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chapter 3

THROWING GOOD MONEY AFTER BAD

BARRIERS SOUTH AFRICAN VOCATIONAL TEACHERS EXPERIENCE IN BECOMING COMPETENT EDUCATORS

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Introduction¹⁰

In keeping with international trends, the vocational education and training sector in South Africa has been subject to wide-ranging changes in the past 10 to 15 years – not all of which improved the sector. With the introduction of the South African National Qualifications Framework (SANQF) in 1998, technical and vocational education and training (TVET¹¹) was earmarked to produce the next generation of skilled workers for the economy, and much effort was put into the reform of this system (see for example Papier, 2010). However, it soon became clear that much of the early policy reform was steeped in symbolism in the form of idealistic statements of intent, which did not necessarily lead to workable and pragmatic approaches to change (Blom, 2006). For example, more than ever before, the South African public TVET college sector became trapped in an education–training divide, quite contrary to the stated ideal of an integrated national system. The divide was keenly felt, particularly by those workers who were denied education and training opportunities under the apartheid regime (Swiss-South African Cooperation Initiative [SSACI], 2010). While an education–training divide is not unique to South Africa (see for example Education International, 2009), in this country, it was strongly associated with the deliberate mediocrity of education for ‘non-White’ citizens. Parity of esteem between education and training became vested with the ideals for a new system. It was thus with disappointment that it became evident that the public TVET sector had to bear the brunt of a different divide in the post-apartheid era, namely, a fight for turf between two national departments: the Department of Labour (DoL), responsible for sector education and training in workplaces (and the custodian of an enormous source of funds); and the then Department of Education (DoE), responsible for TVET education in public colleges (Heyns & Needham, 2004). The result of this turf war was devastating for colleges – an already diminished apprenticeship system went into further decline; public TVET colleges and workplaces were increasingly de-linked; and outdated vocational education curricula were left unreformed, as these were meant to be replaced by ‘learnerships’¹² – a system by now entirely in the hands of Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), in-house and private institutions under the auspices of the DoL. In a short space of time, this situation essentially resulted in two parallel systems: a private TVET system serving the SETAs and the DoL, and a public TVET system under the DoE, experiencing severe contraction and struggling to remain relevant to workplaces and the needs of the economy. In the meantime, the DoE developed and introduced a new ‘school-like’ vocational curriculum (the NCV), indicated its intent to phase out the old curriculum, and inhibited colleges from offering non-DoE

10 This article is based on a paper presented at the Research in Post-Compulsory Education (RCPE) inaugural international research conference of the Further Education Research Association (FERA) held in Oxford, Harris Manchester College, 11–13 July 2014.

11 Until recently (January 2014), with the publication of the White Paper (see reference list), TVET colleges were known as Further Education and Training (FET) colleges.

12 A learnership is a structured learning process for gaining theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the workplace, leading to a nationally recognised qualification. The intention was that learnerships would replace apprenticeships.

programmes through its restrictive funding formulae. To complicate matters further, all of these developments were taking place against the backdrop of general reform impulses in, and reviews and reformulations of, the broader South African system (see for example the report on the review of the SANQF published in 2002 and the subsequent proposed changes to the system published in 2003). Always the last in line in the system, the public TVET college sector again found itself in an untenable position.

With the new cabinet sworn in under President Jacob Zuma in 2009, the DoE was split into two new departments – the Department of Basic Education (DBE), responsible for schooling, and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), now responsible for all post-school education and training, including university education, sector education and training, TVET, and adult education, stripping the DoL of all responsibility for vocational and occupationally directed education and training. The new DHET immediately halted the phasing out of the old curriculum and importantly, became the custodian of the enormous skills development fund amassed by the SETAs. This move was largely supported by the South African education and training community – it was hoped that the divides evident under the previous administration would soon disappear. However, there is now the danger that the new White Paper for Post-school Education and Training's (DHET, 2013) ambitions may also be un-implementable, as the sector looked upon to develop key mid-level skills for the economy and enhance employment is considered to be the weakest sector in the system.

Nevertheless, since 2009, there has been an unprecedented focus on the public TVET sector in the country. Apart from the systemic problems in terms of the contested turf noted above, this move seems to have been motivated by a number of drivers: the massive (and growing) unemployment rate of youth (especially black youth) who exit formal schooling prior to achieving a school-leaving certificate; the struggling economy; the need to (re)industrialise the economy of South Africa; and, possibly, the deeply held (but contested) belief that there is a relationship between vocational education and the revitalisation of the economy.

