of white racists are fluent in an African language and knowledgeable about the culture of its mother tongue speakers. And, unless we subscribe to the myth – so assiduously cultivated by several eminent figures at the Human Rights Commission’s conference on racism – that there are no black racists to speak of, we must assume that the same applies to black racists, *mutatis mutandis*. Language by itself will not necessarily do anything to break the pattern of prejudice, and may in fact confirm it. However, given other changes and a willingness to reach out to one another, knowledge of the languages current in one’s area can handsomely advance the process.

The sentence I have spent so much time on is part of the newspaper article. It derives, at a fairly short remove, from the report, *Values, education and democracy* which was submitted to the Minister of Education in May (James et al., 2000). Much of that report is eminently sensible and helpful, but the naivety about language and its agency is manifest in two key statements. The first is: “In order to be a good South African citizen one needs to be at least bilingual, but preferably trilingual” (James et al., 2000: 19). So a monolingual South African is a bad citizen to be transformed in socio-ethical status by acquiring the rudiments of another South African language! The second statement relates to making Afrikaans- and English-speaking South Africans “*acquire* at least one

African language as a *subject*” (my emphases) throughout the school years. “Such a step,” we are told, “would add considerably to reconciliation processes and the promotion of a common South African citizenship” (James et al., 2000: 20). Language acquisition is one thing and is almost entirely in the control of the acquirer. Being obliged to take a language as a subject is quite another. And how this *in itself* would “add considerably to reconciliation processes” is wrapped in mystery.

- “We see our multilingualism as a resource with the potential to empower all South Africans to participate fully in our country’s social, political and economic life.” Thus said Minister Ben Ngubane in the second quotation I shall discuss from the article in the *Argus* of 25 September 2000. Ngubane’s words sound well enough, but they make no sense. *Multilingualism* is an individual’s command over more than two languages. If there is a high level of multilingualism in a country, the country has many individuals with such a command. One can safely say, then, that multilingualism is a potential resource to those people and those around them. However, multilingualism is not to be confused with a multilingual situation: one in which a number of languages are at play. South Africa is a multilingual society. There are, inevitably, problems associated with such a social condition, just as there are advantages. We are far from having solved the problem of adequate access to the political process for all South Africans, as many are effectively excluded by the practice of using English only or mainly. Such problems must not be glossed over by speaking of the multilingual situation as a resource. At the same time, one should emphasise the advantages which it embodies. For example, various languages and cultures offer different angles on a common reality and can make for a humanly richer common society. However, neither multilingualism nor a multilingual society is going to achieve this automatically. Multilingual political and educational leaders and ordinary citizens have to testify to the resulting larger view in practice if it is to be an informing social resource.

Minister Ngubane gives this multilingualism/multilingual society agency “to empower all South Africans to participate fully in our country’s social, political and economic life”. Given

the right linguistic equipment, all social barriers will fall, all political life will become transparent, and the sky will be the limit on employment prospects – for everyone. It is a utopian picture to gladden the heart of any language teacher. However, Minister Ngubane is the victim of the Platonist idealism of the discourse he (his advisers?) initiated nearly six years ago with the establishment of Langtag, the Language Plan Task Group, in December 1995. One of the instructions Dr Ngubane gave Langtag (1996) was that:

“All South Africans should have access to all spheres of South African society by developing and maintaining a level of spoken and written language which is appropriate for a range of contexts in the official language(s) of their choice.”

As I have said elsewhere (Ridge, 1998), this politically correct discursive medley hides conceptual muddles with serious implications. The following are most prominent:

- “All South Africans should have access to all spheres of South African society” goes far beyond the modest democratic vision of all South Africans having full access to shared political and economic life. It opens “all spheres of ... society” to all. The farm worker from Delmas must feel at home at a Houghton tea party. The Constantia socialite must slip effortlessly into a Khayelitsha shebeen.
- This aim of total access is to be achieved through an official language perfectly mastered. Even if it were practicable for any South African to master his or her own language in its full social range, it hardly needs to be said that this would not afford access to all spheres of society mediated through that language. Even less would it afford access to spheres of society mediated through other languages, whether or not they are official. The quite unrealistic aggrandisement of the role of language in isolation from other social factors is troubling, and places a totally impossible burden on the language teacher.

3. CORRECTNESS AND CLARITY: OBE

Moshe Dayan has gone down in history as a swashbuckling Israeli commander with an eyepatch. His words to Cyrus Vance in 1977 did that reputation no harm. “Whenever you accept our views,” he told Vance, “we shall be in full

agreement with you.” That leads us into the third tendency to be discussed in this paper: political correctness as the enemy of clarity. The focus here is a crucial document for South African education: the statement of Critical Outcomes. Although Curriculum 2005 is currently undergoing a facelift, the Critical Outcomes are apparently to be left to sag.

Outcomes-based education (OBE) policy statements are frequently marred by shoddy formulation. This is often caused by a desire to make all the right noises and to do so by rhetorical assertion. In some circumstances commenting on formulation would be pedantic. One has only to examine the Critical Outcomes document put out by the South African Qualifications Authority to see the real dangers that poor formulation represents in this case. The Critical Outcomes document is a compulsory guide for teachers and planners in all schools and other educational institutions across the country. Its purpose is practical. Yet it is profoundly confusing.

- OBE is explicitly concerned with critical thinking as an outcome. What kind of critical thinking can be intended when the list of outcomes involves basic category errors? Critical Outcome 1 reads: *Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking*. Fair enough. But Outcome 4 is, in fact, a subsidiary element of the same point and not a new point in its own right. How can learners identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking unless they *collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information*? The latter is, in fact, a means to achieving Outcome 1: Problem solving using critical and creative thinking will involve collecting, analysing, organising and critically evaluating information. Another category problem arises with Outcome 6: *Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others*. This is a specific instance of Outcome 1. How could one use science effectively and critically unless as a means of solving problems?
- OBE is concerned, in Critical Outcome 3, that learners *communicate effectively* ... What kind of effective communication can be intended when one of the short list of seven outcomes does not make sense – or is

couched in such arcane language that only initiates can decode it? Point 7 reads:

Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation. There are three main problems with this. The word “demonstrate” is the first problem. It is widely and legitimately used in OBE to describe the practical manifestation of high-level outcomes in terms of their relation or lack of relation to real life. The other OBE outcomes (with the possible exception of 4) are inherently valuable in real-life contexts. However, Outcome 7 is described as if it is a discrete skill to be demonstrated merely by *recognising* something. This is the use of the word in positivist syllabuses where it has an essentially technicist meaning: performing a discrete skill for evaluation.

Outcome 7 does not seem to belong in OBE at all. The second difficulty is with the notion of *the world as a set of related systems*. It is problematic, both because it offers a totalising account of the world as *bounded* by existing human knowledge and systematisation, and because it assumes that all systems are related. What is probably intended is some kind of ecological sensitivity: An alertness to the complex interdependencies which are increasingly being discovered as a feature of the natural and human worlds. They, however, would not be discovered if scientists and thinkers were closed to the possibility of new systems and to aspects which fall outside patterns and relationships currently recognised. The third difficulty is that the demonstration is to be *by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation*. What are problem solving contexts? Distinctive kinds of contexts or merely the contexts in which people happen to solve problems? What can it mean for problem solving contexts not to exist in isolation? By considering anything in context we are deliberately not considering it in isolation. Does it mean that problem solving contexts exist in relation to other problem solving contexts – or to contexts which are not problem solving? And if we have the answer to that, are we any the wiser? Nonsense is nonsense. The probable intention of this outcome is: *Demonstrate a sense of the interrelatedness of systems in nature and the human world by solving problems in*

clear recognition of the contexts affected.

That would make sense of the latter part of Outcome 6: using science and technology in ways which show *responsibility towards the environment and the health of others*.

- Finally, it is important to consider what is omitted from the list of Critical Outcomes, probably inadvertently, through the short-term interests of assertive rhetoric being privileged above the intellectual rigour one has the right to demand of a founding philosophical document. Four of the eight Areas of Learning specified for OBE are scanted or ignored in the outcomes listed. The human and social sciences, the economic and management sciences, and numeracy and mathematics seem to have little or no place in the Critical Outcomes, and arts and culture slip right off the page. Ironically, the authors neglect a basic rhetorical rule: when one specifies mandatory items, what is not specified is not mandatory. Such errors carry a cost. It is hard to believe that numeracy should not be accorded the same status as communication in the Critical Outcomes, and that some sensitivity to our multicultural realities and the opportunities they afford is not considered important enough to mention.

4. AFFECT AND EFFECT: THE POSITION OF ENGLISH

The fourth and final tendency is to avoid giving appropriate attention to the position of English – or any other language – in the South African democracy and so in South African education. There are exceptional language provisions in the constitution. There is a fully articulated Language in Education Policy. Also, a comprehensive Language Policy and Plan for the country has elicited passionate debate. Yet the assertive, high-moral-ground rhetoric of equality constantly blocks even the beginnings of debate on the real-life roles of the languages and what practical steps are necessary to use our advantages while supplying our deficiencies. I shall concentrate on English because it is the most complex case, but much of what is said applies to the other official languages as well.

Let me say, from the start, that the role of English is not self-evident, either as just one of eleven languages, “reduced to equality”, or as the most important language of the society. We

need a more nuanced vocabulary for understanding its functions – and the functions of the other South African languages. Let me say also that evading this issue is a sure way of losing the initiative in fostering a new language order in South Africa. English is currently the dominant language of the most publicly visible parts of the common society. Refusing to look closely and appreciatively at its role as one of South Africa’s languages and as a resource to be glad of, is a way of ensuring by default both that English will not only be dominant but dominating, and that it will become a disempowering remnant of its former self. Breyten Breytenbach (1996) has the nightmare image of us all being smothered in what he calls “a *fanagalo* English”.

The position of English brings together a major cluster of affective issues. Liberal guilt at the role of English in globalisation at the expense of other languages is expressed in Phillipson’s (1992) emotive term, “linguistic imperialism.” In South Africa this vocabulary seems more often to be used by campaigners for other languages as a stick to beat the mother tongue English-speaker with (Breytenbach, 1996; Du Toit, J B, 1996). Against this there is a strong desire for English, either as a language of liberation or as a language of economic opportunity among the majority of black South Africans (Ridge in press). This desire has been so passionate that it has led at times to a demand for “English only” at school: a situation with lamentable results in the absence of properly equipped teachers (Plüddemann, 1997). A strong tug in yet another direction comes from Afrikaans language activists, who tend to view English with more or less guarded hostility, sometimes in a rather knee-jerk fashion, as the supposed cause of Afrikaans being treated shabbily in the new order (e.g. Henning, 2000). Business and government have tended to go the English-only route in a situation of limited financial and human resources, but that is increasingly being challenged on constitutional grounds (Du Toit, Z B, 2000). The constitution provides for equal status in government and administration for all the official languages, and for equitable use of the languages. *Equitable*, a word chosen with great care by the constitution makers, is read as equal in the minds of those conditioned by the earlier, pre-democratic order in which equal use of Afrikaans and

English was the policy. There is also a recurrent tendency to confuse equality of legal status (which can be decreed) with equality of sociological status – a status accorded implicitly by the user community through its choices and practices. No discussion of the different functions and uses of the South African official languages gets very far without emotive, identity-related equality issues arising – and usually stopping the show. I wish to argue that levelling the playing fields is one thing, and levelling the entire terrain of the country quite another.

Where does this leave education? It does have a Language in Education Policy and other elements in place (Plüddemann, 1999). However, too many implementational aspects are being left in limbo because of the emotive issues outlined above.

- It is clear that there is a great deal of controversy surrounding the issue of mother tongue or English as medium of instruction for L1 speakers of African languages. Some of this controversy was aired on the occasion of the Heritage Day celebration of our multilingual society last weekend (Oosterwyk, 2000). The educational case for initial mother tongue instruction is very strong (Macdonald, 1990). There is also evidence of a strikingly more nuanced view on the language issue among African parents in a large-scale study – completed recently – commissioned by the Pan South African Languages Board. Neville Alexander advocates a return to mother tongue education as the norm, but in view of the position of English, he contends:

“we shall only be able to do this by way of a transitional model of dual-medium education (African languages and English) since people will continue to believe that the best, and even the only, way in which their children can become proficient in English is if they use it as a language of teaching and learning (medium of instruction) from as early as possible” (Oosterwyk, 2000).

This pragmatic conclusion accords with the wider African perspective of Kamwangamalu (1995). Only in so far as it is plain that there is genuine access to English will the anxiety about access to the economy, whether or not there are grounds for it, abate enough to give due scope to the mother tongue.

- If there is to be genuine access to English, there must not be emotive and political ambiguity about learning the language. The affective factor is potent in promoting or preventing language learning, and language activists who encourage aggressive attitudes to other languages, rather than strongly positive attitudes to the languages they support, are likely to contribute to language decline rather than additive multilingualism. This means that any counterbalancing of the position of English must be at the level of quiet action and promotion, not noisy, rhetorical put-downs. If there is ambiguity it tends to prevent proper attention being given to anything. In such circumstances, the situation described by Mary Norton (1958) in her children’s novel, *The Borrowers*, will come true: “If you’re born in India, you’re bilingual. And if you’re bilingual, you can’t read. Not so well.” Teachers and planners and learners have to be able to go about their business without feeling a constant need to look over their shoulders. They should not face an either/or choice. Mary Norton presents the tragic picture of children learning to read by ceasing to be bilingual. That is the opposite of the additive multilingualism South African policy espouses and South Africa needs.
- If there is to be genuine access to English, teachers will have to be equipped to offer it. This will demand significant training courses, and a range of support. However, it is important to notice that the success of these efforts is predicated on another development beyond teaching learners how to read and write and follow instructions and deliver sentences in English. The empowerment that is sought depends on teachers and learners and all others involved, becoming involved in a larger process of literacy. The problems that arise when that is not done have been seen from a variety of angles internationally. The Italian realist novelist Alberto Moravia comments sardonically that while the ratio of literates to illiterates has remained constant, “nowadays the illiterates can read and write” (McCarthy, 1979). The United States historian, Daniel Boorstin (1965), comments on the forces against literacy in a spindoctored society: “We expect to be inspired by mediocre appeals for ‘excellence’, to be made literate by illiterate appeals for literacy.” And the

South American Marxist educational thinker, Paulo Freire, captures his vision of literacy in the title of his book with Donaldo Macedo, *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*. With minor adjustments, these very different people are saying the same thing. Access to English (or to any other language) will not mean much if it is not accompanied by this larger literacy. Teachers will have to learn how to affirm the mother tongue (probably already a medium for wider interpretation) alongside English and in continuity with it, fostering enjoyment and the ability to read the word and the world through both. That process helps produce democratically empowered citizens.

- If there is to be genuine access to English, the language will have to be developed. The range of English taught will have to include features of black South African English as a systematised variety. The peculiarity of a *lingua franca* is that it is no longer the exclusive property of the mother tongue speaker. However, having said this, I have to point out that mother tongue English speakers at between eight and nine per cent of the population constitute one of the larger linguistic groups and have every right in terms of the constitution to have their variety of their language honoured and taught. In addition, for L1 or L2 speakers of the language, there are advantages in having a command of international English. Clearly, standardisation and range is an area which must be carefully negotiated if the English which is so desired by a large part of the population is to be the English the education system in fact offers. Perhaps the new National Language Body for English will undertake this work.
- Finally, extending access to English beyond

the rhetoric barrier has to be part of a more general rehabilitation of our schooling system. This is going to demand mobilising all the resources available. In the transitional ten years, there will probably be a need for personal help from English speakers in the community, well-designed learning material, and an encouraging sense among teachers of being part of a collegial enterprise – instead of being fed to the wolves. With luck, these things will become a permanent feature of the landscape. The teacher will have to be free to use pupils as resources more readily. In such changing circumstances, it is also important that the parents and the community, often pretty conservative, to understand what is happening and give their support. But that is not where this process stops. It is necessary to say at the outset that the inadequacy of state funding cannot be allowed to impede this rehabilitation. State funding is highly unlikely to increase, or even to keep pace with the growing population in schools, although some changes in World Bank thinking, designed to secure the basis for real development, may offer relief.

CONCLUSION

If the measures we have discussed are to be implemented and we are to foster a truly literate generation to turn around the decay and demoralisation in our school system, as well as to genuinely strengthen the economy, new kinds of management in education, able to muster and coordinate regional resources, will be required. In this context, the move to English in an additive multilingual situation may make a major contribution to bringing various parts of the larger community together and building democracy with a common purpose.

REFERENCES

- BOORSTIN, DANIEL J. 1965. *The Image*. Harmondsworth: Pelican.
- BREYTENBACH, BREYTEN. 1996. Mondvol: gedagtes oor Afrikaans en saamstaan. *Die Burger*, 5 October 1996.
- DU TOIT, J. B. 1996. Die Taakgroep vir die Bemagtiging van Afrikaansgebruikers op Televisie (Tabema): Uittreksels uit die voorlegging aan die SAUK en OUO asook die antwoorde wat die SAUK verskaf het. Internal Tabema policy document.
- DU TOIT, Z. B. 2000. Vermoorde Rautenbach se werkverlies dalk nie verniet. *Rapport* 24 September 2000: 11.
- FREIRE, PAULO AND DONALDO MACEDO. 1987. *Literacy: Reading the word and the world*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- GUNNING, EUGENE. 2000. Vestiging van veeltaligheid kry knou. *Rapport* 24 September 2000:11.
- HENNING, OLIVIER. 2000. Afskeep van taal ons eie skuld. *Rapport*, 24 September 2000: 17.
- HOBBS, THOMAS. (1651) 1985. *Leviathan*. Ed. C B Macpherson. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- JAMES, WILMOT ET AL. 2000. *Values, Education and Democracy: Report of the Working Group on Values in Education*. Pretoria: Department of Education, 9 May 2000.
- KAMWANGAMALU, A. M. 1995. The colonial legacy and language planning in sub-Saharan Africa: A case study of Zaire. *South African Journal of Linguistics Supplement* 20: 73-97.
- LANGTAG. 1996. *Overview, Recommendations and Executive Summary from the Final Report of the Language Plan Task Group (Langtag)*. Pretoria: Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology.
- LUND, TROYE. 2000. Language – the final hurdle. *Cape Argus*, 25 September 2000: 9.
- MACDONALD, CAROL. 1990. *Crossing the Threshold into Standard Three in Black Education*. The Consolidated Main Report of the Threshold Project. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.
- MCCARTHY, MARY. 1979. Alberto Moravia. *The Observer*, 14 October 1979.
- NGUGI WA THIONG’O. 1986. *Decolonising the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: James Currey.
- NORTON, MARY. 1958. *The Borrowers*. Harmondsworth: Puffin.
- OOSTERWYK, TREVOR. 2000. But the experts are at odds over the medium of instruction. *Cape Argus* 25 September 2000: 9.
- PHILLIPSON, ROBERT. 1992. *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
- PLÜDDEMANN, P. 1997. ‘Additive’ and ‘subtractive’: Challenges in education for multilingualism. *Per Linguam* 13.1: 17-28.
- _____ 1999. Education with multilingualism in South Africa: An overview. *Indian Journal of Applied Linguistics*. 25.1&2: 27-48.
- RIDGE, STANLEY G. M. 1998. Formulating effective policy: Some functions of language in achieving or hindering democratic change, *Per Linguam* 14.2, 19-30.
- _____ 1999. Discourse constraints on language policy in South Africa. *Indian Journal of Applied Linguistics*. 25.1&2: 7-25.
- _____ In Press. Mixed motives: Ideological elements in the support for English in South Africa. In Tom Ricento (ed.), *Ideology, politics and language policies: Focus on English*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Dealing with the Principle of Equality in East Germany from 1945 to 1990

Gert Geißler

INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with the issue of educational opportunities within the former German Democratic Republic's (GDR's) education system. The author takes the view that the structuring of schools followed the principle of equality, whereas the principle of political-ideological selection violated the right of equal education opportunities. Rigorous selection according to performance was observed, as well as strict planning of needs related to usability and practicability, and this undermined the civil right of free choice of education.

1. SCHOOL REFORM IN THE GDR

German history during the 20th century shows a number of fundamental changes: From the empire to the republic, from the republic to the National Socialist dictatorship after 1933, followed by Germany's separation since the end of World War II, dividing the country into conflicting political settings in East and West Germany, and finally the remodelling of the East German education system upon unification with the Federal Republic of Germany since 1990. In this paper, I will explain only the reform measures in the East German state, the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

With the school law of May/June 1946, school reform promised "all adolescents, girls and boys, city and country children, without differentiating the wealth of their parents" and independent from "belief" and "birth", the "same right to education".

The "unity school" negated hitherto existing selection and differentiating mechanisms,

which regulated access to education according to social, ethnic (racial), gender, confessional and regional circumstances.

The unity school had the following design: A common eight-year elementary school, followed by a four-year secondary school with three types of specialisation, the three-year vocational school as well as technical colleges. Access to university was possible via secondary school as well as technical colleges, night schools and special courses at adult education centres.

The traditional vertical structure of the German education system and its principle, whereby only a consequent, as early as possible starting higher education was to pave the way to university, was thereby abolished. The difference in quality of education, shown in different types of schools, was to be discontinued and the new generation was not to be streamed and distributed to different forms of schools according to measures of supposed talent after only a few common school years, as had been the case.

The structural decision for a common eight- and later ten-year school for all school-age children was bound to the prohibition of new privately owned education institutions.

With the prohibition of every private initiative in the education system, the governmental right of supervision over the school system became an unlimited governmental school and education monopoly.

The separation of school and church, which was connected to this, received characteristic features in the later years of the GDR. Religious education was therefore pushed to the

edge of society, being made the sole responsibility of religious parishes. It should be noted, however, that the state school did not develop into an ideologically neutral non-denominational school for all, but into a politically ideological education environment. The school did not open itself to social democracy, as announced, but became a tool of social dictatorship.

2. RADICAL CHANGE

The break of the traditional school structures, which was heralded with the school law, took place in a radical way. This break remained without important transitional forms and without considerable concessions to the conservative political camp, because after the mostly unsatisfying school compromises in earlier times, fast political facts concerning education were to be created.

From a materialistic point of view, this change was daring. It was bound to quite a drastic change of teaching personnel, and it got its drive from “above”, by pushing ahead orders without parliamentary legitimisation.

A self-supporting pedagogic reform movement did not develop. With the rapid structural decisions its discussion at a political level was quickly finalised, and questionable pedagogic objections were turned down in illusory expectation.

Especially references to the danger of losing the level of higher education, as it existed after restricting the new secondary school to not more than four, later only two years, remained underestimated until the collapse of the GDR interpreted as political obstruction against the unity school. Despite this, the elementary school was given more tasks than it was able to accomplish – also until the collapse of the East German state. This happened because the dualism of folkloristic and scientific education was to be overcome. While the majority of teachers still in work looked naturally for connection to former standards and ideas, the interest of the rapidly educated teachers was first of all mainly bound by standing up professionally. On the whole, the reform met an unprepared and unquestioned population, which was focused on the conventional education system.

The roots of the East German school system lay in the Soviet militaristic occupation era, and here, outlines of a loss of reform abilities appeared already: The education policy pres-

sure continued, so that eventually every public criticism of schools was politically suspicious. Nowhere in the theory and practice of schooling did education exist without a well-considered claim to power. A political order was constituted, which rejected rights of freedom, also regarding education.

Educational channels were no doubt opened structurally and by social contributions. Discrimination and selection of the social elite took place according to proven political reliability, and this mainly after assessing one’s parents’ political leanings. In particular, the regulations for selection to further education institutions became an essential object of East Germany’s social conflict history. They contributed to the fact that part of the population rejected this state, while the other demonstrated loyalty to the newly opened education opportunities. Financial obstacles to attending a further education school were dropped step by step – until eventually, scholarships were granted for all direct students and support was given to those attending secondary school. However, governmental “admission rules” were instituted. These rigorously favoured “worker- and farmer-children”, whose status was determined according to rather diffuse criteria, and severely disadvantaged children of other classes.

After having drastically extended access to further education institutions up to the 1950s, so that about 20% of those born in one year attended secondary school (in earlier Germany about five per cent), this was later drastically reduced to less than ten per cent. Finally, there were fixed violation quotas, which correlated with the forecast economic need for university leavers.

While in the earlier German society, children from lower social classes were only marginally represented in further education institutions, the education policy of the early GDR wanted to create proportional equal opportunities. Children from different social classes were to represent the quota of their origin in their further education institution. Children from lower social classes received previously unheard of advancement opportunities and systematic support. At universities, special classes were created for these students, which led to the general certificate of higher education. The intention of recruiting more than half of the secondary school students, and thus of the future ruling

class, from families of workers and farmers, could not be realised despite sometimes drastic measures. The interest in education among these families turned out to be generally poor. On the other hand, families of the old elite and increasingly also of the new elite, with university and technical college attendance, saw their children disadvantaged despite good performances.

To improve statistics and guarantee political recruits, children of party and state officials as well those of officers in the army, police and state security service, who were as determined as workers' children, were promoted accordingly. In the last decade of the East German state only about every fourth secondary school student came from the family of a production worker, and at the end of the 1980s only slightly more than ten per cent of university students belonged to families in which both parents were workers.

For example, the best chances of having access to secondary school after tenth grade among approximately 30 candidates were had by a girl with politically correct parents, wanting to become a teacher, and a boy with politically correct parents wishing to become an officer, both with functions in the centralised youth organisation, with social commitments and proven good or very good school performance. Selection took place increasingly according to political and ideological selection principles besides performance, but less according to social affiliation.

The aim of a selection bound to the social structure of the population, if possible, became historically outdated by the change of elite. The new elite increasingly reproduced itself, while in other groups of workers, farmers and crafts-

men, who were financially hardly worse off, time consuming educational careers were often seen as not worthwhile.

In combination with political requirements, the principle of performance and guaranteeing quality with rigid selection dominated in the later years of the GDR. The education level of the population had clearly been increased – only a small percentage of students left the general education ten-grade school without a school leaving certificate, almost every leaver of this school received an education to become at least a qualified worker afterwards – but in the structurally open unity school system, education restrictions could also be felt.

Clearly, interest was focused on promoting the best, the highly talented. Education – and employment – systems were closely combined, and the education of highly qualified workers, which was higher than the forecast need, was avoided if possible.

Around the same time an expansion took place in the nearby West German state, by which approximately every third student of the comparable age-class attended further education institutions, and the representation of worker and farmer children was slightly stronger there than in the GDR.

CONCLUSION

While the school system in the GDR followed the principle of equality, its political and ideological selection principles meant it violated the proclaimed right to equal education and opportunities. The result was strict selection according to performance and a rigid planning of needs under the aspect of utilisation and usefulness, which neglected the civic right of free choice of education.

Official Policy Related to Quality and Equality in Education: A Documentary Study

Willem du Plessis

INTRODUCTION

This paper will focus predominantly on equality in education. In it, I shall attempt to give an overview of government's ideas underlying its policy regarding the value of equality in education, how it understands the concept, and how it could be introduced and realised in pre-tertiary as well as in post-secondary education.

Policy makers in South Africa need to contend with the reality that South Africa is a developing country within a global society, and therefore need to realise two important constraints.

On the one hand, they need to recognise governmental objectives within the ideological, social and economic context and address the expectations of their supporters at grassroots level that have to be satisfied. These expectations currently demand the attainment of equity for all in the shortest period of time as part of a comprehensive transformation of an unjust society into a just and democratic one.

On the other hand, policy makers have to cope with pressure from the international society within which South Africans have to perform and have to compete against powerful contenders, that challenge us to improve our country's competitiveness. This challenge is pressing government to comply with the demands of the international society. Both the domestic and the international/global factors demand an increase in quality in all sectors of society, including education. South African society, with its large diversity in demographic, social and economic compilation, requires the extinction of backlogs, equal treatment and equal opportunities.

The philosophical mood in the globalised world tends to favour achievement, which promotes the contribution to economic wealth. The global mood seems to contain a duality of demand: that of a capitalist economic nature, and that of a humanist socialist nature. The former favours the need for quality improvement, protection of quality and for quality education. At present, however, this is coupled with a growing sentiment of humanist origin, emphasising the understanding of human need and protection – protection of the less gifted, the underperformer, and the disadvantaged in society. Educational systems have to accommodate both through a sophisticated education system; therefore, quality as well as equality.

1. DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY – A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The social and political context in which our policy on education has been framed, must be considered in order to understand its meaning. I wish to distinguish between five historical stages in our policy development.

- The roots of this development have to be studied in its ideological origins. The ideological framework gave rise to political policy as we experience it today. The ideological conception took place predominantly in the period before 1990 when the African National Congress (ANC) as the leading black consciousness movement had no constitutional power. Without political power, what was left to the ANC was an ideal and dreams of a better future.
- With the legalisation of the ANC and the South African Communist Party in 1990, a

takeover of political power came within the grasp of the ANC. As a government-in-waiting the ANC planned its policy on education through its conferences, workshops and its Education Desk. The results eventually led to the publication of the ANC Education Policy, two months before the general election of 1994. This document was important and was the result of years of research and deliberation, including the comprehensive research project which was undertaken on a national basis, the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI). This document has served as the cornerstone for the formulation of policy on education and educational initiatives since that time.

- Since its election in April 1994, the ANC government published several discussion documents, white papers and green papers in developing its new structures and legislation for educational reform.
- This led to a number of laws intended to regulate the provision of education and training as a continuous lifelong process.
- We now seem to be in the fifth stage. Currently a number of laws are in place, governing education in South Africa in terms of higher education (1997), the governance of schools, national qualifications, further education and training, and norms and standards for educators. With legislation in place, the policy objectives have to be further developed in practice. This includes an ongoing process of reconsidering policy objectives and adjustments where necessary.

2. POLICY ON EQUALITY

Equality appears to be an extremely important ideal of government. It is mentioned in the opening clause of the Bill of Rights, to which the Constitution refers as “the cornerstone of democracy in South Africa”, as one of its three democratic values. The other two are human dignity and freedom, which are also linked to equality.

We have to distinguish between equality as a value, and equality as a principle. As a value it represents a predominantly affective awareness of preference of something which is regarded to be of exceptional and precious value (for that particular person or group). As a value it has an important influence on preferences regarding norms, and as such it determines decision mak-

ing. As a principle it figures as the primary source (as basis for reasoning) for further action, such as the formulation of policy.

Regarding education, equality as a value reverts directly to the vision set out in the Freedom Charter “to open the doors of learning and culture to all” (cf. ANC, 1994:2). This would allow everybody a fair chance for learning.

What does government intend to do about equality in education? Government’s policy initiatives must be viewed against the backdrop of the political and social events of the past. The desire for equality is basically a political initiative (to satisfy a political objective). Apartheid (segregation) as practiced before, was blamed for dividing the population into watertight compartments. Some refer to “two nations in the country”: the advantaged and the disadvantaged, those who have and those who do not have. The previous policy of apartheid, as imbedded in laws of segregation, was seen as degrading to the larger section of the population. Human dignity had to be restored among the disadvantaged. This has to be done on a national level in all sectors of society. Education is seen as a powerful instrument to produce the equal society where everybody has equal human dignity and equal share of the wealth of the country.

The broad-based support for the ANC as the political tool to achieve these ideals includes the expectations that education should play a role in the restoration of human dignity. In “building a better society”, Mosibudi Mangena (2000:22) regards the education system as suitable “to eradicate a sense of inferiority and alienation that still afflicts the black majority as a result of living in a racist and dehumanising society for centuries”. In this sense, equality is applied as principle in the formulation of policy and of action.

