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College tutors: a fulcrum for change?

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Abstract

The paper summarises information gathered through MUSTER¹ on the characteristics and career patterns of college tutors in Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi and Trinidad and Tobago. The findings confirm that teachers become trainers in haphazard ways, that their induction and professional development is neglected, and that consequently many “train as they were trained”. Exploring some of their perspectives on their work, the study concludes that although few have an explicit theory of teacher education, most work within a ‘technical rationality’ model, in which knowledge and skills are transmitted to trainees to be applied unproblematically in the schools. This discussion focuses on how colleges can be enabled to lead rather than follow the paradigm shifts in education. © 2002 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

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1. Introduction

Teacher educators all over the world are a neglected group. From a professional point of view, very few countries have taken seriously the need to develop their skills and to establish satisfactory career paths for them. From an academic point of view, little research has been carried out in this field and the available literature, even in the West, is very sparse. From a policy viewpoint, it can

surely be argued that just as teachers are a key factor in raising standards in schools, so teacher educators are crucial for improving the quality of the teaching force. Thus one of the aims of MUSTER was to look at the teacher educators themselves, at their careers, training and the kinds of experiences and philosophies which have shaped them. The aim was not only to understand tutors better but also to clarify why colleges are so seldom an innovative part of the education system.

This article reports some of the preliminary findings. It begins with a short overview of some relevant research, and then describes what was found in response to the three guiding questions:

- Who becomes a college tutor, how and why?
- What induction and professional development programmes are available for them?
- How do they perceive their work, with particular reference to their views on how young tea-

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¹ The MUSTER (Multi-Site Teacher Education Research) Project is a research project funded by DFID. It is based on collaboration between educational research institutes in Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago and the University of Sussex Institute of Education. There were four main strands to the research: the costs of teacher education, the college context, curriculum issues, and the process of becoming a teacher.

chers acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need?

It concludes with some discussion of issues raised by the research.

2. Review of relevant studies

Teacher education as a whole is under-theorised. Various attempts have been made to produce conceptual frameworks that help to distinguish different models or approaches to teacher education that might be applicable across national boundaries (Avalos, 1991; Calderhead and Shorrock, 1997; Zeichner and Tabachnik, 1999; Stuart and Tatto, 2000). For the purposes of this paper we shall use Schon's broad distinction between the 'technical rationality' and the 'reflective practitioner' paradigms. The 'technical rationality' model assumes that propositional knowledge in the form of theories and principles can be applied directly to professional practice, in a manner akin to the natural sciences. In contrast, the 'reflective practitioner' model sees the professional as interacting constantly with unique and confused situations, drawing indeed on public propositional knowledge, but also on experiential and situational knowledge, to develop their own personal form of theory and practice in a way more akin to artistry (Schon, 1983).

In teacher education, the 'technical rationality' model can take several forms. Some programmes focus on *behavioural skills*, in which teachers are taught to deliver the curriculum by using certain methods, techniques and planning mechanisms. Others take a more *academic* approach, assuming that once students understand the subject disciplines, they can teach it. A third variant is the *applied theorist* approach, where students are given educational theories, based on child development and cognitive studies, on the assumption that these can be usefully applied in all classrooms.

The 'reflective practitioner' model requires students to take an *inquiry-oriented* approach to their teaching and expects them to use what they have learnt to develop their own personal theories and repertoires. A more radical version of this, based

on critical theory, can be termed *transformative*, where teachers are prepared to work for change within the system (Zeichner and Tabachnik, 1999).

None of these approaches are mutually exclusive. They are described here as 'ideal types', but in practice teacher preparation programmes will, of course, incorporate elements from several approaches, while tending to emphasise one more than others. Such frameworks can be used to compare and contrast the way teacher educators perceive their work.

Recent qualitative studies of teachers' professional lives have provided new insights into why they teach the way they do (Goodson, 1992), but there are few comparable studies of college tutors or lecturers. One exception comes from a group of (mainly) North American university teacher educators, working in the 'reflective practitioner' mode, who used self-study and action research approaches to theorise about their own professional learning and how to improve their practice (Russell and Korthagen, 1995). They stress that tutors must themselves be active learners, constantly posing questions and looking for better solutions, so they can "foster in their students an active acceptance of teaching's inherent uncertainty, as well as the skills of reflective inquiry" (Richert, 1995; p. 5). They point out that teacher educators need "knowledge, skills and attitudes in the field of human development—adult development, social psychology, counselling" (Korthagen and Russell, 1995; p. 191), but at present very little opportunity for such professional development exists, even in the North.

