CHAPTER 8

From bureaucratic compliance to creating new knowledge: comparative patterns of curriculum change

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Opportunities and challenges, responsibility and power

We have attempted to illuminate the conditions of possibility for the development of new teachers across a newly created national education system. Such a project is ambitious, and we have been able only to sketch out the contours of the terrain.

South African teacher educators are in a position where they have potentially great opportunities but also face severe challenges. The positive opportunities relate to the new higher education location of professional teacher education, and the space to redesign programmes in a way that encourages disciplined inquiry and academic disciplinary-based curricula. The case studies illuminated the massive and sometimes conflicting demands and expectations – on individual universities, on the new faculties and schools of education, and on teacher education academics – that constrain their best efforts. There is evidence that faculties and schools often do not have sufficient power and resources to meet their responsibilities.

In this chapter, we compare trajectories of curriculum development across the system, illustrating the complex intersection of dynamics operating at the macro-, meso- and micro-levels. The conclusion is that over the last 10 years, recurriculation of initial professional education of teachers (IPET) programmes has primarily taken the form of bureaucratic compliance, although there is evidence of the ability to create new knowledge. Analysis points to a set of controversies and directions that can promote the ability for more universities to 'create new knowledge' to inform future development of the teacher education system.

A comparison of recurriculation dynamics

University of Zululand: ad hoc institutional compliance

The case of the University of Zululand (UZ) provides an exemplar of the challenges at historically black universities, which for the most part continue to be 'black universities, desegregated in theory but in fact catering to the poorer or less qualified black students' (Morrow 2008: 266).

We have argued that of the five cases in the study, this historically black university has undergone the least disruptive institutional restructuring. College incorporation had minimal impact, as the Faculty of Education responded in a short-term manner

to the opportunities offered by the injection of pipeline students to halt a decline in student numbers. The shift to becoming a comprehensive university likewise had minimal impact on the Education Faculty in terms of developing its strategic direction.

In general, the faculty tended to react in a short-term manner to external imperatives. The arrangements for teaching in the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) and Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) programmes, to the personal benefit of staff but at a cost to the academic and professional benefits, are a case in point. At the micro-level, it seems that staff were primarily concerned with protecting jobs. At the meso-level, the faculty was concerned with defending its large full-time equivalents (FTEs) and financial standing in the university, in contestation with other faculties. In terms of IPET curriculum, these dynamics meant that there was little attempt at substantial review, research or redevelopment. The same programmes and practices were maintained for years, with priorities lying elsewhere.

This situation may have continued indefinitely if not for the negative assessment by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) National Review of the quality of some of the UZ IPET programmes. The case reveals starkly how the HEQC was a strong direct driver of change in these programmes. Here, state regulatory instruments were used in a direct way in an attempt to improve the quality of teacher education in the province. The review provided the central university management with a lever to bring about change, in the form of a new executive dean from outside the institution. With formal authority to act, and not being entrenched in the prevailing stakeholder institutional culture, the new dean was able to make strong interventions based on logic and good practice, rather than on the prevalent basis of individual academic or personal interests.

The staff reacted relatively positively to this externally driven management intervention, implementing, for example, the changes to teaching practice required by the HEQC. There is evidence of the beginnings of a clear shift away from allowing stakeholder interests (whether of staff or of students) to drive programmes at the meso- and micro-levels. The changes to teaching practice were planned in a reactive way, in direct response to an externally imposed threat to programme accreditation and, hence, to the continued existence of the faculty – and a considerable revenue stream for the university. There is little evidence of theoretical or disciplinary-informed intervention. Analysis of the changes suggests that they were informed by commonly accepted good practice in other universities – for example, placing students in schools that provide a 'good' learning environment rather than letting students choose the school most convenient for them.

However, in line with the Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE), one may expect that teaching practice should be at the core of a revised programme, integrating what is taught in each theoretical and practical module. The practical component is viewed as the essential feature of all teacher education programmes, as a

> mode of delivery through which all the different roles of educators should be developed and assessed. Time spent in the workplace...should provide the authentic context within which student educators experience and demonstrate the *integration of the competences developed in the entire curriculum*. (DoE 2000a: 5; italics added)

Changes to the teaching-practice component should ideally have been part of a comprehensive recurriculation process rather than an ad hoc revision. Nevertheless, the changes are important symbolically in signalling the intention to change and be responsive to quality imperatives.

What remains to be seen is whether in future there will be sufficient resources and the will within this historically black university for quality IPET programme development to be academically driven in terms of a coherent vision of teacher education. At this point, there are positive indications of change, but recurriculation has largely taken the form of an ad hoc, institutionally driven attempt at compliance with national directives, given the direct threat of withdrawal of accreditation of core programmes.