It is a phenomenon characteristic of the civilised world that – true to the ideals of humanist reasoning – the provision of education in any country should be guided by equality as a value. In South Africa the government has made this value of equality a principle of policy development, one of its most basic principles.

How does government intend to achieve the ideal? Three different though related actions are evident.

2.1 Equitable distribution of resources

The NEPI report stated that educational support services must be accessible to all and should be “provided to all” (NECC, 1993:234). It is further clear from NEPI that these educational services should be provided on an equitable basis, with a bias toward those who were disadvantaged under the previous political system. Policy has subsequently been based on this recommendation.

2.2 Juridical protection of the disadvantaged

The South African Bill of Rights (RSA, 1996b) intends to safeguard the principle of equality by stipulating in clause 9 that everyone is equal before the law and has the right to protection. Legislative and other measures were designed to protect or advance persons or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination.

“No person [read: teacher, principal, school or school governing body – author] may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more listed grounds in terms of subsection (3).”

These listed terms are: race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

This is a complicated aspect. The educational importance of the issue has to be understood in the total national social context. Education is never an isolated activity; it is always an important part of the complete social reality. It is therefore being subjected to comprehensive policy making in terms of society as a whole.

Equality in education refers to:

- Equal treatment of different genders. Boys and girls should be allowed to take the same school subjects. No one should be barred from any specific field of study, e.g. engineering, food and clothing or business.
- The equal treatment of the physically challenged. These students should have opportunities equal to all those students who have no physical handicaps. Physical amenities should therefore be adjusted to suit the challenged.
- The mentally handicapped should be equally protected from the so-called injustices of the past.
- The phasing-out of specialised classes for the mentally handicapped, and of the industrial

schools and reformatories which have over the previous century served the education of law transgressors.

- Equal treatment of religious groups and their religious education.

This policy is judged by some critics to be mainly inspired by government’s “socialist” ideals, instead of educational considerations. It has also been accused of neglecting cultural, spiritual and religious values. However, government deserves credit for bringing the interests of specific categories of learners to the attention of the public, better than ever before in this country. Similarly, the discrimination against girls is apparently better addressed than ever before.

2.3 Eradication of discrimination on the grounds of race

The main focus of the policy of equality is given to persons from different ethnic origin (race). The other aspects of dealing with equality mentioned above seem currently to be dwarfed by the insistence on equal quality education for all, irrespective of racial origin.

Racism has been targeted by government as an important remnant of the previous apartheid dispensation. It is still causing friction in social and economic life. The eradication of racism is a priority of government’s political programme. Education is regarded as an important means of destroying racism.

The perception has been that, under the apartheid system, all good quality education was the sole property of schools for whites, in white residential areas, beyond the reach of non-white students. The abolition of all racist laws and the opening up of residential areas, brought the perceived “good white schools” within reach of disadvantaged non-whites. This move has already created a sizeable black middle-class which could also be termed an advantaged group on account of economic prosperity. The large majority of the population is, however, still as disadvantaged as before. Special measures have to be put in place to help them toward educational mobility.

Equality in education cannot be achieved overnight. Central policy making will have to lay the foundation for transformation to enable equal education for all. The South African Schools’ Act (RSA, 1996) upholds the principle of equality by protecting all children from

undignified treatment, as well as against discrimination in public schools on the grounds of culture, language, religion or financial grounds.

The White Paper on Education and Training, 1995 spells out 23 values and principles which would and are covering education for all, irrespective of racial origin, in South Africa. The principle of equity is underscored by several of these principles and values. For example:

- No. 2 – The basic right of all people to receive basic education.
- No. 6 – Equal access to basic education for all.
- No. 7 – The redress of educational inequalities.
- No. 8 – “The state’s resources must be deployed according to the principle of equity, so that they are used to provide essentially the same quality for learning opportunities to all citizens.”
- No. 13 – Pursuit of the “realisation of democracy, liberty, equality, justice and peace”.
- No. 15 – Education in the arts “must become increasingly available to all communities on an equitable basis”.

The danger is that policy makers, in their eagerness to redress special injustices of the past, could go overboard in addressing such injustices by changing longstanding educational values and concepts.

Commonly accepted and acclaimed definitions from the past are now, in the transformation process, being questioned on account of their perceived possible ideological origin.

The endeavour for social equalisation is also prevalent in the introduction to the White Paper on Education and Training (1995:21, value and principle No. 9) which spells out the reasons why education and training should be dealt with similarly. In the fourth point of motivation for such an integrated approach, it is stated:

“An integrated approach implies a view of learning which rejects a rigid division between ‘academic’ and ‘applied’, ‘theory’ and ‘practice’, ‘knowledge’ and ‘skills’, ‘head’ and ‘hand’. Such divisions have characterised the organisation of curricula and the distribution of educational opportunity in many countries of the world, including South Africa. They have grown out of, and helped to produce, very old occupational and class distinctions. In South Africa such distinctions in curriculum and career

choice have also been closely associated in the past with the ethnic structure of economic opportunity and power.”

3. EQUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The same ideals regarding equality as the objective hold for the policy on the transformation of higher education. It also illuminates the principle of equality.

The Minister of Education’s vision for higher education is:

“a transformed, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist system of higher education that will promote equity of access and fair chances of success to all who are seeking to realise their potential through higher education, while eradicating all forms of unfair discrimination and advancing redress of past inequalities...” (RSA, 1997 par. 1.14; pp. 10-11).

In the same White Paper No. 3, the Ministry elaborates on the application of the principle of equity. It implies:

“on the one hand, a critical identification of existing inequalities which are the product of policies, structures and practices based on racial, gender, disability and other forms of discrimination or disadvantage, and on the other a programme of transformation with a view to redress. Such transformation involves not only abolishing all existing forms of unjust differentiation, but also measures of empowerment, including financial support to bring about equal opportunity for individuals and institutions.”

A single (centralised) coordinated system of higher education will eventually remove inequalities in institutions. Par. 2.21 foresees:

“... as the teaching, research and management profiles become more representative of our people, as quality promotion and quality assurance processes take hold, as the institutional landscape changes, as centres of excellence are recognised and promoted across the system, the distinction between historically advantaged and historically disadvantaged will become less and less relevant.”

Equity means that student numbers at institutions of higher learning should reflect the broad population. The participation rate in all post-secondary programmes in 1993 was 70% for white students and 12% for black students

(NCHE Report, 1966:64). This situation should be reversed, not only with regard to total numbers, but also on a programme basis, and by level of qualification (White Paper 3, 1997, par. 2.22). For this purpose, access to universities and other institutions of higher learning should be facilitated.

The National Qualifications Framework should shorten the route to advanced and scarce qualifications, such as medicine, engineering and accounting. Previous learning for the achievement of higher qualifications should be recognised (RSA, 1995). This could be a positive approach, but needs to be applied wisely. Care should be taken that the adjustment of “difficult” engineering courses in favour of a desired throughput does not jeopardise the maintenance of standards of excellence at universities. The global economy has no respect for mediocre standards.

The Ministry has stated its commitment to achieving equity through:

“ensuring that the composition of the student body progressively reflects the demographic realities in the broader society. A major focus of any expansion and equity strategy must be on increasing the participation and success rates of black students in general, and of African, Coloured and female students in particular, especially in programmes and levels in which they are underrepresented” (Department of Education 1997, par.2.24).

The ANC Educational Policy (1994:34) foresees that “everything possible must be done to seek enhanced school quality whilst minimising its impact upon costs”. It is stated that:

“Good quality basic schooling must be afforded to all. The first priority in educational reconstruction will be improving the quality of schooling in disadvantaged townships, farms, villages, informal settlements and rural areas” (ANC, 1994:40).

The government seems to be putting more emphasis on the ideal of equity than equality, and in the process neglecting quality. It should be cautious not to destroy quality where it exists. Centres of quality have to be nurtured for the sake of competitiveness in the international arena. One should not slow down one’s best athlete in order to enable the other athletes to reach par before the fittest gets further training. Such a neglected athlete might retain his

position as best runner locally, but in the Olympics he will find the competition from international champions too strenuous. Rather help the champion to win the gold medal, while simultaneously developing the other athletes in the club to each reach their attainable levels.

4. SYNTHESIS

Approval must be given to the value of *equality of opportunity* in education, and the related equal distribution of resources. In a humanist sense, both domestically and internationally, equality of opportunity is completely acceptable and needs to be supported. This will benefit the individual as well as the people at large, to the advantage of national political security and social stability.

Equal opportunities of education could hold several advantages. It testifies to a belief in the power of education, that school achievement leads to:

- success in the world of work
- access to tertiary institutions of education
- economic privilege and progress
- advance in the social hierarchy (cf. Heidt, p. 6)

Government seemingly wishes to achieve both, in a synthesis of “equal quality”. There are several reasons why this ideal seems to be unattainable.

The first is the economic reality that the state does not have the financial means to bring about the necessary changes to the public education sector (cf RSA, 1995; Collings, 2000:2). An investigation by Collings comes to the conclusion that education should be seen as “an investment by taxpayers in a process vital to economic growth, job creation and social peace”. Government’s “prime education aim has been to strive for what it calls ‘equity and redress’, not efficiency in serving the economy”.

The second reason is the threat of political and ideological domination of educational reform; the ideological “sink-hole” according to Collings. South Africa has a long history, a tradition, of counterproductive ideological intervention in education.

What is alarming, are the indications that individual and educational interests could once again be overshadowed by politically inspired ideological motives. The endeavour for equality in education could be made subject to the ideals

of equality in the labour market, in society and in politics. Demands by these three sectors of societal life could become prescriptive to education.

In fact, equality of education is impossible to achieve in an unequal society.

Indicative of the South African context is the evidence of a tension among supporters of the ideal of equality. Some are in favour of achievement of equality by means of a revolutionary process. Others are in favour of an evolutionary natural process of developing a society without discrimination. The attitude of enforcing an egalitarian society is threatening existing areas of quality in the country, to the detriment of its people. It results in the outflow of expertise and a loss of quality, both intellectual quality and economic quality. It ignores the “ABC of development policy, viz. Attract Brain and Capital” (Rinsche, 2000:9).

Politicians moreover tend to design policy from a particular ideological mind frame. Thinking in this context is restricted – “boxed in” – within the boundaries of ideological pre-suppositions. The result is: standards are being set for:

- adjustments (redress/transformation) to the provision of education
- central planning of policy and standards of provision
- regulation of education through numerical quotas for intake in educational institutions, as well as for the throughput and output
- in a more extreme form, eventual punishment of excellence where it exists outside the boundaries of the ideological framework.

There is a real danger in the regulation of the provision of education on a quantitative basis. The application of numerical quotas and formulas would attempt to regulate not only intake numbers but also the output of the education system.

Contrary to the intention of policy makers, this could have a severe negative influence on economic prosperity. The economic forces of the free market do not allow themselves to be politically manipulated. The number of engineers, etc., required by the economy depends on the economic conjuncture, and the economic

conjuncture cannot be forecast four years or more in advance. Furthermore, the individual’s right of choice regarding his/her future career is also threatened.

Equality of education for all would be politically correct, but impossible to achieve in our lifetime. As long as inequality exists in society – related also to social infrastructure, such services, e.g. transport, security – it will be futile to expect the realisation of equality in education. Equality in education as well as quality education for all in the sense of the developed countries, seems to be beyond the reach of our governmental means. School management boards depend on the intellectual quality of their members and that of the communities that they serve. Disadvantaged communities need to be developed economically, socially and morally. This will contribute to build capacity, which will allow them effectively to take ownership of their schools in their communities and to care for these schools.

CONCLUSION

Characteristic of the South African policy on equality is the insistence on *total equality* rather than an insistence on *equal opportunities* (as seen in the international community), or on *equal in value*, as was promised under the old apartheid system’s policy of separate development.

Many South Africans believed in the latter, but after years it proved to have been an illusion to create by centralist legislation a dispensation of education which was separate, equal and just to all.

The second deserve to be supported as an ideal which is pursued in most progressive countries and delivers results at least to the effect that movement is made in the desired direction. It promotes positive values such as human dignity and respect for all. It fosters a society in which human dignity is respected and upheld as a natural social value. It uplifts communities and prepares South Africa to contribute to a better future. The first may in time come prove itself to be as illusive an ideal as the third and even as counterproductive in terms of national and individual empowerment.

REFERENCES

- AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (ANC). 1994. *A Policy framework for education and training*. Discussion Document. Braamfontein: Education Department, African National Congress.
- COLLINGS, J. 2000. Ministers must try harder. *Education Africa*. A special report by the *Financial Mail*, 28 January, pp. 2-3.
- DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. 1996. Green Paper on higher education transformation. Pretoria.
- DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. 1997. Education White Paper 3. A programme for the transformation of higher education. *Government Gazette* Vol. 386 No. 18207. Pretoria: Department of Education.
- HEIDT, H. 1988. Zur Paradoxie der bildungswissenschaftlichen Forderung nach Chancengleichheit. *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* 34(1), pp 1-17.
- HIGHER EDUCATION ACT 101 OF 1997.
- MANGENA, N. 2000. Rainbow fading in light of reality. *Financial Mail*, 8 September, p. 22.
- NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION (NCHE). 1996. *Report. A framework for transformation*.
- NECC. 1993. *National Education Policy Investigation. The Framework Report*. Cape Town: Oxford Press.
- POTGIETER, J.M., VISSER, P.J., VAN DER BANK, A.J., MOTHATA, M.S. & SQUELCH, J.M. 1997. *Understanding the SA Schools Act*. Pretoria: Department of Education.
- RSA. 1995. *Government Gazette* Vol. 357 No. 16312. White Paper on Education and Training.
- RSA. MINISTRY OF EDUCATION. 1994. Education and training in a democratic South Africa. First steps to develop a new system. Pretoria and Cape Town.
- RSA. 1995. *Government Gazette* Vol. 360 No. 16439. National Qualification Framework Bill.
- RSA. 1995. NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY BILL [B83B - 95].
- RSA. 1996. *Government Gazette* Vol. 377 No. 1867. Act No. 84 of 1996: South African Schools Act, 1996.
- RSA. 1996b. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996.
- RSA. 1997. *Government Gazette* Vol. 390 No. 1655. Act No. 101 of 1997: Higher Education Act, 1997.
- RSA. 1997b. *Government Gazette* Vol. 382 No. 17944. Draft White Paper on Higher Education.
- RSA. 1998. Further Education and Training Bill.
- RSA. 2000. Government Notice No. 82. National Education Policy Act (27/1996): Norms and Standards for Educators. *Government Gazette* Vol. 415 No. 20844. 4 February.
- RINSCHKE, G. 2000. Principles for designing the constitution and policies of the European Union. Lecture, Stellenbosch, 18 September.

Educational Research as Democratic Praxis

Lesley le Grange

ABSTRACT

Dominant approaches to educational research rarely examine the philosophical underpinnings, specifically epistemological and ontological assumptions, in relation to the research process. Usher (1996:9) argues that the failure to examine these assumptions leads to research being understood as a “technology” – as simply a set of methods, skills and procedures applied to a given research problem. I argue that when research is understood in Usher’s terms as a “technology” it serves only the status quo and does not enable us to interact and transform society.

In this paper I critically examine different research approaches in terms of their potential to contribute to transformation of societies. I argue that instead of educational research merely contributing to social change, it can be a process of change itself. Additionally, I raise challenges for educational research in South Africa and elsewhere, in the context of processes of globalisation and internationalisation currently prevalent.

INTRODUCTION

South Africa is faced with several new challenges since becoming a constitutional democracy in 1994. Pendlebury (1998:333) argues that South Africa’s most urgent and difficult challenge is to transform all spheres of public life so as to establish enabling conditions for a thriving democracy. Pendlebury (1998:334) points out that education, which was a primary site of contestation under apartheid, now is a primary site of transformation. She argues that transformation is not only paramount for edu-

cation’s own sake but also because education is recognised as crucial for transforming other spheres of social life. Enshrined in the South African constitution are important values for the transformation of education, namely democracy, liberty, equality, justice and peace. A question that requires answering in this regard, is how these values can be enabled in the various sites and discourses of education?

My concern in this paper is to raise some issues regarding the relationship(s) between educational research and democracy. I deem this to be important for two reasons. Firstly, as mentioned earlier, the promotion of democratic values is particularly important at this point in South Africa’s history. Secondly, I believe that greater possibilities exist for doing research that is openly committed to establishing a more democratic social order. I say this because we are in a post-positivist period in the human sciences, which Lather (1986, 1991, and 1992) argues is marked by much methodological and epistemological ferment.

Since the mid-1980s in particular, we have seen an explosion of ideas and practices in a quest to understand social reality. Ethnography, phenomenology, hermeneutics, interpretive, feminist, critical, narrative inquiry are some of the terms that have been used as frames of reference for examining social reality.

In addition, in the 1990s there has been a proliferation of “post” frameworks such as post-modernism, post-critical, post-paradigmatic, and so on (Lather cited in Goodman, 1992:118). In this paper I specifically wish to explore possibilities for enabling democratic “ideals” through educational research. Before

doing so I turn now to a discussion on democracy.

1. WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

Democracy is a polysemous term. It is a complex area of human understanding that cannot be reduced to a simple, fixed, unambiguous definition. As Gough (2000a:2) writes, “we can no more provide a precise three-line definition of [democracy] than of everyday words like ‘love’ or ‘justice’ – these are terms that will always be the subject of exploration, speculation and debate”. Of course, it may be argued that there is also a danger that the term democracy could be rendered meaningless if it becomes so fuzzy to convey anything useful.

Waghid (2000:3) argues that there are two broad conceptions of democracy: democracy as a representative system of political decision making and democracy as a sphere for social and political life in which people may enjoy equal opportunities and are engaged in self-development, self-fulfilment and self-determination. For him, representative democracy means that collective decisions concerning the community as a whole are made by elected members of the community. On the other hand, democracy as a sphere of social and political life is constituted by values such as liberty, equality, and so on. Also, the latter kind of democracy is a participatory form of democracy whereby people directly participate in economic, political and social life.

My concern in this paper is not with democracy as a political system, but rather with how democratic values can be (re)constructed within social practices such as educational research. I accept that educational research, like all other social practices, occurs within particular spatio-temporal settings that are partly constitutive of the actions and interactions that take place within them. However, agency of the subject should not be left unrecognised as I believe that human beings are able to make choices within social settings that could contribute to transforming the settings themselves. The point I wish to make here is that although recent political change in South Africa and a post-positivist era in the human sciences do provide greater opportunities for enabling democratic values through educational research, human agency is crucial to changing the status quo.

The democratic values I refer to above are

not fixed but constantly reconstructed through social processes of engagement. I find Waghid’s (2000:5-6) idea of democracy as reflexive discourse useful in this regard, where democracy liberates thought and practices to that which offers more choice, freedom and possibilities for emancipatory politics. With respect to educational research, however, not all approaches provide enabling frameworks for achieving in Waghid’s (2000:5-6) terms “more choice, freedom and possibilities for emancipatory politics”. Therefore I turn now to a discussion on knowledge interests and educational research with the view of briefly exploring some of the underlying assumptions of dominant approaches to educational research.

2. EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE INTERESTS

Habermas (1972) has argued that different knowledge/research traditions are linked with particular social interests. He points out that positivistic research employs technical/instrumental reasoning where the ends are predefined and are attained by following known rules and predefined means (e.g. the scientific method). Habermas described this kind of knowledge as being informed by a technical interest. On the other hand, interpretive or hermeneutical sciences employ practical modes of reasoning (Habermas, 1972). By this it is meant that appropriate decisions are made in the light of the circumstances of the situation and not by pre-defined means and ends. Positivistic research is associated with prediction and control and interpretive research with enlightenment, understanding and communication (Usher, 1996:22). However, neither of these research traditions has an interest in research that changes the world in the direction of freedom, justice and democracy. Habermas (1972) therefore has isolated a third type of “knowledge-constitutive interest” which he links with critical science, that is, an emancipatory interest. This knowledge interest involves the unmasking of ideologies that maintain the status quo by denying individuals and groups access to knowledge or awareness about the material conditions that oppress or restrict them (Usher, 1996:22). Importantly, critical science additionally, is concerned with the actions that can be taken to change oppressive conditions.

Critical researchers argue against the limited

notions of positivist and interpretive approaches. This does not necessarily mean that they reject absolutely research conducted within these frameworks. However, in terms of assumptions, critical approaches argue that positivist and interpretive approaches are epistemologically flawed and politically conservative. Critical research challenges the objectivist epistemology (knowledge is impersonal and objective) and realist ontology (reality exists independently of our knowledge of it) of positivist science. Although critical research shares with interpretive research the view that knowledge (of reality) is socially constructed, it criticises the latter approach for its emphasis on primarily understanding social reality in lieu of contributing to transforming it. It is important to note that critical approaches to research accept as “axiomatic” that our social world is characterised by injustice, exploitation as well as political and economic domination.

As Lather, (1991) so cogently puts it, critical research is about, “what it means to do research in an unjust world”. For the critical researcher the world is unjust by design, i.e., that it is the result of human will and intention. Also, that the social world is oppressive for many groups, particularly along the lines of gender, “race”, class, ethnicity, sexual preference, age and disability, and so on. Furthermore, that our social world is characterised by inequitable distribution of resources worldwide. Unlike positivist research which accepts the status quo or interpretive research which seeks to understand how individuals or communities experience social reality, central to critical research is the ideal of changing our world to one that is more just and equitable. The research process thus becomes a process of change itself. The distinctive features of critical research are: that it is openly ideological (it is not value neutral), socially critical, overtly political, emancipatory in orientation (aims to liberate the participants involved in the research). The question now is how do we conduct research that embodies democratic values? It is with this in mind that I turn now to a discussion on research as praxis.

3. RESEARCH AS PRACTICE

Praxis is different to the everyday usage of the term “practice”. To gain an understanding of the term praxis it is useful to look at how Aristotle distinguishes between praxis and

poiesis. Carr (1995) neatly captures this distinction:

“*Poiesis* is a kind of making or instrumental action. It has an end in view or an object in mind prior to any action. It is activity that brings about specific products, and it requires a kind of technical know-how or expertise (*technè*). Praxis is also directed at a specific end but its aim is not to produce an object but to realise some morally worthwhile good.”

In other words, with praxis, the end in view can only be realised through action and can only exist in the action itself. Also Schwandt (1997:124) points out that the ends of praxis are not fixed but are constantly revised as the goods internal to an activity are pursued. In this context praxis would have in mind democratic values such as equality and liberty, plurality and difference, dialogism and solidarity, and power (see Waghid 2000 for an explication). Waghid (2000:10) also points out that praxis emphasises the importance of collaborative participation, equality and individual liberty in forms of social relations. These values are not fixed but are reconstructed and re-imagined within different contexts so that democracy is reflexive. I turn now to a discussion on case study research in environmental education that I was involved in, and use it as a basis for reflecting on what it may mean to do research that embodies democratic “ideals”.

4. CASE STUDY

The case study I describe was one of six professional development case studies forming part of Activity Two of the South Africa/Australia Institutional Links project entitled *Educating for Socio-Ecological Change: Capacity-building in Environmental Education*. The project was funded by the Australian Agency for International Development (AUSAID) and administered by IDP Education Australia. The structure of the project as a whole was quite complex, involving a total of eight tertiary institutions in two countries – South Africa and Australia. The project was structured into four “activities”: Activity One was concerned with curriculum development; Activity Two was concerned with professional development; Activity Three was concerned with evaluating existing environmental education curricula in South Africa and Australia; and Activity Four

was concerned with the development of a methodology text to support post-graduate research in higher educational settings. The overall focus of the project was the professional development of new and existing staff at South African higher education institutions. Specifically, Activity Two sought to enhance research and professional capacity by working collaboratively with colleagues in a process of workplace-based participatory research, aimed at the development of authentic case studies of changing environmental education practice (Lotz & Robottom, 1998:20). Collaboration among participants started before the funding was received and before the project formally commenced. For a period of approximately one-year we developed the project proposal jointly. I now provide a brief description of Activity Two.

4.1 Activity Two

In Activity Two, participants examined developing case studies of changing practice in environmental education. The developing case studies were processes of professional development in two distinct ways: firstly as a moment in professional self-development, as participants reflected on the meaning of their own theories and practices. Secondly, that the case studies may be useful for the professional development of other teacher educators and for use in teacher education programmes. The starting point for Activity Two was for participants to identify environmental and environmental education issues related to their own professional practices. The first step in the process was for each participant to take photographs representing issues closely related to their work and workplaces. At a next workshop session, each of the participants clarified the focus of their case studies through a process of critical engagement with other activity participants. The other participants provided feedback on the photographs, enabling participants to identify the “gaps” or shortcomings in the pictorial records of their individual cases. The photographs served as the basis for initial individual and collaborative reflection on our practices. As participants we returned to our places of work so that we could take additional photographs intended to fill the “gaps” that were identified at the first meeting. At a next meeting we individually wrote captions for the photographs and shared them with other Activity Two participants for

critical discussion. Following this, each participant began to develop individual case study commentaries from the photographs in preparation for presentation at a next meeting. Draft case study commentaries and captioned photographs were presented at a next meeting. These were circulated among at least two other participants who provided critical feedback orally and in the form of annotations on the text. Feedback was also provided in a plenary session (for more details on Activity Two case studies, see Lotz & Robottom, 1998; Jenkin et al, 2000; Le Grange, 2000).

5. CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

In Activity two of the Australian/South African institutional links programme the value, *liberty* was evident in that participants chose to explore issues that were of interest and concern to them. Also, the issues related closely to their particular workplaces. Values of *equality* and *participation* were closely related in this instance, since all participants were involved directly and as equitably as possible in all dimensions of the professional development process. The dimensions included identifying the issues to be addressed, collection and analysis of data, development and dissemination of materials and reports. As noted earlier, the process of professional development was collaborative. Collaboration in this case did not mean that the individual disappeared, but rather that space was provided for individual reflection on their professional work and development. However, peer review and positive critique of each other’s work supported individual reflection by participants. As a consequence the tension between being collaborative and contextual was overcome. The collaborative nature of the activity fostered dialogue between participants which was key in the development of the project. Meaningful dialogue, however, depended on relationships of trust, which were enhanced during the professional development process. We found that when relationships of trust were well established, critical review from and dialogue between peers was more open, honest and easily accepted. The fact that the professional development needs were grounded in real environmental issues located in different contexts enabled us to respect the diversity of local contexts including the people working within them.

To enable these democratic processes within a professional development project meant that at times some individuals had to give the project direction. At the beginning stages those researchers who had more experience made significant inputs, for example, on professional case study research in environmental education. As the process unfolded, participation became more equitable. The point I wish to make here is that conditions for equitable participation do not necessarily exist before one commences such research processes but are rather enabled through praxiological engagement.

Reflecting on the project more broadly provides useful insights on possibilities for enabling democratic processes in local contexts in view of processes of globalisation and internationalisation currently prevalent. By globalisation I mean the processes of cultural unification, which are occurring across the planet, particularly in terms of culture and media. It also refers to unification, which is centred on economic activity leading to larger and larger political groupings.

According to Gough (2000b: 335) internationalisation involves the promotion of global peace, social justice and well being through intergovernmental cooperation and transnational social movements, agencies and communities. It is important to note that the broader Australia/South Africa institutional links project was conceived in the context of improved relations between Australia and South Africa following the dismantling of legal apartheid. The Australian government made funds available through AUSAID to support the development of South Africa's democracy. Both Australian and South African participants were aware of the danger of a new form of colonisation rearing its head in a project of this kind, involving international donor funders (helpers) and "developing countries" (the helped). An Australian academic who worked with us on the project neatly captures this concern. He writes:

"Clearly, our [Australian] participation in the project is intended to be catalytic in some way – we are here to 'help' – and I am very uncomfortable with being positioned as a 'helper'. I try to heed the advice of Lila Watson, an Australian Aboriginal educator and activist, who is reported as saying, 'If you've come to help me you're

wasting your time. But if you've come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let's work together'" (Gough, 1998).

Our interest was to ensure that we work in such a way that we respect what each individual brought to the process including their ways of knowing.

We found inspiration in the work of Turnbull (1997) for exploring possibilities of doing collaborative professional work in local spaces without disparate knowledges being absorbed into an imperialist archive. Turnbull (1993, 1997) argues that all knowledge traditions are spatial in that they link people, places (sites) and skills. This, according to Turnbull, enables us to conceive of all knowledge systems as sets of local practices so that it becomes possible to decentre them and compare them equitably instead of local knowledges being absorbed into an imperial archive. He points out that achievements such as Indonesian rice farming, the building of Gothic cathedrals, Polynesian navigation and modern cartography represent diverse combinations of social and technical processes rather than being the "results of any internal epistemological features to which 'universal' validity can be ascribed" (Gough 1999:42).

Turnbull argues that disparate knowledge traditions should not only be viewed in terms of representativity but also in terms of performativity so that knowledge can be "reframed, decentred and the social organisation of trust negotiated".

With this understanding it may be possible for different knowledge traditions to co-exist within transnational spaces rather than one knowledge system displacing the other. In the project, *Educating for Socio-Ecological Change*, we attempted to conceive of our work in such a way so as to enable different knowledge traditions to co-exist and be performed together. The extent to which we were successful may, however, require further investigation. Suffice it to say, at this point possibilities do exist for workers from donor countries and recipient countries to work together without their traditions or interests being displaced and absorbed into an imperialist archive.

CONCLUSION

Positivist approaches have limited possibilities

for transforming social life. Fixed settings and predetermined goals, often done by outside experts, do little to change social conditions. Instead of viewing research as a recipe for democratic change it may be more useful to conceive of it as a process that could embody democratic values. More importantly, that it is a process in which democratic values can be re(constructed) and re(imagined). Research as praxis in which the internal goods (democratic values) of the research activity are constantly revised is a meaningful concept in this respect, and further exploration of its usefulness in various research processes could be beneficial to all

of us involved in processes of knowledge production.

In this paper I have critically reflected on possibilities for enabling democratic values by focusing on case study research done in environmental education. I raise a challenge that needs to be taken up seriously if we are going to resist dangers of new forms of colonisation manifesting in relation to processes of globalisation and internationalisation that are currently prevalent. I have argued that we may avoid local knowledges from being absorbed into an imperialist archive by using Turnbull's notions of spatiality and performativity.

REFERENCES

- CARR W. 1995. *For education: Towards a critical educational inquiry*. Oxford: Open University.
- GOODMAN, J. 1992. Theoretical and practical considerations for school-based research in a post-positivist era. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 5(2):117-133.
- GOUGH, N. 1998. Decolonising sustainability: subverting and appropriating mythologies of social change. *Southern African Journal of Environmental Education* 18: 3-13.
- GOUGH, N. 1999. Troubling "freedom": Silences in post-apartheid environmental education. *Southern African Journal of Environmental Education* 19: 40-49.
- GOUGH N. 2000a. Studying research methodologies and methods in education. In Le Grange L (coordinator), *Leadership in Education Study Guide for Unit 2*. Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch.
- GOUGH N. 2000b. Locating curriculum studies in the global village. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 32(2): 329-342.
- HABERMAS J. 1972. *Knowledge and Human Interests*. London: Heinemann.
- JENKIN, N ET AL. 2000. *Educating for socio-ecological change: Case studies of changing practice in South African tertiary institutions*. Cape Town: Ausaid.
- LATHER, P. 1986. Research as praxis. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(3): 257-277.
- LATHER P. 1991. *Feminist Research in Education: Within/Against*. Geelong, Deakin University Press.
- LATHER P. 1992. Critical frames in educational research: Feminist and post-structural perspectives. *Theory into Practice*, 31(2):87-99.
- LE GRANGE, L. 2000. A case study of changing pedagogical practices at a higher education institution. *South African Journal of Higher Education* 14(1): 152-159.
- PENDLEBURY, S. 1998. Transforming Teacher Education in South Africa: a space-time perspective. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 28(3), 333-349.
- LOTZ, H & ROBOTTOM, I. 1998. Environment as text: Insights into some implications for professional development in environmental education. *Southern African Journal of environmental Education* 17: 19-28.
- SCHWANDT, T. 1997. *Qualitative inquiry: A dictionary of terms*. London: Sage Publications.
- TURNBULL, D. 1993. Local knowledge and comparative scientific traditions. *Knowledge and Policy* 6(3/4): 29-54.
- TURNBULL, D. 1997. Reframing science and other local knowledge traditions. *Futures* 29(6): 551-562.
- USHER, R. 1996. A critique of the neglected epistemological assumptions of educational research. In Scott D & Usher R (eds.), *Understanding educational research*, London: Routledge.
- WAGHID, Y. 2000. Reflexivity, democracy and praxis: reflecting on a critical moment in classroom pedagogy. *Perspectives in Education*, 19(1), in press.

