

APPENDIX ONE

Schooling in South Africa

INTRODUCTION

Historically, the South African schooling system has been fragmented and racially polarised. As a result of recent political changes that saw the coming to power of South Africa's first democratically elected government, schooling in South Africa has begun to transform from a racially-based system characterized by disparity and inequality to a non-racial integrated, education and training system. This process of transformation has to date involved the restructuring and rationalization of education departments at national and provincial levels and the introduction of a new curriculum framework. The South African Schools Act, promulgated in November 1996, makes schooling compulsory for children between the ages of six and fifteen. It also initiated the reorganization and rationalization of 19 education departments into a single non-racial system, comprising a national department of education and nine provincial departments.

This appendix describes the context or physical infrastructure in schools and teaching and learning realities that shape schooling in South Africa. It also describes the expectations placed upon a dedicated educational service and juxtaposes those expectations with descriptions of classrooms as educational spaces, exploring capacity to access the service, current teaching and learning practices, and the status of learning and teaching in many schools. The descriptions of physical resources in schools, and teaching and learning processes, however, represent an attempt to show some of the contextual challenges influencing decisions regarding a dedicated educational service.

POLICY OVERVIEW

As part of government's commitment to equity, redress, quality and relevance, several important pieces of legislation have been formulated. These include the National Education Policy Act (1995), the South African Schools Act 1996, Regulations for Governing Bodies of Public Schools, and Norms for the Funding of Schools. This legislation has been designed to revise all aspects of the schooling system, including: planning and management of the education system; governance and finance; curriculum frameworks; the education and professional development of teachers; salaries; and working conditions. In respect of such legislation, significant changes have taken place since 1994. These changes include: the integration of national and provincial departments; increased access and desegregation of schools; redistribution in expenditure for new schools and the upgrading of existing facilities; curriculum changes; and developing a culture of learning and teaching in schools.

The National Department of Education, acknowledges that in terms of implementation of policy in the four years since 1994, it is 'far from achieving our vision for education'.¹ Likewise, Jonathan Jansen from the University of Durban Westville, commenting on the extent to which policy has promoted an equitable education system, argues that, measured in

¹*Business Day*, 25 February 1998.

terms of net available onsite resources, the distance between black and white schools has increased in this short period since the legal termination of apartheid in the early 1990s.²

In his Call to Action statement Minister of Education, Kader Asmal acknowledges that although South Africa has managed to formulate educational policies and laws that are at least equal to the best in the world our schooling system is still dysfunctional in many. There are still some serious problems characterised by³,

- rampant inequalities in schools,
- low teacher morale,
- failures of governance and management, and
- poor quality of teaching.

His utterances also confirm that the excellent policies that have been formulated have not yet had any impact in schools. This chapter explores these issues to confirm the dysfunctionality of the schooling system. This is important because it has to inform decisions about dedicated educational channel.

In order to track the impact of policy on the transformation of schooling and education since 1994, it is first necessary to paint a demographic picture of schooling in South Africa. This will be followed by a review of the impact of the implementation of new policy, particularly in the areas of the provincialisation of education, governance and management, resource provision, and effectiveness of teaching and learning

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Provincialisation of Education

In 1994 legislation was introduced which assigned functions to provincial departments previously held by a variety of authorities. Provinces are now responsible for the provision of education as well as for functions in the areas of legislation, organization, finance, personnel, logistics, information, office services, physical facilities, provision of books, examinations, and computer services. The overall goal of the provincialisation of education is the devolution of considerable autonomy and authority for education, to the nine provinces.⁴ To achieve this goal, provinces have been engaged in a process of restructuring and amalgamating various departments into one coherent education department. In addition departments have had to develop and adopt strategic plans in order to address some of the following areas: infrastructure; financial management; education management and administration; school governance; and curriculum and staff development. The degree to which provinces have moved towards the goal of assuming autonomy and authority for education is uneven and is still, to a large extent considered to be 'work in progress'. According to the President's Education Initiative report, the logistical process of departmental restructuring in the Eastern Cape was finalised in the second half of 1996, while in KwaZulu-Natal this process is reported to be 'far from complete'.

²Jansen, J. (1998). *How Policy Creates Inequality*. Address to the CHR/IDASA Symposium, Cape Town.

³Asmal K, (1999). *Call to Action: Mobilising Citizens to Build a South African Education and Training System for the 21st Century*: Statement by Prof. Kader Asma, Tuesday, 27 July 1999

⁴All aspects of educational planning and management were centralised prior to 1994, thus the new responsibilities afforded to provincial governments to plan, manage and resource education in the respective provinces, is a fairly new phenomenon.

The extent to which provincial departments have made progress in the taking over of functions in areas such as finance and management, and the provision of facilities and textbooks, differs from province to province. It is reported that the Western Cape has made the most progress in the taking over of the various functions.

The most advanced province...is the Western Cape which by the end of July [1995] had taken control of more than 90% of the functions in areas of legislation, organization, provision of books and physical facilities...KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State have also reported substantial progress, with the Northern Province and the Northern Cape lagging far behind in almost all areas.⁵

However, whilst the Western Cape has made considerable progress in comparison to other provincial departments, the impact thereof has been uneven across schools within the province. As Garson notes:

Although the Western Cape's 2000 schools fall under one administrative structure, the differences between them are so vast they may as well be hemispheres apart. One school has abundant resources, good access to the provincial department of Education, and sophisticated management and teaching skills that allow it to forge ahead with fund-raising and implementing the new curriculum. A few kilometres away, another school has none of these. Instead, it has violence, gangsterism overcrowded classrooms and ill-trained(sic) teachers in short supply.⁶

The Western Cape is not unique with respect to differences between individual schools. In the Northern Province, schools in and around Pietersburg are in a much better position relative to schools in the former homeland areas of Gazankula, Lebowa and Venda. These former homeland areas have been amalgamated into the education department of the Northern Province late in 1996. These examples of disparities which exists between schools which fall under one education department, point to the issue of coherence and uniformity in terms of policy implementation from national to provincial to district and to school. It is also underscores the fact that the process of devolution and decentralisation of education, is a difficult one, requiring effective planning and management, effective channels of communication, and capacity-building.

Provincial departments have experienced considerable difficulties in the areas of finance and management. In January 1996 it was reported that 'Gauteng had a budget shortfall of R300m, the Northern Cape of R13,8m, the North West of R270m and the Western Cape of R522m'.⁷ For the 1997/8 financial year, information provided by Edusource, reveal over-expenditure in eight of the nine provinces, with overspending by Gauteng running into R1bn, Kwazulu-Natal by R500m, the Eastern Cape by R1.5bn, and the Western Cape R460m.⁸ It is estimated that by the end of 1997, over-expenditure by province amounted to approximately 5.5 billion rands.⁹

⁵ *Edusource Data News*. No.19/December 1997. p. 5.

⁶ *The Teacher*. October, 1998. p. 14.

⁷ *Edusource Data News*. No. 21/July 1996. p. 1.

⁸ *Edusource Data News*. No. 21/July 1998.

⁹ Department of Education. (May 1998). *An Audit of Provincial Quality Assurance Activities*. Commissioned by Chief Directorate: Quality Assurance.

Some of the reasons cited for provincial over-expenditure, include the high proportion allocated to personnel (up to 90%)¹⁰, as well as ‘poor budgeting procedures that stemmed mainly from weak middle management’.¹¹ Furthermore, provincial reviews carried out by an audit team under the auspices of the director-general of the Department of Public Service and Administration found that the main causes of over-expenditure was ‘related to lack of financial controls and monitoring’ and the fact that most provinces had ‘no qualified financial managers and unqualified finance personnel were administering budgets of billions in the absence of proper financial management training and skills.’¹²

As a means of addressing the issue of over expenditure, the national education department announced that a new approach to spending would be introduced in 1999, with mechanisms to ensure that,

schools and district offices would in future shoulder responsibility for their own finances. Each school would have a separate budget allocation. Schools would be ranked from richest to poorest, and 70% of the budget would be allocated to the poorest 40% of schools. Schools would have to develop their own budgets for maintenance, teacher costs, non-teacher personnel costs, textbooks and equipment.¹³

However, an underlying assumption of this approach is that school staff and governing bodies have the necessary financial management expertise to take on budgeting responsibility. As Vally and Spreen emphasise,

As schools are to become their own budget and cost centres, the burden of establishing, exempting and retrieving fees will be severe. Budget formulation and financial arrangements with district and provincial levels will require considerable expertise and ... [t]he need to afford governing bodies extensive training in financial management is therefore crucial.¹⁴

A key feature that emerges with the provincialisation of education is that of disparity, not only between provinces, but also between schools within one provincial border. These differences have been attributed to the fact that

each region in South Africa has developed with historical, political and economic specificity, [and therefore] the role of the provincial departments in shaping the educational system has varied considerably.¹⁵

It follows therefore, that different provincial departments will be faced with different sorts of challenges as they grapple with the interpretation and implementation of education policy.

School Governing Bodies

In 1996, the South African Schools Act set out a new framework for the ownership, governance and funding of schools.¹⁶ A full year of reports; white papers; and bills preceded

¹⁰ Bot, M. (1998). Education Spending in the Provinces. In *Edusource Data News* No. 20/March 1998. P. 10

¹¹ *Edusource Data News*. No. 21/July 1998. p. 1.

¹² *ibid.* p. 5.

¹³ *Edusource Data News*. No. 21/July 1998. p. 1.

¹⁴ Vally, S. and Spreen, C-A. (1998). Education policy and implementation: February to May 1998. In *Quarterly Review of Education and Training in South Africa*. Vol. 5, No. 3. p. 8.

¹⁵ *ibid.* p. 15.

¹⁶ Based on a contributed by Salim Vally and extracted from Vally, S.; Chisholm, L. and Motala, S. (March 1998). *Poverty and Inequality Hearings: Education Theme. Background paper* commissioned by SANGOCO and the Commission for Gender Equality and South African Human Rights Commission. Johannesburg: EPU Wits. Also, Vally, S. and Spreen, C-A. (May 1998). *Education policy and implementation: February to May*

it. This process was marked by severe contestation, particularly over provisions such as school fees and the composition and powers of governing bodies. The Schools Act repealed all apartheid legislation pertaining to schools, abolished corporal punishment, codified compulsory education for children between the ages of seven and fifteen, and provided the framework for a unified school system. The policy requires that governing bodies at all schools be composed of parents (the majority group); educators; pupils (in secondary schools); non-educator staff and a co-opted non-parent member of the community.

In terms of the policy, governing bodies have a wide range of management functions, including financial management and various aspects of personnel management, as well as supporting 'the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions'. The Act further states that 'the governance of every public school is vested in its governing body'¹⁷. The role of school governing bodies (SGBs) in respect of school governance and management, includes being responsible for appointments, promotions and transfers of teachers, as well as being responsible for raising funds, which may be used to supplement educational resources or employ extra staff.¹⁸ In addition to taking responsibility for these practical aspects of schooling, the role of SGBs is also to encourage the participation of parents and to promote positive and enabling learning environments at schools. In the light of these roles it is clear that SGBs are one of the key mechanisms for effective school governance, organisation and management.

According to the Schools Act, some of the duties and functions of governing bodies are to:

- promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for learners at the school;
- decide upon the school's *mission*, goals and objectives, and develop the *mission statement* of the school;
- *support* the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions.¹⁹

In addition the Act states that, a governing body may apply to the Head of Department in writing to be allocated any of the following functions:

- To maintain and improve the school's property, buildings and grounds;
- Financial management and fundraising, including developing a budget, collecting school fees and developing procedures for the partial or total exemption of parents from paying school fees;
- To purchase textbooks, educational materials or equipment for the school;
- To pay for services to the school; and
- To determine the extra-mural curriculum and the choice of subject options in terms of provincial curriculum policy.²⁰

In accordance with legislation, governing bodies were meant to assume their roles and carry out their functions from the beginning of 1998. However, whilst most schools have elected governing bodies, not all are functional in carrying out their roles and responsibilities. In this regard, *The Teacher* cites a progress report conducted by the Centre for Education Policy

1998. Commissioned by SIDA, Swedish Development Co-operation Agency. In *Quarterly Review of Education and Training in South Africa*, 5, 3.

