

TRANSFORMATIVE SHIFTS AND STRUCTURAL CONTINUITIES IN SOUTH AFRICAN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, 1981-1999

RESEARCH OUTPUTS

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an analysis of the debate around vocational education and training (VET)¹ in primary and secondary schooling in South Africa in the years 1981-1999. The discussion focuses on three critical areas of change in the relationship between education and training (ET) and the demands of a modernising economy. These are: restructuring school-based curricula to reflect a stronger vocational content; restructuring the balance between academic and vocational education in favour of the latter in the general formative phase of compulsory and post-compulsory schooling; and lastly, reshaping the roles of both the state and market in the regulation and provisioning of VET.

The analysis presented here argues that the discourse on VET has shifted significantly in three distinct historical periods since the early 1980s. These are: (a) the early apartheid reform era between 1981 and the start of the State of Emergency in 1985; (b) the late apartheid reform era between 1985 - 1994; and (c) the post-apartheid reform era of April 1994 and beyond.

¹ The term 'Vocational Education and Training' (VET) refers to the provision of vocational and technical education programmes and subjects in the secondary schooling phase whereas the term 'Education and Training' (ET) refers to the total system of education and training in South Africa. VET is a specific sub-sector within the larger ET system.

These discursive changes entailed a shift away from the crude racial conceptions of ET which prevailed in the early 1980s to a more 'market-driven' perspective on ET by the early 1990s, and finally, to a view of the curriculum which stressed notions of democracy, non-racialism and equality in the post-apartheid era. The chapter concludes by contrasting these positive discursive shifts with the irrefutable evidence of continuity in the structural, institutional and political conditions which perpetuate a divisive and fractured ET system in the post-apartheid era.

The chapter begins by providing a detailed comparison of the vocational education and training proposals of the 1981 government investigation into education entitled *Provision of Education in the RSA* (Chaired by Professor De Lange, then President of the HSRC) and the three-part 1991/1992 government inquiry entitled *Education Renewal Strategy* (ERS). The merits of both sets of policy texts are assessed in the light of recent international experience regarding the economic importance of general education.

CURRICULUM RESTRUCTURING AS 'WORK SOCIALISATION'

Subject-based curriculum restructuring is an important area of continuity in the South African ET reform process since the early 1980s. The 1981 De Lange investigation and the three ERS reports all view curriculum restructuring in terms of altering pupils' value systems and behavioural attributes. However, the differences in the content of these curriculum restructuring proposals signify an important shift in the orientation of state policy during this period (1981-1991). Previous racial characterisations of the role of education in society came to be replaced by formulations that sought to reinvigorate what was perceived to be a decline in the South African work ethic through school-based work socialisation.

De Lange on 'cultural modernisation'

The theoretical approach of the 1981 De Lange report on education in South Africa was couched in racial terminology, even though the report claimed to be moving away from race discrimination in order to equalise educational opportunities for all. This racial framework was clearly visible in De Lange's location of the key issues of education reform in the spheres of 'environmental deprivation' and 'economic dualism'. De Lange used these concepts to establish a critical linkage that was employed throughout the report: vocational education was an essential pre-requisite for 'cultural change' and technological modernisation in South Africa.

De Lange's economic dualism distinguished between a modern and traditional economic sector. The modern sector was characterised by capital intensive methods of production and automated industry (HSRC, 1981b: 4, 15). In contrast, the traditional sector was characterised by rapid population growth and the under-utilisation of resources. De Lange maintained that traditional cultures were 'environmentally deprived', as they did not provide appropriate and stimulating environments for cognitive development in the realms of mathematics, science and technology (HSRC, 1981b: 5). The report argued that the classical teaching paradigm in formal schooling, which assumed a strong academic and abstracted approach to the acquisition of scientific principles, was inappropriate for children of traditional cultures (HSRC, 1981b: 13). De Lange argued instead for a teaching model based on developing the concrete and practical. By so doing, technological mastery would be developed first and students could then be introduced to more abstract ideas:

A child from a traditional rural type of culture ... does not have a sufficient background of concrete experiences to develop the concepts needed for the development of science and mathematics ... let a child/person first master simple technology in a field where natural aptitude and interest exist. These experiences are then related to the underlying science and mathematics to improve insight. This is then followed by experience of more advanced technology and deeper insight into and study of the underlying sciences. (HSRC, 1981b: 16)

De Lange suggested that vocational education together with a practical teaching paradigm were the best educational strategies to assist traditional communities in the transition towards modern technological culture (HSRC, 1981b: 16). Having established this link between vocational education and cultural change, De Lange then proposed that vocational differentiation was essential at an early age in the school system:

For the majority of children, especially in a developing situation, this differentiation has to take place shortly after puberty. At this stage, a child tends to model his/her system of values on adults, especially on teachers.... This stage therefore represents the last effective opportunity of modifying the values of the majority of children in a developmental situation to be in better accord with the world they live in.... A well developed human personality requires a moral code, religious belief as well as a career code including for instance diligence, accuracy, punctuality etc. These codes are only effective if they serve as built-in guidelines for behaviour. This can be achieved by developing them in conjunction with vocational skills in order that they become an integral part of the career skills of the individual. (HSRC, 1981b: 17, 18)

According to De Lange, differentiated education would need to ensure that 50-80 percent of black 14-15 year-olds study in the vocational stream. This would provide them with an understanding of the requirements of modern technological culture including, for example, 'how to adjust to new situations, to cultivate a productivity-oriented work ethic, and to master new technological knowledge and skills' (HSRC, 1981a: 208). De Lange was not explicit on what this new approach implied in terms of curriculum restructuring.