Reports from the USA and from Australia (Grundy and Hatton, 1995) suggest that most cadres of teacher educators tend towards a conservative ideology rather than a radical or transformative one. This is perhaps to be expected when they have themselves usually come up through the same system. Yet it seems obvious that if educational change is to take place, those who prepare the next generation of teachers must play a key role in innovation. Writing about educational development in general, Beeby pointed out the self-perpetuating nature of educational systems and the problem of where to break the cycle:

Teacher trainers in developing countries who do try to break with the old pattern usually get their ideas from travel in rich countries, or from books written there, and often hand them on, in the form of indigestible theory, to teachers who need practical guidance to take even simpler steps forward. The reformer's most puzzling question frequently is: "Who is to re-train the teacher trainers?" (Beeby, 1980; p. 465–466)

The next question might be: "in what direction should they be re-trained?" Teacher education is a contested arena. Most states attempt to maintain control over teacher education to ensure that teachers are produced in conformity with the current political values and societal norms, but the professional trainers may have their own ideas on how this can and should be done, and the two views may conflict (Wilkin, 1996). The different programmes for the preparation and development of teachers have to be analysed and understood within their different historical, socio-economic and cultural contexts.

There have been few reports of research or action relevant to these pertinent questions. Teacher educators in university departments of education, like most university faculty, get little or no induction or retraining for the job, though college tutors are sometimes luckier. For example, some concerted efforts were made for colleges in Papua New Guinea (Burke, 1996; McLaughlin, 1996). Another exception is Namibia, where teacher education was planned as the spearhead of reform, and all college tutors were invited to take a postgraduate higher diploma in teacher education. The theory and practices of this course were based on the same principles as those underlying the reforms in the rest of the system, so that tutors were fully prepared to train future teachers in the new methods (Shilambo and Dahlstrom, 1999). This is an example of the state and the professionals working closely together—perhaps made easier by the general post-revolutionary climate in Namibia at that time. Where there is less political urgency, as in the four countries studied here, the vested interests of the many stake-

holders involved make consensual change more difficult.

3. Data sources

The principle sources of data used for this article are interviews, questionnaires and observation of teaching in the colleges, but procedures and coverage varied between the sites, with the most detailed studies coming from Lesotho and Malawi (Stuart et al., 2000). A questionnaire was administered to representative samples of tutors in selected teacher training colleges (TTCs): four in Ghana, two in Malawi, and the Lesotho National Teacher Training College (NTTC). This asked for personal data, qualifications and teaching experience; their views on the curriculum and on students; perceptions of the good teacher and of how the college strives to produce them. Most questions were closed, though a few asked for individual views, and respondents were invited to agree or disagree with a number of statements.

In Lesotho and Malawi semi-structured interviews were carried out with a smaller sample of tutors, drawn from the main subject areas and balanced for age, gender and qualifications. These interviews were intended to follow a modified life-history format with multiple meetings (Kelchtermans, 1993), but time and resources did not permit this, so only one hour-long interview was carried out with each subject. In Malawi most of the interviewees (20) were also observed teaching. In Lesotho, observations were separately negotiated with eight tutors. In Trinidad and Tobago eight tutors from one of the colleges were interviewed about their teaching, some of whom were also observed (George et al., 2000); in Ghana nine tutors were studied in a similar way (Akyeampong et al., 2000). Other contextual data on the colleges were gathered from documents and from observations during fieldwork, enabling some triangulation of the findings to be carried out.

Such piecemeal data do not allow us to make comprehensive comparisons between the countries. They do, however, offer some insights which allow us to raise issues for further debate and exploration.

4. College contexts

Tutors' careers and perspectives need to be studied against the context in which they work. The case studies show clearly how primary teacher education in all these countries still occupies an uncertain position between secondary and higher education, and this ambiguity affects the status and professional identity of the staff in many ways. However, there are some striking differences in attitude, ethos, and organisation between the institutions in different countries. In Malawi the colleges resemble glorified secondary schools, in timetable, teaching methods and atmosphere. The Ministry of Education (MOE) controls the budgets, and determines the curriculum; assessment is by an external exam board. Tutors are 'posted' to colleges by the MOE, and directed to workshops; they seem to have little control over their own careers or professional development and they are not expected to carry out research or develop the curriculum. In Ghana, TTCs also closely resemble high schools; they are managed by the MOE but have a university link in that assessment is done by the Institute of Education at the University of Cape Coast (UCC). As in Malawi, they teach the curriculum set by the MOE, and lack a sense of ownership of the programme and its processes.

In Lesotho, the NTTC has tertiary status, being long since affiliated to the National University, and is now due to move from MOE jurisdiction to become an autonomous 'college of education'. Staff are much freer agents; after taking what opportunities they can to upgrade their own qualifications, they apply to NTTC when jobs are advertised there, and some continue studying of their own accord. NTTC controls its own curriculum and sets its own exams under moderation from an external examiner.