Quality Indicators for South African Schools Against the Background of International Practices

Heinie Brand

“There are good people and bad people; in Athens you know this since Plato ... Aristoteles. Like you always know about good governments and bad governments, good lives and bad lives. And the most important topic of the great dialogues and plays and essays ... is exactly the question of difference: what makes the difference between good and bad, and how can I see the difference?” – Van Bruggen (1999:1)

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND WITH REFERENCE TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION

As part of a process of democratisation in South Africa, a major transformation has marked many spheres of governmental, societal, business and other institutions. South African citizens have almost accepted transformation as part of daily life. Since 1994 this post-apartheid process has been an ongoing reality and has also included radical educational change. The improvement in quality of education must be regarded as an integral part of educational transformation.

Despite the initiation of educational transformation since 1994, it was only in July 1999 that the national Ministry for Education formulated a definite concern about the quality of education. The National Minister of Education declared that education in South Africa was in a crisis and that many schools were dysfunctional. When the State President enquired whether the educational system was preparing our children for the 21st century, the Minister of Education conceded that it was not.

The Tirisano project was initiated as a matter of urgency and had to be realised in practical

strategies that became the responsibility of the provinces. Objectives were formulated after a process of consultation and were directed towards making quality education the norm for all public schools. The clear goal was to transform all schools into learning institutions providing discernible improvements in the quality and consistency of their results. The challenge for schools was clearly to make changes that allow them to deliver high quality curriculum and instruction so that all children reach challenging academic standards and a fair opportunity in the “knowledge economy”. All role-players were motivated by a commitment to achieve equity, access, redress and quality assurance for all children.

1. QUALITY AS A LEGITIMATE AND WORTHY GOAL

In order to focus on quality as a worthy goal, the following remarks need to be emphasised:

- Quality education is a legitimate claim for stakeholders such as communities, parents, teachers and children. The absence of clear evidence of quality has moved parents to put pressure on schools, and has even become a motivation for finding alternative options.
- The change towards quality education cannot merely be seen as a primary responsibility of the state, but rests clearly on the shoulders of educational managers and, alas, needs to be addressed within the framework and functioning of individual schools.
- The cry for benchmarking the South African educational system and school practices links with the need to be internationally comparable. The inviting global opportunities have

highlighted the urgency for quality improvement in order for students to present themselves as worthy applicants in the workforce.

- According to Steyn (2000:8), quality education is also a primary function of any sound democratic government. The country and nation as a whole could only benefit when quality is a reality and not an undefined perception.

2. VALUES UNDERLYING QUALITY

The immediate concepts that come to mind are values such as discipline, excellence, punctuality and self-control. De Klerk (2000:18) uses Harvey's approach to quality and refers to the following:

- The *exceptional approach* which emphasises the maintenance of academic standards. It refers to a standard of learning that is to be desired by the mass, and advocates high-level skills.
- The *fitness-for-purpose* approach relates to particular specifications that meet the demands of expectations.
- The *perfection or consistency approach* refers to the constant evidence of competency and perfection in ensuring work of standard.
- The *transformative approach* emphasises quality as a process of change and should empower the learner in order to make a meaningful contribution to the process of transformation.
- The *value-for-money approach* highlights accountability of the role-players involved and refers to the best acceptable deal for the client.

The above values and approaches may differ in their application in the South African situation. The particular application is directly dependent on the set of variables applicable at a specific learning site. Any practitioner of education who wishes to become engaged in the search for excellence and quality should take clear cognisance of these approaches and their application before identifying the best set of indicators.

3. QUALITY, STANDARDS AND AUDITING

Quality and standards are difficult to define in as much as the meanings sometimes overlap but are also different. A standard is usually a measurable outcome indicator. It refers to a specific level of quality, skill, ability or achievement by which someone or something is

judged and is considered to be necessary or acceptable.

Quality assurance refers to the monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the various levels of a system in achieving the specific goals at each level and the overall objectives of the system. It also includes the management of previously defined quality that involves activities that are used to provide maximum confidence that acceptable levels of quality are achieved in all aspects of setting, delivery and review of standards in the system.

The quality assurance field in education has developed as a response to the demands for accountability from parents, taxpayers and politicians:

“Die Nederlandse inspektoraat formuleer twee kernfunksies , nl. : ... door middel van het toezicht waarborgt de overheid voor de burgers dat er in scholen onderwijs van voldoende kwaliteit wordt geleverd” and “door middel van het toezicht stimuleert de overheid scholen tot ontwikkeling van de eigen kwaliteitszorg en daarmee van de kwaliteit van het onderwijs” (Inspectie van Onderwijs, 1999:5).

With inspection and auditing being the framework of the past decades, quality assurance has come to be exemplified by the development of performance indicators and “school improvement” planning. There are many levels of accountability and the development of various measures will depend to a large extent on the political and economic frame within which such measures are enacted.

The reality is that in South Africa, forms of quality assurance have in the past focused on criteria for improvement of the educators only. A range of indicators was applied only to determine the level of capability and promotability of educators and no indication of the functionality of schools was discussed. In the immediate past, national initiative activated a process of quality assurance of schools. Schools, school leaders and managers are therefore about to become part of these procedures within which they previously did not engage. The very eliminatory audit that was administered in schools lately, focused on the absolute minimum requirements of operational practice. These instruments should be refined in future in order for schools to be in a position to attend and become involved in a thorough practice of

quality assurance. One can expect that “educators will be the first to tell you that setting specific, strategic, measurable goals was new to their practice and took them out of their comfort zone” (O’Neill, 2000:50). A definite reaction from South African schools and educators can be expected once the process has become daily routine. It is also necessary to state – given the enormous diversity of South African schools, their locations, background and functional realities – that schools will react differently to the implementations of these practices.

4. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Quality management refers to the actions, processes and structures necessary to ensure that delivery of education is of the highest quality. As a function, quality management is seen as the responsibility of those in operational and managerial roles in the system, whether the system be considered as a school, a district, a region, a province or a nation. The attainment of quality requires a commitment of all members of the organisation, while the responsibility of quality management belongs to the senior management at each level.

The South African National Department of Education regards the aim of quality management practices “to produce outcomes that not only meet the needs of learners and parents but also meet nationally determined standards and are comparable to international standards” (Department of Education, 1999:10). One needs to ask constantly: what can be done to enhance the quality of education being provided? The answer is to be found in a variety of indicators such as training, provision of up-to-date material, strategies to involve roleplayers, etc. These indicators will have to be clearly identified and defined in order to secure their application in a particular situation of functioning.

5. SCHOOLS AS BREEDING GROUND FOR IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY

As was remarked earlier, schools must accept the challenge to produce quality education as a product through engaging in quality assurance as a process. The emphasis here should be on the creation of a natural evolutionary state where continuous efforts to improve the school become routine. Schools are the show-horses and thermometers of an education system.

From the first years of elementary education to the final analyses of school graduation, quality education should provide the visible and invisible guiding norm for daily practices.

Quality education should therefore reflect the involvement of what Joyce (1999:8) calls the “responsible parties”; those teachers, parents, administrators and community members who form a coalition to create and maintain a learning organisation. School improvement is a part of the ordinary process of the school rather than a response to a belief that things are terribly wrong, or that there are dreadful problems that cry out for immediate solution. Very often, lists of urgent matters reflect a school’s desire to change practices.

Action researcher Emily Calhoun in O’Neill (2000:49) states: “I have seen as many as eleven goals in a school’s improvement plan. As a result, it’s impossible for the school to achieve any of them.” Learn how to do things better and better becomes a way of life. Creating this evolutionary state is on the agenda of all responsible parties and should be administered at all levels. However, no one will disagree that school improvement as it affects students happens in schools, where changes in the educational environment affect students directly. It is within the school itself that many of the changes can take place recognising the input of other parties.

Recently, researchers and practitioners have taken a more holistic view of the school and how to improve it as a social organism. There seems to be a better understanding of the ecology of good schools and the structures or patterns of relationships among the various components of schooling. There is consensus that together, these components have an effect greater than the sum of the parts.

A report by the Process Management Primary Education Committee states it clearly: “*Het geheel is meer dan de som der delen*” (Processmanagement Primair Onderwijs, 1999:1).

As society changes and knowledge about relevant variables increases, schools need to assimilate and accommodate many new realities. Schools need to create a reasonable level of stability and should be constantly open and able to change.

“This means that what must remain constant, what must remain stable in the life of a school, is the emotional and intellectual

disposition toward improvement on the part of the responsible parties” (Joyce, 1999:9). The answer lies in the creation of a certain kind of school culture, i.e. beliefs, behaviours, norms and expectations which allow the establishment of activities fundamental to school improvement.

6. INDICATORS FOR SUCCESS

6.1 The complexities of using indicators

Quality is difficult to measure. However, if it can't be measured, it can't be managed. To identify quality seems quite easy. To agree on quality, seems quite difficult. The answer appears to be locked up in indicators.

The term *indicator* is described as a selected item of quantitative data, which helps in the evaluation of quality and standards by allowing comparisons to be made, or changes over time to be measured. Then again, it can never be determined purely by personal opinion or based on judgements. Any researcher will be confronted with these questions for as long as he seeks to find the answers, and will be confronted once again with questions such as:

- 1) Which indicators need to be considered when talking about a good school?
- 2) How do we need to order the indicators in a frame of reference?

Question 1 : Which indicators need to be considered when talking about a good school?

- There is a tendency during inspection or an auditing process to distinguish between a broad view on the school and a closer, more focused look. This leads to the question whether indicators should be “outcome-indicators” such as in England and Scotland, or “process-indicators” such as in Flanders. What are the underlying ideas and philosophies, and is it possible to find a compromise?
- Another core issue seems to be the fact that results (output/assessment/outcomes/attainment) are one of the main indicators of quality. Another relevant question is how to obtain a view on outcomes without a system of central examinations?
- Quality education will always depend on a number of external factors. The surroundings, environment, people, financial means, etc. How do we take these favourable or less-favourable conditions into account?

Question 2: How do we order the indicators in a frame of reference?

Certain interesting questions can be posed, e.g:

- Can the same framework be used both for primary and secondary schools?
- Do we see educational indicators and organisational indicators at the same level?

Other issues are:

- The position of an indicator could differ among countries. For example, “pupil-teacher interaction” is described in England under the section of Curriculum, in The Netherlands under School climate and in Scotland under Teaching and Learning.
- The formulation of indicators might be used to establish the ranking of a school and/or might be used to make an analysis of the strong and weak points.
- Should specific standards be expressed by way of symbols, figures or words?

Despite the complexities of using indicators, they are being used in the scientific process of determining quality education. Many countries have successfully engaged in auditing, evaluating and developing schools by using a series of indicators. A comparative analysis of the instruments will point out both the legitimate use of indicators as well as the relevance of indicators in a particular country's framework.

6.2 International examples of the use of indicators to determine success

6.2.1.England

The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) formulated its vision very clearly:

“The purpose is to identify strengths and weaknesses so that schools may improve the quality of education they provide and raise the educational standards achieved by their pupils.”

The OFSTED publishes a report of individual schools. Consistent with the requirements of the Parents' Charter, it provides information for parents and local communities about the standard of the school. The idea is that parents and others involved in the school will use the report as a basis to press school management to introduce improvements; or else children will be removed from the school and no more new pupils will be enrolled. There also exists a list containing the names of schools which fail to provide an adequate education and which require special measures.

Inspection of a school reports on the quality of education, educational standards achieved, whether financial resources are managed efficiently and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school. The framework describes specific requirements for evaluation and the criteria which are the basis for giving judgements. To describe the framework, sections and factors are used.

The report is normally presented in three sections:

Section A:

1. The context should give a factual statement about the characteristics of the school, its pupils and the area it serves.
2. The outcomes in the form of educational standards are covered in Attainment and Progress (what pupils know, understand and can do); Attitudes, behaviour and personal development (pupils' response to what the school offers) and Attendance – including punctuality.
3. Contributing factors are evaluated in terms of their contribution to the outcomes and include curriculum and assessment; pupils' spiritual, moral and social development; teaching; support, guidance and welfare; and partnership with parents and the community.
4. Management and efficiency are closely linked in leadership and management; staffing, accommodation and learning resources; and the efficiency of the school, measured by the use of available resources.

Section B focuses on curriculum areas and subjects. **Section C** deals with inspection data which include main findings as well as key issues for action.

6.2.2 Flanders

Flanders announced an interesting style to inspection and made it clear that schools will be the main focus instead of individual teachers. Reports are made available to staff members and anybody who asks for them. Separate instruments address the realities of primary, secondary and special education. It advocates the CIPO model (Context, Input, Process and Output) as a structural framework. Each section indicates the specific aim, followed by the indicators and descriptions as examples of situations that may occur.

Context includes demographic, structural,

financial, juridical, administrative and educational data that may affect the school's input, process and output.

Input is the content of personal data of everyone involved in the learning process and includes children, teachers and the head teacher.

Process refers to the whole of educational and school organisational features and activities, indicating which efforts the school makes in order to attain the targets laid down by the authorities.

The *Output* indicators characterise results which will be obtained and focus strongly on the learning domain-related final objectives.

When evaluating for example the educational operation of a secondary school, the direction is indicated by the developmental objectives, attainment targets, expectations and curriculum aims. The Output indicators occupy a central position in the school audits.

6.2.3 The Netherlands

In evaluating schools, the inspectorate mainly has a supervisory task. Evaluation indicates the gathering of data directed at systematically assessing the quality of education. Supervision means executing activities enabling one to compare the actual state of education with the situation intended by the legislator. This process is an integral one which refers to the fact that characteristics have to be seen in coherence. The focus is clearly on what can reasonably be expected from schools. The legislation is based on a concept of how schools should operate, on what they base themselves and what is socially considered to be good education.

For primary education, a good school can be referred to as a school at which teachers provide good instruction under favourable schooling conditions so that all pupils achieve optimum results. Based on this definition, the process focuses on three areas, namely: the teaching-learning process as indicator for success; the extent to which the school achieves results; and to what extent the school conditions are sufficiently conducive to the quality of the above two areas.

Standards are clearly set. Indicators are the aspects in which the standards are operationalised. Standardisation is expressed on a four-points scale, namely mainly weak; more weak than strong; more strong than weak; and

mainly strong. Although different frameworks are used for different phases, there are aspects that show clear similarities.

6.2.4 Scotland

In 1996, Scotland created a change in emphasis from “How good is our school?” to “Self-evaluation using performance indicators”. The following questions clearly reflect their aim:

- How well are pupils performing?
- How well is the school managed?
- How effective is the school?

The performance indicators provide a coherent, consistent yet flexible approach to enable a school to evaluate itself. *How are we doing?*; *How do we know?*; and *What are we going to do now?* seem appropriate follow-up questions to keep the process focused. Apart from the seven key areas, performance indicators were identified, while each of these were refined with themes.

Scotland used the following indicators as key areas, namely: Curriculum, Attainment, Learning and teaching, Support for pupils, Ethos, Resources and Management. It must be noted that this instrument is applicable to all types of schools. A system of “baseline assessment and value added” was developed to address the issue of raising standards to ensure that all schools provide the quality of education to which the pupils are entitled.

7. ANALYSES OF INTERNATIONAL PRACTICES

The following remarks can be made as an analysis of the above-mentioned instruments.

- Given the different variations on indicators and their related sub-categories, it seems clear that four areas were used by all the above-mentioned countries. These are :
Input: context.
Teaching-learning process: teaching content teaching strategy and contributing factors.
Management: organisational factors and school conditions.
Output: outcomes, pupil performance and attainment.
- It seems important to determine the dimension of the evaluation of the school. Is a broad evaluation of the whole school just an enlargement of a small one, or is it a complementary enlargement?
- Questions such as “What do children learn?”

or “What are children supposed to learn?” highlight the issue of outcome indicators against process indicators.

- The place of an indicator within the instrument and the relationship between indicators and their field of application seems to initiate new debates.
- “Quality is an empty concept” according to Deketelaere (1999:105). What is regarded as a good school is the result of discussions and is based on consensus among people in a certain place and at a certain moment.
- It will always be important to evaluate the specific viewpoint or point of departure when declaring the relevance of an indicator. Can we, for example, use good after-care as an indicator for a good school? It might be valuable to certain parents only.
- Talking about good schools, one will have to bear in mind the educational tradition in a country. One has to situate the indicators of a country within a particular historical framework and link them with current legislation and educational policy. For example, South Africa lists safety and security as important correlates that need attention.
- Agreement on the exact meaning of concepts must be dealt with thoroughly in order to prevent misunderstandings and a variety of interpretations.

8. INDICATORS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

It is evident from practices in South Africa that this country has not yet embarked fully on the debate regarding good schools. Workshops on quality assurance throughout the country merely serve as sensitising exercises to initiate a paradigm shift and to make practitioners aware of a reality that lies beyond their present experience.

The initial instrument as part of an auditory framework and process is elementary and cannot yet be seen as an instrument ensuring quality education.

As was discussed in the analyses, instruments, criteria and indicators may differ in origin, context and application. One can even compile acceptable arguments for the compilation, inclusion or exclusion of particular key areas and any given subtheme in an instrument. This concludes the argument of any given instrument’s application on circumstances other than those for which it was designed.

In an effort to compile a suitable instrument for South African conditions, the writer would like to present five primary key areas for inclusion in the auditing process. This product was compiled after thorough investigation and

deliberation with school leaders from different schools as representatives of different school types. These are: *Context, Management, Resources, Curriculum* and *Output*.

Arguments for inclusion are as follows :

Table 1: A complete view of the classification of primary and secondary key areas

PRIMARY KEY AREAS					
	<i>Context</i>	<i>Management</i>	<i>Curriculum</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Output</i>
	Mission	Philosophy	Governmental policy	Human resources	Quality of management
	Vision	Structures	School curriculum	Physical resources	Quality of leadership
	Character	Organisation	Pedagogical climate	Financial resources	Quality of grade leaders
	Environment	Communication – internal – external	Structures	Resource center	Quality of learning area leaders
SECONDARY KEY AREAS	Language	Infrastructure	Learning areas	Research	Attendance
	Ethos and climate	Organigrams	Learning programmes	Resources staff	Relations
	Health	Policy documents	Teaching content	Resources learners	Academic results
	Safety	Planning	Teaching styles	Resources community	Extramural results
	Socio-economic	Control	Classroom management		Support to educators
	Admission policy	Audit	Learning and teaching		Support to learners
		Support structures	Social and moral educ.		Evaluation of educators
		Administration	Life education		Learning
		Marketing			Involvement of parents
		Developmental planning			Educational programme
	School plan			Contact with other institutions	

Brand

- *Context* corresponds with internationally agreed *Input*, but accentuates the particular environment and socio-economic conditions in which the school functions.

Table 2

- *The secondary key areas are refined into indicators in the form of quality statements. These will give guidelines for auditing and indicate expected levels of attainment.*
- *Each indicator should then be assessed according to a scale. A four-point scale is used.*

SCALE				
Primary key area: CURRICULUM Secondary key area: LEARNING AND TEACHING				
	1	2	3	4
INDICATORS				
Set clear school aims that will guide teaching.				
Philosophy that each child is a capable learner whose success is dependant on quality teaching.				
Carefully planned and structured lessons and learning programmes that are relevant and reflect progression.				
Empower learners to take responsibility for their own learning.				
Challenge pupils to continuously produce their best efforts.				

Table 3

- *The process of auditing is not discussed in this paper. However, it needs to be stated emphatically that quality assurance requires a through process which includes planning, assessing, development planning, etc.*
- *The auditing and assessment is also dependent on carefully planned actions in order to realise the expected levels of attainment.*
- *Given the aims of this instrument, an additional section (Table 3) was included that deals with planned action related to the various indicators.*

Primary key area: CURRICULUM Secondary key area: LEARNING AND TEACHING		Scale				
School plan	Indicator	1	2	3	4	
1	Teachers meet weekly to plan content, progression, assignments and assessment criteria.	Carefully planned and structured lessons and learning programmes which are relevant and reflect progression.				

-
- *Curriculum* as a key area contains the teaching and learning processes and includes teaching content, learning areas, teaching strategies and other contributing factors.
 - *Management* and *Output* are used in similar ways to other recognised instruments.
 - *Resources* is given particular preference as an independent key area due to its importance, but specifically to accommodate the possible differences in resources and its application that marks South African educational realities.
 - Under every primary key area, a number of secondary key areas are listed to indicate the areas of focus.
 - The subsections are interrelated to demonstrate the interdependence of indicators and thereby illustrate the complex realities of a school.
 - The instrument was carefully designed in order to ensure its application to all school types. Primary, secondary and special schools could easily engage in this process due to the broad overview and spectrum of indicators which are covered.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to put schools and quality education in the spotlight. It did not serve to discuss processes of development planning. This conceptualisation of indicators for good schools starts from the preoccupation that it is possible to grasp a good school in indicators. It needs to be emphasised that no outcome should be seen as a verdict, but should rather motivate a process of self-evaluation using performance indicators. This could become the moment of activation followed by innovative actions towards quality education.

After being involved in a similar process abroad, one of the researchers concluded by saying: “Maybe it is more realistic to see the indicators as a heuristic look at a school – which shows you the way – and not as an algorithm which gives you the false certificate that you can catch quality by one instrument” (Van Bruggen, 1999:112).

For South African schools this can only serve as a guideline, an awakening and stimulating exercise to encourage thought on quality assurance in education and schools.

REFERENCES

- DEKETELAERE, A. 1999. *Indicators for good schools; analysis and a proposal*. Report on the workshop, organised by the Flemish Inspectorates of Education for SICI.
- DE KLERK, J. 2000. The values underlying quality and equality in educational transformation. Paper presented at conference on Democratic Transformation of Education. Stellenbosch.
- DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. 1999. *Quality Assurance for Schools*. National Department – South Africa. Training Manual.
- EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT – THE SCOTTISH OFFICE. 1996. *How good is our schools?: Self-Evaluation using performance indicators*. Audit Unit.
- INSPECTIE VAN ONDERWIJS. 1999. *Schooltoezicht 2000* – Informatiebrochure voor Scholen voor primair onderwijs en de expertisecentra. Jan Evers, De Meern. October 1999.
- JOYCE, B., CALHOUN, E. & HOPKINS, D. 1999. *The new structure of school improvement – Inquiring schools and achieving students*. Open University Press. Buckingham. Philadelphia.
- O'NIELL, J. 2000. Smart goals, smart schools. *Educational Leadership*. February, 2000.
- PROCESMANAGEMENT PRIMAIR ONDERWIJS 1999. *Het geheel is meer dan de som der delen*. Verslag over het jaar 1998 Faces Reclame & Communicatie, Veghel. Mei 1999.
- STEYN, J. 2000. Balancing quality and equality in educational transformation. Paper presented at conference on Democratic Transformation of Education. Stellenbosch.
- VAN BRUGGEN, J.C. 1999. Evaluation of teachers and school in Europe – The role of inspectorates of education. Paper presented at the Standing International Conference of Central and General Inspectorates of Education.

Assessment: Transforming Policy into Practice

Riana Hall & Wilma Rossouw

“There is no end to the adventures that we can have if only we seek them with our eyes open.” – Marcus Aurelius

ABSTRACT

Education is going through a period of large-scale, radical change. Teachers, schools and school systems are confronted with change when the traditional ways of teaching, teaching roles, the curriculum, and ways of assessment are questioned as educational provision to learners with special educational needs, becomes more inclusive.

The transformation to inclusive education is considered inherently as an irrevocable social transformation. Education for all learners is the preparation for full participation in a diverse, integrated, democratic community (Saleh, 1996).

Traditional methods in education are being criticised for narrowing the curriculum; the quality of assessments; the consistency of scoring and of learner performance; the fairness of assessments; the interpretability of scores; and the classification of learners for placement purposes.

This paper reflects on the challenges experienced with the implementation of non-traditional forms of assessment for learners with special educational needs in the mainstream. It argues that teachers must be empowered to make their own choices from a growing range of options, with considerable freedom to craft assessment systems to meet their specific needs. It questions the extent to which the system is able to accommodate diversity; the ability of teachers to meet individual needs; and the

transformation of the system as a whole to meet the needs of all learners.

INTRODUCTION

International recognition that education systems should cater for diversity has been growing steadily in recent years. The 1990 United Nations (UN) Conference in Jomtien focused on “Education for All” and the 1994 Salamanca Conference on Special Needs added to this impetus by drawing attention to the large numbers of groups of children currently excluded from mainstream education (Hallahan, Kaufmann & Lloyd, 1996:7; Unesco, 1994). The world’s children with special needs are often hidden away or sometimes separated from other children. Strong negative attitudes towards people with a disability held by parents, professionals and society in general are perhaps the greatest barrier to inclusion (MacLean & Gannon, 1995; De la Rey, Duncan, Shefer & Van Niekerk, 1997).

“Quality education for all: Overcoming barriers to learning and development” is the title of a report commissioned by the South African Minister of Education which was completed in 1997 (NCSNET, 1997). The document will form the basis of a new national policy on special needs education, which is directly in line with general education transformation initiatives. The principles underpinning this educational transformation include: human rights and justice for all learners, equal access to a single, inclusive education system, removing past inequalities, the development of strong links between the community and the centres of learning, and cost effectiveness. Educational

provision and support for all learners must be appropriate, effective, affordable, implementable and sustainable. Starting from the basis of respecting the human rights of all individuals, this radical new policy paves the way for an education system, which welcomes and responds to diversity (NCSNET, 1997).

The traditional approach to the education of learners with special needs was that only specially educated teachers could deal with this task, and only in separate educational settings. The belief was instilled that learners must be able to conform to the ways teachers teach, and that those learners who do not conform, do not belong in the mainstream. Mainstream teachers were therefore relieved of responsibility for the education of learners with special needs (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996).

Learners with a wide range of different needs are currently in mainstream schools, in the care of teachers who have little or no support and/or training (Engelbrecht & Forlin, 1997; Bradley & West, 1994; Kemple, Hartle, Cornea & Fox, 1994). For inclusion to work, educational practices must be child-centered. Teachers who view their role more as being facilitators of learning rather than simply transmitters of knowledge, will develop and use good practices and skills in curriculum-based assessment, team teaching, mastery learning, assessing learning styles (and modifying instruction to adapt to learners' learning styles), other individualised and adaptive learning approaches, cooperative learning strategies, facilitating peer tutoring and "peer buddies," and social skills training (Bradley, King-Sears & Tessier-Switlick, 1997).

The influence of assessment on curriculum and instruction is widely acknowledged, and teachers, policy makers, and others are turning to alternative assessment methods as a tool for educational reform (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997). The movement toward non-traditional methods of assessments has led to the quest for more meaningful assessments which better capture the significant outcomes we want learners to achieve and better match the kinds of tasks which they will need to accomplish in order to assure their future success (Gipps, 1994:4).

The continuing faith in the value of assessment for stimulating and supporting school improvement and instructional reform, links with the principle of partnership between the

learner and the teacher (Bradley et al, 1997). The involvement of learners improves as they participate in setting goals and criteria for assessment. As the learner performs, creates, produces, or does something, a variety of choices in the completion of tasks require learners to use higher-level thinking and/or problem solving skills (Wilson & Wing Jan, 1993:112).

Tasks often provide measures of meta-cognitive skills and attitudes, collaborative skills and intrapersonal skills as well as the more usual intellectual products. Assessment tasks measure meaningful instructional activities and are often contextualised in real-world applications. The learner responses are scored according to specified criteria, known in advance, which define standards for good performance (Hall, 1998: 110).

1. RESEARCH QUESTION

The purpose of this article is to reflect on the implementation of non-traditional assessment for learners with special educational needs in the mainstream. According to the literature (Botes, 1996), learners with special educational needs who are to be included must have comprehensive assessment if teachers are to implement optimal learning programmes for them. Assessment should not be limited to traditional standardised, discrete-point tests, but should include observation of the learners' skill levels (Westby, Watson, & Murphy, 1994).

While assessment has the potential to improve learning for all learners, historically it has acted as a barrier rather than a bridge to educational opportunity. Assessments have been used to label learners and put them in dead-end tracks. Traditional tests have been soundly criticised as biased and unfair, and a very narrow concept of human intelligence has driven views of human learning. This inadequate and inappropriate assessment of intelligence has come under close scrutiny (NCSNET, 1997:29; Gipps, 1994:8).

2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The implementation of non-traditional assessment of learners with special educational needs in mainstream schools was explored with the help of:

- an analysis of the reflections of 18 Further Diploma in Education (FDE) students in teaching practice

- interviews with learner support facilitators at the Western Cape Education Department (WCED)
- a survey of the theoretical component of the Assessment module.

2.1 Participants

In order to explore the implementation of non-traditional methods of assessment, 18 FDE students from the University of Stellenbosch were doing weekly sessions of teaching practice in randomly selected schools in the Western Cape Peninsula over a period of six months.

This study also involved interviews with the learner support facilitators at the WCED that were co-supervising the students in their teaching practice. Initial interviews took place after the first session of teaching practice. Interviews were in the form of informal discussions.

2.2 Contexts

In order to understand the context of the FDE students, it is important to state the implied outcome of the FDE course. The FDE course necessitates a critical view of society and the world of education and special needs education. At the same time the course aims to provide students with the confidence and ability to make instructional, curricular and professional decisions based on new policy documents as well as on the needs of learners.

The course focuses on the development of necessary skills to work collaboratively with colleagues and to adopt key roles of leadership and coordination as part of being advocates for positive change in the profession, schools and society. Students are encouraged to develop ownership in their professional contexts and become reflective practitioners (Engelbrecht & Snyman, 1999).

The assessment modules focus on making assessment on a continuous basis more integral with learning tasks, so that skills such as problem solving and critical thinking can be assessed. The modules on learning support are based on the definition of learning support as preventative interventions, which incorporate all aspects of the teaching-learning process in the classroom. It includes both eco-systemic and individual needs, providing support for teachers, parents, learners and the social community at large. The nature of the FDE programme is one in which dialogue, discussion,

exploration, feedback and practice combine to create an atmosphere where process, not product, is emphasised. Students are encouraged to develop knowledge to pose questions and make choices, rather than to seek simple answers to complex questions.

2.3 Data analysis

A qualitative methodology was employed to analyse the data from students' reflections as well as data from the interviews. The researcher searched the data for common ideas and themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and used those to develop a set of categories. Using the coding scheme, all responses were tabulated within the respective categories. (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:133; Miles & Huberman, 1994:249). An independent researcher read a protocol of the data and indicated categories as well as the frequency of each category. These categories were then compared with that of the researcher.