UNISA: bureaucratic compliance and the weakening of academic autonomy

The University of South Africa (UNISA) incorporated two colleges, a distance technikon and parts of a distance university, but in a way that meant UNISA's academic culture and programmes continued to prevail. Very small numbers of academic staff were retained, and they were absorbed into existing UNISA programmes. However, academic staff at UNISA are rather battered by the impact of a series of internal restructuring processes at the meso-level. The first was a shift to a programme-based structure for the Education Faculty, which displaced long-standing disciplinary homes and allegiances. The second and third processes were directly related to the effect of mergers: the creation of a new organisational and management structure. In a series of moves, education lost its institutional position and status, becoming a cluster of three departments within a school within a college. Herman and Pillay argue in Chapter 4 that critical ambivalences around the role and nature of the university and around teacher education within the changing university paralysed the UNISA academic community. The loss of institutional memory with the departure of experienced senior academics, and the promotion of younger staff from within the faculty to lead the departments, has meant a lack of strong intellectual leadership to drive curriculum development. The dispersion of power at meso-level, the lack of leadership at micro-level and the displacement of academic identities largely explain why the intense change process did not carry over to significant changes to the curriculum.

The response to the series of macro-level curriculum imperatives was reactive, and largely took the form of technical changes to the nomenclature or structure of programmes in order to comply with requirements for accreditation and registration. For many years there was no real substantive curriculum change and no systematic curriculum review processes, despite widespread recognition on the part of academics that the curriculum was overcrowded with too many modules, not logically coherent and not very workable for staff or students. Here the nature of distance education comes into play, as existing courses and modules have acquired an extra weight, given the investment in materials development that makes change difficult.

As at UZ, the outcome of conditional accreditation from the HEQC review has been a direct impetus to change at UNISA. Curriculum committees have been established and there are plans to implement a new curriculum structure that attempts to balance professional and academic studies. What remains to be seen is whether the institutional leadership will be able to address the strong academic alienation in order to harness intellectual energy into substantive curriculum design processes –

particularly given that there are almost 10 000 future teachers currently enrolled, and given the potential reach and promise of distance education.

Overall, the prevailing feature of curriculum change at UNISA to date has been ad hoc bureaucratic and technical compliance with national directives.

North West University: bureaucratic compliance and contestation

North West University (NWU) underwent one of the most complex forms of restructuring, merging a historically disadvantaged and a historically advantaged university, each of which had incorporated colleges in a form of protected enclosure that meant a strong college presence, and each of which had a strongly contrasting ideological orientation. The curriculum at the University of the North-West (formerly the University of Bophuthatswana) had historically been critical and innovative but over time had ossified, leading to a gap between the formal and the espoused curricula. The curriculum at University of Potchefstroom had historically been conservative, strongly informed by a Christian ethos but increasingly dominated by a professional training orientation after college incorporation.

At the meso-level, two significant features shaped IPET recurriculation: the Faculty of Education on each campus continued to operate on parallel tracks with no attempt at programme alignment, and there were perceptions of a process of 'Potchefication', or the growing dominance of Potchefstroom-based management and academics in practice. The fact that IPET student numbers were larger on the Potchefstroom campus reinforced the perceived imbalance.

As at UZ and UNISA, the HEQC review process was a strong direct driver of curriculum change at NWU. The Potchefstroom faculty did not receive accreditation for its master's programme in 2006, while the Mafikeng campus did. Concern about the loss of accreditation in the upcoming review of IPET programmes in 2007 was reportedly a direct impetus for the faculty to establish a process of curriculum alignment across the two campuses for the first time. In contrast to UZ, the process was initiated by the NWU faculty itself, but here the initiative intersected with an institution-wide, post-merger focus on curriculum alignment. Thus, at the meso-level, a formal structured process of alignment was initiated by the faculty but was strongly influenced by a centralised university unit established specifically to drive recurriculation in order to give substance to the merger.

What is of particular note here is the strong degree of formal compliance with national directives, evident in the use of the draft Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) guidelines to structure new programmes – even before the HEQF had been formally gazetted in final form. As Hoadley notes in Chapter 3, this was in line with the well-established pattern of a compliant relationship between the university and the state.

At the institutional level, a cross-campus, formally inclusive process was set up with strong deadlines and time pressures for completion, which impacted on what was possible for IPET. The outcome was a single formal curriculum that strongly reflected the NSE in a literal and unreconstructed manner. However, Hoadley's analysis reveals a lack of consensus in relation to the espoused curriculum and a resistance to implementation of the new BEd curriculum in practice. This related to micro-level dynamics within the curriculum committees and working groups, and to the distinctly

different ideological orientations to teacher education reflecting the academic legacy on each campus.

This case is thus characterised by strong bureaucratic compliance to national norms in the formal curriculum. While the BEd curriculum has a formal coherent logic, in effect, the espoused and enacted curricula are likely to be characterised by the accretion of potentially contradictory multiple approaches as they have developed over time, brought by multiple academics to the lecture room. It remains to be seen whether the process of recurriculation will foster integration between the two campuses, and whether the curriculum will meet the needs of students and academics on each campus.

Cape Peninsula University of Technology: process and potential

Similar to NWU, curriculum restructuring at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) is strongly driven by the contrasting legacy of the two technikons and the two colleges from which it is constituted, and specifically by the imperatives for all of its academics to develop a vision of what it means to become a 'university of technology'.

