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Learning to teach Tourism and Hospitality Studies in South African Technical and Vocational Education and Training

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Abstract: Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges is an element of South Africa's post school education system. The other elements are public universities, public adult learning centres, private post school institutions, and the SETAs (Sector Education and Training Authorities) (South Africa, 2013: xi-xvi, 8). Tourism and a variety of hospitality-related programmes are offered on the two major types of programmes offered by TVET colleges. Although the State recently introduced a professional qualification structure for TVET college lecturers the majority who are appointed to teach do not have a required professional teaching qualification (McBride, Papier and Needham, 2009: 8-9) and rely on their industry knowledge and communication skills to learn skills required to survive employment in vocational education.

The paper reports of the learning experiences of new tourism and hospitality lecturers. The paper is gleaned from a broader study that analysed the learning experiences of TVET college lecturers who entered the profession without a professional teaching qualification.

The paper highlights similarities and differences experienced by new lecturers in the tourism and hospitality sectors. The paper draws on in-depth interviews with eight lecturers employed at TVET colleges in the greater Cape Town area, four tourism lecturers and four lecturers in various elements of the hospitality industry. The framework underlying the paper is located within the critical paradigm and uses multi-level critical discourse analysis to analyse each lecturer's journey to competency. The diverse, but relatively egalitarian, tourism sector resulted in new lecturers being incorporated into institutional communities of practice. The stratified nature of the hospitality industry, in contrast, resulted in different experiences depending on the part of the hospitality industry from where the lecturers came and the qualifications they had.

Keywords: Vocational education, TVET colleges in South Africa, Teacher Education

1. Introduction

This paper is an extract of a broader study that was aimed at identifying how vocational teachers, called Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) lecturers in the South African policy framework, develop teaching skills and competencies. The focus of the broader study was to identify mentoring processes that contributed towards the development of teaching skills and competencies in TVET lecturers who, at the time of employment, did not have a formal teaching qualification and were regarded by the policy framework as professionally unqualified.

The South African system of education and training has undergone radical reconstruction since the country's first fully democratic election in 1994. Reconstruction included the formation of a single system of education and training, out of the apartheid-based structure of an excess of twenty education departments numerous departments of labour. Formal reconstruction processes included the development of a new overriding policy framework, a national qualifications framework, curriculum redesign and, in the case of higher education and vocational education, the amalgamation of existing institutions and the development of new institutions. Reconstruction also included the development of Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). SETAs are State-run institutions responsible for overseeing the management of skills levies payable by employers.

The initial focus of post-apartheid reconstruction of education and training was with schooling and higher, which disadvantaged both the provision and structure of vocational education and training in the country. While the reconstruction of schooling and higher education was well underway by the late 1990s, reconstruction of vocational education did not get underway before the turn of the century.

In the 1990s 'the vocational and technical component of the South African education system consisted of 152 technical colleges located in numerous education departments, each department with its own system of government, management and funding mechanisms' (South Africa, 2013). Between 2002 and 2006, 152 technical colleges, dispersed across approximately 254 campuses, were merged to form 50 Further Education

and Training college administrations, renamed TVET colleges from 2013. A new curriculum was introduced into colleges in 2006 (South Africa, 2006: 4) and a draft policy framework for qualifications for TVET lecturers was introduced in 2008 and finally promulgated in 2013 (South Africa, 2008; 2013).

The absence of specific qualifications for TVET lecturers meant that lecturers were either qualified as school teachers or were employed without formal teaching qualifications required by the state. In 2009 McBride, Papier and Needham (2009: 8-9) noted that the majority TVET college lecturers do not have formal teaching qualifications and rely on their industry knowledge and communication skills to learn skills required to survive employment in vocational education. Within TVET colleges tourism departments had very few lecturers with teaching qualifications of any sort. Most people were employed because of their industry knowledge and expertise. Hospitality departments were staffed by people who were either qualified as a home economics teachers or had industry-related hospitality qualifications. The absence of formal training or mentoring programmes posed a question on how TVET college lecturers developed teaching skills and competencies.