These dynamics are mirrored throughout the world, and have been shown in sharp relief since the economic downturn of 2008. National and international policy reforms are placing the burden of an economic turnaround strategy on the TVET systems of the world – 'skills for sustainable growth' has become the international mantra (see for example the World Bank, 2010; ILO, 2011; OECD, 2010; UNESCO, 2012).

Yet, in the second term of President Jacob Zuma's cabinet, and despite massive injections of funds to recapitalise and capacitate the sector (Papier, 2010), the weakest link in these ambitions is still the capacity of vocational education educators to deal with the pressures brought to bear on them. This seems to be because policy reforms often disregard the people who have to implement the ambitions expressed. In the TVET sector, it is not simply a matter of updating pedagogical practice and/or subject matter expertise (even though these matters also need attention). It has emerged that current conditions of service and the casualisation of work in general have had a major impact on TVET teachers' motivation to learn and to update their skills to meet the additional demands. Further, TVET teachers' perceived low status and the lack of a professional identity, compounded by apathy of institutional managers and restrictive funding regimes, seem to exacerbate the situation. These problems emerge only when 'reading between

the lines' of the numerous reports¹³ submitted to the DHET.

As elsewhere in the world (see for example Keep, 2007), the South African government has responded to the triple challenge of unemployment, a failing economy, and reindustrialisation by proposing education and training policy and by conceptualising qualifications for vocational educators, in the hope that policy will serve as a trigger to becoming more responsive to the needs of the economy through the development of more skilled educators. While these policy impulses will undoubtedly be necessary at some point, in the short to medium term it may not be the most urgent, or the most effective, of interventions in the college sector. Instead, the daily struggles of vocational educators present some of the more immediate inhibitors for change.

This article will therefore interrogate the non-academic, i.e. the non-subject-matter, barriers that South African vocational teachers experience in becoming competent educators able to meet the expressed needs. It does so by analysing a number of high-level reports submitted to the DHET over the past three to four years in respect of public TVET colleges. Many of the reports were compiled in preparation of the new White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2013), or as inputs to the National Development Plan (NDP),¹⁴ and highlight general and specific problems of the sector. The analysis was supported by three exploratory interviews with high-ranking people working in the sector,¹⁵ with the intention of delving into all possible factors which may impact vocational teachers' capacity and formulating research questions for further studies.

Reading between the lines

The DHET's Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2012: 20) stated that 'there are high expectations of [the public TVET] sector as a central component of South Africa's skills development system', but in the same document, admitted that 'most of our colleges are weak institutions'. In the introduction to this article one of these weaknesses was alluded to: inadequate subject expertise of TVET teachers. Further, the Green Paper also mentions poor management capacity and financial management and a poor understanding by TVET teachers of workplace environments and requirements (DHET, 2012). Added to these is the lack of the knowledge (and practice) of pedagogy appropriate to vocational education (Mokone, 2011). These issues are by no means minor, stemming partly from the troubled history of the sector. However, there seems to be more to the sector's problems than subject knowledge and managerial capacities.

13 These reports were compiled in anticipation of the new White Paper for Post-school Education and Training (see references list).

14 The National Development Plan (2011) is an ambitious plan compiled by the National Planning Commission appointed by the President to address the numerous economic, social and educational problems experienced in South Africa.

15 The first respondent is a senior member of staff at a non-government organisation (NGO) involved with capacity building in the TVET sector on behalf of the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) (PC1); the second is the Chairperson of the QCTO (PC2); and the third is an academic and ex-lecturer from a TVET college (PC3). Information from these individuals is referenced as PC (personal communication): PC1, PC2, or PC3.

In respect of subject expertise and vocational pedagogy, current staff have very different levels and types of qualifications, ranging from those with formal teaching qualifications or degrees to those with trade qualifications/trade theory qualifications or industry credentials, but no teaching expertise, and vice versa:

Lecturers with industry experience have practical skills of workshop training but lack theoretical knowledge for classroom teaching, whereas lecturers from teaching backgrounds have theoretical knowledge for classroom teaching but lacked practical experience for workshop training. (Mokone, 2011: 28)

Taylor (2011: 47) adds that until recently,¹⁶ in South Africa ‘there was no training base for FET college lecturers, and no new qualifications framework as yet for lecturing staff’, which means that current teaching staff come from very different traditions and have very different skills.