¹⁷ See Chapter 3. No 16. *South African Schools Act*, 1996.

¹⁸ The Education laws Amendment Act, November 1997.

¹⁹ Government Gazette. (1996).No. 17579, 15 November 1996. *South African Schools Act: Act No. 84*.

²⁰ *ibid*.

Development, which found that, ‘over 75% of all public schools have already established school governing bodies (SGBs).’²¹ Subsequent to the establishment of SGBs, a Federation of Associations of Governing bodies of South Africa has been formed representing 3000 school governing bodies.²²

In some provinces poor infrastructure, as well as a lack of resources and training have hampered the process of establishing SGBs. For example, *The Teacher* reports that, since the elections of school governing bodies in the North West province, ‘there has been a lull’.²³ Whilst some school governing bodies have had significant successes in terms of their role in schooling, some schools are experiencing considerable difficulties due to a lack of training and support mechanisms. The schools who have made the most significant progress, are the better-resourced and ex-Model C schools.

If governing bodies are to carry out their functions then the need for effective support and training is crucial. To this end, the government released close to R30 million toward the training of SGBs in 1998.²⁴ Already provincial departments in collaboration with non-governmental organisations have instituted a number of initiatives. The impact of these initiatives varies from province to province, with training in Gauteng reaching up to 50% of school governing bodies. In the Free State in 1997, a training initiative, on how to set up governing bodies and strategic planning, governance, financial management, reached about 400 delegates from 27 schools.²⁵

While the establishment of SGBs has been lauded in so far as it ‘allows local communities a greater role in schooling’,²⁶ it has the potential to further reinforce rather than reduce inequalities, due to the fact that legislation ‘forces them to carry the financial burden of education costs’²⁷. The development and establishment of SGBs is a recent phenomena, and subsequently it remains to be seen to what extent they are able to carry out their functions in ensuring enabling learning conditions so as to enhance the quality of the teaching and learning process.

As indicated earlier the process leading to the passing of the South African Schools Act was marked by contestations particularly over provisions such as school fees and the composition and powers of governing bodies. The contested area of compulsory user fees contradicts previous commitments to free primary and secondary education. While the argument is made that payment of school fees by some communities will free up resources for poor schools, others feel that, in conditions of already existing disparities, it will tend to perpetuate inequality in education. A compelling view is that poorer communities who desperately require quality education will find themselves in situations where they can only afford rudimentary provision. On the other hand, more privileged communities, which benefited from apartheid, will continue to have access to superior education opportunities.

Clearly this relates to priorities in a dedicated educational broadcasting channel service. The contestation around governance and funding affects any plan to increase physical access to

²¹ *The Teacher*, June 1998. p. 4.

²² *Business Day*. 4 December 1998.

²³ *op cit.* p. 4.

²⁴ *The Teacher*, June 1998. p. 4.

²⁵ Joint Education Trust. (1997). *President’s Education Initiative: Final Report of Phase One, Appendix B.*

²⁶ Vally, S. (1998) *Quarterly Review of Education and Training in South Africa*. Vol. 5, No.4, August 1998. P. 3

²⁷ *ibid.*

broadcasting services. The plans will need to devise sustainable solutions rather than simply dumping hardware on schools, forcing commitment by governing bodies to unaffordable expenses. There is a risk that physical infrastructure plans create an unhealthy and irrational culture of demand that develops a momentum of its own and derails well-intentioned ideas. This happens particularly as people feel an emotional sense of injustice if they are not in line for whatever handouts are being offered. Paradoxically, this potentially reinforces disempowerment of local communities, whose time is absorbed in trying to gain access to handouts - orchestrated by international, national, or provincial entities - rather than developing locally driven, sustainable solutions that build on existing resources. A possible consequence is community dependence on handouts, which is difficult to resolve. The White Paper's commitment to democratic governance and growing involvement by local governing bodies in the affairs of schools provides an in-principle resolution to the problem, provided it is accompanied by appropriate capacity development.

Curriculum 2005

A specific policy area of interest to an educational broadcasting planning process is Curriculum 2005. Of course, as with all South African educational initiatives, Curriculum 2005 exists within the broader policy framework sketched above, which sets clear philosophical and conceptual precedents.

Curriculum 2005 has, as its foundation, the establishment of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) and South African Qualification Authority (SAQA). Both SAQA and NQF were officially established in Act No. 58 of 1995 and are intended to give structural weight to transformation of education at school level. This transformation is a shift from content-based to outcomes-based education (OBE). Curriculum 2005 draws on OBE principles to build better quality educational provision at school level. It seeks to shift focus from 'teacher input (instructional offerings or syllabuses expressed in terms of content) to the outcomes of the learning process'.²⁸ It also empowers the teacher to make decisions about how to teach and how to assess.

The intention of Curriculum 2005 is to create nationally agreed outcomes and criteria for assessing the achievement of these outcomes. This ensures common recognition and acceptance of qualifications and builds greater flexibility in the education system in terms of where and how learning takes place and is assessed. The Department of Education established learning area committees for each of the eight identified learning areas. These learning area committees were responsible for identifying specific learning area outcomes that reflect the critical cross-field outcomes identified by SAQA (where critical cross-field outcomes are general outcomes that express intended results of education and training in a broad sense).

Clearly, though, this is the first – and possibly easiest – step of implementing Curriculum 2005. The more difficult process is using this to shift teaching and learning practices in classrooms around South Africa. It is at this level that the enormity of the objectives of Curriculum 2005 becomes evident. Curriculum 2005 seeks to change some of the traditional approaches to teaching, such as the following kinds of general shifts (which are illustrative of the types of shifts and not an exhaustive list):

- from passive to active learners;

²⁸ Department of Education. (1997). *Curriculum 2005: Lifelong Learning for the 21st Century: A User's Guide*. Pretoria: Department of Education. p. 32.

- from examination-driven to ongoing assessment;
- from rote learning to critical thinking, reasoning, reflection, and action; and
- from textbook/worksheet-bound, teacher-centred education to learner-centred education, where the teacher is a facilitator of the learning environment.

The national department of education began implementing this new curriculum framework during the first quarter of 1998, in grade one classes across the country. It has been introduced in grade two in 1999 and will be introduced in grade seven in 2000, and by the year 2003 it would be in place in all grades.²⁹ Vally and Spreen, commenting on the implementation of Curriculum 2005 during the first quarter of 1998, note that government embarked on the implementation of one of its most significant policy initiatives targeting curriculum reform and the result was much confusion, some resistance and significant trepidation.³⁰

The phasing in of the new curriculum involved the introduction of new school textbooks, as well as the training of teachers. According to the Minister of Education, 90% to 95% of the educational material for curriculum 2005 had been delivered in six of the nine provinces in 1998.³¹ The national education department spent about R50m during 1998 on the training of teachers for the implementation of curriculum 2005.³² The department had opted to invest money in teacher training as opposed to learner support, arguing that 'A greater impact would be achieved in teacher training as teachers would be able to have competencies like developing resources.'³³

Since the introduction of the new curriculum its impact across the provinces has been uneven. Vally and Spreen, in a review of education policy and developments from February to May 1998, report that:

In rural or under-served areas it is estimated that at least 2 000 primary schools (one in five of the schools targeted) have failed to implement the new curriculum for reasons such as lack of teacher preparation or resource materials. Not surprisingly, the provinces that have fallen furthest behind are the Northern Province, Kwazulu-Natal, the North West and the Free State.³⁴

In the Western Cape, where progress has been significantly better, the Subject Advisory Services and Curriculum Services directorates had in early 1997 developed a plan for the implementation of curriculum 2005 outlining in detail the different phases of the implementation process. All provinces have experienced, to lesser or greater degrees, a number of difficulties with the phasing in of the new curriculum. A study commissioned by the Gauteng Institute for Curriculum Development (GICD) ascribed the difficulties surrounding implementation of the new curriculum to 'inadequate training of teachers, a lack of materials and poor communication between department officials and teachers'.³⁵ The difficulties encountered with the implementation of the new curriculum looks set to continue well into 1999, with the Eastern Cape provincial department reporting that 'Curriculum 2005

²⁹ *The Burger*, 29 September 1998, reports that the Minister of Education announced that the implementation for grade seven would be postponed to 2002.

³⁰ Vally, S. and Spreen, C-A. (1998). *op cit*.

³¹ *The Citizen*, 16 March 1998.

³² *Business Day*, 25 June 1998.

³³ Rensburg, I. (1998), quoted in the *Business Day*, 25 June 1998.

³⁴ Vally, S. and Spreen, C-A. (1998). *op cit*. p. 14.

³⁵ Garson, P. (1999). *The Teacher*, Vol. 4. No. 1 January 1999. p. 6.

was threatened with no finance available for materials and educator training, and the department did not foresee being able to extend the programme to grade two in 1999'.³⁶

A key feature of the implementation process of Curriculum 2005 is that of support and partnerships, whether through materials and/or programmes and projects. Provincial departments in collaboration with non-governmental organisations have initiated a number of teacher development projects and programmes.³⁷ In the North West province, for example, a capacity building initiative in outcomes-based education is presently underway. It is described as a NGO co-operative venture, which aims to develop 'the capacity of the province's subject advisers to conduct training in outcomes-based methodology initially in 72 schools and then in all schools by the year 2002'.³⁸ There are a number of similar such initiatives across the provinces, primarily designed to support activities in classrooms and schools related to delivery of outcomes-based education, particularly in the areas of mathematics, science, technology and language.

Debates about the relative merits of OBE, which have been rife as the implementation of Curriculum 2005 started to take effect, have had the unfortunate consequence of creating polarity of opinion based on qualitative interpretations of OBE. In public debate, the new curriculum has often been reduced to either 'good' or 'bad', depending on one's perspective. OBE is not, however, an intrinsically 'good' or 'bad' concept; its value depends on the way in which it is implemented and measurement of this value will shift significantly according to the context in which implementation is taking place. Nor does the articulation of learning outcomes constitute a measure of educational quality of any course or programme. Nevertheless, clear articulation of the intended outcomes of a course or programme does provide an essential initial tool that can be applied in measuring the quality of educational provision, and as such is an important step in establishing transparency in educational provision.

Because it challenges traditional pedagogies, the implementation of Curriculum 2005 is complex and highly contested. The implementation process has been further complicated by parallel efforts to establish democratic governance at school level and by the evolving relationships being established between national and provincial departments of education.³⁹ Equally, though, the success of its implementation is a crucial element in the transformation of South African education and training, and, to be most useful, a school educational broadcasting service will need to ensure that it contributes constructively to ensuring this success, rather than impeding it.

³⁶ *Edusource Data News* No. 23/December 1998. p. 3.

³⁷ Joint Education Trust. (1997). *President's Education Initiative: Final Report of Phase One*.

³⁸ Joint Education Trust. (1997). *President's Education Initiative: Final Report of Phase One*,

³⁹ A key feature of educational transformation in South Africa since 1994 has been the replacement of racially defined education departments with geo-politically defined provincial departments of education. This change has created complex relationships and poorly defined responsibilities. The move was intended to give provincial departments responsibility for implementation, while retaining responsibility for national policy ('norms and standards' and 'conditions of service' for teachers) at national level. The new reality is that agreements reached on policy and implementation issues at national level generate responsibilities for provincial departments of education which they are often unable to carry out, because of lack of managerial capacity, or simply because their budgets (designed and legally approved before the new mandate is received) are too small. As a result, the relationship between the national and provincial departments is evolving in two contradictory directions which need to be monitored: while there are moves to increase the autonomy of provincial departments, the decision-making and negotiation processes which might resolve the current tensions have yet to be designed.

While many of the suggestions made are important, other contextual factors need to be taken into consideration, and will determine whether or not the various needs for educational broadcasting will have an educational impact and be of educational benefit and equity. It is to these factors, to which the discussion turns.

CONTEXT OF IMPLEMENTATION

AN OVERVIEW OF THE MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT OF SCHOOLS

Descriptions of the context of implementation of any initiative run the risk of omission. It is indisputable that the context within which a dedicated educational broadcasting service will be implemented is dynamic one, where constraints can be transformed into opportunities and strengths into weaknesses. This section will show that in black schools, apartheid education led to minimal levels of resources, inadequately trained and few staff, poor quality learning materials, shortages of classrooms, and the absence of libraries and laboratories.⁴⁰ It will also show that large sections of our schooling system are dysfunctional largely because of lack of proper management, administrative and communication mechanisms. Although the government has formulated some of the excellent educational policies to redress the imbalances, some serious disparities still exist between formerly white and black schools and between provinces.

