AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EVOLUTION AND CURRENT STATUS OF THE CORE THEORETICAL DISCIPLINES IN THE TRAINING OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AT SELECTED ENGLISH-MEDIUM TRAINING INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

This investigation examines developments which have taken place in the theoretical component of pre-service courses for primary teachers.

Revised conceptions of the purpose and scope of primary education, and the attendant demand for better qualified primary teachers to implement such education, resulted in a considerable increase in the theoretical component of primary teacher preparation courses. Better theoretical understanding of the educative task was perceived to be essential to the production of more effective primary teachers. The emergence of various schemes for the preparation of South African primary teachers is outlined. The Cape Province provides the major exemplar.

The nature of educational theory, and its precise contribution to enhanced teaching ability has been a subject of fierce debate within educational circles. An analysis of theory, in general, and as it applies in the educational context, is undertaken. The evolution of the core theoretical disciplines of education - history, philosophy, psychology and sociology of education - is traced. The current status of these disciplines at selected South African institutions undertaking primary teacher preparation is then investigated, and the views of lecturing staff at these institutions on the optimal approach to the teaching of educational theory are presented.

The disciplines still play an important role in the South African Bachelor of Primary Education degree courses surveyed. In British teacher

preparation courses, however, disenchantment with the disciplines' format has given rise to demands for new approaches to the teaching of educational theory. Some of these alternative approaches are evaluated. An overall assessment is made of the contribution that can be expected from educational theory in pre-service courses for primary teachers, and some recommendations are made for the management of the theoretical component of pre-service courses for South African primary teachers.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE SCOPE AND AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

1.1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In the present climate of rapid social change, financial stringency and demands for greater efficiency, all aspects of the preparation of teachers have been subject to close but not always consistent scrutiny. The so-called 'disciplines' in education in particular have had a Damoclean sword poised above them for some time now, and in a number of institutions this sword has already made inroads into the territory once occupied by these disciplines. Many students, teacher educators, practising teachers, and educational writers have accused these disciplines of not adequately 'delivering the goods'.

This investigation examines the evolution of the theoretical disciplines - history, philosophy, psychology and sociology of education - as core components of primary teacher preparation programmes, and their current status in relation to the preparation of primary school teachers at selected South African institutions. The desirability of the threatened demise of the disciplines as integral parts of pre-service courses for primary teachers, arguments for their retention and renewed status in

such courses, as well as alternative approaches to the theoretical component of primary teacher preparation, are evaluated.

1.2. OVERVIEW

Prior to the nineteenth century, education of an abstract intellectual nature remained almost exclusively the prerogative of the upper social echelons; the lower strata remaining largely unschooled. It was only in the nineteenth century that serious and sustained efforts were made to provide formal education on a large scale, and to this end it became necessary to give systematic attention to the provision of appropriately qualified teaching personnel.

In Britain, from whence much of South Africa's educational tradition has originated, the start of this formal provision of mass education was somewhat inauspicious, spurred in large part as it was by the expedient demands of the Industrial Revolution. This revolution awakened a recognition of the advantages inherent in having at least a semi-literate proletariat contributing to the workforce. In such a setting, scholarly standards were subordinated to the demand for mass production.

Education - certainly at elementary level - was no longer elitist and teachers participating in this rapidly expanding enterprise were generally not of very high social or intellectual calibre. In describing the situation in the nineteenth century, Bernbaum *et al* commented as follows:

> ... teaching in elementary schools was a low paid, low status activity carried out mostly by teachers who had

> themselves originated in the working class and who now devoted their expertise to teaching that class. ....Such teachers, if trained at all, were products of teacher training colleges dominated by the churches and whose students were not expected to attain either high status or intellectual achievement.
>
> (Bernbaum et al, in Hopkins and Reid 1975:7).

The aims of early elementary education were very different from those of today. In Britain, for example, elementary education was seen as a self-contained unit, designed to inculcate some minimal degree of literacy, numeracy and social decorum into the working classes. In the Cape one of the prime motivations of the Dutch settlers in obtaining an education for their children was that this would gain them access to the teachings of the scriptures. The growth of secondary education, and the philosophy which informed this growth, is partly responsible for the re-definition of primary education's functions. As a consequence, both the content and intention of primary education has expanded considerably.

In the twentieth century there has been a growing awareness of the value of education in terms of helping the individual meet both personal and societal aspirations and expectations. This, together with the above-mentioned re-definition of primary education's purposes, gave rise to a recognition of the desirability of having well-qualified primary teachers.

Implicit in this notion of 'well-qualified' has been the idea that theoretical, as well as practical, aspects should form an integral part of a primary teacher's preparation.

1.3. MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The prime motivation for investigations into teacher preparation lies in the hope of contributing to enhanced teacher effectiveness. An obvious problem arises in defining what constitutes effective teaching. The central problem in determining teacher effectiveness is that the desired end-product must itself be agreed before measures of effectiveness in attaining it can usefully be debated. Unfortunately there is unlikely to be consensus on this matter.

> It is clear that different notions of education, and hence of good practice, exist over time. Moreover, different notions exist at the same time.
>
> (Knight and Smith 1989:430).

This being so, no single definition of 'effectiveness' is likely to satisfy the diversity of teaching situations or of societal expectations. Such diversity aside, however, a great deal of attention has been devoted to the design of teacher preparation courses considered most likely to produce effective teachers in undefined but implicitly orthodox senses. The rationale behind the inclusion of theoretical components in such courses is that they contribute to the development of what Thompson has called "thoughtful practitioners" (Thompson 1972:3).

It is tacitly assumed that "thoughtful practitioners" are more likely to be effective teachers, perhaps better able to offer some reasoned defence of their own activities than those who operate by unquestioned rote. If, however, too much time is devoted to abstract theorizing which has little perceived relevance to the 'chalk face', there is a risk that student teachers may feel insecure about their ability to cope with the

'realities' of the classroom. This risk must be taken seriously, given that the central task of teacher educators is to produce teachers both alert to the requirement of effectiveness and able to implement such effectiveness.

The present investigation explores some of the dilemmas surrounding the inclusion of a theoretical component in pre-service courses for primary teachers. While special reference is made to the situation in selected English-medium institutions in South Africa, discussion is not restricted to exclusively South African circumstances.

A number of factors which form a background to the motivation for this study are outlined below.

1.3.1. INCREASE IN THE DURATION OF PRE-SERVICE COURSES FOR PRIMARY TEACHERS

The duration of pre-service courses for primary teachers has increased significantly. Many countries have now moved to a four-year course for primary teachers, often with degree courses replacing diploma courses. This is a far cry from the situation in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century when virtually no consideration was given to the requirement for some form of training for elementary school teachers. It is recorded, for example, that semi-literate discharged soldiers and sailors (McKerron 1934:140), or even drunkards and former convicts (Borman 1989:9) travelled the Cape Colony, plying their teaching services to the offspring of the early colonists. In an attempt to control the quality of teaching, local church councils were expected to vet teachers

'qualifications', mainly in terms of their adherence to the religious doctrines of the Dutch Reformed Church (McKerron 1934:16), but this was an extremely difficult policy to enforce in the circumstances prevailing at the time.

The examples cited above are acknowledged as extreme. The reason for including them is to highlight the fact that the qualification requirements in respect of early elementary 'teachers' were very much less rigorous than those faced by present-day primary teachers. Even the monitorial system, which did at least represent some recognition of the need for some minimal amount of training for aspirant elementary teachers, appears ludicrous by modern standards. Dr Andrew Bell, originator of the monitorial system, is said to have boasted that he needed only twenty-four hours to produce a competent pupil-teacher (Wragg 1974:31). Joseph Lancaster refined Bell's system and included some rudimentary 'theory' on the 'passions' in his training of the monitors (Wragg 1974:31). The establishment of Lancaster's Borough Road School has been described as "... the first acknowledgement that teaching involved any kind of special skill" (Pollard 1986:9). It is recorded that in this school the best of the monitors received a further two months instruction, mainly from Lancaster himself (Hyams, cited in van der Linde 1985:14). This two month training period, novel though it was at the time, is dwarfed by today's trend towards four-year courses for primary teachers. It should be noted, however, that the contrast is perhaps not quite as remarkable as it seems. On a relative scale, the amount of material to be imparted in Lancaster's day, to both pupils and their would-be teachers, was extremely limited.

1.3.2. INCREASE IN THE THEORETICAL COMPONENT OF PRE-SERVICE COURSES FOR PRIMARY TEACHERS

The increased duration of pre-service courses for primary teachers is in part a response to the tremendous increase in the theoretical component of these courses. Reasons for this increase are, on the one hand, a broader conception of the purposes both of education in general, and of primary education in particular, whereby its scope has moved far beyond the inculcation of basic literacy, numeracy and acceptable moral standards, and, on the other hand, a greater awareness of the complexity of the primary teacher's task. These two reasons are both a consequence of, and a contributory factor to, increased breadth and depth in theoretical insight into the educative process.

When attention was first given to providing specific training for aspirant teachers, such training as was provided was largely atheoretical. The absence of a theoretical component is one of the major distinguishing features of teacher training, as opposed to teacher education. Early conceptions of teacher training were based largely on the belief that teachers learnt to teach simply by observing and imitating their own teachers. This belief in turn was informed by a fairly naive view of what was involved in the learning process. Learning was seen to be merely a matter of transmission. Subsequent growth in knowledge of the factors which influence the learning process has revolutionized ideas about what constitutes adequate teacher preparation. Thus, whereas in the past, "... education as an area of study was narrowly interpreted, being equated solely with practice, with learning teaching techniques and tricks of the trade", the study of education

today has become a vast and complex field with "a newfound bias on the academic" (Evans 1969:50-51).

Education is widely believed to offer a means of maximizing the individual's capacity to meet societal expectations and to achieve personal fulfilment. Teachers, whose task it is to nurture this growth, are expected to acquire a great deal more than the largely atheoretical "techniques and tricks of the trade" mentioned by Evans. They are also required to develop a greater theoretical awareness of their educative role. The prime justification for this increased theoretical insight lies in the belief that it promotes more effective teaching.

1.3.3. EMERGENCE OF THE THEORETICAL DISCIPLINES

The evolution of each of the theoretical, or foundation, disciplines of education - history, psychology, philosophy and sociology of education - is discussed in Chapter Three. This introductory section serves to map out the highlights of their emergence as discrete areas of study.

As indicated in the previous section, courses for student teachers in the mid-nineteenth century, if required at all, were largely atheoretical, and had a severely practical bias. By the 1870s a modicum of educational theory was undoubtedly emerging, albeit of a very rudimentary nature.

In 1872 teacher training courses consisted of school management and methods of teaching the basic subjects (Tibble 1966:6). History and psychology were the first of the contributory disciplines to emerge. Thus, history of education was recorded as a prominent component of

lectures to secondary teachers in Britain in 1879. By 1895 an optional third year of training contained a new course designated "The art, theory and history of teaching" (Tibble 1966:6). This course appears to have been largely concerned with historical matters (namely, studies of English educational institutions, and of the lives and works of educational reformers) and with an embryonic form of psychology.

The early years of the twentieth century saw increased efforts to rationalize the theoretical component of teacher training courses. 'School Management' changed to 'Theory of Education' (c1902) and in 1907 became 'The Principles of Education' (Tibble 1966:23). By the 1920s educational psychology had been firmly established as an autonomous discipline, alongside history of education, and by 1959, had become a major component of pre-service courses, frequently occupying as much as forty percent "out of the total time spent on education as a whole" (Tibble 1966:16).

The two other major theoretical disciplines - philosophy of education and sociology of education - were in such an inchoate state of development that in 1966 Tibble, in his chapter on the development of education as a field of study, commented, "The Sociology and Philosophy of Education, ... barely come within the scope of a historical survey. Their history is too recent ..." (Tibble 1966:21). During the 1960s, however, these two disciplines enjoyed an accelerated rise in prominence and the "traditionally well-entrenched educational studies of psychology and of history, were for a time outshone, first by philosophy and then by sociology" (Dearden 1980:17). Initially these disciplines were combined as the philosophy and sociology of education (Tibble 1966:22), as was also sometimes the case with history and philosophy of education.

Psychology continued to be the most dominant amongst the foundation disciplines.

In the 1960s the contributory disciplines of history, psychology, philosophy and sociology of education became firmly established as important components of teacher preparation courses in Britain. Several factors account for this, one of the most influential being the Robbins Report on Higher Education (1963). Dearden noted that in terms of its recommendations Teacher Training Colleges were redesignated Colleges of Education, thereby marking a distinction between a narrow 'training' of teachers and the broader conception of 'an education' for teachers. The Report also recommended the introduction of a four-year B.Ed degree. This led to a demand for better qualified lecturing staff and for more rigorous courses consistent with degree status (Dearden 1982:57). A number of specialists were appointed, notable amongst these being the philosopher, R.S. Peters, who had expressed concern for what he termed the "rather woolly sort of wisdom" of the "undifferentiated mush" that had previously constituted aspirant teachers' theoretical preparation (Peters 1977:184). Thus, "The traditional education tutor ... was dismissed as 'mother hen' and replaced by prestigious diploma'd or degreed sociologists and psychologists ..." (Eason, in Tibble 1971:90), or, as Chambers and Grainge more graphically put it, "The Mother Hen Education Tutor becomes a dead duck!" (Chambers and Grainge 1974:20). While study of the history of education was in decline, the philosophy, psychology and sociology of education began to assume increasingly dominant roles in pre-service courses for teachers. The acceptance of these disciplines as legitimate components of teacher preparation was not entirely unproblematic, however, and within a relatively short time questions were being asked about their

relevance in relation to what is considered an essentially practical activity. Scepticism about the contribution that the disciplines could make to improved classroom practice generated a great deal of thought and debate about alternative approaches in the handling of educational theory for student teachers.

1.3.4. SCEPTICAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE THEORETICAL DISCIPLINES

As indicated in the preceding section, the supremacy of the foundation disciplines in the theoretical component of primary teacher preparation courses did not remain unchallenged for long. Sceptical attitudes concerning the value of their contribution to the production of effective teachers soon became clearly discernible. This scepticism was expressed in several quarters.

It was reported that many student teachers appear to have difficulty in relating what they are expected to learn from the discipline-based courses to the tasks they are expected to perform in the classroom (Gorbutt 1972:9; Lacey 1977:108). Psychology of education appears to have the greatest appeal, and perceived relevance, for student teachers. The remaining three theoretical disciplines of history, philosophy and sociology have been less enthusiastically received (Bernbaum, Patrick and Reid, in Hopkins and Reid 1985:60). While not all the reasons given for student disenchantment with the theoretical component of their preparation can be taken at face value, teacher educators are nonetheless obliged to give serious consideration to these reservations.

A second area of challenge to the theoretical disciplines comes from the schools. Educational theory "has seldom been a popular subject with ... established teachers. ... There persists a conviction that educational theory is unnecessary ... Pedagogical skills can be acquired ... in the classroom, by watching more experienced teachers work ..." (Moore 1974:1). There are quite a number of journal articles documenting the marked influence that established teachers have over newly-fledged teachers (inter alia, Yee 1969; Denscombe 1982; Britzman 1986). Shipman,too, has commented on what he adjudged as a lack of synchronization between school and college of education culture (Shipman 1967:209). While a number of factors should be taken into account before the views of established teachers are accorded full legitimacy, such views undoubtedly constitute a seriously undermining influence on the status of both educational theory and of the foundation disciplines.

Teacher educators too, have sometimes been known to underplay the role of theory in their pre-service courses. At the writer's own institution, for example, in a staff meeting to review course planning, a previous Head of Department made the suggestion that staff avoid the word 'theory' because this "frightened the students off". There appears to be an increasing trend towards a practical bias in teacher preparation courses, with theory - either within the theoretical disciplines, or in a more integrated form - becoming a mere adjunct (Woods and Pollard 1988:23).

Another influential factor in the increasingly sceptical attitudes towards educational theory, and the theoretical disciplines in particular, is the professional literature. Many journal articles and books on teaching reflect uncertainty as to the role of theory in the production of effective teachers (McNamara 1972, 1976; Hirst 1974; Naish

and Hartnett 1975). In the second of the above-cited journal articles from McNamara, this university lecturer recounted his experiences during an experimental return to school teaching. He commented that he found "no refuge in theory or research findings" in his attempts to grapple with classroom problems, and described it as the "most salutary and disturbing experience" of his educational career in which "the world of academic journals seemed completely irrelevant" (McNamara 1976:147-160).

1.3.5. THE NEED TO PROVIDE STUDENT TEACHERS WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONAL INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Notwithstanding the reservations discussed in the preceding section concerning the relevance of the theoretical disciplines to practical aspects of teaching, an area in which theory can be seen as capable of making a valuable contribution is in terms of the intellectual growth of the student teacher. This is perhaps especially true where candidates for the primary teaching profession are being prepared at graduate level, and are thus presumably more intellectually capable individuals than might be expected in the case of the average diploma candidate.

Most western institutions require that their primary student teachers qualify in a number of subject courses at least equivalent to first-year degree-level as part of their personal education. This undoubtedly constitutes an intellectually demanding aspect of the students' preparation. Much of the primary teacher's preparation, however, is inevitably concerned with material offering relatively less of an intellectual challenge. Re-acquainting student teachers with the knowledge they will be passing on to their pupils, i.e. the content

aspect of method courses, is one such area. The level at which this knowledge is pitched, because it is destined to be passed on to young children, may be seen to be less intellectually stimulating to the student teacher. Another less intellectually exacting area is the initiating of student teachers into the more mundane aspects of school administration.

A recognition that student teachers both appreciate and need intellectually stimulating courses, forms part of the motivation for the present investigation. In a course evaluation distributed by the writer in 1986 to students enroled in a primary teachers' diploma course, several respondents pointedly expressed their appreciation for the intellectual satisfaction they had derived from the courses offered in philosophy and sociology of education.

A concomitant of intellectually stimulating courses is that they tend to attract more intellectually capable individuals: individuals who may themselves generate valuable insights into the complexities of their chosen profession and thus add to the stock of theoretical knowledge.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS SURROUNDING THE INCLUSION OF A THEORETICAL COMPONENT IN PRE-SERVICE COURSES FOR PRIMARY TEACHERS

As indicated in the title, this investigation seeks to explore the evolution and current status, and, by implication, the role, of the theoretical disciplines in pre-service courses for primary teachers. Central to this investigation are a number of problem areas which need to be considered. These are outlined below.

1.4.1. STUDENTS' PRIORITIES

Quite apart from the scepticism which many student teachers express about the relevance of educational theory, another factor affecting their attitude towards educational theory is that they are often extremely anxious about how well they are going to perform in the classroom.

> A common complaint is that educational theory does not contribute to an understanding of classroom problems as encountered by teachers and students. Academic courses in philosophy, psychology and sociology of education seem of little use in the solution of practical problems.
>
> (Gorbutt 1972:9).

The fear that they will not be able to perform well constitutes a potentially serious threat to both the self-confidence and self-image of student teachers. They therefore often express a strongly felt need for the so-called 'tips of the trade', and for coaching in subject competence, to tide them over the initial trauma of their first encounters with pupils. It is perhaps for this reason that the periods of teaching practice are widely regarded as the most worthwhile part of the course.

> ... the only part of the professional course that gets a general vote of confidence from the students themselves, and from practically everybody else, is practice teaching.
>
> (Koerner, cited in van der Linde 1985:45).

In this context, the time spent on studying educational theory, which appears to lack immediate relevance to the task in hand, is frequently viewed as detracting from the more pressing need to acquire classroom

skills which will enable them to perform adequately.

> ... the student is too desperately immersed in the intoxicating task of survival to stop and deliberate how these zealously acquired [theoretical] concepts might affect his classroom behaviour.
>
> (Wragg 1974:vii).

Once the 'anxiety chasm' of knowing that they can cope adequately in a lesson period has been successfully negotiated, students are more likely to adopt a positive attitude towards the study of the theoretical areas in education. This positive attitude is likely to be further enhanced if educational theory is perceived as having direct relevance to mastery of classroom competence.

1.4.2. IDENTIFYING THE ROLE OF THEORY IN PRE-SERVICE COURSES FOR TEACHERS

Despite numerous cogent arguments justifying the inclusion of a theoretical component in pre-service courses for teachers, the precise nature of the contribution that theory makes to the production of effective teachers remains elusive. (As indicated in Section 1.3. of this chapter this is perhaps partly because what constitutes 'effective teaching' is itself neither static nor precisely defined. It is also extremely difficult to evaluate empirically.) Although the fact of its remaining elusive in no way detracts in itself from the importance of theory, protagonists of a more practically-oriented approach to teacher preparation may use this as a rationale for advocating a diminished status for educational theory.

Another part of the reason for difficulty in establishing the exact contribution of educational theory to teacher effectiveness lies in the nature of educational theory. It is not a discrete body of knowledge, and reflects many, often divergent, interests. These divergent interests often manifest themselves via competing paradigms within each of the theoretical disciplines themselves. Educational theory also contains both descriptive and evaluative elements. Further, as is pointed out in a discussion of the potential contribution of Philosophy of Education:

> The influence or effects of philosophical understanding on practice are hard to demonstrate, since they tend to take the form of a shift in general perspective or attitude rather than a change in a specific skill.
>
> (Dearden 1985:11).

Dearden's argument may be seen as equally relevant to a discussion of the contribution which the other theoretical disciplines make to educational practice. Part of the problem may be artificial, in the sense of perhaps arising from a basic misconception of the role that theory can legitimately be expected to play.

1.4.3. THE SELECTION OF APPROPRIATE THEORY IN PRE-SERVICE COURSES FOR PRIMARY TEACHERS

Educational theory is eclectic. It draws from several knowledge areas and includes a wide spectrum of considerations. It does not therefore constitute any primarily coherent body of knowledge and this poses problems for designers of teacher education courses.

Educational theory is historically and socially located, and much of it develops from different types of "social relationships, demands and expectations", rather than from a "disinterested inquiry or reflection on practice" (Hartnett and Naish 1977:63). In deciding what sort of educational theory is appropriate for inclusion in primary teacher preparation courses, therefore, many factors need to be taken into account, inter alia:

- the perceived needs of student teachers;
- the values and beliefs of the lecturing staff at the training institutions;
- the stated aims of the schools for which the students are being prepared;
- the expectations of pupils' parents;
- the requirements of various governmental bodies, notably the educational authorities;
- prevailing circumstances in the wider social context.

All of the above-mentioned factors may reflect differences of opinion regarding the desired outcome of the educational process. Implicit here is the fact that any selection procedure in relation to educational theory is inevitably closely bound up with overt and covert value bases and with contested views of what constitutes worthwhile knowledge.

1.4.4. DECIDING ON THE OPTIMAL APPROACH IN TEACHING EDUCATIONAL THEORY

Identifying the most effective approach to the teaching of theory in the preparation of primary teachers (and teachers, in general) has long been a thorny issue for teacher educators.

As noted earlier, Peters was strongly critical of the "undifferentiated mush" that constituted much of educational theory (Peters 1977:184). Peters' views were an influential factor in the emergence of the theoretical disciplines. In this approach, however, the disciplines tended to take on a life of their own and lose sight of the need for practical relevance in teacher preparation. The result has been a definite trend away from the disciplines towards a more practically-oriented approach involving an integrated form of educational theory, which serves to illuminate practice. This trend too has been subject to strong criticism. Dearden, for example, argued that it will contribute to the gradual disappearance of theoretical specialists in favour of generalists, ill-equipped to periodically "raid" (Dearden's term) the disciplines in search of theoretical insights. Dearden described this as a retrogressive move, and argued instead for a balance between the discipline-based and the more practically-oriented approaches (Dearden 1985:12-13).

This lack of consensus about the optimal approach in the teaching of educational theory poses difficulties for teacher educators in terms of deciding what type of approach to adopt in the preparation of their students.

1.4.5. THE THEORY-PRACTICE DICHOTOMY

Implicit in all the problem areas discussed above is the overarching problem of the so-called 'gap' between educational theory and educational practice. Literature dealing with educational theory in relation to

teacher preparation is shot through with references to this gap.

> As a topic for discussion and debate, the relationship between educational theory and educational practice has received more attention than most. ... [despite this] ... teachers continue to cling to an image of theory as incomprehensible 'jargon' that has nothing to do with their everyday problems.
>
> (Carr 1980:60).

The theoretical disciplines have been accused of becoming too closely aligned to their parent disciplines rather than maintaining contact with the need to provide practical relevance to student teachers. This tendency made the study of education via the disciplines vulnerable to statements such as Wilson's:

> Most topics in education have been so inflated with hot air that, like balloons, they have broken any moorings they once had to terra firma.
>
> (Wilson 1977:62).

Various suggestions have been put forwards as to how best this gap - real or perceived - might be bridged. An important factor in this context is Downey and Kelly's articulation of the need to maintain a balance between approaches which "are academic to the point of almost total irrelevance" and those which "in their determination to be practical, lose sight of the need for a proper rigour and the right kind of academic basis" (Downey and Kelly 1979:xi).

1.5. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE INVESTIGATION

In exploring the issues involved in the investigation of the evolution and current status of the core theoretical disciplines the following objectives are pursued:

a) To trace the evolution of primary school teacher preparation programmes with specific reference to the situation in the Cape Province.

b) To consider the development of educational theory and the emergence of the theoretical disciplines of history, psychology, philosophy and sociology of education, in relation to the contribution expected of such theory to the preparation of primary teachers.

c) To identify current approaches and attitudes toward educational theory as reflected in the relevant educational literature and as they are applied in selected South African pre-service courses for primary teachers.

d) To identify the current status of the core theoretical disciplines in terms of the way in which they are incorporated into Bachelor of Primary Education degree courses at selected South African teacher preparation institutions.

e) To evaluate current ideas about the most appropriate approach to the teaching of educational theory in courses for aspirant primary teachers.

f) To make recommendations for approaches to teaching the theoretical component of pre-service courses for primary teachers.

1.6. METHODS USED IN THE INVESTIGATION

Initially the treatment is largely historical, outlining:

- the implications of the development of mass educational provision for the evolution of primary teacher preparation programmes; and,
- the emergence of both educational theory and, subsequently, the theoretical disciplines.

The investigation then proceeds to a survey of current practices at selected South African training institutions, with regard to the teaching of theoretical components in the preparation of primary school teachers. The investigative tools used here are questionnaires and documentary analysis.

The rationale for including this empirical component is to provide a springboard for the third and final part of the investigation, namely, further discussion and illumination of the dilemmas surrounding the inclusion of a theoretical component in primary teacher preparation courses. It is this latter exercise which is seen as constituting the major purpose of the study.

The field under survey is extensive and rather diffuse and the literature is vast. The presentation of a discrete literature review would therefore prove to be too unwieldy an undertaking. References to the relevant literature are cited throughout the text. South African literature dealing with educational theory in relation to primary teacher preparation is relatively sparse. Consequently overseas material, as contained predominantly in British and American educational publications, has been used. Much of the literature on educational theory does not distinguish between primary and secondary teacher preparation, presumably as the principles are regarded as applying equally to both.

Although the investigation focuses on the evolution and current status of the theoretical (or foundation) disciplines - history, philosophy, psychology, and sociology of education - in relation to primary teacher preparation, much of the debate surrounding these areas of knowledge is inextricably linked to the wider question of educational theory <u>per se</u>,

and writers do not always treat the individual theoretical disciplines as discrete entities. In this investigation, therefore, discussion does not at all times distinguish, or single out, treatment of the 'core' disciplines from the larger matrix of educational theory.

1.7. OUTLINE OF THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE INVESTIGATION

Following this introductory chapter, the emergence in South Africa of primary teacher preparation programmes is discussed in Chapter Two. As the scope of educational provision increased, so did demands for increasingly better qualified teachers at all levels. In consequence, the qualifications of primary school teachers in particular have undergone a marked transformation. The evolutionary changes in the conception of what was required in the preparation of primary teachers and the factors which motivated these changes are examined.

Revised conceptions of the primary teacher's task, and of the purpose of education, owe much to the burgeoning body of educational theory. In Chapter Three the notion of 'theory' in the educational context is analysed, and the emergence of educational theory as an obligatory component of teacher preparation courses is described. Included here is discussion of the evolution of each of the 'core' theoretical disciplines of education, namely, the history, psychology, philosophy and sociology of education.