Again, this situation is not unique to South Africa. At a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) conference in 2012 the participants noted that:

Existing [education] systems generally tend to provide the same pre-service training preparation for TVET teachers as received by their counterparts across the wider field of teaching. Moreover, many TVET teachers enter the classroom without the benefit of an industrial background, and having often lacked the opportunity to experience the world of work. (UNESCO, 2012: 5)

While it is comforting for South African commentators to know that TVET teachers all over the world seem to be in the same boat, and that our own national department has recognised the need for targeted education and training through its development of a suite of qualifications appropriate for TVET teaching (see RSA, 2013), these factors are not the only problems besetting the sector. It is therefore surprising that despite the stated centrality of the TVET sector for post-school education in terms of ‘the development of a skilled and educated population [and] for meeting the needs of an economy which suffers a serious shortage of mid-level skills’ (DHET, 2013: 11), other possible reasons for the problems experienced by the TVET sector in South Africa are glossed over in the Green Paper (2012). Further, the Green Paper limits its comments to issues of conditions of employment, and no problems other than the general problems already noted are mentioned at all in the subsequent White Paper (DHET, 2013).

It is therefore only when ‘reading between the lines’ that the diversity of qualifications held by TVET teachers is seen to contribute to capacity-building barriers. Further, when a weak training base is combined with the poor conditions of service, demanding college programmes, the sociological context of students, and a restrictive funding model, it is a serious oversight to dismiss these problems, which may critically inhibit the capacity-

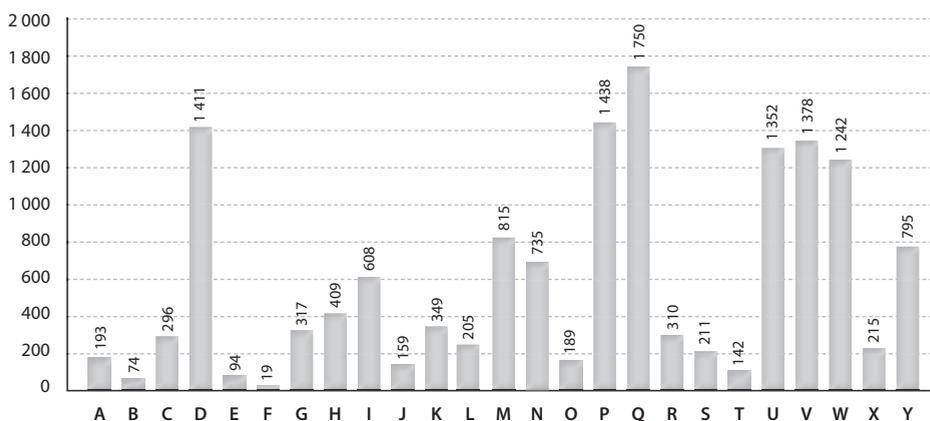
16 A suite of qualifications aimed at the development of TVET college lecturers was proposed in 2013.

building and expansion plans for the sector. In the sections following, each of these factors will be discussed.

Diversity and levels of current TVET teacher qualifications

In order for school teachers in South Africa to be registered with the South African Council for Educators (SACE), they have to successfully complete a four-year Bachelor of Education (BED) degree. Even allowing for differences in the quality of programmes offered by autonomous universities, the BED can be considered the minimum standard to be achieved before entering the teaching profession. Until very recently, with the publication of a suite of TVET teacher qualifications (2013), no such minimum standard existed for TVET teachers in South Africa. Furthermore, these new standards have not yet been implemented, and current college staff qualifications therefore represent a hodgepodge of programmes which cannot be considered to be at the same or similar levels – either with each other, or with the BED school teacher qualification. The situation is depicted in the following figure. For example, in 2011, there were 15 526 TVET teachers in the system, with at least 25 different types of qualifications.¹⁷

FIGURE 6 Number and types of TVET college teacher qualifications (2011)



Source: DHET (2011).

The National N3 to N6 qualification is shown by Q (1 750) in the figure, the National (N) Diploma by P (1 438), and artisanal qualifications by D (1 411). These represent the qualifications of those TVET teachers who have completed a college programme and have either returned or stayed on as teachers at the college, but who have neither been trained as teachers nor, in many cases, had workplace experience. These programmes are considered particularly outdated and weak, yet this is the largest group in the cohort.

¹⁷ Unverified data from a database that the DHET developed of lecturer qualifications in 2011. According to PC3, the data is unverified as lecturers were reluctant to confirm or disagree out of fear that their conditions of service may be affected.

The Education Diploma/National Professional Diploma in Education shown by V (1378) is a school teaching programme, at one time offered to school teachers with outdated teaching qualifications and now discontinued – the last cohort was enrolled in 2014.