Two key factors, one macro and one meso, have altered the working lives of CPUT teacher educators. The first, the upgrading of IPET qualifications from a diploma to a degree programme, has meant that lecturers have had to upgrade course qualifications to meet new policy requirements, without necessarily having the financial or academic support to meet these demands. A second factor relates to the alignment of complementary IPET programmes across three campuses, underpinned by different values that were rooted in the political views prevailing in the constituent institutions in apartheid South Africa.

With college incorporation, education became a new institutional strategic focus for the Cape Technikon, structured in a faculty with a new dean who was mandated to develop the research capacity and profile of staff as a priority. The colleges were incorporated in a process of formally equal partnership but of largely subsumed integration in practice. The qualifications offered by the technikons were aimed at the Further Education and Training (FET) band, and the two colleges brought complementary expertise, both offering programmes at the General Education and Training (GET) band but in different geographical locations and to distinct constituencies. The financial and managerial imperatives of the then technikon prevailed in establishing staff-student ratios and so on, which impacted on pedagogical styles and delivery modes and led to contestation at the meso-level. There was considerable resentment of technikon management, both personally and professionally.

At the micro-level, a cross-campus process was initiated by the faculty to create alignment of formal curriculum for the BEd GET phase, in an attempt to create synergy within the new institution. The dean played a key leadership role in driving alignment, proposing a principle of 'equivalence of outcomes' as the frame for collaboration and compromise. This allowed each campus to continue to teach their BEd GET phase programmes with a degree of equivalence and alignment. Cross-campus curriculum committees were key mechanisms for negotiating change.

CPUT had thus displayed that it was capable of proactive and strategic action, in line with its mission as the largest IPET provider in the province. However, the period

of national policy vacuum hindered more substantial development of a common curriculum, beyond formal alignment.

The merger with Peninsula Technikon proceeded smoothly, but in effect it has thus far taken the form of protected enclosure. The Bellville campus team proceeded on a parallel track, largely continuing with its complementary BEd FET programmes.

CPUT was also driven by anticipation of the HEQC review process. A fresh structured process of recurriculation to deepen alignment was initiated internally at micro-level by faculty leadership and academics involved in the BEd GET programme. At this point, the fault lines between staff from the two colleges and between college and central management that had been accommodated in the shared vision of 'equivalence' became more evident. An emerging shared commitment to a 'constructivist' approach was not strong enough to displace the conflicting legacies of groups of lecturers. Contestation and disagreement resulted, and there was considerable deadlock around proposed changes to the role of disciplines in the curriculum structure. As a result of the disagreement, by the time of writing, CPUT had not been able to introduce a revised BEd Intermediate and Senior Phase programme.

Thus, in contrast to UZ, UNISA and NWU, curriculum change at CPUT was driven less by responses at the meso-level to macro-imperatives, and more strongly by academic and professional priorities at the micro-level. The legacy of restructuring was such that cross-campus contestation at the micro-level means that, for now, the formal curriculum is characterised by an accretion of potentially contradictory approaches and models. The orientation of staff located at the three campuses still tends to be shaped strongly by earlier positions and identities, and these remain difficult to reconcile.

CPUT has begun the process and has the potential to create new knowledge and practice for teacher education, but the extent to which it succeeds will be influenced by the ways in which it can mediate different legacies and develop a solid academic foundation.

University of the Witwatersrand: creating new knowledge and practice for teacher education

The University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) experienced a relatively simple process of restructuring in a form of protected enclosure, incorporating within its School of Education a single college with which it had a strong teaching relationship. Both academically strong in relation to their institutional type, the legacy College and School ran on parallel tracks with no integration or curriculum alignment – and strong contestation between them – for some years.

At the meso-level, the central management of the university intervened, driven by a stated commitment to teacher education as a national priority. Unlike UZ and NWU, where management was driven in response to the HEQC review, Wits management took proactive steps earlier, from 2004, to appoint an external consultant to recommend a future structural configuration. His recommendation of an integrated structure that would draw on the strengths of both the College and the School was accepted, and a new dean was appointed from outside the university. This new dean intervened strongly to actualise the new vision, overcoming reluctance and generating enthusiasm and new energy in the process.

The university funding model and prioritisation of research at the meso-level served to reinforce the power of the former university academics within the new Wits School of Education (WSoE), shaping the emphasis on developing research capacity of former college lecturers and reinforcing the predominance of a theoretically informed approach to teacher education.

As at CPUT, a structured process of recurriculation of the BEd was initiated within the faculty at the micro-level in 2007. This process was informed by the formal and espoused curriculum for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme, which had been developed organically and coherently by a strong academic team over a number of years. An attempt was made to extend a coherent academic logic to the formal BEd curriculum, which had largely involved a legalistic interpretation of the NSE, new nomenclature and additions to the three-year diploma programme of the College. The legacy of the College means that a degree of contestation between the theoretical and professional orientation of programmes still persists. Academics are concerned that programmes be designed to take into account the type of students, their language and academic preparedness for teacher education.

What remains to be seen is the way in which these moves towards integration and intellectual dialogue are consolidated and translated substantively into recurriculation of the BEd. The strong research base at the WSoE has provided a resource for creating new knowledge and practice for teacher education.