A Demographic Picture

Number of schools

According to the School Register of Needs conducted in 1996, there are 27 188 schools in South Africa. We acknowledge that this number may have increased as Chisholm, Motala and Vally indicated that there are 32000 schools in South Africa.⁴¹ However since there is no enough information about latest figures we will rely on information provided by the Schools Register of Needs. According to which,⁴² the majority of schools are to be found in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Province. Approximately 70% of these are primary schools, reflecting a 4% increase on figures for the 1994 schooling year. The distribution of schools per province is provided in table one below, while table two summarizes the number of schools by type in each province.

Table One: Distribution of schools per province⁴³

| Province | Total Schools |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Eastern Cape | 5 880 |
| Free State | 2 881 |
| Gauteng | 2 233 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 5 409 |
| Mpumalanga | 1 907 |
| Northern Cape | 526 |
| Northern Province | 4 170 |
| North West | 2 412 |

⁴⁰ Vally, S. et al. Op cit.

⁴¹ Chisholm L, Motala S, and Vally, S (1999) *Review of South African Education 1996-1998*: Centre for Education Policy Development 2000 Plus Conference, August 1999

⁴² Source: The National Department of Education, *School Register of Needs*, 1997

⁴³ *Ibid*

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Western Cape | 1 770 |
| National Total | 27 188 |

*Table Two: Distribution of schools by type*⁴⁴

| Province | Combined | Primary | Secondary | Special Educ. Need | Unknown | Tech College |
|----------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Eastern Cape | 1006 | 3892 | 960 | 24 | 52 | 9 |
| Free State | 141 | 2418 | 296 | 18 | 19 | 1 |
| Gauteng | 207 | 1413 | 559 | 60 | 4 | 19 |
| KwaZulu Natal | 152 | 3865 | 1344 | 41 | 34 | 12 |
| Mpumalanga | 111 | 1424 | 377 | 12 | 2 | 1 |
| Northern Cape | 49 | 392 | 80 | 1 | 7 | 1 |
| Northern Province | 59 | 2713 | 1372 | 11 | 6 | 9 |
| North West | 121 | 1624 | 630 | 39 | 8 | 1 |
| Western Cape | 119 | 1271 | 314 | 68 | 14 | 5 |
| National Total | 1965 | 19012 | 5932 | 274 | 146 | 58 |
| % of National Total | 7% | 69% | 22% | 1% | 0.5% | 0.2% |

A huge demand is placed on existing infrastructure in South Africa, although the above tables do not reflect the shortage of schools and classrooms. For example, in 1996 it was estimated that there was a shortage of about 58 000 classrooms nationally, with the Eastern Cape in need of more than 15 000 classrooms.⁴⁵ However, according to data obtained from Edusource, December 1998, the shortage of classrooms in the Eastern Cape could be as high as 21 250, a shortfall which would cost the Eastern Cape Department of Education more than R1.6 billion to regain.⁴⁶ A clearer picture of the shortage of schools and classrooms can be obtained by looking at enrolment patterns in relation to the number of schools in the nine provinces.

*Learner Enrolment per Province*⁴⁷

It is estimated that about 400 000 new learners enter the education system every year. In 1994 the total number of learners enrolled at the primary level (grades one to seven) was 7 890 519, whilst the enrolment figures for secondary learners (grades eight to twelve) was 3 517 079. This brings the total number of learners for 1994 close to 11.5 million.⁴⁸ In 1995, enrolment figures for the primary level was 8 159 435 and 3 749 448 at the secondary level, increasing the total to approximately 11.9 million learners⁴⁹. The latest figures show that, by 1998 the number of learners at the primary level had increased to more than 8.5 million (8 665 229), while there was an estimated 4 259 74 learners at the secondary level.⁵⁰ Hence, by 1998, South Africa's school population is estimated to be close to 13 million, of which 25 %

⁴⁴ Source: Data from the 1996 *School Register of Needs*, obtained directly from Edusource, 1998.

⁴⁵ *The Teacher*, September 1997. p. 3.

⁴⁶ In 1994, the IDT School Building Trust estimated that it would cost approximately R52 000 to build one classroom

⁴⁷ Research Institute for Educational Planning. (1998). *Education and Manpower Development, 1997. No.18*. University of the Orange Free State.

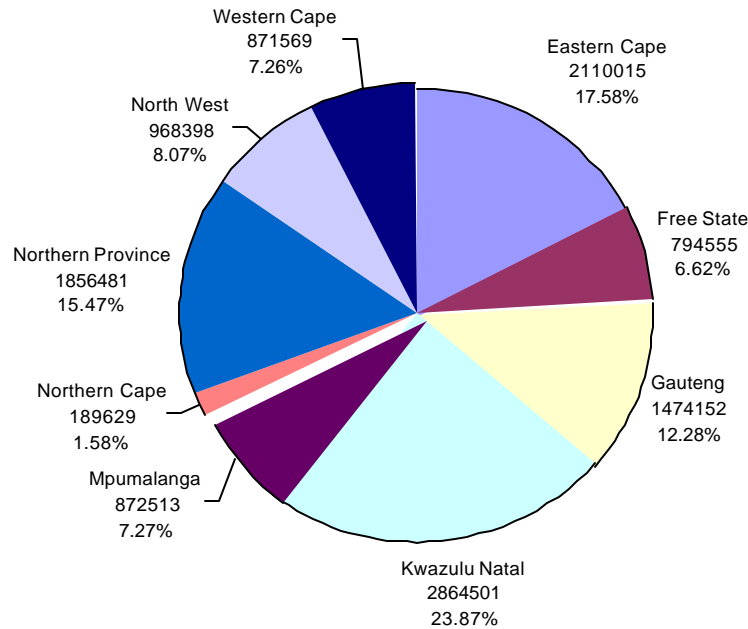
⁴⁸ Research Institute for Educational Planning. (1995). *Education and Manpower Development 1994*. University of the Orange Free State.

⁴⁹ *Edusource Data News*. No. 18/ October 1997.

⁵⁰ Research Institute for Educational Planning. (1998). *Education and Manpower Development 1997. No. 18*. University of the Orange Free State. p. 15.

is to be found in Kwazulu- Natal. The diagram below provides information on learner enrolment according to province.

...diagram



A comparison of the number of schools with enrolment patterns for each province provides some sense of the extent of classroom and school shortages. Out of South Africa's total enrolment figure of close to 13 million, almost seven million students attend schools in KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape, and the Northern Province. In the case of KwaZulu-Natal there are 5 409 schools in which to accommodate 2 864 501 learners. The Eastern Cape has 5 880 schools in which to accommodate 2 110 015 learners. So, Kwazulu-Natal, has more learners than the Eastern Cape, but fewer schools in which to accommodate them. Thus the demand placed on schools in Kwazulu-Natal is inevitably higher. In the Western Cape, it is reported that, there were 837 352 pupils at 1610 schools in 1995, and in 1996, the province had to cope with an unplanned 7000 school pupils.⁵¹ For the 1998 school year, it was estimated that the Western Cape had approximately 885 000 learners and 1 800 schools. The majority of these learners (about 600 000) were at the primary level, and needed to be accommodated in the province's 1300 primary schools.

In 1994, pupil enrolment in Gauteng was 1 379 839, or 10.7% of the total pupil population. By 1997, this figure rose to well over 1 450 000, and it is reported that 2 219 new classrooms have been built over the past four years to cope with this increase in demand.⁵² However, this is still insufficient, and subsequently 'the problem of too few schools [in Gauteng] is dealt

⁵¹ *Edusource Data News* No. 13/July 1996. p. 6.

⁵² *Edusource Data News* No. 23/December 1998. p. 6.

with in part by running double sessions'⁵³ Much of the demand on schools in South Africa is at the primary level, since the majority of pupils is enrolled at grades one to seven.

In tables three and four below, a breakdown of learner enrolment at primary and secondary level by province is provided for 1997 and 1998.

Table Three: Learner enrolment for primary and secondary levels, per province (1997)⁵⁴

| Province | Primary | Secondary | Total |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Northern Cape | 130 860 | 58 769 | 189 629 |
| Eastern Cape | 1 534 462 | 575 553 | 2 110 015 |
| Western Cape | 587 422 | 284 147 | 871 569 |
| North West | 632 535 | 335 863 | 968 398 |
| Northern Province | 1 167 160 | 689 321 | 1 856 481 |
| Free State | 511 276 | 283 279 | 794 555 |
| Gauteng | 946 448 | 527 704 | 1 474 152 |
| Mpumalanga | 578 599 | 293 914 | 872 513 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 1 972 386 | 892 115 | 2 864 501 |
| Total | 8 061 148 | 3 940 665 | 12 001 813 |

Table Four: Estimates for learner enrolment according to province, 1998⁵⁵

| Province | Primary | Secondary |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Northern Cape | 141 273 | 6 1573 |
| Eastern Cape | 1 773 911 | 629 216 |
| Western Cape | 596 754 | 294 945 |
| North West | 660 516 | 355 673 |
| Northern Province | 1 252 757 | 737 312 |
| Free State | 519 661 | 291 325 |
| Gauteng | 990 618 | 575 920 |
| Mpumalanga | 666 743 | 343 478 |
| Kwazulu-Natal | 2 128 098 | 1 022 010 |
| Total | 8 730 331 | 4 311 452 |

A comparison of the figures for 1997 and 1998 gives a clear indication of the rate of increase in learner enrolments at primary and secondary levels. For example, in the Eastern Cape, the number of learners at the secondary level increased by about 54 000 from 1997 to 1998, while primary level enrolment figures increased by approximately 240 000. In Mpumalanga primary level increase of 88 100, and secondary level increase of 50 000. At national level, primary enrolment figures increased by 605 000 and by 320 000 at the secondary level. Thus the intake of learners is greatest between grades one to seven. Generally, however the increase amongst learners in the secondary level is higher than that for the primary level of schooling. A comparison of enrolment figures for 1997 with estimates for 1998 indicates that the average annual growth rate in primary and secondary schools is 2.43% and 3.90% respectively.

⁵³ *ibid.* p. 6.

⁵⁴ Research Institute for Education Planning. (1998). *Education and Manpower Development 1997*, No 18. Faculty of Education, University of the Orange Free State.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

Teacher-Classroom and Teacher-Pupil Ratios

The national norm for teacher-pupil ratios, proposed by the national Department of Education, is 40:1 in primary schools and 35:1 in secondary schools. The national Department of Education recently proposed a 'national ceiling for teacher/pupil ratios of 39:1 for the 1999 school year'.⁵⁶ According to a statistical overview presented by Monica Bot, the teacher-classroom ratios for 1996 averaged 1,2:1 for the country as a whole, suggesting a considerable shortage of classrooms.⁵⁷ In the Northern Province for example, while the average provincial teacher-pupil ratio is within the national norm, the shortage of classrooms in the province (as indicated by a teacher-classroom ratio of 1,4:1) implies that about half of primary school teachers are likely to have classes larger than 40 students, and as many as 519 000 primary and secondary pupils (37%) are in classes with as many as 70 learners.⁵⁸ A similar situation exists in the Eastern Cape, which has a teacher-classroom ratio of 1,5:1 requiring teachers to teach up to 51 children. These two provinces have the greatest classroom shortages.⁵⁹ As a general trend, teachers in the Northern Province, Eastern Cape, and North West share classrooms, teach outside, or use non-teaching areas. It is reported that the 'North West Education Department would need R450m to eradicate a backlog of 4000 classrooms in the 1998/99 financial year'.⁶⁰ A similar situation exists in Mpumalanga where it is estimated that there is a shortage of 20 000 classrooms which would cost the department R500m per year for the next ten years to eliminate the backlog.⁶¹

Schools in Gauteng are generally in a better position than in other provinces in terms of classroom shortages. According to figures released in the Gauteng provincial report, 1996, 12% of schools (representing about 58 600 pupils) in the province are overcrowded,⁶² compared to the Northern Province, where it was estimated that the province was short of 35000 classrooms. With the provincialization of education, the related issues of classroom shortages and teacher-pupil ratios, becomes the responsibility of each provincial department. This means, as will be shown below, that provinces now have the power to determine their own ratios based on their budgets. Thus those schools that are in a position to raise extra funds to employ extra staff will be able to maintain lower teacher-pupil ratios.