The Bachelor degree, U (1352), does not include teaching expertise, while the National Diploma, W (1242), is a technical/occupation-directed programme offered by the former technikons,¹⁸ also with no teaching focus.

M, the Higher Diploma in Education and the Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (815), and I, the Higher Diploma in Education (608) are school teaching qualifications offered prior to the introduction of the BEd, all of which have also long since been discontinued.

N (735) represents a combination of postgraduate degrees and reflects the change in the system when the BEd degree was first introduced as the minimum standard. Many TVET teachers still hold only these qualifications.

G (317), the Bachelor of Technology, and J (159), the National Higher Diploma, are also programmes offered by the former technikons. They are technical and/or occupationally orientated programmes, but here, also, do not include training as a TVET teacher.

C (296), L (250), R (310), S (211), T (142), and X (215) are mostly school teacher upgrading qualifications introduced over the years, or school teacher programmes that have been adapted to a vocational education focus, often also offered by the former technikons.

A small group of university graduates, H (409), also teach at colleges, again without teaching expertise. An equally small group, A (193) and B (74), excluding the doctoral and master's graduates (19 and 189 respectively), have an adult teaching qualification.

Another 795, shown by Y, have a partially completed qualification or no qualification beyond the school-leaving certificate.

In the personal communications with the first interviewee (PC1), the ways in which this situation plays itself out in terms of capacity building in the sector became evident. PC1 indicated that the people with degrees and teaching qualifications, despite not having much occupational workplace experience, feel that they do not need additional capacity building as they are achieving relatively good results in their subject areas (PC1). Furthermore, they are usually those TVET teachers who are offering the 'school-like' basic Sciences, English, or Mathematics (Education International, 2009).

However, with the group comprising Q, P, D and W (a total of 5 841 TVET college teachers), a number of issues emerge. Firstly, the current qualifications of these teachers do not provide them with access to higher education without them having to undertake substantial additional work before they can embark on undergraduate training. Secondly, their own learning trajectories of having achieved their qualifications at colleges means that they are not academically inclined anyway, so the 'jump is too big, too onerous, and the demands are too high' (PC1). Furthermore, as PC2 indicated, they see themselves not as teachers first, but as 'technical' practitioners – they therefore place more value on their industry backgrounds (if they have any) than on teaching, reflecting their lack of

18 Similar to polytechnics – they have now been converted to universities of technology.

professional identity as TVET teachers (PC2). This group is also most likely in their 50s, and they therefore come from a 'technical college'¹⁹ background, which offered only those low-status, low-value qualifications that existed prior to the introduction of a new curriculum. Consequently, these teachers tend to struggle to come to terms with the demands of the new curriculum (PC2). PC1 was also of the opinion that they may be 'afraid to expose their own weaknesses and incompetence in terms of teaching', so they avoid any development that may 'show them up' (PC1). Finally, in respect of this group, PC3 suggested that there are no financial incentives for teachers to take on personal and professional development, and that higher education institutions, in any case, have not been offering programmes that are appropriate for vocationally orientated teaching (PC3). PC2 agreed and indicated that whereas in school teaching there is a clear trajectory of promotion through the ranks, in the college sector this kind of trajectory is weak or non-existent (PC2), which leads us to the next underlying problem: conditions of service.

Conditions of service

The extent to which the constant policy churn has impacted on the motivation and morale of TVET teachers cannot be overemphasised. In a short space of time, the sector and staff have had to accommodate sweeping changes, some of which included the conditions of service of staff. For example, prior to the introduction of the FET Act No. 16 of 2006, colleges were a 'provincial competence' – in other words, management and staff were appointed by provincial departments of education. However, with the promulgation of the 2006 FET Act, TVET teaching staff were to be appointed by college councils. In the words of the 2012 Green Paper this change has had 'many unintended consequences':

One was that the change of employer from the state to the College Councils caused an exodus of around 12% of college lecturers who did not have confidence in their council as an employer and preferred to stay in the employment of the state. Another is a tendency for college staff to be hired on short-term contracts, aligned to learner enrolment for specific short-term programmes. This is clearly contrary to any notion of long-term professional development for lecturers. (DHET, 2012: 25)

Subsequent to these moves, and in terms of the amended FET Act (as amended in 2012 in accordance with the Further Education and Training Laws Amendment Act No. 3 of 2012), TVET colleges became a 'national competence', directly under the auspices of the DHET, which again meant a change in management of the sector. Further, as noted earlier, the conditions of service do not appear to have been considered in the FET White Paper (DHET, 2013), suggesting perhaps that the problems outlined above had been dealt with in the intervening year. Furthermore, apart from the devastating loss of staff