The empirical component of the study is contained in Chapter Four. Aspects of the evolution of the theoretical component in pre-service courses for South African primary teachers are traced. The policies

adopted by selected South African institutions in respect of the teaching of educational theory to primary student teachers are then analysed, and differences and common trends identified in an attempt to establish whether any general pattern is to be found.

Scepticism and a measure of disenchantment with the contribution that educational theory - particularly as it is encapsulated in the theoretical disciplines - makes to the production of 'effective' teachers, has resulted in a far-reaching re-assessment of the role educational theory ought to play in pre-service courses for teachers. In Chapter Five the factors which have contributed to the movement towards a reduced status for the theoretical disciplines are investigated. Alternative ideas for sources of theoretical insight are then discussed.

In Chapter Six an overall evaluation is made of the competing ideas about the optimal approach to educational theory in pre-service courses for primary teachers, together with the writer's final conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY TEACHER PREPARATION SCHEMES IN THE CAPE PROVINCE

2.1. INTRODUCTION

There is a tendency to lose sight of the fact that provision of education on a large scale is a recent undertaking. Less than 150 years ago school attendance was the exception rather than the rule. It is estimated that in England in the early nineteenth century only about one-in-thirty children of school age received any organized education (Curtis and Boultwood 1960:1). Much the same proportion is reported for the Cape Colony : the 1812 Report of the School Commission cited the Graaff-Reinet district, where, out of approximately 3400 children, "a hundred, at most, were receiving instruction" (Borman 1989:8). While this statistic was even then seen to be far from ideal, it is interesting that the Cape - at an embryonic stage of its development - exhibited this parallel with its British counterpart.

Increased provision of elementary education in the nineteenth century resulted in a demand for more teachers. Inadequate numbers of suitably qualified teachers was a major stumbling block to both the quality and the quantity of elementary educational provision. Prior to the nineteenth century it was widely believed that anyone with a smattering of literacy

could teach at elementary level. Little notion existed that a specific training was necessary for aspirant elementary teachers.

> The remarkable thing in modern history of education is that it took so long for the various countries to realise the importance of teacher training - to realise in fact, that schools cannot be better than their teachers.
>
> (Jeffreys 1961, cited in Wragg 1974:36).

This chapter examines the developments which have taken place in South Africa in relation to both the provision and preparation of elementary teachers. The South African situation, with its provincial differences and complex administrative structures, poses a formidable unravelling task, which is beyond the scope of this investigation. The Cape was the first area of South Africa to be colonized by people from Europe and Britain. To a very large extent, therefore, it may be seen to have led the way in the establishment of the country's educational structures. In this chapter therefore, the Cape Province provides the major exemplar of developments in South African primary teacher preparation.

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the antecedent factors to current circumstances rather than to undertake a detailed historical survey. For this reason, for the most part, historical overviews such as those provided in inter alia, Borman 1989, Behr 1988, Behr and Macmillan 1971, and McKerron 1934, have been consulted rather than primary sources.

2.2. EARLY EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IN THE CAPE COLONY AND THE INFLUENCE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN BRITAIN

From 1795, barring the period of Batavian rule (1803 - 1806), until 1918, when the first South African-born Superintendent-General of Education,

W.J. Viljoen, was appointed, educational development in the Colony was in the hands of men of British origin. Thus, while conditions in the Cape were uniquely South African, they were inevitably influenced to a high degree by British ideas.

Despite the industrial and technological advances made in Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there appeared to be a great indifference towards the well-being of her poorer people. Apart from various voluntary movements, few could see any advantage in incurring the trouble and expense of educating the people at large. Lack of educational provision for the poorer classes may have been partly a consequence of the laissez faire philosophy : the policy of minimal state intervention. While this may have greatly served the interests of the upper and middle classes, it did little for the welfare of the proletariat (Evans 1975:12). Towards the end of the eighteenth century, and lasting well into the nineteenth, a number of Factory Acts were passed in Britain, progressively limiting factory owners' access to child labour. Evans commented on the social upheavals caused by these Acts. Many thousands of children, debarred from employment, were released onto the streets "with nothing better to do than turn to petty crime or otherwise misapply their energies" (Evans 1975:2). He suggested a strong causal link between this circumstance and the promulgation of the 1870 Elementary Education Act which made elementary education available (but not compulsory) to every British child (ibid. : 28-29). However, even when the principle of nationalized educational provision was accepted in Britain division between social classes was reflected in the types of education available (ibid. : 6).

In the Cape, by contrast, there were no large towns and few manufacturing industries, and the European population, initially made up of employees of the Dutch East India Company and farmers, was small and for the most part widely dispersed. By 1806 - just over 150 years after the arrival of the first European settlers - the total European population was no more than 21 000 (Behr 1988:11).

As in Britain, the Church was a leading force behind educational provision in the Cape, but, whereas the religious and charitable organizations in Britain appear to have seen education largely as a means of improving the moral rectitude of the poorer classes, the Dutch settlers were motivated to ensure an education for their children primarily because they wanted them to be able to become members of the Dutch Reformed Church. This Church, evolving as it had out of Protestant ethics, espoused a belief in universal education, albeit education of an almost exclusively religious nature. Thus, "The earliest form of education at the Cape was ... predominantly religious" (McKerron 1934:136), and was largely in the hands of minor church officials, although a number of private individuals - many of whom were apparently of a "type not distinguished by its respectability" (McKerron 1934:13) - offered itinerant teaching services to families in outlying districts. Although the Church, via the School Commission, was acknowledged as being in ultimate control, from the start, the government took an interest in education and was keenly aware that there were many shortcomings in the quality of educational provision. A major problem was a lack of adequate teachers. To ensure reasonable teaching competence teachers employed by the government were examined in Cape Town, although at this stage there was as yet no concept of specific training for teachers.

In 1813 the School Commission was redesignated the Bible and School Commission. The predominance of religious ministers in this Commission resulted in its being " ... more interested in distributing Bibles ... than in supervising education" (Borman 1989:9). McKerron commented that its activities were marked by "a curious mixture of piety and incompetence" (McKerron 1934:19). The Commission was not, however, completely blind to the shortcomings in educational provision, not least of which being inferior tuition. On its recommendations a monitorial system along the lines of Bell and Lancaster's model was introduced into Cape schools in 1813 in order to increase teacher numbers (Borman 1989:10). In 1822, in a further effort to upgrade the quality of tuition, six teachers were brought out from Britain, amongst them James Rose Innes, destined to become the first Superintendent-General of Education in 1839 (Borman 1989:12).

By 1825 there were approximately 120 schools of various types at the Cape (Borman 1989:14). The standard of educational provision, however, remained a source of great concern, and much criticism was levelled at the Bible and School Commission in terms of its indifferent discharge of its educational responsibilities. The 1830s was a period in which these criticisms became increasingly vociferous. Foremost amongst the critics were newspaper editor, John Fairburn; the Colonial Secretary, Colonel John Bell, who submitted a memorandum to the Governor of the Cape, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, describing what he termed the "pitiful" state of education in the colony (Borman 1989:20); and the eminent astronomer and scholar, Sir John Herschel who was visiting the Cape at that time. Their joint representations to Lord Glenelg in London resulted in the allocation of finances for the institution of a new system of education for the colony under the control of a single individual in place of the

obviously ineffectual Bible and School Commission. Thus, from 1839, education in the Cape Colony was controlled by a Superintendent-General of Education. This important step reflected two significant developments. First, although the Bible and School Commission only officially relinquished control of government schools in 1841, it marked an almost complete break from Church control over the Colony's educational system. Second, as McKerron suggested, it " ... gave to education a new prestige, for it discounted the idea that an educational system could be organized by anyone who had a few odd moments to spare" (McKerron 1934:23).

One of the most important tasks facing the office of the Superintendent-General of Education was to ensure an adequate supply of teachers. The efforts of successive Superintendents-General of Education in this regard are discussed in the following section.

2.3 THE EMERGENCE OF TRAINING SCHEMES FOR ELEMENTARY TEACHERS AT THE CAPE (1839 - 1915)

A shortage of competent teachers was a major obstacle to educational development in the Cape Colony. In 1813 the Bible and School Commission instituted a form of teacher training, namely, the monitorial system. This system, although fulfilling a vital need at the time, had severe limitations, and was appropriate for only the most rudimentary type of education.

The appointment of the first Superintendent-General of Education in 1839 ushered in a new era for education in the Cape Province. The first man

appointed to the post was James Rose-Innes who had come out from Scotland seventeen years earlier to teach at the Cape.

2.3.1. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PROVISION OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS DURING ROSE-INNES'S TERM OF OFFICE : 1839 - 1859

A number of improvements, based largely on the recommendations contained in Colonel John Bell's Memorandum of 1839 (reproduced in Borman 1989:24), were introduced by Rose-Innes. The first of these was an attempt to systematize the schools. In 1839 state-aided schools were categorized into First and Second Class schools, the former offering both elementary and secondary schooling and the latter elementary schooling only (McKerron 1934:24, Behr and MacMillan 1971:112, Borman 1989:32). In 1841 state aid was extended to country schools, these being designated Third Class Schools (Behr and MacMillan 1971:113).

As a result also of Bell's recommendations, a more liberal and secular elementary curriculum was introduced, which was no longer concerned almost exclusively with religion and the '3 Rs'. This new curriculum, similar to that found in today's South African primary schools, comprised:

> Reading and writing,
> Commercial and abstract arithmetic,
> English language and grammar,
> Descriptive geography,
> Outlines of history and chronology,
> Elements of drawing and linear perspective,
> Natural history and physical science,
> Principles of mechanics.
>
> (Borman 1989:24).

The new curriculum reflected a broader conception of elementary schooling. It also placed greater demands on elementary teachers, although, for a variety of reasons, not all Cape schools were in a position to implement it immediately.

From the start, Rose-Innes was acutely aware of shortcomings in the existing supply of teachers. He did not, however, manage to solve this problem to any effective degree. In a letter written to his wife in his first year of office he expressed his grave concern: "... where am I to look for qualified and influential Teachers, I know not and without them all my labours are as water spilt upon the ground - My only hope now is to get out Scotchmen as Elementary Teachers also ..." (cited in Borman 1989:56). Throughout his term, Rose-Innes relied heavily on the importation of teachers from England and Scotland.

Early attempts at producing teachers locally appear to have been singularly unsuccessful. A normal college, run along the lines of David Stow's Glasgow Seminary, was established in Cape Town in 1842. Although Stow's system represented a great improvement over the monitorial system (Wragg 1974:19), the Cape Town version of the seminary was a failure. Many pupils used the Cape Town normal college merely as a means of improving their own education rather than as a route to becoming a member of the teaching fraternity. The college produced only 12 teachers - none of whom entered the profession - before it was closed in 1860 (Behr 1988:153). Local production of teachers continued to be via the pupil-teacher system.

In 1858, to cope with the chronic shortage of teachers, Rose-Innes drew up regulations to streamline the pupil-teacher system. These were as follows:

- only selected pupils would be eligible for pupil-teacher training,
- only one pupil-teacher was allowed per first-class school,
- the minimum age of entry to pupil-teacher training was fifteen years,
- the system would involve a period of apprenticeship of three to five years.

(Borman 1989:52).

During the apprenticeship, professional development consisted of observation of the teacher-in-charge, the teaching of supervised lessons, and one hour's instruction per day from the head teacher.

The emphasis was on mastery of method in subject teaching and slavish imitation of the mentor (Behr and MacMillan 1971:265), with scant exposure to what might have been termed 'educational theory'. Concurrently with this professional development, the pupil-teacher's personal education continued, being roughly equivalent to a secondary education.

While Rose-Innes undoubtedly placed education at the Cape on a sounder basis than had previously been the case, only minor improvements occurred in the development of a system for producing adequate numbers of competent teachers.

2.3.2. IMPROVEMENTS IN ELEMENTARY TEACHER PREPARATION DURING DALE'S TERM OF OFFICE : 1859 - 1892

Langham Dale came to the Cape in 1848 to take up a professorship in English and Classical Languages at the South African College. He accepted the position of Superintendent-General of Education in November 1859.

Prior to his appointment, Dale had made a tour of British teacher training institutions and, based on his observations of these, instituted in his first year of office, the following minor changes in the regulations pertaining to pupil-teachers:

- the admission of girls as pupil-teachers,
- the lowering of the minimum age of admission to training to thirteen years of age,
- an increase in the period of apprenticeship from three to five years.

(Borman 1989:52).

The pupil-teacher system was suspended at the Cape in 1860 (Borman 1989:102). However, the Watermeyer Commission, whose recommendations were incorporated into the Education Act No. 13 of 1865, (Behr 1988:20), favoured the extension of the pupil-teacher system (Behr and MacMillan 1971:265). It was therefore re-introduced at mission schools in 1866 (Borman 1989:102). In 1873 it was re-instituted also at selected public schools and the period of apprenticeship was reduced to three years, at the end of which pupil-teachers were required to undertake a written examination for which an Elementary Teacher's Certificate (E.T.C.) was awarded (Borman 1989:102).

The following subjects were examined:

> English, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, School management, Dutch and Xhosa as optional.
>
> (Behr and MacMillan 1971:266, Borman 1989:104).

The 'school management' component represents an adumbration of a theoretical component in courses for student teachers, motivated perhaps by Dale's expression of the need for " ... a complete and extended course of professional training on the theory and practice of school management" (cited in Borman 1989:104).

The first examinations for the Elementary Teacher's Certificate were held in Grahamstown and Cape Town in 1873. Possession of the certificate entitled holders to teach in third class and mission schools, but these teachers were often used in second class schools (Borman 1989:104-105). By 1874 no teacher could be appointed without this certificate (Behr and MacMillan 1971:266).

Dale appeared reluctant to take any additional steps to improve the teacher supply, observing that, "The disinclination of young men to devote themselves to the work of teaching has chiefly deterred me from taking a decided course either in establishing a training school under the direction of this department or in extending aid to religious bodies willing to train their own masters ... " (cited in Borman 1989:105). In 1878, however, a normal school was established in Cape Town by the Dutch Reformed Church. Admission to the normal school required the possession of an Elementary Teacher's Certificate (Borman 1989:106). The minimum age of entry to the School was sixteen years (McKerron 1934:147). The two year training period culminated in an examination for the Middle Class

Teacher's Certificate (M.C.T.C.) (Borman 1989:106) in the following subjects:

> English, Arithmetic, Geography, Writing, Latin, Science, Drawing, School Management, plus, Dutch, French and German as optional subjects.
>
> (paraphrased from Behr and MacMillan 1971:266).

Teachers in possession of the Middle Class Teacher's Certificate could teach at second class schools (elementary level only) and assist at first class schools (elementary, plus secondary, level) (Behr and MacMillan 1971:266).

By the time Dale retired in 1892 a number of improvements had been made in the management of both the supply and the quality of teachers. A post-school system of teacher training had been introduced and two teachers' certificates, viz. the Elementary Teacher's Certificate and the Middle Class Teacher's Certificate, had been created. By 1890 approximately 150 teachers had been awarded the latter certificate, but the Cape lost many of these certificated teachers to the Transvaal and Orange Free State (Borman 1989:106).

2.3.3. FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS TO ELEMENTARY TEACHER TRAINING SCHEMES DURING MUIR'S TERM OF OFFICE : 1892 - 1915

Dr Thomas Muir, a scholar and mathematician, came out to the Cape from Scotland to take up the post of Superintendent-General of Education in 1892, largely at Cecil John Rhodes's behest. In a letter in The Cape Times, May 1892, Muir was described as a man "deeply interested and fully conversant with the many problems of Education, both Primary and

Secondary" (Borman 1989:123-124). It is he who is credited with placing the training of teachers "on a sound and proper footing" (Behr and MacMillan 1971:267).

The idea of compulsory education arose during Muir's term of office. In 1909 it was introduced on an experimental basis in six of the hundred districts of the Cape. By 1910 it was operative in ninety-one percent of the districts (Borman 1989:172). Thus, in the course of Muir's tenure, there was a three-fold increase in pupil numbers (Borman 1989:125). This obviously placed heavy demands on the teacher supply. In order to meet this demand Muir considerably expanded facilities for training teachers. Although critical of the pupil-teacher system, which he described as a "cheap form of teaching drudge" and "subsidized" education, constituting an effective "poisoning of the teacher supply at its source" (Behr and MacMillan 1971:267), he acknowledged it to be a necessary evil in the circumstances. To reduce the negative aspects of the system Muir revised the regulations pertaining to pupil-teachers in 1894 as follows:

- Standard Four was the minimum educational level required for admission to pupil-teacher training,
- the minimum age of admission was raised to fourteen years,
- ten hours per week was to be devoted to practice teaching,
- four hours per week was to be spent on professional instruction in school subjects, blackboard work, school management and hygiene.

(Behr and Macmillan 1971:267; Borman 1989:177).

Muir was also dissatisfied with the training received at the Normal School, believing that too much time was devoted to the students' personal education rather than to professional training (Behr and

MacMillan 1971:267). "The born teacher is no doubt to be found ... but it must never be forgotten that he is a rarity" (cited in Borman 1989:176). In Muir's opinion, no amount of personal erudition would compensate for inadequate professional expertise and insight. In 1895 a First Class Teacher's certificate was instituted for which experienced teachers, in possession of the Middle Class Teacher's Certificate, were eligible. Study of the professional literature on the "art, philosophy and history of education" formed an integral part of this qualification (Behr and MacMillan 1971:267). Thus for the first time a form of educational theory, beyond 'school management', was emerging. In the 1906 edition of the South African Education Yearbook, Fitch's Lectures on Teaching and Quick's Educational Reformers are recorded as being prescribed for candidates for the Middle Class Teacher's Certificate. An even wider range of educational literature was prescribed for the First Class Teacher's Certificate, inter alia, Sully's Teachers' Handbook of Psychology, Adamson's Theory of Education in Plato's Republic, and Compayre's History of Pedagogy (Gilchrist 1906:258).

Muir's view on the need for a more formalised approach to teacher preparation were instrumental in the founding of several training colleges during his tenure:

1893	Cape Town and Wellington;
1896	Grahamstown;
1908 - 1916	Stellenbosch, Robertson, Paarl, Kimberley, Cradock, King Williams Town, Steynsberg, Oudtshoorn, and Graaff-Reinet.

(McKerron 1934:150).

The establishment of these colleges signified a definite move away from a purely school-based teacher preparation. From 1913 pupil-teachers were required to undertake a third of their training at a college (Borman

1989:179). The distinction between a school-based personal education and a post-school professional education was indicative of a new conception of teacher training. It facilitated greater depth of professional study and greater attention to a broader consideration of the teacher's task.

Notwithstanding Muir's belief that teachers needed a more rigorous professional, as well as personal, education, he opposed the idea of a professorship in education : "A Professor of Education will never produce teachers. It will be all theory" (cited in Borman 1989:182). In 1911, however, professors of education were appointed at both Stellenbosch and Cape Town (Behr and MacMillan 1971:278), and, since the 1920s, both these universities have offered pre-service courses for primary teachers (Clark 1978a:2).

2.3.4. DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICAN PRIMARY TEACHER PREPARATION : 1910 ONWARDS

Primary teacher preparation syllabi have changed and have included a greater theoretical component, the duration of training has increased, and universities have become increasingly more closely involved in pre-service courses for primary teachers, but, in essence, the elementary teacher training structures set up in Muir's time established the pattern for future developments.

When the Union of South Africa came into being in 1910, the four colonies relinquished their self-governing status and became provinces of a unified South Africa. The rulings pertaining to education contained in

the South Africa Act of 1909 had profound repercussions for elementary teacher training.

In terms of the South Africa Act of 1909, the provinces were given responsibility for all education "other than higher education, for a period of five years and thereafter until Parliament otherwise provides" (Clause 85(iii), cited in Behr 1988:59). "Those three words "other than higher" have caused trouble almost beyond belief" (McKerron 1934:50). Colleges offering primary teacher training (as opposed to universities undertaking the same task) did not classify as institutions of 'higher education', and therefore remained under the different provincial administrations. This resulted not only in a lack of uniformity in the training and certification of primary teachers attending provincial training colleges, but also in what might be termed 'psychological' effects, caused by the colleges' exclusion from the sphere of higher education. Several abortive efforts were made to introduce legislation to improve co-ordination between the provinces and between the colleges and universities in the decades following the Act of Union. In the 1960s moves to eradicate the consequences of this distinction between 'higher' and 'other' education were more successful, notable amongst these being the National Education Policy Act, No. 39 of 1967, and the National Education Policy Act, No. 73 of 1969. Closer co-operation now exists between the various institutions offering pre-service courses for primary teachers and certain minimum criteria for teacher preparation have been agreed upon.

2.4. DIFFERENT MODELS OF PRIMARY TEACHER PREPARATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

As indicated in the previous section, the basic structure of South African primary teacher preparation in the twentieth century was established during Muir's term as Superintendent-General of Education in the Cape, namely, a general education, followed by a post-school period of training. This arrangement is similar to that found elsewhere in the western world.

The two broad patterns of teacher preparation are:

- CONCURRENT, whereby preparation to become a teacher occurs alongside the candidate's general (usually tertiary) education;

- CONSECUTIVE, whereby professional preparation occurs after the completion of the period of general education.

Most primary teacher preparation follows the former, concurrent, pattern. As conceptions of education changed, so different systems of primary teacher preparation evolved. These, as exemplified by developments in the Cape, are discussed below.

2.4.1. THE PUPIL-TEACHER SYSTEM

The pupil-teacher system, which grew out of the monitorial system, was the main method of teacher preparation in the Cape Colony in the nineteenth century. The various Superintendents-General of Education in the Cape Colony instituted regulations to control the quality of training given to pupil-teachers. Pupil-teachers were probably adequate for

schooling which did not extend much beyond inculcating basic literacy, but it was a limited and largely atheoretical form of teacher preparation, ill-suited to cope with the broader conceptions of primary education that began to emerge in the second half of the nineteenth century. "The pupil teachers showed a mechanical familiarity with the various subjects, but no power of handling any of them intelligently" (Dr H. Gutsche, cited in Borman 1989:221). Despite the criticisms of this system, as will be shown in Table I, it remained a significant mode of teacher preparation at the Cape right up until the time it was abolished by the Cape Education Department in 1920.

2.4.2. THE NORMAL SCHOOL SYSTEM

The first normal school at the Cape was, as indicated in Section 2.3.1., a dismal failure. The first successful normal school was established in Cape Town in 1878. It prepared students for the Middle Class Teacher's Certificate (M.C.T.C.). The principle operating at normal schools was that of a 'parallel' education. In addition to receiving what would today be regarded as a secondary education, students "received instruction and practice in methods of teaching and returned as teachers to the elementary schools" (Holmes, in Lomax 1973:19). While constituting a definite improvement over the pupil-teacher system, the courses at normal schools remained essentially practical, relying heavily on imitation of skilful and experienced teachers, both in terms of teaching methods and of acquiring the subject matter to be taught.

2.4.3. THE TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGE SYSTEM

Thomas Muir was critical of the training received at the Normal School, believing that the parallel need to attend to students' general education resulted in insufficient time for the professional aspects of teacher preparation. As noted earlier, between 1893 and 1916 twelve teacher training colleges were opened in the Cape. This marked a move away from a school-based 'apprenticeship' philosophy, and served to sharpen the distinction between a general education and professional preparation. The establishment of these separate institutions specifically for the purpose of training teachers obviously facilitated greater depth of professional study. Towards the end of the nineteenth century some definite notion of building a theoretical component into teacher training courses was discernible and some educational theory had been included in the syllabi for the Cape Middle Class and First Class Teachers' certificates by the 1890s. The main emphasis in these courses, however, continued to focus on the student's own education, rather than on purely professional preparation.

2.4.4. UNIVERSITY PARTICIPATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN PRIMARY TEACHER PREPARATION

Universities have displayed an ambivalent attitude towards teacher preparation, particularly at primary level. The preparation of secondary teachers has been more comfortably accepted by universities, engaging as it does in a supposed higher level of subject specialization than is the case for primary teacher training. South African universities have, however, had a long history of involvement in primary teacher

preparation, longer, in fact, than British universities (Clark 1978a). In the Cape Province, the Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch have, as noted earlier, provided primary teacher courses since the 1920s. Rhodes University and the University of Port Elizabeth have provided courses for primary students from 1952 and 1967 respectively (Clark 1978a:2). A university ambience is conducive to a deeper analysis of, and reflection on, the wider educational spectrum. There is thus greater scope within university education departments than at colleges for educational theorising. It could be argued, however, that if an excessive amount of time in such departments is devoted to theorizing this could be to the detriment of the development of teaching skills.

2.4.5. COLLABORATION BETWEEN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The question of a balance between a finely-honed professional preparation for primary teachers and rigorous theoretical enlightenment is problematic. There has been much debate in educational circles on ways to achieve an optimal balance between the college and university traditions of primary teacher preparation. The Gericke Commission (1968) gave special attention to this matter, with reference to the training of white teachers. The National Education Policy Amendment Act, No.39 of 1969, was the result. The Act stipulated that primary teachers could be trained at either a college or a university, provided there was close co-operation between these institutions (Behr 1988:173). Interpretation of the phrase 'close co-operation' posed difficulties. The Van Wyk de Vries Commission (1974) was set up to clarify the issue. As a result of this Commission's recommendations certain colleges and universities have now established partnerships whereby they take joint responsibility for

primary teacher preparation (Behr 1988:175). Examples of such collaborative efforts are the Bachelor of Primary Education degrees offered at Edgewood College of Education and the Johannesburg College of Education. The students are taught mainly at the colleges by college staff and the degree qualification is conferred by the universities of Natal and the Witwatersrand respectively.

Closer links between universities and other teacher preparation institutions serve a two-fold purpose. It both enhances the status of pre-service courses and imposes the requirement that teacher educators structure their courses to satisfy university standards.

2.5. ESCALATION IN QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AND DURATION OF PRE-SERVICE COURSES FOR SOUTH AFRICAN PRIMARY TEACHERS

The entrance requirements and duration for primary teacher training have increased considerably during the course of this century. These developments are presented in Table 1 (overleaf).

TABLE 1 ESCALATION IN ENTRY REQUIREMENTS AND LENGTH OF TRAINING FOR SOUTH AFRICAN PRIMARY TEACHERS : 1858 - 1980

DATE	MINIMUM ENTRY REQUIREMENT (age and/ or school level	MINIMUM NO. OF YEARS OF TRAINING		SYSTEM OF TRAINING	QUALIFICATION
		apprenticeship	post-school		
1858	15 years	3-5		pupil-teacher	
1859	13 years	5		pupil-teacher	
1873	13 years	3		pupil-teacher	E.T.C.
1879	16 years + E.T.C.	2		normal school	M.C.T.C.
1893	14 years	3		pupil-teacher	E.T.C.
			2	college	E.T.C.
1894	Std.IV	3		pupil-teacher	E.T.C.
1899	Std. V	3		pupil-teacher	E.T.C.
1901	Std. VI	3		pupil-teacher	E.T.C.
1906	Std. VI	3		pupil-teacher	E.T.C.
	Std. VI	2+	1 at normal school	pupil-teacher	M.C.T.C.
1910	Std.VII	3		pupil-teacher	E.T.C.
1913	Std.VII	2+	1	pupil-teacher	E.T.C.
1920	Std.VIII		2	college	P.T.C.
	Std.X		2	college	H.P.T.C.
1929	Std.X		2	coll./univ.	P.T.C.
1958	Std.X		2/+1	coll./univ.	H/P.T.C.
1968	Std.X		3	coll./univ.	H/P.T.C.
1976	Std.X		3/+1	coll./univ.	H/P.T.C.
		ADDITIONAL OPTION FROM c1974:			
	Std.X		4	coll.+ univ./ university	B. Prim. Ed. degree

(Sources: Gilchrist 1906; McKerron 1934; Behr and MacMillan 1971; le Roux 1980; Behr 1988; Borman 1989.)