The situation in Trinidad and Tobago is a mixture: tutors are well qualified, have undertaken research as part of their training, and exert considerable agency over their curriculum, yet the TTCs are under the control of the Board of Teacher Training of the MOE, and the tutors are paid as secondary teachers; the final exams are externally set and marked, albeit in collaboration with tutors, and there is no direct link to the University of the

West Indies (UWI), although individual UWI academics act as external examiners.

The internal organisation of the colleges also reflects their anomalous position, and the tensions arising from trying to provide both academic and professional education. Typically, teaching and learning is time-tabled, by subject, for 6–7 hours per day, so that students have little time for private study. Tutors' contact hours vary from 8–20 per week, but given that classes can be huge—from 30 in a 'small group' up to 200 when a whole cohort is lectured together—and that assessment is continuous and frequent, the academic workload can be heavy. For the professional training, tutors have to prepare students for teaching practice in schools, and then go out to supervise them, which may mean travelling long distances in difficult conditions. Conscientious tutors also try to counsel students in difficulties or offer remedial classes; one such person said she felt she was "doing five jobs in one". All this may have an impact on their teaching methods and limit the possibilities for experimentation.

5. College tutors and their professional development

5.1. Characteristics of college staff

Almost all primary college tutors have come up through the teaching ranks, but in different ways and from different starting points, so that not all have relevant experience. Most of the older Malawian tutors began as primary teachers, but as nowadays college staff must have degrees, the younger ones are secondary-trained. For similar reasons, in Lesotho less than half the staff have any primary experience and most of those surveyed agreed that "most tutors do not know much about teaching primary pupils". In Ghana most have had upper primary or junior secondary experience; fewer have worked in the infant grades. In Trinidad and Tobago most tutors have a secondary school background, again because they are degree-holders while primary teachers are not.

Unsurprisingly, tutors' qualifications vary with the country's wealth and with the opportunities

offered for academic and professional development in the education system as a whole. Thus in Trinidad and Tobago half the tutors hold Masters degrees, in Lesotho almost all tutors are graduates, and about a third have Masters degrees, while in Ghana about three-quarters hold a BEd and very few have Masters. In Malawi the majority of tutors have only diplomas; the rest have Bachelors degrees, with a sprinkling of Masters. While Malawian tutors are expected to be generalists, and may teach two or three subjects, including Education, elsewhere the tutors specialise either in one subject or in Education, though occasionally they may hold degrees in both.

It is notable that few of the qualifications were specifically designed to prepare people to train teachers, though a number of the Malawi tutors went through a 'Diploma in Primary Teacher Education' (DPTE) in the 1980s, and a couple of the Basotho² staff had done a Diploma in Supervision. In Ghana, most college tutors had attended either the UCC or the University College of Winneba but they were not specifically trained as teacher educators since it was assumed that anyone graduating in education would be capable of teaching at a college, even though most of the methodology taught was for secondary level. However, in Trinidad and Tobago the UWI offers a teacher education option within the MEd, which includes training in supervision, and several tutors had received scholarships to undertake this degree.

The gender balance broadly reflects the more general participation of women in the local teaching force. In Lesotho most of the college staff are women and in Trinidad and Tobago just over half, while in Ghana and Malawi they are mostly male. However, Malawi's policy of promoting suitable women is raising the proportion in the colleges, two of which had female principals at the time of the study.

Thus, while tutors come from the local teaching force and mirror many of its characteristics, this poses a particular problem for countries where primary teachers have low status and minimal training, making it difficult to find people to staff the

colleges who have both academic standing and first-hand knowledge of primary schools. The lack of attention paid to specific training for the job is also a widespread phenomenon.

5.2. *Career paths for college tutors*

As in many other countries, the careers of teacher educators appear haphazard and unsupported (Russell and Korthagen, 1995). Nowhere did we find a clearly defined career structure, and ways of crossing from the school world to the college world are varied and unpredictable. In Malawi, for example, tutors reported being 'picked' from their schools to fill gaps in the colleges, and promotions depend on the MOE. In Trinidad and Tobago, where there were few material incentives to transfer, tutors seem to have applied out of personal interest, or via encouragement by others, some having already proved themselves as advisory teachers. Elsewhere the moves seem to have been more deliberately planned; for example in Lesotho, tutors said they moved to get better conditions of service, less stress, and the opportunities for further study—not all of which actually materialised, since criteria for study leave and promotion were unclear. In Ghana, many teachers begin in the primary schools, further their studies by training as a secondary teacher, and then aspire to become a college tutor. This is seen almost as a 'natural progression' towards better conditions of service and more prestige; it also shows how training colleges in Ghana are regarded as 'post-secondary' rather than tertiary or higher educational institutions.