19 TVET colleges were known as 'technical colleges' prior to the introduction of the Further Education and Training Act in 2006, after which they were known as FET colleges – this is in itself indicative of the turbulent policy changes in the sector. Now, they have been renamed again as Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges.

due to the introduction of the FET Act in 2006, the problem of replacing experienced staff leaving the sector has been exacerbated by the fact that no pipeline of new TVET teachers is being developed. This means that once again, colleges have been forced to appoint their own graduates who do not have the requisite qualifications or experience, neither in terms of subject matter and teaching expertise, nor in terms of workplace experience.

In addition, both PC1 and PC3 confirmed, in particular, that the short-term nature of teaching positions has hardly changed (PC1 and PC2). The consequence of the casualisation of TVET teachers' work is that college management is reluctant to develop staff on short-term contracts, which, in the opinion of PC2 reflects the lack of a culture of development and staff capacity building in the sector (PC2). Likewise, TVET college teachers themselves seem to be too anxious about their precarious position to concern themselves with training: the teachers who are on short-term contracts 'are always seeking permanent employment opportunities' and feel that they cannot 'focus on their teaching' (Mokone, 2011: 13). Further, given the distrust that seems to exist between staff and management, staff feel that if they undertake training, the 'college owns you' (PC3); they consider themselves obligated to stay in the service of the college when they have undergone training and development. This attitude is clearly in contravention of the intentions of the DHET namely, 'to improve the qualifications and capabilities of college lecturers' (DHET, 2013: 17) and is counter-productive in terms of improving teaching and learning at TVET colleges. Colleges are generally also not in a position to undertake internal training and development, and where training does take place, there seems to be a mismatch between what TVET teachers feel they need and what they are offered:

The perception is that management ... force lecturers to attend these programmes as most of them are not what lecturers identified as part of their training and developmental needs. Therefore, the prevailing view is that FET college management imposes the academic development training on them. (Mokone, 2011: 15)

The type of training offered is also often seen as inappropriate for the college environment: 'assessor and moderator courses are not linked to the learning programmes [that they are teaching]' (Mokone, 2011: 11).

This situation impacts directly on the next emerging theme.

Demands of TVET college programmes

It is when the aspirations articulated by the DHET for the TVET sector and the reality on the ground are compared that it becomes evident how far the system still has to go: while 'Government expects that TVET colleges will become the cornerstone of the country's skills development system. Thus, a major effort will be made to increase enrolments' (DHET, 2013: 12), it is recognised that 'the mix of qualifications in TVET colleges is complex to administer, difficult for learners and parents to understand, and often poorly quality assured' (DHET, 2013: 14). Nevertheless, despite the acknowledgement of problems in the sector, PC1 was adamant that 'the sense created is that everything can be introduced into the colleges.' Thus, on the one hand the colleges are seen to be the

solution to the country's skills development shortages, but on the other, there is the recognition that all is not well in the colleges.

Moreover, when these expectations are coupled with a variety of funding streams, which often drive implementation of new programmes (more about funding later), TVET teachers seem to be very poorly prepared to deal with all the expectations. For example, PC1 noted, as an ex-TVET teacher herself, that 'we had five days of training to introduce a whole new curriculum', and 'subject matter support was not forthcoming'. This situation is confirmed by the requests for training and development, particularly in respect of the use of workshop equipment associated with the new curriculum:

Lecturers reported that they [have never had] training on how to use new equipment that [was] purchased during the recapitalisation of FET colleges. As a result some of the workshops have modernised resources but are not fully utilized. Some lecturers cannot operate new machines which have been at FET colleges for five years ... (Mokone, 2011: 16)

The new 'school-like' curriculum, the National Certificate Vocational (NCV), introduced in 2007 under the DoE, was so different from the previous programmes taught, that many TVET teachers have taken a long time to adjust to a new and very full programme (PC2). Furthermore, teachers are often expected to teach the old curriculum as well as the new, and management seems to deploy teachers interchangeably between these curricula, each of which have different assessment, quality assurance, and teaching demands (PC3). Indeed, the different curricula represent different cohorts of students – those who have dropped out of school early (at Grade 9), and those who have completed schooling (Grade 12). Often these students would be grouped in one class.

