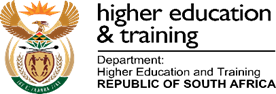
**Advanced Diploma**

**Technical and Vocational Teaching**

**History and Policy of TVET**

Department of Higher Education and Training

**Department of Higher Education and Training**

Advanced Diploma: Technical and Vocational Teaching

Module: *History and Policy of TVET*

Author: Professor Volker Wedekind

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Department of Higher Education and Training

123 Francis Baard Street

Pretoria

0001

Website: [www.dhet.gov.za](http://www.dhet.gov.za)

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Adv. Dip TVT | Advanced Diploma: Technical and Vocational Teaching |
| ANC | African National Congress |
| COS | Centres of Specialisation |
| COSATU | Congress of South African Trade Unions |
| DBE | Department of Basic Education |
| DHET | Department of Higher Education and Training |
| ERS | Education Renewal Strategy |
| FET | Further Education and Training |
| GET | General Education and Training |
| HEI | Higher Education Institution |
| ISI | Import-Substitution-Industrialisation |
| IT | Information Technology |
| NASCA | National Senior Certificate for Adults |
| NATED | National Technical Education |
| NCV | National Certificate Vocational |
| NECC | National Education Coordinating Committee |
| NEPI | National Education Policy Initiative |
| NOLS | National Open Learning System |
| NQF | National Qualifications Framework |
| NSA | National Skills Authority |
| NSC | National Senior Certificate |
| NSF | National Skills Fund |
| QCTO | Quality Council for Trades and Occupations |
| RPL | Recognition of Prior Learning |
| SAQA | South Africa Qualifications Authority |
| SETA | Sector Education and Training Authority |
| SOE | State Owned Enterprise |
| TVET | Technical and Vocational Education and Training |
| UDF | United Democratic Front |
| Umalusi | General and Further Education and Training Quality Authority |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| UoT | University of Technology |
| VET | Vocational Education and Training |
| VOC | Dutch East India Company |

# Programme introduction

The Advanced Diploma in Technical and Vocational Teaching (Adv. Dip TVT) programme seeks to provide a structured professional learning pathway for current and aspirant technical and vocational lecturers/teachers. The Diploma will equip them with the knowledge and competences to implement and manage teaching and learning in their TVET colleges effectively and in alignment with national goals.

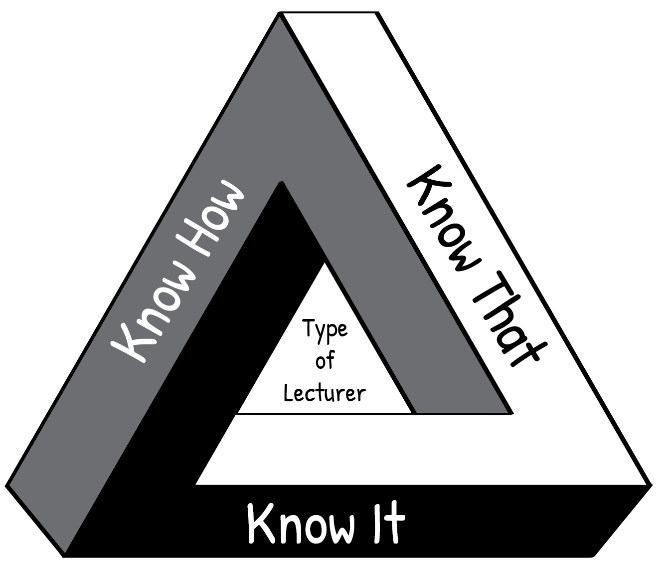
This module is one of a set of modules that contribute to the Advanced Diploma programme. The overall purpose of the Advanced Diploma is to engage lecturers working in the TVET sector in conversations about what it means to be a quality teacher in a TVET college. Each Module in the programme explores this from a different angle, but for every module the foundational concept is about the type of teacher you want to be. We all know that the relationship between teaching and learning is interrelated, so in order to understand the type of teacher you want to be you will need to engage with what learning means in a TVET context.

We often think about vocational and technical or craft knowledge as different from theoretical knowledge. However, there is increasing recognition of the power of vocational and theoretical knowledge coming together to develop the skilled craftsperson whether it is in plumbing, baking, even mathematics and physics. This integration of theory and vocational knowledge is equally important in teaching as well. Teachers are constantly needing to make informed decisions and judgements as they select what to teach and how best to teach the specific content, concept or skill.

This leads to a question about how different forms of knowledge and skill are brought together and balanced in the curriculum and in teaching and learning.

Approach to learning

To answer the question above in this diploma programme, a framework has been developed which is referred to as *know how*, *know it* and *know that*, or the HIT framework. This framework is introduced, referred to and deepened in different ways all the way through the programme.



**“Know How”** is *procedural knowledge*, “in our bodies” or *embodied knowledge*.

For example, following a bread recipe.

“**Know It**” is *recognition*, the knowledge of what counts as good; wisdom; technical and theoretical judgments.

For example, is this sourdough good quality bread?

**“Know That”** is *propositional knowledge* or

*theoretical knowledge*, the knowledge of how and why, *cognitive knowledge*.

For example, the science of bread baking.

**Figure i: The HIT framework**

Think about your own craft of teaching. The kind of teacher you want to be, is one who knows **how** (the techniques of teaching), knows **that** (the science and theory behind teaching AND learning) and knows *it* (knowing and reflecting on what makes a quality teacher). Such a teacher enables students to actively engage with their learning and to develop their full potential.

If you are interested, click on the link provided to watch a short [video](https://youtu.be/JssDzbjlYik) in which Wayne Hugo discusses the “HIT model” of TVET knowledge and learning.

Relating theory to practice

In this module new concepts are often introduced by developing them from a practical situation with which you are probably familiar. This process, which moves from your experience towards a more abstract level of theory is known as inductive learning. It makes learning easier and is very different from deductive learning, which starts by presenting abstract theories and principles, then requires you to “deduce” practical conclusions and concrete examples. You are encouraged to relate the ideas you learn from the Adv Dip programme to your own context and to try to think theoretically about your practice. In other words, to think about the rationale for your practice.

Reflective practice and the use of a learning journal

One of the Adv. Dip TVT modules is called Reflective Practice, if you are interested, you can access it [here](https://oerafrica.org/system/files/13691/assets/13702/advdiptvtmodulereflective-practice.docx?file=1&type=node&id=13702&force=0). It covers the concept of reflection in the life of a TVET lecturer. Of particular importance is unit 2, which describes various models which facilitate reflection. The simplest reflective model that is discussed in this unit, is that of Terry Borton (1970). It consists of three steps as follows:

**Figure ii: Reflective model (after Borton, 1970)**

The three questions to prompt reflection leading to action:

1. What?

**What** happened? In this step you remember or describe the situation or event you have experienced.

1. So what?

**So,** if that happened**, what** does this show you or teach me?In this step you explore what new insights or knowledge the situation gives you.

1. Now what?

**Now** that I have learnt something new by reflecting on the situation, **what** should I do about it? In this step you think about what to do with the new awareness you have gained – i.e. how to make use of it to act more effectively in future situations.

Throughout the Adv. Dip TVT programme, you are encouraged to reflect on your practices at work in the college so that you can improve how teaching and learning takes place. We have embedded reflective practice throughout the programme, and at the end of most units in the modules you will find a reflective activity to complete. The reflective activity will enable you to make the most of what you have learnt throughout the unit, as well as assisting you to apply your learning in your workplace.

This module focuses on events that happened in the past. We will be working chronologically (the order in which events occurred) through the history, starting with ancient history and then moving closer and closer to the recent past. However, at times, we may move backwards and forwards a bit, talking about one theme and then following that up with another. It would be very helpful for you to make your own timeline in the back or front of your learning journal where you list the key events that are mentioned, in their time sequence.

Use a learning journal

Throughout the Adv. Dip TVT modules, we encourage you to use a *learning journal*. You can find a digital template of the learning journal in [Appendix 1](#_Appendix_1:_Learning). Save it where you can easily find it again. You can also use another template, or use a paper-based learning journal. You will use your learning journal to write notes and reflections and complete activities. Write down: (1) the key concepts; and (2) the key lines of argument being developed in the text. Also, write down your own opinion of the arguments made in the module. Do you agree or disagree? Write down your take on the key issues – this is a key part of your learning in higher education – developing your own “voice” or opinion on the key debates. Start your learning journal at the beginning of the programme, and keep it regularly updated throughout.

Active learning

Most learning theorists tell us that new understandings and learning depend on, and arise out of, *action*. All the modules in the Adv. Dip TVT programme include activities. Your learning will be more fruitful if you engage systematically with the activities. If you do not do the activities, you will miss out on the most important part of the programme learning pathway. Please talk to experienced colleagues about the questions in the activities especially if they are also studying for higher education courses. You could create a formal or informal study group to go through your work together. Interviewing/talking to colleagues gives you another point of view on the topic under discussion. This does not mean their arguments are the correct ones. Rather, it is one view of several that exist out there, including your own opinion. Your learning task here is to synthesise (combine) all the opinions and evidence you collect on any issue and determine your own final line of argument on that issue.

Thinking activities

At various points in the module you are asked to *stop and think* and to take some time to reflect on a particular issue. These *thought pauses* are designed to help you consolidate your understanding of a specific point *before* tackling the next section of the module. One of the habits many of us develop through a rote kind of learning is to rush through things. Work though each module slowly and thoughtfully. Read and think. This is how we develop a depth of understanding and become able to use the ideas we learn. Try to link the issues raised in each thought pause with what you have read, with what you have already learnt about learning, with your own previous experience, and so on. Think about the questions or problems raised in the module. Jot down your ideas in your learning journal so that you can be reminded of them at a later stage.

Linkages across modules

As you work through this and other modules, you will notice that topics or issues raised in one module may cross refer to the same issue or topic in another module, possibly in more detail. So for example, while there is an entire module dedicated to the investigation of *curriculum,* key issues related to curriculum will also be highlighted and discussed in a number of other modules including, modules dealing with pedagogy, psychology in TVET as well as in the method of teaching engineering and related design and electrical engineering modules.

Access to readings

There are links to readings throughout the activities. We have tried as far as possible to provide links to Open Educational Resources (OER). In cases where this was not possible you will be directed in the activity to access these through your university library. The website link is shown in the reference list.

Assessment

The activities contained in this module and the Adv. Dip TVT programme as a whole, promote a continuous and formative assessment process. This approach is intended to support your ability to relate ideas to practice and to contribute to your development as you work through the various modules of the programme.

You will also notice that each module includes a summative assessment task with the assessment criteria set out in an accompanying rubric. This summative assessment task is a model only, intended to illustrate the kind of assessment tasks that may be set by the university providing this programme.

It is important that you learn how to improve your own writing and oral argument. These two skills are ultimately the main benefits of a university education. This is why we have included an exemplar summative assessment. A central tool in writing is to develop a line of argument on any issue, which normally has:

1. An introduction, where you set up what you intend arguing.
2. Evidence arranged sequentially: To succeed in making this argument, you must use your evidence (your main points) in a sequential order (you need to decide what piece of evidence should come first, then what logically follows from that in a coherent ordering, and so on).
3. Analysis and critique: The sequential line of evidence developed above empowers you to make some analytical comments, which might require “critique”. For example, you may think that the curriculum policies have not been developed with enough consultation with industry.
4. Then your conclusion: This is the finale of your written work – it requires a final statement/summary of the logic you are making of your argument.

When you have mastered this type of writing, you’re on your way to successfully mastering this Advanced Diploma. This structure is necessary even if you’re writing a one- or two-page answer to the activities listed in this module. You can use this structure, or an adapted version you make yourself, in all your writing in the learning journal.

# Module overview

In this module, we want to take a step back and provide the larger picture of how South Africa’s vocational education system is shaped not only by current policy, but also by multiple factors in the past, including previous policy and legislation. South Africa’s past is affected by many different local and global events, but it is particularly marked by colonialism and apartheid. Although the formal system of apartheid ended more than 30 years ago, there are many traces of this in our skills system to this day.

The module is framed by an historical-sociology approach. This approach draws on two different but complementary disciplines. History is the systematic study of the past by looking at the available evidence, such as documents, artefacts, and interviews, and putting them together in a time sequence or chronology that explains what occurred. Historians are very careful to ensure that they have evidence to support claims they make. Sociology has a slightly different focus. It is the study of people and societies, how those societies are structured and how they function. Sociologists look at things like organisations, institutions, policies, traditions and symbols to understand how groups of people organise themselves into societies at local, national and international levels. Historical-sociologists are also interested in the past, but they try to use our understanding of what happened in the past to look for patterns of society that emerge over time. They therefore draw heavily on the work of historians to tell the story of the past.

The module focuses particularly on the ways in which policies have developed and changed over time. Policies are the rules, regulations, procedures and plans that governments or organisations use to arrange our societies. They are the official rules. However, there are also unofficial rules that emerge over time through practices. The module focuses on both the policies and the practices to understand what actually happened in the past and how this affects what is happening today.

Understanding the whole story of how the South African technical and vocational education and training system has developed over time can help you navigate your work as an educator. We want you to understand how your own educational background, your work and your students have been shaped by South Africa’s history and policies, and the relationships between them.

## The content of this module

There are four units to this module:

* *Unit 1: Background* This Unit provides a little more detail about why an historical perspective might be helpful for making sense of the present. It also defines what we mean by policies and the different types of policies that we will explore. The Unit then looks at how societies transferred skills in the past and what happened in South Africa before and after colonisation.
* *Unit 2: Apartheid, Reform and Resistance* This Unit looks, in some detail, at how the South African economy and society was transformed during the mineral revolution (discovery of diamonds and gold) and how this changed the skills system. The Unit explores the emergence of a technical and vocational education system and how this became tied up with the policy of apartheid. Finally, the Unit explores the resistance to apartheid and how this forced changes in South Africa.
* *Unit 3: Transition and Democracy* This Unit examines what happened during the change from the apartheid system to the new democratic order and how policies have developed over time to structure the system that we have today. In particular, this Unit describes how the different institutions that make up the skills system have emerged and the ways in which colleges have changed over time.
* *Unit 4: Curriculum* The final Unit focuses on the core of a TVET college, namely, the curriculum it has to deliver. It traces how the curriculum was developed to first serve apprenticeships, then became more school focused and, more recently, focused on occupations.

At the end of this module, there is a summary that links the different Units together and explores how your new historical and sociological understanding can benefit your work in colleges now.

## Links to other modules

This module covers some content and themes that are explored in other modules. In particular, Unit 1 has some overlap with discussions in the *Philosophy of TVET* module, while Units 2 and 3 discuss economic developments that are also discussed in *The Political, Economic and Social Context of TVET* module. Unit 4 has many references to curriculum issues that are discussed in a number of other modules. If you have completed these modules already, please use what you have learned in those modules to add to your understanding of this module. In particular, you may notice differences in interpretation. Make a note of these in your learning journal and discuss the differences you have noticed with your fellow students.

## Module purpose

The purpose of this module is to give students an overview of the historical development of the technical and vocational education system. It also includes the policies associated with the system. This will allow students to reflect on how our history has shaped the features and practices in the vocational education system today.

## Module outcomes

By the end of this module you will be able to:

1. Explain the role that time (history) plays in shaping your context
2. Describe the timeline of the development of the TVET system from precolonial times to the present
3. Have an opinion on how national and international political and economic events and forces shaped the TVET system
4. Distinguish between policy intentions, policy enactments and policy outcomes
5. Describe the continuities and changes that have occurred in colleges over the past 50 years
6. Critically reflect on the opportunities and constraints that lecturers in colleges face as a result of historical processes.

## Module structure

Figure : Module structure

## Module credits

This module carries 3 credits.

## Module time (notional hours) 30

This is equivalent to 30 notional learning hours. It is anticipated that you will take approximately 30 hours to complete the module successfully. The 30 hours will include contact time with your Higher Education Institution (HEI), reading time, research time and time required to write assignments. It is also expected that some of your time will be spent talking to college colleagues about the various activities in this course. Each unit and activity in this module indicate the suggested time for completion.

# Unit 1: Background

## Introduction

This Unit begins by clarifying a few key concepts that we will use through the module and then provides some background about the history of skills development and vocational education leading up to the major economic changes that resulted from the discovery of diamonds and gold.

You should spend about 4 to 5 hours on this unit.

## Unit 1 outcomes

By the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

1. Explain why a historical perspective assists in making sense of the present
2. Define policies and how the intentions can be separated from enactment and outcomes
3. Describe how social groups transferred skills from generation to generation
4. Define colonialism and its impact on southern African societies
5. Describe early versions of apprenticeship and how these were connected to slavery.

## Why history?

You may be wondering why it is useful to you as a lecturer in a TVET college or other vocational institution to know the history of TVET. How can this knowledge help you with your daily pressures of teaching and assessing, managing classes, and keeping up to date with developments in industry? This is a good question, and one that you should keep thinking about throughout the module. At the end of the module, in Unit 4, you will have an opportunity to reflect on whether what you have learned is useful.

Activity 1: Thinking about your own historical context

**Suggested time**: 20 minutes

Take a moment to think about your own background and how you have ended up in the position that you have. In your learning journal, write down a few notes that answer these questions, or indicate which ones you don’t know.

