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History curriculum and teacher training: shaping a democratic future in post-apartheid South Africa?

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ABSTRACT

Issues of transitional justice are central to countries moving away from identity-based conflict. Research tends to focus on the most well-known forms of transitional justice, like truth commissions. Far less attention has been given to education as a form of transitional justice, and even less to teacher professional development, even though education is central to signalling the new society and teachers are expected to become agents of change in their classrooms. This article focusses on history curriculum change in post-apartheid South Africa. We show how the post-apartheid South African government developed a human rights-based history curriculum but failed to support teachers to implement it. Aspects of these inadequacies included a failure to take into account the de-skilling of a large segment of the teaching population under apartheid and teachers' personal legacies of that era. Through a review of the teacher professional development programme, *Facing the Past*, this article demonstrates the possibility to implement teacher training programmes attuned to the particular needs of a transitional justice environment.

KEYWORDS

Transitional justice; history education; teacher training; human rights; South Africa

Introduction

Over the past two decades there has been an increased recognition of the potential for education systems to both contribute to conflict as well as facilitate transitional justice processes (e.g. Cole 2007a, 2007b; Paulson 2009; Ramirez-Barat and Duthie 2015). History teaching is seen as particularly relevant because it can facilitate truth telling, the preservation of memory (itself a process of restorative justice for individuals and groups whose experiences were previously silenced and unacknowledged in historical accounts and curriculum) and public deliberation (Cole 2007a). Yet little research has been carried out on appropriate curriculum and the role teacher training plays within the wider context of a country in transition from a divided past (Weldon 2009, 2015).

The United Nations defines transitional justice as 'the full set of processes and mechanisms associated with a society's attempts to come to terms with the legacy of large-scale past abuse, in order to secure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation'

(Annan 2004, 4). Bickford's (2007) definition has also recognised that transitional justice has come to accommodate both justice and reconciliation simultaneously, as was the case in South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) (Posel 1999; Tutu 2000). The TRC's mandate was both deeply moral, in that access to the truth was to lay the foundation for a more human, just social order; and also reconciliatory in that passing judgement on the past needed to take place in ways which reconciled a previously divided society to a future rooted in a respect for human rights (TRC Report, vol. 1, ch 1. Para 28; Posel 1999, 4; Tutu 2007). The TRC became a 'public civic confessional' (Posel 2008, 128), ultimately receiving 20,000 statements from victims and 800 amnesty applications from perpetrators. Approximately 10% of these cases were represented in public hearings, chosen as a (symbolic) representative of the wider group who had suffered human rights violations (138).

It is now accepted that the TRC process was flawed in several aspects, including a mandate with a limited focus on gross human rights abuses and therefore reluctance to confront the apartheid past as a system that destroyed the lives of millions; failure to call the SANDF (SA Defence Force) to account; failure to engage with crimes against women; failure to call institutions to account; too many perpetrators who were not granted amnesty not prosecuted; and lack of political will to ensure reparations recommendations were carried out (Mamdani 1998; Posel 1999; Posel 2008; Weldon 2009). The most significant flaw for the purposes of this article was the failure to include institutions that were culpable in propping up apartheid in the truth-seeking exercise, including the grossly inequitable education system. Although the TRC did organise public hearings on, for example, gender, the media, business, the armed forces, the TRC was designed to process individual claims of gross human rights violations, such as killings, abductions and torture. This was a somewhat narrow interpretation of human rights violations (Kusafuka 2009). The TRC's mandate did not extend to investigations of the systemic impact of Apartheid's racial policies of socio-economic engineering, resulting in 'racially-ordered oppression, gendered injustice and economic exploitation' (Walker and Unterhalter 2004, 280; Henry 2007).

Apartheid education was an instrument of division and oppression. It deeply entrenched notions of white superiority and black inferiority. History education with its dominant Afrikaner nationalist narrative was manipulated to legitimise National Party and Afrikaner control of South Africa (Weldon 2009, 2015). The contradiction here is that although education had been so crucial to maintaining apartheid, this was largely ignored in the formal transitional justice (TJ) process in the form of the TRC. Yet after 1994, the year of South Africa's first democratic election, education was regarded as essential to the transition from apartheid to a new democratic South Africa based on human rights and social justice (DoE 1995, 1997, 2). To this end history education, after initially being omitted from the curriculum in the first curriculum revision process of 1996, was eventually revised in 2001–2002 to foster learning processes that included enquiry and critical analysis. It would have been expected that history education would reflect the narrative approach embraced in the TRC through its hearings (Posel 2008). However, although it included learning about the work of the TRC itself under the broad heading 'dealing with the past and facing the future', the narratives themselves were not written into the curriculum (DoE 2003, 31). This was left to textbook writers and, hopefully, teacher trainers. Yet, the degree to which curriculum reform processes were able to support transitional justice

aspirations in South Africa were compromised as a result of qualitative and quantitative lack of teacher support.