Exemplars and generalisability

The complexity, distinctiveness and variation of each case are marked. Yet, each case was selected to illuminate a specific trajectory of restructuring so that, taken together, the five could illuminate the conditions of possibility for the production of future teachers across the system. As Schofield (1993) has argued in relation to enhancing the generalisability of qualitative research, there is emerging consensus that

> generalisability is best thought of as a matter of the 'fit' between the situation studied and the others to which one might be interested in applying the concepts and conclusions of that study. This conceptualisation makes thick descriptions crucial, since without them, one does not have the information necessary for an informed judgement about the issue of fit. (1993: 221)

The chapters have provided such 'thick description'. What this means is that this research should enable those in a historically black university, such as Limpopo or Venda, to analyse the extent to which there is a fit with the case of UZ and to identify where there are distinct differences. Or it may be used to consider whether there is a fit between the experience of CPUT and other universities of technology, such as the University of Johannesburg or Tshwane University of Technology. And likewise, those at a historically strong research institution that has incorporated a strong college, like University of KwaZulu-Natal, may wish to assess their experience relative to that of WSoE.

From bureaucratic compliance to creating new knowledge for teacher education

Macro-, meso- and micro-level dynamics intersecting

The five case studies can also be analysed in a more general manner, in order to illuminate the multiple dynamics that intersect in complex ways to determine and shape curriculum change across the system. Shaped by their legacy of restructuring, the five cases differed along a number of interlocking dimensions:

- in the degree to which macro-level changes are a direct impetus for change at the institutional level;
- in the specific form of the macro-level changes which have most strongly shaped curriculum change at the institutional level;
- in the extent to which institutions initiated curriculum changes in a largely reactive or largely proactive strategic manner;
- in the extent to which recurriculation is driven from the meso-level by central university management through centralised processes or from the micro-level by faculty leadership through decentralised processes;
- in the extent to which a strong faculty leader plays a direct interventionist role to drive change;
- in the extent to which recurriculation was undertaken in an ad hoc manner or through a structured participatory process;
- in the degree of alignment, complementarity or contestation between the espoused curricula and ideological commitments of legacy groupings.

The result of such an aggregative comparative analysis of the five cases revealed a limited range of curriculum responses along a continuum, from ad hoc institutional compliance through formal bureaucratic compliance to an approach that potentially creates new knowledge and practice.

A spectrum of responses

In an initial reflection on the experience of the HEQC National Review of MEd programmes, Menon and Harley (2007) echo the trend identified in most of our five case studies, that of ad hoc processes and bureaucratic compliance:

> In combination, macro and meso management and reporting policies appeared to be working as a curriculum driver...Academic rationale... came later if at all...Orientations to curriculum developments were understandably mediated by pragmatics. (2007: 10–11)

Curriculum decisions tended to be based on personal interests, authority and reputation, on academic territorialism and on ensuring institutional accreditation, rather than on academic expertise, theoretical commitments and coherent logics drawing on research and academic disciplines across a school or faculty. The first response to any proposed change typically tended to be pragmatic, summed up in the questions commonly articulated by academics: 'How will this affect me and my workload?' or 'How can I survive this change process?'

At the one end of the spectrum is UZ: most directly reactive to macro-level directives and processes, with central management most strongly intervening at the meso-level to initiate change in the Education Faculty through a new leader, in an ad hoc process. Here, the new curriculum tends to be developed by accretion, in a form

of ad hoc compliance with institutional directives in response to national quality directives. Analysis of documentation suggested that the new formal programme structure and curricula were characterised by a literal adoption of 'the Magnificent Seven', as Menon and Harley (2007: 11) have dubbed the prevailing interpretation of the seven ideal roles of the educator enumerated in the NSE. The NSE document specifically cautions that the description of roles and competences is 'not meant to be a checklist' but should be 'integrated in the learning programme and should inform the exit level outcomes of a qualification' (DoE 2000a: 6). What was intended as an illustrative description of the seven roles of educators and associated competences for 'an initial teaching qualification' in the NSE 2000 policy document is largely adopted at UZ (and other universities) as the formal stated curriculum. Meanwhile the espoused curriculum continues to operate in a fragmented manner determined by individual academic interests. In Chapter 5, Hemson argues that this is because external accountability to the state is stronger than internal accountability to the faculty, the university or the community it serves.

In contrast, bureaucratic compliance at UNISA is the result of widespread alienation that saps the energy for curriculum redesign, compounded by a lack of intellectual leadership, given the 'ambivalences' in the macro- and meso-contexts.

NWU is the most archetypical case of bureaucratic compliance from a position of strength, evincing highly structured processes driven by the faculty with support from a central institutional unit. Again, the formal curriculum tended to enshrine the seven roles with little creative interpretation in terms of context, students or phase specifics, and little impact on the espoused curriculum, which continues in a fragmented manner with fault lines drawn between the two campuses. The potential danger is that rather than assessing the integration and application of the competences in each of the seven roles in relation to the purpose of a qualification, as the NSE intends, what will be assessed is 'simply the ability to perform a discrete competence' (DoE 2000a: 5). Here there is likely to be resistance to any further substantial curriculum development at the micro-level, because a strongly centralised formal process has already taken place.

