



Initial Teacher Education Research Project Phase II: From Research to Action

Presentation to EDF

11 November 2015



Phase IA: Curriculum research

- **Five HEIs**, across the spectrum of institutional types, were studied
- We examined the **English and Maths curricula** for BEd students intending to be **IP teachers**
- The results are contained in several reports available at www.jet.org.za
- We also **tested** a (unrepresentative) sample of NQTs in basic knowledge of **English and Maths** – Reports available soon



Findings: Literacy

Great **variability** in content focus and in content depth

None of the 5 universities is dealing with the central issue of **literacy instruction** adequately

This flies directly in the face of repeated research findings that the **majority of learners in the IP are unable to read**

Eg, PIRLS tells us that over 75% of IP learners fail to attain the lowest international benchmark for reading comprehension.



Findings: English First Additional Language

Similarly, it is clear that none of the 5 universities is doing enough to ensure that newly qualified teachers are **proficient in English**

AND adequately prepared to **teach English First Additional Language (EFAL)**

This is also of great concern, given that fact that ALL IP teachers, whatever they may be teaching, will be doing so through the medium of English.



Phase IB: Tests of Teacher Knowledge

Sample: 30 NQTs drawn from the 5 universities

Where are they teaching?

6 in urban township schools

2 in rural townships

3 in village schools

14 in suburban schools (3 are private schools)

2 in innercity schools

12 work in non fee-paying schools



The English Test

The **test items are based on several short texts** selected to enable assessment of aspects of NQTs' knowledge of English specified by CAPS

Part One (48/80 marks) attempts to assess aspects of NQTs' **knowledge of English** as university and school subject

Part Two (32/80 marks) attempts to assess aspects of NQTs' **pedagogic content knowledge** of how to teach IP learners to read and write a range of genre



Identifying the main idea – Item 2

| Description | What the item aims to test | Results | Comment |
|--|---|--|--|
| <i>Extract from Nelson Mandela's autobiography <u>Long Walk to Freedom</u></i> | Ability to identify main idea (MCQ with four options) | 14/30 correct (8 ES; 6 NES) 16/30 incorrect (7 ES; 9 NES) | The ability to identify main ideas is important for teachers' own academic literacy and for teaching reading comprehension |

Inferential reasoning: Item 4

| Description | What the item aims to test | Results | Comment |
|---|---|--|--|
| Circle the <u>best</u> answer to this question: Why did Mandela feel proud of his new trousers? | Ability to infer an answer not directly stated in the text and ability to discriminate among possible answers to identify the best one. (MCQ with four options) | 22/30 correct 8/30 incorrect (4 ES & 4 NES) | It is important to teach learners to infer meaning and thus important that teachers are able to do this. |

Writing: Item 10

Write a description of your parent or another family member. Use 4-6 sentences. You should say who the person is and include details such as what he or she looks like, what he or she likes doing and what makes him or her special to you. (10)

Before you begin, study the 10 mark rubric on the next page that will be used to mark your answer.

Rubric: the sentences are logically connected (1), the content responds to the task instructions (5), descriptive vocabulary is used (2) and sentences are correctly constructed and punctuated (2)



Results for Item 10

Results: $22/30 \geq 6/10$
 $9/30 < 6/10$

‘The **pedestrian nature** of many of the responses (limited vocabulary and little creativity in sentence construction) is some cause for concern’

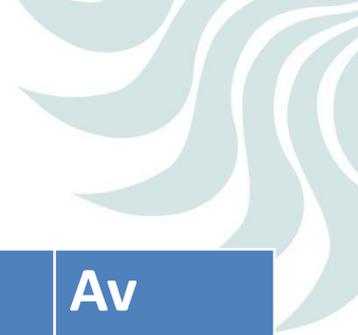


ITERP Phase I Findings: Maths

There is an important question concerning **how much maths ALL IP teachers should know**, given that, at some or other stage in their careers, they will be required to teach maths.

It is apparent that at least some newly qualified teachers who have **specialised as maths teachers exhibit fundamental gaps** in their knowledge of the subject.





| Wrote (passed) | All | Specialised in maths | Are teaching maths | Av all | Av special ists |
|----------------|---------|----------------------|--------------------|--------|-----------------|
| E | 9 (7) | 2 (2) | 8 (6) | 62% | 74% |
| B | 4 (4) | 3 (3) | 2 (2) | 72% | 75% |
| C | 6 (4) | 4 (3) | 3 (2) | 50% | 57% |
| D | 2 (0) | 0 | 0 | 30% | n/a |
| A | 9 (5) | 3 (3) | 4 (3) | 51% | 63% |
| ALL | 30 (20) | 12 (11) | 17 (13) | 55% | 66% |

Examples of maths items and NQT scores

3a. Very basic decimal calculation: e.g. 23,6 times 10
63% correct

4b. Understanding number e.g. Which of the following numbers is closest to 41 divided by 202:
0,002 0,02 0,2 2
47% correct

8b. If 12 learners out of 400 learners pass matric, what percentage of the 400 learners pass matric?
40% correct

ITERP Phase II: From Research to Action

Establish two PLCs: one for Literacy and one for Maths

Proposed functions:

- Developing ‘ideal’ ITE **curricula** for the teaching of literacy, EFAL, and maths.
- Although the question of **African languages** was not a subject of ITERP Phase I, this also requires investigation. African learners are not learning to read and write in their mother tongue.
- How the knowledge and skills required by NQTs in these subjects is to be **assessed**.
- Developing ‘**standards**’ for **TE** in these key subjects.

Launch of ITERP Phase II

Partners: EDF, DHET, DBE, JET, SACE?, CHE? Unions?

National Seminar

- March 2016
- 2 participants from each HEI offering BEd for primary teachers: one literacy and one maths
- **Agenda:** to be decided in consultation with partners
- **Appoint PLC** members
 - On basis of expertise and various contexts
 - To do the work
 - Will be remunerated for work done

Linda Darling-Hammond: Teacher Professionalism

Teaching requires deep knowledge of how children learn differently and a sophisticated repertoire of skills deployed through professional judgment.

For students to be well served, teaching must become a real profession.

Generally, professions have three features:

- They are **morally committed** to the welfare of those they serve
- They share a common **body of knowledge and skills** that they use to advance the best interests of their clients; and
- They define, transmit, and enforce **standards of professional practice**.



Who develops and controls professional standards?

The extent to which an occupation is micromanaged by rules from without is directly related to the extent to which it fails to maintain high, common standards of competence and professional practice

For this reason, rigorous licensing and certification tests have been critical to the professionalization of occupations—from medicine in the early 1900s to nursing, law, engineering, accounting, architecture, and others thereafter.





... **teacher preparation programs are under attack**

At this point ... we believe that the most effective and ethical response is not to stick our collective heads in the sand and complain that nobody trusts us

Rather, we believe that **our collective response** should be to embed high-quality performance assessments in high-quality teacher preparation programs, and to **ensure that our candidates demonstrate they can meet profession wide standards before being permitted to practice.**



The Education Deans' Forum should be the key agent for moving the occupational field of teaching closer to being a true profession.