The central question asked by this paper is framed by this contradiction in South Africa's transitional justice process: what has the absence of public truth seeking about the apartheid-era education system and its curriculum within the TRC, yet the centrality of education within the wider transition from apartheid meant for the way education and in particular history education, has been able to contribute to social change in South Africa? We suggest that it has meant that the burden of making the promise of a new South Africa happen through education has fallen largely on teachers, who have not been adequately supported in carrying out their role as the intended mediators of transitional justice processes in the classroom. We argue that in South Africa's transitional justice environment at least three dimensions of teacher support were necessary for implementing the new history curriculum: training on new content and pedagogy; upskilling for teachers poorly prepared as consequence of the apartheid-era credentialing system (combined with a deep transformation of the segregated schooling system); and opportunities for teachers to consider their personal legacies from the apartheid era. We share data from a teacher training programme Facing the Past (FtP), which successfully provided this support for a group teachers in the Western Cape since 2003. We argue that as a result of this support and their own commitment, teachers were better able to enable what we call micro-processes of transitional justice in their classrooms and therefore to contribute towards the educative transitional justice goals articulated as essential for a democratic South Africa.

Transitional justice and history education: new content and pedagogy

Democratic reform processes and use of new laws and policies, including education policies, are key for promoting the legitimacy of new political leaders and for facilitating transparent and inclusive processes that were casualties during periods of conflict or authoritarianism. There is a growing literature on the role of education in supporting changes in society's processes of governance, institutional structures and leadership in order to promote democratic processes, transparency and accountability (e.g. Cole 2007a; Paulson 2009; Ramirez-Barat and Duthie 2015). In particular scholars have explored the intersection of transitional justice processes and history education (Hamber 1998; Minow 1998; Posel 1999; Elkins 2000; Gobodo-Madikizela 2004; Cole 2007a, 2007b; Dilek and Filippidou 2015; Paulson 2015; Waldron and McCully 2015; Weldon 2015).

A critical question for all societies in transition from violent conflict is what to do about a traumatic past. There is no easy answer to this question, and it remains debatable whether it is better not to engage with the past and 'leave people with their own truths' in the hopes that this will not contribute to renewed violence, or 'try to heal some of the rifts of the past through uncovering, remember and understanding the conflicts of the past' (Hamber 1998). There are those who argue that in societies with a past of human rights abuses, history in the form of public testimony such as TRC hearings, have an educative legacy that requires ethical remembrance and critical learning (Simon, DiPaolantonio, and Clamen 2002). They raise questions about the ethical, pedagogical and political implications of various practices of historical remembrance contained in documents, images, testimony and public memory. In particular these scholars argue that public practices of

memory not merely contribute to knowledge of the past, but can have a 'testamentary, transitive function', bearing an 'educative legacy to those who come after' (Simon 2001). As this paper will show, this was the position ultimately taken by history education reformers in South Africa. The new curriculum introduced in 2002 did not substitute a new narrative for the old, but attempted to redress 'the invisibility of the formerly marginalized and subjugated voices' (DoE 2002) providing for 'ethical remembrance' through the various narratives of those formerly silenced voices in the South African past. The pedagogical approach in the new curriculum was that of historical enquiry, allowing engagement with diverse narratives, and aiming to introduce pedagogical approaches other than the rote learning of a single official narrative. As the process of historical enquiry was written into the Learning outcomes and Assessment Standards, this became the core of the new history curriculum launched in 2003.

Yet, with the exception of Cole and Murphy (2007) and Weldon (2009) there is little research on the role that teacher training within history education can play in the wider context of a country in transition to democracy. Changes in history curricula and textbooks can be a way to institutionalise transitional justice processes. However, enquiry-based history education makes this form of institutionalisation more complex by using methodologies that engage critically with narratives, particularly multiple narratives, of the past. Thus effective teacher training is essential for supporting such changes in classroom practice.

Pedagogical skills are crucial for facilitating value clarification, critical reflection, source analysis, consideration of different points of view, respectful debate and empathy among students. A conclusion of the 'Unite or Divide?' international conference on history teaching about recent conflict organised in 2005 by the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) is that the way history is taught during periods of transition is perhaps even more important than the content. Yet, participants in the conference agreed that pedagogy and teacher training are still under addressed when history reform is taking place (Cole 2007a, 126). A 2015 literature reviews supported the key role of professional development in preparing teachers to promote social cohesion and that 'how' they teach is as important as 'what' they teach (Horney et al. 2015, 8–9).

In South Africa, the TRC was a very public process through which the post-apartheid South African regime established its new order, defined through judgement of the old order as a political act of nation building (Weldon 2009). However, the TRC was a deliberately contained and managed process of constructing a particular official memory (Christie 2006), which focussed on the period of gross human rights abuses under apartheid rather than a system which destroyed the lives of millions of South Africans psychologically and economically (Weldon 2009, 155), and did not translate into a history curriculum at the time of the first post-apartheid curriculum reform of 1996. History had been excised from the first post-apartheid curriculum of 1996 as we discuss in more detail later in this article. It was only at the end of 2002 with the initial release of the National Curriculum Statements (NCS) that 'ethical remembrance' became part of the South African Curriculum. The revised history curriculum that of 2002 included both new content and new pedagogies. In implementing the new curriculum after 2002, teachers ipso facto became the intended mediators of transitional justice in classrooms.

Yet under apartheid these same educators had been teaching history under a very different paradigm in which they were required to teach an exclusive, nationalist narrative

to be learned by rote. Education under apartheid was regarded as a science and aimed to develop conformity and obedience from all South Africans, black and white (Enslin 1984). History was delivered as an uncontested body of knowledge (Weldon 2009) which included narratives of the past contested by 'revisionist' academic historians in the 1970s and 1980s. There was no culture of problem solving, free enquiry or active learning.