QUALIFICATION ACRONYMS:

E.T.C. : Elementary Teacher's Certificate
M.C.T.C. : Middle Class Teacher's Certificate
H/P.T.C. : Higher/Primary Teacher's Certificate (or diploma)

The shift from the school-based apprenticeship system, which dominated teacher preparation schemes in the nineteenth century, towards an almost entirely college- or university-based training is very evident from Table 1. From 1893 the minimum duration for a college-based elementary teacher training was two years. The gradual but marked escalation in minimum

entrance requirements for teacher training, both in terms of age of admission and level of education attained is evident from the table. It was only in 1920 that the minimum educational requirement for admission to teacher training was set at matriculation level, namely, Standard Ten. The implications of this increase in minimum entrance requirements for the inclusion of a theoretical component in teacher training are crucial. It is only once there was a higher level of general schooling that a meaningful study of educational theory became possible. Without a sound basic schooling such study perforce tended to be rather perfunctory. In the last decade of the nineteenth century definite moves were made to separate prospective teachers' general education (i.e. secondary education) from their professional preparation.

In 1920 the term 'elementary' was dropped and the term 'primary' substituted in its place, hence in the table from 1920 the change in certificate designations to P.T.C. (Primary Teacher's Certificate) or H.P.T.C (Higher Primary Teacher's Certificate). From 1976 the minimum duration for a qualification in primary teaching was increased to three years. In 1974 the University of Cape Town inaugurated a four-year degree course in primary education. In the 1980s a number of other South African universities also began offering this degree course as an additional training option.

2.6. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION AS A DISCRETE PHASE OF EDUCATION

The use of the term 'elementary', in referring to the earliest form of mass educational provision, reflects the nature of the education on offer

- that is, extremely rudimentary, pragmatic and circumscribed - rather than the suggestion that this level of education might be seen as antecedent to a later phase of education. It was only as secondary education became increasingly available to the general populace that the term 'elementary' began to be used almost exclusively in the latter (antecedent) sense.

A growing recognition of significant differences in the psychological make-up and cognitive aptitudes of pupils of different ages highlighted the inappropriateness of a single approach for all age groups. In 1920 South African 'elementary education' was redesignated 'primary education' (Borman 1989:107) and this facilitated a more specific distinction between primary and secondary teacher preparation. This development had important implications for educational theory.

With the establishment of primary education as a distinctive phase of education with much more broadly based goals than those of early 'elementary' education a great deal of specifically primary-oriented educational theory has evolved. This was further encouraged in Britain by developments which took place in teacher preparation courses, such as the introduction of the B.Ed. degree in the 1960s, and by recommendations such as that of the Plowden Report that primary education " ... needs to be more firmly based on closely argued educational theory" (Plowden Report 1967:para. 550).

The overseas' influence on South African English-medium primary teacher preparation is marked. On the whole, South African primary education is not well researched, and South African institutions have tended to follow overseas examples rather than to generate their own models. Consequently,

much of the theory informing primary teacher preparation at these institutions is derived from overseas models, particularly Britain, as is evidenced by the predominance of overseas (as opposed to South African) texts in English-medium teacher training institute libraries.

2.7. THE OBJECTIVES OF PRIMARY TEACHER PREPARATION

The objective of any teacher preparation programme is to equip the student to operate effectively in the classroom. This implies that, after completion of a pre-service course, the student teacher should be able to provide meaningful learning experiences for pupils which facilitate a balanced development in terms of the pupils' cognitive, affective, social, emotional and physical domains.

The preparation of teachers involves two major constituents: personal education, and professional education. The two ought to go hand-in-hand, each contributing to the other. As most primary teacher preparation programmes follow the concurrent pattern, these two aspects usually occur simultaneously. This may be seen as one of the advantages of the concurrent pattern, as abundant opportunities may be created for ensuring that the two aspects can in fact contribute to each other.

Zeichner and Liston (1987) identified four main objectives in their analysis of an American elementary student-teaching programme at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. These were the development in students of:

- technical competence in instruction and classroom management;
- the ability to evaluate their own practice;

- an awareness of the ethical and moral aspects of teaching and the ability to make wise decisions;
- sensitivity towards the needs of pupils with diverse intellectual, ethnic, physical and social characteristics and the ability to nurture respect for these individual differences amongst pupils.

(paraphrased from Zeichner and Liston 1987).

All of the above-mentioned goals may be seen to be of equal relevance for South African pre-service courses for primary teachers. Aspects of the last objective identified by Zeichner and Liston are particularly vital as South African schools begin to move away from the policy of racially segregated education.

From the above, it is apparent that teaching ability does not depend solely on the mastery of teaching techniques and knowledge areas. An integral part of teacher preparation is the development of appropriate attitudes and values. There are differences of opinion concerning desirable educational goals and the means by which they might be achieved. It may be persuasively argued that student teachers need to acquire the skills and conceptual tools which will enable them to reflect on their own and competing value systems. This is more likely to ensure that their teaching actions and decisions are based on rational principles rather than being swayed by seductive rhetoric.

In the following chapter the evolution of educational theory is considered. The study of educational theory was included in teacher preparation programmes precisely because it was felt that it could contribute to the development of the type of rational autonomy implied above.

CHAPTER THREE

EDUCATIONAL THEORY AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE THEORETICAL DISCIPLINES

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Little consensus exists on the nature of educational theory or its contribution to effective teaching. The word 'theory', too, is subject to varying interpretations and imprecisions of usage, depending on context, which inevitably influences views on both its status and role in any particular circumstance.

This chapter attempts to identify some of the characteristics of such theory. The ascent of each of the so-called 'foundation' disciplines to positions of prominence in the theoretical component of teacher preparation programmes is then described. Before focusing specifically on educational theory, however, a brief analysis of the general concept of 'theory' is attempted.

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3.2. ANALYSIS OF 'THEORY'

In this section 'theory' is analysed initially in general terms, and then as it applies specifically in the context of educational theory. This is

followed by a discussion of the problem of a perceived dichotomy between 'theory' and 'practice'.

3.2.1. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF 'THEORY'

The word evolved from late-Latin "theoria": "contemplation or speculation" (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary). Several discussions in the literature (Hempel 1966, Hospers 1967, Harvey 1973, Habermas 1974, Haralambos 1980, van Straaten 1981, Bilton et al. 1985) reveal that a broad continuum of meaning has been ascribed to the concept of 'theory', and that there are differing degrees of precision in its usage. Despite this, a common thread running through the various shades of meaning is the notion of a systematically derived set of ideas or general principles which aims to account for some regular aspect of experience.

In a text on the philosophy of science the following outline of the function served by theories is given:

> Theories are usually introduced when previous study of a class of phenomena has revealed a system of uniformities that can be expressed in the form of empirical laws. Theories then seek to explain those regularities and, generally, to afford a deeper and more accurate understanding of the phenomena in question.
>
> (Hempel 1966:70).

While aspects of this description may clearly apply to 'theory' in both the physical and the social sciences, the subject matter of the social sciences (i.e. man) is not as amenable to controlled investigation as is much of the subject matter in the physical sciences. The discovery and formulation of empirical laws in the social sciences is thus problematic. This circumstance highlights a major division between different types of

theory: that distinguishing those comparatively accessible to empirical investigation from those more closely reflecting the original etymology of the word and hence remaining intractably in the speculative realm. In general, the theories of the physical science fall into the former category, and those of the social sciences into the latter.

A related point which emerges in the literature, and is strongly reinforced by popular perceptions and usage, is the notion that 'theory' is distinct from, or even opposed to, 'practice'. In this context, presumably those theories open to empirical testing might be seen as less distinct from practice than those largely dependent on speculation or conjecture. In the case of experimentally accessible theories, therefore, a sub-distinction between 'theory' and 'practice' would pertain to the mechanics of actual application, rather than to practicability _per se_. Speculative theories, _per contra_, are more vulnerable to claims that a hiatus exists between theory and practice.

Despite the common perception that speculative theories display a greater disjunction between themselves and practice, both types of theory aim to provide a basis for action. The empirically-based theory is open to reinforcement or falsification by the results obtained. Speculative theory, however, is far less tractable, because the actions indirectly arising from it do not unequivocally reinforce or refute the antecedent mainsprings of action. Social philosophies such as, for example, Marxist theory, fall into this latter (speculative) category.

Theory, since it seeks to generalize from particular instances, involves inductive inference. By the nature of the inductive process, the best that a theory can do is to establish some degree of probability, less

than absolute certainty (Cohen and Nagel 1964:278-279). While the ultimate aim is a single grand unifying theory, all theories thus far are incomplete. Even in the case of theories about the physical world, where there is a greater possibility of rigorous investigation, absolute verification remains elusive.Thus, while many of the laws underpinning theories in the physical sciences,

> ... are stated as though they held without exception ... the conditions under which they apply are so strictly delimited that they can be only approximated in real life.
>
> (Blalock and Blalock 1968:156).

In similar vein, Capra states:

> One of the main lessons that physicists have had to learn in this century has been the fact that all the concepts and theories we use to describe nature are limited. ... Scientific theories can never provide a complete and definitive description of reality. They will always be approximations to the true nature of things.
>
> (Capra 1982:33).

Because of the impossibility of investigating all the circumstances which might conceivably falsify it, a theory can therefore never be proved completely. The greater the number of substantiating instances the more weight does the theory attain. This substantiation process is more difficult in the case of theories pertaining to the social world. Here the subject matter is not only less controllable, but also less amenable to rigorous investigation. Thus, in the case of sociological theory, for example, it is argued that:

> Like all theory, sociological theory is selective. No amount of theory can hope to explain everything, account for the infinite amount of data that exist or encompass the endless ways of viewing reality. Theories are therefore selective in terms of their priorities and perspectives and the data they define as significant. As a result they provide a particular and partial view of reality.
>
> (Haralambos 1985:521).

From the foregoing it is clear that theorists in both the physical and the social domain are beginning to acknowledge that theories are no more than incomplete and imperfect explanations of reality.

A further aspect of theory, implicit in the Haralambos quote (above), is the intrusion of a subjective element into observations of, and thus ideas (theories) about, reality. The inevitability of a degree of subjectivity is now being widely recognised, even by physical scientists. Thus:

> The universe is no longer seen as a machine, made up of a multitude of separate objects, but appears as a harmonious indivisible whole; a network of dynamic relationships that include the human observer and his or her consciousness in an essential way. ... the physiological aspects of perception cannot be separated from the psychological aspects of interpretation.
>
> (Capra 1982:32, 321).

Influenced by physical scientists' successes in their empirical investigations, early social scientists tended to use the techniques of the physical sciences in their investigations of social phenomena in the belief that:

> ... the scientific patterns of reasoning which have enabled us to extend our control over the world of nature can be used with equal success to extend our control over the human and social world as well.
>
> (Carr 1989:32).

This positivist approach is strongly challenged by those social scientists who reject the notion that the human domain can be investigated in the same ostensibly objective manner as the physical world. This latter group of social scientists bases its opposition on a belief in the unpredictability of man. They argue that as a rational being, man has the capacity to make his own interpretations and to

exercise a fair measure of free will in his social world. Thus the interpretations and actions of both observer and observed are inextricably bound to questions of individual consciousness, as well as to value positions. This division of opinion has obvious and profound implications for theory. This is perhaps especially true in the realm of psycho-social theories. Thus, for example, a behaviourist psychologist and a humanist psychologist may arrive at conflicting theories when analysing what purports to be precisely the same situation. This dichotomy is also found between structuralist and interactionist sociologists' analyses of a particular social phenomenon. Thus, while the quality of a theory may be judged on rational grounds in terms of such criteria as "internal coherence and breadth of applicability" (Bilton et al. 1985:555), much devolves upon questions of:

> ... intellectual or moral commitment. There is often nothing to choose between theories: they purport to explain - however incompletely - some facets about the relations of people with society. One theory is not necessarily better than another; it is simply that different theories concentrate on different facets, making differing assumptions and using different techniques.
>
> (Cashmore and Mullan 1983:viii).

3.2.2. ANALYSIS OF 'THEORY' IN THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

From the analysis in the preceding discussion the following general characteristics of 'theory' were identified:

- the concept of 'theory' is subject to a fairly wide range of definitions, some more rigorous than others;

- a theory constitutes a systematically derived set of ideas or general principles which aims to explain some regular aspect of experience and thereby to provide a basis for enhanced

understanding of that experience thus facilitating some form of action;

- theories fall into two broad categories: those most commmonly representative of the physical sciences in which there is a greater possibility of empirical investigation, and those found in the social sciences and those of a philosophical nature which generally lie outside the realm of empirical investigation. This latter category of theory is thus more heavily dependent on critical analysis for its 'verification';

- all theory is general in nature and in consequence can never be regarded as complete;

- the inevitable intrusion of a degree of subjectivity influencing the development of any theory means that different theorists may arrive at different theories about the same situation.

Relatively few writers on educational theory appear to give attention to the question of <u>what</u> 'theory' actually is or of the extent to which 'educational theory' meets particular criteria pertaining to 'theory'. Each of the above characteristics of theory outlined above, however, may be seen to have relevance to much of what is generally termed 'educational theory', notwithstanding the somewhat derogatory attitude adopted by some people toward its status. O'Connor, for instance, claimed that, "the word "theory" as it is used in educational contexts is generally a courtesy title" (O'Connor 1957:75). O'Connor appears to have been attempting to compare educational theory with that of the physical sciences. In view of education's diverse sources of theoretical insights this would seem a rather futile exercise. It has been argued that, "Social life would be impossible if the only yardstick of knowledge, genuine knowledge, were empirical knowledge" (Sebedi 1980:63).

Direct analogy with any one theoretical paradigm is inappropriate in the case of educational theory, reflecting, as it does, so multi-faceted, variable, unpredictable and value-laden an activity. Education has no single discrete body of knowledge on which to draw. The complex nature

of the educational task and education's eclectic knowledge base militates against the development of any high degree of systematic unity.

> Because of the nature of the questions with which it deals educational theory is dependent on a particularly wide range of knowledge and experience.
>
> (Hirst 1963:57).

This does not, however, negate the fact that a great deal of systematic thought has been devoted to the development of various educational theories. O'Connor's dismissal of 'theory' as a courtesy title in the educational context gives scant credit to the vast body of educational thought developed over the years. Reid likened educational theory to Joseph's coat of many colours in which is included "all reflection and all talk about education of whatever kind and at all levels" (in Archambault 1972:19-20). In contrast to O'Connor's very narrow interpretation of theory, Reid's interpretation is perhaps overly generous.

While each writer has his or her own general assumptions about the nature and purpose of educational theory, for the most part, the differences in these assumptions lie less in the semantics than in the phraseology. All are concerned to convey the notion that educational theory aims to provide teachers with the conceptual means of engaging in a critical examination of the nature and purpose of the educational task and ways of implementing it effectively. Thus, for example, Dearden defined educational theory in terms similar to, but more rigorous than, those used by Reid:

> ... educational theory is the product of a particular endeavour, namely the endeavour to achieve an intellectually deepened understanding of educational practice in all its aspects.
>
> (Dearden 1984:8).

Hirst characterised educational theory as:

> ... a domain of practical theory, concerned with formulating and justifying principles of action for a range of practical activities.
>
> (Hirst 1983:3).

Hartnett and Naish defined educational theory as:

> ... practical and evaluative judgements of any kind that bear on how education should be conducted, and of statements that are used to support such judgements.
>
> (Hartnett and Naish 1977:63).

Each of these definitions, despite minor differences in emphasis, highlights the centrality of practice in the sense that the only justification for time devoted to evolving and/or studying educational theory is in terms of its potential contribution to improving practice.

An analysis of educational theories suggests that they fall into three broad and overlapping categories, none of which need be seen as mutually exclusive of the others. These are:

- those which seek to describe and explain educational phenomena;
- those which seek to offer practical guidelines for action;
- those which seek to provide a critical evaluation of educational practices and ideologies.

These may be summarized as DESCRIPTIVE, PRESCRIPTIVE and EVALUATIVE (or NORMATIVE) respectively.

Each of the above categories comprises an amalgam of varied insights. Some are experientially derived, in the sense that they evolved through a process of trial-and-error in the search for optimal teaching

approaches. These could be termed 'commonsense' theories. They may subsequently be refined by recourse to other sources of insights, for example, those which evolve from the application of particular disciplines to the educational enterprise - primarily psychology, philosophy and sociology. The closest approach of educational theory to 'scientific' status is via the adoption of the methods of the social sciences. Few areas in educational theory are open to the positivist mode of investigation used by physical scientists. In the educational arena one has to contend with the human factor, which is very different from the situation in, for example, a scientific laboratory where variables and extraneous factors can be strictly controlled. Thus, while educational theories may be evaluated in various ways, for example, by means of critical analysis, by definition, strict empirical testing is impossible.

Equally unattainable in educational theory is any form of infallible recipe for teachers. A characteristic of theory identified in Section 3.2.1. is that it is necessarily general in nature. This is perhaps especially true of educational theory. As Dearden pointed out, the final implementation of any educational procedure, irrespective of the teacher's depth of theoretical insight, calls for " ... an unteachable act of judgement" (Dearden 1980:26). Carr termed this judgement "phronesis" - an Aristotelian term meaning 'practical wisdom', knowing which general principle to apply in any given circumstance (Carr 1987:171-172). Because of the intrusion of ideological factors, however, any such judgement would inevitably be filtered through the prisms of the individual teacher's social values.

To sum up, theory in the educational context may be seen as that body of beliefs and ideas, inextricably embedded in culture and ideology, which educators use, more or less consciously, as a modus operandi and a crude and capricious compass-bearing in their teaching activities, and by which they form some judgement of how successful they are being in their activities.

3.2.3. THE PERCEIVED DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

A distinction emerging from analysis of the term 'theory' is that between 'theory' and 'practice'. This distinction creates the impression that 'theory' is more closely linked to the abstract and the academic than to the immediately practical. This prompts comment to the effect that a theory is:

> ... a high-level academic and impractical explanation or idea, something that sounds great but will not work, or even if it does work in some sense, it is so far above the common person that it is not practical or useful.
>
> (Mauch and Birch 1983:63).

The extremely fruitful relationship between theory and practice in much of science has conditioned people to the expectation that other areas of theory and practice can have an equally fruitful liaison. Failures in this attempted liaison in other areas have inevitably produced a certain disenchantment with theory.

Much of the literature on education is studded with references to a perceived hiatus between theory and practice. This poses the greatest threat to claims that educational theory should be seen as a vital

component of teacher preparation courses. As early as 1915, when the notion of a body of educational theory was in its infancy, Adams, for example, began his book with the following observation:

> To the plain man there is something sophisticated about theory which he contrasts disadvantageously with the simple straightforwardness of practice.
>
> (Adams 1915:1).

On a more contemporary note, Dearden commented that teachers:

> ... commonly regard theory with a varying mixture of respect and suspicion: respect because it is thought of as difficult, and suspicion because its bearings are unclear on the detailed decision as to what to do next Monday morning.
>
> (Dearden 1984:4).

While this frequently negative connotation of theory and its relationship to practice is of particular importance in the present investigation into educational theory, such a response to theory is by no means restricted to the educational field.

In contrast to these negative views of theory there are those who perceive it as an indispensable part of any goal-directed practical activity: "... a theory is one of the most practical tools of the modern world" (Mauch and Birch 1983:63).

The conflict about theory's relationship to practice is exacerbated by the fact that theory does not always transfer to practice in a clear-cut or simple manner. Since theory aims at achieving the greatest degree of generalisation, and must necessarily involve considerable abstraction, it cannot possibly provide any kind of cut-and-dried prescription. For this reason the application of theoretical insights to one's teaching

practice is inevitably more demanding and carries less guarantee of desired results than does the implementation of set procedures.

From the discussion in this section it becomes clear that the notion of educational theory and its application to practice is fraught with complexity.

3.3. THE EMERGENCE OF THE FOUNDATION DISCIPLINES

The main developments in the emergence of the foundation disciplines were briefly discussed in Section 1.3.3. In the present section the evolution of each of the core theoretical disciplines is examined in greater detail. In any evolutionary process there is an inevitable tendency towards greater complexity and diversity, and, following from this, a greater degree of specialization. The discussion focuses on developments as exemplified by changes in British pre-service courses for teachers. The South African parallels are presented in Chapter Four.

The theoretical disciplines derive from the parent disciplines of history, philosophy, psychology and sociology. These parent disciplines comprise a major source of theoretical insights into educational issues. The incorporation of the disciplines into teacher preparation courses, it was persuasively argued, would provide a more rational and manageable framework for investigation than the somewhat amorphous area of study - 'principles of education' - that had previously constituted the theoretical component of courses for student teachers. This reflects the general evolutionary pattern identified above.

Before examining the individual foundation disciplines, the concept of a 'discipline' is briefly analysed.

3.3.1. AN ANALYSIS OF THE TERM 'DISCIPLINE'

The word 'discipline' derives from the Latin 'discere' : "to learn" (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary). At the most obvious level, the word, as used in the context of education's 'foundation disciplines', refers to a particular field of study. At a deeper level of analysis, a discipline embodies more stringent connotations, reflective of the other senses in which the word may be used, inter alia, concepts such as strict adherence to rules, subjection to authority, and a high degree of systematic rigour. The application of this additional sense to the term 'discipline' in relation to a particular field of study "involves adoption of a point of view which then selects and gives coherence to content", it provides the student of that discipline "with a pair of mental spectacles, limiting his view, but enlarging for special scrutiny aspects of a universe of knowledge" (Bramwell 1962:23).

King and Brownell (1966) elaborated upon a number of characteristics which a field of study ought to have in order to satisfy the criteria of a discipline. Some of the more seminal characteristics they identified are paraphrased below:

- a well-defined,but dynamic, domain of intellectual inquiry;
- one or more characteristic mode of inquiry;
- a specialized language or other symbolic system which facilitates investigative precision;
- a legacy of thoughts and ideas which provides a platform for further developments within the discipline;

- a commitment to constructive communication between adherents of the discipline, with the objective of enhancing the stature of the discipline while at the same time generating worthwhile contributions to the total knowledge stock.

(King and Brownell 1966).

Each of the fields of study - history, philosophy, psychology and sociology - from which education's foundation disciplines subsequently evolved, fall within the above parameters.

3.3.2. THE EVOLUTION OF 'HISTORY OF EDUCATION'

Prior to the late eighteenth century, study of history was seldom an important part of education: "... it was not until the 19th century that history was accorded recognition by universities as an academic science" (van Jaarsveld and Rademeyer 1964:23). It gained ground rapidly, however. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, when attempts were initiated to elevate the training of teachers beyond the level of an almost exclusive concern for the practical aspects of teaching, it appeared to be a virtual sine qua non that a study of history of education should occupy a prominent position in the theoretical component of courses for aspirant teachers.

History was one of the earliest of the contributory disciplines to be applied to the study of education. Together with psychology, it formed one of the two main strands in teacher training courses in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Included in the historical component was some comparative education, but the main emphasis fell on the study of educational institutions and the study of great educators (Tibble 1966). The prominence accorded to the study of historical aspects in

education may be partially attributed to the fact that, barring the growing corpus of psychological knowledge, the usefulness to education of other theoretical studies, primarily philosophy and sociology, had yet to be recognised. By the early years of the twentieth century, the legitimacy of history of education as an important area of study for intending teachers was well accepted. As evidence of this, Barnard noted the unprecedented spate of educational history texts issued by the Cambridge University Press during the first two decades of this century (1965:203-204). By the 1930s it had been firmly established within university departments of education (Simon 1982), although its status had been somewhat circumscribed by the ascendancy of psychology.

In the late 1940s, following the recommendations of the McNair Report (1944), history of education was subsumed under the 'umbrella' of 'Principles of Education', only to re-emerge as a discrete entity twenty years later with the advent of the Robbins Report (1963) (Alexander, Craft and Lynch 1984).

The 1960s was the decade in which the disciplines 'came of age' (Alexander, Craft and Lynch 1984:134). History of education courses were subject to no small measure of criticism, however. Simon expressed the view that owing to time constraints and the sheer mass of potential material, such courses tended to be too superficial, exhibiting an excessive preoccupation with " ... a somewhat indigestible mass of dates and facts, orders and acts" (in Tibble 1966:91). In the same text, Tibble reported that recent surveys had revealed student disenchantment with history of education courses. Their relevance to the teaching task was questioned (ibid. : 21). One possible explanation for this disenchantment was the failure in many cases to contextualize educational history within

general history. Too often educational developments were taught in isolation from their wider socio-historical setting (Simon, in Tibble 1966).

In 1968 a history of education society was launched "marking a new confidence and providing a focal point for discussion and interchange" (Simon 1982:88). By the 1970s pleas that history should be linked to a broader social, economic and political context (Simon, in Tibble 1966) were being met to some extent. On the whole, however, history of education continued along somewhat traditional and uncontentious lines (Alexander, Craft and Lynch 1985:135).

Advocates of the merits of history of education courses abound. Simon contended that there is "no need to make out a case for the study of history of education as an essential aspect of the course offered to intending teachers" (in Tibble 1966:91). Nevertheless, many writers - including Simon - feel obliged to justify this field of study, claiming that an awareness of past developments not only facilitates a better understanding of present circumstances but also increases the possibilities for change (inter alia, Simon, in Tibble 1966, Chambers, in Tibble 1971, Moore 1972, Simon, in Hirst 1983). As new priorities evolve in courses for intending teachers, it becomes increasingly difficult to sustain such claims with anything like the original degree of fervour. As Simon himself pointed out, "No claim should be made that the study of the history of education directly affects the practice of the teacher in the classroom. Its effect must be indirect" (Simon, in Tibble 1966:126).

3.3.3. THE EVOLUTION OF 'PSYCHOLOGY OF EDUCATION'

Psychology, dealing as it does, with such things as motivation, learning theory and intelligence, won very early recognition as an obvious source of educational insight. Of the four foundation disciplines it has had the longest reign and, although it has not been immune to criticism, its legitimacy as a core component of teacher preparation has never been seriously questioned. A brief survey of the titles of articles in the British Journal of Educational Psychology reveals that, unlike the situation in journals for the other disciplines, there is little soul searching amongst contributors as to the relevance of psychology of education for teachers. It has always been a "mainstay of education theory", subject to few "crises of confidence" (Alexander, in Alexander, Craft and Lynch 1984:135). Harris suggested that:

> ... it is no accident that psychology was the first education discipline to be widely taught in the universities. For psychology appeared to give at least a semblance of objective scientific credibility to the study of education which traditionally was thought to be largely a matter of acquiring teaching techniques and not therefore the proper concern of universities.
>
> (Harris 1978:70).

Although it was only in the 1920s that 'educational psychology' was officially categorised as a distinct sub-discipline of psychology (Tibble 1966:10), an embryonic form of educational psychology occupied a major part of early teacher training courses. The texts of two key figures in the early evolution of a psychology of education, viz. Bain's Education as a Science, and Sully's The Teacher's Handbook of Psychology, were prescribed in the 1895 syllabus for intending teachers (Tibble 1966:6). The study of child development appeared in the 1914 syllabus. This area

of study contributed to a more child-centred educational philosophy (Tibble 1966:15).

Early courses in psychology of education excusably reflected the inchoate state of the parent discipline itself. Tibble commented on the changed thinking which was reflected in the 1886 and 1909 editions of Sully's psychology text for teachers (cited above), and linked this to the developments which had been talking place in the parent discipline. He identified a trend away from the notion that learning was merely a matter of training, towards a view which stressed the importance both of motivational factors and of an awareness of individual differences (Tibble 1966:8-9). Tibble regarded this transformation as a key factor in the introduction of more 'progressive' approaches to the teaching situation (ibid. : 13). In similar vein, Nisbet commented:

> One of the major achievements of educational psychology in the first half of this century has been to establish the importance of individual differences, as a corrective to the methods of mass education which developed in the second half of the nineteenth century.
>
> (Nisbet, in Hirst 1983:87).

By the 1920s a more sophisticated form of psychology of education was taught at teacher training institutions, often by specialist lecturers (Tibble 1966:9). A major growth area in psychology at this time was psychometric testing which had profound implications for education. Writing of this period, Simon cited the following comment:

> ... psychometric intelligence theory achieved hegemony within a mere decade ... it achieved an iron grip on educational theory and practice which was still not undermined in any significant way until the early 1940's and has still not been completely broken.
>
> (Gordon 1981, in Hirst 1983:77-78).