5.3. *Induction and in-service*

One of the most troubling findings was the lack of any formal induction for college tutors. There seemed a general assumption that since you were a trained teacher, you would know how to train teachers yourself. The Malawian colleges offered some informal support; newcomers were given books and syllabuses and encouraged to seek advice, to observe others, or to be observed themselves. In Trinidad and Tobago there was a system of informal mentoring where new tutors could 'sit

² In Lesotho, one person is a Mosotho, the plural is Basotho.

in' on colleagues' lectures, and were paired with experienced tutors on Teaching Practice rounds.

But at the NTTC peer observation was unknown and informal support apparently very sparse. It seemed that most staff had learnt on the job, drawing on memories of their own training. In the English department, tutors with only secondary training were allowed just to teach content at first, picking up the 'methods' courses later on. In the case of Professional Studies, some tutors appeared to have relied largely on what they had been taught at the National University of Lesotho (NUL) in Educational Foundations courses; this would imply that what is being offered to NTTC students may be 15–20 years out of date.

It was clear that when they had first come to the college many tutors had not known what to do, and relied on serendipitous help. One reported a conversation with a colleague thus:

I asked him: "What kind of things do we do here at NTTC?" And he said: "just teach as you have always taught, there is nothing new here"[...]. But in the department, there was a lady who was very helpful. I learnt a lot from discussions with her. (*Female tutor*)

If this kind of experience is widespread, it begins to be clear why colleges are not centres of innovation. Just as new teachers often teach as they were taught, so college tutors will train others as they were trained, and indeed three Ghanaian tutors explicitly mentioned ways in which they had copied their own tutors.

It is significant that none of the colleges studied had a staff development policy. All tutors expressed the need for refresher courses in both subject and professional areas, but complained that provision was inadequate. In the African countries studied, in-service commonly takes the form either of local short courses, or long award-bearing courses that often require foreign travel. In Malawi and Ghana staff are usually sent by the MOE on short workshops to be told about developments in school or teacher education curricula. For example, in Malawi they were all given a two-week orientation to the new Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Programme (MIITEP). In Leso-

tho tutors exercised more personal initiative, but opportunities were sporadic, and the courses usually short. A notable exception was that six staff were trained to run a special programme in Early Learning, through a combination of short courses and regional study tours, which was perceived as very successful.

Many tutors would like to upgrade their academic qualifications for both intrinsic and instrumental reasons, but opportunities are limited by funds and often by the lack of suitable local programmes. While in Trinidad and Tobago tutors could study for an MEd at the local UWI campus, the African colleges were still largely dependent on overseas scholarships. In these countries there were individual tutors who had done post-graduate study in the UK or the USA, and while such courses were stimulating they often found considerable problems in applying the ideas at home. For example, one who studied in the UK said, only half jokingly, that although the course had been an "eye-opener", he had had to "reverse what he had learnt" in adapting the ideas to Lesotho because of the lack of resources in schools. In Ghana over a hundred college tutors were trained in British universities under the Junior Secondary School Teacher Education Project (JuSSTEP), but they were able to make little impact on their return due to the deep-rooted conservatism of the colleges.

Even the best in-service is only valuable if the lessons learnt can be applied in one's own classroom, and this depends crucially on a number of other factors, such as basic resources, follow-up support, a critical mass of sympathetic colleagues, supportive management, and a culture conducive to change. Our case studies suggest many of these factors are often missing. Furthermore, colleges are usually part of wider systems, such as the Ministries of Education. In both Ghana and Malawi traditional assessment practices, both inside and outside the colleges, acted as a brake on efforts to change (Akyeampong, 1997). In Trinidad and Tobago colleges there were both innovative tutors and supportive Principals, but the Board of Teacher Training maintained a conservative grip on the curriculum that the colleges were only just beginning to challenge.

6. Tutors' views and perspectives

Our research suggests that a lot of confusion surrounds the concepts of teacher education in these sites. Both discourses and practices seem to derive from various sources of training and experience, and often include concepts and models that originated elsewhere, resulting in a lack of any coherent theory about professional training. While this ferment and international borrowing has many positive aspects, it also leads to disjunctions between rhetoric and actual practice. Colleges seem to be grappling with the paradigm shift towards constructivist teaching and learning so they can adapt it to local contexts and to development needs, but the shift comes into conflict with strongly held values, attitudes and beliefs about knowledge and schooling. There is a need for clearer models of training which incorporate recent developments in our understanding of professional learning, but which also acknowledge local starting points.