De Lange's specific concern was that curricula in South Africa should become far more differentiated so as to encourage the 'modernisation of cultures' and the development of skills and values appropriate to the technological world. Differentiated curricula should begin as early as the pre-primary and primary level (HSRC, 1981a: 41; 1981b: 23).

A disturbing feature of this race-based conceptual framework is that it had a significant impact on the vocational training community in South Africa. Many trainers in industry were now able to vindicate their traditional views on black education which located 'the

problem' in terms of the absence, amongst blacks, of a 'Western' value system and work ethic, allegedly because of the non-achieving values associated with traditional or 'tribal' affiliations (Kraak, 1991: 420, 421).

Ironically, De Lange's views on vocational education, although still steeped in highly racialised characterisations of black society, were central to the rise of a new and reforming logic of educational change in the 1980s which, by arguing for the dismantling of traditional cultures as a pre-requisite for capitalist modernisation, acted (perhaps unconsciously) to trigger the slow demise of apartheid and its central premise - the preservation and maintenance of traditional culture and society.

Productivity and technology awareness

The issues of productivity and technology awareness were also central elements in the debate about curriculum restructuring during this period. The President's Council Committee for Economic Affairs in 1989 published a report *A Strategy and Action Plan to Improve Productivity in the RSA* (PC, 1989). The report concluded that South Africa's education system would have to be adjusted substantially to remedy the low productivity levels in South Africa (PC, 1989: 254). It recommended that a compulsory school subject focusing on 'productivity studies' be introduced, and put forward the West German subject 'Arbeitslehre' as a useful example. Such a course would span Standards Five to Seven and concentrate on economics and the principles of wealth-creation through improved productivity (PC, 1989: 185).

Walters on work socialisation

The 1990 Walters Committee Report on *The Evaluation and Promotion of Career Education* (DEC, 1990) developed many of the President's Council proposals regarding productivity, technology and entrepreneurial awareness. The Committee conducted research into employer expectations of South African school-leavers (DEC, 1990:78).

The main finding was that matriculated school-leavers did not, in general, live up to employer expectations. The most serious shortcomings for employers were school-leaver's lack of appropriate work attitudes, thinking skills and productivity awareness (DEC, 1990: 80).

The Walters Committee recommended that the new curriculum should include 'career education' as a new component of general education at the senior primary and junior secondary phases. The Committee argued that career education was an essential element of any strategy of economic renewal. Walter's concept of career education entailed the development of communication skills, mental skills related to work such as problem-solving and decision-making, and an acquaintance with the principles of work such as productivity, quality control and the use of technology. Walters defined two further components of career education. These were:

- Work-related values, attitudes and habits, such as the will and willingness to work hard and productively, the acceptance of external and objective quality criteria, exactness, perseverance, acceptance of pressure, being systematic, thorough, honest and economical.
- Economic and socio-economic perspectives, including perspectives on the present division of prosperity in the country; the possibilities for increasing prosperity; and the importance of entrepreneurship (DEC, 1990: 20, 21).

These latter components are classic 'work socialisation' themes which sought to introduce controversial ideological content into the formal school curriculum during a period of heightened racial and class struggle against apartheid in the early 1990s. This ideological project is made far more explicit in another section of the Walters report:

It should also be borne in mind that the nature of career performance is connected with the economic ideology which is valid in a community, which means that appreciation and understanding

of the system of free enterprise, the risks of its distortions, and the conditions of its maintenance should form an important part of career education in the Republic of South Africa. (DEC, 1990: 19)

The Walters report recommended that these key career education elements be incorporated into existing school subjects through curriculum restructuring while some aspects might require new school subjects (DEC, 1990: 23, 23, 122). Walters made a specific recommendation that the existing subjects 'handwork', 'needlework' and 'basic techniques' presently offered in the senior primary phase, be revised in their entirety to provide for a new course entitled 'productivity studies' (DEC, 1990: 118, 119, 130). This subject would aim to orientate all pupils to issues relating to technology, productivity and entrepreneurship, and is in line with the 1989 President's Council recommendations outlined earlier.

The ERS and curriculum restructuring

The ERS approach to curriculum restructuring was almost identical to that of the Walters report. For example, the ERS documents proposed the introduction of a number of new compulsory subjects in the general formative curriculum from grades 1 to 9. These included 'economics education', 'technology' and 'arts education'. The ERS supported the introduction of these new subjects arguing that they provided both 'relevant education' - in terms of the needs of learners, society and person-power requirements - whilst still fulfilling the learning requirements of general formative education (DNE, 1991b: 47).

The ERS proposed that each of these themes - technology, economic systems, entrepreneurship and productivity - be developed across all curricula. Issues that were of value to the world of work would be identified in each subject area and further developed. This was considered to be especially important at the junior secondary phase where such themes would provide some preparation for the vocationally-oriented subject choices to be made at the senior secondary phase (DNE, 1991b: 33, 34).

The politics of curriculum restructuring, 1981-1991

A clear shift in the politics of curriculum restructuring occurred in the period 1980-1991. The apartheid state's race-based conceptual framework was significantly diluted and was replaced with a more 'free market' perspective. De Lange's conceptual framework linked cognitive development and technological literacy with culture and race. Whilst there is obviously some relationship between school achievement and race in South Africa, this has increasingly been perceived by scholars to be the result of institutionalised racial discrimination in education and not because of some intrinsic cultural backwardness.