1. What shaped the choices you and your parents/family made that resulted in you becoming a lecturer?
2. Next, think about the college where you work (or if you are not yet working, think about the school or university where you studied). Do you know why it is where it is? Who started it? If it has multiple campuses, have they always been part of the same institution? Who attends the college? Why do they choose it? What industries does it serve?

If you are working with other student, you may want to discuss your responses and share some information.

Discussion of the activity

I am sure that, whether you are looking at your own life or the information about your college, you will notice that you, your family, or other people have made decisions and choices that have shaped your life and shaped the organisations you work for or are studying at. You will also know that not all the choices that you make are completely free. Some choices you made or the choices your parents made might have been limited by how much money was available, or where you lived, or what was allowed by the rules or laws. People shape their own history, but they do it within certain constraints.

The same is true for your college. At some point, the decision was taken to build the college. There would have been options about where to locate the campus, what was to be offered academically, and what the college would be called. Depending on when this happened, there may have been a variety of factors to take into account. Who was the college for? What industries would be served by the college? Over time, this may have changed but the original decisions still shape the future ones.

## The impact of the past on the present

In this module, we are interested in the ways the past has shaped the present, and what that means for the future. Telling the story about our past, and understanding some of the reasons for the choices that were made, can help to explain what is happening at the moment, and can help us to make informed choices about the future.

Take, for example, the curriculum that is offered at your college. Does your college teach both NCV and NATED courses? Has it started teaching new QCTO qualifications? Without an understanding of the history of these qualifications, you may not be aware of why they all exist, who created them and what they were intended for. Yet, as a teacher, you might be frustrated with some aspects of the curriculum, or wonder why certain things are out of date, and you may not know who designed the qualifications. Knowing the history doesn’t necessarily help with solving those problems, but it might give you the confidence to make some decisions about the curriculum.

Similarly, when you think about the students who come to TVET colleges, what do you know about them? Is the college their first choice? If not, why isn’t it? Are there particular attitudes or values that they and their families have about the college? Where did they get these from?

Very often, people develop particular beliefs based on what has happened before. These beliefs are often very difficult to change. But understanding why people have these attitudes might help to change them.

What you are doing when you tell a story about your past is what historians and sociologists do when they study the history of a particular place, community or country. They try and put together all the bits of information (what they call evidence) that we have about the past and put it together into a coherent story that explains why and how we got to where we are today.

The difficulty that historians and sociologists have is that we can never be absolutely sure that we know everything about the past. The further back we go, the less evidence we have. If people are no longer alive, we can only look at what was written at the time, at pictures, and at things that were made and survived, such as buildings or tools. If we are examining societies that did not use writing, we have even less evidence. But, even if we have a lot of evidence, there are different interpretations of the past. I’m sure you will have had arguments with a friend or family member about something that you did together but have a different recollection (memory) of the event. To work out who was right, you may have to get other witnesses and ask them, or you may find evidence like a photo. In the end, you may still not agree on the same version of events. This is called “interpretation,” and is central to what historians and sociologists do. They present an interpretation of the past, using the best evidence they have, but there are often different ways of interpreting it.

The story that we will explore in this module about the TVET system is based on the interpretation of current evidence. It is not just a made up story and there are many facts that historians would all agree on. But it is an interpretation and there may be other people who would make sense of it in a different way.

Hopefully you will find some of this history of TVET interesting, and some of it will help you to understand why we have got to where we are today. Before we proceed to look at the past, it is important to clarify what is meant by policy.

## What is policy?

In Activity 1, we looked at how your college (or other educational organisation) emerged. The decisions that led to the creation of the college happened because the government at the time had particular plans or intentions, and chose to commit part of its budget to developing new colleges. This sort of decision does not arise because one official had a good idea. It is normally the result of a set of processes that lead to the development of plans, procedures and rules. This is what we call “policy”.

In the Social Sciences, policies are decisions or courses of action taken by governments, organisations, or individuals to address specific issues or achieve certain objectives. These policies can be implemented at various levels, such as local, regional, national, or international, and they can cover a wide range of areas, including social, economic, environmental, or educational domains. When studying policies, researchers often examine three key dimensions: policy intentions, policy enactment, and policy outcomes.

1. Policy Intentions

Policy intentions refer to the goals, objectives, or desired outcomes that policymakers aim to achieve through their policy decisions. These intentions are typically based on a careful analysis of the problem, consultation with experts or stakeholders, and a consideration of political, economic, social, and cultural factors. Policy intentions can vary widely, such as promoting economic growth, reducing poverty, enhancing environmental sustainability, or improving access to education. They represent the ideals or aspirations policymakers hope to achieve through their policy choices.

2. Policy Enactment

Policy enactment refers to the process of implementing and putting policies into action. It involves the translation of policy intentions into specific measures, programmes, regulations, or laws that can be applied in practice. Policy enactment encompasses various stages, including policy formulation, decision-making, implementation planning, resource allocation, and enforcement. This phase involves the coordination and collaboration of different actors, such as policymakers, bureaucrats, agencies, and stakeholders, to ensure that the policy is effectively carried out.

3. Policy Outcomes

Policy outcomes refer to the actual results, impacts, or consequences of implemented policies. They represent the tangible or measurable changes that occur in society as a result of policy interventions. Policy outcomes can be intended or unintended, positive or negative, and they may take time to manifest fully. Evaluating policy outcomes helps to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity of policies, and it informs future decision-making and policy revisions. Examples of policy outcomes could include reduced crime rates, increased employment opportunities, improved educational attainment or decreased pollution levels.

Policies can have multiple dimensions and can often blend aspects of policy intentions, enactments, and outcomes. The study of policies involves analysing these aspects individually as well as their interactions to gain a comprehensive understanding of policy processes and their effects.

Intentions, plans and rules are quite different. For this reason, we can distinguish between different types of policies. Some policies are aspirational and spell out what the government would like to do. Very often, Green and White Papers spell out a vision for the future, with long term goals. Similarly, plans might be aspirational, setting targets for the future. For example, the National Development Plan of 2011 proposed that South Africa needs 30 000 new artisans a year, which was a broad target that wasn’t enforced (National Planning Commission, 2011). It is something the system should try and achieve and resulted in a range of different actions to achieve the target.

Other policies become enshrined in law. These laws are rules that should not be broken. The South Africa Qualifications Authority Act (SAQA, 1995) and the Skills Development Act (1998) specify that certain things have to happen, and that these things are legally enforceable. For example, companies have to pay a skills levy. These types of policies are regulatory.

Often, there are other documents such as guidelines, strategy documents, recommendations or just speeches given by a Minister that shape the whole policy space. When we try and understand policies, we need to look at the combination of all these documents.

Activity 2: Policy analysis

**Suggested time:** 30 minutes

Have a look at the two extracts below. In your learning journal, state what type of policy you think each one is, and give a reason for your choice.

**National Development Plan – 2030 – Extract from Chapter 9: Improving education, training and innovation**

Approximately 65% of college students are unable to find work experience, which is a requirement for completing National Technical Diplomas, popularly known as “N Diplomas”. The college sector is intended as a pathway for those who do not follow an academic path, but it suffers from a poor reputation due to the low rate of employment of college graduates.

*Colleges*

The college sector needs to be expanded, but this must be preceded by clarity about its vision and role. The priority is to strengthen colleges, address quality teaching and learning, and improve performance. A critical indicator of performance is the throughput rate and the ability of college programmes to provide the skills South Africa needs. Colleges are the backbone of technical vocational education and training. Their target group includes young people in the FET phase who chose the vocational pathway, adults who want to change careers or upgrade skills, and unemployed people who wish to start a career. Colleges should be strengthened to become institutions of choice for the training of artisans and for producing other mid-level skills.

**Objectives**

* Improve the throughput rate to 75% by 2030. This would have a major impact on South Africa’s skills profile.
* Produce 30 000 artisans per year by 2030.
* Promote lifelong learning to complement post-school education.
* Provide funding certainty to ensure that colleges employ staff and give them job security. This will ensure that colleges attract and retain skilled and experienced college staff.
* Support the development of specialised programmes in universities focusing on training college lecturers. Provide funding for universities to conduct research on the vocational education sector.
* Build the capacity of FET institutions to become the preferred institutions for vocational education and training. Learners should be able to choose the vocational pathway before completing Grade 12.
* Expand the geographical spread of FET institutions to ensure that learners who choose to pursue a vocational career have access to institutions that provide quality vocational education and training. Distance education, with structured learner support, will help to improve access.
* Expand the college system with a focus on improving quality. Better quality will build confidence in the college sector and attract more learners. The recommended participation rate of 25% would accommodate about 1.25 million enrolments compared to the current 300 000. The DHET proposes establishing Community Education and Training Centres which will incorporate the current public adult learning centres. These institutions, combined with enrolment in workplace-based programmes, should reach an additional 1 million learners.
* Build a strong relationship between the college sector and industry. This will improve the quality of training in colleges and ensure the quick absorption of college graduates into jobs. Continuing education is necessary for meaningful participation in a modern economy where many jobs require some college or university education. Industry should play a significant role in college curriculum development and provide opportunities for practical training. Through this partnership, the college sector will also be able to determine what skills are needed in the labour market.
* Significantly decrease the number of young people who are not employed or in education and training by 2030. There are currently about 3 million young people aged 18–24 who are not in employment, education or training.

(National Planning Commission, 2011)

**Extract 2: Skills Development Levies Act of 1999**

Exemptions 4.

The levy is not payable by— (a) any public service employer in the national or provincial sphere of government; (b) any employer where section 3(1)(u) or (b) applies and— (i) during any month, there are reasonable grounds for believing that the total amount of remuneration, as determined in accordance with section 3(4), paid or payable by that employer to all its employees during the following 12 month period will not exceed R250 000, or such other amount as the Minister may determine by notice in the Gazette; and (ii) that employer is not required to apply for registration as an employer in terms of paragraph 15(1) of the Fourth Schedule to the Income Tax Act; (c) any religious or charitable institution contemplated in section 10( 1)~) of the Income Tax Act or any fund contemplated in section 10(1)&A) of the Income Tax Act, established solely to provide funds to any such institution; or (d) any national or provincial public entity, if 80% or more of its expenditure is defrayed directly or indirectly from funds voted by Parliament.

(Skills Development Levies Act, 1999)

Discussion of the activity

Were you able to see that the two extracts are very different types of text? The *National Development Plan* has some very ambitious objectives for South Africa and the skills system. While the plan has lots of targets, there are no clear mechanisms for achieving those targets. The success of the plan is dependent on a whole lot of other parts of the system working in a coordinated fashion. This policy is aspirational and sets out an agenda. This policy is not a law passed by parliament and cannot be enforced. Some commentators have described these sorts of policies as symbolic, as they do not have any real power to change the way things work.

Symbolic policies focus more on symbolism, signalling, or representation rather than directly achieving concrete outcomes. Symbolic policies are often employed to communicate certain values, ideals, or political messages, rather than addressing practical problems. These policies are intended to shape public perceptions, create a sense of identity or solidarity, or demonstrate political commitments. Symbolic policies can involve symbolic gestures, public ceremonies, symbolic regulations, or symbolic actions that have a limited direct impact but carry significant symbolic meaning. For instance, a government might introduce a symbolic policy to ban a particular practice or promote a cultural symbol to enhance national unity, even if the policy's actual impact on the issue is limited. Jonathan Jansen argues that symbolic policies are often deliberately vague because there is no real commitment behind them (Jansen, 2002). That is not to say that they do not have an effect. For example, while it is not clear why the National Planning Commission stated that South Africa needs 30 000 new artisans per year, there have been many different strategies to try and achieve that target, and many programmes claim to be working towards that end. So symbolic policies can have an effect on the system (often in unintended ways).

In contrast, the extract from the *Skills Development Levies Act* is written very differently. It is a law that cannot be changed other than through an Act of Parliament. It is written in legalistic English and is quite difficult to understand. This part of the Act specifies who is exempt from paying the skills levies that are used to fund SETAs and the National Skills Fund (NSF). Smaller businesses and government departments are exempt from these levies. So, for example, if you work for the government, your employer does not pay the skills levy but is supposed to set aside the equivalent of the levy for skills development.

We will describe various policies in Units 2, 3 and 4. Keep the distinction between aspirational (symbolic) and regulatory policies in mind. Keep asking yourself whether the policies being described are aspirational or regulatory. Policy development after 1994 has seen an enormous amount of change. The democratic government needed to quickly undo the apartheid policies. However, you will see that, at times, it is difficult to change systems because of the history and the institutions that have emerged from them.

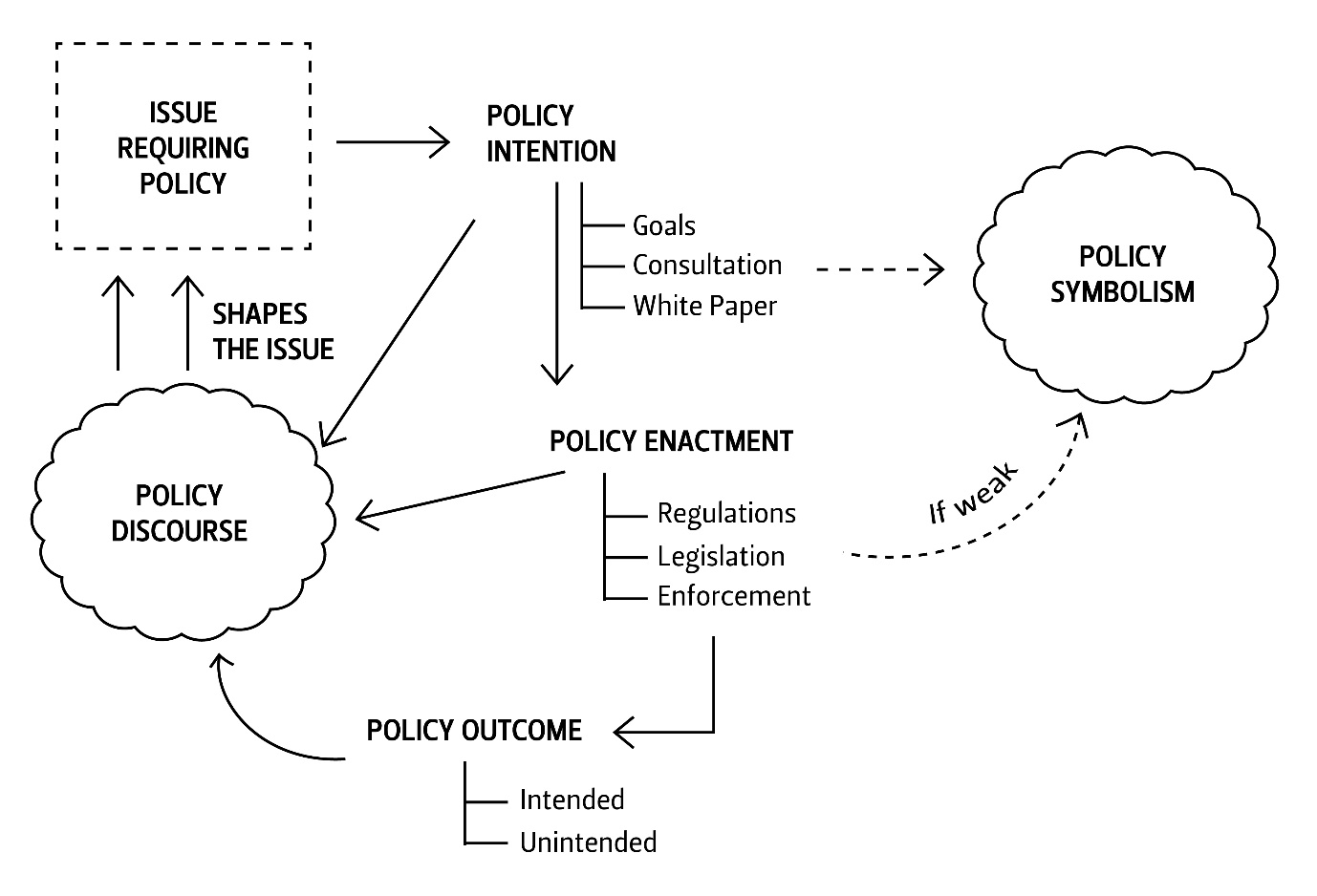
## Policy text and policy discourse

Stephen Ball (1993), a leading British scholar of education policy argues that policies can be defined as text (the actual documents that are written) and as discourse (the way we represent, understand, think and speak about something). As texts, policies are “representations which are encoded in complex ways (via struggles, compromises, authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations) and decoded in complex ways (via actors’ interpretations and meanings in relation to their history, experiences, skills, resources and context)” (p. 11). In other words, when we think about written policies, we need to recognise that they are the outcome of a whole lot of processes and struggles. In this sense, policies are much more than just the final official document – they have to be understood in relation to all the debates and discussions, arguments, versions, etc. that led to that final document.

As a discourse, policies regulate “what can be said and thought, but also who can speak, when, where, and with what authority” (Ball, 1993, p.14) and thus the discourse “changes the possibility for thinking otherwise” (Ball, 1993, p.15). What Ball is suggesting is that, more than just being documents that tell us what we can and cannot do, policies actually start shaping the way that we THINK. They create boundaries about what we imagine is or is not possible, and sometimes those things stop us thinking about other possibilities.