Influential here was Sir Cyril Burt who played a very dominant role in educational psychology in the period 1930 to 1950 (Clarke 1982).

In the 1940s and 1950s psychology of education was subsumed under the 'Principles of Education' format, but retained a major share of the total time spent on academic study of education. Nisbet identified this period as the one in which psychology of education reached its "peak of achievement" in terms of its cumulative contribution to enhanced understanding of the educational enterprise (Nisbet, in Hirst 1983:84). With the advent of the 'disciplines era' in the 1960s, psychology of education was once more firmly established as a discrete subject area, alongside the other disciplines of education.

3.3.4. THE EVOLUTION OF 'PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION'

Despite philosophy's heritage, which dates back to antiquity, its entry into the educational arena as an important component of teacher preparation courses is relatively new. A number of philosophers - from Plato, through John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Dewey, A.N. Whitehead, Bertrand Russell, Martin Buber, to name a few - have contributed in varying degrees to educational debate. For the majority of these philosophers, however, education was essentially a sideline.

Early teacher training syllabi contained elements of what might be termed 'philosophical' concerns: the discussion of educational aims, ideals, values etc., but pre-1960 forays by teacher educators into philosophical realms have generally been described in critical terms: "unco-ordinated and variously interpreted" (Peters, in Hirst 1983:30); "amorphous and

ambiguous" (Tibble 1966:22); "nothing more than reflections on education ... relatively superficial and inconsistent", lacking the rigour demanded in pure philosophy (Harrison 1962:13); a tendency to expect students "to 'learn' philosophy rather than to do philosophy" (Archambault 1965:5).

After the Second World War a number of pure philosophers turned their attention to education. Dearden (1982:57) identified some key figures: C.D. Hardie, whom Peters credited with sowing the first seeds of an analytic approach (in Hirst 1983:33); the strongly positivist D.J. O'Connor; Israel Scheffler, and R.S. Peters - the last named perhaps the most influential contributor to British philosophy of education.

Louis Arnaud Reid, a general philosopher and first incumbent of the newly created chair in philosophy of education at the University of London Institute of Education, is credited with preparing the way "for the great change that was to come about in the 1960s" (Peters, in Hirst 1983:32). The chair passed to Richard Peters in 1962. Peters is widely regarded as the "dominating creative thinker" in education of the 1960s and 1970s (Hirst, in Cooper 1982:8). A philosopher, with a longstanding interest in education, he set about improving the quality of educational theorizing with "missionary zeal" (Dearden 1982:58).

Peters identified three main approaches to philosophy of education in the pre-1960s period:

- the 'principles of education' approach, which he likened to a 'philosophy of life' in which wisdom and aphorisms are dispensed;
- the 'great educators' approach, in which the philosophies of eminent figures were studied for modern applications;

and, what he regarded as the optimal approach:

- the application of philosophy proper to the analysis of educational issues.

(Peters, in Hirst 1983:64).

Throughout the 1960s, Peters, supported by the demand for more academically rigorous teacher education, succeeded in limiting the "rather woolly chatter" which previously comprised philosophy of education courses (Peters 1977:142), and substituted an approach based on the analysis of key concepts in education. He was ably assisted by individuals such as Hirst and Dearden who, together with Peters, were sometimes referred to as the 'London Line' (Peters, in Hirst 1983:36), or, the 'Malet Street School' (Alexander, in Alexander, Craft and Lynch 1984:135). In 1965 Peters was instrumental in founding the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, together with its journal, The Journal of Philosophy of Education. In this period a great number philosophy of education publications were produced. Of significance to primary teachers was Dearden's textbook, The Philosophy of Primary Education. Dearden is described as "a rare combination" : an experienced primary teacher and a graduate in pure philosophy (Peters, foreword to Dearden 1968:v).

Peters retired in 1975, bringing to an end the hegemony of the 'London Line' and its emphasis on conceptual analysis. In retrospective mood, Peters lamented the 'death knell' sounded in 1972 by the James Reports' unsympathetic attitude towards educational theory, but acknowledged that perhaps philosophy of education courses had become overly academic, too concerned with "tidying up minutiae of previous analyses and arguments" instead of breaking new ground (Peters, in Hirst 1983:34-35).

3.3.5. THE EVOLUTION OF 'SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION'

Sociology of education is the youngest of the foundation disciplines. Its progenitor, sociology, is itself, at least in a formal sense, a relatively new discipline. Only in 1838, when French philosopher Auguste Comte coined the term "sociologie", did this branch of moral philosophy emerge as a distinct subject area, concerned with the study of human social phenomena.

Early sociologists largely ignored education, one exception being Emile Durkheim, whose writings still earn considerable attention from people concerned with the social aspects of contemporary education. References in psychology of education courses to the significance of social factors in the learning situation paved the way for the subsequent emergence of a sociology of education, but the application of specifically sociological insights to education remained virtually untapped until the middle of the twentieth century.

Reid noted that initially educational interest in sociology was almost exclusively confined to American institutions. Educational sociology, which Reid described as a "mixed marriage" of educationists and sociologists, with the former having the dominant role (Reid 1982:16), comprised part of American teacher preparation courses from the early part of the twentieth century. This educational sociology was largely moralistic, lacking in theoretical rigour, and concerned with seeking practical solutions to social problems in education (Reid 1982:17-18). Karabel and Halsey echoed Reid's diagnosis, stating that articles appearing in the Journal of Educational Sociology, an American publication dating from 1927, " ... reflected less the application of

general sociological principles than the concerns of a subject that considered itself more a branch of education than of sociology" (Karabel and Halsey 1979:2). This approach, they claimed, together with the generally low esteem in which schools of education were held, constituted a serious obstacle to educational sociology's theoretical respectability (ibid.: 3).

In Britain, sociology was not a well-established university subject prior to the late 1940s (Reid 1982, Banks 1982), and the notion of its having any relevance to education received even less attention. Concern for social problems in the aftermath of the Second World War was largely responsible for an increased interest in sociology. A belief that education could make a vital contribution to the process of social reconstruction led to the gradual emergence of the sociology of education as a distinct branch of sociology. Reid distinguished this new specialty (sociology of education) from the earlier educational sociology, described in the preceding paragraph, in terms of its greater theoretical rigour and its closer adherence to the methodology of the parent discipline (Reid 1982:18).

During the 1960s sociology of education was designated one of the four foundation disciplines of education. A spate of articles in, for example, the 1961 - 1963 editions of the journal Education for Teaching is indicative of the extent of the debate surrounding the pros and cons of including a sociological component in British teacher training courses at this time (inter alia, Taylor 1961, Williams 1962, Sparrow 1962, Macguire 1963, Craft 1963). MacGuire (1963) undertook a survey of the sociological courses taught at various British institutions providing pre-service courses for teachers. Her report reveals that in the early

1960s there was no consensus among these institutions, either about the desirability of including sociology in teacher preparation courses, or of the form such courses should take. Between 1960 and 1968 the number of British colleges offering sociology of education (in a variety of more, or less, discrete forms) increased from six to forty six (Reid 1982), which suggests that at least some of the earlier dilemmas described by MacGuire had been resolved. The desirability of including a sociological component in teacher preparation courses was also fuelled by the findings and recommendations of the Newsom (1963), Robbins (1963) and Plowden (1967) Reports, all of which made reference to the strong link between social class and educational achievement. By the 1970s sociology of education had been firmly established as an important component of pre-service courses for teachers.

3.3.6. THE EMERGENCE OF 'CURRICULUM THEORY' AS A NEW CONTENDER

Although, for the purposes of the present investigation, curriculum theory is not regarded as one of the 'core' theoretical disciplines of education, its growing prominence merits some mention. In terms of the criteria identified in Section 3.4.1., curriculum theory does not qualify for 'discipline' status. Nevertheless it has, since the mid-1960s, become an important part of the theoretical component of British teacher education. Prior to this, the curriculum had apparently attracted little attention, "its nature having been either taken for granted or treated as a matter for teachers' professional judgement" (Whitty, in Lawn and Barton 1981:49).

In the United States curriculum theory was accepted as a sub-field of education by the 1930s. Because it had evolved initially in response to administrative rather than intellectual pressures, it tended towards a preoccupation with the pragmatic and a relative neglect of the theoretical. In the 1960s, following the "Sputnik" humiliation, American educational administrators turned to academic specialists such as psychologists and physicists to remedy scientific and technological lacunae in American curriculae, such lacunae having been thrown into particularly stark relief by Russian successes in the 'Space Race'. Traditional curricular specialists were seen to belong to a field that was "intellectually shabby, without conceptual substance" (Pinar and Grumet, in Lawn and Barton 1981:22-27).

In Britain in the 1960s, with the upgrading and extension of teacher education, and the launching of various curriculum projects (for example, Nuffield Junior Science Project, Integrated Studies Project), the appositeness of a more rigorous approach to curriculum planning became apparent. Two key figures in Britain's curriculum field at this time were Denis Lawton and Lawrence Stenhouse. They helped give to British curriculum studies "a more liberalistic and humanistic flavour than its transatlantic counterpart" (Whitty, in Lawn and Barton 1981:48).

From the late 1960s, changing social, political and economic circumstances generated an increasingly critical questioning of what was taught in schools. This provided a further incentive for the development of sound curriculum principles. By the late 1970s courses in curriculum theory were incorporated into most British teacher preparation schemes and offered "... a more comprehensive basis for analysis and critique of curriculum" (Alexander, Craft and Lynch 1984:136).

Two distinguishing features of curriculum theory are its primary concern with practical issues and its eclectic nature. Curriculum theory comprises:

> ... deliberations and decisions about what to teach, to whom, in what way and under what circumstances, as well as with what ends in view. Curriculum theory must take account of subject matter, the learner, the teacher, the milieux and the justifications for bringing these into a relationship. It must deal with all of these.
>
> (Taylor and Richards 1985 :177).

This eclectic characteristic has prompted some unfavourable comment. Whitty, for example, accused curriculum theory of being "largely parasitic upon the work of philosophers and sociologists of education". He further suggested that as these latter specialists did not hold work in the curriculum field in very high esteem, they displayed a reluctance to be associated with the field. This frequently resulted in curricular specialists relying on outdated and simplistic philosophical and sociological material which then further undermined the academic rigour of curricular analyses (Whitty, in Lawn and Barton 1981:49).

Some resolution of the types of shortcomings noted above has been achieved but much remains to be done. An interesting change in British educational thinking identified by Alexander is the apparent paradox between the much cited Plowden premise that "at the heart of education lies the child" (1967) and the sentiment expressed in a 1981 D.E.S. publication, namely: "The curriculum lies at the heart of education" (cited in Alexander 1984:5). The latter emphasis suggests that curriculum theory is likely to become an increasingly important aspect of teacher education. It also has the distinction of being the only subject area which, unlike the disciplines of psychology, philosophy, sociology and

history of education, was generated specifically within the context of education.

3.3.7. RESUMÉ

It is clear that by the early 1970s each of the so-called foundation disciplines - history, philosophy, psychology and sociology of education - had broken free from the 'Principles of Education' mantle and become firmly established as valued components of British teacher preparation programmes. By the late 1970s curriculum theory too had emerged as an important area of study, notwithstanding the fact that it does not fully satisfy the criteria of 'disciplineship'. In the following chapter the position of the disciplines at selected South African institutions engaged in primary teacher preparation is examined.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE EVOLUTION AND CURRENT STATUS OF THE THEORETICAL DISCIPLINES IN PRIMARY TEACHER PREPARATION COURSES AT SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTIONS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The main thrust of this investigation is a review and evaluation of current thoughts and practices relating to the inclusion of the theoretical disciplines - namely, history, philosophy, psychology, and sociology of education - in primary teacher preparation programmes. In this chapter some highlights in the emergence of the theoretical disciplines within the pre-service courses for primary teachers at selected South African institutions are identified. The current position vis à vis these disciplines in terms of the way in which they are incorporated into Bachelor of Primary Education degree courses offered by selected South African institutions is then investigated. In addition, the views of a number of teacher educators at these institutions on the optimal approach to the teaching of educational theory are explored.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.2.1. THE SELECTED INSTITUTIONS

The data for this survey was collected from four English-medium universities engaged in pre-service primary teacher preparation, although two colleges of education - by virtue of the collaborative links they have established with two of the universities - also contribute to the survey.

Approaches to pre-service primary teacher preparation in South Africa fall into two broad categories: the English-speaking tradition and the Afrikaans-speaking tradition. While there are similarities in these two approaches, the differences between them are considered sufficiently significant to warrant selection of only one category for examination in the present work. The Afrikaans tradition owes much to its Dutch and Germanic origins, which are not strongly represented in the English tradition. The latter tends more towards the British and American pattern of teacher preparation. The writer is most familiar with the English tradition, hence the selection of English-medium institutions for the investigation. The possibility of including dual-medium institutions in the survey was considered but subsequently rejected when it was found that such institutions tended towards the 'fundamental pedagogics approach' favoured by the Afrikaans-medium institutions.

At present, the students undertaking the type of teacher preparation discussed in this investigation are predominantly white. Although a

number of institutions undertaking black primary teacher pre-service work also operate via the medium of English, the approach at these exclusively-black institutions tends to be more practically oriented, and entrance requirements in many cases are not equivalent to those required by the particular institutions included in the present survey.

The movement at the selected institutions is increasingly towards the establishment of an all-graduate primary teaching force. At present relatively few black candidates are coming forward for this type of primary teacher preparation, although recent political developments - most particularly the Government's pledge to dismantle its policy of segregated education - are likely to bring about significant changes.

When the institutions were approached for information they were assured that they would not be directly identified. Although, in retrospect, this does not appear to have been strictly necessary, the undertaking not to directly identify the institutions is honoured nonetheless. In the discussion the selected institutions are therefore designated as Institutions A through F.

There are two parts to this survey of South African primary teacher preparation. In the first part the evolution of the theoretical disciplines is traced. In the second the current status of these disciplines and opinions of lecturing staff towards the theoretical component of courses for primary teachers are examined.

In tracing the evolution of the theoretical disciplines, information has been obtained from Institutions A and B only, as - of the selected

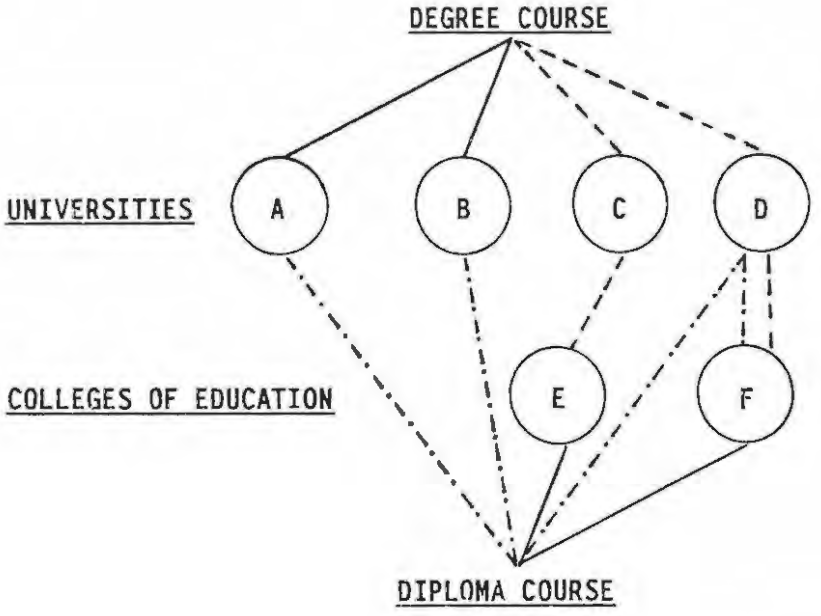
universities - they have the longest history of involvement in South African primary teacher preparation.

The primary teacher qualifications currently offered by the six institutions range from four-year Bachelor of Primary Education degrees to one-year post-graduate diplomas. Of the four universities, two offer self-contained Bachelor of Primary Education degrees (A and B), the other two (C and D) doing so in collaboration with colleges of education (Colleges E and F respectively). Prior to the introduction of collaborative Bachelor of Primary Education degrees, the latter two universities (C and D) did not offer any primary teacher qualification. In addition to collaborative Bachelor of Primary Education degrees, each of the colleges of education offers a four-year primary teacher diploma course (Higher Diploma in Education). Three of the universities (A, B and D) also offer one-year post-graduate primary teacher diploma courses, although in the case of University D's diploma course, all tuition takes place at College F.

The situation described thus far is represented in Figures 1 and 2, (overleaf).

FIGURES 1 and 2 THE SELECTED INSTITUTIONS IN RELATION TO THE PRIMARY TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS THEY OFFER

FIGURE 1



——— qualification offered solely by the institution concerned

– – – – qualification offered in collaboration between two institutions

–.–.– one-year post-graduate qualification

FIGURE 2

INSTITUTION	A	B	C	D	E	F
University	*	*	*	*		
College of Education					*	*
Independent B.Prim. Ed. degree	*	*				
Collaborative B. Prim. Ed. degree			*	*	*	*
4-year primary diploma (H.D.E)					*	*
1-year post-graduate primary diploma	*	*		*		
No primary qualification before B. Prim. Ed.			*	*		

Details of the current theoretical component of the diploma courses are not included in the survey. It was felt that this would merely complicate the issue without adding significantly to the overall assessment of the current status of the theoretical disciplines. Bachelor of Primary Education degree courses mark the newest development in the trend towards increasingly rigorous preparation for teaching in the primary school. Thus, only the Bachelor of Primary Education courses at these institutions are considered. Where a college of education and a university jointly offer a Bachelor of Primary Education degree, they are - for the purposes of this investigation - treated as a single entity (i.e. institutions C and E, and D and F constitute two rather than four entities).

Institution A was the first of the selected institutions to offer a degree course for primary teachers. In the 1980s degree courses were subsequently introduced at each of the other selected institutions. Table 2 shows the dates at which the selected institutions introduced their Bachelor of Primary Education degree courses, as well as whether these are offered at both junior and senior primary level or only at the latter.

TABLE 2 DATES OF INCEPTION OF BACHELOR OF PRIMARY EDUCATION DEGREE COURSES AND THE LEVELS AT WHICH THEY ARE OFFERED AT THE SELECTED INSTITUTIONS

INSTITUTION	DATE OF INCEPTION	LEVEL AT WHICH OFFERED
A	1974	SENIOR PRIMARY only
B	1985	Both SENIOR and JUNIOR PRIMARY
C/E	1983	SENIOR PRIMARY only
D/F	1980	Both SENIOR and JUNIOR PRIMARY

(Source: University calendars)

Unevenness of access to the various institutions was an obvious problem. The writer's own institution (B) was more readily accessible. It was possible to acquire a greater number of examples of the types of material distributed to students and to consult staff members with greater facility. In addition the writer is personally familiar with the course material and modus operandi of the various members of the teaching staff, as well as with the general philosophy of the Department. In an attempt to exploit this unevenness of access in a positive fashion, the decision was made to explore the views of the lecturing staff most closely involved with Institution B's Bachelor of Primary Education programme in greater depth as a complement to the broader analysis of the various institutions. As will be seen in the course of this chapter, Institution B is the only one of the selected institutions to have almost completely abandoned the disciplines format. This provides an additional reason for examining aspects of its Bachelor of Primary Education degree course in slightly greater detail.

4.2.2. DATA COLLECTION

The data for the survey was derived primarily from two sources:

- questionnaires (distributed to the teaching staff at each of the selected institutions);
- analysis of documents (both historical and contemporary) pertaining to the selected institutions.

A problem facing any investigation - particularly in the human field - concerns the extent to which the investigative techniques are actually able to capture 'reality', to get at the 'whole truth'. In the present investigation every effort was made to arrive at an accurate picture of

current practices in relation to the handling of the theoretical component in pre-service courses for primary teachers at the selected institutions. It would, however, be misleading to gloss over unsatisfactory aspects. The field under examination is a relatively large one, notwithstanding the small number of institutions selected for investigation. Personal visits to the various institutions and in-depth interviews with the teaching staff at each of them may have contributed towards a more precise understanding of current practice. This, however, had to be weighed against the question of the scope of the present research project as well as against financial and time constraints.

At the start of the survey, letters were sent to the heads of each of the selected institutions outlining the intentions of the investigation and asking whether they would be prepared to contribute to it. Accompanying this letter was a brief preliminary questionnaire as well as a request for copies of course outlines, reading lists, and past examination papers. A second, more detailed, questionnaire was then sent to each of the participating institutions.

To augment the information acquired directly from the teaching staff of the various institutions, letters were sent to the administrative sections of each of the institutions requesting copies of the standard brochures sent to candidates applying for admission to primary teacher training.

Data for the further examination of Institution B, was obtained from a questionnaire distributed to three members of the teaching staff most closely involved in the institution's primary teacher preparation.

In identifying highlights in the evolution of the theoretical disciplines within South African pre-service courses for primary teachers, the yearly calendars for Institutions A and B were consulted. As noted, of the universities contributing to the investigation, these two have the longest history of involvement in primary teacher preparation.

4.2.2.1. QUESTIONNAIRES

Three sets of questionnaires were distributed: two to the teaching staff at each of the selected institutions, (Questionnaires No 1 and 2), and one to each of three members of the teaching staff at Institution B (Questionnaire No. 3).

The desirability of conducting in-depth interviews rather than distributing questionnaires was mentioned in the previous section. Also mentioned here, however, were various constraints which militated against the use of interviews. Interviews and questionnaires are similar in many ways. They share a number of the same advantages and disadvantages. A questionnaire "may be considered as a formalized and stylized interview, or interview by proxy" (Walker 1985 : 91). The formats of the questionnaires used in the survey were designed in such a way as to try and exploit the positive similarities between interviews and questionnaires. Both closed- and open-ended questions were incorporated into the questionnaires in order to obtain qualitative as well as quantitative data, thus more closely approximating what Walker described as "written conversations" (ibid. : 108).

In order to encourage as frank a response to the questionnaires as possible, the respondents were told that no institution or individual contributing to the survey would be directly identified in the research report. A copy of each of the three questionnaires distributed in the course of the survey is included in the Appendix.

4.2.2.2. DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS

Documentary analyses - or what have been termed "intraviews", in the sense that documents "speak from within" the institutions contributing to a survey (Walker 1985 : 90) - were undertaken quite extensively in the current investigation in order to augment the information obtained from the questionnaire responses. The documents used in the investigation included course outlines, past examination papers, and university calendars. Although calendar entries are, of necessity, brief, and it cannot be automatically assumed that institutions meticulously update such entries each year, they were particularly useful in tracing the historical development of the theoretical component of the primary teacher preparation courses offered at the selected institutions.

4.3. THE EVOLUTION OF THE THEORETICAL DISCIPLINES WITHIN PRE-SERVICE COURSES FOR PRIMARY TEACHERS AT THE SELECTED INSTITUTIONS

From the discussion in Chapter Two it is clear that, prior to the mid-1890s, very little in the way of what might be termed 'educational theory' formed part of teacher training. This was due partly to the fact that notions of what constituted adequate teacher preparation were still

very rudimentary, and partly also to the fact that much of the 'training' period was devoted to the general education of candidates rather than to purely professional preparation. As noted in Chapter Two, it was the establishment of several training colleges during Dr Thomas Muir's term as Superintendent-General of Education at the Cape that marked a significant distinction between a general school-based education and a post-school professional preparation for teachers. This prepared the way for the incorporation of increasing amounts of educational theory in courses for trainee teachers.

Information about more recent developments in the evolution of the theoretical disciplines in South African primary teacher preparation programmes is taken from the calendars for Institutions A and B. As indicated in Section 4.2.2., of the universities contributing to the present investigation, these two were the first to provide pre-service courses in primary teaching. Universities C and D only became involved in primary teacher preparation in the 1980s when their collaborative Bachelor of Primary Education degree courses were inaugurated.

The developments which have taken place in the theoretical components of the pre-service primary teacher courses offered by Institutions A and B are presented in Tables 3 and 4. It was felt that little purpose would be served by tracing these developments right back to the 1920s when Institution A first became involved in primary teacher preparation. Institution B first offered a qualification for primary teachers in 1952. It was therefore decided that, in order to facilitate comparison, only those developments which have taken place at the two institutions since the 1950s would be included in the tables.

TABLE 3 THE EVOLUTION OF THE THEORETICAL COMPONENTS IN THE THREE-YEAR NON-GRADUATE PRE-SERVICE COURSES FOR PRIMARY TEACHERS AT INSTITUTIONS A AND B : 1950-1989

DECADE	INSTITUTION A			INSTITUTION B		
	Date	Year of study	THEORETICAL COMPONENT	Date	Year of study	THEORETICAL COMPONENT
1950s	from 1950	3rd	Theory of edn; History of edn; Psychology of edn.	from 1952	2nd	Psychology I
					3rd	Principles and History of edn.; Psychology of edn.
1960s	1960	2nd/ 3rd	Educational principles and practice.	NO CHANGE		
	from 1961	2nd	Principles & practice of education: - psychology of edn. - theory of edn.			
		3rd	Principles & practice of education: - psychology of edn. - theory of edn. - history of edn.			
	from 1963	3rd	Psychology of edn. Theory of edn. History of edn.			
1970s	from 1971	2nd	Psychology of edn.	from 1972	3rd	Principles & History of edn.; Psychology of edn.
		3rd	Psychology of edn. Theory of edn. History of edn.	1976	2nd	Child psychology
	NO CHANGE. FROM 1976 NO NEW CANDIDATES ACCEPTED FOR PRIMARY TEACHER'S DIPLOMA.				3rd	Principles & History of edn.; Psychology of edn. Sociology of edn.
				1977	2nd	Educational psychology
					3rd	Educational psychology Principles & History of edn.
				1978	3rd	Educational psychology; Philosophy of edn., incl. History of edn.
1980s				from 1980	2nd	Educational psychology; Sociology of edn.
					3rd	Educational psychology; Philosophy of edn., incl. History of edn.
				from 1982	2nd	Educational psychology
					3rd	Educational psychology; Philosophy of edn., incl. History of edn.; Sociology of edn.
				NO CHANGE. FROM 1987 NO NEW CANDIDATES ACCEPTED FOR DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION		

(Source: Annual calendars for Institutions A and B.)

As Table 3 indicates, of the disciplines, psychology and history of education were the first to be included in the theoretical components of the non-graduate qualifications offered at both institutions. Also included in the earlier theoretical component at Institution A was a third area of study - 'Theory of Education' - which appears to have been an embryonic form of philosophy of education. Similarly, the 'Principles' component of the 'Principles and History of Education' courses at Institution B appears to have been largely philosophical in nature.

The importance accorded to psychology at both institutions is very evident. In 1977 at Institution B it was redesignated 'Educational Psychology', the intention presumably being to more strongly emphasise its educational application.

From 1971 until 1977 (which was the last year in which Institution A operated its non-graduate course for primary teachers) the format of Institution A's theoretical component remained unchanged.

Sociology of education made its first appearance in the non-graduate course offered by Institution B in 1976. Philosophy of education was first listed in Institution B's 1978 calendar entry. In this same year, history of education was incorporated into this philosophy of education course, suggesting that the former's status had undergone some reduction.

From 1980 all of the foundation disciplines were reflected in Institution B's calendar entries:

- Educational psychology;
- Philosophy of education (including History of education);
- Sociology of education.

This disciplines' format was retained until 1988, the last year in which Institution B's three-year primary teacher's diploma course was in operation. In Institution B's Bachelor of Primary Education degree course, first offered in 1985, the disciplines became subsumed within the Education I, II and III courses.

In Table 4 (overleaf), the format for the theoretical component of Institution A's Bachelor degree in Primary education is presented. It was felt that, in view of the fact that, from the start, and, as indicated above, the disciplines were fully incorporated within Institutions B's Education I, II, III format, no purpose would be served by detailing parallel developments at this institution.