Tutors' views are here explored from a number of aspects. Some broad patterns can be discerned, but the conclusions drawn can only be very tentative.

6.1. *Tutors' perceptions of their own role vis-à-vis the students*

Interviews and observations revealed some differences which reflect the ambiguous position of teacher education in these countries, and can be related both to tutors' qualifications and to the ethos of the college. Malawian and Ghanaian tutors see their work as similar to high school teaching, and themselves as deliverers of a set curriculum. They regard their students in deficit terms, as empty vessels to be filled with the correct ideas and skills, even though in Malawi most students were in their late twenties and all had taught before. Many of their Basotho and Trinidadian counterparts, by contrast, feel themselves to be tertiary lecturers, have more control over what and how they teach, and expect more independent learning from their students, though this is not easily developed where the students' curriculum is overloaded, there is little time for personal study,

and where students are used to 'transmission' teaching in high school.

One universal complaint from the tutors was the perceived low level of student academic standards. Yet the tutors had not developed pedagogic strategies for dealing with this, such as remedial classes, study skills, or training in independent learning. Lesotho's introductory upgrading semester partly addressed these issues, but the strategies were not continued into the main programme. A truly 'learner-centred' approach would suggest adapting the curriculum to student needs, both in terms of content and of process.

6.2. *View of the good primary teacher*

The studies explored, in different ways, how tutors perceived good primary teachers, in the hope that this would reveal something of their personal views of teacher education. Several themes around the notion of the 'ideal' teacher emerged.

There was a strong personalistic theme: the good primary teacher is committed and caring, plays a nurturing role, and in her exemplary behaviour acts as a role model. This came through particularly strongly in the Malawi and Lesotho case studies. By contrast, in these countries not much stress was laid on how teachers can enhance pupil learning outcomes or teach for understanding. The teachers' personal characteristics and attitudes were foregrounded rather than their knowledge and cognitive skills.

In general, the teacher's role was seen as 'restricted'. This was particularly evident in Ghana and Malawi, where tutors described the good teacher as one who delivers the curriculum efficiently by using a variety of classroom skills and techniques that can be listed, learnt and applied. In Lesotho the discourse was more child-centred, stressing that the good teacher responds to individual needs and adjusts her approach. Asked to rank characteristics of 'effective schools', it was noteworthy that the Basotho ranked 'children take responsibility for their own learning' much higher than either Malawian or Ghanaian tutors.

The Trinidad and Tobago tutors seemed to expect rather more initiative of their graduates: they should be able to plan classes to meet the spe-

cific needs of the pupils in their charge, present interesting and innovative lessons that are mainly student-centred, and which make adequate use of teaching resources, manage their classes well, and administer appropriate evaluation tasks. Though tutors hoped that individuals would keep trying to improve their own skills, there was little emphasis on training graduates to be agents of change in the local school context.

6.3. *How the college produces such teachers*

In general, few tutors have well-developed or clearly articulated strategies for producing these good teachers. In both Ghana and Malawi tutors seemed to have a relatively simple model of training in which both knowledge and skills are transmitted to students who will then be able to apply them routinely. In Malawi this went along the lines of: “we tell the students what to do, let them practise it, and they should be able to do it”. Similarly, in Ghana tutors seemed to pursue an ‘additive’ strategy; they thought students would be adequately prepared if they gave them an adequate store of ways of teaching each topic (Akyeampong et al., 2000).

Basotho tutors’ views varied more, with some tutors seeing learning to teach as a more complex task. Some key terms used were: “we discuss, model ways of teaching; bring them to the level of the child; give them content and methods; teach them to behave as teachers”. But when asked directly how well the college achieved its aim, some seemed unsure how far the reality matched the rhetoric, as one confessed:

I really do not know. I think they are well-prepared for their work. They have been given enough content, they have been given enough resources, they have been given enough practice under supervision, so they should be more or less good teachers. As I said, though, it also depends on their commitment. [*Experienced woman tutor*]

Tutors in Trinidad and Tobago seemed much more aware of the contextual nature of good teaching, and stressed the need for students to find their own

ways of dealing with the diverse conditions in the schools. Some were quite critical of the college programme, suggesting various changes such as more emphasis on practical training, an extra year, and assessment through performance rather than exams.

In general, tutors everywhere seem ambivalent about the role of the schools in the process of learning to teach. On the one hand, many said that teaching practice was an extremely valuable part of the programme. On the other, most tutors, both in survey responses and interviews, expressed mistrust towards the schools and did not value the teachers’ contributions. Overall, there seemed little conception of integrating college and school training as a way of creating ‘performance learning’ (Calderhead and Shorrock, 1997), in which knowledge and skills are integrated and used appropriately in the context of a real classroom (see George et al., this volume, for an analysis of teaching practice in Trinidad and Tobago).