In contrast, the approach adopted by the President's Council, Walters, and the ERS represented a noteworthy shift away from these crude racial formulations. The capitalist work ethic was now at the heart of the curriculum restructuring process. Most of the proposals emerging from these reports were little more than work socialisation strategies aimed at remoulding the value base of black students and workers so that they internalised the work ethics and values of South African capitalism. The significance of this approach was that it was the first time that South Africa's education philosophy had been freed from its narrow Verwoerdian constraints and relocated within the broader ambit of 'free market' ideology.

Whilst these developments allowed for a shift away from racialised conceptions of the curriculum, it laid the ground for new problems. Apart from the attempt to ideologically remould the content of the formal curriculum, the new strategy also formed part of a larger process of political change that sought social stability through ideological means. This entailed promoting the 'free market' as a means of changing mass perceptions about power and inequality while leaving the structural relations that underpinned such power unchanged.

RESTRUCTURING THE BALANCE BETWEEN ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE GENERAL FORMATIVE SCHOOLING PHASE

The second area of continuity in the apartheid state education reform documents since De Lange is to be identified in the attempt to shift the balance from academic to vocational education in the provision of mass schooling. De Lange's contribution here was seminal in terms of its 'anti-academic' stance. De Lange argued that South Africa's education system had an overtly academic bias which developed a value system inappropriate and unrelated to the world of work (HSRC, 1981b: 36). The education system's academic bias gave rise to a highly abstract teaching and learning paradigm, particularly in the fields of mathematics, science and technology. This approach neglected the problems faced by 'environmentally deprived communities' who required a more practical teaching paradigm to assist in their 'cultural transition to the modern technological world' (HSRC, 1981b: 37).

De Lange's proposed resolution of these problems was the systematic introduction of vocational education. The Commission's report advocated the introduction of a new practical teaching paradigm in vocational education, with learning progressing from the concrete to the abstract (HSRC, 1981b: 23). The model aimed at modifying the behavioural attributes and values of 'environmentally deprived' children to better accord with the world of work.

These principles were to be linked with De Lange's recommendations regarding compulsory education. His report made a distinction between compulsory education for nine years, and compulsory school attendance for six years (HSRC, 1981a: 99). Motivated in part by financial constraint, the primary reason for the proposal was that it would allow for a greater interface with the non-formal education and training system (HSRC, 1981b: 19). After six years of compulsory basic education, pupils would be able to exit the formal schooling system with a standard four certificate. They would then complete the remaining three years in the non-formal training sector. Students remaining

in school for a further three years at the junior secondary phase would be exposed to opportunities for study in a career field, in an apprenticeship, or leave school at any stage for the world of work (HSRC, 1981b: 75). This enhanced mobility out of the school system was aimed at the large majority of pupils from so-called 'environmentally deprived' backgrounds:

Children who are severely environmentally handicapped should therefore make an earlier start with vocational education to enable them to master manual and other skills needed for success in the non-formal training sector to become semi-skilled operators in industry or to be productive in the less formal sectors. (HSRC, 1981b: 20)

De Lange's proposals on vocational education underplayed the importance of general formative education on a number of grounds. De Lange's overall anti-academic approach was opposed to an abstract learning context and attempted to reduce cognitive development to the narrowly concrete and practical (HSRC, 1981b: 23). De Lange's model, in seeking a more effective interface with the non-formal training sector, proposed an unacceptably early exit point to the world of work. Standard four represents a stage when many pupils' general education and cognitive skills are not fully developed, rendering them ill-equipped for post-school industrial training. Pupils entering the labour market at such a young age are likely to become members of the lowly paid and highly exploitative manual labour force.

Furthermore, De Lange's proposals were never seriously concerned with the content and quality of the curriculum, and with larger cognitive questions such as the development of problem-solving skills, critical thinking, communication and leadership skills. De Lange's education and training perspectives placed primary emphasis on cost-led, job-specific and narrow forms of VET alongside the need to inculcate appropriate work ethics and behavioural attributes in pupils.

In contrast, the 1990 Walters and 1991 ERS reports differ substantially in comparison with De Lange's under-emphasis of the economic and social significance of good

general education. The Walters report was well informed about the international debates on diversified curricula in the third world. Walters argued that many third world governments held the view that diversified curricula would correct the supposed imbalance between education and the work-place (DEC, 1990: 37). Experience had proven to the contrary. Walters documents the problems which emerged:

- Diversification of the curriculum is expensive. Costs may amount to double the expense of general education.
- All forms of secondary education increase the productivity of workers. In this regard, diversified schools are no better than conventional schools.
- Diversified curricula are difficult to implement as a result of the need for new teaching material, for teachers with new qualifications and for new laboratories and equipment.
- Vocationally-oriented education does not improve pupils attitudes to manual labour (DEC, 1990: 37, 38).

The Walters report noted that many third world countries had found that academic education yielded better results than vocationally-orientated education. According to Walters, this did not mean that vocational education in its entirety was irrelevant, but rather that it needed to be provided in closer association with on-the-job training (DEC, 1990: 38).