1.1 South Africa's system of Technical and Vocational Education and Training

The policy environment in which South African TVET colleges operate is relatively complex and has been subject to continual change since its inception. As stated in the introduction, the country's first post-apartheid election in 1994 resulted in radical legislative changes which caused fundamental alterations to the legislative framework with social demands on the education and training sector. The post 1994 legislative framework introduced, and periodically revised, a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) within which all institutions of education and training are accommodated (South Africa, 2006b). Three education and training bands were incorporated into the NQF. Two bands were established for school education, one of which includes TVET, and one for higher education. The legislative framework included provision for the development of occupationally directed education, training and development practitioners (ODETDP), Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners, Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) practitioners and, more recently, Adult and Community Education and Training (South Africa, 1995; 1996; 1998a; 1998b; 1999; 2000a; 2000b; 2006a; 2006b; 2012; 2013; 2014).

TVET colleges operate in terms of the Further Education and Training (FET) Act (Act 16 of 2006) (South Africa, 2006a), which replaced Act 98 of 1998 (South Africa, 1998a). The Acts (South Africa, 1998a; 2006a) establishes TVET colleges as independent public entities, providing them with a status similar to universities in South Africa and comparable vocational institutions in other countries. TVET colleges offer a wide range of vocational programmes, commonly grouped into engineering studies, business studies and general studies. . The Further Education and Training Act (South Africa, 2006a: 39-40) mandates the offering of programmes accredited by UMALUSI, the quality assurance body overseeing the general and further education and training bands. In addition to UMALUSI quality assured programmes, TVET colleges offer what South African legislation calls 'skills programmes' and 'learnerships', both quality assured by Sector Education and Training Authorities established in terms of the Skills Development Act (South Africa, 1998b) and Skills Development Levies Act (South Africa, 1999), as amended in 2010 and 2011. TVET colleges are permitted to offer unaccredited short courses and courses accredited by foreign and local private providers.

Formal programmes offered by TVET colleges for both the tourism and hospitality industries include the State's National Certificate (Vocational) and the National Education Department (NATED) Report 191 programmes, as well as programmes accredited by international bodies like the City and Guilds.

Although a policy framework for TVET college lecturers has been promulgated (South African 2013), the process of university programme accreditation for TVET lecturers has not been finalised. As a result, lecturers currently employed at TVET colleges are subject to the same qualifications, requirements and conditions of employment as school teachers which are determined by conditions determined by the Employment of Educators Act (Act no 76 of 1998) and based on the norms and standards for educators (South Africa, 2000b).

The criteria for the recognition and evaluation of qualifications for employment in education allows for a range of qualifications. The criteria notes that 'qualifications described here may need to be amended in the light of new academic policy on higher education' (South Africa, 2000b: 26-27). The policy describes ten qualifications ranging from a certificate in education to a doctor of education. The criteria makes provision for the employment of lecturers who 'possess appropriate qualifications, which have been approved for employment in a teaching post' (South Africa, 2000b: 47). Appropriate qualifications included qualifications for post-school

and tertiary education practitioners, certain artisanships and posts for people in possession 'of approved N3 to N5 qualifications in the Business Studies, Art, Agriculture, Utility Services and Social Studies fields of study for which apprenticeships or trade tests do not exist, and where the qualification concerned is the highest N¹ qualification that is issued in the field of study concerned' (South Africa, 2000b: 50-51). N qualifications, qualifications held by many tourism and hospitality lecturers, are not teaching qualifications, they are trade and vocational qualifications which are allowed for employment in vocational education.

The practice of employing unqualified or inappropriately qualified lecturers creates the question of how these people develop appropriate teaching skills and competencies. Within education, and some other complex career environments, mentoring is widely proposed as a competence development tool (Robinson, 1984; Healy, 1989; Brooks & Sikes, 1997; Bleach, 1999; Golden & Sims, 1999; Darwin, 2000; Miller Marsh, 2002; Donovan, 2005).