Towards the opposite end of the spectrum stand CPUT and the WSoE, illustrating that there is potential for creating new knowledge in the system.

Currently, attempts by CPUT academics and managers to be creative and coherent in reformulating IPET programmes are taking place in conjunction with efforts to strengthen the academic and research base across the faculty. The process is a long-term one and has proceeded slowly to create alignment on the basis of respecting but challenging existing identities and approaches, which means that expertise and the education project can be retained at each campus. Strategic leadership is critical to address the constraints in terms of distance, legacies and the academic resources required to maintain a creative dialogue and shared understanding of curriculum.

The WSoE is most strongly proactive to new conditions, at both meso- and micro-levels, with a strong leader promoting a structured process of recurriculation. Engagement was more easily driven by academic logic and coherence, in an attempt to integrate the contrasting approaches of legacy College and School academics and building on the strong academic and research base of the university. Here, there is a sense that the seven roles are viewed critically, and also negatively, with considerable

critique of outcomes-based education (OBE) and the notion of competences. We have made the point that there was significant congruence between the philosophical and epistemological thrust of the NSE and the curriculum understanding of Wits academics. So it is not surprising that of all the cases in the study, the WSoE comes closest to the vision of the NSE, in that the competences should not

> be seen as static. They may be developed in different ways, with different emphases and at different depths. Providers have the responsibility to decide how this should be achieved, and before designing a learning programme, it will be necessary to establish the particular nature of the clients and which qualifications the learners are to be prepared for. (DoE 2000a: 5)

Problematising recurriculation in terms of students' basic and academic literacy stood out starkly as an issue at this university, in contrast to the practice at most of the others. The issue was not sufficiently foregrounded where curriculum change primarily took the form of bureaucratic compliance.

Legacy, reality and policy images

The five case studies demonstrate a dominant trend across the system towards bureaucratic compliance but also show that this is not the only possible way to mediate curriculum change.

The cases suggest that the curriculum legacy of each university is difficult to shift. South African higher education research is replete with references to the 'historical legacy' of universities. A dictionary definition of the term 'legacy' points usefully to something 'that has been superseded but is difficult to replace because of its wide use'. The legacy models and approaches to teacher education that inform curricula may have been formally superseded by the NSE as the official stated curriculum, but for the most part, the well-established espoused curriculum, disciplinary commitments and academic identities of individual academics continue to determine design and development decisions.

In an analysis of (in)congruence between teacher identity and the demands of 'policy images', Jansen (2002) offers one possible explanation of why it is difficult to supersede existing approaches to teacher education. One may extend much of his argument about teachers to teacher educators. He points to the strong requirement of bureaucratic and political compliance in the apartheid era, and how these policy images remained a powerful legacy shaping identity and practice even as new policy images of the ideal teacher 'attempt to create greater autonomy and freedom' (2002: 121). For example, Jansen argues that the image of the teacher promoted by the NSE denies the reality of, and fails to engage with, teachers' existing professional, emotional and political identities.

Such an argument is developed more strongly by Harley and Wedekind (2004), who identify what they call a 'meliorist' attitude in South Africa as the root of the problem of curriculum change in schools. In short, they argue that in the commitment to change the apartheid past, 'a vision of *what should be* has undermined the ability of policy to consider seriously *what is*' (2004: 213). As a consequence, rather than being shaped by school and social realities, policy is shaped by the political commitment to

social reconstruction. Such a 'meliorist' attitude is strongly evident in the NSE and in the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (NPFTED).

The research was motivated by the need to consider more seriously '*what is*' across the teacher education system, in order to inform policy and practice. The five case studies have vividly described existing dynamics in teacher education, and the analysis highlights the general mismatch between IPET curriculum policy images and academic identity, an issue that needs to be addressed.

Academic freedom and autonomy

A second interconnected explanation of the difficulty of changing existing approaches to teacher education relates to the nature of universities as knowledge-producing institutions. Universities have tended to resist externally mandated curriculum change, or any intervention on 'academic turf' at the micro-level. Naude (2003), for instance, stresses that disciplines and departments function at the level of social psychology and not merely as epistemic or social spaces. This means that change may evoke strong feelings of anxiety and resentment. Second, Naude argues that change is likely to involve power struggles, given the highly territorial nature of disciplines – accompanied by power, privilege, career advancement and payments. Third, 'traditional canons of established disciplines represent the social construction of dominant knowledge forms' which can frame terms of exclusion and inclusion (2003: 77). Finally, the notion of academic freedom is often equated with that of disciplinary autonomy.

Such dynamics are evident across the South African teacher education system, and help to explain why there has primarily been acquiescence in the form of bureaucratic compliance with the NSE in terms of the formal curriculum. Many academics identify with the state's transformative political project, but this is kept distinct from their own academic project and disciplinary autonomy. Moreover, the simple fact is that many academics struggle to shift theoretical and epistemological paradigms in mid-career – particularly, but not solely, those in historically Afrikaans and historically black universities.