The Walters report also noted the rise of high-skill technologies and skill-intensive forms of work organisation in the global economy, developments which gave renewed prominence to the importance of a broad general education:

It ... seems essential for vocational education to concentrate on broad skills within a particular field rather than on vocational-specific skills, as a result of rapid changes in technology. (DEC, 1990: 45)

Walters argues that almost all aspects of career education could be developed satisfactorily within the existing subjects found in general education (DEC, 1990: 64). Contrary to the De Lange report, Walters therefore concluded that:

... [vocational] specialisation at too early a stage at formal school level is not desirable and should be avoided.... On the basis of various considerations, the Committee feels that in the SA context such specialisation should not take place before the age of 16+. With the present age of admission to school of 6+ years, this means that specialisation should only be considered during the last two years of the normal 12 school years. (DEC, 1990: 128)

This positive shift in state thinking on the relationship between general and vocational education strongly influenced the contents of the three ERS reports which followed the release of the Walters report. The correspondence of ideas between all four reports was in fact established through Dr Walters, Director of the Cape Department of Education and Culture (white education), who chaired the influential ERS working group 'The linkage between formal and non-formal education' (DNE, 1991a: 95).

The single, most important factor which distinguished the ERS documents from the De Lange report was their detailed discussion of the role, nature and content of the school curriculum. The ERS presented a strong case for a general formative education of nine years for all pupils. In defining what this entailed, it outlined four broad educational aims which a school curriculum should aim to fulfil. These were:

- The development of learners into individuals with a developed intellect, a strong and good moral character, a tolerant and balanced personality and the ability to think critically.
- The development of the inherent potential of the learners to enable them to realise their full potential.
- The preparation of learners for ... occupational competence and economic independence.
- The education of learners towards responsible and useful citizenship. (DNE,

1992: 47)

The ERS provided a number of guidelines for the development of such a curriculum. It argued that there should always be a balance between three crucial components of the learning process: knowledge, skills, and values (DNE, 1991b: 8). With regard to the knowledge component, nine key areas of social experience should be covered by the curriculum: the aesthetic, creative, social, economic, linguistic, literary, mathematical, ethical, physical, scientific, spiritual and technological experiences of life (DNE, 1991b: 8). The skills to be developed at progressively higher levels included intellectual, psycho-motor, social, communication, numerical and technologically-related skills (DNE, 1991b: 14).

As can be observed, the development of the knowledge and skill components of the curriculum as formulated by the ERS implied a far broader cognitive development process than was intended by De Lange, and represented a constructive shift in state educational policy, aligning South Africa with international trends.

It is now clear that the single most important international development which influenced both Walters and the ERS was the advent of 'globalisation' and the knowledge economy. Globalisation can best be understood to refer to the major changes that have taken place in the manufacturing sectors of most economies in the world. Competitiveness in the 1945-1970 era was based on the mass production of standardised goods, cheap raw material inputs, and low-skill, low-wage labour. However, the economic crisis of the 1970s, along with the advent of information technologies, the internationalisation of finance capital and the rise of innovative forms of work organisation in the early 1980s witnessed the birth of a new economic system known as 'flexible specialisation'. This new production paradigm is characterised by the manufacture of high-quality exports aimed at specific 'niche' consumer markets. Innovation and the ability to continuously reinvent products and add-value to existing designs is at the heart of the new system.

This new competitive environment has brought with it new education and training demands, for example, the need for a highly skilled sector of the labour force able to employ the new technologies and add value to existing goods and services. However, it is not merely high-skills that are needed but more well-rounded and diverse skill competencies that are in demand. Enterprises require entire labour forces that are sufficiently skilled to adapt to highly unpredictable and volatile global product markets and rapid technological change. They require broad problem-solving skills to anticipate flaws in production. Workers need to understand how the new technologies can be optimally applied, how the entire production process unfolds, how environmental context shapes the execution of tasks and how to anticipate action when unexpected factors arise. It is the ability to retool and respond quickly to rapidly changing market conditions that is highly valued. Only a formative general education can provide these capabilities through high levels of generalised yet unspecified skills which are in excess of those currently needed in the work place, but which in the future will be in great demand (See Castells, 1996; Finegold, 1991; Harvey, 1989; Mathews *et al*, 1988).

The ERS was clearly influenced by the demands of the rapidly globalising 'knowledge economy'. It made a subtle distinction between academically-oriented and vocationally-oriented routes at the senior secondary phase, arguing that both were formative in orientation in that both sought to satisfy the four broadly defined general education aims of the ERS listed earlier. In fact, the ERS was adamant that there be no rigid differentiation between general and vocationally-oriented education. Rather, a continuum of choices between packages ranging from predominantly academic to predominantly vocational subjects should prevail (DNE, 1991b: 35). The mix of general and vocationally-oriented choices would maintain the generally formative nature of the educational process to varying degrees. De Lange displayed no such subtleties. His entire approach was in fact premised on the need for a sharp degree of differentiation in schools.

In short, the ERS intended implementing a tripartite form of post-compulsory ET (general education, vocational education and industrial training), a route adopted by many other countries in the world since the 1980s. In these countries, post-compulsory students are offered a wide selection of subjects (both academic and vocational) to better prepare themselves for the transition from school to work.

The case is not as clear cut in South Africa. The implementation proposals of the ERS created their own problems. The ERS's concern for formative education evaporated in the section of the report dealing with implementation strategies. Here, cost-driven constraints and a managerial approach to implementation led the ERS to narrow the scope of its recommendations. For example, vocational education would take place at existing technical colleges without any commitment to improve the quality of delivery in these institutions. The curriculum defined for these institutions was characterised by a narrow, job-specific form of training of low quality strongly influenced by employer needs. Learning objectives would be determined on the basis of task profiles compiled in close conjunction with employers (DNE, 1991b: 24, 53, 57). Cognitive development was secondary to narrow occupational skilling. The ERS intended channelling up to 20 percent of senior secondary students along this track - students who would otherwise have continued in formal schooling (DNE, 1992: 136). The ERS did not commit itself to the improvement of quality of VET occurring in these technical colleges.