3. RESULTS

The results enabled us to reflect on the implementation of non-traditional methods of assessment and what emanated was the discovery that the challenges we face are mainly in two areas:

- The specific procedure of the assessment process
- The non-traditional methods of assessment

3.1 The specific procedure of the assessment process

The facilitators of the WCED questioned the specific procedure of the assessment process that the FDE students followed. They were particularly concerned about the fact that learners, who were allocated to students to be assessed, were not being assessed using standardised tests in their first session. The focus of the FDE students was to gather information about the learner as an individual rather than in relation to other individuals, as a starting point of the assessment process. The diagnostic use of standardised tests was planned for a later stage. Teachers at the various schools requested immediate results from students wanting, for example, to know what the learners' specific scores were. When students explained that they had not done standardised assessments in the first session, some teachers were unhappy and mentioned that they cannot allow learners, "who were already failing, to spend time play-

ing when they have to catch up". It seemed as if teachers wanted confirmation of what they already knew, that the learners they referred for assessment were the lowest achievers in their classes.

3.2 The non-traditional methods of assessment

Students in the FDE course have to make their own choices from a range of options for assessment. Assessment aims to devise tests which look at the individual rather than in relation to other individuals and to use measurement constructively to identify strengths and weaknesses individuals might have, so as to aid their educational progress (Gipps, 1994:8).

FDE students approach assessment from the new vision of learning and assessing of learner learning that is broad-based, relevant to real life, process oriented, and based on multiple measures which provide a rich portrayal of learner learning. It taps the power and diversity of active learning, creates multiple sources of information to support instructional decision making, and helps learners become more reflective and capable learners. This approach integrates assessment into classroom instruction (Shearer Mariotti, 1997).

Assessment needs to be considered as an ongoing dynamic process in which learners orchestrate learning strategies in a dynamic flow as they move in and out of different tasks and phases of learning and forms part of a process that enables learners to become successful learners. Assessment becomes the feedback that enables learners to be strategic in their own learning process and enables teachers to adapt the instructional process to meet the needs of their learners (King-Sears, 1997:165). Assessment helps teachers communicate expectations and standards of learning and performance to learners. It also helps learners gain information about what is valued, set personal academic expectations, internalise the required knowledge and skills, promote their self-knowledge about performance, understand who is in control of learning and improve their learning (Wilson & Wing Jan, 1993:10).

Strategies such as dynamic and continuous assessments enable teachers to modify instructions as needed. The concept of dynamic assessment is a natural extension of the idea of integrating assessment and instruction. Teach-

ers employing metacognitive strategies, present learners with increasingly explicit cues and prompts for performing a task (Wilson & Wing Jan, 1994:8). The assessment of learning efficiency focuses on how much help is needed for learners to reach their learning potentials in a particular domain, rather than a static measure of what has already been acquired.

FDE students apply the theory of multiple abilities, talents and skills. There are many kinds of knowledge or talents that enrich our lives and help us respond effectively to our environment. Traditional schools have emphasised the assessment of logical-mathematical and verbal-linguistic abilities, leaving other abilities out of the assessment process, and in so doing it discriminates among learners (Gardner, 1983). As different abilities and skills become increasingly valued in schools, new visions of assessment increasingly include assessment of the various abilities and skills based on a broader concept of intelligence, ability and learning. Not only will logical and verbal abilities continue to be assessed, but assessment also will include visual, auditory, kinesthetic, intrapersonal and interpersonal abilities. This means assessing learners' repertoire of learning strategies, skills in communicating with others, and knowledge as it is applied to day-to-day problem solving and culturally diverse contexts (Fogarty, 1998:14; Wilson & Wing Jan, 1993:52).

The need for rich contexts in problem solving extends to the task of assessing learner performances (Lewis & Doorlag, 1995:459; Gipps, 1993:9). The performances that are selected for assessment must reflect the actual skills and competencies that are valued in the appropriate context (Marzano, Pickering & McTighe, 1993: 13). As learners work through a number of performances, they collect the results in a folder (Elliott, 1994). This collection, along with a description of what has been selected and why, comprises the portfolio.

Learner reflection is a meaningful ingredient in a portfolio not only because it fosters a sense of ownership, but also because it is instructive. Learners must learn how to teach themselves new skills and ideas. Formal schooling can foster this ability by having learners pay careful attention to their individual learning styles, by having them make important choices about their learning while they are in school, and by

having them create portfolios that document those experiences (King-Sears, 1997:145).

4. DISCUSSION

The schooling system must establish a meaningful context for problem solving and provide an opportunity for learners to practice using a variety of intelligences in order to build self-esteem by helping all learners develop an accurate and complete picture of their capabilities. Assessment situations have to facilitate and reinforce this approach.

If we want our schools to prepare learners for the challenges they will face after they leave, we must constantly pose challenges in school that force them to invoke a variety of intelligences. These challenges should have different kinds of solutions, involve a variety of intelligences, encourage collaboration, and provide opportunities for reflection. Learners leaving school with plenty of practice in meta-cognitive problem solving, will be better equipped to solve novel problems in the working world by drawing on a more complete understanding of themselves and their strengths and weaknesses.

CONCLUSION

This paper concludes that the education paradigm is still based on the traditional methods of teaching where the learner has to perform and progress according to predetermined standards. This paradigm reflects the inability of the system to accommodate diversity. Teachers seem unable to meet individual needs as they find it difficult to accommodate a paradigm shift within their traditional frame of reference, which is still deeply immersed in a culture of separate educational provision for learners with special

needs. The traditional paradigm is also reflected in teachers' negative responses and unrealistic expectations of the assessment process of individual learners.

To a large extent school is a mechanism for transmitting the expectations of society. This transmission is traditionally based on language. Such an environment will place many individuals at a disadvantage and will unfortunately yield the view that not every learner can learn. This misrepresentation occurs for any learner whose particular blend of intelligences does not match precisely what the traditional school requires.

The transformation process of the system as a whole can only be accelerated if we begin to think of school as a place where learners pursue the successful accomplishment of meaningful activities. Such a view takes seriously the notion that every learner can learn, but it does not require that all learners learn in the same way. Introducing multiplicity to this analysis and emphasising success does not imply lower standards. Successful accomplishment requires genuine challenge, high standards, and definitions of accomplishment that are acknowledged publicly. Furthermore, we can bring demanding techniques of evaluation to these disparate activities via the assessment alternatives of performances, projects and portfolios. Using these techniques, the schools for success can document and evaluate a variety of performances while maintaining very high standards.

A school that respects and responds to the multiplicity of aptitudes, that builds on its learners' backgrounds, and that allows for variety in learner performance, can strive for success for all.

REFERENCES

- BOTES, A. 1996. Hoofstroomonderwys vir kinders met Down-sindroom: 'n Opvoedkundige-sielkundige perspektief. M.Ed (Psig) skripsie. Universiteit van Pretoria.
- BRADLEY, D.F.; KING-SEARS, M.E. & TESSIER-SWITLICK, D.M. 1997. *Teaching students in inclusive settings: From theory to practice*. Boston, Mass: Allyn and Bacon.
- BRADLEY, D.F. & WEST, J.F. 1994. Staff training for the inclusion of students with disabilities: visions from school-based educators. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 17(2): 117-128.
- DE LA REY, C.; DUNCAN, N; SHEFER, T. & VAN NIEKERK, A. 1997. *Contemporary issues in human development: A South African focus*. Johannesburg: International Thomson Publishing.
- ELLIOTT, S.N. 1994. *Creating meaningful performance assessments: Fundamental concepts*. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.
- ENGELBRECHT, P. & FORLIN, C. 1997. Training of teachers in inclusive education: A South African perspective. Paper presented at the Inclusive Education: Inclusive Society International Conference, Brunei, Darussalam.
- ENGELBRECHT, P. & SNYMAN, H. 1999. Educating pre-service teachers in inclusive education: Reflections on the Stellenbosch experience in South Africa. *International Journal of Special Education*, 14(1): 96-100.
- FOGARTY, R. 1998. *Balanced Assessment*. USA: Skylight Training and Publishing Inc.
- GARDNER, H. 1983. *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.
- GIPPS, C.V. 1994. *Beyond testing. Towards a theory of educational assessment*. London: The Falmer Press.
- HALL, R. 1998. Die rol van spesiale skole in inklusiewe onderwys. PhD. verhandelings. Universiteit van Stellenbosch. Ongepubliseerd.
- HALLAHAN, D.P.; KAUFMANN, J.M. & LLOYD, T.W. 1996. *Introduction to learning disabilities*. New York: Teachers' college Press.
- KEMPLE, K.M.; HARTLE, C.C.; CORREA, V.I. & FOX, L. 1994. Preparing teachers for inclusive education: the development of a unified teacher education programme in early childhood and early childhood special education. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 17(1): 38-51.
- KING-SEARS, M.E. 1997. Assessment. In D.F. Bradley; M.E. King-Sears & D.M. Tessier-Switlick. 1997. *Teaching students in inclusive settings: From theory to practice*. Boston, Mass: Allyn and Bacon.
- LEWIS, R.B. & DOORLAG, D.H. 1995. *Teaching special students in the mainstream*. New Jersey: Merrill.
- LIPSKY, D.K. & GARTNER, A. 1997. *Inclusion and school reform. Transforming America's classrooms*. Baltimore, MD: Paul Brookes.
- MACLEAN, D. & GANNON, P.M. 1995. Measuring attitudes toward disability: The interaction with disabled persons scale revisited. *Journal of Social Behaviour and Personality*, 10, 791-806.
- MARZANO, R.J.; PICKERING, D. & MCTIGHE, J. 1993. *Assessing student outcomes: Performance assessment using the dimensions of learning model*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- MAYKUT, P. & MOREHOUSE, R. 1994. *Beginning qualitative research. A philosophical and practical guide*.
- MILES, M.B. & HUBERMAN, A.M. 1994. *Qualitative data analysis*. (2nd ed.). London: Sage publications.
- NCSNET. 1997. Quality education for all: Overcoming barriers to learning and development. Final Report - November. Unpublished.
- SALEH, L. 1996. From inclusive education to inclusive communities. Paper presented at the University of South Africa. Pretoria: March. Unpublished.
- SCRUGGS, T.E. & MASTROPIERI, M.A. 1996. Teacher perception of mainstreaming/inclusion, 1958-1995: A research synthesis. *Exceptional children*. 63(1) Fall: 59-74.
- SHEARER MARIOTTI, A.P. & HOMAN, S.P. 1997. *Linking Reading Assessment to Instruction - An application worktext for elementary classroom teachers*.
- STRAUSS, A. & CORBIN, J. 1990. *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

UNESCO, 1994. *The Salamanca statement and framework on special needs education*. Paris. Unesco.

WESTBY, C.E.; WATSON, S.; MURPHY, M. 1994. The vision of full inclusion: don't exclude

kids by including them. *Journal of Childhood Communication Disorders*, 16(1), 13-22.

WILSON, J. & WING JAN. L. 1993. *Thinking for themselves. Developing strategies for reflective learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

A Case for Human Rights Education in an African Context: The Concept and the Practice

Tarcisio Nyatsanza

INTRODUCTION

While everyone agrees that human rights education should be implemented, several questions are being raised as to the actual nature of human rights, particularly when applied to non-Western and African context(s) in particular.

1. UNDERSTANDING HUMAN RIGHTS

The discourse on human rights is contestable insofar as it has attracted the attention of, among others, philosophers, politicians, theologians, social protagonists and educationists. Given this contestability, there is a need to re-examine the issue of human rights prior to implementing them in a meaningful way within the school curriculum.

One of the critical issues surrounding discussions on human rights education is the fact that it has been problematic, although not totally impossible, to come up with an agreed upon definition of what the exact nature of human rights is. There has, however, been considerable consensus on the articulation of various human rights articles. I emphasise the articulation because beyond that, a number of problems arise. The problems are by way of example, historical, semantic, economic and contextual. These problems arise because there is no agreement on which rights to grant, who has the obligation to realise these rights and what the source of these rights is (Gwisai, 1999).

In the Western world, human rights have been discussed from early times. Their origin has been variously described – for example, in feudal times, rights had to do with what people owed their landlords, kings of God. With the collapse of feudalism, people started challeng-

ing such narrow conceptions of human rights. Questions started being raised as to how individuals should treat each other, what institutions (such as the state or religion) can do and cannot do, and how individuals and groups should relate to each other. Rights, it has also been argued, are derived from the nature of human beings as such. With the outbreak of the two world wars (1914–1918 and 1939–1945), a plethora of human rights issues came on board. Thus, both the League of Nations and the United Nations formulated procedures and guidelines that prescribed what human rights would entail. It is important to note that such a project would be set up using particular languages. Those languages arose from specific cultural experiences. This in itself presents unique challenges, and these challenges will be explored later.

With the formation of the Organisation of Africa Unity (OAU), however, the African continent formulated its charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Despite the widespread assumption that human rights are universal (Dower, 1983), the attempt in the current decade to introduce human rights education within an African/multicultural context, raises pertinent issues of concern with respect to both the concept and the practice.

2. TENSIONS BETWEEN WESTERN AND AFRICAN CONCEPTIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Multiculturalism has therefore been broadly understood to refer to an individual's having his/her own world view, engaging in practices that are different from other peoples', having the ability to interpret other people's signs, lan-

guage, gestures, cues, as well as developing anti-racist, anti-gender biases based on both historical and contemporary experiences (Bennet, 1999:30).

This then brings us to a point where educational practitioners need to translate the concept of human rights into a meaningful practice within the school curriculum.

Before the concept human rights itself is addressed, one needs to clarify the issue of multicultural education, of which the African context is a typical example. I need not spend much time explaining how the African context is multicultural, but suffice it to say that there is a debate on whether or not the term *African* refers to something simple or complex. In fact, many strands of meaning may be identified. One is that multiculturalism within an African context refers to historical genres: Pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial and how the three sometimes coexist.

The other level of meaning refers to African multiculturalism insofar as Africa consists of various cultural groups. This way of characterising African multiculturalism avoids the reductionist tendency of assuming African particularity rather than multiplicity (Makang, 1997:330). What this therefore means is that multiculturalism in Africa does not necessarily entail uniqueness but the ability of the complexity of African culture to interface with Western experiences. Mudimbe reiterates the same point when he argues that such thinking is a result of the notorious mystification of African tradition ((Mudimbe, 1988:153).

The rest of the paper will try to explore the various tensions that emerge from the African context within itself, as well as the interface between the African and the Western conceptions and practice of human rights. The author would like to argue that it is the discussions about these tensions that will inform us whether or not the human rights education is implementable or not. Notwithstanding the above, Zimbabwe has launched a pilot scheme through the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) in partnership with some neighbouring countries, but the results will depend on the appropriateness of the theoretical framework.

Since the 18th and 19th centuries, European political thinkers have been concerned with how authoritarianism could be kept in check.

One of the ways in which this would be realised was to emphasise the concepts of consent, accountability, democracy and participation. To that end, it was argued that the individual should be given the highest regard *vis-à-vis* the community (Komba, 1998:197). John Stuart Mill also argued that the independence of the individual was absolute and that the rest of the community was dependent on such axioms (ibid). It was on the basis of the same logic that Benjamin Constant stressed the fact that in order to free oneself, one should be free to determine one's life and ends without interference. Modern liberty was to anchor on a constitution that defended the rights of individuals (Constant, 1988).

The preceding points present a backdrop against which the West conceive and exercise their rights. Thus, in Western terms, rights are understood more in terms of the singular pronoun rather than the plural. In practical terms it therefore makes perfect sense to talk of an individual demanding social space, claiming a realm of privacy and arguing for a child's right to choose "a", "b", "c", etc. Within such a framework, human rights education would be based on values that are in tandem with individualism and Western ideology.

The above scenario stands in stark contrast to the African conception(s) of human rights. In fact, the idea of singling out human rights as an identifiable aspect of human enterprise is itself an issue. From the traditional (pre-colonial) through to the contemporary African point of view, life is not necessarily segmented. It is conceived in holistic terms, that is, regarding one's cosmic experiences as a totality. Values (and therefore rights) are construed in collective terms (Komba, 1998:197). Edison Zvobgo (1979:93), a renowned Zimbabwean legal expert, has similarly argued that:

"Rights ... do not exist as an integral part of human nature. They arise from a person's destiny of living in relationship with family, friends, the ethno-linguistic group and nation ... No rights can be exercised apart from one's relationship with another."

In fact, Ramose argues that what Zvobgo propounds is true insofar as the African political culture emphasises reciprocity in the realm of human relations. Reciprocity, according to Ramose (1999:139), crystallises into the principle of solidarity. Human rights then operate

within a context where the group is mutually agreed to respect and recognise (collectively) each other's life experiences. Gyekye (1987:8) reiterates the same point when he argued that:

“The communal ethos of African culture necessarily placed a great value on solidarity, which in turn necessitated the pursuit of unanimity or consensus not only in such important decisions as those taken by the highest political authority, town or state, but also in decisions taken by lower assemblies such as those presided over by heads of clans, that is the councillors.”

It has therefore been demonstrated that the African perspective is collective and this in turn informs their conceptualisation and exercise of human rights. But of critical importance is the fact that the collectivity did not entail unanimity. The collective position was arrived at through a process of reconciling many and often divergent views.

The above argument proceeded on some assumed premise that rights do exist in one form or another. However, Karl Marx's critique of society offers some useful insights into the discussion of human rights. According to his logic, human rights are based on economic power relations. It is the propertied class, which has rights and entitlements. This imbalance (of only the dominant class having rights) undermines the concept of rights being universal. According to the Marxist trajectory, the final stage of societal development is when there will be a classless society. In this society, it is presumed, rights will not make sense. In Marxist terms, any talk of rights is meaningless.

3. PROBLEMS OF THE CONCEPT AND PRACTICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The preceding discussion has already characterised the broad differences between Western and non-Western conceptions of human rights. This section will cite some specific examples of the African context. One area in which the term *human rights* is problematic is language. An exploration of a few African languages demonstrates that the term is relatively new, and has been coined in the recent “era of development”. In fact, what has happened is that the two words *human* and *rights* have been separately translated in order to come up with the African (indigenous) language phrase. When I called

one of my colleagues from Kenya to find out what the KiSawahili phrase for “human rights” is, he paused for a couple of minutes before answering. In fact, he told me that he was trying to translate because the expression is not part of the ordinary language use. I am informed that the equivalent phrase is *haki za watu wote*. In SiNdebele, the expression is *amalungelo abantu*, in Setswana, it is *ditshwanelo tsa batho* and in ChiShona they say *kodzero dzevanhu*.

Because language is conceptual and is intended to convey meaning, it becomes problematic if words are used but their meaning is unclear. The practice of human rights essentially becomes problematic. In fact, part of what emerges from this discussion is that within the African context, human rights are not singly considered. They are conceptualised within the broad framework of a cosmic view of life. The issue of the relatedness of beings already discussed aptly, applies here.

Humans are related to other human beings, to animals, the environment and the spirit world. Whatever conception of rights one would have, within this context, they are defined in a relational manner.

Another example of how rights become problematic in the African context is the impact of the role of patriarchy in defining those rights. Questions are asked, for example, whether or not women's rights are in fact human rights. Pat McFadden (1988) has explored how male dominated epistemology has been constructed in order to define and exercise “human rights” from a biased and monolithic point of view (Gwisai, 1999:5). A similar paradigm also applies when children's rights are considered. It has been argued that there should be a distinction between the rights enjoyed by adults and those enjoyed by children. In a famous case in Zimbabwe, Justice McNally ruled that it was not inhuman to whip a juvenile, but that it was inhuman to whip an adult (Unesco:127-134).

I shall briefly focus on Zimbabwe in terms of the Unesco project on human rights education.

While it should be applauded that such a venture has been embarked upon, critical issues need to be considered if it is to succeed. Workshops have been held with the view to exploring how to incorporate human rights issues in various subjects within the curriculum. While such an inclusivist approach has

some merits, there is need to clarify the conceptual issues that have been highlighted above. It is the author's view that current conceptions (including the manual *Human Rights and Democracy for Southern Africa: 1999*) present a rather simplistic and uncontroversial view of human rights. The text does not reflect a home-grown product in terms of sensitivities, peculiarities and dialectics of the African experiences. Take for example the right to health or the need to protect the environment (Unesco: 127-134).

Within the African context, to be healthy means, among other things, being at peace with the spirit world, being physically fit, being productive and being prosperous. On the other hand, the environment does not just refer to geophysical space, but it is a whole world of existence with beings of different levels. These beings have a history, politics and ideologies, and relate in very complex ways.

It should also be borne in mind that education on the African continent is diverse and complex, reflecting the educational traditions, strategies, aspirations and policies of various communities as well as those of the whole of contemporary Africa.

CONCLUSION

Turning to our own region, I would like to argue that it is imperative to continue to search for a just and equitable society. In order to do this, there is need for an appropriate education system with both the educators and those being educated being critical as well as resourceful. Because the education system is the seedbed of future society, human rights education must be the basis upon which it should develop.

Although some work on human rights has been done, very little work has been done to explore the problems surrounding the concept and practice of human rights in the African context. More importantly, if human rights education is to be introduced in the school curriculum, it will require that a well-articulated and defensible theoretical framework first be put in place. The African context urgently needs specific attention in order to provide a meaningful response to continued violations in many parts of Africa.

It is hoped that this paper has raised some pertinent issues on human rights education and that out of this will come some suggestions towards broader and African-oriented conceptions of human rights.

REFERENCES

- BENNETT, C.I. 1999. *Comprehensive Multicultural Education: Theory and Practice*. Indiana.
- CONSTANT, B. 1988. *Political Writings*. Cambridge University Press.
- DOWER, N. 1983. *World Poverty: Challenge and Response*. York.
- GWISAI, M. 1999. An Overview of Human Rights and Democracy. (Unpublished paper.) Harare: Unesco workshop.
- GYEKYE, K. 1995. *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought*. Philadelphia.
- HALL, P. (ED.). 1997. *Race, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism: Policy and Practice*. New York.
- KOMBA, W. 1988. Choices in Liberal and Non Liberal Educational Thought. In: *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol. 32 No. 2. Blackwell.
- MARX-ENGELS. 1982. *Selected Works*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- McFADDEN, P. 1998. *Southern Africa in transition: A gendered perspective*. Sapes.
- MUDIMBE, Y.V. 1988. *The Invention of Africa*. Indiana.
- RAMOSE, M.B. 1999. *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*. Harare: Mond Books.
- RAY, D. (ed.). 1994. *Education for Human Rights*. Unesco.
- Unesco. 1999. *Education for Human Rights and Democracy in Southern Africa*.
- USHER, R. & EDWARDS, R. (eds.) 1994. *Postmodernism and education*. Routledge.
- ZVOBGO, E.J.M. 1979. A Third World View. In: Kommers, D.P. & Loescher, G.D. (eds.). *Human Rights and American Foreign Policy*. Notre Dame.

Implications of Culturally Based Assumptions of Leadership for the Process of Educational Transformation

Johan Schreuder

INTRODUCTION: TRANSFORMATION OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

“During the last decade, the educational arena has been replete with the rhetoric of decentralisation, site-based management, teacher empowerment and distributed leadership. But does the reality match up to the rhetoric?” (Shen, 1998: 35)

Although this quotation actually refers to the present situation in the United States (US), it also reflects to a large extent the present dilemma in schools in South Africa.

In the past, the South African school system was divided into different departments of education based on racial grounds. These departments were also managed in divergent ways. This diversity meant that schools in the different departments did not all enjoy the same degree of managerial autonomy. It also meant that differences existed regarding management quality and management capacity.

Principals and teachers have consistently been at the receiving end of top-down management structures. They have worked in a regulated environment and have become accustomed to receiving direct instructions from departmental officials. Educational institutions have been unable to make decisions on how to be managed and have been unable to respond effectively to community needs.

Over the past six years, however, democratisation has removed all discrimination and unequal opportunities in society. Each aspect of education has been transformed which, in turn, has far-reaching implications for the management of the South African school system.

The national Department of Education also

appointed a Task Team on Education Management Development to draw up guidelines for and to develop education management. This Task Team was briefed to:

- translate the broad vision of the transformation of education into the practical day to day reality of school life
- promote a culture of participatory management that would empower all levels of school management and refine their management skills.

In order to achieve this vision for transformation in education, it is necessary to:

- develop effective structures to enable participatory management to take place at all levels of school management;
- provide for leadership and management training which will provide role-players with the necessary skills to contribute to the system; and
- empower individuals and groups with the necessary information, skills and attitudes so that they can effectively manage education on a day to day basis (Report on Education Management Development, 1996:11-16).

This new paradigm requires that:

“... school governors will have to learn how best to take responsibility for making decisions that affect their schools, and how to interact with the school management team in ways which offer support and guidance, balanced by thoughtful direction and control. The task of instilling these new attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding is at the heart of the challenge we face in transforming governance and manage-

ment” (Report on Education Management Development, 1996:35-36).

1. THE NEED FOR LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

In spite of the initiatives to translate and implement the vision of the transformation of education and the culture of participatory management into the practical day to day school life, there has been relatively little progress with the implementation of new structures and processes to improve the capacity and quality of the management of schools.

The most important reason for this dilemma is a lack of understanding of the new leadership paradigm that underpins participation. Sergiovanni (1994:6) noted in this regard that it is not leadership that is outdated, but rather the individual’s understanding of the concept.

Charlton (2000:29-30) believes that “... underperformance of organisations can be directly ascribed to ineffectual leadership”. He regards leadership as “... the key factor differentiating average from excellent”. Charlton (2000:60) identified the following competencies of leadership in order to help people to perform consistently and introduce change to the benefit of themselves and the organisation where they work. There were:

- creating an inspiring shared vision that provides focus, hope and direction
- communicating this vision in understandable ways in order to motivate people to do more than what is expected of them
- building a trust relationship with the people whom one works with
- being a visible role model and an exemplary leader
- creating an empowering environment where people are willing, able and allowed to perform to their potential.

Sergiovanni(1994: 6-7) stressed that “... school leadership is about connecting people morally to each other and their work”. Leadership involves “... developing shared purposes, beliefs, collegiality and character development”. He also warned that “empty leadership is encouraged” when leadership style and skills are separated from school contexts and substances.

Covey (1993:287) summarised the goal of transformational leadership as to “transform people and organisations in a literal sense”. This implies that they have to “enlarge vision,

insight and understanding; clarify purposes; make behaviour congruent with beliefs, principles, values and bring about changes that are permanent”.

2. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE

From the above viewpoints on leadership, it is clear that it is indeed a highly subjective concept, because different people may have different interpretations of leadership. Hofstede described culture as the “collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another”.

Culture has such a major impact on human behaviours and beliefs that leadership is actually rooted in culture (Bryant, 1998:7-8). Trompenaars (1993:1-2) concluded that the success of leadership and management practices are directly affected by cultural differences. He pointed out that most leaders and managers are familiar with most of the modern concepts such as site-based management, school-based management, and total quality management, but the key question is what these concepts mean to people in different cultures.

When one analyses the concept *culture*, one only then realises the complexity and inclusiveness of it. Culture consists of various layers which are not independent, but rather complementary in nature. The outer layer, known as explicit culture, refers for example to the uniqueness of a group’s language, food, buildings, fashion and art. The middle layer represents norms and values.

The core of the concept has to do with the ways in which groups have organised themselves over the years to make a living and to deal with problems and challenges (Trompenaars, 1993:22-24).

Trompenaars indicated that human beings deal with each other in the following ways:

- *Individualism versus collectivism*: Do people regard themselves as individuals (individual freedom) or as being part of a group (working for the group)?
- *Neutral versus emotional expression*: Should the nature of interaction be objective or is it acceptable to express your emotions openly and freely?
- *Achievement versus ascription*: Should one be judged on what one has accomplished (skills and competence) or is one’s status

attributed (reward based on experience, age, education, etc)?

- *Internal versus external control*: personal responsibility for life experience versus dependence on circumstances due to outside factors.

The way in which societies look at particular times, also differs. Some societies regard the failures and accomplishments of the past as not being all that important, while the emphasis should rather be on what should be planned for the future. The attitude of a society to its environment is also an important cultural difference. One cannot fully understand why individuals or organisations act in a specific manner without analysing the meaning they attribute to their environments (Trompenaars, 1993:8-19).

If culture is therefore regarded as a set of shared values, beliefs and preferred actions among the members of a society, it will automatically determine and influence the parameters within which leadership development will take place. The cultural values and beliefs directly affect the assumptions on which leadership development is based, as well as the boundaries within which leadership development is understood and practiced (McCauley et al, 1998:339-341).

In South Africa, leadership has mainly been interpreted from a Western perspective during the apartheid era, while the concept of *Ubuntu* and the philosophy associated with it was hardly taken into consideration. *Ubuntu* expresses the humanistic experience in which all people are treated with respect as human beings, and it forms to a large extent the foundation of sound relations in African societies. *Ubuntu* means being human, and being human implies values that are not subjective, but universal. This approach emphasises values such as truth, honesty, justice, respect for person and property, compassion, tolerance of different religions, views and races, sensitivity to the aged, the handicapped, the less privileged and an enthusiasm for life (Steyn and Motshabi, 1996:20-21).

In a multicultural country such as South Africa, it is especially important to allow for the diversity of cultural paradigms and not to judge leadership from one internalised viewpoint only. In this regard Warren Bennis distinguished between the once-born and the twice-born leader. The former is a product of the prevailing culture, attending the right schools,

coming from the right family, having the right friends, consequently "... a perfect product to produce more of the same". Twice-born leaders have learnt the courage to "... listen to their own inner voice and therefore what works for them, rather than society at large" (Charlton, 2000:93).

In many multicultural countries, leadership development has been interpreted from specific internalised patterns of thinking and behaving that are believed to be natural and to be applicable to and supported by all cultures. Examples of assumptions that could have been incorrectly taken for granted are (McCauley et al., 1998: 340-341):

- Leadership development is development of individuals.
- Everybody can develop leadership capacities.
- Almost everybody is called on to lead at times.
- Leadership can be learned through delegation.
- It is good to face challenging tasks in life.
- Ambiguity and uncertainty are natural.
- Being open to change is good.
- Sharing power is a prerequisite for good leadership.
- Improvement and progress are normal.
- Objective feedback is necessary.
- Taking action is essential.

In order to determine how local teachers feel about these assumptions and to make deductions about how this could impact on education transformation, a questionnaire was given to 120 teachers in the Western Cape who are actively involved in tertiary studies. This group of teachers generally reflects the multicultural nature of the population (65% black, 35% Coloured and 10% white). Their opinions are reflected in the following paragraph.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The feedback from the sample of teachers is summarised in the table (*over page*).

This analysis emphasises the real complexity and difficulty of judging the interaction between members of different cultural groups. Certain assumptions which may be valid in one situation may be completely invalid under different circumstances. Peoples' viewpoints and perceptions about things are not only the result of their cultural paradigms, but previous exposure to positive or negative experiences also

	Yes	No
Leadership development is development of individuals:	61%	39%
Leadership development is development of the group:	71%	29%
Everybody can develop leadership capacities:	72%	28%
Almost everybody is called on to lead at times:	74%	26%
Leadership can be learned through delegation:	79%	21%
It is good to face challenging tasks in life:	99%	1%
Ambiguity and uncertainty are natural:	73%	19%
Being open to change is good:	97%	2%
Sharing power is a prerequisite for good leadership:	95%	3%
Improvement and progress are normal:	86%	12%
Objective feedback is necessary:	92%	4%
Taking action is essential:	87%	11%

play a significant part. This is specifically applicable to the people of South Africa during the apartheid era.