6.4. *Views of knowledge*

Recent work in the area of professional knowledge and teachers’ thinking (Eraut, 1994; Calderhead, 1987) emphasises the complex nature of teachers’ work and suggests that learning to teach involves acquiring and developing different kinds of knowledge and skill. This view puts the student–teacher at the centre of the process as an ‘active constructor’ of their own knowledge, making sense of the situation by drawing on many sources, including formal study, their past experiences and their own, often tacit, situated knowledge of that particular classroom.

Epistemological views held by the college tutors interviewed varied sharply between countries. The contrasts probably partly reflect the differences in level of academic qualifications, but also the different historical and cultural contexts. In Malawi most tutors held a rather closed view of knowledge as something ‘out there’, fixed and given, which was to be transmitted to students. Public propositional knowledge was given precedence, while the student teachers’ personal experiential knowledge was devalued. Most strikingly, tutors implied there is ‘one right way to teach’, which students must

learn. In Ghana there was a similar view. Tutors supervising Teaching Practice hoped to find students doing exactly what they had been told or shown in college, rather than responding to the situations and needs found in the classrooms.

In Lesotho tutors held a relatively open view of knowledge, albeit not explicitly ‘constructivist’. Although they taught propositional knowledge in the form of theory, and expected students to apply this, at least some also recognised the value of teachers’ experiential and situated knowledge. In Trinidad and Tobago some tutors did indeed appear to be aware of the need for students to develop their own understanding of classrooms, and their own ‘personal theories’ of teaching. However, very little of this openness was apparent—in either country—in the college curriculum documents or in the classrooms observed. It may well be that individual tutors’ own ‘espoused theories’ could not be implemented given the different orientation of the more general educational discourse, ethos and practice. This points to the need for a much deeper epistemological change at the system level.

6.5. *Tutors’ own pedagogy*

Tutors everywhere are aware of the recommended shift to ‘learner-centred’ teaching, on which modern primary curricula are supposedly based. They pay lip service to this, in that they teach their students about participatory and active learning methods. But very few of them appeared to be able to put these into practice in the college classrooms. Usually there was much more emphasis on teaching than on learning, with the result that most of the tutors observed were following a transmission style: lecturing interspersed with low-level question-and-answer sessions and the occasional discussion. Where group work was used it was seldom organised so as to enhance student learning. Only in Trinidad and Tobago were some—not all—lecturers able to model effectively the methods they recommended. This ability seemed related to their higher levels of education, to their professional confidence, and to a more supportive atmosphere in the colleges.

There was some evidence in Lesotho that tutors working with smaller groups of in-service students

did use much more learner-centred, interactive and constructivist approaches. It may be that the ‘mas-sification’ of initial training programmes militates against what tutors know to be good practice.

Certainly tutors frequently find themselves in a dilemma. They feel they need to cover the syllabus and ‘teach’—as they understand it—their subject content, including Education, and some are also aware that they should be modelling ways of teaching used in the primary school. However, the teacher education curriculum is overloaded, and assessment is mainly by terminal examinations which often drive the teaching and learning. In addition, the trainees expect to be taught by the transmission methods with which they are familiar. If new kinds of teacher training are to be developed, these factors have to be taken into account as well.

6.6. *Overall approaches to teacher education*

In terms of the framework outlined above, almost all the tutors we studied were working within some form of the ‘technical rationality’ paradigm, though this varied somewhat with the context. Training teachers is largely seen in terms of transmitting *knowledge and skills* which trainees will then apply. As one Malawian said: “When one has enough content plus teaching strategies he can disseminate it”. *Academic knowledge* was most strongly foregrounded in the Trinidad and Tobago curriculum, and in the new Lesotho programme. In Malawi the discourse often seemed derived from the *behavioural skills* approach to teaching, yet paradoxically even the skills element was often taught through tutors telling rather than through students practising and doing. Similar practices were observed in the Ghanaian colleges as well.

In Lesotho much of the discourse—though not the practice—was about ‘child-centred pedagogy’. This seems an example of the *applied theorist* approach, in that students were presented with the concepts as though this model of teaching could be used regardless of context, rather than being presented as a set of guiding principles or hypotheses to be tested, developed and modified in Lesotho classrooms.