In the South African transitional context, the expected role of history teachers in both curriculum revision processes was suddenly and fundamentally different from what it had previously been. They were now expected to teach a history subject that was based on enquiry and interpretation and that had explicit goals to develop learners to contribute to a new, democratic, rights respecting South Africa.

History teaching in the context of pervasive inequalities during apartheid-era education

In the South African transitional justice environment, history education also needed to take into account the legacies of the apartheid-era schooling system and the official history narrative that had contributed to conflict. Apartheid education was Christian and National. It was ostensibly a policy for white Afrikaans-speaking children, but also spelled out the features of education for black South Africans that clearly articulated the racist ideology nurtured in the 1930s of the ruling National Party. In 1953, the Bantu Education Act formalised the system of unequal education for black South Africans, who were to be educated to the level of manual labour (Quoted in Kallaway 1984, 92).

What becomes 'official' memory in national curricula reflects the power of certain groups and ideologies in society to define the past according to their interests (Zembylas and Bekerman 2008). In apartheid South Africa, the power reflected in the history curriculum was defined by Afrikaner nationalist historians who sought to justify white supremacy and Afrikaner control of the country (Chisholm 1981; Bundy 1986; Dubow 1992; Weldon 2009). The national narrative fed into the prevailing stereotypes of whites as civilised and black as barbarous, mirroring the patterns of inclusion and exclusion from citizenship and contributing to the shaping of social [racialised] identities (Chisholm 2004). Any resistance to apartheid that had taken place – for example the passive resistance of the 1950s and increasing resistance in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s – did not appear in any of the curricula (Weldon 2009) and the curriculum for black students ended with the date of 1948, when the National Party took control of government in South Africa. While in theory the different education departments developed their own curricula, in practice there was tight control exercised by the white House of Assembly.

Through the Department of Bantu Education 1953, the national government systematically took control of all schools for black students. Of the 7000 schools operating in the 1950s, 5000 had been run by missionaries, and were all taken over by the government. Finance was pegged to a set figure; all teachers were henceforth to be trained in government training colleges; and all syllabi were created by government officials and imbued with ideas of racial inferiority (Christie and Collins 1984). The segregation of schools and the concurrent underfinancing of black schools¹ conspired to institutionalise deeply unequal education between whites and the majority of the South Africans. There was a shortage of teachers in black schools as well as shortages of furniture, books and other equipment. Double sessions (platoon system) were put in place to provide for the

increased number of students. This meant that two groups of students used a school each day, decreasing the school day by a third (Christie and Collins 1984, 177). This inequality also extended to teacher preparation and credentialing. There was an overall marked deterioration in the qualification levels of teachers as the number of teachers without matric [high school] qualifications increased (Christie and Collins 1984, 179). Un- and underqualified teachers worked predominantly in black schools, contributing to marked disparities in the quality of education received by different groups of South Africans. Up until the era of democracy it remained possible for students in the black educational sector to qualify as teachers with Standard 8 (Grade 10) school-leaving certificates (Council on Higher Education 2010, 8).

In the upcoming sections we overview the curriculum reforms and teacher trainings organised by the Ministry of Education following the end of apartheid, between 1996 and 2006. This policy review summarises the changes in the content and pedagogy of history education between the first and second waves of curriculum reform that began in 2000. We use a transitional justice lens to analyse the national teacher training organised for the first general curriculum reform (1996–2000) as well as the professional development organised specifically for history educators in the second reform (2000–2006).

First wave of curriculum reform during the immediate post-apartheid period – no history education

The first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994 set up a Government of National Unity which was the outcome of the politics of compromise. Between 1990 and 1994, the new democracy had been negotiated within the context of intense political violence. As neither the liberation movements nor the apartheid state had been clear victors in the struggle prior to 1990 and the release of Nelson Mandela, compromises were made on both sides. An interim constitution was drawn up in 1993 and agreement reached on a period of five years of power sharing during which the new Constitution would be developed.

The political reality influenced the first iteration of post-apartheid education policy, and in particular the position of history within the curriculum. It was not until 1996 that work on a new curriculum began and at that point, for a number of reasons, History was considered by the newly appointed national education officials to be too sensitive to include in the school curriculum. This, ironically, was the year in which the TRC hearings began.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was set up according to the provisions in the postamble of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act No. 200 of 1993 (the Interim Constitution) and passed in Parliament as the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, No 34 of 1995. The Act established the TRC to investigate politically motivated gross human rights violations perpetrated between 1960 and 1994. While a number of institutional hearings were set up to provide a context for these human rights violations, the apartheid education system was not brought before the TRC. This meant that during the TRC hearings there was no public debate on the role of education in contributing to apartheid, nor on the ways in which the education system might respond to the requirements of a new, democratic South Africa. This was a serious 'shortcoming on the part of the Commission as it was in education that most damage to this

society was done' (Wildschut 2007, 61). What did happen, was the very public construction at the hearings of a 'national narrative' which, it might have been expected, would be reflected in the new curriculum. This did not happen. In the first curriculum reform, there was not history; in the second, the multiple narratives of South Africans became a basis for creating an identity predicated on diversity.