PC3 was particularly vocal on the demands of the new curriculum, for two reasons: she maintains that due to the number of occupational specialisations associated with the new curriculum, TVET teachers are often required to teach disciplines which fall outside their subject matter expertise, and this situation seems to be exacerbated by the fact that the teachers often do not have the pedagogical knowledge to assist in switching between disciplines.

Even more seriously, it seems that lecturers dislike this curriculum because they feel that there are currently no clear articulation routes for further study for students completing these programmes. PC3 claimed that TVET teachers feel that 'they are baby-sitting the students on this NCV curriculum' for the time that they are at the college, because it 'takes them nowhere'; and that college management feels 'there is nothing they can do' to improve the situation because funding is linked to this programme. The historic weaknesses of the TVET sector are therefore simply perpetuated, and the capacity-building interventions so far seem to have been inappropriate and ineffectual (PC1).

Three additional matters which are linked to the demands of TVET college programmes, but not necessarily to a particular curriculum, are important to raise: the language of teaching and learning; multi-level, multi-grade teaching; and overcrowding due to rapid expansion in student numbers.

Firstly, PC3 made the point that 'we believe in the myth that students who come to the college can cope in academic studies'. This can't be further from the truth. Even under

the previous dispensation, prior to the introduction of the recent policy reforms and the new curriculum, the students who attended colleges were, more often than not, redirected out of mainstream, academic schools to 'go and learn a trade'. Now, with greatly expanding enrolments amongst all race groups, more of the so-called weaker students are directed out of mainstream schools, where the language of teaching and learning has become a significant barrier to success. PC3 noted that 'students often only encounter English at school'. As a result, in most colleges, staff and students are teaching and learning in a second or third language. Poor command of English, especially of those TVET teachers who come from industry, affect their understanding and utilisation of textbooks (which are also only available in English) and their teaching (PC3). The result is that teachers teach only those students who seem to be able to cope with learning in English (PC3).

Secondly, when the new curriculum was introduced, 'it was originally meant for young people [who have completed] Grade 9' (DHET, 2013: 14), but due to confusing admission policies, TVET colleges admitted students to this programme who had completed Grade 12 (the school-leaving year). Apart from the fact that colleges soon found that students who have finished Grade 12 are in a much better position to cope with the demands of the programme, classes are often made up of multi-level, multi-grade students, placing even more pressure on TVET teachers to deal with different cohorts in one class (Mokone, 2011).

Thirdly, the DHET has been very successful in expanding enrolments at TVET colleges, both through enrolment targets and student funding:

Head-count enrolments increased from 345 566 in 2010 to an estimated 650 000 in 2013; enrolments are expected to increase to one million by 2015 ... (DHET, 2013: 13)

Therefore, in addition to classroom pedagogy and, in many cases, workplace experience, TVET teachers are calling for 'skills to manage workshops and overcrowding in the classrooms' (Mokone, 2011: 15).

Further, given that many of the students have been redirected out of academic schools due to their poor performance, TVET teachers have to deal with the sociological issues of this student body.

The sociological demands of students

TVET teachers, when asked about whether they see teaching as a 'calling', indicated that in the past, college students were more 'mature and responsible' (Mokone, 2011), and that they enjoyed teaching the students. However, with the introduction of the new curriculum and the redirection of more of the weaker school students to colleges, TVET teachers now deal with adolescents, rather than with young adults (Mokone, 2011), and find these students 'ill-disciplined' and 'lacking in motivation' (Mokone, 2011). TVET teachers also find that the students become demotivated due to their failure to progress and then lose interest in learning. The TVET teachers do not know how to deal with the students' issues (Mokone, 2011). They partly blame this on the communities' lack of understanding of TVET and poor career counselling, both at school and prior to

admission to college (Mokone, 2011). Furthermore, given the poor pass rates, many TVET teachers seem to feel that 'there should be a bridging course to assist learners to cope with the demands of the [programme]' (Mokone, 2011: 12). TVET teachers are therefore of the opinion that many students have serious problems in adapting to college life:

Complaints were raised that learners do not submit class work and [homework], [they] come late, [and there is] no accountability, [as] learners are allowed to write examinations even if they do not have the required entrance examination marks. (Mokone, 2011: 13)

Apart from the waste this represents in terms of financial resources, students also have learning difficulties which are hard to deal with in the context of the current teaching loads and overcrowding (Mokone, 2011). Consequently, TVET teachers suggested that they need training and development in respect of (in no particular order)

teaching methodologies, communication management, financial management, accounting management, conflict management, project management, office practice, adult and multicultural teaching, team building, student and classroom management and leadership. (Mokone, 2011: 14)

In addition, they indicated that they need (again, not in any particular order) training in

office data processing, use of overhead and data projectors, how to use modern equipment in workshops, research skills, computer literacy, implementation of [the curriculum], compilation of learning materials, educational psychology, teaching skills ... (Mokone, 2011: 16)

To date, the training and development needs do not seem to match what has been offered. When these factors are combined with disincentives created by the current funding regimes, then the situation becomes critical.