There were few suggestions that learning to

teach involved learning to solve problems, or to exercise informed judgement in unique, confused and difficult situations (Schon, 1983). Reflecting on practice, learning from mistakes, developing one's own personal theory of teaching and repertoires through experimenting both individually and collectively, were seldom part of the discourse. Still less was any notion that teachers might help transform society through their work. There were, in all the countries, individuals who demonstrated a reflective attitude when talking about their practice, and clearly some of them tried to work with their students in inquiry-oriented ways. But because this was not shared by colleagues, and because the whole programme, in both structure and content, was geared toward the transmission of knowledge and skills, their efforts seemed not to reach beyond the limits of their own classroom.

What often seemed missing in these colleges was some shared vision and philosophy of good teacher education, together with ways of implementing it, which could be based on the local cultural context and be responsive to local needs. As one Trinidadian tutor put it:

We have a transmission mode of education and we are intent on transmitting certain stuff that is vague to us [and] to the students [...] A lot of the notions were not created in our culture... [and are] presented in a language that is not even ours, in a sense of how we think and how we interact, and all the examples and references.... Some of the terminology is so remote [gives example from Piaget] You have to swallow the terminology first. That's how we have been educated ... swallowing books. [Woman Education lecturer]

To change this, and to develop more appropriate models, a high degree of professionalism is required, together with a real sense of ownership of the programmes that are to be implemented. The 'books' must be created and written, rather than swallowed. It is difficult in the present situation to see where the impetus or the professional knowledge and skills for this might come from.

7. Some concluding reflections

7.1. *Teacher educators and development*

It is tempting, in this journal, to speculate about whether some of the differences we found in the careers and perspectives of teacher educators can be related to other aspects of development, but the patterns seem by no means clear-cut. The level of qualifications is certainly linked to levels of wealth, but there are many other historic, social, geo-political and cultural influences that can be identified as having potential relevance. For example, Malawi's recent experiences of authoritarian rule—colonial and indigenous—and lack of contact with centres of intellectual debate have probably contributed to a relatively constrained view of 'good teaching' and of professional knowledge, while Lesotho's long symbiotic relationship with industrial South Africa, as well as its deliberate links with the West during apartheid, may have helped create a more open system. Trinidad and Tobago has a relatively high GNP per capita, but the proximity of North America and a different intellectual climate may be just as important in encouraging the tutors' openness to alternative ideas and innovations. It is, then, paradoxical that the Trinidad and Tobago colleges themselves seem oddly undeveloped, constrained by other aspects of the educational system. It is surely ironic that Ghanaian tutors, who by and large content themselves with implementing a given curriculum in an uncritical way, have more prestige and status than secondary teachers, while in Trinidad and Tobago the tutors do not, in spite of their higher qualifications and willingness to innovate.

Here we shall reflect on some of the issues and further questions thrown up by the studies.

7.2. *The place and role of the colleges*

In the first place, the studies show up the ambiguous nature of TTCs today, and how this affects the staff who teach in them. Historically, such colleges grew out of small, post-secondary, often mission-based establishments. Are they now to be regarded as part of the tertiary professional/vocational sector, or as higher edu-

cation institutions? Or are they in the process of moving along some development-oriented path from one kind of status to another? If so, what are the eventual goals? Answers to such questions may help clarify what kinds of staff are required, and what kinds of status and rewards should be offered to them.

The role of the colleges vis-à-vis the schools seems at present very unsatisfactory. One important consequence of the colleges' isolation—both physically and professionally—from the schools is that tutors really cannot tell how effective their training has been. As one Trinidadian tutor pointed out, school teachers quickly see the results of their efforts, while teacher trainers get very little direct feedback. This may partly explain why they put so little emphasis on the learning outcomes of their students, or indeed of the pupils they were trained to teach. It seems important to find creative ways of incorporating schools more closely into the training process. Schools need to be seen as places which provide opportunity for the interpretation of college learning about teaching, rather than vice versa. Tutors as well as trainees need to test out their models against classroom realities. More involvement of the colleges in ongoing INSET might be conducive to such a change of perspective.

7.3. The problem of selecting, recruiting and retaining appropriate staff

As academic standards are raised, tutors need to be university graduates, and so increasingly they come up through secondary school teaching, but such people may have little understanding of, or sympathy for, primary classrooms. An alternative would be to select suitable primary teachers for professional upgrading so they can take on the role of tutor. This might, however, clash with traditional views of status which regard primary teaching as inferior.

Beyond that, there need to be sufficient avenues of promotion and reward structures, with clear criteria, to attract and retain quality personnel. A key issue in all the countries studied concerned the pay and conditions of service for teacher educators. We found much goodwill and commitment among the

tutors, and many individuals described their work as intrinsically rewarding, mentioning, for example, the intellectual challenge, their professional relationships with students, or the sense of doing a worthwhile job. However they often felt undermined by the lack of equivalent monetary rewards and status. This was strongly apparent in Trinidad and Tobago, where the college tutors were classified and compensated on a par with secondary teachers, although they were far better qualified, carried heavier workloads, and felt that they were doing a more difficult and responsible job.