Mentoring is, broadly speaking, a form of in-service training in which experienced staff members 'show [novices] the ropes' (Nel, Werner, Haasbroek, Poisat, Sono & Schultz, 2008: 467; Nel, Werner, Poisat, Sono, du Plessis, Ngalo, Van Hoek & Botha, 2011: 380). Mentoring encompasses both formal and informal forms of initiation, and is understood by the British Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) (in Renton, 2009: 40) to be the development of:

a person's skills and knowledge so that their job performance improves, hopefully leading to the achievement of organisational objectives. It targets high performance and improvement at work, although it may also have an impact on an individual's private life.

Mentoring, as a developmental process, must not be confused with a formal mentoring programme. While a mentoring programme involves formal instruction and, commonly, the allocation of mentors and a structured process of mentee development, mentored learning includes a variety of self-driven informal learning process.

In its initial form as displayed by Homer (in Rieu, 1948; Rieu, 2003) and Hawkesworth (1797; 1825; 1848) mentoring is linked to a specific kind of person or personality. In its application to professional development (Du Bois, & Karcher, 2005; Loots, 2007; Anderson, 2009) mentoring is commonly linked to the inputs of qualified or experienced person, a methodology for developing skills and competencies (Nel et al, 2001; 2006; 2008; 2011; Meyer & Fourie, 2006; Steinman, 2006; Stout Rostron, 2009a; Herhodt, 2011), and a methodology for developing professional identity (Healy, 1989; McKenna & Beech, 1995; Bleach, 1999).

Broader social analysis of mentoring processes indicates it as a developmental relation between two classes of people (Robinson, 1984; Healy, 1989; McIntyre, Hagger & Wilkin, 1994; Husbands in Brooks & Sikes, 1997; Bleach, 1999); Darwin, 2000; Van Louw & Waghid, 2008) or a form of subjugating new professionals into an ideology of work (Kobeleva & Strongman, 2010 ; Mooney Simmie & Moles, 2011; Mooney Simmie, 2012). More recent studies have focussed on the productive developmental nature of mentoring. Mentoring, more recent studies indicate, is an adaptable, interactive, dialogical and productive development process (Mooney Simmie & Moles, 2011; Mangani, 2012; Irby, 2013; Slack, 2015).

Research on mentoring, in addition to providing information on the developmental nature of mentoring, provides inputs into the agency of mentoring. A mentor is commonly indicated as being an individual, one who is competent or respected, operating in what Loots (2007: 61) refers to as a one-on-one, older/younger mentoring situation. A mentor is the person whose competency and credibility are established. The power relation between a mentor and mentee is hierarchical (Loots, 2007: 61).

A mentor is, in some cases, described as a person who operates on the same level as the mentee. This form of mentoring, Du Bois and Karcher (2005) call peer mentoring. Peer mentoring commonly utilises an agent who is 'a more-experienced or able person of roughly the same age or at the same level or career' (Loots, 2007: 62) as the person being mentored. This form of mentoring is popular in higher education (Loots, 2007: 62-63) or in environments in which knowledge can be transferred and behaviour adapted (Anderson, 2009). An adaptation of peer mentoring involves what Loots (2007, 63) calls group mentoring. Group mentoring takes place when a mentor is assigned to or influences a number of mentees. Co-operative mentoring, also called co-mentoring

¹ N refers to NATED, the National Education Department who promulgated the series of courses in the 1980s and 1990s.

(Loots, 2007: 64-65), takes place when a number of mentors collaborate to mentor one mentee. In addition to being an individual person or group of persons, information and communications technology can, and do, act as a mentor (Loots, 2007; Zanetti, 2009), as 'electronic mentoring can connect people across time and distance' (Loots, 2007: 66);

Glenn (2003: 22) provides a unique dimension on mentoring, by arguing that mentoring could be an intra-personal activity. 'Glenn's approach implies that a mentor and mentee can be the same person. Mentoring can be autodidactic if the ability to judge and correct one's own actions are stimulated' (Van der Bijl, 2015: 24).