The greatest shortcoming of the ERS was its proposal for a nine-year period of compulsory schooling constrained by two problematic riders. These were:

- 20 percent of learners who would normally complete the last three years of secondary school through contact education would do so by means of distance education by the year 2003.
- A further 20 per cent of the learners who in the past would have completed the final three years of school education would move on to the vocational training system by the year 2003 (DNE, 1992: 136).

Whilst the ERS was expressing a clear commitment to nine years of general formative education for all, such a commitment in practice was conditioned by a number of questionable proposals. Distance education (as envisaged by the ERS for 20 percent of senior secondary students), without a solid assurance of high quality tutors and sophisticated infrastructure, would hinder the development of intellectual and cognitive capabilities essential to those students channelled along such a route. By tracking a further 20 per cent of senior secondary students into college vocational training, the ERS placed a ceiling on the number of senior secondary students doing generally-oriented and vocationally-oriented school education at 60 percent. Taking into account the fact that the ERS intended encouraging a large majority of students to move in the direction of vocationally-oriented formative education (DNE, 1991a: 48), there was then a strong likelihood that far less than half of the senior secondary school population would receive general formative education. This was in contradiction with the global trends that emphasise general education. What was not stated in the Report was that those excluded from senior secondary academic schooling were also likely to be black. In short, the philosophy underpinning the ERS was committed to nine years of general formative education, but cost-driven considerations resulted in radically different recommendations that in the end suggested a high degree of educational differentiation.

ROLE OF THE STATE AND MARKET IN REGULATING VET IN THE LATE APARTHEID ERA

A number of tensions characterised the state educational reform process during the 1981-1991 period: a commitment to reform by one arm of the government paralysed by the conservatism and inertia of another. However, by 1992 the government had succeeded in overcoming these divisions by attaining a large degree of coherence on critical ET policy questions, most notably, vocational education.

Early 1980s: divisions within the state

Despite the vigorous debate around skills training and vocational education initiated by De Lange, the 1980s was a decade characterised by inactivity on the ET policy reform front. Delay after delay characterised state decision-making. Contributing directly to this paralysis was the lack of unity within the state itself, which until the early 1990s, failed to achieve unanimity regarding vocational education. Two related tensions accounted for this. The first was opposition within apartheid's several education ministries to the 'economic rationalist' arguments which underpinned support for vocational education - arguments which were being propagated by leading state reformists (such as Wiehahn and Riekert) and by the Department of Manpower in particular. The second tension was the threat to the education ministries posed by the deracialisation of education which support for vocational education implied.

'Economic rationalism' was the economic theory informing the 'new vocationalist' discourse that took root amongst the key reformist actors in government since the late 1970s. Government officials in the manpower and economic ministries, and key ideologues within the Riekert, Wiehahn and De Lange commissions, accepted the need for reform in education and training to meet the changed skill requirements of the economy. In particular, this entailed the deracialisation of the labour market and education and training institutions so that larger numbers of skilled blacks could be trained by former whites-only technical training institutions so as to enter an increasingly deracialised occupational structure.

These new reformist policies were strongly resisted within the educational ministries themselves. For example, under pressure from the education departments, the state's 1983 White Paper in response to the De Lange investigation rejected the recommendation that education be strongly oriented towards vocational requirements. Rather, education should guide students:

... towards good citizenship, enabling them to make a productive contribution to the economic life of the country and to fit into ordered society as well-adjusted and civilised people. Education should contribute to the moulding of people into civilised citizens and can never be one-sidedly directed at the needs of the working world. (RSA, 1983: 34)

This stress on developing 'civilised citizens' highlighted the emphasis the educational apparatuses placed on the political and ideological concerns of formal schooling over and above those of the labour market. Formal education, in the form of 'Christian National Education' and 'Bantu Education', had played an important role in defending and promoting apartheid's racial policies since the early 1950s. In the 1980s, this was perpetuated in the state's new constitutional and educational governance agenda. The 1983 New Constitution established a divide between 'general affairs' and 'own affairs'. The Department of National Education (DNE) was set up as a centralised administration with generalised functions across all racially defined education departments: functions such as the determination of common salaries scales, conditions of work and examination standards. Educational instruction itself was to be provided for as an 'own affair' with education for each racial group falling under a racially defined ministry (RSA, 1983: 15).

Borne within this renewed segregationist thinking, the Department of National Education was vehemently opposed to the dilution of racial differentiation implied by many of the vocational education proposals put forward by Walters, the ERS and other reformists. This line of reasoning was dominant within the apartheid education ministries until the early 1990s. The state's ability to act decisively on key educational issues to do with vocational education and the economy was consequently severely crippled.

During the 1980s the apartheid state dealt with the issue of deracialisation by adopting delaying tactics to all substantive recommendations for reform which emerged from its own commissions of inquiry. For example, the state's response to De Lange (via the 1983 White Paper) was to defer the need for decisions by establishing further committees of investigation. It argued that more research was needed on non-formal

education before changes could be considered. A reconstituted De Lange/HSRC Committee was mandated to continue this research work although no final report was ever forthcoming (RSA, 1983: 20, 24).