While apartheid education had not been interrogated at the TRC, education in post-apartheid South Africa was nevertheless seen as central to the realisation of the vision for South Africa's transition. Several key new education policies, deriving their values from the South African Constitution had been put in place by mid-1996 (Weldon 2009). The preamble to the SA Constitution clearly articulates the vision for South Africa's transition by recognising 'the injustices of our past' and adopting the Constitution as supreme law of the new democracy so as to 'Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights ...' (SA Constitution 1993 (Interim) and 1996). The central education policy document was the 1995 *White Paper on Education and Training* in which the goal of post-apartheid education was stated as the promotion of a democratic, free, equal, just and peaceful society with well-informed and critical citizens (DoE 1995). Two years into the democracy, it had now become urgent for a new curriculum to give expression to these ideals. In July 1996, a draft *Curriculum Framework for General and Further Education and Training* for the development of a new curriculum, was published (DoE 1996) setting out a vision for transformation through outcomes-based education (OBE). The new curriculum, Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was launched in March 1997. The introduction to the curriculum policy documents contained a vision of the 'new' South African citizens who would be able to build social cohesion, support democracy and contribute to an economically prosperous country – by turning their backs on the past (DoE 1997).

OBE as outlined in C2005 took away everything that had been familiar to teachers, leaving them no 'hooks' on which to begin building a new approach to teaching and learning. Under apartheid, the majority of teachers had been required to teach a body of knowledge uncritically; they were now supposed to 'facilitate and mediate the educational experience' (Jansen 1999, 4). Moreover, OBE did not take into account the necessary infrastructural adjustments to support such a radical change in approach, such as an aggressive teacher retraining programme and resource allocation. Moreover, there continued to be a lack of resource in most schools (Jansen 1998, 9).

Quality of in-service teacher training under the first wave of curriculum reform

The national Department of Education (now Department of Basic Education) was aware of the need to re-train practicing teachers for the implementation of the first wave of curriculum reform, C2005 (see *White Paper on Education and Training* (DoE 1995), the National Education Policy Act No 27 of 1996 (DoE 1996), the Norms and Standards for Educators (DoE 2000a), and the 2005 Report of the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education: A national framework for teacher education in South Africa (DoE 2005).

Orientation workshops were held throughout the country which stressed the political imperatives for change; which explained the nature of a 'transformational' outcomes-based education; and explained the new role of teachers (personal experience of one of

the authors in conducting the sessions). However, there was no attempt to provide the kind of training that would enable teachers to begin to transform classroom practice.

Implementation was not always carefully thought through, properly piloted or resourced and enormous stresses and strains were consequently placed on already over-burdened principals and teachers in widely-divergent educational contexts. The OBE training was too short and impractical (Singh 1999; Jansen and Taylor 2003, 41; Pillay, Smit, and Loock 2013, 120).

Furthermore, the cascade model of training had been 'too short, information-driven, removed from classroom contexts and realities, and thin on substantive content' for it to have been successful (Jansen and Taylor 2003, 41).

Second wave of curriculum reform – history education returns

In 1999 following the second democratic elections, a new Minister of Education, Prof Kader Asmal, was appointed. By this time, it had become clear that C2005 had failed and that a new curriculum was needed.

Asmal launched a *Call to Action* to the country and the *Tirisano* (working together) framework of principles and strategies for achieving the educational goals of the national Education Department. This was the beginning of a process that would introduce a revised national curriculum, the NCS with a focus on human rights and social and environmental justice and would re-introduce history education (DoE 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2000d, 2000e).

These documents, located in a 'discourse of revolution, Africanism and humanism' (Chisholm 1999, 56), moved away from the vocational and technicist discourses of C2005. Education was regarded as intrinsic to democracy and the right of citizens, both essential to the realisation of the democratic promise, contributing to the 'shared values on which nation building will develop and that the fissures and alienation of the past are eradicated' (Asmal 2000). There was to be teaching and learning within the context of clearly understood rights, responsibilities and values and a return to a more discipline-based approach to subjects and learning areas.

A strong values and human rights framework derived from the Constitution informed the entire curriculum, which would become known as NCS. However, while all Learning Areas and Subjects were to infuse issues of human rights into their curriculum statements, particular attention was given to the emerging history curriculum, which was considered to be one of the most important vehicles for the transmission of human rights and social justice (DoE 2002). Three documents commissioned by Minister Asmal as part of his intention to restore history to the curriculum, followed in rapid succession, catapulting history education into the centre of a national debate. These were the report of the Review Committee, appointed by Prof Asmal to review C2005 (DoE 2000a); the report *Values, Education and Democracy* of a Working Group on Values in Education, formed by the Minister (DoE 2000b); and the *Report of the History and Archaeology Panel to the Minister of Education* (DoE 2000b). The reinstatement of history in the curriculum was regarded as a way of promoting 'human values', 'encouraging openness' (DoE 2000b, 24); as opposing the manipulative or instrumental use of the past and enabling us to listen to formerly subjugated voices and to redress the invisibility of the formerly marginalised (DoE 2000b). Prof Asmal believed that history teaching within an ethically based framework, would play

an important role in the transitional environment of South Africa, contributing to the vision of a future democratic South Africa.