Take, for example, the idea that all children should go to school. Nowadays, we don’t find many people who even consider whether it is a good idea for children to spend their adolescent years in school. We generally accept that this is what young people should do. We might debate about what age they should start, and what they should do at school, but it is never a discussion as to whether they should go to school. This is a policy that has become so accepted that it is a discourse that most people don’t even consider. Yet we know that the idea that all children should go to school is actually a fairly recent idea. There are still places in the world where this is not normal. In our society, policy choices are part of a wider discourse of human rights, the right to education and ideas of investment in education that make some policies seem “natural” and uncontested.

Figure 2 is an illustration of the key concepts discussed above. Make sure that you understand the concepts represented here.

Figure 2: Key policy concepts discussed in the unit

Let us begin looking at the history!

## Skills transfer and societal development

Before we begin to look more closely at the TVET system we have in South Africa, we need to understand how skills get transferred from one generation to the next.

As soon as humans started living together and learning and adapting to their environment, they needed to pass on this knowledge to people in the group and from one generation to the next. Initially, this would have happened entirely in their family groups, with parents teaching their children and people sharing information informally. About 12 000 years ago, humans started domesticating wild animals and growing crops, which meant that they started settling in more concentrated groups. In these settlements, people started developing more specialised roles with particular skills and expertise associated with these roles. Some people were farmers, others warriors, leaders, tool makers, clothes makers and so on. Often, these specialised roles were passed on from one generation to the next within a family, so that your occupation was determined by your parents. However, with the development of writing, it was also possible to record knowledge and to teach people new roles.

Every society has a system of skills training. In Africa, before the arrival of European colonists, there were many societies with complex economies linked into global trade. These societies had numerous occupations related to food production and preparation, stone masonry and other forms of construction, metal work, wood work, boat building, leadership and management, etc. The skills linked to these occupations were generally passed on through a system of apprenticeship, where young people learned these skills from older more experienced masters[[1]](#footnote-2) by working alongside the master and by observing, copying and practising the master’s work. In some cases, more formalised training in larger groups also occurred in something similar to schools or training camps. For example, initiation into adulthood for young men and women included formal training.

Stop and think

To what extent are these forms of skills transfer still present and relevant in our society today? Think about skills that you have learnt (or passed on) in this way.

You might have identified a lot of skills that are still transferred from parents to their children or outside formal schools, colleges or universities. In fact, informal skills training happens everywhere almost on a daily basis. We learn from our friends, we teach each other skills, we learn from books and, increasingly, from YouTube and other apps. There are also quite a few occupations where people still learn on the job, either in official formal apprenticeships or learnerships, or in unofficial informal apprenticeships.

In summary, you need to keep two things in mind. Firstly, all societies have some system for transferring skills, and this has always been the case. And, secondly, the formal system (schools, colleges, Technikons, universities, training centres, etc.) is only one part of a skills system. In this module, we focus mainly on the formal education and skills training system that has its origins in models imported from Britain. But, it is important to remember that there were systems in South Africa before, and that there remain many ways of transferring skills outside of the formal system.

#### Further exploration

If you are interested in finding out more about how skills training happened in Africa before colonialism, use the following resources:

**Take note:** You may need to access the online version of these articles via your institutional library or the library of the institution through which you are studying.

1. Moseunyane, D. (2013). The African Educational Evolution: From Traditional Training to Formal Education. *Higher Education Studies, 3*(4).Doi:10.5539/hes.v3n4p50
2. Serame, B. M. (2019). Decolonising South African Education: Lessons from the Pre-Colonial Era. *National Political Science Review, 20*(2), 156–162.

## Conquest and colonialism

We have already used the term “colonialism” in this Unit. There is quite a lot of debate about colonialism, colonisation, and also decolonisation when people talk about South Africa’s politics. But what do we mean by these words and why are they still being discussed so much?

If you studied History at school or university, you probably have a good understanding already. If you did not take History as a subject, you may know something about colonialism from other sources.

Activity 3: Considering colonialism

**Suggested time:** 20 minutes

In your learning journal, write down *your own definition* of colony, colonisation, and colonialism. Do not look up the meaning of these words before you do this. If you do not know what these terms mean, then say that.

Once you have written down how you understand what colony, colonisation and colonialism mean, have a look at definitions of these words. You can use a dictionary or a search engine like Duckduckgo, Google or Bing.

Discussion of the activity

How close was your own definition to the ones that you looked up? Was there anything surprising or new about these definitions?

For purposes of our discussion, a colony is a territory that is ruled by another country. The word comes from the Latin language spoken by the Romans, who colonised most of Europe. Many forms of colonisation have happened throughout history, as one group of people has conquered another group’s land and ruled over it. Colonies have existed on all the continents of the Earth at various times in history as different groups created empires. This process is what is termed “colonisation”. However, from the 17th century onwards, most colonisation was carried out by various European powers as they sailed around the world conquering large parts of the Americas, Africa, Australasia and Asia. This reached its height in the Age of Imperialism (1760–1914) when Europe’s most powerful countries raced each other to try and secure more colonies in order for them to get access to the resources. The colonies served a range of different purposes: they were used as penal colonies (essentially large prisons); they were used to settle surplus populations (settler colonies); they were used to extract raw materials (exploitation colonies); or they were used for strategic purposes. This whole system, including the ideas that justified it, is called colonialism.

Colonialism has shaped the modern world. In Africa, for example, almost all territorial borders that we know today were decided by the colonisers at a conference in Berlin in 1878. These borders cut across older tribal and linguistic boundaries. The official languages spoken are often still the languages of the colonisers. We classify countries in Africa as Francophone (French speaking), Anglophone (English speaking) and Lusophone (Portuguese speaking). Many symbols of government and systems of governance, including our education systems, are remnants of those put in place under colonialism. For this reason, even though African countries are no longer colonies, there are so many traces of colonialism that many people argue that we have not decolonised (Fataar, 2018).

## Colonialism in South Africa and skills training

When we think about the history of South Africa and the role that racism and inequality have played in shaping our present society, we often focus on the apartheid system. However, the policy of apartheid was only implemented in the middle of the 20th century. Before that time, there was a much longer period of colonialism, and this has had many lasting effects on our society.

In this Unit, we can only touch on a few key features. There are many excellent resources that you can look at and read on the history of colonialism in South Africa.

Activity 4: Thinking about colonialism in South Africa

**Suggested time:** 20 minutes

Watch this short video that gives a very quick overview of colonialism in South Africa and the key features of that system.

<https://youtu.be/Mi93LjuQbMM>

In your learning journal, make a note of any new things about the history of colonialism in South Africa that you learned. Then list ways the history of colonialism helps to explain aspects of South Africa now.

Discussion of the activity

The video shows that the Dutch first established a settlement in the Cape in 1652, in order to supply food and water for the ships that were passing on their way to colonies in Asia. The refreshment station required farmers to supply the food and, because local people had little interest in trading with the Dutch East India Company (VOC), farmers were brought out to grow the crops needed. Very soon, the farmers (known in the Dutch language as “boers”) chose to end their contract of employment with the VOC and chose to farm and trade with the VOC on their own terms. This was the start of an increasing expansion of settlements further and further into the interior of South Africa.

The settler colonists who decided to work independently of the VOC were the ancestors of what are now called Afrikaners. These were people of Dutch and other European descent who developed their own African identity. Some intermingled and intermarried with local people, but the majority tried to establish themselves as independent of local African and colonial rulers. To get away from the Dutch and British colonial authorities, they moved into the interior of South Africa, eventually setting up their own independent republics. These settler republics were later invaded by the colonial power after it was discovered that they had diamonds and gold.

The detail of this history is not that important other than to stress two points: firstly, colonialism was a complex process with a range of competing interest groups. It was not just a conflict between the coloniser and the colonised, but between different interest groups in each of those. Settler colonists fought against the authorities representing the colonial power; local African leaders went into alliance with the colonisers against other leaders; missionaries came with intentions to convert people to Christianity; and traders came to make money. All these processes shaped what would become South Africa.

Secondly, the colonial authorities and the independent settlers were all tied to an economy that was focused on farming. Our interest is the skills that were needed and these were predominantly agricultural. For most of the 200 years from 1652 to the 1850s, where South Africa was being shaped by colonialism, the core skills needed were understanding crops, animals and markets. Skills training happened through informal transfer from one generation to the next in both the settler and indigenous communities.

There was one additional element to the skills picture that is often neglected, and this is the role that slavery played.

## Slavery and skills

One of the features of colonialism is the connection with slavery. You are probably aware that the United States of America had a lot of slaves, but were you aware that South Africa had a large slave population as well? South Africa had slaves for almost 200 years. European colonialism was connected with and justified by an idea that white Europeans were racially superior. This racist belief system saw people in other parts of the world as uncivilised and inferior and, for this reason, it was acceptable to take away their land and also to take away their freedom and make them slaves.

Slaves were an important part of the skilled labour force in South Africa. They were brought to South Africa from Indonesia and various parts of Africa because they had skills, such as carpentry, that were missing locally. Slaves were used in various parts of the economy, working in homes but also manufacturing most of the furniture and making the wagons and other equipment that were needed by farmers. Some of those skills have remained with the descendants of the slaves (Gamble, 2021). The earliest forms of apprenticeship were actually an extension of the slavery system that allowed slave owners to keep their slaves as apprentices after the system of slavery was abolished in 1833 (see Wedekind, 2018).

Stop and think

Watch this short video from the SABC that explains the history of slavery in South Africa and make notes in your learning journal on the key points.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HelgTxSjvvM>

## Missionaries and skills

Another feature of colonisation is that, very often, the colonisers also bring their religion to the colony. This was particularly true of the European colonialism because the idea of colonising was also tied up with an idea that the superiority of the white race was connected to Christianity. Consequently, the colonisers conquered and converted. Missionaries set up mission stations throughout the colonies and opened schools for the converts. Many of the missionaries had strong beliefs that the schools should teach skills such as gardening, carpentry (woodwork) and other practical subjects. These schools were the first formal skills training institutions and some of these mission schools and colleges continue to exist in various parts of South Africa.

Because South Africa’s economy was predominantly agricultural, there was very little other technical or vocational education available outside the mission schools and some early agricultural colleges. Skilled workers, who were needed for running the colonial state, were usually imported from Britain and skilled workers, who made the furniture, wagons and other farm equipment, were often the descendants of the slaves who used to do this work.

## Conclusion to Unit 1

In this Unit, we briefly explored why historical understanding might be helpful for making sense of current contexts. We have also defined what we mean by policy, and have seen that policies can have different purposes.

The history of South Africa’s skill system is tied up with the history of colonisation and colonialism. Traditional practices of passing on skills from one generation to the next had existed in the indigenous communities living in southern Africa. When colonisers from Europe came to the Cape, they brought different skills, particularly in agricultural practices. They also brought slaves who were skilled in carpentry and other crafts, and these skills were passed on through various types of apprenticeships, informal learning and some schooling.

At this stage, there is little evidence of a technical and vocational training system or any policies regulating training. All of this was set to change when diamonds were discovered in 1867. The mineral revolution was about to start and, with it, the skills needs of the society would change quite quickly. The economic changes also brought about major social change and the racism of the colonial period would become increasingly formalised under apartheid. This is what we will discuss in Unit 2.

# Unit 2: Apartheid, Reform and Resistance

## Introduction

In Unit 1, we explored the definitions of three key concepts that we are working with in this course. Firstly, we explored what history is and why looking at the past may be helpful. Secondly, we explored ideas around policies and how different types of policies are defined. Finally, we looked at colonialism and examined some of the ways in which skills were passed on from one generation to the next in precolonial and colonial times.

Societies, where the main economic activity is related to agriculture, are called *agrarian* societies. In precolonial and early colonial times, the South African economy was largely agrarian. This changed quite suddenly in the late 19th century when diamonds and then gold were discovered. These discoveries led to a complete change in the type of economy that was developing and this, in turn, meant that there were changes in the nature of work and the types of occupations people performed.

The discovery of diamonds and gold also brought about a lot of political and social changes. In Unit 2, we explore how, over the course of the 20th century, the unified country we know as South Africa was formed and how the white settler minority attempted to keep economic and political power in its hands. One of the ways of doing this was to restrict access to certain kinds of jobs and this affected the development of the training system.

By the end of the 20th century, global economic conditions and internal resistance had caused major changes to South Africa’s economy and its political system. When you have completed this Unit, the scene will have been set for the reforms that took place after South Africa became a democracy in 1994.

You should spend about 8 to 10 hours on this unit.

## Unit 2 outcomes

The key learning outcome for this unit is that you should be able to understand and explain how the vocational education system evolved and changed as wider economic and social changes occurred in society. You do not need to know every date or every event but should be able to place the major developments on a timeline (as discussed in the “Advice on study methods” section at the start of the module).

Specifically, you should be able to:

1. Identify key dates and critical developments in the history of industrialisation and the formalisation of skills training
2. Describe how racism and racial classification of occupations shaped the apprenticeship system
3. Link international, national and local economic changes to increasing demands on the skills system
4. Describe the various social and economic pressures affecting the vocational education system between 1970 and 1990.

## The mineral revolution, manufacturing and the establishment of formal apprenticeship

The discovery of diamonds near the town of Kimberley in 1867 started a process that historians now call “the mineral revolution”. It was a revolution because it started a process of major social and economic change in much the same way as other revolutions overturn the existing social, political or economic system.

Stop and think

Why did the discovery of diamonds cause so much change in South African society?

A diamond is the crystalline form of the element carbon and has the highest hardness and thermal conductivity of any natural material. Diamonds are important industrially as well as being highly sought-after gemstones. After the first diamonds were collected on the surface, word spread about the discovery. People from all over the world flocked into the Cape Colony to try and get rich quickly. However, very soon, the surface diamonds were gone and people needed to mine deep into the ground for diamonds. This began as open cast mines, but quickly the mines began to go even deeper. This is strikingly illustrated by the size and depth of Kimberley’s Big Hole (see image in Figure 3). It was therefore no longer possible for individuals to prospect on their own, as depth mining requires machines, large numbers of labourers and capital (money) to pay for this. Individual miners had their mining rights bought by large companies that were formed at this time. These companies, such as De Beers, quickly monopolised the mining industry.

Figure 3: The Big Hole, Kimberley

(Source: Wikimedia Foundation)

Activity 5a: The discovery of diamonds

**Suggested time:** 20 minutes

Watch the video “History of South Africa Part 5” up to time 4:27 (discovery of diamonds). In your learning journal, briefly write three effects of the discovery of diamonds on the developing states of the future South Africa.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyF9q4hmXkc>

In 1886, the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand led to a further acceleration of the mineral revolution. Thousands more miners and prospectors rushed to the Highveld and, very quickly, new towns, such as Johannesburg, sprung up. Like the diamond fields, the intensity and complexity of the mining process meant that it was only possible to mine effectively at a large scale. Small mines were bought out and consolidated into a few large conglomerates which dominated the South African economy for most of the next century.

Activity 5b: The discoveries of gold

**Suggested time:** 20 minutes

Watch the video “History of South Africa Part 5” from time 4:28 to 8:12 (discoveries of gold). In your learning journal, briefly write three effects of the discoveries of gold on the developing states of the future South Africa.

Discussion of the activity

The consequences of the mineral revolution were very significant. Before looking at the emergence of the training system, there are a number of wider impacts that need to be covered. These cannot be discussed in detail here, but are explored further in other modules and there are many good resources you could look at online by searching for South Africa’s mineral revolution.

Historians are largely in agreement that the discovery of diamonds and gold led to the following:

### Changes in demographics

The discovery of diamonds and gold brought about a significant migration of people. Thousands of people arrived from all over the world to work in the mines and many more moved within southern Africa. Once the large industrialised mines were established, unskilled labour was needed in large numbers, and this was supplied by migrant workers from rural areas in what is now the Eastern Cape and various other areas. The impact was thus also on the population of rural areas in South Africa as well as neighbouring countries, such as Zimbabwe and Mozambique, with young men leaving for the new towns. Rural agrarian communities changed as they lost young male labour and became increasingly connected to, and dependent on, the cash economy of the mining towns.

As the mines grew, large settlements became large towns and cities. These attracted other people who set up the businesses that served the mines and the growing population around the mines. South Africa’s population became more urbanised and less dependent on agriculture for its livelihood. The growing towns needed builders and electricians, plumbers and lawyers, doctors and teachers. The children of these people needed schools and universities. Local government was needed to manage the new towns. Transport networks (railways, roads, harbours) started expanding as mines and towns were connected to the ports that enabled the import and export of goods and materials. This meant that towns far from the mines, such as Durban, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town, also started growing as a consequence of the mining.

The mining companies were initially quite happy with using cheap labour in large numbers who migrated between their homes in rural areas and the mines. They were accommodated by the mines in large men-only hostels in very poor conditions. However, over time, the companies realised that this was not very efficient as the workers were tired out by the journeys, were unreliable as they could choose when they wished to work, and there was a high turnover of workers. Furthermore, other industries that had emerged in the new towns and cities also needed a stable workforce. The solution was to encourage black families to settle near the mines and towns. This led to the creation of housing for families and the first urban townships for black South Africans. This, in turn, created additional demands for skilled workers in the building trades.

### Changes in agriculture

The changes described above also had an impact on the rural areas. As more and more people were drawn into the cities for work, shortages of labour in rural areas resulted in changes to farming patterns. Farms became bigger and more commercially driven by the profits that could be made supplying commercial crops to the cities. Smallholdings were bought and amalgamated into large farms, leaving large numbers of black and white farmers without work.