TABLE 4 THE EVOLUTION OF THE THEORETICAL COMPONENT IN THE FOUR-YEAR BACHELOR DEGREE IN PRIMARY EDUCATION AT INSTITUTION A : 1974-1989

DATE	Year of Study	THEORETICAL COMPONENT
from 1974	3rd/4th	EDUCATION I and II, each comprising units in: - Philosophy of education; - History of education; - Psychology of education.
1976	3rd/4th	Philosophy of education History of education Psychology of education
1977	3rd/4th	Philosophy of education History and Administration of education, sociology of education Psychology of education
from 1978	3rd/4th	Philosophy of education History and social foundations of education Psychology of education
from 1981	3rd/4th	Philosophy and theory of education History and Sociology of education Psychology of education
1983	3rd	Philosophy and theory of education Psychology of education History of education Sociology of education
	4th	Philosophy and theory of education Psychology of education Sociology of education
1984	3rd/4th	Philosophy and theory of education Psychology of education History and Sociology of education
from 1985	3rd	Philosophy and theory of education Psychology of education History and Sociology of education
1987	3rd	Philosophy and theory of education Psychology of education History and Sociology of education
	4th	Curriculum theory and practice in the primary school
from 1988	3rd/4th	Philosophy and theory of education (including 'Curriculum theory and innovation in the primary school' in the fourth year of study) Psychology of education History and Sociology of education

(**Source**: Institution A's annual calendars.)

The strong presence of each of the foundation disciplines within the theoretical component of Institution A's Bachelor degree in Primary Education is very evident from Table 4. In the first two years in which this degree course was operated the disciplines were incorporated into 'Education' courses in the third and fourth years of study but, thereafter, they appeared as independent entities, albeit that some were presented in combination with others.

History, philosophy and psychology of education were included in Institution A's Bachelor of Primary Education course from the outset. Sociology of education first appeared (in combination with 'History and Administration of Education') in 1977. In 1987 'Curriculum Theory' appeared as a separate area of study but in subsequent years it was incorporated into the 'Philosophy and Theory of education' course.

A fair amount of re-organisation of the theoretical component is evident - with different combinations of subject areas and different distributions over the third and fourth years of study - as the lecturing staff sought an optimal balance. The format established in 1988 is the same as that which is outlined in the section which follows, in which the current status of the theoretical disciplines at the selected institutions is discussed.

4.4. THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE THEORETICAL DISCIPLINES AT THE SELECTED INSTITUTIONS

As indicated in Section 4.2.1., Bachelor of Primary Education degree courses represent the most recent development in the evolution of South African primary teacher qualifications. In the present section the current status of the theoretical disciplines is examined in terms of the way in which they are incorporated into these degree courses.

4.4.1. THE STRUCTURING OF THE THEORETICAL COMPONENT WITHIN THE BACHELOR OF PRIMARY EDUCATION DEGREE COURSES AT THE SELECTED INSTITUTIONS

Table 5 (overleaf), shows the format of the theoretical components within the Bachelor of Primary Education degree courses currently offered by each of the selected institutions.

TABLE 5 CURRENT STRUCTURING OF THE THEORETICAL COMPONENT WITHIN THE BACHELOR OF PRIMARY EDUCATION DEGREE COURSES AT THE SELECTED INSTITUTIONS : 1990

INSTITUTION	A	B	C/E	D/F
YEAR 1	Academic courses only.	Academic courses only.	Academic courses only.	Academic courses, one of which is Professional Studies I.
YEAR 2	Academic courses only.	Education I: Theme: "The Child" - emphasis predominantly psychological.	Education I: Educational psychology; Philosophical aspects of education; Sociological foundations of education; History of education.	Education I: Introductory courses in Psychology, Philosophy and Sociology of education.
YEAR 3	Philosophy and theory of education; Psychology of education; History and Sociology of education.	Education II: Theme: "The School" (no theoretical discipline strongly emphasised).	Education II: Philosophy of education; Educational psychology; Education, schools and society; Comparative education systems.	Education II: Psychology of education; Sociology of education; History of education.
YEAR 4	Philosophy and theory of education, of which curriculum theory constitutes 70%; Psychology of Education; History and Sociology of education.	Education III: Theme: "Wider Social Issues as they impinge on Education" (includes sociological and philosophical modules); Independent study topic.	Education III: Philosophy of education; Sociology of education; South African education (primary school focus); Educational psychology.	Education III: Philosophy of education; History of education; The teacher and the law; Independent study topic.

(Source: University calendars and course outlines)

Institution A is the only institution which still retains the 'disciplines format', although, of the 'core' disciplines, only psychology of education is treated as a separate entity. Philosophy of education has been combined with theory of education in which is included study of curricular issues, and sociology and history of education have been combined. The other institutions (B, C/E and D/F) have subsumed the disciplines within their Education courses at the second, third and fourth year levels of study. There is, however, considerable variation in the extent to which the disciplines have 'disappeared' from the courses given by each of these institutions. Institution B appears to have moved the furthest away from the disciplines format. Institutions C/E and D/F still appear to place a fair amount of emphasis on each of the disciplines, albeit that they are handled as 'components' within their Education courses.

Table 6 (overleaf), shows the current status of each of the disciplines at the selected institutions.

TABLE 6 CURRENT STATUS OF EACH OF THE 'CORE' THEORETICAL DISCIPLINES WITHIN THE BACHELOR OF PRIMARY EDUCATION DEGREE COURSES AT THE SELECTED INSTITUTIONS : 1990

INSTITUTION	HISTORY	PHILOSOPHY	PSYCHOLOGY	SOCIOLOGY
A	Combined with Sociology in third and fourth year	Done in third and fourth year (includes curriculum study in 4th year)	Done in third and fourth year as separate area of study	Combined with History in third and fourth year
B	Very little coverage of historical aspects	Done as "module" in Education III course	Constitutes most of Education I course	Done as "module" in Education III course
C/E	Done as components of Education I, II & III courses	Done as components of Education I, II & III courses	Done as components of Education I, II & III courses	Done as components of Education I, II & III courses
D/F	Done as components of Education I, II & III courses	Done as components of Education I, II & III courses	Done as components of Education I, II & III courses	Done as components of Education I, II & III courses

(Source: University calendars)

Of the four disciplines it would seem that psychology of education has been least affected by the reduction in the status of the disciplines. At each institution it comprises a significant part of the theoretical component. At Institution C, the pre-eminence of psychology of education is further evidenced by the fact that the Education Faculty comprises two departments: the Department of Education and the Department of Educational Psychology. History of education is no longer treated as a discrete entity at Institution B (although, as will be shown in Table 8, some historical aspects of primary education are dealt with within the Education courses). It is taught by all the other institutions.

Philosophy and sociology of education remain as components at each of the institutions but nowhere are they accorded independent status in the sense of being taught as a separate course.

From the foregoing it would appear that, with the exception of Institution B, there has been little reduction in the status of the theoretical disciplines at the selected South African institutions.

In the following section, the reasons provided by staff members for their choice of approach in handling the theoretical component of the primary teacher preparation programmes at the selected institutions are discussed.

4.4.2. THE RATIONALES FOR THE CHOICE OF APPROACH TO THE THEORETICAL COMPONENT OF THE BACHELOR OF PRIMARY EDUCATION DEGREE COURSES : VIEWS OF THE TEACHING STAFF AT THE SELECTED INSTITUTIONS

The information contained in Table 7 (overleaf), was taken either directly from responses to Questionnaire No. 2, or from the covering letters which accompanied the return of this questionnaire.

TABLE 7 INSTITUTIONAL RATIONALES FOR APPROACH TO THE THEORETICAL COMPONENT : 1990

INSTITUTION	APPROACH/RATIONALE
A	**APPROACH:** Disciplines' format, albeit that certain of the disciplines are taught in combination with one another. **RATIONALE:** This approach enables individual lecturers to "operate from their strengths and interests". Integration of the different theoretical perspectives is seen to be the responsibility of the individual student. One means whereby this is achieved is through a major written assignment which requires students "to integrate the elements of the various theory courses".
B	**APPROACH:** Disciplines' format almost entirely abandoned in favour of 'issues-based' approach. **RATIONALE:** The study of 'issues' is considered to be "of greater value in a rapidly changing society than the study of separate disciplines for its own sake".
C/E	**APPROACH:** Each of the core theoretical disciplines is taught within the framework of the Education I, II and III courses. They are, however, effectively taught separately. **RATIONALE:** No specific rationale for this particular approach was provided. It was stated, however, that there is "a strong awareness on the staff for the need to integrate material and develop insight on the part of students of the inter-relations and relevance of topics being taught".
D/F	**APPROACH:** Disciplines' taught within the Education I, II and III courses. Emphasis on 'integrated studies' recently replaced by "discipline base" and "... practical implications are addressed in an integrated way AFTER the disciplines have been introduced and dealt with". **RATIONALE:** Integrated studies "tend to confuse students and lead to much wooliness and "waffle" ".

(**Source**: Responses to Questionnaire No. 2.)

Before discussing Table 7 it is necessary to highlight a potential weakness, namely, that Questionnaire No. 2 was completed by individual staff members. Therefore, although one may perhaps assume that the views expressed are representative of the institution's general philosophy, one cannot in fact assert that this is so.

The picture which emerges from Table 7 would seem to confirm the earlier suggestion that, with the exception of Institution B, there has been very little diminution in the status of the disciplines. The "retreat from the disciplines" (Dearden 1985) in British pre-service courses for teachers has not yet taken place within the pre-service courses for primary teachers at the selected South African institutions. Of interest is the comment from the staff member representing Institution D/F to the effect that there has been a recent return to a discipline-based course; a move prompted by the belief that the 'integrated studies' route had failed to produce an adequately critical approach in students. In the 1989 calendar entry for Institution D/F's Bachelor of Primary Education degree a theme-based approach within the Education I and II courses is listed. Introductory courses were done in each of the disciplines in the Education I course, and then, in the Education III course, students were required to select one of the disciplines in which to specialize, with a focus on the curriculum.

4.4.3. AN INDICATION OF THE TOPICS CONTAINED WITHIN THE THEORETICAL COMPONENT OF THE BACHELOR OF PRIMARY EDUCATION DEGREE COURSES AT THE SELECTED INSTITUTIONS

In Table 8 (overleaf), the topics contained within the theoretical component of the Bachelor of Primary Education degree courses at each of the selected institutions are listed. The topics have been assigned to five broad categories, four of which roughly mirror the conventional discipline-based subdivisions, namely, historical, philosophical, sociological and psychological. The fifth category contains those topics which did not appear to slot readily into any of the 'discipline' categories. Although the topics listed for each of the institutions may not constitute an exhaustive list, and no indication is given as to the depth of coverage of any one topic, it would nonetheless seem that there is a fairly high degree of similarity in the range of topics dealt with at each of the institutions, even in the case of Institution B where, in the words of one member of the lecturing staff, the disciplines have become "ancestors in the cupboard" (pers. comm. 1990).

TABLE 8 TOPICS COVERED BY THE SELECTED INSTITUTIONS WITHIN THE THEORETICAL COMPONENT OF THEIR BACHELOR OF PRIMARY EDUCATION DEGREE COURSES : 1990

	TOPIC	INSTITUTION			
		A	B	C/E	D/F
H	Changing conceptions of childhood	*	*	*	*
I	Greek education [Plato/Aristotle]			*	*
S	Montessori	*			*
T	Rousseau			*	*
O	Steiner				*
R	History of South African education	*	*	*	*
Y					
	Aims in education		*	*	*
	Alternative education:				
	- Freire	*	*	*	*
	- Illich	*	*	*	*
	- A.S. Neill	*	*		*
	- People's Education	*	*		*
	Authority		*	*	*
	Child-centred education	*	*	*	
	Competition in education		*		
P	Creativity	*	*	*	
H	Culture	*	*	*	*
I	Curriculum theory (aspects of)	*	*	*	*
L	R.F. Dearden (writings of)	*	*		*
O	Dewey	*		*	*
S	Discipline	*	*	*	*
O	Education (concept of)		*	*	*
P	Equality (concept of)		*		*
H	Freedom and responsibility		*	*	*
I	Ideologies in education	*	*	*	*
C	Indoctrination	*	*	*	*
A	Moral education		*	*	*
L	Open education	*			*
	R.S. Peters (writings of)				*
	SATC Credo (implications)		*	*	*
	Schools of philosophical thought:				
	- phenomenology			*	*
	- existentialism			*	*
	- conceptual analysis		*	*	*
	Teaching (concept of)			*	*
	Theories of knowledge (e.g. Bloom's taxonomy)	*	*	*	*

TABLE 8 (contd.)

	TOPIC	INSTITUTION			
		A	B	C/E	D/F
PSYCHOLOGICAL	Children with special needs	*	*	*	*
	Developmental theory (child)	*	*	*	*
	Erikson		*		*
	Freud		*		*
	Guidance and Counselling	*	*		*
	Individual differences		*		*
	Intelligence testing (e.g. Thorndike)		*	*	*
	Learning theories	*	*	*	*
	Maslow		*		*
	Motivation	*	*	*	
	Nature/nurture debate	*	*	*	*
	Perception	*	*		*
	Piaget	*	*	*	*
	Remedial education	*	*	*	*
	Rogers, Carl (Humanism)	*	*	*	*
	Skinner (Behaviourism)		*	*	*
	Self-concept		*	*	*
SOCIOLOGICAL	Construction of social reality	*	*		*
	Cultural differences	*			*
	Deviance	*		*	*
	Differential educational attainment		*	*	
	"Diploma Disease"	*			
	Education & Development (Third World context)	*		*	*
	Ethnicity in education	*	*		*
	Gender in education	*	*	*	*
	Hidden curriculum	*	*	*	*
	Labelling theory		*		*
	Language and education (e.g. Bernstein)	*	*		*
	Pupil-teacher interaction	*	*	*	*
	Self-fulfilling prophecy	*	*	*	*
	Socialization (plus home background theories)	*	*	*	*
	Social stratification		*	*	*
	Sociological writings of:				
	- Bowles & Gintis	*	*	*	*
	- Durkheim	*	*	*	*
	- Nell Keddie		*	*	*
	- Talcott Parsons		*		*
	Sociology of knowledge(e.g. M.F.D. Young)	*	*		*
	Theoretical perspectives in sociology	*	*	*	*
	World of work (educational implications)	*			*

TABLE 8 (contd.)

	TOPIC	INSTITUTION			
		A	B	C/E	D/F
I	Accountability		*	*	*
N	Apartheid education	*	*	*	*
T	Christian National Education	*	*		*
E	Classroom research methods	*	*		
R	Communication	*	*		
D	Community projects	*			*
I	de Lange Commission	*	*	*	*
S	Discovery learning	*	*	*	
C	Evaluation (assessment)	*	*		*
I	Gifted children		*	*	
P	Integrated curriculum	*	*	*	
L	Integrated day	*	*		
I	Mixed ability teaching	*	*	*	
N	Multi-cultural education	*		*	*
A	Other educational systems:				
R	- U.K.	*			*
Y	- U.S.A.	*		*	*
	- U.S.S.R.	*		*	*
	- African countries	*		*	*
	Play in education	*	*		*
	Second language teaching (issues)		*		
	Teaching styles	*	*	*	*

(**Source**: Responses to Questionnaire No. 2, course descriptions and past examination questions.)

The topics listed in Table 8 (particularly in the first four categories) do not appear to differ very much from those which might be included were all the institutions still explicitly committed to a 'disciplines format'. When asked to indicate the extent to which students were introduced to the "particular concepts, methodology etc of each of the foundation disciplines (Question B(iv), Questionnaire No. 2), it was stated that Institutions A, B and D/F did so "in a fair amount of detail"; and at Institution C/E these aspects were "strongly emphasised".

4.4.4. THE VIEWS OF LECTURING STAFF ON THE PURPOSE BEHIND THE INCLUSION OF A THEORETICAL COMPONENT AND WAYS OF MINIMISING ANY APPARENT DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Much of Questionnaire No. 2 was devoted to soliciting the views of lecturing staff at the various institutions on the justification for the inclusion of a theoretical component in primary teacher preparation courses and on the optimal means of minimising any dichotomy which may arise between this theoretical component and the practical aspects of such courses. The staff were also asked to indicate whether they were conscious of any degree of student disenchantment with the theoretical component, and, if so, to suggest reasons for this. The views put forward by the various staff members are outlined in Tables 9, 10 and 11.

TABLE 9 JUSTIFICATIONS PUT FORWARD BY LECTURING STAFF FOR THE INCLUSION OF A THEORETICAL COMPONENT IN PRIMARY TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTION	JUSTIFICATION FOR THE THEORETICAL COMPONENT
A	"If we hope to produce teachers who will function as autonomous, reflective professionals rather than as mindless functionaries then there needs to be some theoretical base from which they make decisions and against which they appraise their actions."
B	"I believe there is a distinctive philosophy of primary education - not just context and method, but the values and concepts on which it is based. If students in training begin to understand and assimilate these distinctive concepts and values they will have a firm basis for action in the classroom."
C/E	"Foundational to practice."
D/F	" ... we would hope that all teachers can make conceptual links and informed choices about their preferred classroom practices and the possible consequences of these."

Implicit in all of the above justifications is the notion that theory ought to be seen as having a vital contribution to make to sound

practice. The extent to which lecturing staff believe students are cognisant of this is outlined in Table 10.

TABLE 10 LECTURING STAFFS' PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT RESPONSE TO THE THEORETICAL COMPONENT OF PRIMARY TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMMES

		INSTITUTION			
		A	B	C/E	D/F
FREQUENCY OF APPARENT STUDENT ANTIPATHY TOWARDS THEORETICAL COMPONENT	never				
	occasionally	*	*	*	*
	fairly often				
	frequently				
EXPLANATIONS OF LECTURING STAFF FOR ANTIPATHY	student immaturity	*			
	lack of professional awareness	*		*	
	problems inherent in the course	*	*		*

As Table 10 indicates, lecturing staff at the selected institutions believe that student antipathy towards the theoretical component of teacher preparation programmes is only an occasional problem, and the main reason, albeit not the only one, for this antipathy lies with the nature of the theoretical component itself. It was suggested that many students undertaking their pre-service preparation were sometimes unable to see the "specific personal relevance" of certain theoretical issues "at this stage of their professional development" (Institution A). This same point was made by a staff member at Institution B. The relevance of some theoretical aspects is only realised once the student has acquired more experience of classroom reality.

Other reasons put forward by a staff member at Institution F were:

- the students' own twelve years of schooling which sometimes seems to threaten much of the 'idealism' of theory;

- the negative impact of theory which is "critical of education". "... some of the most capable students are "turned off" and demotivated."

- the tendency of weaker students to experience "conceptual problems, verbal and linguistic barriers, to understanding the role of theory".

A staff member at Institution C claimed that the major reason for student antipathy towards the theoretical component lay in students' difficulty in "connecting theory and practice". In Table 11 (overleaf) the views of lecturing staff in relation to this apparent dichotomy between theory and practice, and ways of ameliorating it, are outlined.

TABLE 11 THE VIEWS OF LECTURING STAFF ON WAYS OF MINIMISING THE THEORY/PRACTICE DICHOTOMY

INSTITUTION	VIEWS OF LECTURING STAFF
A	- Staff with "a grounded practical base in primary school work to handle a major portion of the theory". - Collaborative staff input into theoretical component. - "Moves towards a transformatory praxis model of operation." - Students expected to participate in small-scale research investigations with "... a focus on action research that develops personal theory and acts to test theory in practice". - Expectation that students' teaching-practice log-books "reflect theory".
B	- Essential for staff to "give reasons for actions in the classroom, using theory to underpin those actions", and to expect students to "be able to justify anything they do in their classrooms". - "Constantly relating" theory and practice "and not seeing them as two distinct aspects". - "Getting students to reflect on their actions" which "naturally causes them to draw upon theory but not in a forced way".
C/E	- "There should not be a dichotomy." "Careful structuring of the course" will reduce the extent to which this is a problem.
D/F	- Greater co-ordination between staff responsible for theoretical component and those responsible for professional component. "Closer co-ordination across the entire curriculum" between college and university staff. - "Research on part of students."

The information contained in Table 11 indicates that the participating lecturing staff see the onus as falling largely on themselves to ensure that there is a 'good fit' between theory and practice. This can be achieved both in terms of the way in which the theoretical courses are

structured and in terms of the way in which students are encouraged to view the relationship between the theoretical aspects of such courses and the practical realities of the classroom situation. This requires that staff be well-versed not only in their own area(s) of theoretical expertise, but also in the practical aspects of primary teaching. Implicit in all this is the need for close collaboration between staff members responsible for the various components of the programme - both the theoretical and the practical. There is a need for staff to constantly draw students' attention to theoretical implications underlying practical situations and vice versa. Students must be encouraged to actively reflect on theory in relation to their practical experiences. In this way theory can be transformed from an inert body of knowledge into an integral part of their repertoire of teaching aids. One means of encouraging this is via the involvement of students in research-type activities - be it via careful reflection on their experiences during teaching practices or via more formally structured research projects.

The views of three staff members at Institution B on some further aspects of primary teacher preparation are presented in the following section.

4.5. THE VIEWS OF THREE MEMBERS OF THE LECTURING STAFF AT INSTITUTION B ON ASPECTS OF SOUTH AFRICAN PRIMARY TEACHER PREPARATION

Although there is a certain degree of overlap in some of the questions contained in Questionnaire No. 2 and in the questionnaire distributed to three of the staff members at Institution B (Questionnaire No. 3), an

attempt is made to explore their views on primary teacher preparation in somewhat broader terms; i.e. beyond an exclusive focus on the status of the theoretical disciplines. The staff members' responses to the questions are outlined in Table 12.

TABLE 12 SOME ASPECTS OF SOUTH AFRICAN PRIMARY TEACHER PREPARATION : THE VIEWS OF THREE STAFF MEMBERS AT INSTITUTION B

LECTURER 1	LECTURER 2	LECTURER 3
Question 1: Views on most important aspects of South African primary teacher preparation?		
A need to move away from Euro-centric thinking and equip students with the skills to deal with the "polarity" in S.A. education at present.	Initially, to provide students with the professional skills to cope in the classroom; then to encourage the student in the development of a professional rationale for their actions.	To produce thoughtful and competent practitioners - able to prepare the child for living in the broadest sense of the word, beyond mere knowledge and skills.
Question 2: Best means of meeting needs of both students and the schools in which destined to teach?		
Development of an awareness of the forces/ systems that exist in S.A. and an awakening of possible approaches for the future, and the "pragmatic ability to survive during the first two years of teaching".	Strong professional training in teaching subjects and a clear understanding of the theory behind "good primary practice" and a clear view of the types of schools in which students are likely to operate.	Courses that enable students to grow as human beings with better knowledge of themselves, of young people and of the tasks of education - a humanistic approach vital to the production of "true facilitators of learning".

TABLE 12 (contd.)

LECTURER 1	LECTURER 2	LECTURER 3
Question 3: The contribution that can be expected of educational theory?		
To get the teacher to think critically about about what they are doing and why.	Without theory students are likely to rely on others in the decision-making process - theory facilitates the development of independent thinking and the ability to change or adapt to new circumstances.	To produce people who see theory as informing practice and practice as reflecting theory. Educational theory is a "crucial component" in the production of a thoughtful practitioners.
Question 4: Student response to educational theory?		
Depends on the student, the topic, and the skill of the lecturer. Students particularly critical of: 1) questions of relevancy, and, 2) lecturing staff who lack primary experience.	Very dependent on way it is taught - if it "sheds light on the context, the people involved and the learning taking place, then it becomes meaningful and thus relevant.	Lack of experience hampers students' ability to appreciate theory but if lecturers "take pains to make the learning of theory meaningful, i.e. it both informs and reflects practice, then students see it as worthwhile".
Question 5: The use of the disciplines as 'vehicles' for the teaching of educational theory?		
Each discipline has value but time constraints prevent them being taught adequately - "eclectic approach around the topic 'education'" preferred.	Disciplines are fine if seen as 'vehicles' and not as ends in themselves. There is "a danger of the discipline itself becoming the overriding focus rather than the education it is meant to serve".	Can be very useful, especially if links are drawn between the different disciplines and not divorced from practice - otherwise value of the disciplines in "informing and reflecting practice is lost on the students".

TABLE 12 (contd.)

LECTURER 1	LECTURER 2	LECTURER 3
Question 6: Reasons for disciplines losing ground?		
1) Too many other demands in course to give adequate attention to the disciplines; 2) Lack of perceived relevance; 3) Experience/quality of lecturing staff.	Often rejected by the clientele they were supposed to serve - expectations were not fulfilled in terms of benefitting them as teachers.	The dominant educational philosophy on S.A. does not give much emphasis to producing thoughtful practitioners. Socio-political and economic factors emphasise practice as if it were adequate in itself. Also, sometimes the disciplines are poorly taught. Staff too have other pressures to contend with, e.g. production of research publications.
Question 7: Optimal approach to theory/practice balance?		
"... a determined link between theory and practice" should be made frequently and meaningfully. Lecturers need to "show their competence and experience in both theoretical and professional areas"	Strive for "relevance and balance" - to get students to reflect on issues - both professional and theoretical.	Theory and practice be seen as "separate" - make practical value of of theory clear. Theory courses need to deal with related topics in tandem to help students to "make connections".
Question 8: Differences between 'old' diploma course and 'new' degree course?		
Greater number of academic courses in degree course, plus an attempt at raised standards.	Introduction of study of wider South African context, plus 'Special Study' which "has made intellectual demands of of a different sort on students".	Degree course more rigorous and more likely to produce thoughtful practitioners. Theory is "taken much more seriously and students appear to value it more".
Question 9: Degree course attracted a different type of student?		
"I don't think so."	"Yes ... students are more academic and therefore more able to cope with the demands of the course ... [but] there is, as yet, no evidence to suggest that they are better teachers ..."	"Difficult to say." Students seem to be "more thoughtful about what they do in the classroom ... perhaps the fact that it is a degree rather than a diploma attracts a more academically capable students".

TABLE 12 (contd.)

LECTURER 1	LECTURER 2	LECTURER 3
Question 10: Priorities for the future?		
Nature, duration and standards will change dramatically. Euro-centric approach will become even more inappropriate. "The most pressing needs will be the teaching strategies needed to cope with compulsory primary education for all multi-racial classes, and the effective teaching of literacy and numeracy to large groups."	Need to develop a better understanding of pupils of different cultures and how to cope in a multi-cultural classroom. Need to develop "independent thinkers with a clear grasp of the needs of the primary child, especially the S.A. primary child".	Will need to produce as many teachers as possible in the shortest possible time. This may compromise quality - exacerbated by numbers, language problems, and socio-economic and political difficulties. Hopeful, nonetheless, that competent teacher trainers "can still offer a quality theoretical course - especially if the future scenario involves a good deal of upgrading and refresher work - once teachers have qualified".

The three staff members' responses contained in Table 12, largely 'speak' for themselves. An important point to emerge is a consciousness of the need to develop courses for South African primary teachers which reflect South African circumstances to a greater extent than may previously have been the case. There is a strongly felt need to move away from predominantly Euro-centric models. This is seen to be particularly vital in the face of changes on the political front and the prospect of teachers operating in multicultural/multiracial settings in the near future. In this context educational theory is seen as having a vital role to play in terms of encouraging student teachers to develop personal rationales for the teaching policies they adopt, rationales which evolve from their own critical and independent appraisal of competing educational philosophies.

Each of the staff members acknowledged that the disciplines of education can provide a valuable basis for courses in educational theory. Problems experienced in the teaching of the disciplines, however, are seen to undermine their maximally effective use: problems such as shortage of time to 'do justice' to the disciplines; difficulties in terms of staff expertise in these areas; the danger of the disciplines becoming ends in themselves rather than aids to the development of a professional practitioner; and, lack of perceived relevance in the eyes of student teachers. On a more sinister note, the suggestion was made that current educational policy-making tends to favour the production of a technocratic-type efficiency in teachers rather than any measure of rational autonomy which may conduce to a questioning of prevailing norms and values.

In meeting the needs of student teachers, all three staff members argued that the first priority is to provide students with the skills to "survive" their early teaching experiences. Once this has been achieved students are then more likely to recognise the contribution that educational theory can make. To facilitate this it is seen as essential that constant links be made between the theoretical and professional components of primary teacher preparation courses and that lecturing staff are seen to themselves be proficient in both areas.

Staff members' views on the difference between the degree and diploma course were relatively non-committal. Although the former is seen to demand a more academic approach, there was no certainty as regards the extent to which degree candidates actually make better practitioners.