What emerged at the end of the writing process, was a history curriculum document that was explicitly located within the values of the SA Constitution and transitional justice processes (DoE 2002; RNCS Social Sciences, 1; DoE 2003; NCS FET History, 1). History as a discipline was affirmed and its outcomes included the processes of historical enquiry. New content was located within a framework of transitional justice in that it made provision for diverse memories and narratives, recognising the South African diversity and attempting to redress 'the invisibility of the formerly marginalized and subjugated voices' (DoE 2003; NCS FET History, 9). In this way, it sought to 'acknowledge, challenge, and overcome inequalities' (Paulson 2009) that had been deeply embedded in the apartheid history narrative taught in schools. It was an open rather than a closed text, which provided for diverse memories and narratives as part of a new national narrative. History was strongly linked with intended transitional justice processes in South Africa, as a subject which might 'help sustain a more open, equitable and tolerant society' (Asmal 2003). Included in the curriculum was the transition from apartheid to democracy, including the making of the Government of National Unity, the making of the new Constitution, and broadly, the way in which South Africa dealt with the past (DoE 2003, Grade 12 content).

Teacher training for the 'new' history subject

While the training for the introduction of the NCS History was considered an improvement on the OBE training, in that there was a practical component, it was still insufficient. Many teachers felt that the period of training had been too short (Pillay, Smit, and Loock 2013) and there was still too much emphasis on the technical aspects of the curriculum, rather than on upgrading content knowledge and skills, particularly given the expectation that teachers shift pedagogical approach towards an enquiry-based teaching of history. Too much attention was given to how to develop lesson plans rather than the use of enquiry-based methods to support the new curriculum. The training manual for *Further Education and Training: History* (DoE 2006) for the NCS followed the generic structure set up by the DoE, which took place over five days.

Session 1. National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and the National Senior Certificate (NSC);

Session 2. Subject Statement;

Session 3. Planning for teaching subjects in the NCS; and

Session 4. Annual Assessment Plan. (DoE 2006)

Only one and a half days was given to the use of historical sources and evidence in the classroom – clearly not enough (DoE 2006, 3). The NCS for History contained new content areas, including those relating to the transition from apartheid, the TRC (dealing with the past and facing the future), and the construction of a democratic South Africa (DoE 2003, 27), but there was no time to address these content areas specifically in the trainings. The methodological elements of the training were too superficial for teachers to acquire the depth of understanding necessary to be able to change their

practice. Nothing was put in place to provide ongoing support for teachers to enable them to adopt new teaching methods. Education leaders failed to fully take into account the combined stresses on teachers of adapting not only to new content but also new ways of conceptualising the practice of education.

Moreover, the NCS training did not take into account the historic inequalities between teacher training and schools, which had become deeper in the years after 1994. Schools, particularly in rural areas and ‘townships’ remained de facto segregated; classroom overcrowding became more pronounced in black schools as teachers left the system during 1996 rather than be re-assigned to an area where there was a teacher shortage (Spreen and Vally 2010). Historically disadvantaged schools were thus further disadvantaged by large classes (up to 48 per class), lack of learning support materials, lack of resources, lack of funding, insufficient staff and reading levels of students (de Waal 2004).

Thus, the new demands on history teachers were taking place in a schooling environment that remained largely segregated, particularly socio-economically (Murphy 2017). Equity had been defined as equal treatment of all ‘races’, but there was no genuine strategy for addressing the unequal status of teachers and schools in post-apartheid South Africa (Spreen and Vally 2010). Prior to the introduction of the new curricula, little research had been conducted into what would be necessary to bring about equality in schools in relation to fiscal needs, institutional structures and staff development (de Waal 2004). Policy reform had failed to take into account ‘the long-term and sustained effect of poverty and inequality due to the unique apartheid legacy’ (Spreen and Vally 2010, 443). Thus, the Department of Education, in failing to provide adequate support for in-service teachers, perpetuated the disparities in schools and classrooms that was the legacy of apartheid. The Department also failed to make the larger structural reforms to education, beyond curriculum, that would have possibly enabled education to contribute more towards transformation. The burden of transformation through curriculum fell to under-supported teachers within a system that remained essentially unchanged.

A final, and possibly the most critical, weakness of the NCS training for transitional justice, is that it failed to take into account the impact of the teachers’ own experiences in relation to South Africa’s past. We might call this a ‘personal reconciliation process’ and an essential first step to facilitating ‘the curriculum aim of creating value-laden critical thinking and producing active and compassionate democratic citizens’ (Wray 2017, 340).

The NCS training did not provide opportunities where teachers could engage in critical reflection and dialogue with (diverse) others about their personal experiences and traumas living under apartheid. No ‘democratic spaces’ as envisaged by Lederach were created for the difficult reflections, questions and discussions that needed to take place in order to teach the history of the apartheid past in a way that contributed to a democratic South Africa based on human rights values.

Teachers as transitional justice actors: personal legacies and moral imagination

Attention to teachers as actors involves not only equipping them with methodological skills (e.g. use of primary sources and multi-perspectivity in history teaching) but also critical self-awareness of themselves as individuals with personal histories linked with a difficult national story (in this case apartheid).

In societies in transition from conflict, changing the education system not only signals a new national identity, it is also often regarded as a means of reducing societal violence and creating a democratic society. We argue that when schooling systems are expected to assist in transitional justice processes, teachers are required to not only implement new curriculum but also incorporate transitional justice-like processes in their classrooms that involve critical engagement with the past with the intention of contributing to social cohesion and democracy. While social transformation requires a collective will in a transitional justice environment, we maintain that this can be realised only through individual engagement in transformative processes. We argue that it is through these micro-processes of transitional justice, enacted at classroom level by skilled teachers, that education might make a contribution towards transitional justice and the wider democratic process in South Africa.