The data sets presented above, point to the fact that there has been significant shifts in enrolment patterns in South Africa since 1994. Most of South Africa's children are now attending school, and more learners are moving through the schooling system at the secondary level now than in previous years. Whilst the majority of learners are enrolled at the primary level, enrolment trends suggest that there is a significant increase in flow to secondary education. For example, 7 945 07 learners were enrolled at the primary level in 1994, compared to 8 061 148 in 1997. Whilst at the secondary level 3 513 486 pupils were enrolled in 1994 compared to 3 940 665 in 1997, thus the rate of increase at the secondary level for the period 1994 to 1997 is approximately 3.7 times that for the primary level. In addition, while it appears that more learners are passing through the schooling system, there

⁵⁶ *The Teacher*, October 1998. p. 3.

⁵⁷ Bot, M. (1998). A Statistical Overview of Education in South Africa In *Education Africa Forum - Second Edition*. p. 129.

⁵⁸ Joint Education Trust. (1997). *President's Education Initiative: Final Report of Phase One, Appendix A*. p. 4.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 129.

⁶⁰ EduSource Data News. No.21/July 1998. p. 8.

⁶¹ EduSource Data News. No. 17/August 1997. p. 9.

⁶² *ibid.*, p. 3

is an overall decline in intake in grade one. The grade one intake for 1995 was approximately 1 666 980 and in 1997 it had dropped to 1 558 019.⁶³

Some educational analysts have interpreted these trends in enrolment figures as follows:

Demographic projections suggest that the number of entrants to schools has now levelled off and will fall in the course of the next decade. Total school enrolments trends depend also on flows through the system and repetition rates. Improvements in educational quality and student flows will accelerate progress through schooling initially, followed by a period of falling enrolment extending well into the 21st century.⁶⁴

Crouch and Mabogoane, in an analysis of historical and current data, make the point that what enrolment trends suggest is the 'nearly universal coverage in most grades, and the large numbers of years children attend schools'. Thus they argue that,

The task that now appears is a less dramatic but more difficult one: that of managing the flow of learners through the system, rather than the simpler (managerially) but depressing (financially) task of throwing resources (building schools, hiring educators) at a major under-enrolment problem.⁶⁵

PROVISION OF RESOURCES

According to the School Register of Needs Survey, carried out in 1996, only 17% of schools have libraries and about 50% of schools have an adequate supply of textbooks. On the whole, schools in the Northern Province and Eastern Cape are the worst off in terms of facilities like condition of buildings, libraries, laboratories, water supply, electricity supply, ablution facilities and telephones. The Western Cape, Gauteng and the Northern Cape are generally in a better position. An example of the extent of provincial disparities in terms of resource provision, is the case of library facilities, where in the Eastern Cape and Northern Province 7% and 5% of schools respectively have library facilities, compared with 44% in Gauteng and 52% in the Western Cape. The School Register of Needs Survey states that eight million out of a total of twelve million learners do not have access to library facilities.

The extent to which learners' needs are being met as far as the provision and upgrading of classroom facilities are concerned, varies from province to province. In the North West province, which has a backlog of 4000 classrooms, 511 classrooms have been constructed during the 1995/6 financial year.⁶⁶ In Mpumalanga 48 new schools were built and 226 damaged schools were renovated during 1997. The province estimates that an additional 4 325 classrooms are needed to overcome backlogs.⁶⁷ In the Northern Province, during the 1995/6 financial year, 1000 new classrooms were built with an additional R200m set aside for new schools for 1996/7.⁶⁸ In Gauteng, 2 219 classrooms have been built in the past four years. The Eastern Cape department of education reports that its 1998/99 budget does not

⁶³ Note, this information is based on data sets obtained from RIEP.

⁶⁴ Donaldson, A. (1998). The Medium Term Challenges of Financing Schools. In *Education Africa Forum - The Second Edition*. p. 32.

⁶⁵ *Edusource Data News* No.19/December 1997. p. 5.

⁶⁶ South African Institute of Race Relations. (1997). *The South African Survey 1996/97*.

⁶⁷ *ibid.* p. 7.

⁶⁸ South African Institute of Race Relations. *op cit.*

allow it to make provision for the building of classrooms⁶⁹, thus the department is still faced with a shortage of about 20 000 classrooms.

Inadequate provision of resources is not confined to classrooms or library facilities. There also exists a severe shortage of textbooks for South Africa's 12 million pupils. The School Survey of Needs has shown that approximately 49% of schools have an inadequate supply of textbooks. By mid-year 1998 grade one classes in six provinces were without textbooks, largely due to a lack of funds.⁷⁰ Government spending on textbooks decreased from R851m in 1995/6 to R381m in 1996/7 and R226m in 1997/8.⁷¹ According to *The Teacher*, the 'National Department of Education may appoint a special task team next year [1999] to solve the current crises around textbook and stationery shortages in schools'.⁷²

It is clear that a considerable number of schools still have insufficient and/or inadequate resources such as classrooms, libraries, textbooks, and general school maintenance. As Vally and Spreen note,

presently, a differential education system continues to exist where differently endowed communities enjoy widely varying levels of provision and only some are able to meaningfully supplement state resources.⁷³

The historical legacy of schooling in South Africa means that there exists a substantial backlog in terms of minimum educational requirements, with limited government funds to meet the needs of learners. It is argued that,

given the backlog in resource allocation, it is unlikely that government will, in the foreseeable future, have sufficient resources to match the educational needs of the country. It is therefore imperative that the private sector assist in augmenting what government is able to provide. Governing bodies and teachers must also innovatively explore ways to make the necessary resources for quality teaching and learning⁷⁴.

In this respect, the roles and responsibilities afforded to governing bodies take on a special significance. The South African Schools Act makes provision for a governing body to 'take all reasonable measures within its means to supplement the resources supplied by the state' in order to improve the condition and quality of schooling. However, as will be shown below, whilst on the one hand it may signal a positive move in the light of existing disparities, it may also mean that the gaps in schooling provision will not only remain but might even widen.

Shortage of resources basic needs such as libraries, textbooks, water supply, electricity supply, ablution facilities in schools raises serious questions about whether schools can access broadcast services. Data collected from the School Register of Needs' survey and Sentech's coverage maps have been used to generate a description of primary and secondary schools' potential to access a dedicated educational broadcasting channel on service

⁶⁹ *Edusource Data News*. No. 23/December 1998. p. 6.

⁷⁰ *ibid.* p. 8.

⁷¹ *Edusource Data News*. No. 21/July 1998. p. 10.

⁷² *The Teacher*, March 1998. p. 3.

⁷³ Vally, S and Spreen, C-A. (1998). *op cit.* p. 7.

⁷⁴ Lehoko, K. (1998). An Outcomes-Based Approach to Education and Training: Challenges Facing the Government. In *Education Africa Forum - The Second Edition*. p. 38.

INSIDE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

Approximately 70% of the 27 864 schools falling inside of South Africa's borders are primary schools. Some deviation between provinces exists, but by far the most interesting and significant deviation is in the Free State where primary schools make up 84.1% of all schools. Plans for a schools service will therefore need to consider whether the service will focus on primary school education – a focus of school services in many countries – or target secondary school education, given the obvious lack of secondary school facilities within the country. The following table summarizes the number of schools by type in each province.⁷⁵

| Province | Combined | Primary | Secondary | Special Educ. Need | Unknown | Tech College |
|----------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Eastern Cape | 1006 | 3892 | 960 | 24 | 52 | 9 |
| Free State | 141 | 2418 | 296 | 18 | 19 | 1 |
| Gauteng | 207 | 1413 | 559 | 60 | 4 | 19 |
| KwaZulu Natal | 152 | 3865 | 1344 | 41 | 34 | 12 |
| Mpumalanga | 111 | 1424 | 377 | 12 | 2 | 1 |
| Northern Cape | 49 | 392 | 80 | 1 | 7 | 1 |
| Northern Province | 59 | 2713 | 1372 | 11 | 6 | 9 |
| North West | 121 | 1624 | 630 | 39 | 8 | 1 |
| Western Cape | 119 | 1271 | 314 | 68 | 14 | 5 |
| National Total | 1965 | 19012 | 5932 | 274 | 146 | 58 |
| % of National Total | 7% | 69% | 22% | 1% | 0.5% | 0.2% |

Huge demand is placed upon existing schools in South Africa. For example, almost seven million students attend schools in KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and Northern Province alone. Although 62% of schools have less than 500 enrolled students each, Gauteng schools tend to have slightly higher enrolments. Schools with 1000-plus students do exist, most of which are located in KwaZulu-Natal.

Data on teacher-classroom ratios offer a more precise indication of the demand on classrooms as educational spaces. In order to deal with the problem of classroom shortage, teachers in the Northern Province, Eastern Cape, and North West share classrooms, while other schools are platooning (meaning that a school is running double sessions or hosting another on its premises). The table below shows that a number of schools that are platooning.⁷⁶

| Province | Schools not responding to question (NULL value) | | Schools Platooning | |
|-------------------|---|-----|--------------------|----|
| | Count | % | Count | % |
| Eastern Cape | 64 | 1% | 200 | 3% |
| Free State | | 0% | 101 | 3% |
| Gauteng | 192 | 8% | 185 | 8% |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 103 | 2% | 232 | 4% |
| Mpumalanga | 85 | 4% | 100 | 5% |
| Northern Cape | 15 | 3% | 15 | 3% |
| Northern Province | 1827 | 44% | 164 | 4% |

⁷⁵ Based on information provided by EduSource.

⁷⁶ The Education Foundation, *National Schools Building Programme Education Data Set*. Produced for the 1996 Schools Survey of Needs. SAIDE database cross-tab query run on PLATOONING and PROVINCE fields with a NAME count on 'school.mdb' file.

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|------|-----|------|----|
| North West | 137 | 6% | 135 | 6% |
| Western Cape | 64 | 3% | 131 | 7% |
| No Province Indicated | 4 | 22% | 1 | 6% |
| Total | 2491 | 9% | 1264 | 5% |

Besides platooning, in some schools, teachers have to teach outside or use non-teaching areas or work in overcrowded classes. Many teach to classes ranging between 44 students (Northern Province) to 51 children (Eastern Cape). The potential of classrooms of this type to function as physical, social, and psychological spaces that facilitate children's creative expression and interaction with their world is inhibited by the material realities of the school. Overcrowded spaces in combination with inexperienced teachers have the potential to lead to authoritarian and inflexible educational experiences.

Educational Spaces

Effective integration of various technologies and media in classrooms is dependent on a range of factors. One that is most often ignored is educational space. Designing educational spaces therefore ought to consider convergence and compatibility of architectural design with audio-video learning resources and the curriculum. Central questions include: 'To what extent does the design of the building enhance or inhibit the attainment of educational outcomes?; To what extent is the design of the classroom conducive to use of television, radio, and videocassette recorders in lessons?'

For example, in KwaZulu-Natal, 39m² is the standard area allocated to classrooms. School building design is provincially co-ordinated. For example, KwaZulu-Natal provides schools with modular options from which they can choose a number of educational spaces. In the Western Cape, the need for educator participation in the design process has been recognized. A team of designers and teachers works together to design suitable educational spaces, but, in this high intervention partnership, there is also a high risk that teachers' lack of expertise in this area will inhibit positive educational effects. In Gauteng, a 'grand plan' approach is used, and architects are brought in at a reduced fee to provide additional design input if required. These plans are however not responsive to technological resource implementation or Curriculum 2005 processes, the environment, or even the multi-cultural realities of the individuals who will teach, learn, or work in that space.

Provincial education budgets are currently overwhelmingly allocated to salaries. For this reason, financial factors will impact on the design and use of educational spaces. It is, however, incorrect to assume that the design of educational spaces in schools will be negatively affected solely by budgets. It will be very negatively affected by a lack of imagination and critical reflection on the relationship between technology use, curriculum, and space.