Similarly, the DNE delayed the release by the Department of Manpower of the 1985 National Training Board/ Human Sciences Research Council (NTB/HSRC) report on *The Training of Artisans* for over two years whilst it scrutinised the recommendations for any proposed dilution of racialised schooling. These delays and referrals continued until as late as 1992 when the third ERS report was published.

This tension between economic rationalism, support for vocational education and labour market deracialisation on the one hand, and a commitment to racially segregated schooling on the other, was at the heart of the state's paralysis in the sphere of vocational education reform in the years between 1981-1991. No formal policy prescriptions that constituted significant departures from previous separate development policies in VET were adopted and implemented during this period - even though 'economic rationalist' arguments were now being loudly articulated in other forums of the state. The absurdity of this policy contradiction can best be observed in the case of apprenticeship training in the 1980s and early 1990s. Whilst the labour market had been significantly deracialised after 1980 (black artisans could now be employed in 'white' South Africa), their training remained strictly racially differentiated until the mid-1990s. It has only been in the past five years that former whites-only technical colleges have opened their doors to blacks. (See Kraak and Hall, 1999)

Early 1990s: coherence within the state

It took the apartheid state almost ten years after De Lange to develop a coherent and unanimous policy framework with regard to vocational education. This signifies by far the most important achievement of the ERS. Given the 1981 state rejection of De Lange's

main findings, it was highly significant that by 1991 it was the DNE itself that put forward a plan for the reform of vocational education.

A major reason for this shift was that the 1990 Walters Report (which strongly influenced the ERS) and the 1991 ERS displayed sensitivity to the fundamental changes which had taken place in the global economy during the 1980s. These reports reflected some understanding of the importance of improved ET to the successful application and adaptation of the new technologies and new forms of work organisation. The reports were also informed about the immense problems associated with diversified curricula. Global developments such as these were decisive in moving the apartheid state beyond its racist Verwoerdian constraints. As a result, both Walters and the ERS adopted a dual formula: they supported general education until the ninth grade and diversified curricula in the senior secondary phase.

There was also a gradual shift of the apartheid state away from a defence of racial categorisation in education towards a more clearly formulated 'free enterprise' and market-led perspective. This was evident in the curriculum restructuring proposals of the ERS which emphasised the acquisition of new values normally associated with discourses about the 'market'. These values included the ERS's continual emphasis on sustaining the capitalist work ethic and enhancing workplace productivity and technology awareness in schools. This ideological shift made vocational education policies more of a priority than the defence of racially privileged schooling. The promotion of this market ideology by the state as a whole led to a stronger sense of unity across previously fractured state departments.

Most markedly, the intensity of political struggles in education since 1976 made governance by race an increasingly unacceptable policy option. Issues of equity and fairer access to education and training were now being addressed within the state. Struggles on the ground contributed decisively to this shift. The state responded to these pressures of access by promoting policies which viewed vocational education institutions

as the main recipients of the growing numbers of black secondary and post-secondary students. Even though these proposals were seriously flawed, they nonetheless reflected a shift away from racially segregated schools and technical colleges to a more deracialised form of vocational education provision.

THE POST-APARTHEID POLICY DISCOURSE

The policy discourse changed dramatically with the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC) and other political organisations in February 1990 and with the rise to power of the ANC in the first-ever democratic elections of April 1994. Although space constraints do not allow a full treatment of ANC policies in the post-1994 period², the three key pillars of the new policy environment are:

- *An integrated education and training system:* The starting premise of ANC education policy is a principled opposition to divisive education and training systems and the social divisions they buttress in the occupational structure and economy. The ANC has committed itself to the creation of a single, unified and integrated education and training system and the eradication of the structural and institutional divisions of the past.
- *A single qualifications structure:* The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is the centre piece of this integrated model. It is viewed as a regulatory mechanism able to link the previously disparate education and training sub-systems together. The NQF seeks to abolish distinct academic and vocational tracks and replaces them with an integrated system in which learners are not differentiated by the track they are on but by the combination of modules (both academic and vocational) at each level that they achieve. The NQF is viewed as a critical lever in the reduction of social differentiation because it collapses the structural basis of previous forms of social division which have emanated from the hierarchical divide between academic and vocational schooling.

- *A new curriculum framework:* 'Curriculum 2005' is the new curriculum framework being implemented in pilot grades in primary schools throughout the country. It is premised on three critical elements. Firstly, it introduces eight new learning areas that claim to discard many of the ideological restrictions of past forms of curriculum restructuring. Values such as non-racialism, non-sexism, democracy, social justice and cultural tolerance are the key principles that must permeate all new curricula. The eight new learning areas are titled; 'Language, Literacy and Communication'; 'Mathematical Literacy'; 'Human and Social Sciences'; 'Natural Sciences'; 'Technology'; 'Arts and Culture'; 'Economics and Management Sciences'; and 'Life Orientation' (Department of Education, 1997b: 14-15).

Secondly, 'Curriculum 2005' is an outcomes-based approach based on the attainment of twelve critical cross-field outcomes as the key building blocks of all curricula and qualifications. These outcomes are the 'contextually demonstrated end-products' (Department of Education, 1998a: 34) of the learning process which incorporate the key multi-functional problem-solving, team-oriented and entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and values which are today widely considered crucial to the attainment of competitiveness on global markets.