Giroux and other critical and progressive educational theorists argue that history education provides a vehicle for the development of 'a collective critical consciousness, and through developing historical consciousness those who study history are enabled to highlight the contradictions in society' (Giroux 1997, 5). Giroux has also called for 'alternative, democratic spaces' to 'sustain the promise of a democracy that must be continuously expanded into a world of new possibilities' (Giroux 2009 as quoted in Spreen and Vally 2010, 431). Importantly, we argue that such spaces – where teachers can engage in ethical, critical and political reflection and discourse – are first necessary for educators to prepare themselves for the essential task of creating micro transitional justice spaces for their students. In South Africa, this is particularly important as teachers will soon be working with children and youth with no personal memory of apartheid (since they were not yet born) and yet at the same time, these students are influenced by this legacy through family history, memories and influences that are still evident in communities and schools.

Given the divisions of the past, personal change in the present cannot happen in isolation from fellow teachers from across the apartheid educational divides. Professional development programmes need to provide a safe space and opportunities for teachers to interact with one another across the identity divides particularly in a country such as South Africa in which de facto segregation continues in many schools and communities. Cole (2007a, 130) also contends that teachers in transitional justice periods needed 'space and opportunities' to have the 'difficult conversations among themselves before trying to facilitate the discussions among their students'. John Paul Lederach, a psychologist and peace worker who has worked over three decades in 25 countries, has called this rebuilding the 'relational space'. In such spaces meaningful interactions can take place that assist participants in recognising the web of relationships that connect us all, and the centrality of such connections for human existence.

Lederach's (2005) concept of moral imagination is particularly helpful in thinking about possibilities for real change after identity-based conflict that can be extended to teacher professional development. A key element of moral imagination exercised in a relational space is the capacity to imagine the web of relationships that holds society together and to include even our enemies; and a desire to understand our enemies from their point of view (Lederach 2005, 5). 'Their point of view' in the South African context needs to include both group memory and individual identity (Weldon 2009). Lederach emphasises the importance of understanding the past in order to understand the settings

of cycles of violent conflict. Moral imagination does not see the past as something to be overcome, laid aside or forgotten in order to move toward a better future. Instead, he argues that these narratives that give meaning to peoples' lives and relationships must be told and the repetitive patterns acknowledged so that healing can take place.

For teachers dealing with legacies of identity-based conflict, 'discovering where they have been, who they are and where they are going' is a necessary pre-requisite not only to personal change but also to the ability to engage with these difficult conversations with their students (Weldon 2009). This was a particular focus in the teacher training conducted by FtP.

Data and methodology

We analysed primary data collected for a professional development programme carried out in the Western Cape, FtP. We argue that this programme was more successful in enabling teachers to support micro-processes of transitional justice, since it provided them with the relational space to interrogate their own experiences and have difficult conversations.

Primary data was collected through internal programme evaluations conducted in conjunction with the FtP teacher professional development programme between 2003 and 2008. These evaluations were based on survey data that includes responses to both open- and closed-ended questions and highlighted key, representative quotes. A total of 105 teachers, from all 'racial' groups, and from a variety of schools from the former apartheid education departments represented in the Western Cape (former 'white', 'coloured', 'black' and 'Indian') attended initial workshops.

In addition to this primary data on teachers' professional development in the FtP programme, selective data was drawn from the DECIDES research project – Developing Citizens in Divided Societies: Secondary Schools, carried out in the U.S., South Africa and Northern Ireland. This was an international project which looked at how legacies of conflict and division impede or enhance how adolescents develop as citizens. All teachers and students who participated in the DECIDES project were part of the FtP programme (South Africa) or Facing History's U.S. and Northern Ireland programme. The South African component involved 20 teachers and 200 students. The interviews were conducted over four years and gave us a deeper insight into the way in which the teacher training of FtP had made an impact on teaching and learning.

Primary data used in this article were gathered from one working group of five teachers from the DECIDES project. While history teaching per se was not the focus of the DECIDES research, the working group interviews in South Africa provided valuable insights into the classrooms of the five history teachers who were all long-standing participants of the FtP programme. Themes explored in the interviews included issues of identity, divisions in society, democracy and threats to democracy, current critical incidents, political or otherwise, in the schools and country, violence in school and society, border crossing, and reflections on their schools and classrooms. Data in the DECIDES research were coded using the Atlas data-coding programme.

The primary data for the FtP and the DECIDES research came from only one province of South Africa, the Western Cape Province, since this is where the programmes have been implemented. Traditionally this province has, in terms of apartheid ideology, been

predominantly 'white' and 'coloured', and was designated a 'preferential employment' area for coloureds. However, since 1994 the demographics of the Western Cape have changed dramatically, partly through a process of internal migration from the rural areas, in particular the former black homelands. This allowed for the participation of teachers from ethnically diverse backgrounds in the FtP trainings and the DECIDES project.

Results: an alternative teacher training approach for history learning: 'FtP'

FtP was a professional development programme set up by the Western Cape Education Department in partnership with a U.S.-based non-governmental organization Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO), the Cape Town Holocaust Centre (initially), and managed by a non-profit organisation, Shikaya. FtP was set up in Cape Town in 2002 in order to fill the gap left by the official training programmes. This included not only some of the content gaps and classroom methodology, but also the individual apartheid legacies. Each workshop deliberately included teachers from diverse schools and former apartheid education departments. In this way, a community of practice could be developed among workshop participants whose backgrounds reflected the diversity of the country.