The analysis indicates that there is not a clear choice between individualism and being part of a group. In fact, the situation in which people are may determine to large extent whether they regard themselves as individuals or as part of a group. Regarding the nature of interaction, there is a definite need in favour of objective feedback, as indicated by the score for this item.

Regarding the difference between achievement and ascription, there is a clear preference in favour of judging people on their skills and competence, rather than judging their status on aspects such as experience, age, and their education. One can also understand this preference

in view of the political circumstances which existed before the period of transformation in South Africa.

The analysis also reflects a clear choice in favour of facing challenging tasks in life, sharing power and the importance of taking action when being in positions of leadership. Personal responsibility for life experience is therefore rated as a very important aspect of leadership.

CONCLUSION

Although this analysis gives a rough estimation of the opinions of a group of teachers regarding culturally based assumptions of leadership, it is by no means representative of the feelings of the teachers in the Western Cape. This exercise was actually undertaken to highlight the following aspects about leadership, especially in multicultural societies undergoing a process of transformation:

- It is difficult to determine the real impact of culture on leadership and management practices because of the complexity and inclusiveness of the concept culture.
- Leadership can never be interpreted only from a specific internalised pattern of thinking and behaving that is believed to be applicable to and supported by all cultures.
- Leaders in multicultural societies should realise the importance of making provision for cultural diversity. There is always a push toward uniformity that one has to struggle against. Many leaders instinctively select people to work with them who think and sound like them. In making provision for diversity one generates creativity and one realises that it is the “difference that actually makes the difference” (Charlton, 2000:94-96).

REFERENCES

- BRYANT, M.T. 1998. Cross-cultural understandings of leadership. *Educational Management & Administration*. Vol. 26 (1), 7-20.
- CHARLTON, G. 2000. *Human habits of highly effective organisations*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- COVEY, S.R. 1989. *The seven habits of highly effective people*. London: Simon & Schuster.
- DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: SOUTH AFRICA. 1996. Report of the Task Team on education management development: Changing management to manage change.
- MCCAULEY, C.D. ET AL (EDS.). 1998. *Handbook for leadership development*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- SERGIOVANNI, T.J. 1994. The roots of school leadership. *Principal*, November, 6-9.
- SHEN, J. 1998. Do teachers feel empowered? *Educational Leadership*, April, 35-36.
- STEYN, M.E. & MOTSHABI, K.B. (EDS.). 1996. *Cultural synergy in South Africa*. Randburg: Knowledge Resources.
- TROMPENAARS, F. 1993. *Riding the waves of culture*. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

The Need for the Transformation of Religion in Education: Towards an Understanding of Democratic Values

Cornelia Roux

“Issues like integrity and trust and respect and decency have nothing to do whether one is Jewish, Protestant, Catholic or Buddhist. The whole idea of such values is clearly as part of the school system as learning.” – T. Peters

INTRODUCTION

The democratising process in education needs to address all aspects of the curriculum. This implies that the relevance of religion in education has to be challenged in order to make a contribution towards transformation in school environments. Since the democratic elections in 1994 the position and curriculum of religion in education has become a matter of contention. Monoreligious and monocultural schools became more multicultural and multireligious. Problematic situations surfaced in many schools where communal values and religion are regarded as non-negotiable elements. Many studies during the 1990s indicated that the teaching of religion in schools has to adopt a new approach in order to stay relevant in the process of transformation and globalisation. The democratic change in South Africa has also influenced scholars to re-evaluate the subject at tertiary and at school level. New emphasis on communal values, focusing on the establishment of an understanding and knowledge of different cultures, religions and behaviours, is becoming a worldwide trend. The teaching of religion in schools needs to change in order to fulfil the requirements of transformation in society, education in general and the needs of learners in particular.

With this topic I would first like to address

the position of religion in education in South Africa from a historical perspective. This is based on my personal conviction that the role and function of religious education in the South African education system needs to be democratised in order to fulfil the needs of the post-modern learner in the new millennium. The question to be asked is whether religion in education in South African schools can really contribute in any significant way to the development of life skills such as respect, understanding and tolerance? The presence of religion in the school system may perpetuate the myth that it does in fact make a difference. In my opinion religion in education can only make this contribution if parents, educators and curriculum developers recognise the special contribution of religious diversity and mutual values of the broader society.

My arguments will make reference to:

- The fact that the role of religious education or religion in education has not really been clarified within the new democratic education system since 1994.
- The fact that religion in education in South Africa has historically been entrenched within a specific paradigm, which as such hampers the transformation of democratic values in the pluralistic South African society.

First, I would like to define different concepts used in religion in education.

Religious education

Religious content taught to learners as a separate subject with a specific curriculum and didactic approach. The content can either be mono- or multireligious:

Religious instruction

Religious content taught to learners as a separate subject with a specific curriculum and a nurturing didactic approach. The content is only monoreligious.

Religion in education

Religious education in a wider context being part of the curriculum such as life skills programmes.

Religious community

Persons belonging to the same religion, but not necessarily the same denominations or groups.

School community

Parents of learners, the learners and the teachers/educators who attend the same school. They may be from different cultural and religious communities.

1. THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN EDUCATION IN THE NEW DEMOCRACY

The democratic elections in 1994 created an awareness of religious diversity and this is reflected in the South African constitution and the South African Schools Act (1996/97). However, the role of religion in education in the new democratic education system remains unclarified. As a result, the majority of schools continue to adhere to traditional approaches. The recognition of the diversity of different religious communities within the school communities therefore seems to remain of academic interest. Although South Africa is a multicultural and multireligious society, many schools continue to reflect a monocultural and specially a monoreligious ethos, as if learners of different cultural and religious backgrounds do not exist. Some teachers and parents are still not willing to accommodate the religious needs of learners from different cultures or religious backgrounds owing to the status of monoreligious education in public schools. Communities, especially those in rural areas (e.g. Transkei) and in towns (South Africa's platteland) are not even aware of religious diversity except for maybe the existence of different Christian faith communities or denominations. Feedback from students from different regions participating in distance education courses of the Faculty of Education, University of Stellenbosch (B.Ed / 2000) confirmed their lack of knowledge on

different religions in their school community and their region. In metropolitan areas the differences between religions are more pronounced and this is reflected in the composition of the school communities. It is also apparent that some religious groups, as well as parents and teachers, very often are suspicious of any new development. This is particularly the case in the discussion of educational goals when introducing new approaches and contents developed for a multireligious society and for religion in education. The approval of religious leaders seems to be more important than the knowledge and scientific responsibility of educators working in this field (cf. circulars on religious seminars from religious communities). Some religious leaders still embrace old paradigms and perceptions of religion in education as religious instruction despite their awareness of the different religious backgrounds in society. Some have even proved to be confrontational with respect to new developments.

Why is there a necessity to respond to multireligious education as part of democracy? Responses to religious plurality and diversity came mainly within the South African scenario with the rise of and debates on Religious Studies at different universities. Debates on religion in education started in 1992 and many research projects were undertaken since 1993 (ICRSA, 1992; Roux, 1993, 1994, 1997; Braaf, 1994; Hoblyn, 1997; Baatjes, 1997; Rhodes, 1997; Snyders, 1999 and Ferguson, 1999). Although numerous reports were presented to the national and provincial departments of education, study groups with tertiary institutions were established and curricula developed, very little has been achieved since 1994.

This situation confuses teachers regarding their perceptions of the new education system (Carl et al, 1999). Some schools are aware of religious plurality while others ignore their diversity. Schools tend, with the permission of their governing bodies, to invite unqualified parents or religious leaders to teach religion in order to avoid any multireligious approaches. The arguments are that there are no sufficient strategies or curricula at present in place and therefore they need to make a contribution. I believe that this is a further decline of the professional approach towards religion in education, especially in schools. Religion in education will continue to be introduced as *religious*

instruction, that is from a confessional and nurturing perspective, as has been the case in the past and quoted by so many research studies in South Africa (Summers & Waddington, 1996; Roux, 1997). In a research project (Roux, 1997) it was demonstrated that this is indeed the only approach many teachers adhere to in schools, especially in the rural areas.

The learner composition in schools and lack of responsible and scientific educational material as well as information on religion in education contribute to this un-educational situation, where very little change has taken place in schools with diverse religious school communities. However, there are a few multireligious schools where appropriate programmes are in place (Ferguson, 1999), because the learning area, Life Orientation, of Curriculum 2005 (1997) provided an opportunity for multireligious programmes.

The question is whether these programmes in some schools can contribute to the democratising process of values in a multireligious school community?

The slow progress of the implementation of new programmes or approaches towards religion in education is part of this dilemma (cf. Roux, 2000a). This is the case despite, or as a result of, the composition and eventual report of the Ministerial Committee (formed in August 1998, reported in January 1999) on a new education paradigm in religion. The document accommodated different outcomes, from knowledge on religions and values to social skills. However, the schools were left to choose their own model or approach provided that they did not violate the constitutional rights of teachers or learners (Stonier, 1999), thus the status quo prevails. It became clear that the education of religion in schools is still different from the debates and traditional conceptions of Religious Studies at universities.

2. RELIGION IN EDUCATION WITHIN AN INTEGRATED MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

There has been a worldwide shift, especially over the past 30 years, from the study of a single religion (monoreligious), also linked to a specific view of culture, to a multireligious approach associated with human rights. This started mainly with the influences and results of development projects and with the works of Ninian Smart (1968). The tension or various

kinds of compromises between these two above-mentioned approaches had a direct influence on the role of religion in education.

In the outline of the new curriculum document (Curriculum 2005, 1997), the focus on life skills implies that information on all cultures and religions must be promoted in order to understand and promote respect and tolerance as well as other values within a diverse South African society. Taking the failures of the past into consideration – where religion in education focused mainly on nurturing with a confessional approach – an opportunity for religion to contribute to a more democratic school environment is created. This implies that more emphasis can be placed on communal values in order to establish mutual understanding, respect and knowledge. To a very large extent the old paradigm of religion in education has become inappropriate (cf. Roux, 1998:86).

One of the reasons for the failure of religion in education is the so-called truth claims of different religions (cf. Küng, 1995) that tended to be part of the curriculum, with no room for different opinions. In South Africa, as in many countries worldwide, religious private schools present a dogmatic religious education programme while in public schools the policy of the government regarding religion in schools determines the curriculum. However, religious freedom and the conscience clause are always options for educators and learners. If one considers the poor outcomes of religion in education in public schools in South Africa, and its influence on important democratic values such as respect, it seems that there are indications of more problems than successes in the broader society.

According to Du Toit (1998:61), values are historically linked, contingent and contextual. He argues that it is therefore difficult to find in any culture a fixed and integrated value system that will accommodate value differences. People who are unemployed and live in poverty are hungry and lack basic human needs. They may even view themselves as worthless human beings. In such a case, stealing may be the only means of survival. In various traditions, value systems and religions, stealing is wrong and accountable before the law. How does one then teach beliefs and values without the context in which it has to function? No programme on democratic values will solve the basic needs of

a school society unless the broader perspective and responsibility of the diverse society is presented in context. Mutual values in a diverse society cannot be forced on people, especially on parents. It has to be facilitated by educators to the very young and the youth. The lack of knowledge and skills to handle multicultural and multireligious content as well as values and customs in the everyday life of a diverse society, remains contentious. Knowledge of beliefs and values seems also to be a requirement to facilitate content of different learning areas. The main question, however, is whether educators are aware of this new role as value practitioners. Will they be willing to obtain skills and knowledge to facilitate the different belief and value systems of a diverse multicultural and multireligious society?

3. THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC VALUES IN A MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION SOCIETY

There is a need in many developing multicultural societies in Africa, Asia and Europe to understand religious pluralism (Lähnemann, 1995; Weisse, 1996). Religious diversity was, and will always, be part of the world's societies. The South African scenario regarding religion in education reflects similarities with other parts of the world (cf. Jackson, 2000). The survival of humankind has become a global issue. What happens in Africa or Asia has an influence on Europe, whether emotional or economic. One starving child in Africa becomes, or should become, the conscience of Europe and/or America. The colonialism of the previous centuries, wars and undignified political dispensations of the 20th century showed their influence on new directions of thought.

According to Küng (1995), the survival of humankind, also at a religious and spiritual level, will increasingly become a global issue. Religion in education can thus no longer educate learners on issues of old scriptures, or to comfort them only in their daily need. From a hermeneutic point of view, religion has to make more sense to learners. The understanding of religious content and values follows if they are presented in an understandable paradigm. Religion in education has to provide learners with skills to understand their own spirituality, values imbedded in humankind, their multireligious and multicultural environment and the

global environment. Another factor is the rise of a network society by Internet or satellite, challenging values and questioning and/or marginalising religions and customs. On the other hand, there is also an awareness of the power of an identity with strong religious and cultural roots.

In order to understand the role of religion in promoting democratic values in education, religion should first be studied and understood as a phenomenon. The intention is to present knowledge and information on different viewpoints in order to promote the understanding of people's behaviour. Religions and other ideologies' influences on different spheres of life – such as values, customs environmental issues, art, health and gender issues – should be recognised. This approach can assist educators who feel threatened by other religion's and cultures' belief and value systems (cf. Roux, 1997, 2000b).

Another aspect is to promote the skills needed to develop values and other related issues. This should be done in such a manner that the way of thinking or conscience of the different religious beliefs is related to practice and every day life. This approach means that skills should be developed from practicable experiences. The approach gives educators and learners the opportunity to reflect first on their own frame of reference, before embarking on new or mutual values. This will also enable developing communities to integrate their traditional religious values within the broader society. It enables educators to identify different values and beliefs on specific issues to be incorporated, rather than serving to exclude. The development of a social responsibility towards the whole community should be established. In a study at schools in the Western Cape, Rhodes (1997:98) indicated the lack of responsibility of educators and other role-players towards values of a diverse community. A responsible involvement of learners in the broader community through which educators can assess learners to determine the outcome of democratic values of society is suggested. However, any assessment of values developing through belief systems should be done responsibly because of the diverse interpretation of cultural and religious values.

CONCLUSION

The role of religion in education in promoting democratic values is still underestimated by

many educators and policy makers. To fulfil the requirements of transformation in any multireligious society, as indicated by the Schools Act (1997), religion should play a vital role. The

responsible facilitation of different religious belief and value systems can only contribute to the understanding of democratic values in a multicultural society.

REFERENCES

- BRAAF A.J. 1994. Bybelonderrig in staat en staatsondersteunde skole in 'n multi-religieuse samelewing. (Bible education in state and state-funded schools in a multireligious society). Unpublished M.Ed. thesis. University of Stellenbosch.
- BAATJES F.H. 1997. Religieuse onderrig in 'n multi-religieuse primêre skoolopset: die verhouding tussen religie en moraliteit. (Religious Education in a multireligious primary school environment: the relationship between religion and morals). Unpublished M.Ed. thesis. University of Stellenbosch.
- CARR D. & LANDON J. 1998. Teachers and Schools as Agencies of Value Education: Reflection on Teachers' Perceptions. Part One: The role of the Teacher. *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 19(2):165-175.
- CUSH D. 1999. The Relationship Between Religious Studies, Religious Education and Theology: Big Brother, Little Sister and the Clerical Uncle? *British Journal of Religious Education*, 21(3), 137-146.
- DU TOIT C.W. & KRUGER J.S. 1998. *Multi-religious education in South Africa - Problems and prospects in a pluralistic society*. Pretoria. Research Institute for Theology and Religion. University of South Africa.
- FERGUSON R. 1999. Strategies for teaching religion in colleges of education. Unpublished M.Ed.-thesis, University of Stellenbosch.
- HOBLYN W.R. 1997. The role of the education leader in facilitating a multireligious programme in a secondary school. Unpublished M.Ed.-thesis, University of Stellenbosch.
- ICRSA. 1992. *Religion in Public Education*. Report by the Institute for Comparative Religion in Southern Africa. University of Cape Town.
- JACKSON R. 2000. From the study of religions to religious education: A response to David Chidester. Paper read at the IAHR Conference. Durban. South Africa. August.
- KÜNG T. 1995. A global ethic and education. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 18(1), 6-21.
- LÄHNEMANN J. 1995. Protestant education and global changes. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 18(1), 27-30.
- MITCHELL G. 1995. Principles in the development of religious and moral education in South African schools. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 18(1), 55-58.
- RHODES B.D. 1997. Die onderrigleier se rol ten opsigte van vraagstukke rondom religie en etiek binne skoolverband. (The education

- leader's role on problem areas like religion and ethics in the school environment). Unpublished M.Ed. thesis. University of Stellenbosch.
- ROUX C.D. 1997. Biblical values and multireligious education in the primary school: problems and proposals. *Scriptura (International Journal for Bible, Religion and Theology in Southern Africa)* 60(1), pp 63-70.
- ROUX C.D. 1997. *Redefining the role of Religious Education in a multicultural and multireligious school environment*. HSRC Special Report. Pretoria. pp 65.
- ROUX C.D. 1997. The need for a paradigm shift in teaching religion in multicultural schools in South Africa. *South African Journal for Education*. Vol. 18(2), pp 84-89.
- ROUX C.D. 2000 (A). Multi-religious education – an option for South Africa in the new education system. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 22(3):173-180.
- ROUX C.D. 2000 (B) Facilitating religion in Life Orientation programmes: challenges for a multicultural society. *Journal for the Study of Religion* (to be published).
- ROUX C.D. & STEENKAMP D. 1995. A curriculum proposal for the school subject – Religious Studies. *Scriptura (International Journal for Bible, Religion and Theology in Southern Africa)*. 53(2), 73-95.
- ROUX C.D. & STEENKAMP D. 1997. *The Christian teacher and multireligious education*. Pretoria. Via Africa.
- SMART N. 1968. *Secular Education and the Logic of Religion*. London. Faber and Faber.
- SNYDERS A.E. 1999 Die hantering van mono-religieuse kurrikulum binne 'n multi-religieuse skoolopset. (A monoreligious curriculum in a multireligious school environment). Unpublished M.Ed.-thesis, University of Stellenbosch.
- STONIER J. 1999. A new direction for Religious Education in South Africa? The proposed new RE policy. *Diversity as Ethos*, Chidester D., Stonier J., Tobler J. (eds) Cape Town: ICRSA. 28-46.
- SUMMERS H.C. AND WADDINGTON R.R. 1996. *Religious Education for Transformation*. Pretoria. Kagiso Trust.
- PETERS T. 1988. In search of excellence – a talk with Tom Peters about principalship. *Bulletin* Vol 72, 12
- WEISSE W. (ED.) 1996. *Inter-religious and intercultural education: methodologies, conceptions and pilot projects in South Africa, Namibia, Great Britain, the Netherlands*.

Official Government Reports

- 1996 Norms and standards for teacher education (COTEP), Department of Education, Pretoria.
- 1996 Lifelong learning through a National Qualifications framework, Report of the Ministerial Committee, Pretoria.
- 1997 The South African Constitution. Pretoria. Government Printers.
- 1997 The South African Schools Act. Pretoria. Government Printers.
- 1997 Curriculum 2005, Department of Education, Pretoria, (April).
- 1998 Outcomes-based education in South Africa. Background information for educators, Department of Education, Pretoria, (April).
- 1999 Report of the Ministerial Committee on RE. Department of Education, Pretoria, (January).
- 2000 Values, Education Democracy. Report of the Working Group on Values in Education, Department of Education, Pretoria, (May).

Democratic Values and Content-Specific Language Teaching and Learning: Experiences in the Northern Cape

Carol Puhl & Jeanette de Klerk

INTRODUCTION: VALUES, LANGUAGE AND CITIZENSHIP

South Africans live in a newly democratic society; our schools have the task of educating learners not only for self-development and as income earners, but also to become constructive citizens who contribute to building a democratic nation. Young people learn what they do – if they are educated through authoritarian ways, they learn these ways; if they are educated through democratic ways, they learn these ways. Implicit in educational practice are values. There is no such thing as “value-free” education – values are always there. In this paper, we will discuss how democratic values can transform classrooms in South Africa.

There is a growing trend to demand that learners become literate in various school-defined areas, such as social studies, science, and mathematics. As Gibbs and Fox (1999:66) state in one such context:

“A consensus has begun to emerge among science education researchers, teachers and practicing scientists that schools should turn out scientifically literate citizens, not more candidates for the academic elite.”

Learning-area literacy means that learners must be conversant in the discourse of that area to the extent considered appropriate to their age and level. Helsby (1999:3) offers a definition of discourse, rooted in the work of Bourdieu and Foucault, as a set of related social practices made up of many language modes, including ways of talking, listening, reading, writing, acting and interacting. Discourse in this sense is situated in time and place, and it involves using tools and objects, indicating a particular social

identity. A discourse – such as an educational approach to mathematics, for example – projects a particular version of reality, which cannot escape privileging some views of reality and marginalising others.

Entering the discourse in a learning area involves obtaining a certain amount of knowledge, which in this context is meant to include also attitudes, values (in the context of that discourse) and skills. As learners proceed into this discourse, they can challenge it through critical thinking, begin to own what is “received” as well as what is the result of the dialogic process of challenge, let their constructed knowledge inform their personal and future professional lives, and perhaps make further contributions in the process. The role of language in entering the discourses of science and mathematics is crucial.

In this paper we explore the link between the development of language competencies needed for learning area literacy and the practice of democratic values in the classroom. First we examine the meaning of language competencies, then we explore democratic values, and finally we will see how these ideas are contextualised in a special project in the Northern Cape to upgrade the teaching of mathematics and science at secondary level.

1. THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF LANGUAGE

1.1 Language and thinking

To construct new meanings people need language, both in a general sense and especially in the sense of language as it is used within a specific learning area. The inseparability of language and thinking is well documented, as

illustrated by Vygotsky (1978:24), who shows how language as it develops in children moves from reflecting the world to organising it. He says further:

“The specifically human capacity for language enables children to provide for auxiliary tools in the solution of difficult tasks, to overcome impulsive action, to plan a solution to a problem prior to its execution, and to master their own behaviour. ... The cognitive and communicative functions of language then become the basis of a new and superior form of activity in children” (Vygotsky, 1978: 28-29).

By mastering one’s environment through language, the learner produces new relations with that environment “in addition to the new organisation of behaviour itself” (Vygotsky 1978: 25). Continually creating these uniquely human forms of language-based behaviour gradually produces the intellect and becomes the basis of productive work. Language and thinking are interdependent; one cannot do much thinking without language, and language develops through thinking.

For learners to become fluent in the language of their subject, they need to acquire it through using it in meaningful ways. This implies that telling is not enough and memorising is not enough. Learners need opportunities to use language in ways that are meaningful and communicative in their own terms, so that they can make it part of themselves, part of their intellectual development, and keep on “producing their own intellect”. This is especially true for a country like South Africa, in which most learners must experience schooling and pass examinations in a language other than their mother tongue, usually English. While languages used as mediums of instruction remain an open issue, secondary schools at present (and probably for the next few years) have as their medium of instruction either English or Afrikaans.

1.2 Language in education

One of the major reasons for developing literacy in elementary school is that it enables more education to take place. (And more education should continue to develop learners’ language abilities.) Language draws on the symbolic – much of education is from classroom discourse and/or books; as Halliday (1993:93) says, “educational knowledge is massively dependent on

verbal learning”. Much is thus non-experiential, which means it must necessarily proceed through symbolic means. Meaning in mathematics, for example, is (at worst) experienced as a set of rules that learners must remember and follow correctly; even real-life problems – such as asking learners how to divide up a log of precious wood fairly among three brothers – while more concrete, are still not experiential. Likewise, much of meaning in science is expressed through “if’s” – varying conditions that exist on paper, without learners seeing or touching or smelling the consequences of those conditions (Puhl, 2000: 4). The classroom can be far from experience.

This is also true for examinations and portfolios; learners “write” them – they must show their knowledge symbolically, through language. When they lack sufficient proficiency in the language of instruction or the language of assessment (often the case: see Prins, 1995:21-25), which language must be developed in the context of the subject they are studying or writing, they are definitely not set for success.

The language of a subject is an integral part of the discourse of that subject, as Helsby (1999:3) says. Only through language can one get a hold on the concepts appropriate to that subject. One often uses metaphors of language as tool or barrier, but any such comparisons are limited. One could more accurately say “*languageing*” to indicate that language is more a process, a way of getting a handle on reality, to the extent that this is possible. At the same time, such “*languageing*” helps to define that reality. According to linguist Michael Halliday (1993:94), it is through language that fluid, undifferentiated experience is turned into knowledge.

1.3 Language proficiency – what and how

Language proficiency – here also called communicative competence (CC) – is a construct with a multiplicity of meanings, depending on which researcher or practitioner one consults (Brown, 1994:29; see also Savignon, 1997:56, and Canale & Swain, 1980). However, CC is generally accepted to consist of several components such as the typical list below:

- *organisational competence*, which includes grammatical correctness and discourse competence, or how ideas are connected by use of language

- *pragmatic competence*, which includes functional competence, such as what is accomplished through language, e.g. a request, a disagreement, etc., and sociolinguistic competence, referring to the appropriateness of what is said or written
- *strategic competence*, which includes “paths” the learner chooses to reach his/her goals
- *psychomotor skills*, which include pronunciation, the act of writing or typing, eye movements when reading, etc. (Brown, 1994:29).

If learners are to learn science or history or mathematics, it means they must be able to communicate in it. This means they need to be able to talk about the subject, write about it, complete tasks and projects in that area, produce a portfolio, and write exams, all of which are heavily language-based. Brown states:

“The array of studies on CC provides what is perhaps the most important linguistic principle of learning and teaching: Given that communicative competence is the goal of a language classroom, then instruction needs to point toward all of its components: organisational, pragmatic, strategic, and psychomotor. Communicative goals are best achieved by giving due attention to language use and not just usage, to fluency and not just accuracy, to authentic language and contexts, and to students’ eventual need to apply classroom learning to heretofore unrehearsed contexts in the real world” (1994:29).

What is operative here is the emphasis on *use*. Fluency, authenticity, and transfer to the real world can be seen as part of using the language. Such language use implies attention in some form to all the components, which is impossible without context (the subject). As Savignon (1997:35) says, speaking perhaps for much of the field of language teaching: “One learns to communicate by communicating.” Within the scope of each learning area, teachers need to use the context of their subject to teach the language of that subject. There is just no other way as meaningful for developing proficiency in the language of that subject.

1.4 Language and democratic values

Such an approach, which has the learner speaking, listening, reading and writing actively and meaningfully in authentic contexts, requires respect for the learner because the teacher

should allocate “talk time” in the classroom and find ways to allow a significant portion of time for learner talk (and other forms of use of language by learners, such as writing, reading, problem-solving, etc.). This gives the learner “space” for making a creative contribution.

With meaningful language use, along with a modicum of language instruction, comes the development of the learner’s own communicative competence. It follows that the development of CC correlates strongly with the amount and quality of opportunities given to learners to engage in communication. These opportunities, we suggest, are dependent on a classroom practice which could be described as participative, based on democratic values and behaviour. The absence of democratic values in practice has, however, proved to be a huge stumbling block in this process of developing CC. We will now take a fuller look at which democratic values should be encouraged in the classroom situation.

2. DEMOCRATIC VALUES IN THE CLASSROOM

One usually thinks of democracy in a political sense; however, political democracy is not quite the same as democracy in the classroom. For example, equality is a pivotal principle in a democracy, but the educative relationship is not a relationship between equals. According to Higgs (1996:247) there is no “... tension between the concept of democratic education and unequal educative relationships, and any notion of complete equality must therefore be abandoned in the context of education”. The inequality is not an inequality of human dignity but lies in the inequality of wisdom, knowledge and expertise, in which the teacher is the superior. Although this relationship is not one between equals, it is a participatory relationship in which the student is an active participant. The fact that relationships in democratic education are not only participative, but also reciprocal, non-repressive and non-discriminatory, has important implications for teaching practice in the classroom.

In a democratic classroom, learners are given freedom within defined limits and they are allowed to make decisions about their behaviour. Teachers believe that learners are capable of solving many problems on their own and learners are given as much freedom as they can manage responsibly. Discipline in a democratic

classroom is characterised by consistency, clarity and respect, as well as firmness and freedom with responsibility. Learners learn to respect rules and authority, and they learn self-control and self-discipline, independence, cooperation and responsibility. These are all characteristics that are important for a person to function as a citizen in a democratic society.

Learners in a democratic classroom are perceived as valuable, able and responsible human beings with the ability to think, learn, choose and value. Because of this, there is an atmosphere of mutual respect and positive regard for the fact that humans are unique. The learners experience that they are recognised and accepted as individuals with potential. They are not compared with one another or belittled. Not only is the teacher courteous towards the learners, but the learners are also expected to be courteous to one another. Because of mutual respect and positive regard, the emphasis is not on competition but on cooperation. The atmosphere is one of support, clear communication, flexibility, sharing and ownership. Motivation takes place through encouragement and reward and not through threats and punishment (Steyn, De Klerk & Du Plessis, 1999:80-93).

A democratic lifestyle is served by people who have developed their negotiation skills, listening skills, respect for and sensitivity to others, communication skills, adaptability, openness, flexibility of thought, teamwork, unselfishness and critical thinking (Steyn et al., 1999:18-20). The possibility of giving shape to democracy depends heavily on the development of critical thinking skills on the part of both teacher and learner. Independent thinking is a cornerstone of democracy, because leaders must not be slavishly followed; their ideas and behaviours must be reviewed by people who can think critically and judge for themselves.

Although South Africa became a democracy in 1994 in the political sense, day-to-day realities since then have made it quite clear that a democratic system of government does not automatically lead to democratic behaviour, and that a democratic culture based on democratic values is not automatically affirmed. Democracy as a way of life is not inherited; rather, it needs to be taught through various social institutions such as the family, the school, universities and colleges, the workplace, and, most importantly, it has to be a con-

sistent way of life. Surely one of the biggest challenges for teachers today is to emphasise democratic values in the classroom. Democracy as a way of life and as a form of government is directly dependent on democratic values, attitudes and beliefs which are instilled in young people by their primary educators, their parents, and by the follow-up educators, their teachers. Democratic values and practices have to pervade classrooms and become entrenched in the minds and hearts of learners and teachers.

Democratic values became an issue for research within the special project (called GEMS, discussed below) mainly because of their perceived absence. When some desired changes did not seem to happen to the extent anticipated, the perspective offered by democratic values seemed one way to understand the situation. We must first, however, explain the project more clearly.

3. GEMS PROJECT: OVERVIEW

This three-year project is based at the University of Stellenbosch. Its initials stand for the four aspects it targets: G for governance, E for English/Afrikaans related to mathematics and science, M for mathematics, and S for science. The first two aspects are addressed through the Centre for Education Development (Cenedus), which coordinates the Education Faculty's outreach and service functions along with related research. The last two aspects are addressed through the Institute for Mathematics and Science Teaching (Imstus), also at the University. The GEMS Project is charged with improving the teaching and learning of science and mathematics in 11 secondary schools (Grades 8-12) within a certain geographical area in the province of the Northern Cape. This province is the largest geographically of South Africa's nine provinces, and paradoxically it has the smallest population, fewer than a million people. Its population density is two people per square kilometre, compared with 32 in the Western Cape and 459 in Gauteng (South Africa Survey, 1999:10). The low population density can be explained by the regions dry weather conditions, from the Kalahari savannah in the north to the Karoo shrubland in the south. The province is strong on mining and meat production.