As college lecturers move from one form of identity (e.g. chefs, catering managers, tour guides, etc.) to another (lecturer, vocational teacher, programme manager, etc.) no single mentor profile or agency is likely to be identified primarily because, as James and Biesta (2007: 136) argued, becoming a vocational teacher is a 'complex and contradictory' process. It is uneven and support from assigned mentors, where this occurs, is 'often non-existent' (Lucas & Unwin, 2009: 427).

When being mentored an individual makes use of a variety of mentoring agents. Mentoring agents include assigned mentors, other individuals they identify as useful and their own, internal, intellectual processes. When identifying who the mentors of new TVET lecturers are, the process of identification cannot be limited to seeking a single individual or a single process. 'A mentor could be an archetypical person (a manager or colleague) or a combination of people. A mentor could be the individual being mentored by him/her-self' (van der Bijl, 2015: 24).

Roberts (2000) conducted an analysis of mentoring by means of a 'sample of literature encompassing the period 1978-1999 and across several disciplines ... for evidence of essential and contingent attributes (those which mentoring may do without and still be seen as mentoring) that constitute the essence of mentoring'. (Roberts, 2000: 151). Roberts (2000) argued that mentoring involves a number of what he called essential attributes. The essential attributes are:

- An active relationship
- A helping process
- A teaching-learning process
- Reflective practice
- A career and personal development process
- A formalised process
- A role constructed by or for a mentor.

'While the role of a mentor cannot be divorced from a person [or personality], a key indicator of a mentor is not who a mentor is, or what the mentor/mentee power relation is. The key personality indicator is what the mentor does. A mentor is therefore not a person: a mentor is an agent with a particular personality and a fund of transferable knowledge' (van der Bijl, 2015: 24).

2. Methodology

The absence of appropriate qualifications or mentoring programmes negates a comparison between education and/or training and its implementation. An indication of how skills and competencies were developed required an identification of the processes most likely followed by new lecturers. In the research from which the information used for this paper was gleaned (Van der Bijl, 2015) it was decided to identify a small, but representative, sample of lecturers who learnt their skills and competencies on-the-job and to ask them a small number of open ended questions.

The target population from which the sample was drawn was TVET college lecturers employed at colleges in the country's Western Cape Province. All taught business-related subjects, four of whom taught tourism-related subjects and four hospitality-related subjects. None were professionally qualified as educators when they took up employment at TVET colleges. Human resource managers at TVET colleges were included in the sample as a means of verifying information relating to college operations. In total, eighteen lecturers and three human resource managers were interviewed, selected by means of a call purposive sampling (Babbie & Mouton, 2011: 166-167). Purposive sampling is useful in this case as, according to Babbie and Mouton (2011:

166-167), the aim was 'to study a small subset of a larger population'; in this case professionally underqualified business studies lecturers.

Data was collected by means of in-depth interviews conducted in a single interview with each participant on the campus where lecturers were employed at a venue supplied by campus managers. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed.

Analysis took place by means of critical discourse analysis (CDA) associated with the work of Fairclough (1992; 2010). Fairclough (2010: 230) argues that discourse is used to make sense of or to comprehend a social process because language is associated with a particular way of 'construing aspects of the world associated with a particular social perspective'. CDA is a form of discourse analysis based on language analysis and semiosis. CDA, Wodak and Meyer (2001:2) postulate, exists 'in a dialogical relationship' with other social theories that can engage with its method in a transdisciplinary way. CDA, they argue, creates ways of analysing language and semiosis within broader analyses of social processes.