Thirdly, the new integrated curriculum framework is premised on attaining both a solid formative general education and a more meaningful specialisation relevant to the needs of the labour market. Currently, senior secondary education is too general providing few opportunities for specialisation relevant to the labour market. In contrast, current technical college provision is often argued to be too narrow, offering in many instances obsolete specialisations with little underpinning general education. The critical issue, then, is one of providing greater curriculum choice and diversity underpinned by a sound general education. The new curriculum framework (Department of Education, 1997a, 1997b, 1998a, 1998b) argues that these objectives can be met if a qualification

is comprised of three components: fundamental credits (in communication and mathematical literacy), core credits (specialised modules which vary across different occupational contexts), and finally, elective credits, which refer to optional extras in the field of specialisation (depth) or credits outside such a field which broaden the core learning undertaken. In short, future school exiting qualifications will entail both academic and vocational foci which when combined holistically in a qualification will create a more career-oriented set of competencies which will seek to provide immediate currency on the labour market.

It is clear, therefore, that great strides have been made at a discursive level to reconceptualise ET in the post-apartheid period. In the first instance, explicit ideological contestation around race and the free market has receded dramatically in the process of curriculum restructuring. The new values underpinning the curriculum are now based on more universally accepted 'best practice' in education - principles such as non-racialism, non-sexism, democracy, participatory citizenship, equity and a tolerance of cultural diversity. Innovative inter-disciplinary curriculum restructuring is also taking place with the design of the eight new learning areas. These developments open up the possibility of more holistic and less compartmentalised learning.

In the second instance, there is a strong commitment by government to the idea that a broad general education must underpin the integrated curriculum and its associated core, specialist and elective modules. And lastly, there is recognition of the importance of balancing state and market forms of regulation in ET. Key ANC policy documents stress the need for curricula to reflect the obligations of the state towards the development of an empowered and equal citizenry whilst also recognising the need for curricula to be responsiveness to market forces in the economy and occupational structure.

UNCHANGED STRUCTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CONDITIONS

In sharp contrast to these impressive discursive shifts, the structural, institutional and political conditions that underpinned apartheid education remain unchanged since April 1994. In one sense, this critique is premature because insufficient time has passed for the new policies to take root. However, it would be incorrect to assume that these logistical determinants are the only factors that hamper the creation of an integrated ET system. Other structural and institutional factors have resulted in the modification and dilution of the ideal of an integrated/unified ET system. These are:

- *Lack of co-ordination between the differing state departments:* Perhaps the first major blow to the idea of an integrated system was the political decision made in April 1994 with the appointment of Mandela's first Cabinet to keep the 'education' and 'training' portfolios separate in two Ministries instead of the much expected single Ministry of ET. This decision has had serious ramifications ever since, most importantly the failure of the new state to discard the political fiefdoms and territorial modes of working which characterised the divide between 'education' and 'training' in the apartheid state. In addition, few meaningful linkages between education and the critical economic ministries (the Department of Trade and Industry, for example) have been established. These divisions within the state continue and seriously hinder the development of a comprehensive and well co-ordinated human resource development strategy for the country. They act to perpetuate old social divisions in ET and weaken the possibilities for attaining 'co-ordinated social market' policies (the ill fated 'Reconstruction and Development Programme' being the best example of failed cross-sectoral attempts at policy co-ordination). The neglect of policy co-ordination across these critical axes - the macro-economic, employment, labour market and education and training policy domains - opens up the way for the dominance of conservative 'Neo-Liberal' free-market regulation as is best characterised by the government's current 'Growth, Employment and Reconstruction Strategy' (GEARs). In short, the structural and

institutional conditions that underpinned apartheid VET are not being radically altered by the poorly co-ordinated package of policies which the new ANC government has begun to implement.

- *Provincial governments weaken the power and efficiency of central state intervention:* Another serious political constraint on the ANC government's ability to reform the ET system has been the constitutional prescription of concurrent powers in education and training. Whilst an integrated ET system requires that a single set of regulatory mechanisms apply in a coherent manner to the entire system of ET, concurrent powers do not allow this possibility in South Africa. Whereas higher education is regulated by the national Department of Education which can effectively steer the system through its control of the tertiary sector's purse strings, coherent state steering of a single system in further education and training (FET) is considerably weakened by two factors. These are, firstly, the fact that nine distinct Provincial Departments of Education exercise exclusive control over the school and technical colleges sector; and secondly, that the National Department of Labour has regulatory powers over all publicly-funded industrial training schemes and enterprise-based training. The national Department of Education's ability to steer FET in the direction of a single co-ordinated system through financial and other incentives may be seriously undermined by provincial department control of the block grants which provinces receive for social service expenditure.

- *Lack of progress in designing a truly integrated education and training curriculum:* Little has been achieved in the development of new curricula which truly collapse the crude divisions between what is considered academic learning and vocational training. Little planning work has gone into the development of new curricula that are both educationally sound and relevant to the economic conditions of the new millennium. Little progress has been made in encouraging 'college-school' and

'school-industry' linkages so as to widen curriculum choice and diversity. The old divisions remain.