7.4. Induction and professional development

None of the colleges had policies for staff development of any kind. It is obvious that all tutors need a proper induction and orientation when they move from schools to colleges, followed by opportunities for academic upgrading to the level where they feel confident both in the relevant subject areas and in their understanding of professional theory and practice. But this in itself may not be enough to break the cycle of copying the old patterns of 'training as they were trained'. The key problem is how to introduce new ideas that will both change the discourse and reshape the practice in ways that have an impact on the teachers' performance in schools. The research suggests several ways of doing this. Probably most useful are opportunities to see and hear about good practice in situations not too unlike one's own; thus well-focussed workshops and short courses (if necessary with external consultants), regional study tours, or part-time study with assignments related to one's own context, should be used where possible. Full-time award-bearing courses overseas may also have a part to play, especially as 'eye-openers' that can stimulate awareness of alternative ideas and practices.

7.5. Whole college development?

As in all teacher development and INSET work, the new ideas and skills will only be put into practice if there is opportunity and support in the home environment. It was clear from our interviews that

individual tutors, working in isolation, could do little to change the prevailing approaches. The Ghana JuSSTEP experience is instructive in showing how a conservative environment can prevent new ideas from taking root. Just as teacher INSET is moving towards ‘whole school development’ approaches, so a strategy of ‘whole college development’ is needed. Such an approach would require a senior management team with a clear vision of change—and a brief from the authorities to carry it out—and groups of tutors prepared to commit themselves to professional improvement. This has implications for the ways in which the colleges are administered and managed, since such things as rigid timetables, heavy teaching loads, examinations system, and bureaucratic regulations constrain the ways in which professional teaching and learning can take place. College management is currently given little training or support for innovations, and the system of financing often adds yet more problems (see Lewin this volume). Changes in structures, as well as in the mindset of those who work within them, are equally necessary.

7.6. New approaches to teacher education

And what of the direction for change? The variants of the ‘technical rationality’ model found in the colleges seem inadequate for preparing teachers to deal with the realities of primary and basic education classes in countries of the South. Developments in our understanding of professional knowledge and learning suggest more interactive and more flexible approaches would be more likely to produce teachers able to deal with the challenge of 21st century classrooms. However, these cannot be borrowed wholesale. One major task for teacher educators in developing countries is to adapt the new approaches to local realities and cultures. Textbook knowledge about teaching—often deriving from very different cultural origins—is often seen as sacrosanct, and local contexts become forced into ideal models of teaching. In effect these theories about learning to teach become the lenses through which teaching is viewed, rather than hypotheses to be tested out in local contexts.

Part of the way tutors think and act in colleges may be a legacy of the once strongly promoted

behaviourist views about learning and is often consonant with prevailing local cultural discourses about education (Tabulawa, 1997). Yet there is another strand in the discourse, one that harks back to missionary days and stresses the personal and ‘vocational’ nature of teaching. When the tutors emphasise professional attitudes and ethics, when they describe primary teachers in terms of personal characteristics and interpersonal skills rather than knowledge, when they complain they cannot work with such large groups of students, they are implicitly critiquing the ‘technical rationality’ model that focuses on knowledge and skill rather than on personal development. It seems plausible that this tradition, if linked to a more open and constructivist view of knowledge, would be a good foundation for developing the ‘reflective practitioner’ view of teacher education.

7.7. How could teacher preparation institutions become a fulcrum for change?

Long ago Beeby (1966) wrote that education systems can only change as fast as the teacher training changes. This still seems true. Any attempt to introduce reforms in school curricula without also paying attention to those who educate the teachers seem doomed. It is clearly difficult, for example, for tutors holding a fixed, transmission view of knowledge to train teachers to work in open, learner-centred constructivist ways, since one cannot effectively teach what one has not experienced and understood. In other words, a paradigm shift in the college tutors’ understanding of theory and practice has to take place before they can develop new kinds of teachers.

However, such a process is long and complex. This paper has explored a few of the issues, focussing more on the people than the institutions, but both are equally important. Though some patterns have emerged, it is clear there can be no ‘one size fits all solution’, since teacher education institutions and their practices have developed out of their own unique experiences and contexts. Common themes seem to be the isolation of many colleges—both from the world of practice in the schools and the world of intellectual debates—the low status and rewards accorded to the tutors, and

the lack of opportunity for professional development. Dealing with these problems should be starting points for any realistic policy.

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