Funding

Funding influences everything in public TVET colleges in South Africa. In most cases, colleges have two or more funding streams: funding in respect of the old curriculum, and separately, funding for the new curriculum; then they often receive funding in respect of the SETA learnerships; and finally, funding is provided for short-term projects, often from foreign donors (PC1). In the light of these funding streams, it is not surprising that TVET teachers are calling for financial, accounting, and project management in addition to teaching and classroom management training. However, the funding model itself may also inadvertently inhibit colleges from introducing innovative programmes, especially programmes that may provide articulation routes for the new curriculum, which could solve the 'baby-sitting' problem (PC3). This situation arises because such articulation programmes are unfunded, despite the DHET's encouragement to implement them:

Recently Level 5 (Higher Certificate) programmes have been introduced in some colleges in partnership with universities. This has worked well in terms of developing and enhancing intermediate skills which are in high demand. These programmes are often occupationally directed but have strong articulation possibilities into higher education ... (DHET, 2013: 15)

However, PC3, in working with some of these colleges attempting to introduce Higher Certificates, maintains that TVET colleges ‘refuse to market programmes that have no funding associated with them’. This means that in addition to a lack of articulation with higher education for students, collaboration with university teachers to improve the subject matter expertise of TVET teachers is discouraged by the lack of funding.

Another consequence of the current funding model is that colleges are concerned with enrolment numbers and not with the appropriate selection of students for particular programmes (PC3), with the result that even greater demands are made on TVET teachers. For example, colleges enrol students for programmes without regard to whether the students need a firm basis in mathematics or not. It is only after enrolment that teachers for Financial Accounting, Information Technology and Engineering programmes, for example, discover the students’ deficiencies in the basics.

Nevertheless, the DHET (2013) is adamant that the TVET college sector should be responsible for the development of mid-level skills for the economy, and consequently the college sector is targeted for the greatest expansion in the post-school system. The rapid increase in enrolments is raising concerns about ‘further diluting the quality’ of teaching and learning in the colleges (PC1) and the ‘lack of accountability’ in respect of the funding. PC3, for example, indicated that no questions are asked about the poor throughput and pass rates, which means that TVET teachers (and students) do not learn from the assessment of their students; all funding is in relation to enrolment targets. She believes that this approach will bring about ‘reproductions of poverty’, as the success of students is far from a priority. Students consequently leave the colleges without being prepared either for further learning, or for work (PC3).

Conclusion

In South Africa, as elsewhere in the world, TVET is seen to be an increasingly important element of the education and training system. Countries respond to this imperative in many different ways. The South African government has chosen to respond by completely reorganising the post-school education and training sector, developing new policies, and rearranging the management of the sector. It remains to be seen how successful this realignment will be, but even the best plans will fail if there is poor recognition of what the situation on the ground may be. In this regard, some serious questions should be raised about the ambitions of the White Paper (DHET, 2013) in respect of its expansion plans for the TVET sector. This is because much of what is expressed in the White Paper can be considered to be political symbolism (Jansen, 2002), namely that policies are often developed as a symbol of change, rather than with an intention to really effect change:

The policy literature in developing countries is replete with narratives of ‘failure’

attributed to the lack of resources, the inadequacy of teacher training, the weak design of implementation strategy, and the problems of policy coherence. This research on education policymaking after apartheid presents the following puzzle: what if the impressive policies designed to change apartheid education did not have 'implementation' as their primary commitment? (Jansen, 2002: 199)

Nevertheless, in the past three years alone, bursary allocation to students increased from R300 million in 2010 to R1.988 billion in 2013 (DHET, 2013). While it is laudable that students from poor families are not only given bursaries for class fees, but also for transport and accommodation, this indiscriminate expansion in student enrolments is placing a huge burden on an already weak and poorly managed sector. The sheer pressure of student numbers will render policies ineffectual if concurrent improvements are not made in respect of TVET teachers themselves by seriously paying attention to their concerns.