At the same time, there is evidence in the system of the ability to create new knowledge, to move beyond superficial alignment and repackaging towards coherent and logical theoretically grounded and integrated programmes. The following section identifies new directions as well as enduring controversies and mismatches highlighted by the comparative analysis, which require systematic attention across the teacher education system.

Directions and controversies

There are many commonalities, but the experience of each university highlights a specific curriculum 'controversy'. This section identifies a number of future substantive directions for teacher educators to engage with within their universities, between universities to build the teacher education system, and between universities and national and provincial education departments and other statutory bodies such as the HEQC. This presentation of directions and curriculum controversies is intended to inform research, debate and development of the kinds of interventions possible and desirable at distinct levels.

The need for a more coherent focus on teaching practice

The situation at UZ points to a critical feature of IPET that requires attention across the board: the conceptualisation of teaching practice at the integrative heart of the programme.

The evidence of the other cases is that teaching practice is a neglected and contested component. The case of UNISA illustrates the sheer scale of the administrative and logistical arrangements required for teaching-practice placements, as well as the costs in time and funding. The case of the WSoE illustrates the significance (and considerable demands) of developing robust systems of administration for the management of teaching practice, enabling academics to track the progress of students across the four years of the BEd. This was a critical issue at UZ too, at the core of the old model of student self-selection of schools. At some universities with large student numbers, such as CPUT, contract staff are employed to supervise and assess students in schools. At other universities, such as UNISA, high enrolment numbers means it is possible for academics to conduct only one or two supervision visits, making it largely a token assessment. A third model has been school-based mentorships, but there is a major mismatch between policy image and real conditions in schools, which often are such that the mentorship is difficult to implement on a large scale. Indeed, the NPFTED (DoE 2007c: 22) has cautioned that mentorship models may be adopted only 'where there is a guarantee of proper supervision and a suitable school placement'. The assessment of teaching practice is another area that is highly contested.

Until recently, many university-based academics have resisted involvement in professional development, particularly in supervising teaching practice, as they see the period as an opportunity to pursue research interests. Indeed, academics at UNISA and the WSoE undertook school-based supervision for the first time in 2007, and the study noted the positive impact thereof. The process at the WSoE stands out in that a review of teaching experience followed the identification of myriad problems, and a coherent theoretical basis for revision was proposed, informed by an academic staff member's postgraduate research.

In Chapter 7, Gordon raises critically pertinent questions about teaching practice that inhere in the conditions of schooling. She notes that

> teaching experience needs a new framework to deal with, *inter alia*, economic disadvantage, social fragmentation, the impact of the HIV/Aids pandemic, spatial considerations (particularly those concerning rural and urban schools) and migration patterns. Notions of 'functional' schools must be challenged to take account of teachers' roles today, ensuring that professional training enables graduates to make a difference to their schools' social fabric.

The case studies thus highlight the need for further research and development around this critical integrative component of the IPET curriculum. There is scope for debate and engagement of university-based teacher educators nationally to develop stronger conceptions of – and support systems and materials for – teaching practice.

The professional–academic tension

The case of UNISA highlights the tension between an academic and a professional orientation to education, in the perception on the part of some staff that teacher education is not a 'proper' discipline and that academic work is descending into technicist professional training. There are, of course, those at UNISA who are committed to finding resolutions of this tension by developing a strong research base for teacher education. Such controversies come to the heart of debates around shifting forms of knowledge, the nature of the university and its relationship to social and economic development. The notion of ambivalences that Herman and Pillay introduce in Chapter 4 is a useful one, particularly in understanding dynamics at those universities that have incorporated colleges with their strong professional orientation. Through the case of UNISA, we see that the shift of teacher training to the university, to become teacher education, is not a simple one, nor is it automatic. Developing an academic foundation requires far more active intellectual and professional engagement.

What we see at UNISA is a displacement of academic homes and identities, but there is a lack of clarity on what will replace them. Academic staff resisted a shift to becoming 'professional trainers'. In contrast, at the WSoE, there is an attempt to engage university and college staff in dialogue to problematise what theoretically informed professional education can be like. And yet another slant is evident at CPUT, where college and technikon lecturers have been drawn into an academic world that requires them to rearticulate their practical, career-oriented professional courses and to consider more deeply the theories underpinning teaching and learning and how these can be supported by relevant research. In short, at CPUT there are 'professional trainers' striving to become academics.

A related issue is that in some cases the professional is 'academicised' in problematic ways. An 'applied scientist' model (DoE 2005) of teacher education is prevalent at UNISA and in some of the other cases, in which the university's responsibility is to provide the 'theory' of teacher education and encourage students to 'apply' it. This model does not attempt an integration of theory and practice as promoted by the NSE. Welch has noted a problem with the way that the 'applied scientist' model is practised at universities like UNISA.[93] Instead of teaching theory for academic rigour and depth, introducing students to a disciplinary base of knowledge with which they can engage in relation to practice, much of what is taught as 'theory' is, in effect, codifications of practice. This undermines both theory and practice, and the potential resolution of the tension between the professional and the academic. WSoE academics experienced the opposite problem, in that students resisted courses which attempted to promote 'theory' to inform practice.