AN OVERVIEW OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

In the previous section, we described the physical and infrastructural conditions in schools. But besides tangible, material deprivation, schooling in South Africa has also fostered unquestioning conformity, rote learning, autocratic teaching and authoritarian management

styles, syllabi replete with racism and sexism, and antiquated forms of assessment.⁷⁷ In this section, we discuss the classroom processes of teaching and learning, highlighting some of the challenges facing any educational initiative aimed at South African schools.

Management and Administration

Areas of school management and administration seem to be requiring more attention. According to the minister of education, Prof. Asmal,

The school principal, who represents the provincial department of education and is head of the school management team, has the crucial role of professional and administrative leadership, and is responsible for the standard of learning and teaching in the school ... It is therefore important that the school leadership team, headed by the principal, and the governing body in each public school is given the opportunity to create the sense of common purpose and mutual support.⁷⁸

From what the minister said it very clear that managerial and administrative issues are placed largely on the shoulders of principals and governing bodies. The main questions therefore become; Do principals and governing bodies have the capacity to carry out the task? Do they have tools to assist them carry out the mandate and ensure that schools are functional? The survey conducted by Edusource about teachers' perceptions of the extent to which the principal is successful shows that on average, principals' performance in a number of issues is rated around 53% although this is not so bad, it is not very impressive. The table below gives details performance of principals as seen by teachers.⁷⁹

| Teachers' Perceptions in the Extent to which Principal is very successful in: | |
|--|-----|
| Providing a clear vision for the school | 52% |
| Promoting teaching and learning | 58% |
| Being a good manager | 56% |
| Providing guidance for the SGB | 56% |
| Interacting with parents | 55% |
| Interacting with learners | 59% |
| Involving teachers in decision making | 52% |
| Staff development/professional support | 46% |
| Monitoring of teacher performance | 46% |
| Dealing with non-performing staff | 42% |
| Involvement in school activities | 58% |
| Frequent monitoring of school activities and learners' progress | 53% |
| Promoting co-operation between staff | 57% |

Issues of management and administration are also very important in order to deal with problems of time. One of the most important issues raised by the minister of

⁷⁷ Vally, S. et al. *Op cit.*

⁷⁸ Asmal, K, (1999). Call to Action: Mobilising Citizens to Build a South African Education and Training System for the 21st Century, Statement by Prof. Kader Asmal, Tuesday 27 July 1999

⁷⁹ Edusource Data News No.26/September 1999. p.6

education relate to time wasted in schools where many schools neither start no end on time.

Classroom Realities: Teaching Processes

Complex and diverse realities exist within any school system. In many documents, romantic notions of the role that technologies can play in education obscure the realities of the classroom.⁸⁰ This prevents critical reflection on many erroneous notions about children, pupil-teacher dynamics, and school operations. Naïve representations of the classroom often depict bright-eyed, innocent children eagerly awaiting instruction, or their turn 'on the computer'. Such representations of classroom activities do not contribute to developing viable strategies for sustaining a dedicated channel, particularly in South Africa where the reality is often so strikingly different from idealized scenarios.

Policy documents such as the *Report of the Technical Committee on the Revision of Norms and Standards for Teacher Education* (hereafter referred to as TCRNSTE) offer some description of these sites:

Besides inequalities, the school system is dominated in many cases by disruptive behaviour ranging from alienation from school work, teenage pregnancy, classroom disobedience, school boycotts or 'stayaways', to social crime, vandalism, gangsterism, violent behaviour, rape and drug abuse as well as disrespect for teachers with considerable impact on teacher performance and student achievement. Amongst teachers, this is often reflected in a lack of commitment to the profession. This phenomenon very often referred to as the 'collapse of the culture of learning, teaching and service' is one of the main features common in many schools, especially those in urban areas.⁸¹

The table below shows some of the misbehaviour by learners and the frequency of such misbehaviour.⁸²

| Frequency of Learner Misbehaviour | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| How often do learners: | Daily (Learners) | Weekly (Learners) | Daily/ Weekly (Teachers) | Daily/ Weekly (Principal) |
| Come late | 56% | 17% | 82% | 79% |
| Stay away without good excuse | 32% | 25% | 75% | |
| Miss a class | 37% | 21% | 59% | 46% |
| Don't dress properly | 35% | 16% | - | - |
| Disturb classrooms | 34% | 17% | 59% | 41% |
| Cheat in exams/tests | 17% | 10% | 43% | 29% |
| Damage/destroy school property | 22% | 10% | 30% | 20% |
| Swear at each other | 38% | 15% | 44% | 32% |
| Swear at/verbal abuse of teachers | 18% | 10% | 19% | 10% |
| Hurt teachers | 16% | 8% | 13% | 9% |
| Smoke/possess tobacco | 58% | 7% | 39% | 33% |

⁸⁰ Selwyn, N. (1997). The continuing weakness of educational computing research. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 28, 4.

⁸¹ Technical Committee on the Revision of Norms and Standards for Teacher Education. (1997). *Norms and standards for teacher education, training and development: Discussion Document*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

⁸² Edusource *Data News*, No. 26/September 1999

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Use/possess alcohol | 18% | 15% | 20% | 13% |
| Use/possess drugs | 17% | 8% | 18% | 12% |
| Possess weapons on school ground | 18% | 9% | 17% | 10% |
| Misbehave sexually | 8% | 4% | 15% | 8% |

The minister of education, Prof. Kader Asmal has also acknowledged that ‘our system of education and training has major weakness and carries deadly baggage from our past. Large parts of our system are seriously dysfunctional. It will not be an exaggeration to say that there is a crisis at each level of the system’.⁸³ The minister has also noticed that there is indiscipline on the part of principals, teachers and learners and that many schools fail to start on time yet they close early.

Many classrooms in South African schools are materially deprived, thus structurally reproducing disadvantage among students, and the interaction of material and social factors directly impacts on teachers. Many teachers work in contexts that are not conducive to learning and teaching, and most are not trained to deal with these realities.

Teacher Education Systems

South African education is attempting to transform and a key part of this is transforming teacher education systems, which are central to the development of South African human resources.⁸⁴ But the education system characteristics, developed during apartheid, continue to influence and impact on the realities of classroom life, even though proposals and policies are in place to overcome them.

The ability of the system to transform itself is affected by backlogs in teacher qualifications, subject teacher shortages, and uncertainty facing teachers at all levels. Work by Bot and Shindler indicates that there have been some improvements in the overall qualifications of teachers. The table below show number of qualified teachers by province.⁸⁵

| | | | | |
|--|---|-----------|---|-------|
| | % | Qualified | % | Total |
|--|---|-----------|---|-------|

Number of Educators by Qualification Levels

| Province | Un(der)qualified | | Qualified | | Total |
|-------------------|------------------|-----|-----------|-----|--------|
| Eastern Cape | 20 800 | 31% | 47 023 | 69% | 67 823 |
| Free State | 7 502 | 31% | 16 581 | 69% | 24 083 |
| Gauteng | 5 504 | 13% | 38 495 | 87% | 43 999 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 25 261 | 34% | 49 503 | 66% | 74 764 |
| Mpumalanga | 6 947 | 27% | 18 413 | 73% | 25 360 |
| Northern Cape | 1 412 | 21% | 5 463 | 79% | 6 875 |
| Northern Province | 12 210 | 21% | 44 889 | 79% | 57 099 |
| North West | 11 466 | 36% | 20 385 | 64% | 31 851 |
| Western Cape | 3 755 | 13% | 24 437 | 87% | 28 192 |

⁸³ Asmal, K (1999) *op cit*

⁸⁴ Technical Committee on the Revision of Norms and Standards for Teacher Education. *op cit*.

⁸⁵ Bot M, and Shindler J (1999) *Macro Indicators 1997: Update of Baseline Study: CEPD Education 2000+*, April 1999

| Province | Un(der)qualified | Qualified | Total |
|----------|------------------|-------------|---------|
| National | 94 857 26% | 265 189 74% | 360 046 |

This table confirms that of South Africa's 360 046 educators who taught in schools in 1998, 74% were qualified while 26% were not. This indicates an improvement from 1994 where only 64% educators were qualified. Despite this improvement, it seems that many teachers still do not understand their subjects.⁸⁶ Duncan Hindle, chief director of human resources in the department of education, is understood to have said that under-qualified teachers who had less than a three year qualification were concentrated in rural area and that mathematics, science, and the teaching of language featured prominently among the outstanding subjects.⁸⁷

Other issues identified to be bothering teachers have been uncertainty and anxiety linked to the effects on teachers of processes that aim to: democratize society; increase access to schooling; introduce a new curriculum; and change community expectations of teachers. From the perspective of teachers, the introduction of Curriculum 2005 requires resourceful teaching to ensure that the outcomes set in the formal curriculum are reinforced and enhanced by the values exerted by the teacher's whole mode of operation.

Curriculum 2005 increases teachers' responsibilities, and changes what they do daily in their classrooms. It calls for a professional teacher, who is intellectually resourceful, imaginative, adaptable, flexible, creative, and a critical thinker.⁸⁸ It requires that teachers be enthusiastic about their studies and participate in the growth of their own understanding, skills, and professional competence. It also requires that the system support them in becoming autonomous students, by making it habitual for them to enquire, to question, to criticize and evaluate, and to assume responsibility for the management of their own learning. These are qualities that professional teachers should develop and impart to their pupils to create a culture of learning, teaching and service.⁸⁹ It is not surprising that teachers feel inadequate, insecure, and angry in the face of demands for wholesale personal and professional reinvention and the development of skills that very few individuals possess. Achieving the goals of Curriculum 2005 alone demands that teacher education systems require unprecedented transformation. The psychological and social processes associated with this cannot be ignored.

What many teachers might actually do in the pedagogical moment between teacher and student can at least in part, be extrapolated from information on teacher education in South Africa. The picture that emerges is very worrying. The quality of teaching in the classroom is dependent on the quality of learning and teaching to which teachers were exposed. For example, it is unlikely that teachers will act as mediators or facilitators of learning if college staff or university lecturers are 'poorly prepared [and] practice [sic] unsuitable approaches to learning ...[and] poor quality of delivery.'⁹⁰

What is taught to teachers also affects what happens in the classroom. Many South African teachers were – and often still are – exposed to content developed during apartheid. The

⁸⁶ Business Day, *Upgraded training for unqualified teachers*, 05/08/1999

⁸⁷ *ibid*

⁸⁸ Technical Committee on the Revision of Norms and Standards for Teacher Education. *op cit.*

⁸⁹ Technical Committee on the Revision of Norms and Standards for Teacher Education. *op cit.*

⁹⁰ Technical Committee on the Revision of Norms and Standards for Teacher Education. *op cit.* p. 13.

content of teacher-education curricula tends to be 'dominated by old-fashioned concepts, inappropriate philosophies, methodologies and modes of assessment.'⁹¹

It is:

Overloaded with a proliferation of different subjects, many of which are irrelevant to the new society. Syllabi are dated and concentrate on rote learning. There is a range of approaches and methods of learning, but the dominant approach has been authoritarian and content-based...In many colleges, students acquire only a superficial knowledge of their teaching subjects... Theory and practice have not been integrated nor do they reflect the direction of the new South Africa or the latest international advances in knowledge...Hence students [in these institutions] have been ill-prepared for contexts such as large classes, multi-cultural and multi-lingual classes and multi-grade classes in rural areas.⁹²

Likewise

Most [teachers] are trained in the rigidities of Fundamental Pedagogics and this does little to challenge children to actively participate, many are incompetent in English but need to teach in this language.⁹³

Exceptions to this do exist and must be acknowledged,⁹⁴ but many South African teachers are taught to be technicians who follow orders and implement syllabi constructed from 'above'. Education and training remains based on fundamental pedagogics tending to be characterized by rigid, hierarchical, and authoritarian attitude to teaching.