### Changes to the environment

Mining is very extractive, dangerous and damaging to the environment. It altered the landscape with deep pits, mine dumps like large hills, and dams full of poisonous water. It polluted rivers and damaged the natural environment. The creation of large towns far from natural water supplies meant that rivers had to be dammed and diverted. Commercial agricultural farming led to the degrading of soil quality, and overgrazing by cattle resulted in the formation of dongas as soil was washed away.

### Political consequences

All the above had a significant impact on political developments in southern Africa. Prior to the discovery of diamonds and gold, the colonial powers were not that interested in the interior of South Africa. Their strategic interest was in the shipping lanes around Africa that served the trade routes between Asia and Europe. This changed once the wealth of the diamond and gold fields became apparent. The British colonial government moved quickly to annex territories and, where they met resistance, they declared war. The Anglo-Zulu war of 1879 and the South African War of 1899–1902 were directly a result of the mineral revolution, as Britain tried to control the entire region. The consequence of these wars was that the various parts of South Africa were brought together into one country and granted a degree of independence in 1910. It also meant that previously independent African kingdoms were brought under British rule and then were governed by the white settlers. South Africa adopted many of the conventions of the British political system, as well as many British style institutions.

Stop and think

What implications do all the changes that followed from the mineral revolution have for education and training systems?

In addition to needing machines, such as steam engines, the mining companies also needed the engineers who could keep the machines running. As the mining processes became more technical, the miners also needed greater specialised skills such as using explosives, building structures underground and so on. Skilled people came to South Africa from all over the world where similar mining processes had already been used. But very soon, the mining companies realised that it would be cheaper to train local people rather than recruiting engineers and miners from Australia, Cornwall or Canada. The first serious demand for technical training was starting to emerge.

## Implications for education and training

You will probably have noticed from the description of what happened during the mineral revolution that South Africa’s economy changed. It shifted from being a mainly agrarian economy to an industrial economy, based on mining, but with increasing related industries. The types of workers needed for this new economy also changed. The introduction of machinery, factories and railways meant that technical skills were needed. While the mines did require cheap labour in large numbers, they also needed skilled engineers, boilermakers, fitters and turners, electricians and explosives experts.

Initially, the skilled workers were brought in from other countries but, very soon, the industry started training in the country. Already, in 1884, the Natal Government Railways began the first technical education classes for railway apprentices in their railway workshops in Durban. The subjects taught in similar classes which were started in Salt River by the Cape Government Railways in 1890, and by the Central South African Railways in Pretoria in 1902 respectively (Sooklal, 2005), were machine construction, practical Mathematics, carriage building and sketching. In 1896, the School of Mines was established in Kimberley and the De Beers Mining Company made the attendance of apprentices at evening classes compulsory.

After the end of the South African War, there were moves to coordinate the education system. In 1902, heads of education from the Cape, Natal, Free State and Transvaal met and, amongst the resolutions taken, was that technical schools should be established, along with higher education institutions in order to meet the needs of the country. In 1904, the Transvaal School of Mines was established and mining students from Kimberley were transferred to this school. This mining school quickly developed into a more general technical education institution which evolved into the University College Johannesburg, and became the University of Witwatersrand in 1922. Many of the institutions that are part of the university system in South Africa today started at this time as technical colleges.

In terms of curriculum and assessment, the technical institutes were obliged to follow a national curriculum and examinations after 1916 and this system evolved into the National Technical Education (NATED) programme. Apprenticeship, at this time, was still relatively unregulated and varied from one company to the next. However, entry requirements to the colleges and technical high schools were set with most courses requiring a Standard 4 or, in some cases, a Standard 6 pass. While these requirements were not explicitly racially discriminatory, the lack of access to general education meant that few black people were able to enrol in the courses and get qualified.

### How occupations became racially classified

The policy on technical education that evolved at this time was not divorced from wider social patterns. South Africa had been established as a country that excluded the black African majority from any political power and this became increasingly entrenched in the economy as well. In order to secure the political support of the white working class, successive governments enacted policies that privileged and protected white workers. This was not supported by the owners of the mines and factories as they preferred employing the cheaper black workers. As more black workers became skilled, more white workers lost their jobs. To counter these trends, white workers formed trade unions and political parties that campaigned for restrictions on the jobs that black workers could do. In 1911, the government introduced the Mines and Works Act which stipulated that skilled and semi-skilled work was reserved for white workers. In 1918, the South African Mineworkers Union negotiated an agreement with the Chamber of Mines that, for every 17 black workers employed, two white workers would be employed and paid skilled wages.

In the years following the end of the First World War (1914–1918), the mine owners tried to move away from these agreements. During the recession of the 1920s, many white workers were retrenched and unemployment amongst unskilled white working-class people rose dramatically. In 1922, the white mineworkers went on strike. Many of the miners had experience of fighting in the war and they formed militias to defend themselves. Prime Minister Jan Smuts sent in the army and the air force dropped bombs on the workers. There were battles in the streets of Johannesburg. After four days of fighting, 153 people were killed, 500 wounded and over 5,000 workers were arrested. Four of the leaders of the strike were hanged. The mine workers lost the fight against their bosses and thousands were retrenched or had to accept a drop in wages. However, this outcome was not popular with the general white population and the government lost a lot of support because of these actions. It strengthened the two political parties that supported greater restrictions on the rights of black workers and ensured that they were able to form the next government.

The two parties that formed the government after the elections in 1924 were the National Party that had support amongst poor white Afrikaans-speaking people and the South African Labour Party that had support amongst white workers. It was known as the “Pact government” (because of the agreement between the two parties). The Pact government put in place many of the policies that entrenched the discrimination against black people in South Africa. They tried to remove the few black people who had a vote from the voters’ roll and introduced a number of policies to help unemployed white people and restrict black South Africans in the labour market. The government used its own state enterprises, such as the railways, to create jobs for unskilled and semi-skilled white workers. It introduced further restrictions on who could do certain types of work and introduced further restrictions on the movement of black people into urban areas. Many of these policies formed the basis of the formal apartheid laws that were legislated after 1948.

### Changes to skills training

The Apprenticeship Act of 1922 regulated the educational requirements for admission to most trades. While the act did not specifically exclude Africans or Coloureds from gaining the qualifications, the entry requirements to colleges and the costs of training effectively barred most black people from entering these regulated occupations. There were small numbers of black artisans who did qualify but, very often, this did not lead to employment as skilled jobs were reserved for whites.

There were a few exceptions. Due to the increasing urbanisation of black South Africans, local government needed skilled workers in the construction industry to build the townships and some factory owners ignored the job reservation policies and continued employing black technicians. This increased significantly during the Second World War as many white workers left their jobs to fight in the war. So, while the policy discourse was about restriction and job reservation, there were times when this was ignored.

Activity 6: Education and training after the mineral revolution

**Suggested time:** 30 minutes

Read the section *Implications for education and training* again. Then, answer these questions to help your thinking:

1. How did the mineral revolution change the labour and skills needs of southern Africa?
2. Create a flow diagram that shows how social and political events led to the general racial classification of occupations between 1902 and 1945.

Discussion of the activity

We could approach this question in the following way:

First, think about how skills needs are determined. Skills are needed to continue an activity or to start a new activity. Sometimes change happens slowly and skills can be developed over time. If the new activities start suddenly, there may be skills needed that no one has.

Then think about what skills would have been in southern Africa before the discovery of diamonds and gold. We know that southern Africa’s economy was agrarian before the mineral revolution. This means that most of the people who were economically active had the skills needed to support work in agriculture. Besides farming skills, such as animal husbandry and crop management, more specialised skills, such as viticulture (making wines) and carpentry, were also present. There were also a small group of administrators and educators in the country, but a lot of these skilled people were trained in Britain.

Now think about what would have changed.

The discovery of diamonds and gold meant that there was a sudden change in the skills needs. Initially, the diamonds and gold were collected using simple technologies as the first discoveries were alluvial (they were lying on the ground or in rivers). Very soon, these easily accessible deposits were exhausted and the miners needed to go underground. This meant that much more technology and a range of specialised skills were required. Engineers were needed for the machinery; people with blasting licenses for the explosives; and geologists who could find the gold. For every job related to the actual mining, there were more skilled jobs needed to support the mining. Think about what would have been needed. In Unit 2, we mentioned lawyers, builders, doctors, teachers and plumbers. What other jobs would have been created as a consequence of the mining? Think about the transport system and how it changed. Think about the increased numbers of people in towns. What jobs did this create? Think about the rich people who made money from the mines. What did they spend their money on and what opportunities did that create? And what did people in these towns do for entertainment? The mines also needed wooden poles to secure the tunnels, so timber plantations were needed and farming changed to accommodate this.

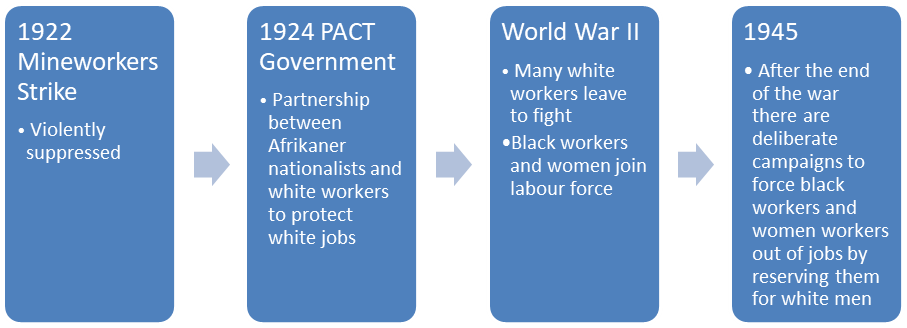
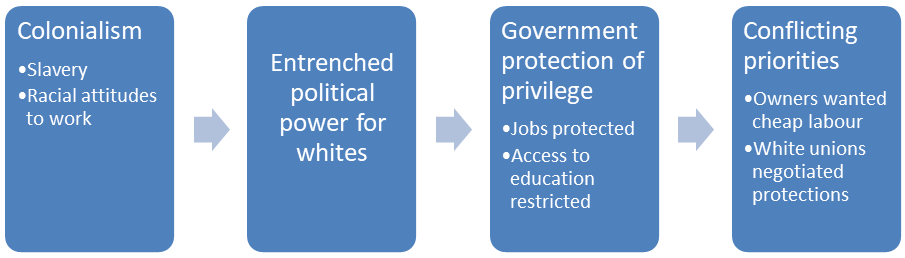
As the population increased in the towns and cities, it became viable to start manufacturing the things that people needed. It was cheaper to do that locally than import everything from Britain. What skills are needed if you want to start a factory? What services are needed? For example, if you have money to invest, then you need banks and building societies, you need stock exchanges, and you need insurance companies. The jobs created for these industries are not directly connected to mining and minerals at all.

We’ve spoken about the changes in skills needs. What is the impact of this on the workers? Where do they come from, and where do they learn the skills that are needed?

In southern Africa, the agrarian economy meant that local people were mainly in rural areas. After the discovery of diamonds and gold, people were needed in places that were previously not populated. Because there were opportunities to get rich quickly, people came from all over the world and brought their skills. Local people also were attracted from the rural areas. This meant that the rural areas changed as well. For a while, it was easier and cheaper to import skilled labour but, over time, this became more expensive and so employers focused on local people and getting them trained.

Think about your response to the first question. How much of the above did you cover? What new things have you thought about?

The second task was to create a flow diagram. These are helpful ways to summarise the sequence of events and show developments, but they are a summary and cannot show all the details and complex ways in which events interconnect. Historians show us that there is usually not a single reason why something happened in the past. Nevertheless, here is a simple flow diagram that details some of the key developments between 1902 and 1945. The next box in the flow would be the election in 1948 which brought the National Party to power and introduced the period we know as apartheid.



## Summary

This section of Unit 2 has focused on the mineral revolution and how this changed South Africa economically and politically. The key points to note are:

1. The discovery of diamonds and gold had a major impact on the country in many ways and shaped the economics and politics for more than 100 years. It changed South Africa from a mainly rural agricultural economy to an urban industrial one. It created new cities, brought new technologies and changed the political landscape, bringing about the unification of South Africa into one country.
2. The changes in economic activity meant that differently skilled people were needed. This resulted in the creation of a technical education system and the formation of the colleges and universities that we are still familiar with today. In addition, apprenticeships were formalised and regulated for the first time.
3. The political and social consequences of the changes that occurred resulted in the increasing formalisation of discrimination against black people in policies around work and training.

In the next section, we will explore what happened after the Second World War and how the skills system developed.

## Economic growth and apartheid

The period after the Second World War (1939–1945) until the 1970s was a period of enormous social upheaval but also significant economic expansion throughout the world. This was also true for South Africa. There was massive investment in Europe to rebuild the countries destroyed by the war and there were changes to production that made goods much cheaper to produce. Also, the exploitation of the Middle Eastern oilfields meant that fuel became cheap and plentiful.

In South Africa, some of these global trends were also present. As the global economy expanded, there was an increasing demand for the raw materials that South Africa had in abundance. The mining industry continued to expand and manufacturing increased as the local economy grew. The post-war economic growth resulted in shortages of skilled labour and representatives of business and industry lobbied the government to loosen some of the restrictions that stopped black South Africans from being employed in certain occupations.

However, this period also coincided with the coming to power of the National Party and the full implementation of the apartheid policy. The segregation and discriminatory policies that were already in place were strengthened and enforced. The key legislation forbidding people of different races to live together was passed during this period.

Under apartheid, the South African government implemented various economic policies to support the white minority and maintain control. The state pursued import-substitution industrialisation (ISI) policies, aiming to reduce reliance on imports by developing domestic industries. This led to the growth of manufacturing sectors such as steel, motorcars, and machinery. However, these policies were biased towards supporting white-owned businesses, reinforcing racial inequalities.

Apartheid spatial planning resulted in the creation of special industrial zones in rural areas far away from towns and cities. In urban areas, the residential segregation resulted in black working people living on the periphery of towns and therefore having long commutes to work. The lack of access to good quality education, low wages and the policies of job reservation, which meant that certain occupations were restricted to white workers, meant that the manufacturing sectors struggled to grow.

Activity 7: Skills and employment under apartheid

**Suggested time:** 30 minutes

The general history of apartheid will not be covered in any detail here. Watch these short videos which give a brief overview:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJOU9YYMzpw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_72a0J25cI>

Think about the information in the videos and the text above in relation to skills and employment under apartheid. What do you think are the main consequences of the system for skills training? Write brief notes in your learning journal.

Discussion of the activity

Among the key features of apartheid were the advantages and protections given to white South Africans, and the active discrimination against black South Africans. Well-known examples are the Group Areas Act, which reserved the best land for white people and the restrictions on access to beaches, facilities and shops for black people. In terms of education, this discrimination also had its effects. While the post-war period did see a significant increase in access to education for black South Africans, the quality of that education was inferior to the education for whites. Education institutions, such as schools, colleges and universities, were forced to segregate even more than they already were. And increasing job reservation meant that many types of jobs were not available to black South Africans. Whereas in the past, the access to certain training or skilled jobs was restricted by education requirements and affordability, under the apartheid system, skilled jobs were simply not available to black people.

This meant that, during the 1950s and 1960s, the technical college system was largely restricted to white South Africans. Colleges were almost exclusively linked to various forms of apprenticeship and operated a trimester block release curriculum where apprentices would work full-time and then be given time off to attend classes for a period of three months. The curriculum that was offered was largely theoretical as the practical experience was gained on the job or at in-company training facilities.

There were some exceptions, of course. In some cases, such as in Johannesburg, the local municipality required skilled construction workers to assist in the large-scale development of townships such as Soweto. The city council trained black electricians, plumbers and builders, but they were not allowed to take the formal trade test. Therefore, a parallel system emerged where these workers were as skilled as their white counterparts, but were not recognised as qualified and so were not paid at the same rate.

A key feature of the training system was the emergence of large state-owned companies. The following section explores this in a bit more detail.

## South Africa’s state-owned enterprises

Since the mineral revolution, the South African economy has been dominated by a number of large companies. We have already seen the central role that mining companies played in shaping the history of the country. The other big actors in South Africa’s economic development were the very large state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Many of these companies have existed in one form or another for nearly 100 years and therefore have been central to the story of South Africa’s development.

### What is a state-owned enterprise?

SOEs are companies that are established and owned by the state. This means that they are accountable to the government of the day, rather than private shareholders, and are not necessarily driven by the need to make a profit, as they can be funded by the tax payer through government loans or grants.

South Africa had a large number of these companies that were established for strategic reasons. Some of the companies that you may be familiar with that started as SOEs include: Transnet (previously Spoornet and South African Railways); Portnet (harbours); South African Airways; Armscor and Denel; Iscor (iron and steel); Telkom (telecommunications); the Post Office; Sasol (oil); and Eskom (electricity). Some of these companies have been partially or completely privatised, but many remain under public ownership.

Activity 8: Labour and skills in state-owned enterprises

**Suggested time:** 30 minutes

Using the link below, read a short article from *The Conversation* by Nancy Clark (2019) in which she details the history of the two oldest SOEs in South Africa.