The GEMS schools are themselves diverse, with two being former Department of Educa-

tion and Training (DET) schools, which were, and are, attended by Setswana-speakers. Four schools are former House of Representatives (HoR) schools, with learners who speak either Afrikaans or Setswana as their mother tongue. Five are former Model C schools, which were the most privileged schools under the apartheid system. Two of these schools have only Afrikaans-speaking learners, while the remaining three comprise Afrikaans or Setswana mother-tongue speakers, with a few English and Portuguese mother-tongue speakers. The schools are spread over five towns with about one to two hours' drive between them. This highlights one of the unique problems facing the Northern Cape – namely, the dispersion of its people over a large area. Some 55 mathematics and science teachers are eligible to participate in GEMS, with about 35 choosing to actively do so.

3.1 Focus on classroom change

The focus was placed on the classroom because this is where learners experience most of their school life. The teacher has great power in his or her classroom.

While the classroom is not unaffected by the context of its school, its community and centralised policies, we maintain that, generally speaking, the teacher as “agent” or one who acts, remains its most powerful force (Muller, 2000:1, 8 12, 16; Helsby 1999:viii). As Helsby states (1999:172-173):

“As long as governments remain dependent upon teachers to translate their policies into practice, then teachers will retain a degree of freedom in their day-to-day work. As yet, no government has been able to reduce education to a machine-deliverable process or to devise a teacher-proof curriculum. Accordingly, the human element will always tend to interfere with even the most carefully designed system and prevent it working in entirely predictable ways. Thus teachers do continue to have some choice over how they respond to policy initiatives, although they may react in varying ways. Whilst some may experience strong feelings of disempowerment and therefore adopt a passive approach to what is asked of them, others may deliberately refuse to view policy texts as operational prescriptions and instead see them as possible courses of

action to be considered and amended as possible.”

Helsby (1999:viii) writes of interfering and preventing, but we see this human element as a positive way of opening creative spaces for the teacher. Thus it can be argued that, although there are many influences impinging upon educational practice, there remains enough choice regarding teaching approach, and that choice remains principally and ultimately with the classroom teacher.

The main means of effecting change, at first, was through workshops, through science exhibitions, and through providing new materials especially in mathematics based on a constructivist approach. Imstus has a “facilitator” who lives in the area and visits each school twice a month. For the language component (the E part of GEMS), workshops became supplemented by class visits plus the requirement of one project per semester, or five projects per teacher over the three years, and finally, some micro-teaching to a group of learners by the lecturer and teachers themselves. Initially it was believed that, because teachers were already in service and were thus experienced at teaching, it would not be so difficult to share with them some language-based techniques that would at times focus class work on language aspects of mathematics and science. Both first-language medium teachers (L1, mainly Afrikaans, with some L1 English) and second-language medium teachers (L2, English-medium, to mainly Setswana speakers) are included. The reasoning is that using language, even an L1, in a learning-area context seems to be a universal problem (for example, see Tanner & Casados, 1998:345), and developing language proficiency in the discourses of science and mathematics becomes that much more difficult when an L2 is involved (Prins, 1995:22).

In the workshops, several generic language teaching techniques were suggested and modelled by the presenter, and worked through by the teachers. Some were created especially for this project: Debug, a multi-level vocabulary technique; Menu, a means of getting an overview of a unit or chapter; and Website, making a combined word-picture “web” of meaning in the learner’s own words and drawings. Other techniques were introduced and worked through as well, such as cloze work, writing tasks, focus on function words such as

discourse markers, as well as several interactive group and pair techniques.

An example using “debug” can show some of the proposed change from authoritarian to a more democratic teaching style. There is no escaping the need of learners in science and mathematics to know scientific and mathematical definitions of key words. But rather than copying them from the board and memorising them, at worst by rote, the process can be made more learner-centred by “debugging”, in which they are encouraged to:

- themselves identify important words that they want to understand better
- guess at a workable definition using background knowledge and helped by peers
- define informally also with a small drawing
- then define precisely.

In both styles they learn the words, but the second way seems to reflect democratic values because it honours the initiative, choices and prior knowledge of the learners.

The task at first seemed relatively straightforward, seeing that the teachers were experienced in their areas. It was to help the teachers understand the important role of language in their subjects, then share the most effective language teaching approaches and techniques with them, and the job would be done. One of the authors (Puhl) was the person responsible for the language aspect of GEMS. After the first two workshops, which included some theory and several techniques, it became evident to her that not much discernable change in the classroom was taking place. She tried to form groups of teachers who were teaching in the same learning areas, but this was problematic due to time constraints and the great distances involved. She then moved to “projects”, which meant at first any change that a teacher wanted to make. This proved to be too open-ended, so “project” was defined as any one-class session of language-based science or mathematics. This approach proved manageable by the teachers but was systematically implemented by only a few.

There seemed to be two main stumbling blocks: the first is that understanding the role of language in education is no small matter, and the second is that effective language teaching as understood in contemporary terms requires the practice of democratic values, and most of the teachers were operating in a traditional,

authoritarian way. To make science and maths teachers also language teachers turned out to be much more of a challenge than anticipated. Had the teachers already been operating from a basis of democratic values, the language aspects would have been much easier for the teachers to adapt and implement.

Most of the teachers were enthusiastic (otherwise they would not have attended), and as delighted as they seemed, it became apparent, through a paucity of project work and through class visits, that not enough meaningful change was taking place. These results were also apparent from an extensive, systematic outside evaluation conducted by the Joint Education Trust (JET) and written by Reeves (2000).

In this study, classroom observations showed that teachers still engaged most in explaining, demonstrating, and defining, but did not engage much in establishing learners’ understandings at the start, and did not give learners much chance to practice, grapple with text, interact with one another, or experiment (Reeves, 2000:25). They were teacher-centred rather than learner-centred, and one might say authoritarian rather than democratic. This fact suggests that most of the teachers in the project allowed the learners almost no space in which to enter as “agents” into the discourse, and as a result, the learners had little chance to develop their abilities regarding language within the discourse of the learning area.

The basic principle of language acquisition as currently understood is use; to learn a language (scientific, mathematical, other), one needs appropriate opportunities to use it. In the classroom, teachers need to create such opportunities, taking into account desired learning area outcomes as well as the specific situation in which they teach. It became clear in the field research that one of the barriers to improvement was the authoritarian style of most of the teachers. It was not that these teachers did not want to change to become more democratic; rather, they just had very little awareness of what changes were needed, why they were needed, let alone how to go about changing. They seemed to have little concept of the freedom that is already in their hands. The same seemed to hold for the principals.

Rather than impose information on the learners, teachers must stimulate, encourage and assist them to re-create it for themselves, a

basically constructivist approach. To construct meaning implies not only access to, but also command of, the symbolic systems which are part and parcel of “received” knowledge. It is argued that by far the most powerful of these symbolic systems is the verbal one, language. Such a classroom requires learners to use language, and by using it, they are more likely to learn to become literate in their learning area and thus be able to enter the discourse of the discipline. This does not mean they are expected to add to the body of “received” knowledge while in school, although one must not discount the possibility.

That the teachers do not see the freedoms that they already have is clear from the dialogue below. In one of the project workshops, we explained that learners need to be active because they must be busy with constructing new meaning, that is, making science and mathematics meaningful to themselves, in terms of what they already know in general and what they have learned so far in these areas. We contrasted transmission teaching with constructivist teaching, and for all but one of the teachers, constructivist teaching was news. At the end of the workshop, a school principal approached one of the authors (“I”), below:

He: You know, you have set us free (shaking his head).

I: What do you mean?

He: I’ve known all along that there must be a better way than the way we have been doing things, and now such a way is becoming clear to me.

I: How so?

He: Well, when I started school myself, as a learner, I saw it as 12 years of slogging. I had to get through it, memorise everything, pass the exam hurdles ahead of me. I did it. But I never thought it had to be meaningful to me. The idea that we have to build on what the learners bring – that is freeing. My teachers already have lots of freedom, and now, I know why this is a good thing. It shows that I as a teacher can make a difference through my own initiative. I can even adjust the syllabus, something that was never done in the past.

Another teacher’s comment is also instructive, indicating there is more freedom than he had realised:

“The ideas from the group (of teachers in a

workshop) made me realise that we do not have to be bound to the book, but that we have to make the learners aware of summaries and writing techniques” [translated from Afrikaans].

This comment also indicates that the teacher has an intuitive understanding that knowledge does not necessarily come from the “top down”, in that he could learn through his peers.

Although the project has not yet exerted its full impact, it is encouraging that some movement in a more democratic direction is becoming evident to the researchers, as reflected in the following teacher comments:

“I learned how to deal with learners so that they can communicate, reason and respect one another’s standpoint.” [*This shows values of participatory relationships, non-repression, mutual respect and courtesy – authors*]

“Will this (problem-solving, an open-ended technique) be suitable for Grade 8 learners? Will it confuse them or will they learn to be taught in this way?” [*This teacher is showing openness to new ideas, as well as critical thinking – authors*]

“I will be glad if we can have more workshops like this because we will be helped to maintain the interest of our learners and keep them in class.” [*This teacher is valuing cooperation both with us and with his or her learners. It also shows empathy with the learners, in wanting to relate to what interests them as well as what the teacher needs to teach – authors*]

4. OVERALL RESPONSES OF TEACHERS

A few of the teachers went for immediate implementation in their classes, and saw the project as a means of self-renewal as teachers. One could hardly ask for a more positive attitude, which was the overwhelming general response. (The teachers who do not want change obviously have chosen not to participate in the GEMS Project.) Examples of teacher comments follow.

“I really like these sessions, because they are informative and enhance one’s teaching and build one’s confidence.” [*This teacher and the one below seem to be in the process of realising their own potential – authors*]

“I am developing and growing from these workshops.”

“I liked best that I have learned a new method – the learners don’t have to write just for the teacher.” [*He/she is open to change, and to incorporating more of the community into class work – authors*]

“I’ve learned and experienced something new – AGAIN.”

“It made me feel even more excited about changing my teaching methods and my way of thinking.”

“This workshop made me eager to think of myself beginning something new, to make things nice not just for my learners but also for myself.” [*Words like “new”, “excited”, “eager” indicate openness, enthusiasm for change maybe even to the extent of a paradigm shift toward transformation, maybe toward more learner-centred teaching – authors*]

Wideen (1992: 134) notes three stages at which many teachers engage in a transformative process. At Stage One teachers tend to focus on “what works better” in the classroom. This is where we started out in the GEMS project, and many teachers have implemented changes at some level in their own situations. At Stage Two, the teachers examine and re-formulate their perceptions of teaching, how it is best done, what the purposes are, and so forth. At Stage 3, teachers inquire into the nature of the education process as they experience it. In the GEMS project it seems to the researchers that participants in general have come through Stage One and have entered Stage Two. We may need to be there for a while. Stage Three, it seems, has been glimpsed by a few teachers but we have not as yet gone there much. Much work remains to be done, and this work can be more fully explored by looking at how such a paradigm shift may be conceptualised.

5. PARADIGM SHIFT

It became clear that the implementation expected, far from being the addition of a few techniques, required a huge paradigm shift on the part of the teachers. Their model has been a traditional, top-down, lecture-based, information-

driven, transmission model; and contemporary language teaching approaches require learners to use language, which implies a bottom-up, task-based, learner-centred constructivist model. Such a shift would have been easier, it seems, had democratic values been operative in most classrooms.

South Africa is experiencing transformation at every level, including several paradigms within education. National education policy has embraced the approach known as outcomes-based education (OBE), which began to be implemented in 1998. For teachers coming from a traditional lecture approach, OBE requires various paradigm shifts. One of the far-reaching changes is the fact that this approach is learner-centred rather than teacher-centred. The teacher no longer uses the traditional lecture method, but is the facilitator of the learning activities. He or she organises the learning environment of the learner so that learning can take place. This approach puts its faith in the abilities and individuality of each learner (and teacher).

“Different learning styles and rates of learning need to be acknowledged and accommodated The ways in which different cultural values and lifestyles affect the construction of knowledge should also be acknowledged . . .” (Curriculum Framework for General and Further Education and Training, 1996:11).

The uniqueness of the learner is recognised and the learners’ prior knowledge is taken into account.

“Educational processes must therefore put the learner first, recognising and building on their knowledge and experience, and responding to their needs” (Department of Education White Paper, 1995:21).

Without a democratic culture of learning and teaching, the learners cannot be empowered. They can no longer merely memorise and reproduce facts from a handbook, but they must be able to think independently, communicate effectively, be tolerant toward others and dare to take on their own learning and living environment with self-confidence. This demands not only new teaching strategies, but also a change of attitude and approach.

6. TRANSFORMATION

A transformative paradigm shift on the part of

teachers is crucial, but the larger context must also change, in the sense of broad and deep educational transformation. (Bitzer, 1998:4) has proposed an analysis of educational transformation as follows:

- A fundamental change in the underlying values and presuppositions that applied in the past.
- A new vision for the future in terms of expectations, possibilities and opportunities.
- New aims and objectives.
- A new disposition/attitude as a result of transformed perspectives.

It is clear that transformative efforts will mean very little outside of a context of values. This will require that teachers develop an awareness of their own values and a sensitivity to the fact that what they say they value and what they actually do in practice often differ.

Cuban (1990:73) distinguishes two basic types of change – first-order and second-order changes:

“First-order changes try to make what already exists more efficient and more effective, without disturbing the basic organisational features, without substantially altering the ways in which adults and children perform their roles

Second-order changes seek to alter the fundamental ways in which organisations are put together . . . [and] introduce new goals, structures and roles that transform familiar ways of doing things into new ways of solving persistent problems.”

The changes taking place in South African schools cannot be just first-order changes. Nor can they be merely new curriculum content or new learning areas and levels; they must be really fundamental second-order changes, and this new approach, relationship and attitude must be embedded in democratic values. Change toward a more democratic approach in schools needs to be more than merely of a structural nature, which often means “change without difference” (Roemer, 1991:447). Rather, it must be a basic change concerning core values on which ideas and behaviour are based. Instead of restructuring, schools need “rewiring” (McDonald, Smith, Turner, Finney & Barton, 1993:8). This “rewiring” in our schools fundamentally means “inculcating democratic values in the ethos of a classroom and school so that it will become part of the

atmosphere of the school and part of every lesson”. We may have started out in the GEMS Project by concentrating on first-order changes, but we came to understand that second-order changes (transformation) were required, and we are moving to facilitate them.

6.1 Encouragement from the learners for transformation

The GEMS language projects done by the teachers required teachers to obtain feedback from their learners after implementing a language-focused technique. Usually this took the form of a page in which learners could answer anonymously a few questions relating to the class process and a few open-ended questions, such as what they liked best, what they did not like, and what they believed they learned. Typical feedback from two classes is given and discussed below.

Science class. After a group-based task of putting eight statements regarding an electrical circuit into logical order, 25 feedback sheets were obtained, representing nearly all of the class.

Twenty-three said they liked the activity “a lot”, two liked it “a little”, and no one said “not really”.

“I liked it, it was fun and I discovered things that I never thought I would.” We comment that the overwhelming reaction was very positive, as reported by the learners.

Most learner comments were as follows: “I liked it a lot because I can understand it better” (several), “because I did well”, “it was a little bit different”, “it tested our knowledge about a circuit”. “I liked the understanding we gained in groups”.

“I liked this activity a lot because I’ve learned a lot of science skills.” And below on the same page, to respond to “I have the following question(s)”, this learner wrote: “What is the importance of this activity?”

This comment shows how the learner did not see his/her work in a larger context, and could not see the reason to learn it. This gap also must be addressed. It seems to show that much of what we ask of some learners, appears meaningless to them.

“I liked it a bit because it was a bit difficult”.

“My group worked well together because we discussed our answers.”

Mathematics class. A similar implementa-

tion in a class of Grade 8 learners elicited the following feedback from learners in five groups. Groups were given a cloze passage which the teacher had created from the textbook, to review understanding of arcs, chords, and theorems. Certain words had been deleted, and learners in groups had to put the words (given at the bottom of the page) into the proper blanks. This is essentially practice in reading a text and in negotiating meaning. The groups then compared answers in the large class group.

Three groups said they liked the activity a lot because “it was extremely interesting”, “it was practical”, “it teaches you to ‘prove’ problems by yourself”, “we all participated and gained something from this activity”. One group said they liked it only a little because “it needed a lot of thinking and attention”, which shows they were engaged, perhaps more than they wanted to be! This comment, “It was understandable for the first time”, showed perhaps how the learners can learn from one another, not just from the teacher.

The learners said they liked best how to approach theorems in different ways. They said they put ideas together and worked well as a group, solving the theorem (as they saw it).

Something they did not like: the time was too short, “having many reasons and they are confusing to us”, “undermining our ideas and laughing at one another.” These last two responses are also instructive, showing the need for getting used to a new way of learning and the need for learners to practise democratic principles of respect and sensitivity toward their peers. Democratic values, as we pointed out earlier, need to be taught.

From these two examples, typical of many other teacher projects, one can see that the majority of the learners appreciated the direction of the changes. Even though the lessons were not necessarily ideal and the teacher-made materials may not have been letter-perfect, the learners expressed great enthusiasm. We were, and still are, hoping that learner enthusiasm would encourage transformation, and we believe that it may have an important, though as yet not totally clear, role to play.

CONCLUSION

We have argued that, for this secondary-level Northern Cape project, learning-area literacy depends on language proficiency in the discourse of the learning area; that language proficiency for both L1 but especially for L2 learners, depends for its development on opportunities for learners to use the language in context; and that learners do not get much opportunity when the teacher does nearly all the talking (“*linguaging*”).

We have argued that lack of democratic values in practice is a major stumbling block to more learner-centred, transformed teaching. Work within the “E” or language component of the GEMS project has shown that participating teachers and their learners show enthusiasm for such changes.

However, such changes do not come spontaneously or easily or rapidly. It seems that a better practice of democratic values in the classroom could serve as a foundation for educational practices that promote better language development, fuller learning-area literacy, and a lived experience for preparing citizens to continue developing hard-won South African freedoms.

Unfortunately the practice of democratic values and better language teaching cannot solve everything. The very limited employment opportunities in that region of the Northern Cape, and in the country as a whole, also have an impact.

As one teacher asked:

“How [can we] get learners with no expectations for the future, motivated for mathematics? They come from homes without breadwinners and most of them are without work when they leave school.”

While our secondary schools cannot do everything, they can do something to make a difference. If citizens in the schools can live the freedoms that they already have, if learners and teachers can create democratic classrooms while developing competencies for entering national and global discourses of science and mathematics, then we will be building a nation on solid democratic values.

REFERENCES

- BITZER, E.M. 1998. Hoër Onderwys as 'n Studieveld: Uitdagings in 'n tyd van Omvorming. Inaugural Lecture, University of Stellenbosch.
- BROWN, H.D. 1994. *Teaching by principles: Interactive language teaching methodology*. New York: Prentice Hall Regents.
- CANALE, M. & SWAIN, M. 1980. Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics* 1:1-47.
- CUBAN, L. 1990. A fundamental puzzle of school reform. In Lieberman, A. (ed.). *Schools as collaborative cultures: creating the future now*. New York: Falmer Press, pp 71-77.
- CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR GENERAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING. 1996. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DOE) WHITE PAPER. 1995. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- GIBBS, W. & FOX, D. 1999. The false crisis in science education. *Scientific American*, October, 65-71.
- HALLIDAY, M. 1993. Towards a language-based theory of learning. *Linguistics and Education* 5(2), 93-116.
- HELSEBY, G. 1999. *Changing teachers' work*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- HIGGS, P. 1996. Democratisation and the transformation of education. In Coetzee, J H & Smith, T G (Eds.) *International conference on educational change: discourse in education and change*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- MCDONALD, J, SMITH, S, TURNER, D, FINNEY, M, & BARTON, E. 1993. *Graduation by exhibition: assessing genuine achievement*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- MULLER, J. 2000. The sound and fury of international school reform: a critical review. Unpublished paper prepared for the Joint Education Trust. Cape Town.
- PRINS, E. 1995. The influence of readability on achievement in senior secondary school mathematics. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch.
- PUHL, C. 2000. Content-based (science) language teaching: experiences in the Northern Cape. Paper given at the Conference of the South African Association of Applied Linguistics, 14-16 September, University of Stellenbosch.
- REEVES, C. 2000. Evaluation of the Northern Cape GEMS Project. Unpublished report. Cape Town: Joint Education Trust (JET).
- ROEMER, M. 1991. What we talk about when we talk about school reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 61, pp. 434-448.
- SAVIGNON, S. 1997. *Communicative competence: theory and classroom practice*. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- SOUTH AFRICA SURVEY 1999-2000. 1999. Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.
- STEYN, J., DE KLERK, J & DU PLESSIS, W. 1999. *Education for democracy*. Durbanville, Cape Town: Wachwa Publishers.
- TANNER, M. & CASADOS, L. 1998. Promoting and studying discussions in math classes. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 41:5, pp. 342-50.
- VYGOTSKY, L. 1978. *Mind in society: the development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- WIDEEN, M. F. 1992. School-based teacher development. In Fullan, M. & Hargreaves, A., eds. *Teacher development and educational change*. Washington, D. C.: The Falmer Press, 123-155.

Language and Democracy

Elaine Ridge

INTRODUCTION

The development of democracy in South Africa will be strongly affected by the ability of future citizens to use language effectively. The social, economic and political competence of citizens is greatly enhanced by their ability to use language well. The architects of our new educational dispensation recognise this. The real issue is whether outcomes-based education (OBE) in the mode of Curriculum 2005 can deliver on its promise to transform classrooms thereby creating opportunities for immediate participation on more equitable terms for the majority of learners.

In some important areas, Curriculum 2005 is vague. The Chisholm Report acknowledges this problem: a great deal needs to be specified and teased out if Curriculum 2005 is to be effective. In this paper, I hope to contribute to that process. I shall examine five areas. First, an understanding about language learning implicit in Curriculum 2005 must be critiqued. Second, the implications of treating language generally must be explored (the curriculum deals with language as a general category rather than with Afrikaans, English or Xhosa). Third, there are major consequences of not distinguishing between main language and additional language. These must be understood. Fourth, the three elements in the Language, Literacy and Communication learning area must be explored, to make plain both the scope which they suggest, and the important aspects which seem to be excluded. My paper concludes with some remarks on specific actions necessary if Curriculum 2005 is to serve the democratic purposes envisaged.

Two assumptions underlie my discussion and should be stated immediately. The first is that language is critical in learning. The second is that, at least in the short- to medium-term, most children will learn through the mother tongue and English (Heugh, 2000).

1. ACTIVITIES AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

The illustrative materials and broad guidance that has been offered to language teachers within the Curriculum 2005 initiative have generally displayed the optimistic view that mere involvement in activities which require language use will bring about adequate language learning. This is deeply misleading. The complex nature of language development indicates a strong role for conscious awareness of what is required for success in situated activities. Without this, learners may be condemned to remain outsiders, never really engaged. This becomes particularly acute in multicultural situations. For example, township children in elite former model C schools may fail because they do not understand the implicit demands of the learning and practical situations they find themselves in.

As opposed to a strong communicative approach in which language is said to be unpredictable, a “situation” perspective sees situations in which language is used as never entirely novel. Analogous situations are repeated with more or less variation over time. It is important for learners to have knowledge and understanding of how specific configurations or patterns are characteristic of specific kinds of communicative situations. Here we are talking about shared assumptions which have to be

honoured if one is, for example, to participate in small group discussion, report on a scientific experiment, answer a comprehension test, or write a letter of complaint. Most learners need to acquire this kind of pragmatic competence in order to operate successfully in school-related activities. The principle is readily extended to real-life situations.

All too often the reason given for poor performance at school is the medium of instruction. Carol MacDonald (1990) is the best known of a number of researchers who have attempted to explore the effect on learning when learners are not able to use effectively the language being used as a medium. Unfortunately, her important research findings have been used to argue for language medium as the only problem.

I argue that the problem is more complex. It is obvious that knowledge of the particular language that is chosen as medium is important. But a deeper cause of difficulties may be that opportunities have not been created for learners to acquire the necessary pragmatic competence. If the problem of poor success rates could be solved by merely changing to mother tongue instruction, it would be hard to explain the relatively poor results in the former House of Representatives schools.

2. TREATING LANGUAGE GENERALLY

Linguists and anthropologists may find that viewing language generically is essential within the broad exploration and analysis with which they are concerned. However, the needs of the classroom are with the specific and must deal with the systematic development of each of the languages which form part of the learning programme of a particular set of learners. Generic treatment of language is unlikely to advance that goal. Nor is it possible to study specific languages generally. In both cases one can learn facts about them, but that does not help one to learn them or to learn how to use them.

Ironically, the fact that it is necessary only to pass one language in this learning area may increase the dominance of English rather than fostering additive bilingualism. There are also timetable implications. One learning area has only one foothold in the timetable, so classroom time and notional learning time for languages will be reduced. The more languages you learn, the less time you have to learn them!

3. MAIN LANGUAGE AND ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE HOMOGENISED

Curriculum 2005 provides one set of documentation for the learning area. While this allows for a more realistic view of the role that, for example, English may play, like most homogenising processes it is likely to affect the distinctive fullness of flavour of the various languages that would be possible. But there is perhaps an even greater danger. Bilingualism may be seen as a barrier to learning. Consider the underlying message in the following extract drawn from *The Borrowers*.

“Can you read?” the boy said at last.

“Of course,” said Arrietty. “Can’t you?”

“No,” he stammered. “I mean – yes. I mean I’ve just come from India.”

“What’s that got to do with it?” asked Arrietty.

“Well, if you’re born in India, you’re bilingual. And if you’re bilingual, you can’t read. Not so well.”

Arrietty stared up at him ...

“Do you grow out of it?” she asked.

He moved a little and she felt the cold flick of his shadow.

“Oh yes,” he said, “it wears off. My sisters were bilingual; now they aren’t a bit. They could read any of those books upstairs in the schoolroom.”

It is vital that bilingualism/multilingualism should be seen as a resource, where new languages are added to enrich the learners repertoire.

4. THE THREE TERMS OF THE LEARNING AREA

In Curriculum 2005, the languages are combined in a learning area known as Language, Literacy and Communication. This name is not unpacked clearly in the Curriculum document. In what follows, I examine each term separately.

4.1 Language

What is meant by *language*? Like the other specific outcomes, Specific Outcome 5 lacks usable definition. It may therefore be seen as affirming a role for traditional grammar. However, it could be seen as making provision for a study of use and even for a nuanced exploration of form. This would mean that we could escape the crude, binary distinctions which suggest that form and meaning are sepa-

rate concerns. We would also be able to look at English grammar (etc.) and so terms such as incorrect vs. correct might be largely replaced by appropriate vs. inappropriate. The focus could fall instead on particular patterns and choices within a number of systems. Even that, however, would not go far enough. The belief that the ability to use a second language (knowing “how”) would develop automatically if the learner were allowed to focus on meaning, has been strongly challenged (Nunan, 1995: 13). We need a clearer framework if we are to see form as integral to meaning, selected in the light of factors such as context and the relationship between the communicators, and operating in complex interaction with them to provide situated meaning.

What I am concerned with here is what Gee (1999) terms “grammar two”. This is the rules by which grammatical units like nouns, verb forms and clauses are used to create patterns which signal or provide an “index” which indicates to interpreters their situated identities and the specific activities they are engaged in. Understanding sentences is a matter of semantic decoding. This knowledge alone will not allow us to understand language in use (Widdowson, 1990:102). Co-locational patterns signal specific social language and the social identities and activities which it implies. Put simply, we are able to arrive at agreed understandings of discourse because what we read or hear is interpreted within a whole set of larger contextual understandings. The implication for teaching is that meaning making can be taught effectively only by embedding language (i.e. sentences and other structures) in what Gee calls “the conversational sea in which it swims”.

It is important to recognise that while some learners acquire a language incidentally, the majority of pupils will not. On the basis of careful research involving three communities, Shirley Brice Heath (1983: 352) argues that:

“Academic success beyond the basis of readiness depends on becoming a contextualist who can predict and manoeuvre the scenes and situation by understanding the relatedness of parts to the outcome or the identity of the whole.”

An understanding of grammar within particular situations is vital so learners can read and use the cues and clues it offers to meaning with increasing sophistication. The problem for us is

to find a means of enabling learners to acquire the information and competencies. Successfully addressing the needs of learners cannot be achieved by a return to exercises which use discrete sentences to focus on specific language items and treat knowledge of these sentence grammar items as “outcomes”. If the outcome is to be understanding, language teaching must always be contextualised and underlying concepts must be systematically developed.

The majority of our learners have limited opportunities to extend their knowledge of English, and so require more fine-tuned exposure and systematic opportunities to develop a more complex understanding of how language functions. The demands of equity make it essential that the advantages of the classroom be exploited.

4.2 Literacy

Next we focus on *literacy*. In attempting to understand what is meant by the term, we look at excerpts from the OBE policy documents:

Literacy: Initially “literacy” was seen as a cognitive process that enables reading, writing, and numeracy.

Literacies: Currently the term “literacy” has expanded to include several kinds of literacies. “Literacies” stresses the issue of access to the world and to knowledge through development of multiple capacities within all of us to make sense of our worlds through whatever means we have, not only texts and books.

Examples of kinds of literacies:

- Cultural literacy – Cultural, social and ideological values that shape our “reading” of texts.
- Critical literacy – The ability to respond critically to the intentions, contents and possible effects of messages and text on the reader.
- Visual literacy – The interpretation of images, signs, pictures and non-verbal (body) language etc.
- Media literacy – The “reading” of e.g. TV and film as cultural messages.
- Computer literacy – The ability to use and access information from computers.

(Department of Education 1997: 25)

It must be acknowledged that this moves us beyond the traditional definition of literacy as

the ability to read and write. However, “literacy” is ill-defined. Phrases such as “through whatever means we have” are vague and need closer specification if they are to be useful. What kinds of things might be encompassed by the word “means”? A key obstacle to easy inference here is that the term “texts” does not seem to include “books”. From a social constructivist perspective – this seems to be the informing philosophy – “texts” refers to very much more than books, but it most decidedly includes them.

A huge problem is that the definitions of literacy (with the exception of computer literacy) describe exclusively passive or receptive abilities. The “definition” of critical literacy is a case in point: the ability to respond critically to the intentions, contents and possible effects of messages and text on the reader. This does not appear to take account of the ideological debates which relate to literacy – perhaps the most important one relates to language as a site of power. At an obvious level, therefore, the description in the documents leaves out the productive ability to use language consciously for a particular purpose. There are a number of other ways of exercising power, as the following examples illustrate: the use of terror tactics, the use of satire, the use of seemingly abject behaviour. It is also possible for learners to be subjected to a kind of indoctrination as they are schooled to interpret particular texts mechanically, without regard to the contexts in which they would be found or the purposes they would serve.

Gee (1999: 28) offers these examples to show how audience affects discourse.

“Experiments show that the *Heliconius* butterflies are less likely to oviposit on host plants that possess eggs or egg-like structures. These egg-mimics are an unambiguous example of a plant trait evolved in response to a host-restricted group of herbivores.” (Professional journal)

“*Heliconius* butterflies lay their eggs on *Passiflora* vines. In defence the vines seem to have evolved fake eggs that make it look to the butterflies as if eggs have already been laid on them.” (Popular science)

It seems to me that textbook writers and material developers sometimes themselves prevent development through producing discourse that

does not take account of the learners for whom they are intended.

Perhaps the main difficulty in the OBE descriptions is that literacy is presented in static terms, as opposed to being seen as a dynamic developmental receptive and productive process which involves an understanding of how language, thought and increasingly complex social interaction combine for particular purposes in particular situations.

Literacy is not a neutral technology. Learning to make meaning is not simply a matter of being exposed to rich resources and systematically integrating the four skills. Such an approach can, of course, help, but much more is needed if the empowering intentions of the curriculum are to be realised. Consider Willinsky’s (1990:8) comments:

“The new literacy consists of those strategies in the teaching of reading and writing which attempt to shift the control of literacy from the teacher to the student; literacy is promoted in such programmes as a social process with language, which can from the very beginning extend the students’ range of meaning and connection.”