Thus, the question that requires debate and research among education academics is, how can academics promote the value of professional teacher education as a theoretically informed discipline?

93 Personal communication (14ay 2008), based on unpublished case studies of UNISA programmes.

Social constructivism as a shared framework

The case of NWU illustrates the formidable challenges of developing an integrated approach to teacher education in the face of disparate and contesting philosophical and ideological commitments of individual academics.

One emerging solution is a shared espoused commitment to a constructivist philosophy, in line with new educational policy. However, as Hoadley shows in Chapter 3, at NWU there are many meanings and interpretations of what 'constructivism' entails. In Chapter 6, Gordon identifies a similar dynamic at CPUT, where there was evidence of an espoused shift to 'problem solving' and constructivism across the three campuses, articulated by the erstwhile supporters of child-centred philosophies, Fundamental Pedagogics or critical social relevance, among others.

The growing consensus is an outcome of the teaching and learning principles informing the NCS, but it is clear that there are multiple meanings attributed to this potentially integrative philosophy. The case studies raise critical questions about the depth of understanding of the constructivist philosophy underpinning teacher educators' work. There is a danger of compliance with 'politically correct' or 'intellectually fashionable' positions on the part of individual academics. Moll (2002) argues that there are good developmental reasons for constructivism to inform changes to teaching and learning in South Africa as proposed in new policy. However, he is concerned to clarify different meanings of the concept in current usage, in the face of common misunderstandings evident in the implementation of OBE and Curriculum 2005 (C2005) in schools.

Constructivism may provide a shared framework for engagement and for new conversations between academics with contesting legacies. The challenge is to develop a theoretically rigorous understanding of the conceptual basis for constructivism, and to problematise how it can inform curricula more systematically and substantively.

Generalists and specialists

At CPUT, curriculum alignment and redevelopment processes stalled on the issue of whether to structure IPET programmes in terms of specialist subject disciplines or on the basis of generalised learning areas that combine a number of school 'subjects' (DoE 2001b). This issue is tightly entwined with debates around the coverage of school subjects required for professional development, as opposed to the depth and academic rigour required of teacher education at university level.

The NSE states that the role of learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist is a critical 'over-arching role into which the others are integrated' (DoE 2000a: 6). There is also consensus that in the first few years of implementing C2005, schools threw the proverbial baby out with the bathwater (Taylor & Vinjevold 1999; Jansen & Christie 1999). In the years since, there has been a stronger emphasis on the critical role of content knowledge, disciplines and subject specialisms.

These issues are compounded by the differences between Foundation Phase programmes, which require future teachers to be more generalist, and FET programmes, which require specialist knowledge. The analysis of curriculum

documents at NWU and the WSoE using Bernstein's (2000) notions of horizontal and vertical knowledge structures illustrates the significance of specialisms in relation to subjects such as mathematics. In relation to teaching practice, there was also lively debate at UNISA as to whether a subject specialist should be the supervisor, or whether general competence could be observed by any lecturer.

A related controversy concerns the location of teaching of content subjects within the university. Is it best located in specialist departments to draw on academic expertise in other faculties, or taught by education academics who understand the requirements of school subjects? The debate was a source of tensions at UZ. It also led to the potential for tensions in curriculum alignment at NWU, where two campuses had opposing approaches that directly impacted on implementation of new curriculum plans. At Wits, there have historically been mixed solutions, but subject methodologists housed in other faculties are increasingly moving to become located in the School of Education.

Here too, academic identities come into play. The fact that contestation in defence of specialist disciplines has at times been in the interests of individual academics has led to the common feature of overloaded curricula. *All* cases displayed evidence of the accretion of multiple 'pick and pay' sets of modules with repetitious or overlapping content, the arbitrary delineation of modules to structures, and contestation around the weighting of compulsory and elective modules. The result is a lack of integration and coherence across the BEd programme.

The issue is thus to research and debate the place of disciplines and specialist knowledge in the new curriculum framework, and the extent to which BEd programmes are structured to produce generalists or focused specialists. Such decisions are critical to focus and coherence.

Engaging with students' needs

The case of the WSoE illustrates the need to engage more proactively and effectively with a shifting student profile. Clearly, many Wits academics were accustomed to better prepared and stronger students, and were grappling with students' low levels of academic literacy and the inability to work with theory and concepts, which have long been widespread in other education faculties and schools. The shift at the WSoE related to new institutional admission criteria, which were widened beyond the traditional 'high-achieving student'.

What is of note at the WSoE is the attempt to maintain a strong theoretical framing of the programmes, underpinned by a social justice 'gaze'. Nevertheless, students resisted and contested 'theory-laden' courses, and questions were raised about the extent of support available to ensure student success. The experience at UNISA was rather one of acquiescence, where academics complained of 'dumbing down' their courses and making them more 'practical' to meet student demand.