In terms of the future, concern was expressed that the need for increased production of teachers may compromise the ability of lecturing staff to sustain quality in their courses. A suggestion was made, however, that this could be alleviated by means of subsequent in-service courses dealing with theoretical aspects of the educative task.

4.6. RESUMÉ

From the information contained in this chapter it is clear that staff members at each of the selected institutions regard educational theory as vital to the production of effective teachers, capable of exercising independent and well-reasoned judgement.

There is some variation in the way in which the theoretical component is structured at each of the institutions. Three of the four institutions place emphasis on the theoretical disciplines, although these disciplines are presented in different formats and/or combinations. Staff members at the fourth institution, while acknowledging that the disciplines may constitute an effective 'vehicle' for the teaching of the theoretical component, believe that the disadvantages inherent in the disciplines format outweigh the advantages, and have thus opted for an issues-based approach to educational theory. A survey of the topics dealt with within the theoretical component taught at each of the institutions reveals that, notwithstanding differences in the ways in which it is structured at each institution, there is probably quite a high degree of similarity in the final outcome.

The success of the theoretical component - in terms of its contribution to the production of thoughtful practitioners - is seen to depend largely on the way in which it is structured and implemented. Vital to this success is the extent to which students are encouraged to draw links between the educational theory to which they are exposed and their own critical evaluations of practical teaching situations; i.e. students must be encouraged to test theory in relation to practice, and vice versa. A valuable means of facilitating this two-way process is the encouragement of a more participatory role for students, whereby they are required to 'research' their own teaching experiences and also take part in small-scale research projects.

Other ideas regarding an optimal approach to the theoretical component of primary teacher preparation programmes are examined in the following chapter. Also included here is further discussion of the debate surrounding the 'fate' of the disciplines.

CHAPTER FIVE

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEVOLUTION OF THE THEORETICAL DISCIPLINES AND THE EMERGENCE OF ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO THE INCORPORATION OF EDUCATIONAL THEORY IN PRIMARY TEACHER PREPARATION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

It is apparent from the literature, and also from the findings reported in the previous chapter, that the theoretical disciplines no longer retain unchallenged centre stage in the theoretical component of primary teacher preparation programmes. In British programmes they are now rare as separate entities (Wilkin, in Woods and Pollard 1988:23). Of the four South African Bachelor of Primary Education degree courses surveyed in the preceding chapter, only one institution has retained an explicitly discipline-based approach. In the degree courses for the other three institutions, although the disciplines continue to be important components, they have been subsumed within the Education I, II and III courses. In the case of one of these institutions, however, the disciplines are not in fact explicitly identified as such.

The term 'devolution' in the title of this chapter is intended as a counterbalance to the use of the term 'evolution' in Chapter Three in which the ascendant status of the theoretical disciplines was discussed.

'Devolution' is defined as "delegation or conferral to a subordinate" or as "retrograde evolution" (Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary). In this chapter the factors contributing to the devolution of the theoretical disciplines are discussed, as well as counter pleas from those favouring the retention of the disciplines. Alternative proposals for sources of theoretical insight are then discussed.

5.2. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO A REDUCTION IN THE STATUS OF THE THEORETICAL DISCIPLINES

A number of factors have contributed to the move away from the disciplines as the major sources of theoretical insight in teacher preparation courses. In the late 1970s McNamara and Desforges wrote, "... the time is ripe for the abandonment of the disciplines of education" (McNamara and Desforges 1978:17). In the 1980s the trend was increasingly towards a more integrated, holistic approach to educational theory. There are those who question the amount of time given to educational theory in courses for student teachers, proposing instead a much greater emphasis on the honing of pedagogical skills and subject expertise. As Woods and Pollard noted, " ... during the 1970s and 1980s ... the status and influence of the educational disciplines declined and that of the professional dimension of teaching increased" (Woods and Pollard, in Woods and Pollard 1988:23). In this section some of the factors contributing to a diminished status for the disciplines are identified. Although the major focus of this section is on the disciplines, many of the arguments lodged against the disciplines have also been directed at educational theory in general.

5.2.1. AN EXAGGERATED STATUS FOR THE DISCIPLINES : PURITY versus PRAGMATISM

Philosopher, Richard Peters, warned that the teaching of the disciplines to student teachers should at all times take cognisance of vocational requirements, that teacher educators should be "... primarily concerned with turning out good teachers, not with training philosophers, psychologists, or sociologists" (Peters 1977:160). In many cases, however, teacher educators have been accused of failing to heed these cautionary words in the design of their discipline-based theory courses.

The disciplines were first incorporated into pre-service courses for teachers in the belief that, not only did they constitute entirely appropriate sources of theoretical insight into educational issues, but also, that they would increase the academic rigour of such programmes. The latter aspect was regarded as particularly important in view of the perceived need for greater university participation in the preparation of primary teachers. In these institutions of higher learning, theoretical thoughts and writing tend to be more highly valued than activities of a professional nature (Wideen, in Hopkins and Reid 1985:86). It has been suggested, however, that academically-biased discipline-based courses have tended to be taught for their "intrinsic value rather than their potential worth as aids to the enhanced understanding of practice" (Wilkin, in Woods and Pollard 1988:26). The desire for academic recognition, perhaps more than anything else, threatened to tip the scales when it came to achieving an optimal balance between academic rigour and professional utility.

Relatively early on, Peters, in referring to philosophy of education, highlighted the dilemma of these two extremes:

> The work could be practically relevant but philosophically feeble; or it could be philosophically sophisticated but remote from practical problems.
>
> (Peters, in Archambault 1965:x).

Dearden, too, while remaining a staunch advocate of the merits of the disciplines, warned that an over-enthusiastic, academically-oriented pursuit of the disciplines often detracted from a concern for practical issues (Dearden 1980; Dearden 1984).

Notwithstanding the sentiments cited above, philosophers of education, in particular, have been accused of being major contributors to the elevated status of the disciplines (Wilkin, in Woods and Pollard 1988:31-33). A comment by Hirst, himself a philosopher, would seem to support this argument:

> ... educational practice brooks no delay and it often seems that whilst philosophers are busy debating the possible implications of certain beliefs for education, the philosophical contribution that educational theory really needs goes by default.
>
> (Hirst 1963-64:64).

Philosophers of education are not, however, the only offenders. Woods and Pollard suggested that when sociology of education was first becoming established as a recognised discipline of education, its exponents were more concerned with establishing its academic credentials than with meeting the needs of teachers (Woods and Pollard, in Woods and Pollard 1988:10). Psychology of education too has been criticised. It has been claimed that in its yearning for scientific respectability it borrowed heavily from the classical theories of its parent discipline and, in so

doing, bored "generations of teachers to death with irrelevant pieties" (Fontana 1977:30). Similar criticisms of psychology of education have been made by Desforges and McNamara (1977), Desforges (1985) and Smith, L, (1987a). The relevance of history of education for prospective teachers, in the face of what are perceived by many to be more urgent priorities, was questioned comparatively early on - as was indicated in Section 3.4.2. It appears, however, to have been subject to fewer recent criticisms. One explanation for this may be that history of education has tended for some time to play a less dominant role in teacher preparation programmes than the other disciplines. Also, claims are seldom made that history of education can make anything more than an indirect contribution to a teacher's classroom competence. It is seen essentially as providing what might be termed 'background information', albeit, in the eyes of many, important background information, with the potential to alter perceptions and therefore attitudes and actions.

There is a certain irony in the fact that while teacher educators specializing in the disciplines have been charged with being overly concerned with adherence to the particular concepts and methodologies of the parent disciplines, mainstream philosophers, psychologists, sociologists and historians do not appear to have been especially interested in education. Smith, for example, refers to "the relative neglect of teaching shown by psychologists" (Smith 1990:293).

5.2.2. UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS

The disciplines' format was initially introduced in the belief that it would provide a more rational and manageable framework for what was an

essentially eclectic and somewhat amorphous area of study. However, for reasons such as those discussed in the preceding section, it has become apparent that this format is not perceived as adequately fulfilling this earlier expectation. Writing in 1977, Lacey noted students' declining interest in the theoretical disciplines (Lacey 1977). More recently, Munby and Russell commented that, "As teacher educators, we have witnessed our students' collective dissatisfaction with 'theory'" (Munby and Russell 1989:73).

As part of the SPITE project (The Structure and Process of Initial Teacher Education within Universities in England and Wales, Bernbaum, Patrick and Reid 1982) students were asked to rate courses in terms of the intellectual stimulation they provided. Psychology of education was rated as the most intellectually stimulating, sociology of education was accorded second place and philosophy of education third. In terms of the contribution these courses made to professional development, while psychology retained top-billing, philosophy and sociology "were much less well received" (Bernbaum, Patrick and Reid, in Hopkins and Reid 1985:60). More recently, however, in a report of the proceedings of a symposium on "The Primary School Classroom", even psychology was described as being " ... widely perceived as having marginal relevance to education" (Smith 1990:293). Smith attributed this apparent decline in psychology's status to two factors. Firstly, the CATE (Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education) criteria in terms of which subject knowledge is seen to be of paramount importance; and secondly, the high priority accorded to "good practice" (Smith 1990:293). The types of criticisms levelled by practitioners against sociology of education courses include, " ... lack of rigour, stating the obvious in obscure terminology and lack of relevance to practice" (McNamara, in Barton and Walker 1978:280-281). In

this same article, McNamara is further recorded as having suggested that there is an inherent mismatch between the world views of sociologists and teachers, the former tending towards scepticism and a measure of iconoclasm, the latter tending to a greater optimism and conservatism. In referring to philosophy of education, Robin Barrow pointed to the danger of it degenerating into "a sterile exercise in hair-splitting without practical import" (Barrow 1974:135).

In all of the above, a common theme is the failure of the disciplines to provide adequate guidelines to practice. Dearden, in defending the disciplines, argued that criticisms of much of educational theory were based on inappropriate expectations of the contribution it could make to educational practice: "Detailed practical assistance was never promised in the programmatic outlines of the 1960s ... in consequence it is judged to be failing where it could not succeed" (Dearden 1980:18).

5.2.3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATED THEORY OF EDUCATION

It could be postulated that, having used the disciplines format as a kind of 'Trojan Horse' with which to enter the portals of higher learning and to gain academic credibility, this format could now be discarded. A new route to maintaining academic credibility might be seen to lie in the creation of independent fields of study within the specifically educational context.

In Chapter Three curriculum theory was mentioned as being one subject area within the theoretical component of teacher preparation courses which, unlike the disciplines of history, philosophy, psychology and

sociology of education, germinated specifically within educational terrain. The emergence of this new and relatively autonomous field of study (notwithstanding its quite extensive borrowing from each of the core disciplines) arose not only in response to the recognition of the need for a more specific focus on curricular issues, but, also, in response to calls for "a meeting place for [education's] related "disciplines" to come together" (Chambers and Grainge 1974:20). This may be seen as a reflection of the general trend taking place in many fields away from reductionist philosophies towards more holistic approaches.

The incorporation of the disciplines into the 'educational studies' format is a further indication of a trend towards holism. In this context the fragmentation of the theoretical study of education into the - essentially academic - disciplines of history, philosophy, psychology and sociology of education could be seen to run counter to this newly emerging holism. As noted earlier, in three of the four South African Bachelor of Primary Education degree programmes surveyed, the disciplines have been subsumed within the Education courses taught in the second, third and fourth years of study.

5.2.4. DEMANDS FOR GREATER PRACTICAL COMPETENCE

While the increase in the amount of theory incorporated into primary teacher preparation courses - particularly as encapsulated within the disciplines' format - may well have won for such courses greater academic credence, this development also prompted quite severe criticisms that a concomitant of the time spent on educational theorising was that inadequate time was available for the perfecting of teaching skills. As

Tibble put it: "Some of the critics seem to be complaining that Cinderella, now a princess, is not so good at scraping and scouring as once she was" (Tibble, in Tibble 1971:2).

The perception that teachers were not being adequately prepared for the practical demands of the classroom gave rise to demands that greater attention be given to enhancing teaching skills. A number of articles in 1980s' educational journals have been concerned with the question of 'skills training', inter alia Stones 1983; Barrow 1987; Griffiths 1987; Smith, R, 1987. In addition calls have been made for closer liaison between schools and teacher training institutions. In this context, Paul Hirst made the following comment: "If educational theory is to illuminate and influence particular judgements in teaching, I am convinced it must be developed in the closest possible relationship with current practices in schools ..." (Hirst 1974:21). In the same article he argued in favour of "professional training rather than teacher education" (ibid.). Hirst's line of argument might seem to be in direct opposition to the recommendations of the Robbins Report (1963) that teacher training colleges be redesignated colleges of education.

In terms of the 'Criteria for the evaluation of South African qualifications for employment in education', South African student teachers registered for the four-year Bachelor of Primary Education degree are required to spend a minimum of ten weeks in schools on teaching practice (Department of Education and Culture 1988, Clause 11.5.2.7 : 49). This is no different from the stipulated time for the three-year diploma course (ibid., Clause 11.4.5.8 : 34). In Britain, however, more emphasis has been placed on school-based training in place of "... the theory dominated courses of yesteryear. ... Students will

spend long hours in school, learning the craft of their profession from the practitioners" (Wilkin, in Woods and Pollard 1988:25). This move carries shades of the pupil-teacher system discussed in Chapter Two. In terms of the criteria laid down by the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, British primary student teachers are required to spend one hundred days in schools (Department of Education and Science 1989, Circular No. 24/89, Section 2, paragraph 2.1 : 7). This is approximately double that required for South African Bachelor of Primary Education degree students.

The desirability of positive links between schools, colleges of education and universities is generally accepted. Notwithstanding this, however, there are those who question some of the factors motivating the demands for a greater emphasis on professional courses. Questions have been asked as to the extent to which this development arose in response to genuine complaints of teacher incompetence or whether economic pressures are at the root of it. Elliott and Labbett, for example, implied that there is a strong link in American education between Competency-Based Teacher Education programmes, (C.B.T.E.), and the accountability movement and suggested that the same process was occurring in Britain in the face of fiscal constraints. They asked whether "simplistic stimulus-response models can be applied to educational situations without distorting the whole nature of the educational enterprise" (Elliott and Labbett 1975:51). In similar vein, Dearden cited the severe cost cuts and closures currently faced by institutions of higher learning as causal factors in the declining status of the theoretical aspects of teacher preparation (Dearden 1980:17-18).

Perhaps the harshest criticisms are those voiced by Hartnett and Naish. They described the demand for educational theory to be relevant as a disturbing symptom of what they scathingly termed the "new vocationalism" (Hartnett and Naish, in Hartnett and Naish 1986:185). They suggested that this could be seen as an attempt to make theory safe and non-threatening to the status quo, an attempt by the powers-that-be to rein teachers in, to reduce their autonomy by stifling the development of teachers' critical faculties (ibid. : 193). (A similar suggestion from one of the members of the teaching staff at Institution B is recorded in Table 12, Chapter Four.) Hartnett and Naish further suggested that the claim that student teachers are not being adequately equipped with practical teaching skills could be interpreted as an attempt to shift any blame for educational failure away from central government onto the teaching profession (ibid. : 192). Teacher educators - aware of the fact that their own professional advancement was helped by "well-oiled" (ibid. : 195) relations with government officials - are accused of having fallen prey to this "new vocationalism" (ibid. : 195). These writers rejected narrowly practice-focused approaches to educational studies, on the grounds that such approaches gave " ... no adequate place for serious intellectual reflection on, or understanding of, the nature of the educational enterprise or of it central and prior problems" (ibid. : 183-204).

5.2.5. THE IMPACT OF TEACHER SOCIALIZATION

The socialization process has been described as a very influential factor in determining student teachers' receptivity to educational theory - either within Educational Studies courses or as it is encapsulated within

the disciplines' format. As reported in the previous chapter, this socialization process was mentioned as a factor contributing to student difficulties in relation to the theoretical component of their preparation by a staff member at Institution F (Section 4.4.4).

Several educational writers have discussed the question of teacher socialization, inter alia, Hoy 1968; Edgar and Warren 1969; Yee 1969; Gibson 1971-1972; Helsel and Krchniak 1972; Fuchs 1973; Lacey 1977; Hogben and Petty 1979; Petty and Hogben 1980; Denscombe 1982; Hargreaves 1984; and Britzman 1986. An analysis of the literature suggests that teachers in fact go through three socialization experiences. The first is a kind of "invisible apprenticeship in pedagogy lasting from 12 to 15 years" (Locke, cited in Hatton 1988:343) during which they are themselves pupils and in almost daily contact with the teaching world. The second takes place during the training period, and the third, once they actually enter the schools, be it either as student teachers during periods of teaching practice or, subsequently, as 'fully-fledged' teachers in their first teaching appointments.

What emerges very clearly in these writings is that there appears to be a degree of mismatch between the idealism and progressivism espoused by colleges of education and universities as against the - often harsh - realities of classroom life, both in terms of student teachers' memories of their own schooldays and of their ensuing experiences on the other side of the desk. Dearden described what he called the "sentimentalism" implicit in many of the educational theories promulgated by teacher educators. He argued that too often young teachers find that the progressive ideas favoured by the colleges and universities are not easily applied. This then causes them to revert to the authoritarianism

of their own schooling experiences (Dearden 1968). Denscombe also referred to the discontinuity between the views advanced by the staff of colleges and universities and subsequent classroom life, suggesting that once student teachers have completed their pre-service courses and entered the 'real' world of teaching " ... the ideas and practices espoused at college give way to more hard-headed attitudes" (Denscombe 1982:250).

It is argued that in schools teachers are primarily concerned with practical issues. Their duties leave scant time for reflection on the more utopian ideals expounded by educational theorists, with the result that, all too often, " ... whatever wisdom or impetus for change is to be found in theory courses will be sacrificed to the expediency of survival in the classroom" (Petty and Hogben 1980:59). Helsel and Krchniak argued that the "reality shock" faced by many new teachers is an issue which many training institutions fail to confront adequately (Helsel and Krchniak 1972:99). It has been suggested that in terms of their influence over student teachers or newly-fledged teachers, experienced practitioners in the schools are much more significant 'significant others' than education tutors (Hoy 1968; Edgar and Warren 1969). This constitutes a potentially serious threat to the aims pursued by teacher educators, particularly if the comment made by Wideen can to be taken at face value, namely, that in the classroom setting " ... tacit knowledge and anecdotal information are perceived to be far more useful than abstract theory" (Wideen, in Hopkins and Reid 1985:86).

5.2.6. RESUMÉ

It is clear that there are many factors militating against an unproblematic acceptance of the educational theory taught at the colleges of education and the universities. While the factors discussed in the present investigation are by no means exhaustive, the disciplines' format seems to have been a major source of contention. The precise nature and optimal role of educational theory in the preparation of teachers has long been a vexing problem for teacher educators, but it was perhaps dissatisfaction with the disciplines' format that constituted the strongest stimulus to the heated debates that have been a significant feature of the past two decades. These debates have led to a far-reaching re-appraisal of the contribution that educational theory ought to be expected to make to the production of competent teachers, and of the form in which it ought to be presented to student teachers. Notwithstanding the objections lodged against the disciplines' format, there are those who regard the abandonment of the disciplines as a retrograde step. In the following section, arguments in favour of the retention of the disciplines are considered.

5.3. REAR-GUARD ACTION : ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE 'DEMOLITION OF THE DISCIPLINES'

One of the definitions given for 'rear-guard action' is: "a preventative or delaying action in defence of the existing order" (Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary). In this section two types of rear-guard action are considered. The first favours the retention of the

disciplines' format in pre-service courses for teachers, while the second suggests an alternative role for the disciplines.

5.3.1. ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF THE RETENTION OF THE DISCIPLINES

'The Retreat from the Disciplines' is a phrase used by Dearden (Dearden 1985). He is a major protagonist in the rear-guard action defending the disciplines against those who have discounted the contribution the disciplines could make to initial teacher preparation. The disciplines, Dearden argued, represent "not only an accumulated and constantly refined body of ideas but also a set of critical tools and standards" against which educational practices could be evaluated (Dearden 1984:13).

In an article written in 1982 detailing developments in philosophy of education over a thirty year span, Dearden predicted that practicist approaches would undermine the status of the disciplines, writing: " ... the perceived needs of practitioners are likely to be increasingly of a narrow and immediate kind, which will create a climate of expectation inimical to the kinds of insights offered by the liberalising disciplines" (Dearden 1982:70). He went on to argue that philosophy of education (and, by implication, the other disciplines) ought to be regarded as essential to clear thinking about educational issues (Dearden 1982:76). In a subsequent journal article he appears to have become even more concerned about emerging trends, and expressed grave doubts about the viability of the disciplines if they were to be relegated to the position of mere "stores" to be periodically "raided" (Dearden 1985:12). He envisaged that this would lead to the inexorable demise of the

disciplines. In describing his views on the trend towards integrated studies and the ascendancy of generalists over specialists, he commented:

> It does not necessarily follow that there will be a return to what Richard Peters called 'undifferentiated mush', ... There may well still be some differentiated consciousness of the disciplines, but it will increasingly have the character of a fading afterglow.
>
> (Dearden 1985:9).

In this same article Dearden argued that it was essential to retain a balance between more pragmatic aspects of theory and that contained within the "more broadly conceived disciplines of education" (ibid. : 13).

Dearden is not alone in his support of the disciplines. The fact that the publication of journals in each of the disciplines continues unabated is witness to this, although, here too, Dearden sounds a warning note. He cogently pointed out that, with the erosion of the disciplines, "... effects are felt on the membership and activities of the societies which exist to advance the study of the disciplines. Journals lose in circulation and attendance at meetings tends to fall" (Dearden 1985:10). It is difficult to assess the extent to which this has in fact occurred. South African educational journals are, for the most part, eclectic, but libraries at local tertiary institutions continue to subscribe to overseas specialist publications and articles appearing in these publications bear testimony to the various authors' sustained concern for the advancement of their respective fields. The fact that, barring Institution B, each of the South African institutions included in the present investigation has retained the disciplines within their Bachelor of Primary Education degree courses suggests that in relation to South African primary teacher preparation, at least, the disciplines are under

no immediate threat. The comment made by a staff member at Institution F - to the effect that there had been a recent decision to return to a 'discipline-based' approach - should presumably offer some reassurance to exponents of the disciplines' format (Table 7, Chapter Four).

In the following section suggestions about a new role for the disciplines are discussed.

5.3.2. ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF A NEW ROLE FOR THE DISCIPLINES

Two interrelated factors seem pertinent to suggestions for a reconception of the role that the theoretical disciplines ought to play in enhancing our understanding of educational issues. The ideas put forward by Professor Paul Hirst would seem to have bearing on both of these.

The first of these factors is the trend towards a more holistic approach to educational issues. In this context, Hirst contended that the disciplines - because of their commitment to their distinctive domains, methodologies and concepts - have hindered the development of a unified educational theory. He argued that the unity of educational theory lay in "the unity of a consistent set of principles of practice ... not that of one vast theoretical integration of the contributory disciplines" (Hirst 1983:5). This leads into the second factor prompting a redefinition of the disciplines' role, namely, the belief that educational theory falls short in terms of its contribution to educational practice. In this context, the development of 'practical principles' is seen to constitute a more appropriate source of guidance for teachers than the pursuit of a grounding in the theoretical

disciplines: " ... there seems to be an inevitable gap between the conceptual framework within which the issues of practice arise and the conceptual frameworks the distinctive disciplines employ for their particular purposes (ibid. : 6). The prime task of educational theory ought to be the development of "rational principles for educational practice" (ibid. : 5). This, according to Hirst, has been subverted by an excessive preoccupation with the teaching of the disciplines.

Hirst therefore suggested a very much reduced role for the disciplines. He recommended instead, the identification of practical principles derived primarily, though not solely, through an empirically-based consideration of current practices, "articulating accurately the concepts and categories that practitioners use implicitly and explicitly" (ibid. : 5). The identification of these concepts and categories would then provide a basis for an "overt rational critique of practice" (ibid. : 5). The role of the disciplines is regarded as indirect. It is "to provide a context of ever more rationally defensible beliefs and values for the development and practical testing of practical principles" (ibid. : 19). Within these parameters, the disciplines should be used to "maximum degree" (ibid. : 28).

Hirst's view of the proper role for the disciplines is supported by Elliott (1987). He too argued that the 'operational theories' used by practitioners should provide the central focus. The disciplines should then be employed "eclectically as tools for the analysis of concrete practical problems and situations" (Elliott 1987:164).

Although these ideas have some appeal there are some formidable obstacles to their successful implementation. One is the debatable matter of

taking current practice as the base-line. Another is that of adequately 'articulating' practitioners' 'operational theories'. These two potential problem areas are discussed in Section 5.4.1. A third problem is that voiced by Dearden, and outlined in the previous section, namely, that if student teachers are to be only minimally exposed to a study of the disciplines, from where are we to draw a continuing supply of committed specialists in these disciplines who would be able to orchestrate a meaningful critique of any emergent 'practical principles'?

The suggestion has been made by Elliott (1987), that specialists in the disciplines should be engaged to work in consultation with practitioners and teacher educators. The same idea has been articulated by Reynolds in relation to the role of sociology of education. He advocated a consultative role for the sociologist as a means of establishing more effective links between sociology of education and teachers (Reynolds, in Woods and Pollard 1988:158-175). The suggestion has also been made in relation to psychology of education that psychologists must be encouraged to become more closely involved in the work of teachers (Desforges 1985).

An irony, identified earlier (Section 5.2.1.), is that mainstream psychologists, philosophers and sociologists do not generally appear overly interested in involving themselves in educational matters. Their participation will have to be more actively sought than has been the case until now if the suggestions in the previous paragraph are to be successfully implemented. A recent issue of The Psychologist (13(10) October 1990:460) carries a potentially promising indication that an initiative is being taken in this direction. Notification of a conference to be held in Blackpool in January 1991, the theme of which is "Promoting psychology in initial teacher training", is contained in this issue. It

is interesting to note the use of the term 'training' rather than 'education' in this announcement.

5.4. PROPOSALS FOR ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF THEORETICAL INSIGHT

In addition to suggestions for a diminution and redefinition of the role of the theoretical disciplines of education, a number of alternative sources of theoretical insight have been explored. In the following sections three of these alternative sources are briefly discussed. A central feature of each of these is the prominence given to the generation of theoretical insights from the nidus of practice.

5.4.1. GREATER EXPLOITATION OF PRACTISING TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE

There are two ways in which practising teachers' knowledge can be used. The first is by involving practising teachers more closely in the training process. The second is by researching teachers' practice and making their operational theories more explicit, and therefore more readily available for incorporation into teacher preparation programmes.

As regards the first of these ways, the idea that practising teachers should be invited to play a greater role in teacher preparation - as was the norm in earlier models of teacher training - has been expressed with increasing vigour. The curtailment of the disciplines' as a source of theoretical insight has perhaps precipitated a greater acceptance of what might, in earlier decades, have been rejected as a retrograde step. An initial move towards this is evidenced by suggestions from a number of

writers, including, for example, Gleeson 1974; van der Linde 1985, and Stones 1987, that school-based teacher-tutors be employed as mentors to student teachers. Professional tutors of this sort have been posited as the ideal bridging agents between college-based 'theory' and school-based 'reality'.

It has recently become evident that, at least in Britain, the teaching profession will become even more closely involved in the preparation of new teachers. In terms of the criteria laid down by the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, established teachers are required to participate in the planning and evaluation of pre-service courses; in the selection of candidates for the teaching profession; in the supervision and assessment of students' practical work; and, also, to contribute to lectures and seminars at the colleges of education and the universities (Department of Education and Science 1989, Circular No. 24/89, Section 2, paragraph 2.1 : 7).

As regards the view that practising teachers' knowledge should be more explicitly used as a source of theoretical insight, a criticism, made with increasing intensity, is that educational theory takes insufficient account of this knowledge.

> The fault of educational theory is precisely that it ignores what teachers and children actually do in favour of pre-defined characterizations of concepts. What is required is to find out what education means to those who are actually doing the educating and being educated; this means that we must start with the agent, not with the theoretician.
>
> (Harris 1978:74).