3. Initial learning by tourism and hospitality lecturers

Interviewees represented people with diverse backgrounds who entered the tourism or hospitality education for different reasons. The first catering lecturer interviewed was a chef who was attracted by the working conditions that employment within TVET education in Cape Town offered, compared to one in catering in Durban on the country's north east coast. His interest in entering vocational education was reinforced when he took up a post in the private catering college after breaking one of his hands, an action that rendered him unable to cook for a number of months. The second catering lecturer interviewed worked in the small-scale accommodation industry in the Western Cape's rural area. She noted that she wanted to become a teacher but domestic conditions forced her to study catering, the only post-school programme available in her home town. She moved from the accommodation industry to education when a position became available at a local TVET college, and subsequently to the city when such a move became viable. The third person interviewed worked in corporate catering and food marketing. Staff training and food-related presentations was part of her job, which resulted in the development of an interest in education and training. She regarded the move to public vocational education as a step towards her dream of opening a private cooking school. The fourth person interviewed was a catering manager who moved from employment in corporate catering to the college. She was employed at a business that serviced the printing industry, which resulted in her working most public holidays and over festive seasons. Like the chef interviewed, her motivation for taking up a post in TVET education was the result of a desire for stability.

The first tourism lecturer interviewed moved to a TVET college when he was retrenched from a post in the public transport sector where he had worked as a booking agent. The second person interviewed had worked as a corporate travel agent during the day and a part time lecturer in the evenings. She took up a position at a TVET college because she enjoyed teaching and found that it provided her with financial stability. The third tourism lecturer interviewed worked in local government as a travel consultant who work included presentations on employment opportunities at colleges. She developed an interest in employment in education from her visits to colleges, reinforced by 'getting a little bored' with her work. The fourth tourism lecturer interviewed was also the youngest person interviewed. She recently graduated and took up a post at a college as the first step in an academic career.

Decisions to move into education differed. Each person interviewed had his/her own story but a few common threads, which indicate mentored processes, surfaced. All interviewees noted an interest in a career in education, but were either discouraged from studying teaching when they completed school, or were unable to do so for financial or geographic reasons.

People who moved from the catering industry, particularly those who had had been self-employed or worked abnormal hours, were lured by a perception of spending less time at the workplace. One interviewee, a corporate catering manager who had 'not spent a Christmas or Easter holiday with my family' noted that 'you need to be prepared to sacrifice, your family life and your home life, in pursuit of your career ... your career is important, but', she said reflecting on growing domestic demands, 'I had to change my whole mind-set'. The chef who took up part-time teaching after he broke his hand, noted that he remained in education after his

hand healed because 'the hours were really appealing'. He continuously used the word 'hard' to describe work in the cooking industry.

Boredom was the reason for moving into education expressed by most tourism lecturers. Boredom's primary cause was the repetitive nature of the work they were involved in. The travel agent noted this, as did the two who worked as booking agent and travel agent for the State. The State employed travel agent's answer was direct: 'try something else' she said, 'I was getting a little bored'.

A third common motivator for moving into education is related to the financial and economic conditions. The average income of most interviewees increased when they took up employment in education. This contrasted the views held by the human resources managers, who were of the opinion that people's income decrease when they make a career move into education. One person, a booking agent employed by the State, took up a position in education after being retrenched. Another, a corporate booking agent, taught in the evening to increase her income. A frustration she noted was receiving complementary air tickets to European destinations, but not having money to enjoy the experience.

All interviewees found employment in TVET more challenging than they had expected it to be.

Unlike business, where employee cooperation is common, the form of education where interviewees took up employment was characterised by working alone and fraught with interpersonal and inter-departmental conflict. While some interviewees, both those teaching on hospitality and tourism programmes, found themselves in cooperative environments, most did not. One person, in hospitality, had different collegial experiences at the two colleges at which she had been employed teaching the same subjects. The college and programme where she was 'treated like a princess' and 'made us feel welcome', a colleague experienced as lonely and hostile.

One interviewee, a tourism lecturer, contrasted her initial positive experience with others as follows:

There was one lecturer who said 'I'm too busy to help you. If you want this job you must make it work'. I said 'thank you I will' ... some people feel vulnerable, they don't want to ask for help because they might think that you might think they're stupid. Others are just plain selfish.