This opens up cognitive possibilities and serves already recognised as well as burgeoning needs. Literacy should be a dynamic developmental process involving conceptual development, the learner’s own questions and the immediate demands being posed by a particular situation in increasingly complex social interaction. The sociocultural context in which learning takes place becomes important and the social identity of the learners, the teacher and the producers of material is crucially significant. Heath (1983), Kress (1989) and Gee (1990, 1999) are among those who emphasise the connections between becoming literate and social process. Through interaction with a group, the individual is involved in bigger contexts of values, intentions and meanings. Depending on the transitions that are made or not made, the individual is an insider or an outsider. Literacy (and classroom practice in this regard) is thus directly related to larger issues of democratic participation.

Views of literacy have direct implications for assessment and for practice. In a skills-based, instrumental system, literacy is described in terms of performance at a certain level. In that view, literacy is a matter of training. It is not an

empowering process for the learner, but consists of teacher-directed preparation and practice to meet externally generated “standards”. This view tends to equate proficiency with demonstration of mastery. I believe OBE has been strongly influenced by this view. The problem with this kind of approach is that it ignores social process. Furthermore, it does not take into account what Bonny Norton Peirce (1995) has termed “investment” – learners must identify with the purpose at hand before there can be affective commitment. MEANING RELATES TO THE HERE AND NOW AND THE ENVISAGED FUTURE: What Freire terms in Freire and Macedo (1987) “Reading the word – reading the world”. Without an awareness of the diversity and complexity of the processes involved in empowering literacy, lifelong learning and OBE itself could be reduced to no more than the accrual of discrete modules, confining learners to a very limited and potentially disabling set of possibilities.

4.3 Communication

What is meant by *communication*? The history of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) attests to what an elusive concept this is. Pennycook (1994), perhaps one of the harshest critics, has dismissed CLT as trivialising the teaching of language. One thing is certain, rigour will be important if the empowering intentions behind giving communication prominence in the curriculum are not to be lost in practices which reduce communication to bare intelligibility. In reviewing the work of Canale and Swain, Bachman, Bachman and Palmer, and Widdowson, Skehan (1985:100-106) provides a useful picture of communication as being achieved by means of an information processing system in which there are limited attentional capacities. He lists the multiple demands made on attention as cognitive demands, linguistic demands, linguistic criteria, time pressure and unpredictability. The non-native speaker can call on five resources: existing competences, previous experience, skill in using time-creating devices, degree of influence on the communicative encounter and planning.

Despite its declared concern for process, OBE is essentially (and perhaps inevitably) concerned with product. Breen (1984:52-3) provides a useful balance. He advocates:

- prioritis[ing]the route itself

- focusing upon the means towards the learning of a new language: give priority to the changing process of learning and the potential of the classroom – to the psychological and social resources applied to a new language by learners in the classroom context
- a greater concern with capacity for communication rather than a repertoire of communication
- that the activity of learning a language should be viewed as important as the language itself
- and a focus upon means rather than predetermined objectives.

All these indicate priority of process over content.

CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS AND CHALLENGES

My argument leaves us with a number of daunting challenges:

- How do we ensure that our decisions do not represent new sites of contestation? Insisting on particular approaches to learning such as constructivism may precisely deny some learners space and actually marginalise them.
- How can we come to know, understand and adapt to the “language” and identities of the learners in a multicultural situation? And in doing so how can we ensure that this does not introduce new sites of contestation? Focusing on where learners have come from instead of acknowledging where they might wish to be going, might deny them opportunities in the short term and limit their capacity to operate within the sphere of social and political life in the long term.
- How can we incorporate an understanding of how particular communities interact socially and share knowledge in literacy events into our classrooms?

Nothing short of re-education for present and future educators will suffice. We have to be able to engage in alternative imaginings so that we can see that present situated meanings could have been different. In a sense, the present is partly an artifact of a very specific past. And we have to be able both to offer overt instruction and to immerse learners in situated practices.

Without strong educator competencies (both the ability to use language effectively and to create opportunities for systematic development) we may very well continue to engage in disabling practices.

The road forward could represent an exhilarating time as we apply Lila Watson's adage "your survival is bound up in mine" (Gough,

1998:12) and discover that rich fulfilment of the role of educators depends on creating the possibility of rich fulfilment for learners.

REFERENCES

- BREEN, M. 1984. Processes in syllabus design. In C Brumfit (ed.) *General Syllabus Design*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- CHISHOLM, F., VOLMINK, J, POTENZA, E., MULLER, J., VINJEVOLD, P., MALAN, B., NDHLOVU, T., MAHOMED, H., LUBISI, C., NGOZI, L. AND MPHAAHLELE, L. 2000. *A South African Curriculum for the Twenty First Century: Report of the Review Committee on Curriculum 2005*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. 1997. Discussion Document: Curriculum 2005: Specific Outcomes, Assessment Criteria and Range Statements: Grades 1-9.
- FREIRE, PAULO AND DONALDO MACEDO. 1987. *Literacy: Reading the word and the world*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- GEE, J. 1990. *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideologies in Discourse*. London: Routledge.
- GEE, J. 1999. *An Introduction to Discourse analysis: Theory and Method*. London: Routledge.
- GOUGH, N. 1998. Decolonising sustainability: subverting and appropriating mythologies of social change. *Southern African Journal of Environmental Education* 18: 3-13.
- HEATH, SB. 1983. *Ways with Word: Language and Life in the Community and Classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press..
- HEUGH, K. 2000. The case against multilingual education in South Africa. Paper presented at the 2000 SAALA Conference, Stellenbosch.
- KRESS, G. 1997. *Before Writing: Rethinking Paths to Literacy*. London: Routledge.
- MACDONALD, C. 1990. *Crossing the Threshold into Standard Three in Black Education*. The Consolidated Main Report of the Threshold Project. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.
- NORTON, M. 1958. *The Borrowers*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Puffin Books.
- NUNAN, D. 1995. *Designing communicative tasks*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- PEIRCE, B.N. 1995. Social identity, investment, and language learning. *Tesol Quarterly* 23(3): 401-420.
- PENNYCOOK, A. 1994. *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language*. London: Longman.
- SKEHAN, P. 1995. Analysability, accessibility, and ability for use. In Guy Cook and Barabara Seidlhoffer, *Principle & Practice in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- WILLINSKY, J. 1990. *The New Literacy: Redefining Reading and Writing in Schools*. London: Routledge.

Can Devolution of Power Enable Transformation in South African School Systems?

Chris Reddy

ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, a trend has been observed regarding the reform of administration of schools and school systems in various parts the world. Many of these reforms have been undertaken under the overt agenda of decentralisation or devolution of control and were designed to provide for increased autonomy at the level of the local school site. Stevenson and Schiller (1999) write that policies encouraging site-based management are associated with increases in the influence of teachers and school councils in decision making with decreases in the influence of central office. Chapman, Froumin and Aspin (1995) state that the examination of data and practices suggests that the situation is far more complex than this.

In this paper I discuss some of what Chapman et al (1995) call “the complex factors and variables associated with changed relationships along the centralisation-decentralisation continuum”. I refer particularly to issues likely to be encountered in the current shift in the South African formal schooling context, from a virtually totalitarian, centralised approach to school administration to one of school-based management and decision making. In my argument I contend that such a shift will be highly problematic unless accompanied by parallel processes of skills development related to changing roles for all stakeholders and critical appraisal of policy shifts.

INTRODUCTION

What does devolution of power entail in school systems? Essentially this process entails a shift

in the locus of power from central agencies to the school site. Geijsel F, Van Den Berg R and Slegers P (1999) write that contemporary education reform being undertaken simultaneously in many countries in the world, which includes changes to traditional institutional patterns of school administration, seem to indicate that schools need to become increasingly responsible for their own future. Gordon and Whitty (1997) mention that:

“... in recent years many governments have sought to restructure and deregulate state education. Central to these initiatives have been moves to reduce educational bureaucracy and create devolved systems of schooling entailing significant degrees of institutional autonomy and a variety of forms of school self-management.”

Chapman et al (1996) write that:

“devolution, school-site management, and local management of schools seem to have been the main versions of administrative rearrangement found in the rhetoric of proposals for systemic restructuring in many countries in recent years.”

Stevenson and Schiller (1999:261) in turn mention that state policies encouraging site-based management are associated with increases in the influence of teachers and school councils in decision making and with decreases in the influence of the central office. According to Rivarola and Fuller (1999), a dominant characteristic of the image of reforming schools in Nicaragua was the development of policies that encouraged the redistribution of decision-making authority to the local school. This entailed the involvement of parents, teachers and school

councils in decisions related to personnel and the use of school resources. David (1996) argues that there are as many versions of devolved management systems as there are people proclaiming to have instituted systems of site-based management, and that the concept is difficult to define or explain easily.

In South Africa the trend to devolved school management is related to the increase in democratic practices in political and social life following the shift to a democratic government in 1994. Chishlom (1997:50) mentions that the move to devolve decision-making power to schools (site-based management) is not unique to South Africa and points out that, "...educational policies for a new South Africa show remarkable congruence with international trends".

1. SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT: BACKGROUND TO REFORM

Traditionally, the South African system of education was highly centralised and unified. The control exercised from the centre over institutions, curriculum and pedagogy was heavily influenced by ideological considerations. Principally, neither school-based personnel (students and teachers) nor stakeholders in the community (including parents) were allowed to express or disseminate any opinions on educational matters that differed to the position pronounced as official by the government. This resulted in the establishment and perpetuation of an extremely rigid hierarchical administrative structure ruling out the introduction of any innovations at any level other than official provincial or national education departments. Rigid teaching techniques and centrally dictated and approved text books and content was the order of the day.

With the shift to a democratic government in 1994, definite attempts were made to transform the education system. These included the management and administration of schools, and this was officially promulgated in the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996, Republic of South Africa 1996). The vision for which many parents, educators and students struggled – namely, the right to have democratic structures of school governance in place at all schools in South Africa – has become a reality as a consequence of the South African Schools Act, Hendricks (2000:1). According to Pampallis

(1998:65) this act is the culmination of a long process of establishing democratic practice in schools. The establishment of school governing bodies was an important development in the Schools Act.

Beckmann and Blom (2000) summarise the important implication of this development. As statutory bodies the governing bodies of schools ensure the participation of parents, educators other staff members, the principal, learners and co-opted members in the governance of public schools in South Africa (South African Schools Act section 23(1) and (2)). According to this act the governance of every public school is vested in its governing body (section 16(1)), and the principal of the school has formal legal authority in terms of the management of the school (section 16(3)). This act, according to Beckmann and Blom (2000), can be interpreted as a mandate for increasing the accountability of schools and governing bodies. This implies that both the governing bodies and the principals are legally required to perform certain functions for which they are accountable, (Beckham and Visser, 1999).

The Schools Act makes provision for representative governance at schools, in the form of democratically elected community-based school governing bodies and has essentially devolved power and responsibilities to the school communities in the form of governing bodies.

School governing bodies in South Africa have the power to decide, among other things, admissions, religious and language policies, a code of conduct for learners, and the times of the school day. They also play an important role in the appointment of staff, make recommendations to provincial education departments, control property and raise funds for the schools. If necessary, they can make curriculum choices in terms of provincial curriculum policy regarding the purchasing of textbooks, educational materials and equipment. Inputs can be made in determining extra mural curriculum, which ensures representivity and opportunities for influencing developments in this regard, (Beckmann and Blom, 1999).

2. DEVOLUTION OF POWER IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Hendricks (2000) indicates that school governance is an entirely new terrain for the vast

majority of South African communities – so the changes have not all been plain sailing. She highlights some of the challenges that arose during the implementation of the Schools Act and that were experienced by some governing bodies. These include:

- Lack of education among some stakeholders represented on the governing body.
- Apathy and disinterest.
- Lack of experience and capacity.
- Many communities are steeped in backgrounds where democracy was previously curtailed or completely denied.

Hendricks (2000) also mentions the following issues/problems that emerged during implementation:

- Failure of parents to participate.
- Rivalry between groups.
- Conflict of interests.
- Inadequate infrastructure.
- Provincial government interference.

The problems and issues experienced are not unexpected or unique to the South African context. Many similar issues arose in other countries and contexts where decentralisation was favoured as a transformative approach to education management at school level.

3. DISCUSSION

The South African experience (issues and challenges) as mentioned by Hendricks (2000) is not surprising. While it is early days yet in South Africa, the experiences are similar to that in many other countries. Advocates of devolution assumed teachers and parents would jump at the opportunity to participate, but numbers of parents willing to be involved are dismally small and many schools fail to attract quorums when meetings are held for the election of officials. Rivarola and Fuller (1999:506) relate similar experiences in Nicaragua. They mention that devolution of school authority results in contested terrain for a complex set of local actors that are not always prepared and willing to become involved in taking decisions related to schools. They mention that it is difficult to develop "... more horizontal relations at the grassroots level inside what are historically top-down institutions". They describe the apparent lack of willingness to change to strong social organisation and tradition and mention that "the habitus of any social collective – the daily customs, sources of authority, and conventional

wisdom that lend cohesion to any organisation – is difficult to break down and recraft".

Poverty and social disintegration, such as family breakdowns, are another factor cited by them. These are all issues which could be related to the problems being experienced in some South African communities.

Many other factors also affect the successful working of governing bodies. David (1996:6) mentions that school councils (governing bodies) are often made up of people who have never worked together as a group previously and who often have no experience in collaborative decision making. In many cases members may in fact have a history of being adversaries. There is always suspicion and uneasy relationships in such settings.

Guskey and Peterson (1996:11) mention the lack of time and work commitments as possible constraining factors. They also indicate that meaningful deliberations and carefully reasoned discussions about complex issues require considerable time, and the nature of teaching commitments and the inflexibility in daily schedules do not always make this possible. Meetings therefore need to be wedged in between various other activities and often do not make the necessary progress possible. Lack of expertise and poor education is another real problem in many South African schools, as are the personal agendas of individuals and groupings that seem to take precedence over school interests.

4. MOTIVES FOR DEVOLUTION: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Dunstan (1996:123) alludes to suspicions related to the motives for devolution of authority to schools. In his critical appraisal of the democratisation of schools in the state of Victoria, Australia, Spicer (1996:132) writes that this process involved a realignment of power which gave far greater power to the members of teacher unions and parent associations, than bureaucratic officials. He adds that the so-called democratisation of schooling in Australia was concerned with the locus of control for certain key areas of decision making from the centre to the school site. The reasons for devolution according to him have been far more related to issues of productivity, efficiency, value for money and power than they have been to democracy. These are all tenets of economic

rationalism in education based on World Bank structural adjustment programmes.

In South Africa, devolution of authority resulted in schools having much more responsibility for everyday school management. Schools have had to carry more of the running costs as well as the costs of extra teachers, when teacher numbers decreased during downsizing. Unpopular decisions had to be made at school level, leaving principals and governing bodies to face the flack from communities. Jones (1997) mentions the idea of increased user accountability and responsibility for education processes as an important trend in the World Bank policies on education. This, they argue, will improve efficiency of delivery and reduce state responsibility for education provision, and they encourage governments not to underestimate the willingness of communities to take responsibility for the education of their children.

Pape (1998) writes that the South African education arena of policy development certainly shows similarities to the World Bank economic structural adjustment programmes that have been imposed on developing countries. A question begging an answer is whether devolution of power in South Africa is serving to enable democracy or if it is in the service of economic rationalism?

CONCLUSION

The devolution of power to schools and the consequent decentering of school management has resulted in what Rivarola and Fuller (1999), when writing about experiences in Nicaragua, refer to as both painful anxieties and heartening benefits in various countries. Making fundamental changes and shifts in education systems is complex and raises some questions and challenges for which there are no easy answers. In South Africa, decentralised school governing bodies can be linked to the historical struggle for the democratic right of school communities (parents, teachers and students) to participate in the exercise and control of all matters affecting their school (Hendricks 2000:4). This cherished ideal needs to be enabled and sustained.

Jansen (1999) writes that declaring policy is not the same as achieving it. Attention needs to be given to the complex of varying contexts

and support systems needed to move from policy enunciation to policy enactment within schools. He warns that uniform large-scale changes are more likely to benefit advantaged schools than disadvantaged institutions.

David (1996) indicates that support systems are needed during policy implementation to ensure that site-based management does not exacerbate resource differences between schools and leave schools in the poorer neighbourhoods at risk of being further disadvantaged. She adds that support systems also need to be in place to ensure meaningful participation of broader school communities in governance in varying contexts so as to avoid business as usual operations that serve to entrench privilege held by some communities.

The challenge according to David (1996:7) is "...to maximise the likelihood that decisions will be appropriately participatory, informed and sensitive to the context". To ensure that this happens she calls for opportunities for principals, staff and parents to learn new roles, and for redefining teachers' jobs to allow time for collaborative decision-making and ongoing professional development that could help to make this possible. These suggestions also seem to be relevant in the current South African context.

Clear motives need to be established for devolution of power. It needs to be questioned whether devolution of power to schools is related to promoting democracy or whether it is linked to economic rationalism? If coupled to the latter, it could represent a destructive relationship in which devolution of power will serve to further entrench state control and not enable transformation at site level through meaningful participation of stakeholders. Broader community involvement could be seen as mere token participation to legitimate state initiatives, reducing transformation through democratic participation to a facade of democracy and transformation of schools by communities, to a pipe dream. In attempting to answer the question in the title, I believe that only adequate support systems for policies and a sincere commitment to democracy will enable transformation through devolution of power to school sites. Anything less is unacceptable and could have the opposite effect.

REFERENCES

- BECKMANN J. AND BLOM M. (2000). Thoughts on accountability and democratic school management. *South African Journal of Education* Vol 20(1).
- CHAPMAN J., FROUMIN I., ASPIN D. (EDS) 1995. *Creating and Managing the Democratic School*. London: Falmer Press.
- DAVID J. (1996). The who, what and why of site based management. *Educational Leadership* Vol 53 (4).
- DUNSTAN J. (1995). The structure of democracy in educational settings: The relationship between the school and the system in Chapman J., Froumin I., Aspin D (Eds) 1995. *Creating and Managing the Democratic School*. London: Falmer Press.
- GORDON L. AND WHITTY G. (1997). Giving the 'hidden hand' a helping hand? The rhetoric and reality of neoliberal education reform in England and New Zealand. *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 33 (3)
- GEIJSEL F., VAN DEN BERG R., SLEEGERS P., (1999). The innovative capacity of schools in primary education: a qualitative study. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, Volume 12 (2), pp 175-191
- GUSKEY T. AND PETERSON K. (1996). The road to classroom change. *Educational Leadership* Vol 53 (4).
- HENDRICKS M. (2000). School governing bodies: Their significance in the democratic transformation of South African society. Unpublished Master of Education thesis, University of Stellenbosch.
- JANSEN J. (1999). Policy learning: lessons learned (and not learned) from the OBE experience. Unpublished proceedings Western Cape Education Department, OBE conference "Making OBE work?" Kromme Rhee, Stellenbosch, 13-15 December 1999.
- JONES P. (1997). Review article on World Bank Education Financing. World Bank (1995) Policies and Strategies for Education: A World Bank review (Washington DC, World Bank). *Comparative Education*, Vol 33(1), pp117-129.
- PAPE J. (1998) Changing education for majority rule in Zimbabwe and South Africa. *Comparative Education Review*, Vol 42(3), pp 253-266.
- REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA. 1996. South African Schools Act. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- RIVAROLA M. AND FULLER B. (1999). Nicaragua's experiment to decentralise schools: contrasting views of parents, teachers and directors. *Comparative Education Review*, Vol 43 (4), pp 489-521.
- SPICER B. (1995). Democracy in the school setting: power and control, costs and benefits in Chapman J., Froumin I., Aspin D. (Eds) 1995. *Creating and Managing the Democratic School*. London: Falmer Press.
- STEVENSON D. AND SCHILLER K. (1999). State education policies and changing school practices: evidence from the national longitudinal study of schools, 1980-1993. *American Journal of Education* 107, August 1999.

Shaping and Sizing: Proposed Transformations of the Higher Education Landscape in South Africa

Eli Bitzer

ABSTRACT

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) in South Africa issued a discussion document on the restructuring of higher education drafted by its Shape and Size Task Team in April 2000. This document was followed by a final report to the Minister of Education by the end of June of the same year. The report proposed a model whereby higher education will, essentially, be differentiated into at least three institutional types, ranging from mainly teaching to predominantly research institutions. The Task Team claims that the model seeks a meaningful realisation of higher education goals in relation to equity, quality and cost effectiveness. These goals will be achieved, inter alia, by the proposed institutional differentiation, increased and widened access, improved throughput and measures to counteract institutional drift.

This paper contextualises the proposals of the Task Team within developments on the international higher education scene during the past decade. It also analyses a number of responses to the proposals of the Task Team and finally draws conclusions as to possible effects and implications the proposals, if accepted, might have on the transformation of higher education in South Africa in the longer term.

INTRODUCTION

Judging from articles published on the restructuring of higher education internationally, there is little doubt that the past decade was a period of substantive change (Cabal, 1993; Teichler, 1993; Farnham, 1999). Many of the higher

education systems in developed countries have reached mass-status (Guskin, 1996) and in terms of demand, the sector has never been in a better shape globally.

Mass higher education, however, has forced institutions to adhere to some principles of mass production. Personalised interaction has been replaced by mass modes of delivery and crowded tutorials; scholarly contemplation and leisurely reflection has given way to forms of rote learning, and market-like analogies have become commonplace within and among institutions and national governing systems.

The basic explanation for most of the above is economic rationalism (De Boer, Goedegebuure & Meek, 1998). Governments, and thus society, were not prepared to bear massive expansion costs in higher education. At the same time, however, they were not prepared to lower their expectations of what the sector could be contributing to national development goals either.

The effects of all this were rather predictable. Higher education was to cater for increasingly diverse constituencies, and deliver more, in spite of fewer resources. Consequently, as highlighted by De Boer, Goedegebuure & Meek (1998:104):

“... with remarkable agility, universities jumped on the bandwagon of total quality management, performance-based funding, benchmarking, product diversification, venture capital and strong, executive leadership.”

During the past decade, many countries introduced new legislation or amended legislation regarding the governance and management of

higher education. These developments were most obvious in the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia during the early 1990s, and were to be followed later in the decade by European countries such as Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands and Austria (Farnham, 1999).

Most of the changes in higher education had a similar thrust, namely to introduce a more corporate form of decision making in higher education, to streamline the system and to locate authority at the apex of both the national and institutional structures. A few examples will serve to illustrate the effect of some of the initiatives taken in different countries, as they have recently become noticeable.

1. EXAMPLES OF INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION SHAPE AND SIZE DEVELOPMENTS

1.1 The United Kingdom and Australia

Both the UK and Australia, traditionally placed in the Anglo-Saxon group, have experienced profound changes, one of which was the termination of the binary institutional divide, with important consequences for governance and management.

In the UK, the changes were heralded already in the mid-1980s during the heyday of the Conservative Government. By the late 1990s, higher education in the UK had become an essentially unitary system, largely based on universities, but institutionally diverse. The emergence of this unitary system was only possible because historically the idea of “the university” had dominated the concept of higher education in the UK (Farnham, 1999). What was formerly a status hierarchy of types of institutions (universities, polytechnics, colleges) was replaced by a single hierarchy of universities. As indicated by Trow (1995), new status groupings of research universities, research and teaching, and mainly teaching universities were created. Dearlove (1998) concludes his assessment of the situation in the UK by stating that, notwithstanding the legal requirements for institutional diversity and government pressures for increased efficiency, the organisation of higher education would always be a somewhat messy business where much is decided informally under the skin of established and formal arrangements.

In their overview of Australian higher education reforms, Kelso and Leggett (1999) describe how a unitary system was created by

merging and transforming institutions in the mid-1990s. Commonwealth policy directives changed higher education from an elitist to a mass system, comprising 37 publically funded and two private universities. Four “clusters” of institutions – the so-called “group of 8, the second wave, the universities of technology and the former colleges” – can be distinguished on the grounds of their distinct institutional goals and missions. Meek & Wood (1998), in their studies on university governance in Australia found, *inter alia*, that tensions were markedly discernible between the executive leadership and the day-to-day practices on the academic shop-floor. Their findings pointed towards increasing discrepancies between the values, objectives and actions of central management and those of devolved units. Furthermore, Australian higher education faced, and is still facing, substantive challenges arising from massification combined with an increased emphasis on efficiency and competition.

1.2 Belgium and the Netherlands

Issues of language and cultural identity within a federal state make Belgian higher education an interesting object of study. The first real expansion of Belgian higher education started in 1965 with the establishment of a number of new universities (Verhoeven and Beuselink, 1999). Expansion was mainly the result of two factors: a greater demand for university education on the one hand and divisions between language and ideological groupings on the other. Currently the structure of higher education in Belgium is characterised firstly by a language divide (Flemish and French institutions) as well as by an academic–technical divide between universities and colleges of higher education (*hogescholen*). Both communities have thus retained the binary divide, although colleges have been organised into smaller groups to improve educational delivery. Attempts have also been made to bring universities and colleges closer together, although different missions and structures remain intact, as a result of which staff at universities are mainly rewarded for research, and those at colleges for teaching.

Before 1997, and following political developments in many Western European countries, the Dutch university system became mired in notions of representation and democratic governance (De Boer, Goedegebuure & Meek,

1998). In 1997 an act was passed by the Dutch parliament which provided much more scope for individual institutions towards executive leadership and managerialism. The Dutch higher education system represents a binary divide between the current 13 universities and 70 vocational institutions (*Hoger Beroepsonderwijs* or HBOs). While the main goals of the university sector include the pursuit of independent scholarship, preparing students for professional functions and bringing about an understanding of the ultimate unity of knowledge (De Weert, 1999), the main task of the HBO institutions is to provide theoretical and practical training with a clear vocational orientation. HBOs also have the important task of transferring and developing knowledge for the benefit of the professions in the industrial and service sectors. According to De Weert (1999) the current trend for these institutions is to operate on an increasingly national and international basis instead of providing learning opportunities relevant only for the regions or economies within which they are situated.

1.3 Canada and the United States

Savage (1999) points out that Canadian universities are firmly part of the North American tradition in the sense that there is no national system of higher education. Most universities are either *de facto* or *de jure* individual corporations, with their own boards of governors. The only exception is that of the University of Quebec system, where strong tendencies towards decentralisation are currently experienced. Since there is no single federal department responsible for higher education, the key governmental players are provincial governments. They have separate ministries of education responsible for the funding of higher education institutions within their jurisdiction. According to Savage (1999), there are currently 71 universities in Canada, while a number of colleges are affiliated to universities as degree granting institutions, and community colleges also offer recognised university transfer courses. The binary divide in the English-speaking parts of Canada was created, as in the United States (US), by the establishment of a community college sector. The participation rate for 18- to 24-year-olds in higher education was around 20% in 1993/4, at that stage increasing at a rate of three per cent per year. Currently

there is much talk and action on the issue of institutional differentiation, aiming to transform a number of universities into research intensive institutions while others would become essentially teaching institutions with no research permitted and effecting much lower costs. A more common form of the differentiation debate in Canada, however, is within institutions (Savage, 1999). It is argued that institutions should concentrate on what they do best. They have also realised that the closing down of classics or religion departments does nothing to solve budgetary problems. Only abolishing expensive programmes in science, engineering or medicine will have that effect. These are, however, precisely the programmes that boards of governors and provincial governments wish to maintain.

The history, culture and politics of the US have resulted in a highly decentralised, complex and pluralistic system of higher education. Horton (1999) points to the fact that in 1995 a total of 3698 higher education institutions were classified by the Department of Education according to ownership and types of degree qualifications offered. Although the responsibility for all education, including higher education, rests primarily with each of the 50 states, the Carnegie classification system to differentiate among institutions has been in operation for more than three decades (McCormick, 2000). In 1970, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education developed a classification taxonomy that would reflect the variety of higher education institutions in the US. Before 1970, simple descriptors such as level (two- or four-year institutions, with four-year institutions sometimes divided into doctoral and non-doctoral) and control (public or private, with private sometimes divided into sectarian and non-sectarian) were used. Such a taxonomy failed to capture important differences, grouping widely divergent institutions together, while separating institutions that had much in common, such as public and private research institutions (McCormick, 2000).

The Carnegie classification, adopted widely by researchers, policy makers, funding agencies, institutional staff and students, distinguished among the seven following types of institutions (1994 edition): Research Universities (I and II), Doctoral Universities (I and II), Baccalaureate Colleges (I and II) and Associate

of Arts Colleges. The 2000 edition, however, distinguishes among only five types of institutions, since research and doctoral granting universities have been jointly classified as Doctoral/Research Universities I and Doctoral/Research Universities II.

Horton (1999) suggests that institutional autonomy in the US has gradually been eroded by statewide boards, councils or commissions directing policy on public higher education. Even private colleges come under their ambit as states seek to plan for further growth. Consortia, massification and egalitarianism have made institutions interdependent rather than dependent and the trend is towards increased centralisation – from local to state or national level, and from private to public sector higher education.

1.4 Japan and Malaysia

Higher education in Japan currently consists of three types of institutions: universities, junior colleges and colleges of technology (Yamamoto, 1999). Universities are responsible for advanced teaching and research in specialised academic disciplines, while all universities may set up graduate schools that offer advanced studies up to the doctoral level. Junior colleges train students for vocational or practical life and programmes are normally two or three years in duration. Colleges of technology have lower entry requirements than universities and junior colleges and they equip students with knowledge and skills for vocational life. The participation rate of school-leavers in higher education rose from approximately 10% in 1960 to more than 45% in 1995. Table 1 provides an interesting picture of the type and number of higher education institutions in Japan by 1995.

Malaysia’s higher education system comprises eight national universities and one interna-

tional university, two colleges offering degree or degree equivalent programmes, 31 teacher training colleges and seven polytechnics providing vocational education (Hj Din and Shanmugam, 1999). While Malaysia had the highest per capita spending on higher education in the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean) region in 1994, it also had the lowest participation rate of 4.3% for the 19-24 age cohort. Besides referring to universities, colleges and polytechnics, Hj Din and Shanmugam (1999) highlight the fact that there are numerous private organisations which collaborate with universities from abroad via distance learning, franchising or joint study programmes. In this respect students are expected to spend about two years in Malaysia and complete the rest of their programmes at a foreign university. Private sector higher education institutions have expanded rapidly and the trend is to “corporatise” universities, meaning that the national government retains “ownership” but that universities are governed by their own legal statutes and administered by executive boards.

From the limited examples discussed above, it becomes clear that in many respects vast differences in higher education configurations exist among countries. These examples also illustrate that higher education landscapes have been influenced by historical, cultural, political and economic factors within particular contexts, but that globalisation and massification are increasingly forcing countries to re-evaluate their systems on a more regular basis than in the past. Farnham (1999:341) puts this quite succinctly:

“While the exact direction and depth of the changes differ among each of these countries, all the higher education systems appear to be experiencing similar trends such as massification, reductions in public

Table 1: Japanese higher education institutions by 1995

<i>Type of institution</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>National</i>	<i>Local</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>% of private institutions</i>	<i>Number of students</i>
Universities	565	98	52	415	73.5	2 546 649
Junior Colleges	596	36	60	500	83.9	498 516
Colleges of Technology	62	54	5	3	4.8	56 234
Total	1223	188	117	918	75.0	3 039 004

(Source: Yamamoto, 1999)

funding, movement to the market, curricular instrumentation and searching for appropriate methods of managing academic staff in conditions of change.”