Hirst strongly criticised the failure to capitalize upon "the vast potential of the domain of the everyday discourse of experienced and

critical teachers for the generation and justification of practical principles" (Hirst 1983:23). Similarly, Carr argued that theorists tend to overlook "the extensive theoretical powers that educational practitioners already possess" (Carr 1980a:65). He further argued - albeit a little ambiguously - that " ... since the practical experience of teachers is the source of the problems under consideration, it must be recognised that the active participation of practitioners in the theoretical enterprise is an indispensable necessity" (ibid. : 67).

A problem identified by McDonald is that teachers frequently feel that their knowledge is in some way inferior to that of the theoreticians: "Teachers are not used to thinking that they know some things which some theorists, at least, consider valuable" (McDonald 1986:356). He commented upon the tendency of theorists to sidestep "the messy practicality" that is an inescapable part of so much that goes on in the classroom (ibid. : 377). In this context Russell described what he saw as a tendency to downgrade practical knowledge in comparison with 'scientific' knowledge. He suggested that " ... the idea that knowledge is separate from the use of knowledge is deeply embedded in our culture" (Russell 1987:370). Desforges and McNamara too slated what they termed "spurious 'sciencing'" (Desforges and McNamara 1977:35), although, in a later article, these authors did caution against a completely unreserved acceptance of the "staffroom view of competence" (McNamara and Desforges 1978:23). A number of other writers have explored the possibility of greater use being made of practising teachers' knowledge. These include Bolster 1983; Elbaz 1983; Kremer and Ben-Peretz 1984; Rudduck 1985, and Smith, L, 1987b. There is now a substantial body of literature focusing on this.

Included in this literature are a number of cautionary views. Three areas seem to be a particular source of concern, the first of which is some misgiving about the desirability of entrenching the status quo. In this context, Wilson argued that much of teachers' knowledge and commonsense " ... may itself easily become partisan or turn into another 'ideology'" (Wilson 1977:126), while Carr, in a slating review of a book written by Wilson, (Fantasy and Common-Sense in Education, 1979), argued that although common-sense has a legitimate and valuable place, it is vital that it be subjected to rigorous appraisal. It was only in this way that teachers' "common-sense interpretations and judgements will become more rational and coherent and less dependent on the prejudice and simple-mindedness of our unreflective selves" (Carr 1980b:95). In similar vein, Stones commented caustically on the "almost mystical belief in the efficacy of current practice" (Stones 1981:219). Denscombe suggested that a "hidden pedagogy" exists in teachers' thinking which "strives for practical usefulness more than anything else": the main priority of teachers is to cope with existing circumstances, rather than to seek to change them (Denscombe 1982:260).

The second area of concern is that of actually determining what constitutes good practice. Carr highlighted the difficulty of characterising educational practice, warning that it was wrong to assume that "it has a unity and simplicity which it patently does not" (Carr 1987:166). Knight and Smith, while agreeing that the study of good practice would be invaluable in the training of new teachers, pointed out that so much of practice is context-dependent. They further suggested that the very intangibility of much of good teaching may, in fact, be the "hallmark of an expert" (Knight and Smith 1989:435). Berliner identified a number of features which may be seen to characterise good teaching, but

he made it abundantly clear that his research team (along with many other researchers in this area, whom he cites) had found the undertaking to be fraught with complexity. He ended his journal article in the following terms:

> We will continue our pursuit of the expert pedagogue. If we ever feel really secure that we have found a few of these elusive beasts, we will study them in great depth and share those findings with those who also await their capture. Like the search for the Yeti and for Big-foot, we expect to have a good many false sightings ... along the way.
>
> (Berliner 1986:13).

The third problem area identified in the literature is the view that practising teachers are not good at making their knowledge explicit. Hargreaves argued that the pressures of the classroom militate against this. He also suggested that a form of "cultural exclusion" was operative, whereby teachers were reluctant to appear to be too 'theoretical', in a field where practical aspects are paramount (Hargreaves 1984:248). Hargreaves argued that teachers have to be specifically encouraged and be provided with opportunities (within working hours, rather than on an extramural basis) to consciously reflect on their practice in a more formal and theoretically-oriented way (ibid. : 252). This view is supported by Proctor (Proctor 1984) and McDonald (McDonald 1986), both of whom argued that, given the appropriate opportunities, teachers were eminently capable of raising their common-sense thinking to the conscious level and presenting it in an adequately theoretical way as a useful source of guidance to both teacher educators and their students.

5.4.2. RESEARCH-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION

In an otherwise entirely positive review of a book edited by Alexander and Wormald, (Professional studies for teaching, 1979), Crompton suggested that the contributors had bitten "all the bullets but one" (Crompton 1980:263). The unbitten bullet, according to Crompton, was the question of "student-centredness". Crompton expressed regret about the contributors' collective failure to explore ways of encouraging student teachers to see themselves as active participants in the definition of the tasks of teaching (ibid. : 264).

Desforges contended that "Teachers should be trained to be creators rather than consumers of pedagogical knowledge" (Desforges 1985:13). Research-based teacher education has been characterised as an invaluable means of ensuring that student teachers do not see themselves merely as passive recipients of professional knowledge (Rudduck 1985; Yonemura 1986; Zeichner 1986). Rudduck described research-based teacher education as a "powerful and natural bridge" between theory and practice, claiming that in such a setting, students were "learning not to depend on others for a diagnosis of classroom problems but were instead developing the capacity and confidence to make their own diagnoses". In so doing, Rudduck argued, student teachers were more likely to regard the problems they encountered as challenges rather than indications of their own incompetence (Rudduck 1985:287).

Both Stones (Stones 1981; Stones 1983) and Ashcroft and Griffiths (Ashcroft and Griffiths 1989) have recommended the use of action-research techniques in teacher preparation programmes. It was reported in Chapter Four that action-research forms part of the requirements for the Bachelor

of Primary Education degree programme at Institution A. Students at this institution are expected to participate in small-scale action-research projects which give them the opportunity to develop personal theories and serve to "test theory in practice" (Table 11). Without making any specific recommendation as to appropriate research methodologies, McNamara, too, has argued that student teachers need to be taught to be critical, must be shown what to look for in the teaching situation, how to analyse what they see, and against which standards to test their findings (McNamara 1990). The period of school experience (teaching practice) is seen as pivotal. It has been claimed that, "Current conceptions of supervision of student teaching practice reflect the atheoretical apprenticeship mode of training" which will " ... inevitably lead to simplistic approaches to pedagogy and paternalistic relations between supervisor and trainee teacher" (Stones 1987:68-70). What was recommended instead was a "continuous process of joint exploration of theory and practice of teaching by tutor and student teacher" (ibid. : 71). It was argued by Ashcroft and Griffiths that in this context, an action-research type approach was best suited to the development of skills which would enable student teachers to "monitor and reflect on their own and other people's actions" (Ashcroft and Griffiths 1989:36).

The consensus which emerges from these writings is that effective teaching necessarily involves a process of critical enquiry. It is in relation to this that the concept of the 'reflective practitioner' is discussed in the following section.

5.4.3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS

In the preceding section, research-based teacher education was posited as a means of ensuring the active involvement of the student teacher. 'Reflective teaching' too demands that the student participate fully as a "self-critical problem-solver" (Ashcroft and Griffiths 1989:36) in the search for solutions to educational challenges. Research-based teacher education and the development of habits of critical self-reflection would seem to complement each another.

'Reflective teaching' appears to be a new catch-phrase, as evidenced by the spate of 1987 to 1990 articles on education which have the phrase built into their titles, inter alia, Elliott 1987; Zeichner and Liston 1987; Pollard, in Woods and Pollard 1988; Bowman 1989; Buchmann 1989. It is also evident from the responses provided by the various staff members at the selected South African institutions that a high premium is placed on the ability of student teachers to reflect critically upon the teaching task. The responses contained in Table 9 of Chapter Four are particularly significant in this context.

'Reflective teaching' is not a new concept so much as a rediscovered one. Philosopher John Dewey, for instance, wrote in his 1916 text, Democracy and Education, of the need to distinguish between 'reflective' and 'routine' behaviour, the former guided by careful thought and concern for consequences, the latter largely unthinking operations guided by force of habit or past traditions (cited by Pollard, in Woods and Pollard 1988:58). In a number of 1960s' and 1970s' articles and texts mention is also made of the importance of critical reflection on educational issues (for example, Reid, in Archambault 1965; Gorbutt 1972; Wragg 1974;

Renshaw 1974). In the 1980s, however, the phrase appeared to take on an entirely new status, to the extent that 'reflective teaching' is now " ... gaining a substantial foothold in our professional lexicon ..." (Munby and Russell 1989:79).

Some of the central features of 'reflective teaching' include:

- sincere concern for the consequences of one's teaching actions;
- an on-going commitment to an open-minded and enquiring attitude;
- having one's actions guided by informed judgements which stem partly from critical self-reflection and partly from insights derived from theoretical sources.

(paraphrased from Pollard, in Woods and Pollard 1988:57).

It has been suggested that 'reflective teaching' could act as an excellent counteragent to the trend towards centralised control of education and against those who would attempt to reduce teaching to a repertoire of pre-defined skills (Ashcroft and Griffiths 1989; McNamara 1990). It has also been described as an essential ingredient for enhanced professionalism (Zeichner and Liston 1987; Bowman 1989). And, finally, it has been described as an ideal means of integrating formal (theoretical) knowledge and personal knowledge (Bowman 1989).

McNamara, despite his advocacy of 'reflective teaching', does raise a problematic issue. He suggested that there is no evidence to suggest that thoughtful or reflective practitioners necessarily make <u>better</u> practitioners; the fact that " ... there are teachers who are excellent at reflecting about practice but awful in its execution must cause problems for those who are enamoured with the notion of the reflective

practitioner" (McNamara 1990:152). In this he appears to have taken the argument full circle. Philosopher, Louis Arnaud Reid also issued the warning that thinking may often, in fact, actually increase teachers' uncertainties, but, notwithstanding this, he continued his argument on a positive note; one which would seem to provide an apt finish to a discussion on the desirability of training student teachers to be reflective:

> Yet will not the teacher whose thinking is vital and ongoing, who himself has some sense of life's depths and continuing perplexities, be a more stimulating and wiser guide to pupils who are growing up in a difficult world where ready-made answers are of less and less use?
>
> (in Archambault 1965:33-34).

In the final chapter an attempt is made to provide an overall evaluation of the issues discussed thus far, both in relation to an optimal role for the disciplines of education and in relation to new suggestions for sources of theoretical insight. Included here is some assessment of the implications which these developments have for South African pre-service courses for primary teachers.

CHAPTER SIX

OVERALL EVALUATION : A SUMMING UP

6.1. INTRODUCTION

As noted earlier, South African ideas about teacher preparation, particularly at English-medium institutions, have been strongly influenced by British thinking. This influence can be explained not only by virtue of the leading role played by British individuals in the early evolution of South Africa's educational provision, but also by the fact that even though, after the Act of Union (1910) South Africa ceased to be a British colony, she remained a member of the Commonwealth of Nations until just a few months prior to the white electorate's (marginal) vote in favour of her becoming a republic. It was thus only in 1960 that South Africa broke her formal ties with Britain. This did not , however, serve to lessen the impact of British ideas on the preparation of South African teachers. This continued, not only by default, as it were, in the absence of any obviously superior alternatives, but also because the momentum of established precedent is a powerful force.

As South African literature contributing to the debate on educational theory is relatively sparse, the literature used in this investigation is overwhelmingly of overseas - and particularly British - origin. It is

vital, however, that the relative paucity of indigenous literature in this area does not conduce to any wholesale acceptance of overseas' views. A criticism levelled against South African primary teacher preparation by a staff member at Institution B is the predominance of Euro-centric thinking (Table 12, Chapter Four). Notwithstanding any validity which this criticism might have, it should not be taken as implying that no cognisance should be taken of overseas' contributions to this debate. These contributions provide an extremely rich source not only of insight but also of warnings of potential pitfalls. The extent to which South African pre-service courses for primary teachers follow the same trajectory as that set by their British counterparts will, to a very large degree, depend on a careful assessment by South African teacher educators of the British experience.

In this final chapter an assessment is undertaken of various claims in relation to the theoretical component of pre-service courses for primary teachers. The extent to which such claims should be perceived as complementary, rather than competitive, is discussed. The chapter includes a discussion of the writer's views on the appropriate role of the disciplines of education in the preparation of primary teachers. Also included are recommendations for pre-service teacher preparation schemes in the face of pressures which will undoubtedly be placed on the South African educational system by political developments.

6.2. EVALUATION OF SUGGESTIONS FOR SOURCES OF THEORETICAL INSIGHT IN RELATION TO PRIMARY TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMMES

A review of current thinking in relation to optimal approaches towards the management of the theoretical component in pre-service courses for teachers reveals that there are six main 'contenders' in the debate. These are:

- the practicist approach;
- greater exploitation of practitioners' knowledge;
- research-based teacher education;
- the development of an integrated theory of education;
- the retention of the disciplines;
- the development of reflective practitioners.

A brief evaluation of each is undertaken in the following sections.

6.2.1. EVALUATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A 'PRACTICIST' APPROACH

The practicist approach may have some merit, and the experience gained from attempts to implement it might provide valuable insights for teacher educators. In the opinion of the writer, however, the inherent disadvantages in this approach far outweigh any merit it may have, particularly if one is considering pre-service courses for primary teachers at graduate level. For this reason, the writer believes that the practicist approach is the least desirable of the six 'contenders' listed above.

An initial problem is that of identifying competencies, or "practical principles" (Hirst 1974; Hirst 1976; Hirst 1983), and of then selecting which of these should be incorporated into pre-service courses. Teaching is a complex and highly context-dependent task, and, as Griffiths commented, there are " ... a worrying number of people trying to reduce complex practical activities to a checklist of relatively simple and mindless ones" (Griffiths 1989:208). In a critique of Hirst's thinking, Salter and Crompton argued that the approach advocated by Hirst was "disturbingly behaviourist" (Salter and Crompton 1980:256). (Something which needs to be pointed out, though, is that Hirst's practicist arguments were directed primarily at the one-year Post-Graduate Certificate in Education. Here time constraints are obviously far more severe than would be the case in a three- or four-year course.)

A further problematic aspect in the selection process is the possibility that it might contain hidden ideological biases (Beyer 1985:389). This same fear was expressed earlier by Dearden, who argued that if educational theory was too subordinated to practical considerations it " ... could very easily become mere apologetic ideology" (Dearden 1980:22).

One of the most strongly criticised of these 'ideologies' is that mentioned earlier (Section 5.2.4), namely, the "new vocationalism" identified by Hartnett and Naish (in Hartnett and Naish 1986:185). These writers described the cutbacks in educational studies and the demands that they be made relevant as "the 'new vocationalism' in its teacher education form" (ibid.:185). In an article in the same text, Jonathon argued that demands "for a redirection of emphasis at all levels in education, away from the academic and towards the vocationally relevant"

(Jonathon, in Hartnett and Naish 1986:135) were indicative of an unfortunate tendency to conflate the needs of society with the needs of industry (ibid.:136). This she regarded as short-sighted in the extreme, commenting, "Fashions in educational policy often lead to wasteful diversions, but this latest trend is a narrow cul-de-sac" (ibid.:144). In a subsequent article, she claimed that we are in "an era obssessed (sic.) with technique" (Jonathon 1987:180). Smith, too, argued strongly of the need to challenge the "prevailing technicism" (Smith, R, 1987:201).

The writer suggests that the attempts to apply business management principles to education may be seen as symptomatic of this vocationalist bias. In a description of some parallels between British and American educational policy, Hartnett and Naish cited Israel Scheffler's claim that the emphasis on management principles had promoted an image of the teacher "as a minor technician within an industrial process" (Scheffler 1964, cited by Hartnett and Naish, in Hartnett and Naish 1976:184). Dearden also commented on the rise to prominence of the study of management as "the most recent candidate for the role of quasi-messianic leadership" in teacher preparation courses (Dearden 1980:17).

While applying management principles to education may carry the potential for increasing the efficiency of the educational process, the parallel demand that education take greater cognisance of vocational considerations, would seem to run counter to the notion of a liberal education. There is a certain irony in the fact that Hirst should be one of the exponents of a more practically-oriented approach in pre-service courses for teachers. He has written quite extensively on the notion of a 'liberal' education, and in one discussion, stated categorically that,

"Whatever else a liberal education is, it is not a vocational education" (Hirst, in Peters 1973:87). Having developed his case further, Hirst contended that a "liberal education remains basic to the freeing of human conduct from wrong" (ibid.:101). Although Hirst's arguments in this particular article were concerned with education at school level, his contributions to the trend towards a more practically-oriented teacher preparation strike a somewhat discordant note. Notwithstanding the fact that teacher preparation is undoubtedly preparation for a vocation, there would seem to be something of a paradox in advocating a reduction in the 'liberal' component of this preparation, given the complexity of the task, the problem of competing value systems and the apparent importance attached by society to a sound education for its new generations.

The practicist approach may be seen as valuable in terms of preparing student teachers for their initial teaching experiences, but it carries the danger of limiting "possibilities for future growth" (Beyer 1985:390). This same fear was expressed by Entwistle:

> No doubt a purely practical training based on a few rules of thumb would produce teachers who could perform prescribed routines efficiently in familiar situations, but who would be unable to analyse their work in such a way that their competence would develop in response to changed situations.
>
> (Entwistle, 1969:121)

One further problem area in relation to a practicist bias concerns the question of professionalism. A low-key, essentially practical course would seem to be inimical to the concept of the education of a profession. The inroads that such an approach make on teachers' autonomy have profound implications for their status as professionals. There is a considerable body of educational literature dealing with the issue of the professional status of teachers, inter alia, Covert 1975; Hoyle 1980;

Hirst 1982; Lindop 1982; Sykes 1987; Gottleib and Cornbleth 1989. There appears to be a tacit assumption that teaching is assigned full professional status, hence references to the 'teaching profession', the 'professional component' of teacher preparation courses, 'professional competence' and so on. This reflects loose or colloquial usage of the term rather than any securely-based claim to full professionalism. Gottleib and Cornbleth noted that, "Academic debate over whether teaching is a profession or not dominated the field in the 1960s and 1970s" (Gottleib and Cornbleth 1989:3). More recent literature makes it clear that this issue remains unresolved (inter alia, Hoyle 1980, 1982; Sykes 1987; Bowman 1989). It is beyond the scope of the present investigation to undertake a detailed examination of the various criteria whereby an occupation is designated 'professional'. One criterion which emerges from an analysis of the writings of a number of the above-mentioned authors would, however, seem to be of particular pertinence in the present context. This is the ability to bring to bear a coherent and specialized knowledge base which facilitates the exercise of rational judgement. Unless primary teachers can show that they possess, and are able to bring to bear, a genuinely rigorous theoretical infrastructure which transcends the knowledge and activities which are actually conveyed in the classroom, and demonstrate an awareness of wider issues as they impinge on the educational task, they are unlikely to conform to society's conception of professionalism. Reid argued that pursuit of this higher-order knowledge is what distinguishes a professional course from mere training in performance:

> There is good reason for saying that better intellectual ... understanding can, and will, so alter a person's perspective that as a teacher he will act with more insight and more intelligence.
>
> (Reid, in Archambault 1965:33).

Peters echoed these sentiments, writing that if student teachers are not well-grounded in the theoretical underpinnings "which are ancillary to their task there is little hope of their establishing themselves as a profession which can retain some kind of authority in the community" (Peters 1977:137).

6.2.2. EVALUATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GREATER EXPLOITATION OF PRACTITIONERS' KNOWLEDGE

As indicated in the previous chapter (Section 5.4.1), two ways of utilizing the knowledge of established teachers are, firstly, by observing teachers at work in the classroom and attempting to codify the practical theories by which they appear to operate, and, secondly, by encouraging their more active involvement in the preparation of new teachers.

Greater exploitation of practitioners' knowledge would require closer collaboration between the colleges and universities responsible for teacher preparation, and the schools. Several important benefits might derive from such collaboration.

In relation to suggestions that more attention be given to teachers' practical theories, one of the benefits of this might be the greater probability of overcoming what McDonald termed "theory's rapacious history, its missing of the mark" (McDonald 1986:377). A common criticism of much of educational theory is its failure to adequately reflect classroom reality. The identification and codification of teachers' applied theory would enhance existing classroom-based theory. Such theory

is likely to have more immediate appeal to student teachers than is 'academic' theory. By the same token, practising teachers might themselves be encouraged to elevate their thinking above their immediately practical concerns and display a greater willingness to engage in a constructive evaluation of the implications which 'academic' theory might have for their classrooms. A consequence of such a dialectical process might be not only to raise some practitioners' theories above the level of the immediately practical, but also the tempering of some of the more idealistic or esoteric theories espoused by the colleges and universities. This would certainly help to reduce the extent to which there is a perceived mismatch between the culture of the colleges and universities and that of the schools. It might also help in more general terms to bridge a perceived gap between theory and practice.

As regards suggestions that established teachers play a greater role in the preparation of new teachers, one benefit of this might be a facilitation of the 'socialization' process which new teachers inevitably undergo once they enter the schools. Established teachers might be less inclined to project negative views of 'academic' theory if they have themselves contributed more actively to the creation of such theory. Another benefit may perhaps derive from the psychological effects of the invitation to participate more fully in the preparation process. Such an invitation constitutes a vote of confidence in practising teachers' ability to participate in a meaningful way. This might act as a morale booster and also have a rejuvenating effect on their willingness to consider afresh some of the complexities of their task: complexities which may have become obscured by the immediacy of classroom demands. Finally, another advantage that might accrue is that of student teachers

being able to more readily identify with classroom-based - as opposed to college- or university-based - mentors.

In addition to the desirable possibilities, a number of potential problems relate to the exploitation of practising teachers' knowledge, some of which were mentioned in the previous chapter. One of these is the problem of entrenching the status quo. Another is that by no means all practising teachers make good role models for newcomers. As noted in the previous chapter the identification of the good practitioner is no easy task (Berliner 1986). A third consideration relates to the extent to which practising primary teachers - accustomed to teaching young children - are able to accommodate the additional requirement of teaching adult learners. This problem does not appear to have yet been fully investigated. Another difficulty relates to the complaint that teachers already have a heavy workload. This raises the question of whether they will actually have the time to cope with the additional obligation of a more active participation in the initiation of newcomers to the profession.

The writer suggests three ways to facilitate collaboration between teacher educators and practising teachers in the preparation of new teachers. The first is to ensure that teachers are not required to take on this task if it is to be an additional load. Their other duties will have to be appropriately reduced. Secondly, practising teachers will need to be provided with guidelines on how to undertake the task, possibly by means of in-service courses. They also need to be kept fully informed of the rationale behind the perceived need for their greater involvement in the preparation process, and will have to be exposed to current thinking related both to the educative task and to the preparation of student

teachers. Here, too, this should not constitute an additional workload. Arrangements would have to be made to incorporate these activities within the framework of teachers' normal workloads. Thirdly, and finally, it is vital that the greater participation of practising teachers in the training process is not actualized as an apparent response to a decree from above. This may well result in a negative and hostile response, unlikely to foster a positive working relationship. Terms such as 'encouraged' and 'invited' rather than 'required' should be used.

6.2.3. EVALUATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION

In section 5.4.2. of the previous chapter it was suggested that research-based teacher education provides a means of achieving a more student-centred approach to the integration of theory and practice (Rudduck 1985; Yonemura 1986; Zeichner 1986). It was further suggested that periods of teaching practice, in particular, provide opportunities for students to research aspects of classroom life (Stones 1987). In Chapter Four it was reported that at one of the selected South African institutions student teachers are required to participate in action-research. At at least two of the others an independent study topic forms part of the requirements for the final year of the Bachelor of Primary Education degree course.

An obvious pre-requisite to this approach is that students will need to be equipped with appropriate research 'tools'. Some of these 'tools' would be: knowledge of the different types of research that could be used in the educational context; knowledge of appropriate research

methodologies; and, most importantly, knowledge of criteria against which to assess findings.

It could be argued that familiarity with these areas of knowledge, and some experience in their implementation, would be invaluable to student teachers in the longer term both in terms of equipping them to investigate problems which they may encounter in their own classrooms, and in terms of enabling them to interpret and evaluate the research findings of others.

There are, however, a number of factors which militate against students deriving their theoretical insights solely through this approach. An initial factor concerns the question of time. In the writer's opinion an exclusively research-based teacher preparation would be an inadequate way of attempting to expose student teachers to all the knowledge that they would need in order to be successful. This would be analogous to trying to get students to re-invent the wheel. Although it has been claimed by the eminent and much-cited philosopher, Gilbert Ryle, that "Efficient practice precedes the theory of it" (Ryle 1949:30), the validity of this claim depends on the assumption that the practice in question is a de novo one. In the case of preparing student teachers for the classroom, a considerable body of theory already exists and it would be highly inefficient not to exploit it. The time-consuming nature of much research would also circumscribe the scale of any research that student teachers could undertake. It would have to remain on an essentially small scale.

Another factor relates to ethical considerations. Firstly, there is the question of the legitimacy of allowing the use of pupils as 'guinea pigs' in the hands of inexperienced student teachers. Secondly, there is the

question of the types of problems student teachers would be able to investigate. The range would have to be limited. Students could not, for example, investigate pupils' home background problems at anything other than a superficial level, without the danger of trespassing into sensitive issues: issues with which they were inadequately equipped to deal. Many of the psychological and sociological issues encountered in education would fall into this category. It would seem that the most appropriate areas in which student teachers could conduct research would be those related to experimenting with different teaching methods.

The ability of student teachers to make a meaningful evaluation of their research findings is a third potentially problematic factor. Effective evaluation presupposes a sound knowledge-base against which to measure one's findings. In this context, students would need to have been exposed to the thoughts and findings of others. It is essential that they have access to the accumulated body of educational theory in order to be able to judge the merit of their own observations and findings.

A final point to consider is the influence that particular value systems have on education. Student teachers need to recognise this influence and be provided with the means of rationally assessing competing ideologies. In this context, it is important to note that normative questions do not lend themselves to empirical investigation. Analysis of a philosophical kind is necessary here.

The writer concludes that while research-based teacher education may provide a constructive way of enhancing students teachers' ability to respond effectively to difficulties they encounter in the classroom

situation, it could not be regarded as adequate in itself. Other approaches are also needed.

6.2.4. EVALUATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATED THEORY OF EDUCATION

The eclectic nature of educational theory was noted in Chapter Three. Also noted (Section 5.3.2.) was Hirst's criticism that an excessive emphasis on the disciplines had hindered the development of a unified educational theory. The possibility of any unity in educational theory has, however, been questioned. Brauner, for example, in his discussion of the evolution of American educational theory, suggested that the stages he identified " ... do not chart any evolution of a discipline of education so much as they show the failure of such an evolution to take place" (Brauner 1964:280). Later in his text he argued that, "In their eagerness to have a comprehensive theory ... educators have been too willing to believe that a general discipline was at hand" (ibid. : 297).

Roughly coinciding with the publication of Brauner's text, American curriculum theory, as noted by Pinar and Grumet (Pinar and Grumet, in Lawn and Barton 1981:22-27), was undergoing an overhaul. It was also at much the same time that curriculum theory was becoming established as a recognised field of study in Britain (Whitty, in Lawn and Barton 1981:48). Chambers and Grainge's comment to the effect that curriculum theory might be seen as a "meeting place" (Chambers and Grainge 1974:20) for the various disciplines of education was noted in Section 5.2.3. The writer suggests, however, that the notion of curriculum theory as the embodiment of an integrated theory of education, although superficially

plausible, is problematic, as, indeed, is any suggestion of the possibility of a unified educational theory. The parameters within which education operates, and the factors which impinge upon it, are so complex and diverse as to significantly compromise the capacity of a hybridised field to deal with all the issues involved with anything like the degree of precision that might be possible were a number of specialist insights brought to bear on a particular issue. An apt analogy in this context might be that of the loss of definition which would occur were a photographer to enlarge a photographic negative beyond its optimal size.