Human resources managers all indicated that they offered induction programmes. They admitted the absence of formal mentoring programmes, all indicating that lecturers are employed as 'subject matter experts' on the basis of their experience and qualifications. On appointment they were allocated to a programme or department, with a line manager. The development of teaching competencies was the direct responsibility of a lecturer's line manager.

The absence of formal mentoring practices resulted in the interviewees learning from others through informal processes (informal peer mentoring) and through self-analysis (self-mentoring).

Peer mentoring took a number of forms. In some cases it was direct and the result of positive development inputs. As the tourism lecturer quoted above noted:

I had a very good mentor there. [The mentor personalities came] from industry as well, [and] know how important it is to work as part of a team and helped and say if you battle, come, and are you okay and also, are you struggling, still struggling or battling again. They were always there to help.

The hospitality lecturer who noted earlier that she had been treated like a princess, when she compared her previous places of employment is indicative of peer mentoring at work. Another person interviewed, a hospitality lecturer who had been in corporate catering, noted the nature of the peer mentoring that she was exposed to as follows:

I was in a fortunate position that my manager, [name], is the type that you can approach. If you're sitting, if there's a dilemma, how do I handle this, what do I do, how do I approach this ... I learnt a lot from her.

In other cases peer mentoring was the result of negative behaviour.

The point on colleagues being too busy to provide assistance, noted earlier, served as a mentored process, albeit a negative experience. Similarly, one catering lecturer, who had worked in corporate catering and marketing noted that she was repeatedly reminded that she did not have a professional teaching qualification, the only lecturer at the college's hotel school without such a qualification. The absence of a teaching qualification, she mentioned later, motivated in becoming better than her colleagues, most of whose experiences was limited to teaching, at the college and at schools prior to that. Negative inputs from colleagues who were at the college when she joined it motivated her to do a number of cooking courses, keeping up to date with current practice, as well as trainer courses and registering with hospitality bodies and involving herself with events in the local community. 'There will not be a day', she said, 'that a person asks me a question that I cannot answer'.

Self-mentoring commonly took the form of reflective reactions to other people's inputs. Self-mentoring also took the form of what one catering lecturer, a chef, called 'a lot of research and reading'. Through reading he identified what to do and developed plans: 'this topic so many hours, this topic so many hours'. Through research and communication with other, more experience lecturers, combined with confidence in his own product knowledge he grew 'slowly, slowly, slowly ...then I was comfortable'. He identified a lack of knowledge as an inhibiting factor. 'People lack information. That is one of the key problems I identified ... if I had all that information [now], I'm sure, I could have done something like this long time ago'.

All but one of the interviewees (the tourism lecturer who recently graduated) indicated that their competency development was sound. The recent graduate noted that she had not been in at college long enough to make such a judgement. The other lecturers interviewed could illustrate how the informal competency development to which they were exposed to provided them with a conceptual base to get involved in the orientation and development of others. At time of the interviews, three were completing a formal teacher education qualifications and three recently completed teacher education qualifications. One had started a teacher education qualification but dropped out, choosing to register elsewhere and qualify as a trainer for the accreditation body with which her planned cooking school would register.

4. Conclusion

The majority of the participants interviewed went into their respective industry due to it being the only work available in their socio-economic environment. They then took up a position TVET when given the opportunity to gain higher economic grounding, and have been providing through their learnt experiences education to those seeking it. Their experiences are largely on-the-job experiences, and they have the advantage of providing industry relevant knowledge, often to those who were in a similar socio-economic class to them.

The promulgation of legislation requiring specific qualifications for TVET lecturers in South Africa is likely to alleviate the challenge of employing professorially unqualified lecturers. However, due to the historical nature of exclusion in South African higher education, implementing policies will not include those historically disadvantaged. The government policy of inclusion through providing alleviation for those historically disadvantaged clashes through the implementation of legislative qualification. It's a sticky situation; the government agencies are stuck between providing legitimate education as well as allowing those who were unable to gain educational qualification to teach and help alleviate the socio-economic stance of both those they teach and themselves.

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