Through the intensive skills- and practice-focused orientation, the training programme aimed to be effective with educators, regardless of their preparation under apartheid. In other words, there was the plan to bridge two gaps: the knowledge gap for educators who had been trained in the lower tier of the two-tier system under apartheid and the skills gap that nearly all educators felt in relation to being able to teach the new history curriculum, given that it had been framed within a human rights and enquiry-based approach rather than a delivery of a narrative.

More importantly, the FtP programme was also designed to explicitly address the values and emotions of the teachers. The Department of Education saw the history curriculum as being central to promoting a human rights and ethical framework. A teacher-centered professional development programme would need to take into account the legacies of the teachers. Moreover, given the difficult history of the country – one which each of the teachers had played some part in – it would be necessary for the teachers to consider their own histories within a diverse community of colleagues. The incorporation of this critical self-reflection would ultimately assist educators in facilitating similar 'micro' transitional justice processes in their own classrooms.

The four-day introductory workshop follows the Scope and Sequence of FHAO. This approach models the content and methodologies in the workshops that teachers are able to transfer to their classrooms. The Scope and Sequence begins with understanding the fluidity of individual identity, leading to examining group and national identities with their definitions of membership and exclusion. These concepts are applied to the historical case studies Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, and apartheid South Africa. In each, the participants engage with the dilemmas and choices faced by real people when societies begin to apply laws which create, isolate and discriminate against 'the other'. Concepts such as perpetrators, victims, bystanders, rescuers and upstanders are introduced, and the complexity of making choices in totalitarian societies is explored. Participants then move on to Judgement and Legacies: Nuremberg after The Second World War and the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The last piece of the journey is Choosing to Participate. Helping young people to understand the ways in which they might

participate positively in their own societies, be it family, school or larger community. The methodologies help teachers to provide opportunities for critical discussion, for consideration of the decisions made by real human beings in another time and place.

The critical session for teachers is the one in which, through an approach called Silent Conversation, teachers confront and engage with individual identities and traumatic legacies of their apartheid experiences. At the core of identities in apartheid South Africa was the way in which groups constructed their identities in relation to the 'other'. Segregation at all levels, reinforced 'otherness' rather than the commonalities everyone as South Africans shared. Given these divisions of the past, the FtP project believes that personal change in the present cannot happen in isolation. In the silent conversation session teachers engage with personal stories of South Africans from across the historical divides in groups and in silence, commenting on the stories and having discussions around the stories in writing. These stories evoke deep personal responses which are shared in a plenary session.

This story is almost like my own. I was 17 before I ate in a restaurant, for fear of reprisals or humiliation publicly. We have been chased off beaches and other spaces too frequently. (FTP participant 2003)

The teachers' personal journeys are neither simple nor easy. For some it's the first time that they have talked about the trauma and hurt caused by the past. In spite of the pain, for some there was a sense of personal liberation. At the end of one of the workshops a participant wrote in his evaluation:

The fact that I was willing to share my deepest emotions with people I did not know four days ago, actually set me free. I realised I can talk about stuff without the fear of being labelled a racist or a privileged white man. (White male, rural state school in new area, FtP workshop delegate 2008)

Importantly, this painful self-knowledge translates into classroom approaches:

As a person, the seminar taught me to forgive and do away with hatred of other races. Professionally it taught me not to involve my emotions that may trigger hatred of whites by my learners when dealing with the past. (Black teacher, FTP reflections 2004)

The evaluation data collected for the Western Cape Education Department and FHAO at the end of every workshop, showed that teachers were satisfied with the training and felt prepared to implement the new, enquiry-based history curriculum. Ten teachers from a range of schools completed a survey as part of an independent evaluation of the FTP programme in June 2004 for FHAO. Analysis of the results indicated that

FtP workshops were particularly effective in introducing new content and methodologies but also worked effectively in building a community of educators and supporting the use of the FTP program. (Tibbitts 2004)

Furthermore,

eight out of ten teachers indicated that the program (including the original seminar training, follow-up workshops and supports, and teaching resources) had a 'very high' impact on them professionally and the remaining two noting a 'high' degree of impact. The most frequently mentioned impact areas were teaching methods/skills and professional growth. The main recognized strengths of the program were elements of FtP's methodologies and skill building

for classroom practice, and professional development methods used in the trainings themselves. (Tibbitts 2004)

Results were consistent for teachers, regardless of their training and experiences in the previous system. This was attributed to the practical, practice-oriented content of the training. Educators from under-resources schools who attended FtP trainings also consistently reported confidence in teaching history using enquiry-based methods.

In reflecting on her involvement in FtP over the years, in 2014 a teacher wrote:

Facing the Past has not only had a profound influence on me personally, but has transformed my approach to teaching and learning History forever ... The training programmes and learning material that were disseminated ... have enabled and equipped me to address controversial issues in my classroom to foster tolerance, acceptance and understanding in our society that still experiences racism, ostracism and discrimination at times ... I have been equipped to encourage my students to become active citizens who think critically about their own choice making and actions in their immediate communities and to stand up for principles that are embedded in human rights and democracy. (FtP teacher reflection 2014)

FtP organised a number of community events and shorter workshops during the year and many teachers continued to attend events and workshops. The conversations deepened with every group contact. The safe space created by the workshop and by the ongoing personal interaction across identity divides allowed teachers to explore Lederach's 'moral imagination' and to acknowledge the power of their own legacies and the transformative power of group sharing. The conversations continued over the four years of group interviews with FtP teachers for the DECIDES project. The group was representative of the diversity of the South African population, as well as of schools.