[South Africa’s state-owned companies: a complex history that’s seldom told](https://theconversation.com/south-africas-state-owned-companies-a-complex-history-thats-seldom-told-120152)

Note the different ways the government made use of the SOEs. In particular, note how, during the apartheid period, these companies were expected to provide jobs for unemployed white workers, but this policy was never fully implemented.

Think about how international and national political and economic changes affected the development of the SOEs and the demands for skilled labour. How did the SOEs respond? Make brief notes in your learning journal.

Discussion of the activity

In the article, Nancy Clark discusses the history of two of the prominent SOEs. One of them, Iscor, is now fully privatised and owned by an international company. The other, Eskom, remains the state provider of all electricity. Clark describes how these companies were started: Initially, they were created to meet particular needs in the mining sector but were also created to ensure economic independence. At various points in their history, governments used the SOEs to meet particular political aims. In the apartheid period, the SOEs were expected to employ white people. In the post-apartheid period, they are expected to meet developmental goals.

When we think about technical skills training, these SOEs were a significant part of the overall system. Each of the companies had one or more technical training centres and took on apprentices every year, often over and above their needs. This meant that many artisans started their training at one of the SOEs or with municipalities. The SOEs worked in collaboration with technical colleges and these artisans either worked for the SOE, or moved with their qualifications into the private sector. The result was that many private companies did not invest in their own training facilities because they could easily recruit from the public sector. We will see later that this arrangement creates difficulties for the skills system.

## Recession, resistance, reform

During the apartheid period discussed in the previous section, the South African economy benefited from the global economic expansion. As the local economy expanded, it became increasingly clear that there were not enough skilled workers to fill all the positions. For a while, the South African government tried to encourage immigration from Europe, but these workers demanded higher wages. This resulted in increasing pressure from business and industry to open jobs and training to black South Africans.

By the 1960s, South Africa’s discriminatory policies started facing increasing internal and international resistance. The 1950s’ non-violent passive resistance campaigns were met with harsh repression, culminating in the Sharpeville Massacre, and the banning of the African National Congress in 1960. This resulted in international condemnation and led to the decision to start an armed struggle against the apartheid regime. At the same time, global economic changes resulted in a recession and a slowing down in demand for South Africa’s resources at a time when the costs of extracting gold and other minerals was increasing.

Faced with the pressure from employers, both within the country and internationally, and the economy, the government attempted to reform some of the key aspects of economic apartheid while trying to retain the key features of separation of the different race groups in the country. Some of the key reforms affected the skills system.

The Wiehahn Commission, set up in 1979, proposed changes to the labour legislation which improved workers’ rights, allowed the formation of trade unions, and recommended access to skills training in order to improve productivity. This resulted in a series of reforms in the 1980s: These included the repealing of job reservation, including all persons working for an employer as an employee, and allowing racially mixed unions. These reforms strengthened the position of trade unions and made it possible for skills to be part of the bargaining agenda between employers and workers.

The repeal of the job reservation policy made it possible for black South Africans to enter into occupations that were previously reserved for whites. In order to do this, the number of technical colleges that were open to black South Africans also needed to be increased.

After the student uprising in Soweto in 1976, the government set up a Commission of Inquiry into certain aspects of the Education and Training System in South Africa. This Commission, known as the De Lange Commission, covered a wide range of educational issues, including school education and higher education. It also examined the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector, which encompasses the apprenticeship system. De Lange’s report was quite surprising for its time, given that Bantu Education and the policy of separate Christian National Education for whites had been a key apartheid policy. De Lange’s first principle was stated as:

Equal opportunities for education, including equal standards in education, for every inhabitant, irrespective of race, colour, creed or sex, should be the purposeful endeavour of the State (cited in Collins & Gillespie, 1984, p. 625).

This sounds quite different to the ideology of apartheid with its emphasis on separateness.

However, De Lange’s report was criticised from a number of different angles. To look at some of the criticisms of the report, we will read an article published at the time the report came out. The authors provide a broad overview of the report, and then describe the way the report was received by different groupings.

Activity 9: The impact of social and economic pressures on policy reform

**Suggested time:** 45 minutes

Read this article [Moving Education Forward to Keep Society Back](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1187189?seq=14) by Colin B. Collins and Roselyn R. Gillespie. You may need to access the online version of this article via your institutional library or the library of the institution through which you are studying.

Make notes in your learning journal on the following:

* The key proposals and the underlying intentions of this policy.
* How was this proposed reform a response to various social and economic pressures affecting the vocational education system in the 1980s?

Discussion of the activity

The report was viewed very differently by different interest groups. Black South Africans had not been involved in writing the report and were largely dismissive. The Afrikaner response was divided between those who felt that the report was too radical in its proposals and those who broadly supported the report as it addressed concerns related to “manpower” or labour market needs. This also represented the view of English business leaders. The liberal and radical left were most critical, arguing that the proposals were trying to hide the inequalities in the system by proposing differentiation.

In terms of vocational education, the report does focus on the development of technical and vocational skills. Technical schools are a major proposal. There is also an emphasis on non-formal learning (on the job) and other types of adult education. The three levels of the system that are proposed are very similar to the bands that were introduced after the end of apartheid, and point to the influence of this report in shaping the policy discourse for the next twenty years.

The report was not fully accepted by the government. To keep its right-wing critics happy, the government did not accept the idea of one single education department, and also recommitted itself to separate institutions for different race groups. Politically, the reforms that followed did not deviate from apartheid logic. However, following the report, there were a number of developments including white private schools taking in many more middle-class black children, historically white universities increasing the number of black students they accepted, and quite major changes to the technical high school and college sectors.

A number of technical and comprehensive schools were built in townships that provided pathways into occupations that were previously restricted to particular racially categorised groups. Colleges were built in townships and homelands that offered the same curricula as the white technical colleges. Technikons were expanded and new institutions set up for black South Africans to study technical skills.

Despite these reforms, the pressure on the government during the 1980s increased. Internationally, more and more governments condemned the apartheid system and introduced sanctions against the government. The decolonisation of the Portuguese colonies (Angola and Mozambique) and the independence of Zimbabwe meant that South Africa was surrounded by countries that actively supported the liberation movements of South Africa and Namibia. With Cuban support, the South African army had suffered a number of military setbacks on the Angolan/Namibian border. Internally to South Africa, affiliates of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) were increasingly open in their resistance to the state. A call in 1984 by the exiled ANC to make South Africa ungovernable was picked up by civic, youth and student organisations, leading to increasing loss of control in townships.

Extension Activity

This activity is not a requirement for this module. It provides you with the opportunity to further explore a topic that is not central to the section, but adds to the context.

You can explore the role of the ANC during the 1980s by examining the timeline that is available at:

<https://sahistory.org.za/article/african-national-congress-timeline-1980-1989>

Have a look through the events of that period. To what extent do the struggles of the 1980s relate to skills and education and training? Make some notes in your journal on key events that link to training.

Look at the way the timeline has been organised. Can you think of a different way of constructing a timeline?

Discussion of the activity

The government responded harshly, declaring partial and then national states of emergency in the mid-1980s. Army troops were sent into the townships to support the police and thousands of activists were detained and many hundreds killed. Students and student organisations were at the centre of many of these conflicts and education at school, college and university levels was repeatedly disrupted during this time.

As the repression increased, economic conditions also deteriorated. International sanctions and the refusal by banks to finance South Africa’s debt meant that the economy went into recession. Ongoing strike action and disruptions related to the political situation meant that productivity was also affected.

Increasingly, companies that had invested in training began cutting these programmes. The number of apprenticeships dropped dramatically. This was due to the general economic climate, but also because the SOEs were being run along corporate lines, and any “unnecessary expenditure,” such as training, was cut. The consequence for technical colleges was that their core function, to provide the theory part of the training of apprentices, had disappeared. A decision was taken to offer the NATED programmes to students who were not in apprenticeships. This was an important shift in the way the technical colleges functioned within the skills landscape, one that has continued to the present.

## Summary

The two main sections of Unit 2 have brought us to the end of the apartheid period. After the Second World War, from 1945 to the end of the 1960s, South Africa’s skill system was shaped by the ideology of racial segregation. As the economy grew, and resistance to apartheid increased, this system became increasingly unable to meet the needs of the changing economy. A series of reforms were implemented in the 1970s and 1980s to try and address these tensions but, by then, the global and local economic conditions had changed. In addition, the political resistance to the system had intensified to such an extent that none of the reforms adequately addressed the challenges.

By the end of the 1980s, it was clear that fundamental change was needed or the society would spiral into economic collapse and civil war. Changes in international politics, with the fall of the Soviet Union, meant that international power dynamics were changing. Behind the scenes, political and business leaders were starting to negotiate and, in 1990, the ANC and other liberation organisations were unbanned and political prisoners were released. The next unit deals with the period after the advent of democracy in 1994, and looks at how TVET has changed under the democratic dispensation.

# Unit 3: Transition and Democracy

## Introduction

In this Unit, we explore how the system that we are currently working in, as TVET lecturers, was shaped in the transition from apartheid to democracy and then developed in the democratic period between 1990 and 2020. There were many policy changes during this period that shaped the development of the institutional landscape and the curriculum. Unit 4 focuses on the changes in the programmes while, in this Unit, we focus on the design of the vocational system. This means that we will move backwards and forwards in time across these two Units. At the start of the module, we suggested that you create a timeline to help you keep track of the dates and events. This will be particularly useful in Units 3 and 4 as we won’t always follow a chronological order when we discuss the major reforms and changes to the curriculum over the course of the 30 years.

Keep in mind the different ways in which we can understand policies. This was discussed in Unit 1 and, if you are not sure of these differences, please go back and refresh your understanding by looking at Figure 2 and read the section on policy.

Before talking about the key reforms introduced by the democratic government, we briefly examine what happened in the transition during the negotiations.

You should spend about 5 to 6 hours on this unit.

## Unit Outcomes

1. Describe key policy developments and identify the purpose of various new institutional arrangements such as SAQA, SETAs, etc.
2. Describe the shifts in the governance of colleges, particularly through mergers
3. Show an understanding of the tensions between different parts of the education and skills system over the function of colleges
4. Explain why colleges have changed names
5. Explain what Centres of Specialisation are and why they have been introduced
6. Describe other parts of the vocational system in South Africa that lie outside colleges.

## Transition

As was mentioned in Unit 2, during the last years of apartheid, the government began negotiating with the ANC. It became clear that major changes were on the horizon, and therefore various groupings started preparing for the change. The ANC began developing policies in preparation for the transfer of power. Internally, the government policymakers, academics and activists in the democratic movement began developing policy options.

The apartheid government released a document titled “The Education Renewal Strategy” (ERS) in May 1990. This advanced five major policy recommendations; many were similar to the proposals of the De Lange Commission (see Unit 2: Recession, Resistance and Reform). They were that,

1. race should not be a factor and equal opportunity should be assured;
2. national unity should be promoted while respect for diversity is ensured;
3. a balance between national regulation and local autonomy should be maintained;
4. the future Constitution of South Africa should allow for a decentralised education system unified at the national level, with accountability at both levels; and
5. responsibility for the new model should be shared by national and local government, teacher organisations, parent groups, and other interested parties.

The apartheid government was trying to ensure that a future education system was much less centralised and hoped that the new South Africa would allow for lots of differentiation. As we shall see, the ERS was rejected primarily because it had not been developed in consultation with anyone outside government. Nevertheless, many of the details in the document became incorporated into later policies.

The ANC developed a broad policy statement on education that became known as the “Yellow Book” because of the colour of the cover. This document spelled out the broad principles of the envisaged national system but was not very detailed, serving largely as a symbolic policy. More detailed proposals were developed through the National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI) which had been commissioned by the National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC), a UDF affiliated structure that brought together parents, teachers and students around the crisis in education during the 1980s. The NEPI produced a number of detailed reports that were widely consulted across the country. The NEPI attempted to move from slogans about people’s education to thinking through what that would mean for the national system. While the Yellow Book made some general statements about vocational and adult education, the NEPI had detailed studies on options for the vocational system.

Perhaps most significantly, the trade unions were also exploring what policies would benefit their workers. Through their international partnerships with trade unions in other countries, such as Australia and Canada, COSATU affiliated unions started exploring ways in which the skill system could be designed to enable workers who had developed skills on the job to get recognition of those skills.

Finally, as South Africa moved into a period of negotiation on the future of the country, international agencies and consultants, such as the World Bank and the international development departments of countries like Germany, Britain and Denmark, also entered into the policy processes. They brought new ideas from various countries around the world and started shaping the debates about the economy and the skills system.

## Establishing the building blocks of the new system

### The Constitution

The Constitution of South Africa is the fundamental document that spells out how the country should be governed. It also enshrines certain fundamental rights for all citizens, including the right to ten years of free basic education, and progressive rights to further and higher education. However, the Constitution also recognises that these rights cannot be achieved immediately and that this will take time.

The Constitution was the outcome of a negotiated settlement, and there are aspects of the Constitution that were compromises. The ANC had been arguing for a unified state, while the apartheid government and some of the other participants in the negotiation process wanted a much more federal or confederation model. Countries with federal systems, such as the USA, Germany or Nigeria, locate power in a decentralised way, with the state or province having most of the control over daily services. In the end, the model adopted in South Africa contained elements of both systems, with the nine provinces being given control over certain functions, but the central government controlling policy and taxation. Crucially, education was a responsibility that was given to provinces, with the exception of universities and other higher education institutions. Technical colleges therefore became the responsibility of the newly established provincial education departments.

Once the new provincial education departments were established, they had the difficult task of merging the many existing departments of education that were based on race groups, old provinces, and homelands. In addition, the key priority was to ensure that the schooling system was reformed. Consequently, in the early period of the new departments, between 1996 and 2000, very little focus was put on the colleges.

### The SAQA Act

One of the earliest pieces of legislation that shaped the entire education system was the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act No. 58 of 1995. This created a framework for education and training in South Africa by mapping out a single, unified system for education and training qualifications. It also provided the basis for the establishment of institutions that would ensure that these qualifications are of a high quality.

Prior to the establishment of SAQA, qualifications were regulated by a wide array of different bodies. These included universities, which had degree awarding powers and control over their qualifications, professional associations, government departments and private entities. There was no uniformity on the naming of qualifications or on the levels or time taken to get a qualification. This made understanding and transferring of qualifications difficult across sectors and internationally. Because qualifications had not been defined in terms of credits, it was also difficult to get recognition for a part of a qualification.

The new system, as envisaged by the SAQA Act, brought all qualifications into one national framework. The SAQA Act provided the basis for the establishment of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). This was viewed as a tool for mapping and aligning all qualifications, and describing them in terms of outcomes at different levels. The original NQF had eight levels, where Level 1 represented all of General Education and Training (GET) – schooling from pre-school up to Grade 9, Levels 2, 3 and 4 represented Further Education and Training (FET), and Levels 5 to 8 were for higher education qualifications. The NQF was revised in 2008 to add two additional levels in the Higher Education Band. Figure 4 shows the revised SAQA Act after the addition of two further levels in 2008.

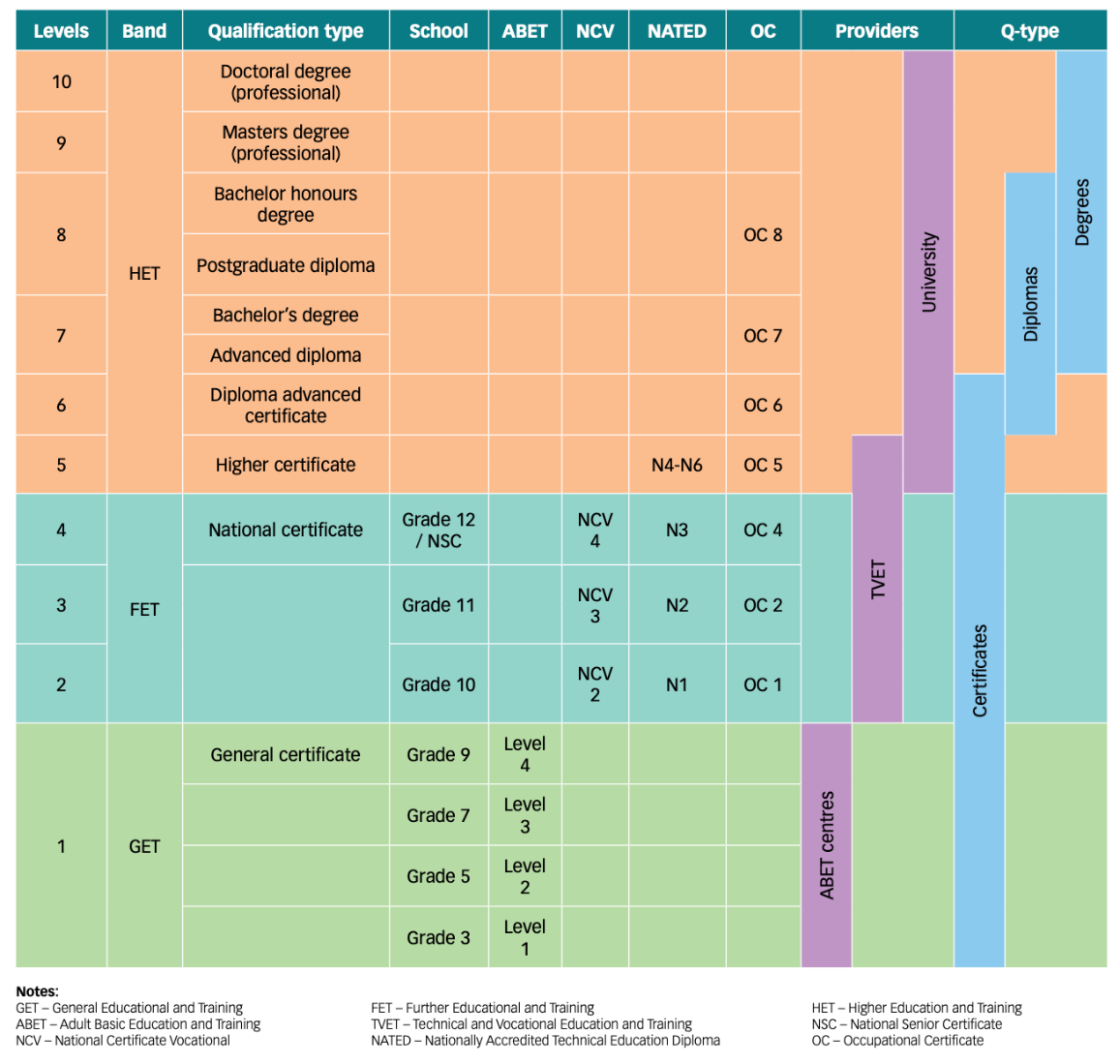


Figure 4: Diagram of the National Qualifications Framework

(Source: Branson et al. (2015))

Every qualification on offer in South Africa would be judged to be at a particular level and would have the same name and the same number of credits. There were general level descriptors for each qualification that applied at each level regardless of whether the qualification was for general academic purposes or for vocational or occupational purposes. Once these qualifications were listed on the framework and the outcomes had been specified, it was hoped that it would ensure progression for people already in the system and recognition for those who didn’t have qualifications but could show that they had the skills and competencies required.