NWU revealed another dimension: the differences between students on the two campuses in terms of their learning needs and their past schooling experiences, and the future contexts with which they would have to engage as teachers. Could a single formal curriculum meet the needs of both groups of students? How does that impact on the need for alignment across a merged university?

The differences between students at the three CPUT campuses were stark, and each set of academics oriented their courses accordingly, further complicating attempts to forge a single integrated curriculum. Such pedagogical issues are receiving attention across fields and disciplines in higher education, and are not peculiar to education. They have particular resonance in education, however, given the critical role of future teachers.

At the same time, students have to demonstrate competence at the appropriate levels. The debate on forms of assessment was particularly vigorous at CPUT, reflecting contrasting models of teacher education. There were queries at NWU and at CPUT about what the various National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels actually mean, with academics struggling to interpret policy texts in their practice. How are teacher educators to assess competence at distinct levels of qualification, and what are the most appropriate forms of assessment for teacher educators?

Identifying ways to engage with the changing nature of teacher education students, with their academic development needs and with the contexts within which they are likely to teach, is critical to forming better teachers.

The role of leadership

Taken together, the case studies illustrate the critical role of both academic and intellectual leadership, as well as managers with the political sensitivity to negotiate in the interests of their organisation and the system of teacher education nationally.

Perhaps the starkest illustration is the case of UZ, where a new dean with managerial and leadership skills was able to act as a catalyst to begin to address long-established anomalies and constraints. The case of the WSoE is also notable for the strong leadership provided by the head of school to organise existing capacity more effectively, to overcome divisions between the legacy College and legacy School that were threatening to become counterproductive, and to promote the cause of the WSoE within the university. At CPUT the dean was able to drive alignment between multiple campuses by setting up structures and progressively promoting shared discourse and practice.

In contrast, the absence of strong academic leadership and of a 'political' leadership that was able to intervene institutionally on behalf of education was evident at UNISA, contributing to the current paralysis. At NWU, it was too early to assess the roles of the new deans, but the leadership flux over the past few years has not been positive.

Growing the next generation of leadership that possesses a combination of these roles – of strong intellectual leadership, of sensitive 'political' leadership (in the sense of organisational or institutional politics) and of effective management (particularly in multiple campus contexts) – is critical to the health of the system.

Research, research, research

The project has only been able to scratch the surface of the kind of research that is required to inform policy and practice.

There is scope to develop a full history of teacher education in South Africa, by including the story of all 22 new universities and going back earlier than 1994.

In relation to curriculum change, the study has primarily analysed systemic and institutional dynamics. It was possible to focus only on official and espoused curricula. The Multi-Site Teacher Education Research (MUSTER) project found a major divide and often a contradiction between espoused curricula and those enacted in programmes in South Africa. As the study concluded:

> The discourse that surrounds teacher education and its development is littered with propositions, assertions and preferences that do not map well onto observations of practice in training institutions, or insights derived from trainees' lived experience of teacher education. (Lewin, Samuel & Sayed 2003: 373)

There was a strong sense of frustration on the part of the case-study researchers, as they could intuit this dynamic but the scope of the project did not allow for systematic investigation of enacted curriculum. Clearly, this is the major area for future research – to investigate empirically the practices of teacher educators, and to build on the present analysis of the mediations of new curriculum policy frameworks and institutional restructuring by researching enacted curriculum.

The evidence of the case studies also suggests that a fruitful line of future enquiry would be to investigate teacher educators' identities and the degree of 'match' with the policy image of the teacher educator proposed in the NSE.

A call for consolidation and active dialogue

There have been public calls for attention to the production of new teachers, including political calls for the re-establishment of colleges of education.

The current conditions for IPET in higher education are not ideal, and the study shows that the constraints are many. However, it is equally evident that the most pressing requirement is not more change and new structures but consolidation of an emerging system. The facilities, resources and capacities of the colleges have been redistributed or lost over the past decade. They would have to be recreated at considerable cost. To restructure the system once again would most likely destroy the fragile gains made by universities over the past few years. Thus we support calls for a moratorium on structural change for a period of consolidation.

There is scope to build stronger interchange and active dialogue around curriculum development specifically, between the expertise and experience of university-based teacher educators in different universities and regions, the HEQC with its oversight of quality issues, and the national and provincial education departments with their understandings of 'policy images'.

We have proposed an initial set of issues for substantive curriculum dialogue and engagement arising from existing practice. Building such dialogue may provide a stronger foundation for the IPET system, particularly in terms of strengthening the intellectual and financial resources required for curriculum development.

Singh (2001: 1) has called for 'a more active negotiation or renegotiation about the nature of higher education institutions and their special contribution to social and economic development'. She argues that universities need to actively identify policy shifts and the conditions to negotiate new, more complex and nuanced roles. They

must also identify who they have to engage with and what arguments they can make to convince other social players. Teacher education academics and managers need to understand their own contexts, and the conditions within which they are engaging, to articulate their own strategic direction. Only then can they convince other social players of their potential contribution to education development in South Africa. To do this, they need to reclaim the space and opportunity offered to drive recurriculation based on developing academic expertise.