The regular interaction as a group was a transformative experience on several levels, highlighting the value of communities of practice, particularly in the aftermath of identity-based conflict. On a professional level, the group was able to share the difficulties of teaching a painful history at a deep level. A 'coloured' teacher who is teaching in a township school shared her feelings about teaching apartheid to children who as yet haven't experienced the benefits of change in South Africa:

... one of the things about teaching in a school like ours, in a transitional society like ours, where you actually teach the 'victims' and their situation hasn't changed, it makes teaching topics such as apartheid so difficult. What we as teachers normally try to do is, is to get the kids to see the debate, to use history to interrogate apartheid. But it's so difficult, cos you're talking about us – you know – we're talking about ourselves. I think we ... underestimate how far we still need to go, when we look at what still needs to be done and how far these kids still have to go. And then you have this education system that is not doing what it's supposed to do and you have an economy that's not doing what it's supposed to do – bringing real change. (DECIDES)

One teacher summed up the feelings expressed by various teachers in the group on several occasions over the four years:

I feel a lot about how much I've gained from this group, from NN, from JK, from RH, and how actually meeting like this has transformed me as a person and as an educator ... actually I'm not the same person I was before we started meeting. Because what, what RH and JK and NN have shared has deeply challenged some of the things that I think and feel and whatever. And I am deeply grateful for that, so thanks guys. (DECIDES)

Conclusion: enabling micro-processes of transitional justice

In this article we have highlighted the failure of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission to call an education system to account that had contributed to the apartheid system. We argue that this limited attention to the structural legacies of apartheid in the education system placed a greater burden on curriculum reform to enable the country's transformation.

The role of history teaching as supporting South Africa's transitional justice processes was an emergent one, appearing only in the second wave of curriculum reform. This is not unusual as history teaching about a contested past has often been temporarily suspended in post-conflict environments (Weldon 2009). The history curriculum reform that was ultimately adopted was thoughtful and visionary – including multiple and inclusive narratives and pedagogies to ensure critical thinking – and was positioned as essential for building a new, democratic, socially just South Africa. The TRC appeared in very broad terms in that new curriculum as 'dealing with the past and facing the future' (DoE 2003, 31). It was left to textbook writers to develop content in more depth and use the narratives of the TRC. However, teacher support was inadequate to prepare teachers for these new pedagogical methods and responsibilities to contribute towards the transitional justice project.

The South African national Department of Education, not only failed educators in terms of preparation for new history content and teaching and learning processes, but also in regards to the post-colonial legacies of the apartheid period. Structural violence originating in the segregated system of education was not sufficiently addressed. Teachers disadvantaged during the apartheid period were not 'up-skilled'. Moreover, teaching became even more difficult for some educators. Resource inequalities between primarily black and non-black schools actually increased. Research released as recently as 2015 shows that in South Africa, the wealthiest 25% of schools outperform students in the remaining 75% of schools and that the divide is largely along historical-school-system and socio-economic lines (Spaull 2015). The Stellenbosch University Socio-Economic Policy Unit found that 98.3% of all the white pupils who wrote the school-leaving matric exam passed, while only 72.7% of black African pupils did (Equal Education 2016). These figures would be reflected in the specific figures for History.

Moreover, the responsibilities given to history teachers to support transitional justice processes were placed on them without due consideration to teachers coming to terms with their own personal histories during the apartheid era and their need to 're-imagine' a democratic South Africa based on diversity and human rights values. If the schooling system is seen as central to transitional justice then systemic reform should take into account these educators' needs. This means that curriculum reform and appropriate teacher training should go hand-in-hand with other systemic needs in a transitional justice environment, including teacher supply, class size and equitable resource allocation for schools.

The FtP programme demonstrates that it is possible to offer teacher support across all these areas and we contend that this is necessary in order for educators to be prepared to mediate 'micro' transitional justice processes in their own history classes. South Africa is a society in transition in which young people are increasingly finding themselves in a difficult 'space' between the past and present as they try to navigate their parents' legacies and their own opportunities and aspirations within the new South Africa. Schools and

teachers, and perhaps history teachers in particular, should be playing a positive role in providing support for their students.

Being able to understand the ways in which a divided past shapes the present, and that the unresolved legacies of conflict cannot be ignored, is of critical importance in building a viable democratic future. One can continue to question to what degree effective teaching and learning about a divided past can contribute positively to transitional justice processes, even under ideal circumstances. There are no clear answers to this. At the policy level, one lesson is that governments simply need to account for such investments in implementing curriculum reforms. Well-designed teacher training programmes that take into account these legacies as well as the need to re-imagine South African society from the 'bottom up' are a necessity in a transitional justice environment. This has important implications for conceptualising and implementing curriculum change and teacher development in other transitional justice environments that require not only imagination and hope, but also new teacher skills and a direct reckoning with lingering structural violence in schools.

Note

1. 'Black' schools under apartheid refer to the schools established for black students in urban townships and rural areas in those parts of South Africa regarded as part of 'white' South Africa. Education for these students was centrally controlled by the Department of Education and Training. As the 'independent' homelands were set up, the homeland governments also set up and ran schools.

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