As can be seen from the mixed bag of current qualifications, the upgrading of qualifications and the capacity of TVET teachers to teach in diverse settings needs serious attention. However, the introduction of appropriate qualifications is not enough – which at any rate will take a number of years to introduce, and more years still to develop a new pipeline of TVET teachers.

The stabilisation of staff conditions of employment is therefore paramount. At the moment, this situation plays itself out in the lack of trust between staff and management. This situation is also likely to discourage new recruits to the profession, and it may therefore be difficult to develop a pipeline of TVET teachers.

However, the two most important (short-term) interventions seem to hinge on the immediate needs of TVET teachers to better interpret and understand the current curricula they are teaching, and the need for TVET teachers to learn how to deal with some of the debilitating sociological problems experienced by students. In no small measure, the under-preparedness of students seems to be linked to TVET teachers' sense of helplessness which could lead to their lack of motivation for self-development.

In short, apart from improving management at colleges (clearly articulated in the White Paper) (DHET, 2013), TVET institutions need to be strengthened in terms of their capacity to meet the needs of teachers and students. Finally, since TVET colleges are known for the fact that they only promote programmes that are linked to funding, a more equitable and diverse funding regime needs to be considered.

Sadly, linked to indiscriminate funding is the poor selection of students. Colleges often discover later that they have oversubscribed certain programmes, purely for the sake of attaining the maximum funding for enrolments. The result is not only that classrooms and/or workshops are uncomfortably full, but the success rates of students at colleges are notoriously poor. The massive injection of funds and the direction of these funds to bursaries and subsidies to offer programmes regardless of whether students are succeeding may indeed be a case of throwing good money after bad.

What universities can do

In the international literature, there are debates about TVET teacher training. On the one hand, UNESCO recommends that the training of TVET teachers should 'preferably

be offered as a tertiary programme', combined with various in-service and lifelong learning programmes (UNESCO, 2001: 81–87, cited in Education International, 2009: 16). Furthermore, the view is that TVET teacher training should be longer than training for school teachers 'due to the requirement for the TVET teacher to have practical experience' (UNESCO, 1973: 98, cited in Education International, 2009: 17). On the other hand, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) recommends that the 'pedagogical requirements should be lower', especially if TVET teachers are recruited from industry (OECD, 2009: 34, cited in Education International, 2009: 17). Grollman and Rauner (2007) call this 'a fundamental dilemma between recruitment of TVET teachers and the practices of TVET teaching and learning':

There is either, on the one hand, a highly professionalised model of teacher education and recruitment associated with a strong alienation from the world of work, [and] on the other hand an ad hoc-type model of recruitment based on experience in the field, leading to occupational localism or strong subject-based identities. (Grollman & Rauner, 2007, cited in Education International, 2009: 17)

For South Africa this is an important caution to keep in mind when specific qualifications for TVET teachers are introduced from 2016/17. The DHET has published a suite of qualifications intended to accommodate various entrance, articulation, and upgrading routes. These qualifications provide for pre-service, but also in-service, development, especially for those TVET teachers already in the system. By providing alternative pathways into higher education there is also the recognition that many current TVET teachers may not meet the minimum entry requirements for Bachelor degrees. A further important element is the substantial work-integrated learning (WIL) component in all of the qualifications. This is in keeping with the DHET's intention to prioritise workplace experience of TVET teachers: 'to ensure that their training is up to date with workplace needs of employers in their field' (DHET, 2013: 17). Universities will therefore play an increasingly important role in the development and capacity building of the pipeline of TVET teachers, as well as in the upgrading of the current cadre of teachers in the sector.

However, responding with a suite of qualifications addresses only part of the problem, as can be seen in the previous discussions. Developing qualifications will not magically encourage and motivate TVET teachers to embark on study.

Research

Universities are responsible for the development of new bodies of knowledge. Internationally, there has been much research undertaken in respect of vocational pedagogy, but in South Africa this is a relatively new field of inquiry (Papier, 2013). In the development of qualifications for upgrading of the current cadre of TVET teachers and for a new pipeline of TVET teachers, vocational pedagogy is important and should inform the curricula of TVET teacher qualifications. However, it is also clear that TVET teachers' work is not only about the enactment of a particular curriculum using appropriate pedagogies – there seem to be a number of other factors which influence their work. The persistent poor performance of the TVET sector in South Africa suggests that a deeper

investigation into the reasons for these weaknesses is needed. Given that the sector carries the burden of the expectations of the system, a study of the context, hopes, and fears of TVET teachers is important. Hopefully, this will end the indiscriminate pouring of money into a system which is ill-prepared to make the best use of it.

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