Thus far, curriculum theory does not appear to have been accorded a very big role in pre-service courses for South African primary teachers. In Section 4.3 of the previous chapter it was noted that in 1987 it was introduced into the Bachelor of Primary Education degree course as the only theoretical component in the fourth year of study at Institution A. The following year, however, Institution A reverted to a discipline-based format and study of the curriculum was relegated to being a part of the 'Philosophy and Theory of Education' course. Similarly, as regards Institution D/F's attempt to introduce an integrated, theme-based approach to educational theory, it was reported in Section 4.4.2 that this approach was claimed to have failed in terms of achieving an adequately critical level of thinking in student teachers. In 1990 this institution reverted to a disciplines-based format within its Education I, II and III courses.

In this context, the following line of argument, which was put forward by Woods in the early 1970s, but which, in the opinion of the present

writer, still holds good in the 1990s, would seem pertinent.

> Why does one have to contend with four disciplines when studying education? Why not simply study the discipline of education? The short answer to this is that education is not a discipline. There are educational problems varying considerably in scope and complexity, but there is no set of specifically educational techniques and procedures with which to tackle these problems. It is necessary to have recourse to one or more of the underlying disciplines.
>
> (Woods 1972:9).

In a 1984 text, Dearden devoted a chapter to exploring the feasibility of a unified science of education. He concluded that such a science is possible only "in restricted and partial ways" (Dearden 1984:44). He did suggest, however, in what could be seen as a somewhat ironical contradiction of Hirst's criticism (cited in the opening paragraph of this section), that one means of achieving a degree of unity was via the judicious use of the disciplines:

> In spite of there being different disciplines each asking different questions, it might be said that they do still address the same topic, namely some aspect of educational practice.
>
> (Dearden 1984:38-39).

The merit of Dearden's suggestion is heavily dependent on the extent to which the problems associated with the disciplines' format (which were noted in the previous chapter) can be resolved. Some of these problems are discussed further in the following section in relation to the evaluation of suggestions in favour of the retention of the disciplines.

6.2.5. EVALUATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE RETENTION OF THE DISCIPLINES

Factors which contributed to a diminution in the status of the theoretical disciplines as components of British pre-service courses for teachers were discussed in the previous chapter. The main thrust of the criticisms against the disciplines which was reported in this chapter was that, in the desire to achieve academic respectability, teacher educators had tended to retain too close an allegiance to the parent disciplines. It was noted that this sometimes produced an overly-academic bias, inadequately focused on the needs of practice, thus giving rise to sceptical responses from many teachers and student teachers. A further criticism noted was that the disciplines' format tended to result in educational theory lacking in coherence and unity. Demands for greater practical competence in the classroom were also reported. A consequence of more time being devoted to meeting this demand would be that less time then became available for theorising. This constitutes an additional assault on the status of the disciplines. Finally, suggestions for alternative sources of theoretical insight such as those discussed in the preceding sections, further eroded the disciplines' status.

It was noted that two main avenues for the retention of the disciplines were proposed by overseas writers. One was that they should continue as components of pre-service preparation. Another was that they should be 'held in trust' by the experts to be periodically 'raided' as necessary, by practising teachers and teacher educators.

From the findings reported in Chapter Four it is evident that, as regards South African pre-service courses for primary teachers at the selected

institutions, the disciplines are still perceived as useful vehicles for providing student teachers with theoretical insights. The extent to which this difference between British and South African pre-service courses is a reflection of a time-lag, rather than an independent decision on the part of South African teacher educators not to emulate the British example, is difficult to assess. The case of Institution D/F's having tried, and then subsequently rejected, an integrated approach to educational theory in favour of a return to its earlier discipline-based approach (as reported in Section 4.4.2 of Chapter Four, and as reiterated in the previous section), would seem to suggest that, certainly in this instance, a South African institution has not merely followed the British lead.

The criticisms of the disciplines format would seem to have validity. If the disciplines are to continue as components of pre-service courses for primary teachers it is essential that these criticisms are addressed. In addition to the criticisms noted in the opening paragraph, another explanation provided by a staff member at Institution B for this particular institution's decision to reduce its discipline-based focus was that there was insufficient time to give adequate attention to each of the disciplines (reported in Chapter Four, Table 12). This view is lent support by the following observation from Richard Peters, who claimed that "to train people in even two such disciplines at once is quite an undertaking". He then went on to insist, however, that it would be both "logically absurd" and "practically impossible" to subsume the disciplines under a general discipline of education (Peters, cited in Woods 1972:10).

If one accepts the soundness of Peters' claim (above) that it is remotely improbable that student teachers could be adequately trained in all of the disciplines - though one might like to challenge Peters' use of the term 'train' - the question then arises of how the disciplines should be used in pre-service courses for primary teachers. The present writer would suggest that some exposure to the disciplines is an essential ingredient of sound teacher preparation. Each of the disciplines focuses upon an aspect of the wider educational context in indispensable ways. It is impossible, and indeed, undesirable, to teach the disciplines with the same degree of academic exactitude as would be the case within the teaching of the parent disciplines. It would seem, therefore, that the task of teacher educators ought to be that of careful selection and pruning of available material in each of the disciplines in such a way as to ensure that the areas covered in pre-service courses have, if not direct relevance to practical classroom issues, at least relevance to the primary teacher's task in the wider sense.

Of the disciplines, history of education is perhaps the least easily justified in the face of time constraints and other priorities. It has value, however, in terms of showing student teachers how present arrangements came into being and of how, such arrangements can be - and have been - changed, for better or worse, given the will to do so. In the teaching of educational history care should be taken to avoid a deadening 'acts and facts' approach. Rather, there should be a specific focus on the effect which past events in the wider social climate have had on the educational situation, and of the implications such effects have for the management of education.

The value of psychology of education to student teachers appears to have been seldom questioned. The theoretical formats of each of the selected South African Bachelor of Primary Education degree courses described in Chapter Four bear testimony to the importance accorded to this discipline. Knowledge of how pupils learn and of the factors which impede the learning process are of central concern to teachers. Psychology of education too, however, could benefit from a judicious pruning of some of the more abstruse theoretical aspects taken from the parent discipline, in order to achieve a more directly relevant course for student teachers.

Exposure to the impact which social forces have on educational outcomes, which is achieved through a study of the sociology of education, may also be seen to be vitally important. Not only can this alert student teachers to ways in which, through their own social beliefs, they may unconsciously have an adverse effect on the quality of the learning experience for certain of their pupils, but it can also foster an awareness of hidden ideologies that serve to perpetuate social inequities within the broader social spectrum. Sociology of education can contribute substantially to a better understanding of, and preparedness to consider ways of alleviating, some of the social inequities which exist in present arrangements.

In relation to philosophy of education, it is the writer's contention that, in the context of teacher preparation, this discipline should be seen as an activity rather than as a specific body of knowledge to be transmitted. The major objective of a philosophy of education course, therefore, ought to be not to expose student teachers to the thoughts of the so-called 'Great Thinkers' or to steep them in epistemological

polemics, but rather to help student teachers to become 'thinkers' themselves. The approach, therefore, should be that of challenging students to become critical in their analysis of educational issues and to help them acquire the skills necessary for rational evaluation of competing claims.

The present writer shares the fears voiced by Dearden, which were noted in Section 5.3.1 of the previous chapter, that much would be lost by leaving the disciplines only in the hands of 'experts'(Dearden 1985). Specialists in the disciplines can make a vital contribution. They can research new areas within their particular area of expertise; they can advise teacher educators on the design of an optimal course in their particular discipline; and, they can be on hand to assist practitioners when problems are encountered. If student teachers are not themselves exposed to the disciplines, however, they will not be in a position to adequately assess or respond to any recommendations that might be forthcoming from the 'consultant psychologist' or the 'consultant sociologist'. The degree of expertise required of student teachers in any one of the disciplines would not have to be the same as that of the consultant specialist, but, in the opinion of the present writer, it is essential that student teachers have a reasonable familiarity with the particular concepts and methodologies of the various disciplines and a knowledge of some of the applications of each.

6.2.6. EVALUATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS

In section 5.4.3 of the previous chapter, the comment from Munby and Russell, to the effect that reflective teaching is now " ... gaining a substantial foothold in our professional lexicon ... " (Munby and Russell 1989:79), was recorded. Although the notion of the reflective practitioner is not as new as the spate of 1980s journal articles dealing with it would seem to suggest, the publication of these articles would seem to be a very encouraging sign that this idea is now being more closely considered.

In the opinion of the present writer, the suggestion that teacher preparation courses should aim at the development of reflective practitioners represents an ideal meeting place for all the other suggestions regarding the various sources of theoretical insight evaluated in the preceding sections of this chapter.

The development of reflective practitioners ought to result in the production of teachers who are able to subject their own actions and those of others they observe to critical scrutiny, making use of both their own personal beliefs and values and the ideas contained in the theoretical literature. A dialectical relationship between personal and academic theory may be seen to be of paramount importance. If such a relationship is established it is more likely that student teachers will be encouraged to internalise those academically-derived theoretical insights which accord with their own personal theories in a far more meaningful way than would be the case if they attempted - often unsuccessfully - to merely apply the academic theory. It would also serve

as an antidote to those who would attempt to promote the idea that teaching can be reduced to the mere application of particular techniques. In this context, Ashcroft and Griffiths argued that the successful development of reflective teaching has to take account of the individual human qualities of the teacher. It " ... depends on the understanding of teaching as being, quintessentially, something which is done by particular human beings who give of themselves in an activity they see as congruent with their own beliefs and values" (Ashcroft and Griffiths 1989:46).

In order to be able to reflect successfully on their own practice, on that of others, and on the implications which particular areas of educational theory may have for them personally, it is essential that student teachers be provided with appropriate tools for reflection. They cannot simply be instructed to 'reflect'. It is here that the writer suggests that the disciplines of education can play a vital role. The disciplines may be seen as constituting a valuable framework from which to operate. The particular concepts and methodologies employed within each of the disciplines provide student teachers with guidelines as to how to investigate particular issues; the knowledge and research findings that have been developed within each of the disciplines provide a valuable backdrop against which student teachers can evaluate their own ideas and observations.

George Will argued that, "The aim of education is to teach people how to think, not what to think" (Will 1984:157). Showing student teachers how to become reflective practitioners, would seem to carry the promise of emancipation from approaches which attempt to impose an excessively pragmatic bias. It is likely to facilitate the development of questioning

ways which may lead to the unmasking of hidden assumptions, and in the development of the skills necessary for achieving an enhanced understanding of the educative task. Perhaps most importantly, such an approach is likely to enable teachers to respond more flexibly and more thoughtfully to changing circumstances.

By encouraging student teachers to test educational theory against their own personal experiences and beliefs, one is helping them towards the realisation that all theory must necessarily be general, that it cannot be expected to supply ready-made answers to difficulties they may encounter. Such theory can be used to enhance student teachers' own personal theories, but Dearden's comment about the need to exercise "an unteachable act of judgement" would seem pertinent here (Dearden 1980:26). This judgement will become increasingly more important as the tempo of change increases. The ability to reflect critically may be seen as a significant factor in the ability to judge wisely.

In the following section, some recommendations are made for the handling of the theoretical component of pre-service courses for primary teachers.

6.3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE HANDLING OF THE THEORETICAL COMPONENT IN PRE-SERVICE COURSES FOR SOUTH AFRICAN PRIMARY TEACHERS

1. Student teachers must be adequately equipped with practical teaching skills, but this should not be regarded as the exclusive objective of pre-service courses.

2. Demands for more practically-oriented teacher preparation should not be allowed to compromise the contribution a study of educational theory can make to sound teacher preparation. Theoretical study should continue to be regarded as an indispensable component in pre-service courses for primary teachers, and particularly for such teachers at graduate level. A liberally-based teacher preparation, rather than one narrowly focused on practical considerations, provides the best possibility of producing teachers able to make a rational assessment of current policies and practice.

3. All available sources of theoretical insight should be further developed:

   - research into the operational theories of established teachers should continue;
   - 'practical principles' should be identified as far as is possible;
   - student teachers should be encouraged to play an active role in researching, and reflecting on, the educative task;
   - the disciplines of education should continue to be regarded as valuable explanatory frameworks within which to promote student teachers' awareness of educational issues.

4. Greater attention should be directed towards the development of South African-oriented educational theory which will more accurately reflect the multi-cultural nature of the South African schools of the future.

5. Explicit links should be made between the various components of pre-service courses - theoretical, professional, subject knowledge and school-based experiences - in order to facilitate integration of theory and practice.

6. Teacher educators should continue in the establishment of positive links between their institutions and schools, to minimise the sense of disjunction inevitably felt by student teachers between their pre-service experiences and their subsequent functioning in the schools.

7. Student teachers should be encouraged to consider the dilemmas surrounding the theory/practice debate. They should be made aware of the nature of educational theory, and of the impossibility of it providing ready-made answers. They should be assisted in developing personal views regarding the suggested desirability that educational theory be an integral part of their pre-service courses.

8. Given the recommendation that the disciplines be retained, it is essential that, in the face of time-constraints, teacher educators select carefully from the material available within each of the disciplines in order to ensure that education, rather than any allegiance to a parent discipline, remain the central concern.

9. As it is impracticable to include a comprehensive study of each of the disciplines at the pre-service level, more capable primary teachers should be encouraged to consider further study once they have acquired some practical experience. Greater numbers of Bachelor of Primary Education graduates will increase the number of primary teachers eligible for acceptance into the Bachelor of Education degree courses offered by a number of South African universities.

10. Larger numbers of suitable black candidates should be urged to register for Bachelor of Primary Education degree courses. (Research into perceptions by black candidates of primary teaching - as distinct from secondary teaching - should be undertaken in order to establish whether there is any perceived inferiority in the status of primary teachers. If this is found to be the case, ways of promoting a more positive image of primary level education should be investigated.)

11. Notwithstanding the desirability that student teachers be well-grounded in the theoretical aspects of their chosen career, it is recognised that, in view of the pressing need for increased numbers of primary teachers which is likely to be felt once primary education is made compulsory for all population groups in South Africa, a four-year graduate-level primary teacher qualification may in many cases be an unaffordable luxury. An intermediate, and more practically-oriented, qualification - of perhaps two-years' duration - should therefore be introduced, which would allow access

to the profession but would also serve as an initial step towards the higher qualification at a later stage.

6.4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In view of the amount of intellectual effort devoted to exploring the relationship between educational theory and practice it seems quite extraordinary that no satisfactory resolution of the dilemma has yet been achieved.

The sources listed in the reference section at the end of this work represent the 'tip of the iceberg'. The impression gained in examining the literature is that educational writers often appear to be going round in circles. The same things have been said by different writers at different times, and little cognisance appears to have been taken of earlier comments and recommendations. It seems, however, that some possibility of a constructive amalgamation of consonant viewpoints is beginning to arise.

In the introduction to Section 6.2 it was suggested that there are six main 'contenders' in the debate about sources of theoretical insight. Each of these has been evaluated. The writer suggests that, rather than being seen as mutually exclusive, each should be regarded as complementing the others. Each has merit, but none is sufficient in isolation. 'Reflective teaching' is the most embracive approach insofar as it represents an attempt to blend academic and personal theory. Given suitably honed 'tools' for critical analysis, the reflective practitioner is perhaps more likely, in dealing with any particular situation, to

exercise a desirable degree of flexibility in selecting from available alternatives. The climate of the future will undoubtedly be very different from that currently prevailing. The bigger the theoretical domain within which the teacher reflects, the greater is his or her manoeuvrability in threading a rational course through uncertain waters.

In any programme aiming to produce effective teachers, theoretical understanding ought to rank equally with practical competence. Ryle suggested that the ability to make intelligent use of theory is itself a skill (Ryle 1949:27), and thus presumably open to improvement with practice.

The following quote best illustrates the present writer's beliefs concerning the need for a balance between theoretical and practical components in the preparation of teachers. It does so in a more articulate and sensitive way than she could have achieved.

> For teaching at any level, two important attributes are: on the practical side, confidence soundly based on professional skills; and on the theoretical side, an informed humility, springing from some understanding of the complexity of human issues, the evanescence of intellectual fashions, and the enduring qualities of mind which make some thinkers still influential when their world has passed away.
>
> (Clark 1978b:17-18).

APPENDIX

COPY QUESTIONNAIRE NO. 1:

QUESTIONNAIRE ADDRESSED TO STAFF MEMBERS AT TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

(PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE IN RESPECT OF PROPOSED MASTER'S DEGREE RESEARCH PROJECT)

1. Name of Institution: .....

2. Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates in education offered to primary level trainees:

	Duration of course	No. of students registered for current year
.....	☐	☐
.....	☐	☐
.....	☐	☐
.....	☐	☐
.....	☐	☐

3. Educational theory courses comprising parts of the above:
(e.g. Philosophy of education, History of education, etc.)

	Degree/diploma for which required	Year of study in which course is taken	No. of periods allotted to course
.....			
.....			
.....			
.....			
.....			
.....			

4. Do any of the lecturers responsible for the above courses have graduate-level qualifications specific to the subject (for example, a degree in sociology)? Please give details.

.....

.....

.....

If you wish to make any suggestions, comments or criticisms re my research intentions I would be very interested to receive them.

Thankyou very much.

SALLY-ANN ROBERTSON

COPY OF QUESTIONNAIRE NO. 2

(Sent to those institutions which were finally selected for inclusion in the investigation.)

QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING THE TEACHING OF EDUCATIONAL THEORY

TO PRIMARY TEACHER TRAINEES

To be returned to:

Mrs Sally-Ann Robertson
Faculty of Education
Rhodes University
P.O. Box 94
GRAHAMSTOWN
6140

[STAMPED, SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE ENCLOSED FOR YOU CONVENIENCE]

The following questionnaire is designed to assist me in my research into the teaching of educational theory at various teacher training institutions in South Africa.

Your contribution to my research will be extremely valuable, and to this end, may I ask that you answer the questions as fully and frankly as possible. The anonymity of your responses is fully guaranteed as no individual or institution contributing to the empirical component of my investigation will be directly identified.

A. QUALIFICATIONS OFFERED

i) If your institution offers a B. Prim. Ed. degree, in which year was this degree course introduced?

.....

ii) At which levels is the B. Prim. Ed. degree course offered?

senior primary ☐

junior primary ☐

iii) What diploma courses for primary teachers does your institution offer?

Pre-pr ☐

3 year J.P. ☐

3 year S.P. ☐

4 year J.P. ☐

4 year S.P. ☐

1 year post-graduate S.P. ☐

1 Year post-graduate J.P. ☐

No diploma courses ☐

iv) Are there plans to phase-out diploma courses?

yes ☐

no ☐

v) If your institution is a college of education, and it offers a B. Prim. Ed. degree in collaboration with a university, could you please briefly explain the nature of your collaboration with the university. e.g. does the university have a merely validatory role etc.?

.....

.....

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.....

B. STRUCTURE OF THEORETICAL COMPONENT

i) Which of the following educational theory courses for primary teacher trainees does you institution operate?

History of Edn ☐

Philosophy of Edn ☐

Psychology of Edn ☐

Sociology of Edn ☐

Curriculum theory ☐

Integrated course ☐

Any other? Please specify:

.....

.....

.....

.....

ii) If you offer an integrated theory of education course, what is the rationale for this approach in preference to the pursuit of the separate foundation disciplines?

.....

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iii) In such an integrated course to what extent are the students made aware of the individual contributions of each of the foundation disciplines [History of Edn, Philosophy of Edn, etc.]?

Strongly emphasised ☐

Made reasonably clear ☐

Not considered necessary ☐

iv) How much attention is given in the educational theory course[s] to introducing students to the <u>particular</u> concepts, methodology, etc. of each of the foundation disciplines?

Strongly emphasised ☐

In a fair amount of detail ☐

Briefly covered ☐

Not considered important ☐

v) If you retain the separate disciplines approach in the teaching of educational theory, in what way do you see this as superior to an integrated approach?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

C. OVERSEAS INFLUENCE

Which tradition do you consider to be most influential in the structure and teaching of educational theory at your institution?

American ☐

British ☐

German ☐

A balance of the above ☐

D. JUSTIFICATION FOR THEORETICAL COMPONENT

i) What is your personal rationale for the inclusion of educational theory in primary teacher preparation courses?

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.....

ii) Do you think students are made sufficiently aware of the contribution that educational theory can make to their professional development? Please elaborate.

.....

.....

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.....

iii) Do you consider any one area of educational theory to be of particular importance to a student's professional development? Please elaborate.

.....

.....

.....

.....

E. STUDENT REACTION TO EDUCATIONAL THEORY

i) Have you been aware of any degree of student antipathy towards the theoretical component of their training?

never ☐

occasionally ☐

fairly often ☐

frequently ☐

ii) In cases where you have encountered such antipathy, to what would you attribute it?

student immaturity ☐

Lack of professional awareness ☐

Problems inherent in the course itself ☐

Do you have any additional explanation for student disillusionment with educational theory? Please elaborate.

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iii) Can you identify any particular area[s] of educational theory which students find especially interesting/valuable? If so, please elaborate on why you think this should be so.

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.....

iv) Can you identify any area[s] of educational theory which students find relatively less interesting/valuable? If so, please elaborate on why you think this should be so.

.....

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.....

F. APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF EDUCATIONAL THEORY

i) What form[s] does the teaching of educational theory take at your institution?

mainly lectures ☐

mainly structured tutorials ☐

mainly open-ended discussions ☐

staff team-teaching ☐

Any other approaches? Please elaborate.

.....

.....

.....

ii) What form of input is required from students?

formal student-led discussion ☐

informal student contributions to discussions ☐

participation in small-scale research investigations ☐

Any other approaches? Please elaborate.

.....

.....

.....

.....

iii) What types of reference materials are recommended/provided to students for the theoretical component of their course?

prescribed textbooks ☐

photocopies of selected readings provided for various topics ☐

students required to pursue their own reference work ☐

a single, comprehensive handout per course ☐

all necessary information provided by the lecture ☐

iv) If possible, please indicate some examples of what you consider to be seminal references in various of the theoretical aspects of the course.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

v) What form[s] does examination for the educational theory component of the course take?

oral presentations ☐

open book exam ☐

closed book exam ☐

entirely based on assessment of course work ☐

course work contributes ☐ % towards exam mark

G. THEORY/PRACTICE DICHOTOMY

i) What are your views on the theory/practice dichotomy?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

ii) What steps do you think can be taken to reduce the dichotomy (perceived or real) between theory and practice?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

H. CONTENT OF COURSES IN EDUCATIONAL THEORY

i) To what extent are students made aware of the specific South African context in relation to educational theory? Please elaborate.

.....

.....

.....

.....

ii) To what extent are students made aware of the political overtones in the South African educational context? Please elaborate.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

iii) The following is a somewhat eclectic list of topics which might be included in educational theory courses. To avoid any impression of a particular bias or pre-emptive categorization, these are arranged alphabetically.

Could you please indicate which of these topics are currently included in the educational theory course[s] at your institution.

- ☐ accountability
- ☐ aims in education
- ☐ apartheid and education
- ☐ authority
- ☐ changing conceptions of childhood
- ☐ child-centred education
- ☐ children with special needs
- ☐ Christian National Education
- ☐ classroom research methods
- ☐ communication
- ☐ community projects

Comparative education:

- ☐ - UK
- ☐ - USA
- ☐ - USSR
- ☐ - other African countries
- ☐ hidden curriculum
- ☐ ideologies in education
- ☐ individual differences
- ☐ indoctrination
- ☐ integrated curriculum
- ☐ integrated day
- ☐ intelligence
- ☐ intelligence testing
- ☐ knowledge (theories of)
- ☐ labelling theory
- ☐ language in education
- ☐ learning theories
- ☐ mixed ability teaching
- ☐ moral education
- ☐ motivation
- ☐ multi-cultural education

- ☐ competition
- ☐ construction of social reality
- ☐ creativity
- ☐ culture
- ☐ curriculum theory (aspects of)
- ☐ deschooling
- ☐ de Lange Commission
- ☐ developmental theory (child)
- ☐ deviance
- ☐ differential attainment
- ☐ Diploma Disease
- ☐ discovery learning
- ☐ discipline
- ☐ education (concept of)
- ☐ education and development in the context of the Third World
- ☐ equality (concept of)
- ☐ ethnicity in education
- ☐ evaluation
- ☐ freedom and responsibility
- ☐ gender in education
- ☐ gifted children
- ☐ guidance and counselling
- ☐ nature/nurture debate
- ☐ open education
- ☐ People's Education
- ☐ perception

Philosophical approaches:

- ☐ - conceptual analysis
- ☐ - existentialism
- ☐ - phenomenology
- ☐ play in education
- ☐ pupil-teacher interaction
- ☐ remedial education
- ☐ SATC Credo :implications
- ☐ self-concept
- ☐ self-fulfilling prophecy
- ☐ socialization (including home-background theories)
- ☐ social stratification
- ☐ sociological perspectives
- ☐ sociology of knowledge
- ☐ teaching (concept of)
- ☐ world of work (educational implications)

iv) Please indicate whether your educational theory course[s] include topics other than those listed above.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

v) Which of the following figures/writers receive attention in the educational theory course[s] at your institution?

☐ Aristotle	☐ Maslow
☐ Bernstein	☐ Montessori
☐ Bloom	☐ A.S. Neil
☐ Bowles & Gintis	☐ Talcott Parsons
☐ Dearden	☐ Pestalozzi
☐ Dewey	☐ R.S. Peters
☐ Durkheim	☐ Piaget
☐ Plato	☐ Erikson
☐ Floud & Halsey	☐ Carl Rogers
☐ Paulo Freire	☐ Rousseau
☐ Freud	☐ Skinner
☐ Froebel	☐ Thorndike
☐ Herbart	☐ Steiner
☐ Ivan Illich	☐ Vygotski
☐ Nell Keddie	☐ M.F.D. Young

vi) Please indicate any other figures not included in the above list who are included in the educational theory course[s] at your institution.

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.....

Thankyou very much for the time you have given in completing this questionnaire. I hope it has not proved to be an excessive imposition!

Any additional comments which you may care to make would be most welcome. (They can be added to the reverse side of this page.)

Sincerely,

SALLY-ANN ROBERTSON

COPY OF QUESTIONNAIRE NO. 3

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGNED TO ASSESS THE ATTITUDES OF TEACHING STAFF AT INSTITUTION B TOWARDS THE THEORETICAL COMPONENT OF PRIMARY TEACHER PREPARATION COURSES

To assist me in my research I would be most grateful if you would complete the following questionnaire. The title of my investigation is:

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EVOLUTION AND CURRENT STATUS OF THE CORE THEORETICAL DISCIPLINES IN THE TRAINING OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AT SELECTED ENGLISH-MEDIUM TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

1. What in your view are the most important aspects of primary teacher education in South Africa?

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2. What do you consider to be the best approach to meeting the needs of both primary student teachers and the schools in which they are destined to teach?

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3. What contribution do you think educational theory can be expected to make to the production of an effective primary school teacher?

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4. What, in your experience, has been the student response to the theoretical aspects of their training? Do you feel that they consider it to be a worthwhile area of study?

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5. What are your views on the use of the 'theoretical disciplines' - history, philosophy, psychology and sociology of education - as 'vehicles' for the teaching of educational theory to primary student teachers?

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6. Why do you think these disciplines appear to have lost the prominence they once had in teacher education courses?

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7. What do you consider to be the optimal approach to the teaching of educational theory in primary teacher education in order to achieve a "good fit" between theory and practice? Do you feel that your institution has been successful in achieving this? Are there any modifications which you would like to see introduced?

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8. In what ways does the 'old' diploma course differ from the 'new' degree course in primary education?

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9. Has the degree course attracted a different type of student? Have you yet discerned any improvement in teaching effectiveness relative to diploma vs. degree course candidates?

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10. What effect do you think recent developments on the political front in this country are likely to have on the <u>type</u> of primary teacher education offered in the future? What do you consider to be the most pressing needs in this context and what implications might this have for the theoretical aspects of primary teacher education courses?

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Thank you very much for the time you have given in completing this questionnaire.

If there are any additional comments which you feel might be pertinent to my investigation, I would greatly value them.

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ADDITIONAL REFERENCE SOURCES:

SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY CALENDARS:

Rhodes University	: 1952 - 1990.
University of Cape Town	: 1916 - 1990.
University of Natal	: 1983 - 1990.
University of the Witwatersrand	: 1980 - 1990.

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