The idea of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) against the qualification descriptors was a central idea underpinning the framework. This was seen as a way to correct some of the injustices of the apartheid era where black workers had been restricted in the qualifications they could achieve. This was what the unions had been pushing for and therefore the unionists, who moved into the new Department of Labour, developed these policies. The RPL process and the NQF were supposed to make it possible for someone to progress from “sweeper to engineer”. We will discuss whether this policy worked in practice in Unit 4.

While the levels were important for determining the equivalence of qualifications, the framework divided the system into three bands but did not specify that institutions were restricted to a specific band. This logic started to develop in practice, because the national Department of Education (DoE) organised its branches around these bands, and the quality assurance bodies (the General and Further Education and Training Quality Authority, known as Umalusi, and the Council for Higher Education’s Quality Committee) were restricted to the bands.

What were the consequences of these key early reforms for colleges?

Initially, there was no major impact on colleges as they continued to offer the existing NATED Report 191 qualifications. However, because colleges were seen to be institutions that were in the Further Education and Training (FET) Band, they fell administratively under the FET Branch of the DoE at national level and in similar sections at provincial level.

This issue of the colleges and the bands they fell in would become much more complicated in relation to the curriculum. This will be discussed in the next Unit.

### Sector Education and Training Authorities

The Skills Development Act of 1998 established the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). The Act played a pivotal role in the reform of the country's skills development and training system, and it provided the legal framework for the creation and operation of SETAs.

SETAs are responsible for overseeing skills development initiatives within specific economic sectors in South Africa. Their main objectives include: promoting skills development; facilitating the implementation of sector-specific training programmes; and addressing skills gaps and shortages in the labour market.

Under the Skills Development Act, SETAs were tasked with various responsibilities, including:

1. *Developing sector-specific skills plans*: SETAs are responsible for conducting research and analysis to identify the skills needs within their respective sectors. Based on this research, they develop skills plans that outline the priority skills areas, training programmes and initiatives required to address those needs.
2. *Accreditation and quality assurance*: SETAs are responsible for accrediting education and training providers and assessing their programmes for quality assurance purposes. They ensure that the training provided meets the required standards and is aligned with the needs of the sector.
3. *Allocating funds for skills development*: SETAs collect skills development levies from employers in their sectors. These funds are then used to finance various skills development initiatives such as learnerships, apprenticeships, and skills programmes. SETAs play a crucial role in allocating these funds to support skills development efforts within their sectors.
4. *Promoting workplace-based learning*: SETAs facilitate the implementation of workplace-based learning programmes, such as apprenticeships and learnerships, to provide practical, on-the-job training opportunities for individuals seeking to acquire skills in specific sectors.

The creation of SETAs through the Skills Development Act aimed to ensure that skills development initiatives in South Africa are aligned with the needs of different economic sectors. Because colleges are one of the key providers of skills training, there is a close relationship between some SETAs and colleges.

However, SETAs are interested in ensuring that the courses offered are delivered quickly and cost effectively. Colleges were often not able to respond quickly enough to these requests and therefore SETAs would approach private training firms to deliver these programmes. Where colleges did offer skills programmes funded through the SETAs, there were some tensions between the quality assurance requirements of the SETAs and the more general quality assurance requirements of Umalusi. The SETAs reported to the Department of Labour, while Umalusi reported to the Minister of Education. The tension over who the colleges should respond to became an ongoing issue for most of the next decade.

## Focus and mergers

During the late 1990s, there were extensive discussions about the size and shape of the college sector. There were over 150 technical colleges in South Africa and many were duplicating courses in the same geographical area. This was because colleges had been built for different race groups under apartheid and there was a need to integrate college students and staff, and rationalise some of the programmes.

The final decision was that the colleges should be merged into larger multi-campus institutions. It was decided that there would be fifty colleges created out of the merger process. The new colleges would be rebranded as Further Education and Training (FET) colleges, to align with the FET Band that was supposed to be their focus. A pilot merger took place at South Cape FET College in 2000 and, after the successful merger, the remaining 49 colleges were merged and established in 2002.

Institutional mergers are always extremely complicated and generate a lot of stress. Aligning staff conditions, dealing with redundancies and resistance from colleagues who did not wish to move campuses, and putting in place new management structures created enormous stresses in the FET college sector. It was achieved with very little public attention, particularly when compared to the mergers in higher education.

A broader debate about whether the colleges should become more like American-style community colleges took place at this time, but the advocates for this approach were not able to influence policy makers. This is a debate that has resurfaced periodically and remains under consideration to this day.

Activity 10: Finding out about your college

**Suggested time:** 1 hour

What do you know about the history of the college you are working at? Do you know what the colleges were that became the campus of your current college? Are there any members of staff who remember the college before it merged in the early 2000s?

See what you can find out about your college’s history and what the various campuses were before they were merged. Are there any reminders of the past? Who were the students at the college? What courses were offered?

You may be able to find out some of the history from your college’s website. Or you could try and find people who remember the college before the merger. Make notes in your learning journal on what you were able to find out.

Discussion of the activity

Was it difficult to find information about your college? Some colleges have tried to preserve the history of the college by keeping the names of campuses and documenting the history on the website or in the buildings. Other colleges have focused on their new identity and have not retained a record of the past. Whether it is acknowledged or not, the present-day structures and many of the programmes on offer were shaped by what was there before. Of course, there may also be new buildings or new campuses that were put in place after the merger. Many colleges invested in the central campus, where the main administration is located, so there may be new buildings there. Perhaps you found that some of the campuses used to be colleges for different racially classified groups under apartheid. Perhaps some of your campuses had a much narrower focus, concentrating on just one or two programmes. There may also have been campuses that were completely different, for example, some colleges took over school buildings or teacher training colleges.

Are there any practices or local cultures in your college that are connected to the past? If your college campus was a college before the merger, has anything stayed the same as it used to be? Do members of the community view the campuses differently? Sometimes, even when names are changed and structures are merged, the people inside or outside organisations don’t change their perceptions and they may not change the things they do.

## Contestations over governance

We have already mentioned that colleges have had shifts in their governance arrangements. Of all the parts of the public education and training system, colleges have had the most change and volatility. The governance shifts have been both internal and external, and relate to whom the colleges account to and who has tried to influence or control them.

Stop and think

In your learning journal, list the major policy changes that we have discussed thus far in Unit 3. Are you able to identify the policy intention, the policy enactment and the policy outcomes for each of these policies?

The National Education Policy Act 1996 and the Constitution determined the responsibilities of the national and provincial departments of education. However, skills development was the responsibility of the Department of Labour. Colleges thus had to respond to all three departments for different parts of their work. The creation of the SETAs, as well as the establishment of Umalusi, meant that quality assurance responsibilities were also divided.

The Further Education and Training Act of 1998 clarified that the colleges were under the control of provincial Departments of Education, but had a degree of autonomy as they were to be governed by a council. Nonetheless, funding to the colleges came via both the provincial Department of Education and, for skills programmes, via the SETA. Apprenticeships were still regulated by the Department of Labour and therefore the colleges continued to have multiple stakeholders. This had a very negative effect on college staff, as the nature of their employment depended on what programmes they were teaching. Some college lecturers were employed directly by the provincial department, while others were employed by the college council using funds from SETAs and other sources. This meant that lecturers were employed on different conditions of service.

These tensions were only resolved in 2010 with the establishment of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). This new ministry and department included all university (higher), further education, adult education and skills training from the previous Department of Education and the Department of Labour, and brought all post-school education and skills training under one Minister. At this point, responsibility for colleges was also removed from the provincial departments of education and all staff became employees of the DHET. This enabled greater alignment between different parts of the skills system, in particular, the SETAs, the National Skills Authority and the National Skills Fund (NSF). It also ensured that student financing, which had only been available for university students, was extended to college students.

There have been a number of further reforms to the skills landscape. The NQF was reviewed and revised, and two additional levels were added to the Higher Education Band. Crucially for colleges, the Level 5 in the Higher Education and Training Band was envisaged as a qualification level that could be offered by colleges, under the right circumstances. This shifted the understanding of colleges being only for the FET Band and opened up the possibility for new types of programmes being offered in colleges.

The SETA system was also reviewed as there were many concerns about its effectiveness. The most direct consequence of this was that the quality assurance functions of SETAs were removed and a new quality council was established alongside Umalusi and the HEQC. The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) was established in 2010 and has begun changing the occupational qualifications. This will be discussed further in the next Unit.

More recently, the original vision of a highly integrated framework was changed, as a consequence of the growing recognition that the purposes of qualifications needed to be different. Sub-frameworks were created for general and further education, overseen by Umalusi, for higher education overseen by the Council for Higher Education (CHE) and for trades and occupations, overseen by the new QCTO.

Shortly after the creation of the DHET in 2010, FET colleges were renamed Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. We discuss the significance of these name changes in the next section.

## What’s in a name?

### Technical College, Community College, FET College or TVET College

From the history we have explored so far, over the past 120 years, South Africa has had colleges. These institutions have been called different things. Does the name make a difference?

To answer this question, we need to briefly recap. When colleges were first introduced, they were technical training institutes for the mining industry. They were formally changed to colleges when all apprenticeships became regulated in 1922, and remained technical colleges until the change to FET colleges in 1998.

The change of name at this point signalled a shift in focus. FET colleges were supposed to be institutions that addressed a wider range of students than technical colleges. There were elements of the debates about community colleges that informed the vision for the FET colleges. And we shall see in the next Unit that there was an impact on the curriculum.

Technical colleges were primarily focused on apprenticeships which significantly declined. In the democratic era, colleges were to offer a wider set of programmes. However, the new programmes that were developed did not have much support from industry and so the colleges continued to offer the older Report 191 NATED programmes that had been designed for apprentices.

After 2010, when the colleges were brought under the DHET, there was a strong push to focus the colleges back on technical occupations. For this reason, the colleges were renamed TVET colleges in 2014. The concept of TVET is also used internationally, particularly by UNESCO, and so this new name was meant to make it clearer what the focus of the colleges was, particularly to international observers.

Community colleges were finally established as separate structures within the post-school education landscape by consolidating the numerous small adult education centres. By creating separate community colleges, the debate about the role of TVET colleges also performing a wider community college function was clarified and the focus was confirmed as being primarily technical and vocational.

Activity 11: The change from FET to TVET

**Suggested time:** 30 minutes

Read the article: [Transition from ‘FET’ to ‘TVET’ underlines the growing importance of practical training](https://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/transition-from-fet-to-tvet-underlines-the-growing-importance-of-practical-training-2015-02-13)

In your learning journal, make notes about the reasons for changing the names of colleges. What do you think about this change? Does it make a difference?

Discussion of the Activity

At one level, it probably does not make a lot of difference what the colleges are called. However, the different names do signal something about the focus and purpose of the colleges. From the perspective of the Department of Labour, colleges were primarily focused on apprenticeships and skills training in mid-level skilled occupations in technical fields. When the Department of Education took responsibility for the colleges, this meant that colleges were viewed as a solution to wider challenges, such as high school drop-outs, unemployed youth, and people with learning disabilities or other challenges.

Once the DHET took over, the focus became more technical and specialised again. Proposals for the establishment of community colleges were revisited and the former public adult education centres were seen as the basis for these. There have consequently been various attempts to focus and specialise what is offered at colleges. In the last few years, a number of colleges have been designated Centres of Specialisation (COS) as strategies to strengthen the technical programmes on offer at colleges and ensure targeted investment. Of course, names can be changed quickly, but the people who are employed and the programmes that are offered cannot be changed overnight. We will see in the next Unit that programmes offered in the colleges were affected by these shifts in focus and governance and the legacies remain to this day.

Before we focus on the curriculum, we will look at some other colleges that are part of the skills system but are not public TVET colleges.

## Other providers

While we have focused on the public system, South Africa’s technical and vocational system is much bigger than just the fifty TVET colleges.

Stop and think

Can you list other types of vocational education providers that are part of the South African skills training system? List them in your learning journal.

We do not have time to look at all the institutions in great detail, but it is important to understand that the vocational education system has a range of other providers.

In the publicly funded system, the Universities of Technology (UoT) have a degree of overlap with TVET colleges. Many UoTs started as colleges then became Technikons and later universities. A number of them offered NATED programmes until quite recently, and they often provide progression routes for TVET graduates.

There are also a number of specialised colleges and training institutes under various government departments or entities. Agricultural colleges (now called Agricultural Training Institutes), nursing colleges, police and military colleges all offer vocational and occupational training in specific fields. Public service academies, at national and provincial levels, offer training programmes for civil servants. In some cases, these overlap with areas taught by TVET colleges. For example, some TVET colleges offer agricultural qualifications and public administration programmes.

In Unit 2, we discussed the critical role that state owned enterprises played in supplying the economy with apprentices. While a number of training facilities were closed, there are still large training academies linked to Transnet, Portnet and South African Airways. A number of larger private sector companies also have their own training capacities, particularly in the automotive and engineering sectors.

Finally, there are a large number of training providers that are either for profit or not for profit. These offer qualifications or skills programmes in a wide array of occupations, sometimes in direct competition with TVET colleges, but also in occupations in industries that are not well covered by the TVET sector. Some of these providers are poor quality (often termed “fly-by-nights” because they pop up and disappear at short notice), but many offer very good training and are well regarded by industry.

Activity 12: Thinking about other vocational education providers

**Suggested time:** 15 minutes

If you are not familiar with what is happening in the private sector, have a look in your home town (or the area you live in) at what private training provision is available. Who are the providers? What qualifications do they offer? Are they in competition with your college or do they offer something different? What are the fees?

Currently, there is little coordination across the sector and little interaction between public and private providers. Would there be any benefits to you as a lecturer if there were more interactions across these different institutions? List them in your learning journal.

Discussion of the activity

Depending on where you are located, there may be a wide array of private providers offering vocational courses such as business and office management and Information Technology (IT). Some hotels and restaurants integrate hospitality or catering schools. There are also a growing number of private providers offering various level courses focusing on the entertainment industry. Drama, television, music and production-related qualifications are popular. While less common, there are also a few engineering focused colleges. What else did you find?

If you are based in an urban area, you are much more likely to have come across these private colleges. This is because these colleges cater to market demand that is to be found in the more populated areas. This highlights the very important role that public colleges play in providing access to opportunities in more remote areas where the private sector does not go.

The types of programmes they offer also tend to be easily delivered without too much expensive equipment. For example, offering programmes in engineering would require workshops, and these are costly. However, there are some providers that do offer more expensive programmes and they sometimes charge very high fees. And some of these private providers offer qualifications in fields that the public TVET colleges don’t offer or they offer qualifications that are accredited internationally by organisations such as City and Guilds. They therefore increase the range of choices available to young people.

What were your thoughts about the possible benefits of linkages between the private providers and TVET colleges? Is this something that should be encouraged? One possible advantage is the sharing of resources, equipment and lecturer expertise. We will return to this issue in the final section of Unit 4.

## Conclusion

Unit 3 has focused on the policy developments from 1990 to 2020. TVET colleges have undergone many changes in these thirty years. We have seen how they were pushed and pulled between different ministries and departments and their focus shifted over time. Over the past decade, they have become more clearly defined within the post-school system and their role has officially become more focused on technical training. However, debates over the scope and purpose of the colleges continue into the present. A key question has been and remains what should the colleges teach? And who should they teach? It is to these questions that we turn in the last Unit of this module.