It is a bitter irony of history that the ANC's policy ideals, modified and diluted by the structural, institutional and political influences mentioned above, now begin to resemble the ERS proposals. This policy convergence is occurring because current ANC approaches to VET emphasise a flexibility of choice between fundamental, core and elective modules in senior secondary schooling that will produce exit qualifications which are either predominantly academic or vocational (See Department of Education, 1998c). These dual tracks in schools, when placed alongside vocation education in technical colleges, begin to resemble the ERS triple-tracked proposals which incorporated an academically-oriented formative education in senior secondary schools; a vocationally-oriented formative education in senior secondary schools; and a vocational education track in technical colleges. Michael Young has referred to this phenomenon as 'divisive expansion' (1993: 14), a compromise approach to integration which does not entail any radical reworking of existing academic and vocational curricula, but rather, entails their additive combination. Divisive expansion entails little change in the institutional environment of senior secondary schools and technical colleges.

CONCLUSION

Much has been achieved at the discursive level since 1994 in eradicating the last vestiges of racism and discrimination in ET and in shaping a new and positive conception of the school curriculum. South Africa now possesses some of the most progressive policy texts in the world. Unfortunately, the conditions that structure the lived reality of schools, technical colleges and industrial training remained largely unchanged. Recent political and institutional decisions, often unintentionally, have acted to solidify the social stratification that surrounds vocational education and training. Discursive shifts may seem impressive, but the structural, institutional and political continuities in

the VET arena over the past two decades have severely limited the possibility of any real change.

ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
DEC	Department of Education and Culture
DNE	Department of National Education
DoE	Department of Education
ERS	Education Renewal Strategy
ET	Education and Training
FET	Further Education and Training
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NTB	National Training Board
PC	President's Council
RSA	Republic of South Africa
VET	Vocational Education and Training

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CEPD CONFERENCE ON THE HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICAN APARTHEID EDUCATION

Salt Rock Hotel

27 – 28 October 1999

PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 27 October 1999

08:30 – 08:50 : **REGISTRATION**

- 09:00 – 10:00 (a) :
- ⇒ The Nature of the Project / Update on the project to date:
 - ⇒ Briefing on the nature of the process and the lines of enquiry / what are we doing / what are we not doing / What would be like to be doing?
 - ⇒ Aims/ Objectives / Ambitions
 - ⇒ The Nature of the process so far / the role of the co-ordinating team
 - ⇒ Race and academia / historical writing
 - ⇒ Why do we need “foreign” participation?
 - ⇒ Discussion of the programme

**WHAT IS THE AIM OF THE WORKSHOP? WHAT DO WE
HOPE TO ACHIEVE IN THE NEXT TWO DAYS OF BUSY
LIVES?**

(The Workshop and the discussions and the Interviews (Alan and John))

- (b): ⇒ Who am I and what am I doing here? What is my work and how does it fit into the overall project?

10:00 – 10:30 **TEA**

10:30 – 12:30 **WORKSHOPS ON THE SHAPE AND NATURE OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS**

Meeting of Groups:		Room
Contributors to Part 2.	Education under apartheid L Chisholm	<i>Royal Palm Room 1</i>
Contributors to Part 3.	Apartheid Education and Popular Resistance – J Hyslop / F Nekhwevah	<i>Royal Palm Room 1</i>
Contributors to Part 4 & 5	Identities and Institutional Practices - Dubow / Vally	<i>Royal Palm Room 2</i>

13:00 – 14:00 **LUNCH**

14:00 – 16:00 Workshop Continuation of morning session / identification of key themes and issues and
revision / re-evaluation of work completed and work still to be done *INTERVIEWS*

16:00 – 16:30 **TEA**

16:30 – 18:30 Report back on the above meetings – Identification of Key Issues and Concerns
Interviews and other discussions *INTERVIEWS*

19:00 – 20:00 **DINNER**

20:30 – 21:30 Comments on the day led by:
Linda Cooper, Brown Maaba, Shireen Motala, Fhulu Nekhwevah,
Rob Morrell, Shula Marks, Saul Dubow

Thursday, 28 October 1999

06:00 – 07:30 Information discussion groups about points of common interest : *INTERVIEWS*

07:30 – 08:00 **BREAKFAST**

07:30 – 08:00 **Historiography / Form of writing so far:**

- ⇒ "Yes this is the history (story) of apartheid education but it is also about
.....!!!!!!!"
- ⇒ How do we justify the study of history in an age of policy? / what is the purpose
of the project?
- ⇒ How do we engage with the political challenges of the task
most effectively?

10:30 – 11:00 **TEA**

11:00 – 12:30 Presentations on the nature of the four parts of the project
Report back / Discussions stemming from Groups of yesterday afternoon.

12:30 – 14:00 **LUNCH**

14:00 – 16:00 **THE PROJECT SO FAR; WHERE DID WE GET TO?**

Goals for completion; future plans; publications; future projects to flow from this.

Comments by: Alan Wieder, Sifiso Ndlovu, Sean Morrow, Jon Hyslop, Shireen
Motala, Elaine Unterhalter, Pulumani, Glenda Kruss, Azeem
Badroodien Shula Marks, Saul Dubow, Ciraaj Rassool, Peter
Pluddemann, Thandiwe Haya, Lebo Moletsane, Carin Harris-Williams

FINAL WORD : Shula Marks, Saul Dubow

17:00 **CLOSURE & DEPART FOR AIRPORT**

PUBLISHERS APPROACHED : OUP,; UCT PRESS (Jutas); RAVAN PRESS (Hodder & Stoughton);
MAYIBUYE BOOKS

EDUBASE – DATA BASE ON EDUCATION FOR BLACK SOUTH AFRICANTS
(Peter Kallaway)

Educational archive project.

History of Apartheid Education video project – cf One World Media FORGING A NATION.