A third factor impacting on classroom teaching is the institutional culture that exists in many teacher education colleges and institutions. Many of these institutions are characterized by negative institutional cultures. Some of the institution's teaching staff members themselves lack professionalism, teaching experience, and appropriate subject knowledge. Hence graduates of these institutions are often not trained to teach mathematics, science, and specialized education. And when faced with their own classroom of students, many graduates lack professional commitment, understanding of teaching methods demanded by the new curriculum, and/or are unable to overcome the disjunction between theory and practice.⁹⁵

The combined effect of repressive departmental control, large classes, and low salaries means that many teachers retreat into narrow textbook teaching:⁹⁶

We have a confluence of a number of factors, which make teachers, as a whole, likely to be even more pedagogically conservative and resistant to change than international literature on teachers suggests.⁹⁷

The often-repeated message is that:

Insecure in their subject knowledge, never educated as innovators and caught between a repressive authority and a militant, divided and often antagonistic

⁹¹ Technical Committee on the Revision of Norms and Standards for Teacher Education. *op cit.* p. 13.

⁹² Department of Education. (1997). *An agenda of possibilities. National policy on teacher supply, utilisation and development: A stakeholder response.* Pretoria: Department of Education. pp. 31-32.

⁹³ Bot (1986) and Jaff (1992) cited in Gultig, J. (1992). *Educating teachers for a 'new' South Africa: What role can distance education play?* Paper presented at the SAIDE launch conference, 7 September 1992. p. 4.

⁹⁴ The Top 100 Schools Survey indicated that the commitment of teachers was a major variable in the learners' success rates. *The Sunday Times*, 11 January 1998.

⁹⁵ Technical Committee on the Revision of Norms and Standards for Teacher Education. *op cit.*

⁹⁶ Gultig. *op cit.*

⁹⁷ Gultig. *op cit.* p. 5.

student community, it would be true to say that teachers, never treated as professionals anyway, have lost the culture of teaching.⁹⁸

Teachers, Teaching and Transformation Processes

The descriptions thus far have focused on policy and academic discussions of teaching processes. Teachers themselves have different and differing views about teaching and transformation. Some of these views, combined with a brief description of recent teacher mass action activities, are provided to enrich this discussion.

*Some Teachers' Views*⁹⁹

Interviews conducted with groups of teachers in Gauteng by SAIDE researchers provide some indication of these different views of teaching and transformation, as perceived by teachers. Teachers in all groups indicated that initial teacher training did not prepare them for the day-to-day realities of the classroom or school. The theoretical nature of preparation, especially university courses, in effect meant that initial training 'moulds you into what you should be' but does not help teachers to cope with the dynamic nature of schools and changing requirements of what it means to be a teacher.

Confidence and Awareness

Many teachers reported that they lacked confidence and that their first year of teaching was particularly difficult. University-trained teachers were identified as the least prepared type of teacher. Overall, training did not prepare teachers to deal with classroom management, helping children with learning and emotional difficulties, teaching large classes, teaching children from diverse backgrounds, and the challenges of assessment.

Teachers interviewed were aware of significant educational policy changes, but their levels of awareness did not always reflect accurate interpretation or translate into classroom practice. For example, most participants were concerned with the 'lack of flow of information' on Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and Curriculum 2005 between the Department and teachers. They also did not have a clear understanding of what either of these concepts meant. For example, OBE was described as something familiar because 'we have been doing group work for as long as I can remember' or

OBE is not so different. It needs a little training, retraining. It confuses us, when they facilitate it to us. We can see that it is not so different. It is child-centred, sometimes my lessons are becoming more child-centred. OBE is an additional thing to what we were already doing. They say even in language you must cover all areas, just like now - in language - we train children to count.

Teachers differed in their response to OBE principles, but all of them stated that they needed guidance and support in implementing this. They argued that contextual realities of schools had to be taken into consideration. For example, class sizes are not always conducive to group work.

⁹⁸ Gultig. *op cit* p. 5.

⁹⁹ Based on a data report by Makano Morojele and the abridge findings reported on in Morojele, M. (1998). Teachers speak for themselves and about themselves. In SAIDE. (1998). *Open Learning Through Distance Education*, 4, 1.

Teachers also stated that implementation of Curriculum 2005 dominated professional development courses at the expense of other areas of teacher development, such as classroom management techniques or stress and time management skills. These issues were identified because teachers had to cope with large classes made up of multi-grade, multilingual and multicultural learners.

Teachers working in traditionally white schools stated that they needed help with children from 'unstimulated backgrounds'. They gave examples such as primary level children not knowing colours or shapes and possessing very poor vocabulary. Only a small number of these children had attended pre-school. Teachers felt that these children were severely disadvantaged, and this was compounded by their parents working long hours, thus not being available to help them with homework. The process of 'mainstreaming' also impacted on teachers who felt ill qualified to assist and needed a range of psycho-educational skills to deal with such children.

Professional Empowerment

A key problem identified by teachers is professional isolation and the lack of communication and support networks between teachers and other role players. Most teachers stated that school governance processes were a point of concern for them as teachers, and that they experienced these structures as disempowering:

They say parents are stronger now, they can take you out of school... There are too many parents on the governing bodies, over and above the number of teachers. We want more teachers than parents.

They [parents] should have a role, but they should not pull the strings. Kids can complain about teachers, but parents should not be able to take you out. We must sit down together as staff and discuss an issue, and if there is no solution the teachers' organization must get in - then if there is no conclusion the GDE must get inside. Parents must be there too, but they should choose enlightened people, not parents who are uneducated.

An important indicator of professionalism is collegiality and communication between members of a profession. Most teachers indicated limited communication with other teachers and schools. One of the consequences of this isolation, according to these teachers, was that it was detrimental to their profession. Teachers also indicated that many interventions offered by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private organizations were ineffective. They described them as boring, not innovative and facilitated by presenters with no command of the subject matter or no grasp of the realities of the schools 'I usually sit at the back of the room and if I discover that it is the same workshop, I just leave'. The focus on content rather than method was mentioned, and some teachers complained that they had very little time to analyse or synthesize information. The rate of transformation and meant that some courses were no longer useful in the light of current policy developments.

What is clear from these interviews is that teachers are aware of the importance of professional development opportunities and that professionalism is not an outcome but a value which the system as a whole must reflect. Ensuring that teachers use and benefit from Education broadcasts will depend to a large extent on whether or not the broadcasters are able to meet teachers' needs and recognise them as professionals.

Teacher Mass Action ¹⁰⁰

Recently, unions such as the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU); the National Professional Teachers' Association (NAPTOSA); and the Suid Afrikaanse Onderwyse-unie (SAOU) threatened mass action in response to certain educational policies and practices. SADTU, in its memorandum to NEDLAC, lists some of its grievances as:

Continued inequalities in schools, overcrowding, additional costs of education passed on to parents particularly in working class areas, the lack of training for teachers and school governing body members, and the lack of textbooks.

For the sake of brevity, only some of these grievances are discussed, but it is important to realize that, in the current climate, there remains some tension between teacher unions and the national Department of Education. This will impact on the planning and implementation processes of a schools service.

No single reason exists for why teacher unions threatened mass action in May 1998. One of the many reasons was teachers' concern with educational budgetary management throughout the education system. Budgetary reform has been crucial to wider educational reform. In order to cut down budget costs and make more efficient use of resources, government decided on a strategy to rationalize the teacher work force. This strategy has been long in the making, and has taken different phases as teachers have responded in different ways. Redeployment of teachers was one of the first measures taken by the new government to address inequalities in terms of pupil-teacher ratios.

Post-apartheid budgets have prioritized formal education, with approximately 80% of expenditure going to schools and 10% to tertiary education. Despite this, as the Survey of School Needs showed, massive backlogs persist in terms of poor physical infrastructure, lack of learning materials as well as the training of teachers. Unions such as SADTU have recently denounced the national and provincial departments for 'not promoting the interests of working class communities by addressing inequalities in the education system.'⁴

Besides the impending retrenchment of teachers, unions criticized the government for failing to:

- Prevent overcrowding;
- Prevent additional costs of financing education being passed on to schools and consequently to parents;
- Create a funding mechanism to address the disparities between previously advantaged and disadvantaged; and
- Provide textbooks and other educational resources.

In rural or under-served areas, approximately 20 000 primary schools (one in five of the schools targeted) have failed to implement the new curriculum because of lack of teacher preparation or resource materials. ⁷ Not surprisingly, the provinces that have fallen furthest behind are Northern Province, KwaZulu-Natal, North West, and Free State. Conversely, in many former Model C schools, teachers have resisted attending workshops or implementing Curriculum 2005, and dismiss the proposal as simplistic, repetitive, and watering down standards.

¹⁰⁰ Vally, S. et al. *Op cit.*

Across the country, many teachers have expressed similar views about lack of information, resources or teaching materials for implementing the new curriculum. Combined with this is another process; that of communities developing new expectations from schools, of teachers, and curriculum reform. This is posing new challenges for teachers. Indeed, one of the greatest challenges for teachers will certainly be the implementation of Curriculum 2005, which marks a paradigm shift from a subject or content-based curriculum to outcomes-based education (OBE). This requires resourceful teaching to ensure that the outcomes set in the formal curriculum are reinforced and enhanced by the values exerted by the teachers' whole mode of operation.

In contrast to concerns that were raised about funding, training and preparation for the new curriculum, most educators still express enthusiasm and hope for the vision set out by Curriculum 2005. The general perception of Curriculum 2005 is that it will provide new means to achieve equity and redress.

Budgetary reform has not only affected areas such as Curriculum 2005 and provision of resources in schools. It has also affected teacher salaries. In September this year teacher unions were at loggerheads with the government, demanding an increase 8,3% for teachers while the government was offering 6.8%.¹⁰¹ The unions rejected the government's offer and embarked on the biggest strike to be led by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in the democratic South Africa. As a result of the strike, the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), an organisation offering political representation for high school pupils, has since proposed that matric examinations be postponed because most schools have not completed the syllabus or that separate examinations should be administered for schools which were badly affected by the strike. The minister of education has rejected this proposal.¹⁰²

CLASSROOM REALITIES: LEARNING PROCESSES

In the previous section, reference was made to the fact that information about the realities of teaching is essential to planning and implementing a school broadcasting service. In this section, the realities of learning and the needs of students are discussed in an attempt to identify strategies that might motivate South African school students to use such a service.

The School Register of Needs Survey describes the extent of the lack of physical and material resources within schools. But schools as sites of learning are more than the sum of physical parts (or the lack thereof). Classrooms are also psychological, political and social spaces, in which a wide diversity of students live and sometimes learn. The large numbers of students in classrooms impact on the quality and quantity of learning taking place during school hours. Some teachers may use textbook teaching methods as a way of coping with large classes. The potential result is that students 'learn' that rote learning is all that is required.

A second and equally obvious statement is that many students in South Africa do not have adequate learning materials. In both the School Register of Need survey and in a report on

¹⁰¹ *Sowetan*, 09 September 1999, p.1

¹⁰² *Sowetan*, 13 September 1999, p.3

library facilities,¹⁰³ it is clear that: Students largely from African schools have not been exposed to school libraries and are therefore disadvantaged in their studies.¹⁰⁴

This lack of resources can have several consequences for students: it reinforces rote and mechanistic learning patterns; it discourages development of healthy attitudes to learning (for example, that learning is a fun and pleasurable activity); development of information skills (including information seeking, accessing and integration) is limited; and some students do not become active and continuous or lifelong readers.¹⁰⁵ Many teachers have not been trained to understand the role of libraries and fail to develop learning tasks that encourage students to use library resources. The use of the 'chalk and talk' method or monologue approach to teaching 'limits the child's expression and inhibits their use of information and their creative development.'¹⁰⁶

As stated earlier, it is not possible to describe a typical South African student within a typical South African classroom. Complexity and diversity are the norms. It is, however, necessary to repeat the warning that if one does not acknowledge that school children are not all bright-eyed, innocent, eager to learn, or (should the resources be available) willing to use broadcast materials to enhance their school performances, motivating students to use the service will be impossible.

South African students are not a homogeneous group. Differences exist in terms of gender, urban-rural locale, special educational needs, and community violence levels, among other factors. Some of these issues are briefly described. Clear differences exist in terms of male and female students' learning behaviours and performances. High dropout and force-out rates among female students due to teenage pregnancy, violence, rape (ranging from date rape through to 'jackrolling') is increasing. The classroom is more than just an educational site. For adolescent students it is also a social and psychological space in which they negotiate identity, relationships, sexuality, and political commitments. Consequently, success in the classroom does not relate only to academic success.¹⁰⁷ Anxiety associated with relationship pressures or physiological changes can detrimentally affect a student's school performance.