# Unit 4: Curriculum

## Introduction

In this final Unit, we focus on the teaching and learning that has happened in colleges, and how that has changed due to changes in policy. We will go over some of the themes already discussed in the previous Units, but will focus on the curriculum policies. We will also look at some of the debates over the purpose of TVET colleges. These have already been discussed in Unit 3 but here we will examine how these have affected what is actually taught in the curriculum. Delivery of the curriculum is the core responsibility of a lecturer, and it is important to be aware of the reasons why the curriculum has been developed in the way that it has.

You should spend about 4 to 5 hours on this unit.

## Unit Outcomes

1. Compare and contrast the old apprenticeship system and learnerships, and new apprenticeships
2. Explain why the NATED and NCV curricula have continued to be offered in the system
3. Describe the process of development of the new occupational qualifications
4. Explain how the new three streams model of the DBE might impact colleges.

## What is curriculum?

Before we look at some of the detail, it is worth pausing to make sure that we have a common definition of curriculum.

Stop and think

What do you understand by the term curriculum? Write down your understanding in your learning journal. You may also have come across this concept in other modules. If you have, then you can include those ideas in your notes.

Curriculum is a central concept in the study of education. However, there are many different ways to understand curriculum. In its narrowest form, it can mean the formal documented list of what should be covered in a particular course. Often, this is referred to as a syllabus. This understanding of curriculum is too narrow for our purposes. We are interested in what is formally written down, but also how the curriculum is interpreted by teachers and students, how things are taught, how things are assessed, how much time is spent on particular parts of the course, and where activities take place. In much the same way as policy can be understood to be more than the actual words on the page, curriculum is more than what is intended. It is also what happens in classes and workshops that is not intended, or things that are hidden or informal.

Think about your own teaching. Do you only teach what is in the curriculum statements? It is highly unlikely that all you do is teach what is in the text book or manual. You probably add things or leave certain bits out. You may give advice to your students. You may have to cover things again that the students have forgotten. Sometimes, there is also an understanding that what is important is what is assessed, and so you may decide to leave things out that you know are never tested. Lecturers always interpret and make decisions. What they actually deliver is what we call the *enacted curriculum*.

What the policy makers intend and what the lecturers intend may be similar or quite different. But neither can control how the curriculum is received. Students make their own sense of the curriculum and also interpret it. This is what we refer to as the *received curriculum*.

For the purposes of this Unit, we will largely focus on what policy makers want the curriculum to be (the *intended curriculum*), but it is important to remember that what actually happens in the daily interaction between lecturers and students (the *enacted curriculum*) is often much more important than what the policy says should happen.

## Apprenticeship and Report 191

We have already seen in Unit 2 that the technical colleges emerged in order to provide the theoretical part of the training that apprentices needed in order to become skilled workers. The traditional curriculum for apprentices was basically a combination of observation, trial and error, and practice while assisting the master on the job. As human societies became more complex and developed technologies, so the work became increasingly technical. Apprentices needed to understand some of the science behind the work they were doing. It was also not possible to allow apprentices to make mistakes in order to learn, as this could be very dangerous. There was an increasing need for more theoretical and practical training away from the workplace. It was for this purpose that colleges were set up.

When colleges were first set up during the early stages of the mineral revolution, the curriculum was determined primarily by the employers and the assessment of the apprentices was an informal process where the master signed off the apprentice’s work in a logbook. Once they had served out the time of their contract, they had passed and became a Journeyman.[[2]](#footnote-3) Throughout most of the 20th century, this system remained largely unchanged. There were changes to who was officially allowed to become apprentices as a result of the racial restrictions of apartheid, but the content of what happened in colleges and on the job remained largely the same. Once the colleges were taken over by the state, there was some standardisation of the curriculum and trade tests were introduced, but this largely formalised the existing time-based system. The standardised national curriculum became known as the NATED or Report 190 curriculum. The core elements of the theory curriculum, as detailed in NATED documentation, remained largely the same from the 1970s onwards.

College lecturers, at that time, could assume that the students they were teaching already had some work experience, that they had the prospect of a job after their apprenticeship and, more often than not, came from a family where people would have gone through the same system. In many ways, the apprentices they were teaching were following the same path that the lecturers themselves had been on and therefore there were a lot of things that they had in common. This meant that lecturers could safely assume that the apprentices were being exposed to real world contexts that the lecturers were also familiar with. Because the system operated on a trimester block release model where apprentices would alternate between time at work with their master and time in the college, there were also strong connections between colleges and workplaces. Lecturers would hear from students if there were changes in production processes and, very often, the lecturers had connections to people in industry because their former students were there. This meant that it didn’t matter too much what the official curriculum documents said, because the enacted curriculum was up to date.

This system changed rapidly with the collapse of apprenticeships. In Unit 2, we learned about the economic decline that began in the 1970s and lasted into the 1990s. Employers could not afford to take on apprentices and the large state-owned enterprises cut back on their training. This pattern continued through the 1990s and into the 2000s as can be seen from Table 1. It was only 25 years later that the number of apprentices passing the trade test reached the same numbers that were being trained in the 1980s, but this figure is very far from the aim to train 30 000 new artisans per year that is mentioned in the National Development Plan.

Table : Numbers of apprentices in selected years

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1985** | **1990** | **1996** | **2011** |
| Passing trade tests | 13 500 | 7 000 | 3 000 | 13 168 |

(Data extracted from Van Rensburg, 2012)

The consequence for technical colleges was significant. Fewer apprentices meant fewer students in the colleges. The colleges either had to reduce some of their capacity by shutting programmes or find new students. In order to keep colleges open, the college administrators started enrolling students who did not have apprenticeship contracts. This meant that the students were not getting practical experience in the workplace and the only practicals were the workshops in the colleges.

You can imagine the difference between teaching these two types of students. Besides their lack of workplace experience, the new students were not necessarily as committed to their occupation as they had not been inducted into it by their masters. Lecturers were now expected to also make the students work ready. However, these sorts of workplace skills were not part of the formal curriculum, and so the lecturers had to try to build these additional components into their teaching.

This was the situation that faced the policy makers after 1994. You can see from Table 1 that the apprenticeship system had basically collapsed and was not suited to the way the South African economy had changed. By the 1990s, the economy had moved away from agriculture, mining and manufacturing being the main employers, to finance and services that were now the largest sectors. These sectors did not have apprenticeships, because apprenticeships were understood to be only appropriate for technical occupations (and some hospitality and cosmetics occupations). This was not a unique situation. With the rise of low cost manufacturing in China and other parts of Asia, many developed countries had experienced this shift into a post-industrial world where most jobs were in services and financial sectors.

With increasing youth unemployment in these countries, policymakers tried to reinvent the idea of apprenticeships for these new economic sectors. In some countries, they were called “modern apprenticeships” and, increasingly, they were linked to higher level qualifications such as degrees. South African policy makers adapted this idea and introduced a new concept, a *learnership*. The idea was similar to an apprenticeship, but there was no contractual obligation on the side of the employer to keep the learner on. In fact, unlike an apprenticeship where the employer pays the apprentice while they learn, a learnership was funded by the SETAs. From a college perspective, the learnerships were an opportunity to increase their enrolment, but it wasn’t always that simple to accommodate the learnership students.

The difficulty was that there wasn’t always an appropriate programme for the students. The old NATED curriculum was dated and not appropriate for all occupations, and new Unit Standards based skills courses were not always available or were difficult to deliver at the same time as other programmes such as the National Certificate Vocational (NCV). Consequently, many learnerships were offered through private providers.

While the concept of learnerships made sense in policy terms, employers and students were unfamiliar with this idea and were mistrustful of its value. Some employers agreed to take on learners because it did not cost them anything, but they often did not provide the mentorship and access to work experience that would really prepare students for the future. Where NATED programmes existed, employers seemed to prefer students doing those courses rather than new skills courses. There appeared to be a nostalgia for the NATED programmes, despite them not having a practical component or their content being up to date.

A key reason for the resistance to the new qualifications was that the new college curriculum had been designed around a different type of student. In the next section, we will look the main design differences between the NATED curriculum and the new curriculum for the NCV.

Activity 13: Changes in apprenticeship

**Suggested time:** 45 minutes

Read the conference paper, *Rearranging the furniture? Shifting discourses on skills development and apprenticeship in South Africa* by Volker Wedekind, in Appendix 2.

This paper was presented at the International Network on Apprenticeship held in Johannesburg in 2012. It explores the way in which apprenticeship has changed over time and what has influenced the views on apprenticeship.

In your learning journal, note the policies implemented after 1994 and the intentions of these policies. What were the challenges to implementing these policies as intended? Think about this in relation to your own college – do the ideas discussed in the paper above make sense in your own context? Wedekind talks about policy scripts, sequencing, silos and suspicions. What does he mean by each of these terms and can you note an example of each of these?

#### Additional Reading

Dewald van Rensburg (2012). [Reinventing the apprenticeship system in South Africa](https://www.leader.co.za/article.aspx?s=6&f=1&a=4115) Van Rensburg explains the technicalities of the different routes to apprenticeship in this short article. He also emphasises the continuity that has been there all along.

You may need to access the online version of this article via your institutional library or the library of the institution through which you are studying.

Discussion of the activity

In this short paper, Wedekind discusses the ways in which apprenticeship has been understood in South Africa over time. He covers some of the early history that we discussed in Unit 1, including the fact that apprenticeships were first linked to slavery. However, he makes the point that the modern form of apprenticeship is not obviously connected to the history of slavery. Instead, he suggests that the apprenticeship system emerged from the period when South Africa became industrialised. While the system was not ideal (not least because of its racially discriminatory arrangements), it did serve a purpose in producing the artisans required for South Africa’s development. In the post-apartheid period, there is less policy stability as the policy script changes, which results in various reversals and uncertainty about the future of apprenticeships. Wedekind suggests that this can partly be explained by the nostalgia for apprenticeships, by the silos associated with the system, and the suspicions that various branches of government had of each other.

## National Certificate (Vocational) and NATED

Stop and think

Before we proceed to discuss the National Certificate (Vocational) (NCV), take a moment to have a look at Figure 4 (the National Qualification Framework in Unit 3). What do you notice about the middle section of the NQF?

While the lower and upper parts of the framework are relatively simple with just one or two options for the qualification types, did you notice how the middle section between Levels 2 and 5 are filled with multiple options? There is the schooling pathway leading to the National Senior Certificate or Matric. There is the NATED pathway known as N1-3. There is the NCV. There are Occupational Qualifications. And there is a missing “Adult Matric”, the National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA) at Level 4.

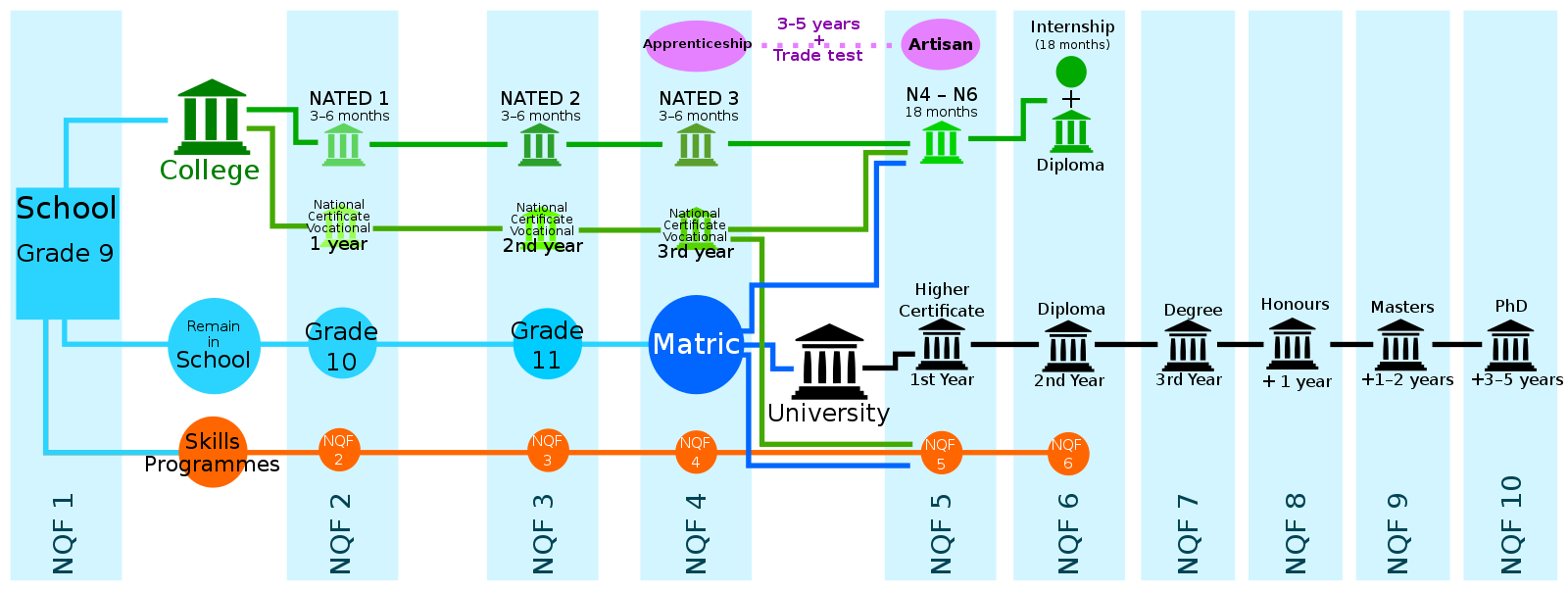
In Figure 5, the NQF is represented in terms of the pathways a learner can take. This again highlights the complexity of the FET Band.

Figure 5: Pathways through the NQF

(Source: https://peritumagri.com/stride/mod/page/view.php?id=3785&forceview=1)

Figure 5 shows that the framework of the policy underpinning the NQF allows progress through different routes to a suitable level of qualification. The most common route is to continue with school and proceed to Grade 12 and write the exams for the Matric. Alternatively, learners could start work and then take various skills programmes that would allow them to eventually achieve Level 4 (equivalent to Matric) and then progress on to higher level skills programmes. The more likely route is one of the options linked to the TVET colleges. Here the choices are varied: Learners could do the NCV full time over three years or they could take the NATED courses on a part time basis through to N6; thereafter, if they find an internship, they could get a National Diploma. Alternatively, after completing N3, if learners are lucky enough to find an apprenticeship, they can complete the apprenticeship alongside the N courses and take the trade test. The NASCA is a further alternative offered through the newly established community colleges. There is a further complication as some learnerships can be combined with skills programmes, NCV qualifications or NATED qualifications.

While multiple routes are not necessarily a problem and allow for different circumstances to be taken into account, does it make sense to have four different paths offering qualifications for the same field? Why is there a NATED pathway that is parallel to the NCV and occupational qualifications?

In order to understand this, it is necessary to revisit some of the institutional arrangements that emerged after the NQF was established. When the Further Education and Training Act of 1998 was promulgated, this located colleges under the Department of Education. The Department of Education was focused on major problems in the schooling system, and saw colleges as an opportunity to provide alternative routes for students who were at risk in the school system. The Department of Education was not focused on the relatively small number of older students coming through the NATED courses, and the NATED courses did not align with the credit and level structure of the NQF. Officials in the Department felt that a new set of qualifications was needed to replace the NATED courses, and the NCV was conceived.

Because the NCV was a National Certificate at Levels 2, 3 and 4, the highest level needed to be equivalent to the National Senior Certificate (NSC). So, like the school programme, the NCV was considered to be full time. It also matched the basic credit structure of the NSC, with students required to take the same number of modules that had to include Maths or Mathematical Literacy and a language course.

While it was presented as a replacement of the NATED programmes, in fact, the NCV bore no resemblance to NATED. NATED did not include a practical component as this was supposed to be covered at the workplace. The NCV did not assume that students would be employed so 60% of the time was supposed to be spent on practical learning in workshops or classroom simulations.

The process of developing the various NCV curricula was quite rushed. Department officials, consultants and a few industry and subject matter experts wrote up the curricula over the course of a few months and they were implemented without much wider consultation or evaluation. Colleges were told to begin phasing out the NATED courses and replace these with NCVs. Central funding to the colleges was based on the enrolments into the NCV programmes.

What is already clear is that the multiple pathways we see on the NQF were not intended to remain open. The NATED qualifications have been viewed as outdated for more than 20 years and yet they remain on offer. The problem was that the NCV was not designed to be an occupational qualification that would lead to a trade test. It was supposed to be a general vocational qualification that prepared students for further specialisation in the occupation. The entry requirements were intended for a student who had completed General Education (i.e., Grade 9). What was intended by the policy makers was that large numbers of students, who were leaving school before completing their Matric, would take an NCV, qualify and be ready for further training in the occupation in higher education or in the workplace.

The policy intentions and the policy enactment were quite different when the programmes were started in 2007. People assumed that, because colleges taught NATED and the NCV, that these were equivalent. Learnerships were offered in conjunction with the NCV when this was not the purpose. The compulsory requirements for Maths created major difficulties for students as many of them had left school because they were struggling with academic subjects. Yet the subjects in the NCV were often more demanding than the equivalent in school (Allais, 2006). Colleges did not have the teachers to teach some of the core subjects, and so they hired school teachers with no industry experience. The curriculum had been designed with a 40:60 theory: practice split, but the colleges didn’t have the workshops and staff to offer that much practical. In reality, the courses ended up being 90% theory.