Against this background the South African higher education system and in particular the proposals of the Shape and Size Task Team of the CHE, as well as responses to those proposals, will be discussed.

2. SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 Background

A number of universities and technikons in South Africa experienced serious management and financial problems during the latter half of the 1990s – mainly due to legacies from the previous political dispensation and weak control mechanisms. Structural and conjunctural problems characterised the higher education system. Structurally, issues such as fragmented geographical location, excessive competition amongst institutions for students, inefficiency, skewed student distributions among various fields of study and low output levels were obvious problem areas. Conjunctural problems included an unsuspected decline in student enrolments within the public higher education system, accompanying financial constraints on certain institutions, fragile governance capacities at several institutions and inadequate information systems.

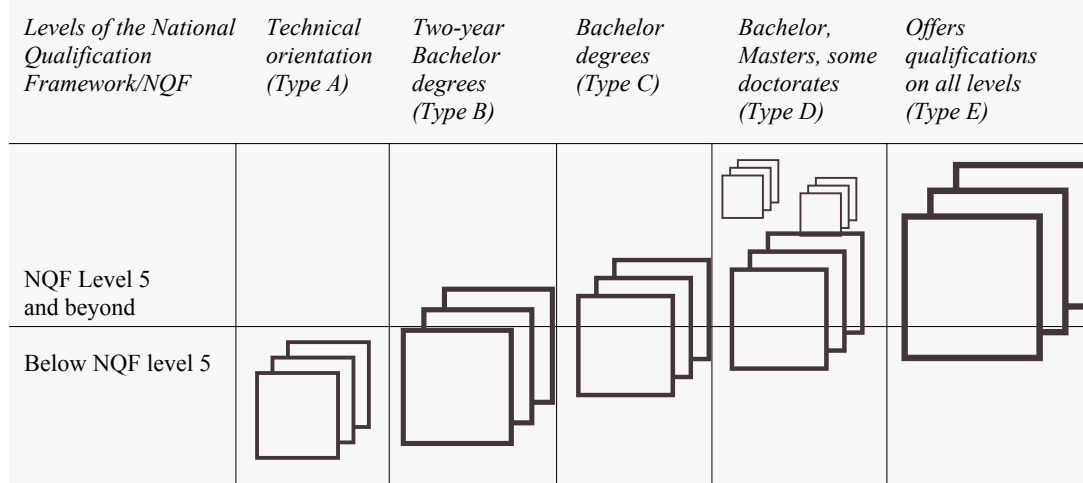
The Minister of Education requested the

CHE during the latter part of 1999 to provide him with advice on the reconfiguration of the higher education system in order to meet the high-level human resource needs of the country. In a memorandum produced in December 1999, the CHE proposed a number of key principles and bases upon which the reconfiguration of higher education should take place. It also proposed the establishment of a Task Team to develop details of a framework and strategies for the reconfiguration of the higher education landscape.

Following broad government policies as outlined in Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (RSA, 1997), the Task Team produced its first discussion document in April 2000 (Shape and Size Task Team, 2000), only three months after its establishment in February. The gist of the proposals in the discussion document entertained a differentiated higher education landscape constituting five types of institutions depicted in Figure 1.

The South African Universities’ Vice-Chancellors’ Association (SAUVCA) produced a 12-page response to the Task Team’s first discussion document issued in April 2000. Its response indicated that the proposals in the discussion document offered a prescriptive solution, which was not supported (SAUVCA, 2000: 1). It was stressed that any proposals should account for institutional and overall con-

Figure 1: Model of differentiation and institutional types (first discussion document of the Shape and Size Task Team)



(Source: Shape and Size Task Team Discussion Document, April 2000)

textual realities such as the development needs of the economy and society, transformation dynamics and the state of the present further education and schooling systems from which higher education draws its students. SAUVCA supported an incisive, but flexible system intervention consistent with the policies and goals of the White Paper on Higher Education (RSA, 1997) previously published. While the concept of differentiation in higher education was welcomed, the proposed typology was considered too restrictive and hierarchical by SAUVCA. It suggested regional solutions, new distinctive institutional missions, larger multi-campus institutions, closer attention to the equity issue and the use of existing powerful instruments like a new funding formula and a national higher education plan as steering mechanisms.

The Democratic Party's spokesperson on education, Mike Ellis (*The Sowetan*, May 1), responded by warning that the future of existing universities needed to be debated before any grading system should be suggested. He reiterated that expensive institutions with small student numbers and the overlapping of areas of specialisation among higher education institutions should be looked into as a priority. Ellis concluded that the higher education system needed to be reorganised and streamlined, and not complicated by the bureaucratic jungle of a grading system.

One institutional response (UWC, 2000), as an example, reflected concern that such a radical proposal was presented in a way which obscured its implications and practicability. Another concern was that the discussion document did not locate the proposals historically and politically, thus failing to situate the proposals within a broad frame of issues. As an example it was noted that no clarity was provided whether differentiation was to be effected only on an institutional basis, or also on a programmatic one. Being prescriptive with regard to research agendas was seen as "bizarre and pernicious", while the proposals were also criticised for overriding previously adopted government policies on higher education.

Taking note of the serious concerns raised by several stakeholders about the proposed differentiated model in the first discussion document, the final report (Shape and Size Task Team, 2000a) was handed to the Minister of Education by the end of June 2000.

2.2 The Shape and Size Report

The report seeks to reconfigure the South African higher education landscape in such a way that it delivers effectively and efficiently, based on the principles of equity, quality and a responsiveness to democratic values. It strives to provide a framework for the promotion of a coordinated system which will ensure that the knowledge and human resource needs of a developing democracy are effectively met.

A number of important issues are addressed by the report:

2.2.1 Goals, principles and values

One of the important goals of higher education is that of assisting in the process of eroding the legacy of socio-structural inequities, while providing opportunities for social advancement through equity of access and opportunity. By means of research, teaching and learning, as well as by way of community service programmes, higher education must produce the knowledge and personpower for national reconstruction and economic and social development. This would enable South Africa to engage proactively with and participate in a highly competitive global economy.

2.2.2 Key problems

The report states that most institutions have extremely low research outputs, and even those that demonstrate a higher ratio of research outputs in relation to other institutions, appear to be rather inconsistent as to their levels of output. Available data indicates that the research outputs of the higher education system have declined since 1994, thus compromising the research and development agenda of the country. In 1998, about 65% of all publications recognised for subsidy purposes were produced by only six of the 21 universities. These same six institutions also produced close to 70% of South Africa's total masters and doctoral graduates. The Task Team acknowledges that the technikons were initially not expected to conduct research and produce high-level graduates and that historically black universities were not designed as knowledge-producing institutions.

2.2.3 Effectiveness challenges

The reconfiguration of higher education is faced with the challenge of increasing the absolute number of graduates and diplomates to

address the shortage of high-level skills on the labour market. In this regard, the accelerated construction of appropriate programme mixes which are responsive to the growth and development needs of the country as well as to individual needs for employment is also urgent, particularly with a view to increasing the number of learners in science, engineering and technology (SET) fields. The dangers posed to the knowledge needs of society and the economy by low and declining numbers of research outputs also need to be addressed. Measures should be aimed at increasing the numbers of researchers as well as those of research outputs.

2.2.4 Outcomes of the reconfiguration exercise

According to the report, a more rational landscape for higher education will provide a more focused framework for innovation. Innovation in teaching and learning, as well as in research and in community service, is more likely to be stimulated through a concentration of resources and attention on niche areas – centres of excellence grounded in real intellectual and physical capabilities – than applying them across all areas within the system.

Differentiation and diversity in higher education is a characteristic of most national systems of higher education. A differentiated and diverse landscape should be based on the levels and kinds of programmes offered, the teaching and research capabilities of institutions, the human and physical resources of institutions, the qualifications of staff, and other features.

2.2.5 Growth and development

Higher education in South Africa also has a crucial role to play in improving the quality of schooling, health care, welfare services and other public services at national, provincial and local levels. This requires more active promotion of continuing education and the upgrading of professional knowledge and technical skills, thereby creating flexible opportunities for life-long learning among practising personnel in education, health, social services and other public sectors. It also requires thoughtfully applied and strategic research around key social policy issues and the concrete problems of social reconstruction and development. Such research, together with the upgrading, consolidation and continuous enhancement of the knowledge, competencies and skills of public sector person-

nel is indispensable for innovation, improved social delivery and development. Giving effect to life-long learning will require concentrated effort, the development of flexible continuing and adult education programmes and the necessary support and resources for such work.

2.2.6 Differentiation and diversity

“Differentiation” is used to refer to the social and educational mandates of institutions. The mandates orient institutions to meet economic and social goals by focusing on programmes at particular levels of the qualification structure and on particular kinds of research and community service. Qualitative and quantitative criteria (minimum student full-time equivalents [FTEs], minimum enrolments in broad fields, staff qualifications and research output, etc.) underpin the mandates of institutions. “Diversity” is used with reference to the specific missions of individual institutions. Differentiation and diversity are connected in that mandates provide the overall national framework within which individual institutions pursue specific institutional missions. To ensure diversity, the missions of individual institutions must be varied (*see Table 2, over page*).

The goal is a differentiated and diverse system that is at the same time integrated and coordinated. An integral feature of such a newly reconfigured system should be the articulation between institutions with different mandates and different missions, in order to ensure student and staff mobility, to enable teaching and research collaboration and to promote partnerships.

Quality assurance can then target programme improvement in a strategic way within single or across multiple institutions. Given the limited financial resources and the small number of academics with advanced qualifications and research experience, it makes little sense from a quality assurance point of view to have all higher education institutions offering, for example, doctoral level (or perhaps, even masters level) studies in all fields.

Providing a focused framework for knowledge production and application and innovation would be better achieved in a reconfigured and rational landscape for higher education. Innovation in teaching and learning, as well as in research and community service, will occur through a concentration of resources and atten-

Table 2: A proposal for institutional types based on orientation and focus

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>“Bedrock of the higher education system” institutions</i>	<i>Extensive masters and selective doctoral institutions</i>	<i>Comprehensive postgraduate research institutions</i>
Undergraduate programmes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Postgraduate Programmes	Limited programmes up to taught masters level. No doctoral programmes	Extensive taught and research programmes up to Masters level and selective taught and research programmes up to the doctoral level	Comprehensive taught and research programmes at doctoral level
Research mandate	Related to curriculum, learning and teaching with a view to application	Selected areas of research	Extensive research capabilities across a range of areas
FTEs	4000	6000	8000
Fields of study	Not specified	Humanities 25% Commerce 10% SET 15%	Humanities 15% Commerce 10% SET 25%
Postgraduate students	Not specified	5% FTEs on M & D level	10% FTEs on M & D level
Research output	Not specified	0.2 units/academic staff member	0.5 units/academic staff member
Academic staff	Not specified	20% doctorates	40% doctorates

(Derived from the Shape and Size Report, 2000)

tion on niche areas rather than across all areas within the system. The quality assurance system cannot be satisfied with minimum standards only. It must also facilitate excellence. One goal of higher education is to facilitate the creation, dissemination and evaluation of new knowledge and to contribute towards finding new applications of knowledge. This is normally achieved through high-level intellectual enquiry and research. The generation of new knowledge and the evaluation thereof is an activity subject to national as well as international norms and standards, underwritten by the generally accepted mechanism of peer review.

2.2.7 Research involvement of institutions

The report stresses that involvement in research makes heavy demands on higher education institutions in terms of the qualifications and quality of staff, the research infrastructure, the

quality and availability of post-graduate students, the quantity and quality of research outputs, etc. These requirements make it impossible for South Africa to sustain an adequately resourced, extensive and high-level research capability and involvement at all higher education institutions, carried out on an efficient and effective basis. The report suggests benchmark levels for postgraduate enrolments as well as for staff research outputs (mainly derived from Australian and New Zealand criteria).

2.2.8 Comprehensive post-graduate and research institutions

No country can institutionalise postgraduate teaching and high-level research in a comprehensive way in every one of its higher education institutions. The constraints of available human and financial resources preclude this, permitting the development of only a limited

number of institutions with such a mandate. This points towards a real need for the dedicated funding of postgraduate teaching and research. However, these conditions will not necessarily apply across the board, for it cannot be assumed that post-graduate teaching and research capabilities will exist in every field and discipline at all institutions. Institutions will be subject to accreditation processes and quality assurance procedures for gaining access to public funding.

In collectively offering a comprehensive range of taught and research postgraduate programmes, these institutions will also have to ensure that they produce increasing numbers of high-level black and female graduates who are equipped to occupy positions in the public and private sectors, as well as academic positions at higher education institutions. Thus, they have the social responsibility of contributing to transforming the inequitable predominance of white and male South Africans as academics in research and development establishments, and at senior levels in the private and public sectors.

Constituting the class will pose a special challenge to these institutions if they wish to avoid becoming the preserves of solely white and Indian students, and those from upper middle-class and wealthy backgrounds. Serious attention will have to be paid to access and opportunities for black and Coloured students, students from working class and poor rural families, and adult learners.

2.2.9 *The degree structure*

The Task Team proposes that provision should be made for the introduction of a four-year first bachelor's degree. The first two years of the four-year first bachelor's degree could provide for the development of required generic and foundation skills and include some broad discipline and multi-discipline based knowledge. Years three and four of the degree could include a strong emphasis on single discipline and multi-discipline based specialisation, including an introduction to elementary forms of investigation and research methodology. The implication of and the relation between the four-year degree and the existing Honours qualification would need to be examined.

2.2.10 *Funding*

One recommendation on funding purports that

a "blind" research funding component be terminated, so that research would have to qualify for earmarked funding. Such earmarked funds should make provision for dedicated research and development work related to curriculum, learning and teaching, while at the same time offering incentives for research collaboration among academics based at institutions with different mandates. They should also support new academics for a set period and help build capabilities at certain institutions which have been placed on a developmental trajectory for reasons of social need and redress.

In essence the report recommends that:

- the present (binary) higher education system should be reconfigured into a differentiated and diverse system which would be responsive to the varied social needs of the country
- higher education institutions should have differentiated mandates and purposes with respect to knowledge production and successful graduates (cf. Table 2)
- traditionally disadvantaged institutions should be put on developmental trajectories
- there should be no closure of institutions, but that the number of institutions should be reduced through combination (of which several examples are being mentioned in the report)
- the higher education participation rates of "African, Coloured and mature" learners should be increased
- as part of the development of a national plan there should be an iterative process between the minister and institutions
- the present levels of public funding for higher education should be maintained.

Since the recommendations are much more elaborate than the summary above suggests, it is impossible to capture all the nuances of the various responses to the proposals of the Task Team. What follows is an attempt to delineate some of the more important areas of response offered by the printed media, institutions and other stakeholders.

3. RESPONSES TO THE FINAL PROPOSALS OF THE SHAPE AND SIZE TASK TEAM

The Task Team's detailed proposals to Education Minister Asmal in June 2000 (Shape and Size Team: 2000a) elicited a distinctly more positive response than the proposals contained in the initial discussion document.

Reporters and commentators reacted positively to ideas concerning the merging of institutions and the streamlining of the system. The proposed unifying and differentiation measures were also perceived as sound and sensible (*Sunday Times*, July 23; *The Sowetan*, July 19; *Business Day*, July 19; *The Star*, July 19; *The Citizen*, July 20). However, institutions directly implicated for combining with other institutions were quick to react: Professor David Woods of Rhodes University (*The Citizen*, July 20) was not in agreement that sheer numbers should be a criterion for the grading of an institution. Vista University issued a statement pointing out that the Task Team's recommendations concerning Vista was made on the basis of incomplete and incorrect information (*The Citizen*, July 20), while Professor Brenda Gourley from the University of Natal warned against the implications of forced mergers (*Beeld*, July 20).

Institutional responses to the proposals generated a vast number of viewpoints. As an example, the response of one institution is briefly summarised below (University of Stellenbosch, 2000):

- Proposals that the higher education system should be characterised by excellence, relevance and cost efficiency in order to assist the country in achieving a meaningful level of sustained growth were welcomed. Also the 20% overall participation rate for the 19–24 age cohort of the population was seen as a laudable goal for the system. The role of a sound schooling system in the realisation of this goal was stressed in particular. The important contribution of sustained academic support to underprepared students entering higher education, at least in the interim, was also highlighted.
- Measures to ensure accountable differentiation and diversity were welcomed. It was also acknowledged that, because of softer distinctions between pure and applied knowledge, stronger emphasis could not be placed on horizontal differentiation (such as the technikon–university divide). A proposal particularly welcomed was that of softening institutional mandate boundaries and offering institutions the opportunity to place themselves on a realistic development trajectory.
- It would be preferable if technikons had shown a stronger resistance to institutional drift, remaining committed to the goals origi-

nally set for them, since South Africa did not need general purpose institutions. What was needed instead, were institutions that emphasised science, engineering and technology as being instrumental to their primary mission. It was hoped that forms of encouragement and possible incentives were to be introduced, whereby institutions would be enabled to adopt technological profiles.

- Objections were raised against the proposal that student numbers be used as a major criterion for the classification of institutions. While admitting that this has become a trend in many public higher education systems in order to curb costs, the university in question also pointed out that many institutions in South Africa are located in rural or semi-rural areas. Since government is also committed to the development of rural communities, it might be advisable to soften the criteria for institutions located in these areas, while hardening them for institutions in urban areas.
- Concern was voiced that any timeframe for realising the proposed differentiated system might be too tight. It is important to consider that higher education institutions do not change quickly and that it could take, for instance, ten to twelve years to produce a doctoral student who can initiate and conduct independent research. Higher education institutions should therefore be given a realistic timeframe in which to prove their development towards a particular type of institution.
- A multifaceted approach to institutional combinations, by means of which a variety of combinations will be catered for, was suggested by the commenting institution. This institution was not convinced that mergers or combinations between the institutions as suggested in the report would achieve the desired results in the long term. As was proven elsewhere in the world, geographical distance and status differences between institutions play a significant role in the success of combinations/mergers.
- The development of a clear policy directive on the provision of distance education in South Africa, as well as the lack of any attempt to return to a rigid separation of distance and contact education modes, was welcomed. In addition, the emphasis on quality assurance in higher education was considered as a strong element of the report.

Currently the most prevalent question in higher education circles probably concerns the outcome of the proposals moved by the CHE Shape and Size Task Team. What will be accepted and what rejected when the Minister presents the report to cabinet in September? If accepted, what will the effect of the proposals have on higher education? The next section offers some brief speculation on these and similar questions.

4. POSSIBLE FUTURE PROGRESS AND IMPLICATIONS

It is inevitable that the higher education landscape in South Africa is finding itself in a process of dramatic change. The main issue is no longer whether it will change, but how radical the changes will be, and within which time-frame they will be effected. It has been concluded by Farnham (1999) that changes in higher education systems worldwide could be grouped into categories (*see Table 3*).

Considering countries where “extensive to significant” changes in higher education took place since the 1980s, it is clear that those are the countries which have been actively involved with the post-apartheid government in South Africa before and since the elections in 1994. It is therefore to be expected that any advice rendered by those countries (in particular Com-

monwealth countries) to South Africa might lean towards the more radical side in terms of change in higher education. Farnham (1999: 344) concluded that change in those countries has been “... far-reaching, radical and probably irreversible”.

The report seems to have heralded the end of the binary divide between technical/technological and academic (technikons and universities) institutions in South Africa. A considerable degree of institutional drift had already taken place: technikons are positioning themselves as technological universities and universities are repositioning themselves for the new differentiated landscape. It could therefore no longer be a question of whether the three-tiered higher education configuration will be accepted, but rather how it will be implemented and what new institutional combinations will emerge. One of the most crucial elements, however, might be how the Minister would handle such a transitional period. Should he adopt an autocratic approach, it is likely that institutions and their constituencies, staff unions and sectoral groupings like SAUVCA will flex their muscles. If, however, he approaches the process in a democratic, participative way, it might be possible to change the landscape in a relatively short period of time.

Another reality which cabinet will be con-

Table 3: Indicative rates of change in national systems of higher education, post-1980

GROUP 1	Australia United Kingdom	EXTENSIVE CHANGE
GROUP 2	Finland The Netherlands Sweden Belgium (Flemish-speaking) Canada	SIGNIFICANT CHANGE
GROUP 3	Ireland Spain Belgium (French-speaking) Malaysia United States	MODERATE CHANGE
GROUP 4	France Germany Italy Japan	RESTRICTED CHANGE

(Source: Farnham, 1999)

fronted with, is the number of ineffective and inefficient institutions of higher education in South Africa. Although higher education institutions would try to convince them of the contrary, known figures tell a different story in terms of research output, student debt, teaching costs per student and other indicators. Although the Task Team has not recommend any closures, the government would be hard-pressed to account for this type of squandering. Mergers, combinations, rationalisation of programme presentation or other such measures would become inevitable.

On the question of quality assurance, the CHE has already produced a founding document (Council on Higher Education, 2000b) to establish the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). Institutions are currently being invited to comment on this document. The Minister will thus be in a position to present sound suggestions as to internal and external quality assurance in higher education.

Firm policy decisions by Cabinet and the National Department of Education will hopefully also bring an end to the haphazard way in which institutional planning processes in higher education have been conducted during the past number of years. The absence of a firm planning and funding framework was not conducive to any meaningful institutional planning. In view of clearer guidelines, however, institutions will at least be better equipped to conduct more rigorous self-assessment and determine their own future positioning within the higher education landscape.

CONCLUSION

Substantive growth in higher education systems

around the world has had at least two important effects: pressure to increase differentiation among and within institutions, which has run counter to the integrating effects of the dissolution of binary systems; and a devaluing of the teaching function in favour of research.

Ramsden (1998) points out that both these effects are in opposition to traditional models of single ideal institutional types which pro-pound the advantages of a full range of disciplines and a close relationship between teaching and research.

In addition, Barnett (1992) suggests that we should start to explain at a structural level why debates and concerns about higher education have a public resonance. The growing temporary interest in higher education is prompted and fanned by forces external to the higher education community, something to be very aware of if we wish to rise above the challenges currently confronting the sector.

The Shape and Size Task Team (2000a) has identified a number of problems and weaknesses afflicting the higher education system in South Africa. It has clearly indicated that such problems and weaknesses should not be tolerated.

To promote possibilities for consolidation, the Task Team has suggested a differentiated higher education landscape involving a number of important related proposals, one of its key premises being that the contribution of higher education in the public domain is not self-evident and the case for quality and equitable public higher education in South Africa should be made in a democratic way. Higher educationists will inevitably have to participate actively in this democratic process.

REFERENCES

- ALEXANDER, F. KING. 1998. The Endless Pursuit of Efficiency: The International Movement to Increase Accountability and Performance in Higher Education. *ASHE Annual Meeting Paper*. November.
- BARNETT, RONALD (ED.). 1992. *Learning to Effect*. Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.
- BEELD, July 20, 2000.
- BUSINESS DAY, July 19, 2000.
- BUSINESS DAY, July 20, 2000.
- CABAL, A.B. 1993. *The University as Institution Today. Topics for Reflection*. Paris: Unesco.
- CLARK, BURTON R. 1998. Creating Entrepreneurial Universities: Organisational Pathways of Transformation. *Issues in Higher Education*. New York: Elsevier.
- COLLIS, B.A. & DE BOER, W.F. 1998. Rapid Prototyping as a Faculty-Wide Activity: An Innovative Approach to the Redesign of Courses and Instructional Methods at the University of Twente. *Educational Media International*, 35(2) :117-121, June.
- COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION. 2000. Size and Shape Task Team Discussion Document. April 7.
- COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION. 2000a. Report: *Towards a New Higher Education Landscape*. June 30.
- COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION. 2000b. Founding Document. Higher Education Quality Committee. August 2000.
- COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION. 1999. Consultative Conference Discussion Paper. *South African Higher Education at the Beginning of the New Millennium: Realities, Problems and Challenges*. Benoni: November 29-30.
- DEARLOVE, J. 1998. Fundamental changes in institutional governance structures: the United Kingdom. *Higher Education Policy*, 11 (2/3): 111-120.
- DE BOER, HARRY; GOEDEGEBUURE, LEO; & MEEK, LYNN. 1998. In the winter of discontent, business – as usual (Editorial). *Higher Education Policy*, 11(2/3): 103-110.
- DE WEERT, EGBERT. 1999. The Netherlands: Reshaping the employment relationship. In: Farnham, David (Ed.) *Managing Academic Staff in Changing University Systems. International Trends and Comparisons*. Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press. 158-173.
- FARNHAM, DAVID (ED.). 1999. *Managing Academic Staff in Changing University Systems. International Trends and Comparisons*. Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.
- GUSKIN, A.E. 1996. Facing the future – the change process in restructuring universities. *Change*, July/August: 27-37.
- HJ DIN, MOHAMMED SALLEH & SHANMUGAM BALA, 1999. Malaysia: an Emerging Professional Group. In: Farnham, David (Ed.). *Managing Academic Staff in Changing University Systems. International Trends and Comparisons*. Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press. 324-339.
- HORTON, SYLVIA. 1999. The United States: Self-Governed Profession or Managed Occupation? In: Farnham, David (Ed.). *Managing Academic Staff in Changing University Systems. International Trends and Comparisons*. Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press. 260-289.
- KELSO, ROBERT & LEGGETT, CHRISTOPHER. 1999. Australia: From Collegiality to Corporatism. In: Farnham, David (Ed.). *Managing Academic Staff in Changing University Systems. International Trends and Comparisons*. Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press. 293-310.
- LETNER, ERICH (ED.). 1998. Educational Research and Higher Education Reform in Eastern and Central Europe. *Studies in Comparative Education*, Vol. 6. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- MCCORMICK, ALEXANDER C. 2000. Bringing the Carnegie classification into the 21st Century. *AAHE Bulletin*, 52(5): 3-6.
- MEEK, V. LYNN & WOOD, FIONA Q. 1998. Higher education governance and management: Australia. *Higher Education Policy*, 11 (2/3): 165-182.
- RAMSDEN, PAUL. 1998. *Learning to lead in*

- higher education*. London & New York: Routledge.
- RSA. (REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA) 1997. Third White Paper on Higher Education Transformation. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- SAUVCA. (SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES' VICE-CHANCELLORS' ASSOCIATION) 2000. Response to the CHE's Shape and Size Proposal. Pretoria. May 15.
- SAUVCA CIRCULAR 133/2000 – CHE REPORT: Comments. July 26.
- SAVAGE, DONALD C. 1999. Canada: Neo-Conservative Challenges to Faculty and their Unions. In: Farnham, David (Ed.). *Managing Academic Staff in Changing University Systems. International Trends and Comparisons*. Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press. 239-259.
- SUNDAY TIMES, July 23, 2000.
- THE CITIZEN, July 20, 2000.
- THE SOWETAN, July 19, 2000.
- THE SOWETAN, May 1, 2000.
- THE STAR, July 19, 2000.
- TROW, MARTIN. 1995. Comparative reflections on diversity in British higher education. Paper prepared for the CVCP seminar on diversity in higher education. London. 14–15 September.
- UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH. 2000. Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Comments on the Size and Shape Report. August 25.
- UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE. 2000. Response to the CHE Task Group Discussion Paper on Size and Shape. April 26.
- VERHOEVEN, JEF. C. & BEUSELINCK, ILSE. 1999. Belgium: Diverging Professions in Twin Communities. In: Farnham, David (Ed.). *Managing Academic Staff in Changing University Systems. International Trends and Comparisons*. Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University 35-57.
- YAMAMOTO, KIYOSHI. 1999. Japan: Collegiality in a Paternalist System. In: Farnham, David (Ed.). *Managing Academic Staff in Changing University Systems. International Trends and Comparisons*. Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press. 311-323.

Programme

Wednesday, 27 September 2000

08:00 Registration

09:00–11:00 FIRST SESSION
CHAIRPERSON: PROF. NIC PRINSLOO

Welcome

Prof. Walter Claassen, *Vice-Rector (Research), University of Stellenbosch*

Opening Remarks

Dr Michael Lange, *Resident Representative,
Konrad Adenauer Foundation – Johannesburg*

Education in an Age of Rising Transnationality

Prof. Wolfgang Mitter, *German Institute for International Educational Research,
Frankfurt am Main, Germany*

Balancing Quality and Equality in Educational Transformation

Prof. Johann Steyn, *Department of Education Policy Studies,
University of Stellenbosch*

Education for Democracy: Revisiting Rortyan Pragmatism

Dr Yusef Waghid, *Senior Lecturer, Department of Education Policy Studies,
Faculty of Education, University of Stellenbosch*

Discussion

11:30–13:00 SECOND SESSION
CHAIRPERSON: DR DAVID TAYLOR

The Values Underlying Quality and Equality in Educational Transformation

Dr Jeanette de Klerk, *Department of Education Policy Studies,
University of Stellenbosch*

Quality Education and Equal Opportunities in Education: Current Discussion in Germany

Dr Hans Döbert, *German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF), Berlin*

Rhetoric and Language Issues in Education in the South African Democracy

Prof. Stanley Ridge, *University of the Western Cape*

Discussion

14:00–15:30

THIRD SESSION

CHAIRPERSON: DR JOHAN SCHREUDER

Dealing with the Principle of Equality in East Germany from 1945 to 1990

Dr Gert Geißler, *German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF), Berlin*

Official Policy Related to Quality and Equality in Education: A Documentary Study

Dr Willem du Plessis, *Department of Education Policy Studies, University of Stellenbosch*

Educational Research as Democratic Praxis

Mr Lesley le Grange, *University of Stellenbosch*

Discussion

16:00–17:45

FOURTH SESSION

CHAIRPERSON: DR JEANETTE DE KLERK

Quality Indicators for South African Schools Against the Background of International Practices

Dr Heinie Brand, *Eversdal Primary School*

Assessment: Transforming Policy into Practice

Dr Riana Hall & Ms Wilma Rossouw, *University of Stellenbosch*

A Case for Human Rights Education in an African Context: The Concept and the Practice

Mr Tarcisio Nyatsanza, *African University, Mutare, Zimbabwe*

Discussion

Thursday, 28 September 2000

09:00–11:00

FIFTH SESSION

CHAIRPERSON: PROF. STAN RIDGE

Implications of Culturally Based Assumptions of Leadership for the process of Educational Transformation

Dr Johan Schreuder, *University of Stellenbosch*

The Need for the Transformation of Religion in Education: Towards an Understanding of Democratic Values

Dr Cornelia Roux, *Department of Didactics, University of Stellenbosch*

Democratic Values and Content-Specific Language Teaching and Learning: Experiences in the Northern Cape

Dr Carol Puhl, *Centre for Education Development, University of Stellenbosch & Dr Jeanette de Klerk, Department of Education Policy Studies, University of Stellenbosch*

Language and Democracy

Dr Elaine Ridge, *University of Stellenbosch*

Discussion

11:30–13:00

SIXTH SESSION

CHAIRPERSON: DR YUSEF WAGHID

Some Obstacles Obstructing Transformation of Education in South Africa

Prof. Nic Prinsloo, *University of Stellenbosch*

Can Devolution of Power Enable Transformation in South African School Systems?

Mr Chris Reddy, *Faculty of Education, University of Stellenbosch*

Shaping and Sizing: Proposed Transformations of the Higher Education Landscape in South Africa

Prof. Eli Bitzer, *University of Stellenbosch*

Discussion

14:00–15:00

SEVENTH SESSION

CHAIRPERSON: DR DAVID TAYLOR

Workshops Report Back and Discussion

Prof. Sonia Human, Drs Jeanette de Klerk & Johan Schreuder