Students are also political beings, some of whom are actively politicized, while the learning of others is affected in the long-term by the political processes underway in the wider community and society. Educational transformation processes have had varying effects on students. For example, they have 'left many teachers as well as pupils in a state of confusion as to what they will be taught and what will be expected of them.'¹⁰⁸

The levels of violence within the school and/or adjacent community impacts on students and their performances. For example:

The number of people killed or injured in acts of political violence during 1993 was 8737. Of these, 874 were children. During the period 1991 to 1994, 26 790

¹⁰³ Karlsson, J.; Nassimbeni, M. and Karelse, C-M. (1996). Identifying the inherited problems in the provision of resources for school learners. In J. Karlsson. (Ed). (1996). *School learners and libraries*. Durban: EPU.

¹⁰⁴ Karlsson. *op cit.* p. 11.

¹⁰⁵ Karlsson, J. (1996). Barriers and limitations to the provision of library resources to learners. In J. Karlsson. *op cit.*

¹⁰⁶ de Andrade Antunes, W. (1996). Brazil's experiences with mobile libraries. In J. Karlsson. *Op cit.* p. 68.

¹⁰⁷ Meyer, J.; Loxton, H. and Boulter, S. (1997). A systems approach to the enhancement of self-concept. In de lay Rey et al. *op cit.*

¹⁰⁸ Meyer et al. *op cit.* p. 123.

children were displaced due to conflict in 36 areas in KwaZulu-Natal. This constituted 42 per cent of all displacees.¹⁰⁹

Although, in some instances, the school - by virtue of the calming influence of routine - aids in a child's resilience and coping strategies, in others, the effects of violence for children, at primary as well as secondary levels, may result in underachievement, loss of motivation, or truancy.¹¹⁰

Classrooms are places of overt and covert struggle.¹¹¹ Students will experience, participate in, and be affected by these struggles to differing degrees. Different schools, and even different classrooms within the same school, exhibit different types of learning and benefits from that learning. In unsupportive environments, learning can be disrupted or inappropriately developed. For example, poor teaching and sexism underlies 'maths phobia', a response learnt by many children - and particularly young girls, black and working class children, who are 'taught' that they do not possess natural abilities in logical and mathematical thinking.¹¹² 'Maths phobia' therefore impacts on subject choices (for example 'dropping' Mathematics and focusing on Home Economics in grade 10) and consequently career pathways. School leavers enquiring about a distance learning access course were reported to be unaware of tertiary educational subjects and faculties, and, in some cases, had been provided with incorrect career information by their teachers:

A group of Matrics [attending a career fair day in Matatiele] asked me whether they could study at [the University of] Natal to be bank tellers ... Apparently guidance lessons are 'free' lessons.¹¹³

The issue of students' awareness of educational opportunities that are provided in further and higher educational sectors are important areas of need. Limited career information resources and appropriate career counselling opportunities are real in many schools.

Structurally created cognitive disadvantage and high levels of disability (physical and cognitive) among impoverished South Africans mean that proportionately more students will have special education needs¹¹⁴ than among student populations in developed countries. It has been estimated that as many as 25% of all children are disabled by socio-cultural factors.¹¹⁵ Students with special educational needs will therefore require a different type of intervention.

Special educational needs are not, however, the only forms of difference. Other types of disadvantage and inequality exist. For example, reading skills created by differences in class and urban/rural locations exist. In 1996, Neil le Roux's research on reading and writing skills compared the skills base of children enrolled at a Model C primary school in East London

¹⁰⁹ Duncan, N. and Rock, B. (1997). The impact of political violence on the lives of South African children. In de la Rey et al. *op cit.* p. 133.

¹¹⁰ Gilmour, D. and Soudien, C. (1991). Disadvantage in South African education: The issue of equality and equity in transformative policy and research. In A Dawes and D. Donald. (1991). *Childhood and adversity: Psychological perspectives from South African Research*. Cape Town: David Phillips.

¹¹¹ Marsh, C. (1992). *Key Concepts for Understanding Curriculum*. London: The Falmer Press.

¹¹² Macloed, C. (1995). Gender differences in mathematics: A discourse analysis. In *South African Journal of Psychology*, 25, 3. pp. 192-3.

¹¹³ Interview with Linda Mdaka, former Liaison Officer at the Regional Access Programme in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

¹¹⁴ Parekh, A. and Jackson, C -A. (1997). Families of children with a mental handicap. In de la Rey et al. *op cit.*

¹¹⁵ See Parekh and Jackson. In de la Rey et al. *op cit.*; and Donald, D. (1991). Children with special education needs: The reproduction of disadvantage in poorly served communities. In A. Dawes and D. Donald. (Ed.). *Childhood and Adversity: Psychological perspectives from South African Research*. Cape Town: David Philip.

with children enrolled at READ project schools and other 'control' schools in rural areas around East London. The results

showed that rural children at disadvantaged schools seem to be, on average, eight years behind their urban counterparts in reading levels. The Grade 7 rural school pupils has an average reading age of 7.6 years while their chronological age was 14.4 years. If these pupils advanced to secondary school, they would be faced with textbooks written for the 16-year language competency level. They would be unable to access the information in these textbooks. The situation highlights the plight of the rural school pupil. In some cases the child may have been able to read, but stopped because there was no material and he then lost the facility to read. This leads to a huge fallout because children are so discouraged. These youngsters, on the whole, will never have the opportunity to overcome the handicap of poor language competence and are unlikely to get high-level employment.¹¹⁶

The learning needs and experiences of children in these different types of schools and geo-economic areas indicate strongly that different types of interventions are required.

While it may not be possible to describe different levels of literacy among all students, it is possible to make some general statements about literacy skills (or the lack thereof). First, illiteracy is stigmatising and alienating; and children with literacy difficulties do face alienation from more competent classmates. Second, literacy is a prerequisite for further and higher education. Children with limited literacy skills are less likely to continue their education beyond school. Third, there are different levels of literacy competence, ranging from passive reading through to active forms of reading that transform children by stimulating their imagination, intellect, moral thinking, and other abilities. Mechanistic teaching and rote learning methods do not encourage the development of active literacy, but keep children in an arrested state of functional literacy. Fourth, reading has been linked to proficiency in additional languages,¹¹⁷ and, in South Africa, multi-lingual children have improved social, learning, and employment opportunities.

Many South African students have different, and sometimes less effective study skills than other students. Moller's study on homework examined the social context within which studying occurs. Some participants reported studying alone while others, more male than female, reported doing homework with friends. According to Moller,

Survey results indicate that many high risk students seek to compensate for the poor quality home environment by studying at school with friends. *Their efforts appear to go unrewarded*. Other results from the study ... indicate that participation in study groups has *little positive influence on academic achievement*. This suggests that the compensation strategies of most pupils from poor quality home environments are not working well and additional measures need to be devised to assist pupils to make academic progress.¹¹⁸

This trend is supported by findings from other sources. At an anecdotal level, descriptions about students participating in a distance access course in Durban indicated that students are encouraged to set up study groups but reported that they do not because they do not know

¹¹⁶ READ. (1998). *op cit* pp. 6-7.

¹¹⁷ Hugo, C. (1996). Classroom libraries. In J. Karlsson. *op cit*.

¹¹⁸ Moller. *op cit*. p. 44. Emphasis Added.

how to study effectively in groups.¹¹⁹ More detailed information about these students' study skills (not reported in the article) showed that they spent as much as eight hours reading a four to ten page extract; used a dictionary on average five times per page; were not able to summarize effectively; and developed inappropriate or inaccurate understanding of the content of the extract.

At a theoretical level, South African psychologists such as Anita Craig¹²⁰ and Ronny Miller¹²¹ have argued that students are disadvantaged by learning opportunities that do not provoke learning (change) in students, and thus the disjuncture between past learning and the demands of different learning opportunities is always extended.¹²² Disadvantaged students approach learning tasks with an 'indigenous epistemology' or a belief that 'there is an assumed, unchanging and 'final truth' which must be uncovered. This 'truth' therefore can be simply stated, requiring no evidence or argument.'¹²³

Craig and Miller's work on 'indigenous epistemology' suggests that these students make and seek out knowledge claims in which truth is revealed through reference to the real world, and can be captured in blurred and sweeping statements.¹²⁴ An example of this would be the statement that 'it is "true" that all women want to be mothers because I want to be a mother'. This type of thinking supports rote learning methods because if a student believes that the truth derives from authorities such as a supernatural being or experts, then accessing the truth or knowledge demands little more than passively receiving it. Broadcast formats that do not support interaction and encourage additional activities beyond the broadcast will not challenge this, and have the potential to reinforce rote learning methods. Similarly, once-off interventions are unlikely to make a positive impact on challenging these learning patterns.

The real needs and abilities of students need to be acknowledged. This acknowledgement is difficult for a range of reasons. The reality is that student needs and abilities pose incredible challenges, and the introduction of radio or television will not result in an educational and technological transformation of students, teachers, and classrooms. Romantic notions of technology and education obscure this when they claim that:

Instructors and students usually take on new roles when they use learning technologies effectively. Typically the changes focus on de-emphasising the lecture format, which is centred on delivery of the instructor's knowledge, and on increasing the use of other formats that develop the learner's capacity to acquire and create knowledge¹²⁵

CLASSROOM REALITIES: PARENTS AND OTHER AGENTS

Educational Attainment

Parents have various roles and responsibilities in their children's lives, one of the most obvious of which is that they have a direct impact on the educational attainment of their children. According to Moller, family life impacts on students' attitudes to homework

¹¹⁹ Selikow, T. A. Learner Support at the Regional Access Programme (RAP). In SAIDE. (1998). *Open Learning Through Distance Education*, 4, 1.

¹²⁰ Craig, A. P. (1991). Adult cognition and tertiary studies. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 5, 2.

¹²¹ Miller, R. (1992). Double, double, toil and trouble. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 6, 1.

¹²² Bradbury, J. (1993). *The meta-language of cognition*. A paper presented at the Kenton Olwander Conference.

¹²³ Bradbury, J. *op cit.* pp. 8-9.

¹²⁴ Bradbury, J. *op cit.*

¹²⁵ Burge et al. p. 62.

activities.¹²⁶ Students from disharmonious families are less likely to undertake homework at home, doing it instead at school. It is clear from the study that under-achievement is linked to a lack of family support.

Parents appear to influence the educational attainment of their children in two ways: Firstly, parents can decide where to send their children to school. Secondly, once their children are enrolled in school, parents can support the educational efforts of their children and encourage them to remain in school and prepare their lessons. The latter parental influence essentially means seeing that children complete their homework and other school assignments and study for examinations.¹²⁷

Some comments need to be made about parental roles. The most obvious is that, in the modern industrial society, the main responsibility for education has been removed from the family. In South Africa, and in other developing countries, many parents have shifted responsibility for the education of their children to professionals. Public education does not, however, mean that parents are excluded from the learning process altogether. Current thinking is that: 'Parental input is not dispensable but represents an important positive influence on academic development.'¹²⁸

School Governing Bodies

Parental involvement can include participation in school life for example, by joining governing bodies, being aware of the importance of supporting children's schooling, or by becoming involved in, for example, repairing broken technological equipment. Volunteerism (willingly and freely giving of one's resources, such as time or expertise), an assumption underlying many claims about parental involvement in schooling, is however, not always a practical possibility. Philpott points out that:

Volunteerism is not a reality for working-class, poor women in both developed and developing countries. Women who are poor may not have the time or the energy to care. or volunteer support.¹²⁹

Parental involvement in school life has traditionally been conceptualized as participation in governing bodies and decision-making bodies that carry out management activities and decisions. In Britain, changes in the Educational Acts have given parents additional rights such as: the right to membership as equal partners (with teachers and principals) of school governing bodies; the right to a wider choice of schools for their children; and the right to receive a report on their school annually. Simultaneously though, parents lost certain rights, such as power over curriculum decision-making because of the introduction of the National Curriculum, which is designed and assessed centrally. In Australia, parental participation has varied widely according to school type. 'Alternative' and parish schools tend to have smaller learner enrolment numbers and hence parents have a greater 'say' in the management of the school. In Canada, parental participation extends to involvement in district-level school boards.

Marsh provides some useful ideas about why parents should be involved in their children's educational activities, for example:

¹²⁶ Moller, V. (1994). *Township youth and their homework*. Pretoria: HSRC. p. 42.

¹²⁷ Moller, V. *op cit.* pp. 4-5.

¹²⁸ Moller, V. *op cit.* p. 6.

¹²⁹ Philpott cited in Parekh and Jackson. In de la Rey et al. *op cit.* p. 49.

- A student's level of learning at school will be increased if he/she is positively supported and reinforced by parents in the home environment.
- Parents will have a greater understanding and appreciation of the complexities of schools if they have first-hand experience of it.
- Parents have the legal and long-term responsibility of their children and therefore should have a say in the decisions that affect their life chances.
- It fosters the development of common purpose between teachers, parents and students.
- By increasing the number of interest groups involved in education there is a greater likelihood that the interests of all students will be taken into account.
- There are greater opportunities for a school to develop a strong sense of identity.¹³⁰

Encouraging parental involvement does have associated with it, several disadvantages such as:

- Parent and community groups can interfere in what is seen at the teacher's professional responsibility.
- Inequalities will increase as participatory democracy tends to favour upper income, educated communities - a 'power hungry, articulate elite'.
- Few parents have the time to take an active and informed role in decision-making.
- School staff members are sometimes reluctant or opposed to parent participation activities.¹³¹

The ideal is that parents will be interested in, willing and able to participate in their children's school experiences. The reality is very different. The introduction of Curriculum 2005 in South African schools has marginalized parental roles, because it introduced technicist and specialist language that alienates most parents.

Other Agents in the Adult Support Network

A false dichotomy often exists in discussions about families between parents and other agents. The reason for this is that it is often assumed that the heterosexual, two-parent family is the norm.¹³² The presence of grandparents (both or one) means that in theory a school child has a deeper pool of resources on which to draw. Three-generation families have 'an edge over smaller township families when allocating educational resources.'¹³³

In South Africa, however, grandmothers in three-generation families play an important role in pre-school childcare and education. Less information exists around the later stages of children's schooling and development. But,

Anecdotal evidence suggests that grandparents may assist youngsters from disadvantaged social backgrounds to complete their education and attain socially recognised positions in society in spite of the odds against educational achievement. Although such cases may refer mainly to skip-generation homes, where the grandparents stand in for absent parents, there is every reason to believe that where grandparents assume titular headship of large urban families that they also wield considerable influence on the opportunity choices of the youngest generation in the household.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Marsh, C. *op cit.* p. 167.

¹³¹ Marsh. *op cit.* pp. 167-168.

¹³² Bozalek, V. (1997). Representations of the family and South African realities. In de la Rey et al. *Op cit.*

¹³³ Moller, V. *op cit.* p. 7.

¹³⁴ Moller, *op cit.* p. 7.

When extended family members do not support the educational attainment of school children, the student is unlikely to attain as well as his or her potential may allow. Moller reports on a 19-year-old, male, student attending a township school, whose family (made up of a grandfather, father, three aunts, an uncle and cousin) was not interested in his schoolwork: '[His] grandfather says it is his policy not to influence his grandson to do better at school.'¹³⁵ His lack of educational attainment was reinforced by (and may even have partially been generated by) lack of family support.

In developing countries, the family is often more than biologically defined, and is usually comprised of a network of extended family members who pool labour, emotional, and social resources in a strategy to combat poverty. Although economic factors such as the class status of a household influence educational attainment, other factors play a role. For example, the family and home are important sites in which literacy events occur, which develop a positive attitude to the tradition of knowledge in the form of myth, folk tales and reading aloud to one another. Literacy events are critical factors for promoting a culture of learning in the home, even among impoverished and immigrant families.¹³⁶

Family support is therefore an important factor, and may have more to do with creating an enabling environment in the home than actual academic support, and must therefore be promoted. Broadcasts therefore need to provide information and knowledge about the importance of positive family support of school students.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

It is widely accepted that an important aspect of effective teaching and learning is the provision and access to resources. Adequate and decent facilities provide the minimum conditions for effective teaching and learning. Earlier in this document some of the infrastructural obstacles to effective teaching and learning were highlighted. These include: lack of facilities, textbook shortages, overcrowding. However, it is also recognised that the leadership, management and administration of schools, parental involvement, and staff commitment are crucial in promoting effective teaching and learning.

As part of government's commitment to the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning in schools, it launched the COLTS (Culture of Learning, Teaching and Service) campaign in 1997. This campaign was in direct response to a breakdown in learning and teaching in a large number of schools across the country. The collapse of schooling has been contributed to a number of interrelated factors: some of these are related to the state and condition of school buildings, facilities and resources, leadership, administration and management; relationships with education departments; relationships between teachers, parents, students, and principals. The Department of Education describes the COLTS campaign as

A mechanism to bring massive visibility, urgency and popular participation to the Ministry's commitment to educational quality throughout the system. It provides a focus for driving deep into popular consciousness and behaviour some of the key values of the education process: discipline, application, determination to succeed, mutual support, community ownership.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Moller, V. *Op cit.* p. 35.

¹³⁶ Caplan, Whitmore and Choy cited in Moller. *Op cit.* p. 8.

¹³⁷ Joint Education Trust. (1997). *President's Education Initiative: Final Report of Phase One, Appendix A.* . p. 7.

In a bid to restore the culture of learning and teaching in schools, education departments embarked upon quality improvement programmes in targeted schools, school leadership programmes, and parental education programmes. The following information from *Edusource* provides some sense of the impact of the campaign one year after its launch in 1997. According to Professor Charles Dlamini, vice-chancellor of the University of Zululand, the government's COLTS campaign has so far had little impact in Kwazulu-Natal.¹³⁸ In the case of the Northern Cape, the premier, Manne Dipco, is quoted as stating that 78 schools in the provinces have been 'rehabilitated' since 1994.¹³⁹ It is difficult to measure the success of the campaign, and as the Deputy Minister of Education points out, the campaign needs the commitment and involvement of principals, teachers, learners, communities and the government if it is to succeed.

Whilst minimum provision needs to be in place for effective teaching and learning to occur, it is significant that in some of the poorest and most under-resourced schools in South Africa effective teaching and learning (as evidenced by their Matric results) continues to take place despite adverse conditions. In the North West province, for example, a combined school of about 600 pupils from grade one to twelve with seventeen teachers, no laboratories, media centres, library or fence, had a 67% matric pass rate in 1997 making it amongst the top 100 schools of South Africa.¹⁴⁰ Similarly, it has been reported that a secondary school near Thohoyandou achieved a 100% matric pass rate in 1996 'despite extremely deprived physical circumstances'.¹⁴¹

What these exceptional cases highlight is that while it is essential for the state to address the serious issues of provision of resources and physical infrastructure, it will not in itself ensure that effective teaching and learning will take place.

OUT OF SCHOOL YOUTH

A CASE study conducted in 1996, into out-of-school youth, put forward the following working definition of out-of-school youth:

{It is} a sub-group of youth.. between the ages of 15 and 30 (inclusive, not currently being engaged in studies, having not studied as far as they wanted to in their education , and expressing the desire to return to some form of education or training.¹⁴²

Chisholm et al (1997) differentiate between out-of-school-youth of schooling age (0-16 years) and those beyond school-going age (16-24/5 years).¹⁴³ The Directorate for Adult Education and Training sets the lower age limit for out-of-school- youth as fifteen years, which is in accordance with international classifications.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁸ *Edusource Data News*. No. 23/December 1998.

¹³⁹ *Edusource Data News*. No. 21/July 1998. p. 11.

¹⁴⁰ *Sowetan Education*. 25 September 25. p. 2.

¹⁴¹ *Cape Times*. 2 October 1998.

¹⁴² Everatt, D. and Jennings, R (1996) *CASE Developing a Policy Framework for Out-of-School Youth in South Africa. Researched for the National Youth Development Forum and the Ministry of Education*. p.6

¹⁴³ Chisholm, L. (1997). 'Youth Policies, Programmes and Priorities in South Africa: 1990-1995'. In *International Journal of Educational Development*, vol. 17, No.2 p.216

¹⁴⁴ Department of Education. Directorate: Adult Education and Planning. (1997). *A national Multi-Year Implementation Plan for Adult education and Training: Provision and Accreditation*. Final Draft. P.7

A report of the National Youth Commission, 1997, describes out-of-school youth as those 'young women and men who are no longer engaged in the education system, who are without employment, or any significant school qualification'¹⁴⁵.

“Street children”

The phrase, 'Street Children' is used generally to refer to children of school going age, who for various reasons have left their families and homes to settle on the streets of the major cities. In most cases these children are out of school. The number of street children under the age of 18 in South Africa is estimated at 10 000 and there are currently about 350 NGO projects that are actively involved with street children¹⁴⁶. Most of these children are also out of the formal schooling system.

Another group of children of school going age who are out of school for other reasons include children residing in farms where education is not provided, children of refugee families, young women who have fallen pregnant and have not been able to return to school¹⁴⁷.

The establishment of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) in November 1997 was undoubtedly a good step towards addressing the needs of all learners. Among the proposals made by NCSNET and NCESS are strategies to provide barrier-free access to all centres of learning, flexible curriculum, effective programmes to make teachers more sensible to learners with special needs¹⁴⁸.

In order to solve the problem of out-of-school youth, the National Youth Commission has proposed that:

Youth community colleges shall expand on existing Programmes and services to develop specific initiatives, which address the needs of out-of-school young men and women. Such initiatives shall include pre-employment training vocational training and skills development, and remedial courses to enable these young women and men to return to school.¹⁴⁹

SCHOOL FINANCE

According to Bot and Shindler, the total education budget (including higher education) increased from R31,8bn in 1995/96 to R36,5bn in 1997/8 and R46,8bn in 1998/9.¹⁵⁰ In terms of the new funding formula proposed in the Medium Term Expenditure Framework, there is a visible move towards provincial equity. The table below shows the increase in provincial education budget.

¹⁴⁵ National Youth Commission (1997) *National Youth Policy*. P.30

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Chisholm L, Motala S and Vally S, *Review of South African Education 1996-1998: For the Centre for Education Policy Development 2000+ Project Conference*, August 1999

¹⁴⁹ National Youth Commission (1997) *National Youth Policy*. P.30.

¹⁵⁰ Bot, M. and Shindler, J. (1999) *Macro Indicators 1997: Update of Baseline Study*. CEPD 2000+, April 1999

*Provincial Education Budgets, 1994-1998 (Rands in millions)*¹⁵¹

| Province | 1994/5 | 1996/7 | 1997/8 | Percentage Increase 1996/97-1997/98 | 1998/9 | Percentage Increase 1997/98-1998/99 |
|-------------------|--------|--------|--------|--|--------|--|
| Eastern Cape | 2 511 | 5 295 | 5 450 | 3 | 6 387 | 17 |
| Free State | N/A | 2 050 | 2 141 | 4 | 2 420 | 13 |
| Gauteng | 4 647 | 4 537 | 5 031 | 11 | 5 828 | 16 |
| Kwazulu-Natal | 5 517 | 5 871 | 6 125 | 4 | 6 869 | 12 |
| Mpumalanga | 1 666 | 2 015 | 2 027 | 1 | 2 562 | 26 |
| Northern Cape | 617 | 650 | 706 | 9 | 812 | 15 |
| Northern Province | N/A | 4 157 | 4 662 | 12 | 5 162 | 20 |
| North West | 1 078 | 2 330 | 2 746 | 18 | 3 096 | 13 |
| Western Cape | 3 389 | 3 173 | 3 303 | 4 | 3 595 | 9 |
| Total | N/A | 30 079 | 32 192 | 7 | 37 180 | 15 |

A number of reasons have been given for increase in the expenditure. These include:

- High real salaries;
- Poor budgetary and financial management;
- Merging of educational department
- A net increase in learner enrolment
- Once off cost of voluntary severance packages

¹⁵¹ Source: Estimates of revenue and estimates of expenditure for the year ending 31 March 1999 for the nine provinces, From Bot M and Shindler, J (1999)