Unsurprisingly, the failure rates were extremely high with very few students progressing through all their modules. The public perception was that these courses had no value and there were continuous calls for the reintroduction of the NATED curriculum. When the DHET was formed in 2010, there was an immediate reversal of the decision to phase out NATED and the NCV was reviewed. The reality was that most NCV students had already completed 12 years of general education and were effectively doing the same level qualification again. Because the NCV had very little record of getting students into work, there was very little value to the qualification for most students. While there have been changes to the NCV curriculum, and there are some specialisations that have used the NCV curriculum to develop new apprenticeships, overall, the NCV has neither fully replaced the NATED nor become an alternative to the Matric. For this reason, it is worth looking at the development of new occupational qualifications under the auspices of the QCTO.

## Occupational qualifications

The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) has taken over responsibility for the development of all occupational qualifications and part qualifications. It has already developed hundreds of qualifications for a wide range of occupations. The QCTO has a process of collaborative qualification development that seeks to ensure that employers and trainers are involved in the development of the qualifications. Each qualification has three aspects to it: theory, practicals and work-based experience.

It is envisaged that these occupational qualifications will replace the NATED qualifications, and that apprenticeships will have new and appropriate qualifications. The current difficulty of colleges offering two different curricula in the same subject field (NATED and NCV) will be resolved by the adoption of the new qualifications.

Activity 14: The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations

**Suggested time:** 30 minutes

Go to the QCTO website ([www.qcto.org.za](http://www.qcto.org.za)) and familiarise yourself with the approach of the QCTO. Have a look at the qualifications that have already been developed. Make notes in your learning journal in answer to the following questions:

Are there qualifications in your specialism that are already there? Identify one new qualification and have a look at the curriculum.

What are the similarities and differences between the new qualification and what you currently teach? What would be the challenges of implementing this new qualification?

How does the QCTO define a trade? What is a profession?

For a general overview of the occupational qualifications look at this flyer <https://www.qcto.org.za/assets/tradesandoccupational.pdf>

Discussion of the activity

The new qualifications being developed by the QCTO will bring about a major change in focus for TVET colleges. These occupational qualifications cover a much wider set of occupations than the NATED programmes and they integrate practical elements into the teaching of the qualifications, unlike NATED which is entirely theoretical (if it is not linked to an apprenticeship). Furthermore, the occupational qualifications are more focused on preparing students for specific occupations than the more general education focus of the NCVs.

Trades are occupations that have an apprenticeship component. The NATED programmes linked to trades are all being replaced. New artisan qualifications are being developed for the 125 listed trades. The qualifications are very focused on workplace application, while the assessment system linked to the occupational qualifications is applied much more, both in the formative and external summative stages. This will require lecturers in colleges to design formative assessments that are project or workplace-based.

The credits for different occupations vary significantly. Unlike the NATED and NCV qualifications, occupational qualifications can be part-qualifications and certificates can vary from 40 credits to over 500 credits. This means that only the amount of time actually required to master a particular task is allocated. But that poses challenges for timetabling and managing the staffing for these variable sized qualifications.

What did you think would be challenges for your college to implement the new qualifications? What are the opportunities? One of the challenges will be that the occupational qualifications will require colleges to do more practical components. Does your college have the necessary workshops and equipment to do this? And do you have staff with the appropriate experience to deliver the curriculum? Some colleges may struggle to offer qualifications for occupations where there is no opportunity for workplace based learning, which is a requirement.

It is not clear yet whether both the NCV and NATED will be phased out and replaced with occupational qualifications, or whether the NCV will be retained.

## The three streams debate

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has recently proposed the introduction of occupational and vocational streams within its curriculum.

The DBE and its predecessors have had vocationally oriented schools in a range of subject areas since the earliest formation of a government department of education in the colonial period. Technical high schools were often forerunners to technical colleges, and technical high schools offered the same NATED curriculum that was offered in colleges. Similarly, there are a number of agricultural high schools throughout South Africa offering specialist agricultural subjects. In the mainstream schools throughout South Africa, there are vocational subjects such as Travel and Tourism, Hospitality Studies, Business Studies and others that are dealing with the same subject matter as college programmes.

The announcement that the DBE is planning to reorganise these vocational subjects and increase their enrolment by introducing a three-stream curriculum, in some respects, represents little more than an internal reorganisation of existing curricula. However, the proposal has potentially significant implications for TVET colleges, as many of the higher-level programmes that will be offered are parallel to the NCV. If these are expanded in the way the DBE proposes, there will be direct overlaps between the college and the school programmes. In particular, the first version of the proposal included the introduction of vocationally oriented and occupationally oriented curricula in primary schools. This would make the point of choice for students, as to which stream they enter, at a very young age. The revised model, represented in Figure 6, is an overview diagram produced by the Western Cape Department of Education.

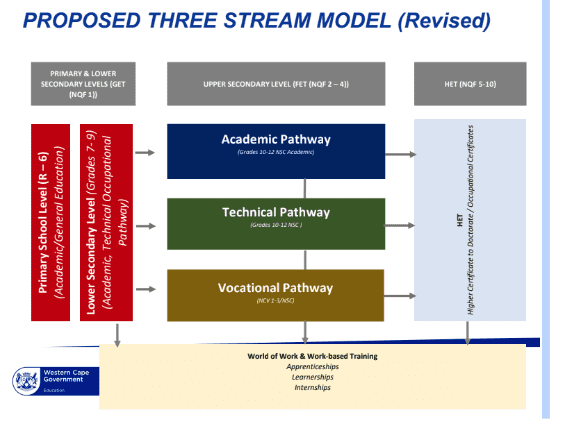


Figure 6: The Department of Education Three Stream Model

Source: <http://www.tafelbergschool.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Newsletter-20.pdf>

This revised version proposes that the three streams start at Grade 7. Interestingly, the model now includes the NCV in the Vocational Pathway. This could open the space for colleges to specialise in occupational qualifications and discontinue offering the NCV.

Stop and think

What do you think about high schools offering courses that are also offered in colleges? What patterns do you see from the past?

Clearly the TVET college’s curriculum continues to be a site for both continuity and change. The history of colleges has always been marked by some lack of clarity on the exact role they should play. At various points, colleges have been asked to be more like schools, then less like schools, then more like universities. This new development may mean a new shift in focus if schools take over the role of offering general vocational qualifications like the NCV. Exactly why schools will be better placed to link to the world of work when this has been a struggle for colleges is not clear.

# Overall Conclusion

This conclusion brings together the themes for the Unit and the module as a whole. It brings together the key concepts and contact and asks the overall question: Does any of the history and policy knowledge we have gained make any difference to the day-to-day life of a lecturer in a TVET college? How does this help with the realities of classrooms and workshops?

Before we begin to answer those overarching questions, we will summarise what we have covered in Unit 4. The curriculum is a core concept in education as it covers what and how something is learned, when and where. By looking at the history of the curriculum, we can pick up the major themes that we discussed in the Units 1, 2 and 3 as well.

Unit 4 focuses on the curriculum and how policy and responses to policy have shaped what is taught in colleges. We know from Unit 2 that colleges emerged from the changes in skills needs that arose during the period of industrialisation after the mineral revolution. They provided a place where apprentices in various trades and occupations could acquire the theoretical knowledge related to their trade. This theoretical knowledge was offered in short three to six month periods of “block release” from the workplace. Over time, this format and the content covered became formalised as the NATED curriculum, and this curriculum was the main offering at colleges throughout the 20th century. Part of the NATED curriculum was also offered at technical high schools (N1–N3) and Technikons or Universities of Technology (N4–N6).

It is important to stress that the NATED courses were part of a wider curriculum of training apprentices. Alongside the theory taught at colleges, apprentices were learning on the job from their masters. Here they would have learned the “ways of being in the workplace” with colleagues, the “tricks of the trade”, and the embodiment of their skills through practice. Separating out the theory on its own provides students with only part of the intended curriculum.

The NATED curriculum had been in place for such a long time that numerous generations of artisans would have come through this training system.

Stop and think

Why is it significant that so many artisans came through the same basic system?

This is an interesting issue. Education is something we all go through and we often have very positive memories about our own educational experiences, even if they were not that good at the time. Many people think back with nostalgia about their time at school, college or university, as this is a very formative time and the majority of people are young and enjoying life before the responsibilities of adulthood.

The problem is that, when those people become influential as policy makers or employers, they sometimes use their own experiences and understanding of training as the basis for making suggestions about policy. This is how an idea becomes institutionalised. Once this happens, it is often difficult to shift a public perception, even when all the evidence suggests otherwise.

To some extent, this is what happened with the NATED curriculum. We learned in Unit 3 that, by the 1970s, the South African economy had run into difficulties and the training system was inadequate. Jobs were declining in mining, agriculture and manufacturing, and shifting to services such as tourism and finance. The training system was out of date and caught in apartheid logics, and the curriculum was no longer fit for purpose. While the experts agreed with this, employers and policymakers did not, in part, because so many officials and employers had come through the system and trusted it. Consequently, the curriculum stayed in place through the 1980s and into the new era of negotiations and democracy, despite the fact that the number of apprentices being trained had drastically reduced.

The NATED curriculum became disconnected from its other half, the on-the-job practical training as an apprentice, because there was a demand for qualifications and training, and colleges had capacity, but apprenticeships had reduced. We saw that, when the colleges were formally linked to the Department of Education, with its schooling focus, the college curriculum changed. Educationists, who knew the NATED curriculum, agreed that it wasn’t suitable, and designed a new qualification catering for a different type of need. The NCV was an attempt to align the curriculum with the NQF logic of bands and levels. The NATED curriculum didn’t neatly fit this logic as it covered both school levels and post-school levels. Some people felt that colleges should not offer anything outside of the FET Band and N6 was clearly post-school.

The introduction of the NCV created new pressures for colleges. They were supposed to deal with a different, younger learner. The NCV was presented as an alternative to the academic pathway in schools but, in reality, it was in some respects harder. For a range of reasons, the policy intention and the policy practice were very different. High failure rates and repetition meant that the NCV was expensive and ineffective. As apprenticeships were increasing again, the full-time nature of the qualification made it unsuitable for apprentices and people on learnerships. The simplest solution was to retain the NATED.

What we see from this example is that policy processes do not work in a neat and logical manner. Ideas get proposed, policy gets passed, and then the reality of implementation forces compromises. That can be for practical reasons or because groupings influence the process. Throughout the history that we have studied in this module, we see the ways in which some policies have been altered over time. This is due to the interactions between what is practical, what is supported by whom, and the external pressures of economy and society. In the same ways, during the colonial and apartheid periods, the logic of racial exclusion was contested and changed depending on economic need. Also, during the democratic era, there have been shifts in policy depending on what issue the policymakers were responding to and who the policy makers were.

The role the colleges should play within the wider education and skills system is now the central question. Are colleges there to train a relatively small number of technical artisans in specialised occupations or are colleges there to provide a general vocational education for large numbers of young people? Are colleges parallel to schools or are they post-school? Should colleges prepare people for further studies at university or should they prepare people for work? These questions have been recurring over the past fifty years and the answers have changed repeatedly. Current developments associated with Occupational Qualifications and the DBE Three Stream Model suggest that the questions will continue to be asked.

For TVET lecturers, being aware of the past and understanding the policy developments is more critical than ever. What kind of college will we have in the future? What kind of student? What will the lecturer need to know? Your future in the college will be shaped by these questions and you will be in a better position to respond to these changes if you understand the reasoning (or sometimes lack of reasoning) behind policy changes.

With an historical perspective, you can also better understand the seemingly messy nature of institutional change. You can understand why people cling on to ideas and why not all policy is the same. You can recognise that, just because something is promulgated as a regulation, doesn’t mean that it is implemented.

Hopefully, through these Units, you have a better sense of how we have come to be where we are. History can teach us many things, but it cannot predict the future. We can learn from the past but history does not repeat itself exactly. Understanding the messiness of the past helps us to make sense of the present and enables us to explore the options for the future.

In the summative assessment below, you reflect on precisely this interaction.

# Exemplar Summative Assessment

## Summative Assessment: Policy Intention and Enactment

**Suggested Time:**

90 minutes research and reading time

90 minutes writing time

In this task, you will apply your learning from this module by analysing one policy that focuses on an aspect of the skills system. The analysis will focus on the intentions of the policy makers and examine what type of policy it is. In the second part, you will reflect on how the policy has impacted your own work as a college lecturer, if at all.

#### Step One: Revise the module

Read the section on policies in Unit 1 carefully. Make notes on the different types of policies discussed.

Then skim through Units 3 and 4 and make a note of the policies that are referred to in these Units.

#### Step Two: Identify your policy

You need to identify *one* policy that applies to the TVET or skills sector. You could choose to focus on legislation, government gazettes, Green or White Papers, reports or proposals. You could also select a more local policy such as a provincial strategy or a college policy. Some documents, such as legislative acts, contain multiple policies, in which case, you can select one of the policies.

#### How do you find the policies?

Official policies at national level are available from government websites such as the Department of Higher Education and Training. Go to [www.dhet.gov.za](http://www.dhet.gov.za) and click on the tab for vocational education, skills development or resources. There are numerous links to a wide range of policies from department circulars through to White Papers. You could also look at related policies from other government departments, such as the Department of Basic Education, the Presidency, or from statutory bodies such as Umalusi, SAQA or the National Planning Commission.

Spend a bit of time looking at different policies. The policy you choose does not have to be one that has been discussed in this module. It should have some relevance to TVET colleges, but may not be about colleges.

#### Step Three: Analyse your Policy

Once you have chosen your policy, read it carefully making notes on what it says.

*Summarise the policy by writing a short paragraph* (maximum 300 words) on what the policy actually says.

*Next, briefly (in 200 words) describe what the intention is.* In some policy documents, this is clearly spelled out. If you cannot find a rationale for the policy in the document itself, you may have to find out a little more about why this policy was promulgated. What is the problem or issue that the policy is trying to address? Do you know why this issue was regarded as important? Is this explained anywhere? You may need to do a bit more research. For example, were there any reports written or research published that described the issue or problem or that proposed the policy? See if you can find out who has influenced this policy.

Can you classify the policy as either aspirational or regulatory? If it is aspirational, is there a clear plan spelled out for how the implementation will happen? Are there commitments to resources? Could the policy be described as symbolic?

*Write a paragraph* that addresses the type of policy you have chosen (100–200 words).

#### Step Four: Reflect

In the final part of the assignment, we would like you to reflect on what the policy means for the college you work at. Does the policy have a direct or indirect effect on the college? What is the effect? Have you experienced this effect already in the way it has shaped the college, or do you still anticipate the effect?

*Write a final section of your assignment that describes what you think the effect or consequences of the policy were, still are, or will be.* Do you think the effect of the policy was or will be positive or negative? Why do you think that? If you think the policy should be changed, how should it be changed?

This section should be between 500 and 800 words.

The Assessment Rubric follows on the next page

### Assessment Rubric: TVET Policy Intention and Enactment Assignment (45 marks)

| Criteria | Excellent (5) | Proficient (4) | Satisfactory (3) | Needs improvement (2) | Inadequate (1) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Policy selection and relevance | The chosen policy is highly relevant to the TVET/skills sector, demonstrating a deep understanding of the subject matter. | The chosen policy is relevant to the TVET/skills sector and aligns with the assignment's requirements. | The chosen policy is relevant to the TVET/skills sector, though the connection may be somewhat vague or lacking in depth. | The chosen policy's relevance to the TVET/skills sector is unclear or poorly established. | The chosen policy is not relevant to the TVET/skills sector. |
| Policy summary | Provides a concise and comprehensive summary of the policy that accurately captures its key points and objectives within the specified word limit. | Presents a well-structured summary of the policy, covering its main aspects and objectives effectively. | Provides a summary of the policy, though some key points or objectives may be omitted or not fully explored. | Offers a limited summary of the policy, missing several important aspects or objectives. | Fails to provide a meaningful summary of the policy. |
| Intention of the policy | Offers a detailed and insightful description of the policy's intention, clearly explaining its aims and potential impact on the TVET/skills sector. | Provides a clear and thoughtful description of the policy's intention and its potential impact on the TVET/skills sector. | Describes the policy's intention and potential impact, but the explanation may lack depth or clarity. | Presents a limited description of the policy's intention and potential impact, requiring further elaboration. | Fails to adequately describe the policy's intention or potential impact. |
| Policy type and classification | Provides a well-argued paragraph classifying the policy as aspirational, regulatory, or symbolic, backed by strong evidence and analysis. | Presents a paragraph that effectively classifies the policy as aspirational, regulatory, or symbolic, supported by relevant evidence. | Offers a paragraph that attempts to classify the policy's type, but the analysis or evidence may be somewhat weak. | Provides a limited or unclear classification of the policy's type, with inadequate analysis or evidence. | Fails to provide a meaningful classification of the policy's type. |
| Effects and consequences | Presents a highly detailed and insightful analysis of the policy's effects and consequences, covering past, present, and potential future impacts on the TVET/skills sector. | Offers a comprehensive analysis of the policy's effects and consequences, discussing past, present, and potential future impacts on the TVET/skills sector. | Provides an analysis of the policy's effects and consequences, but some aspects may lack depth or comprehensive exploration. | Presents a limited analysis of the policy's effects and consequences, missing key aspects or not thoroughly discussing potential impacts. | Fails to provide a meaningful analysis of the policy's effects and consequences. |
| Analysis depth and critical thinking | Demonstrates exceptional depth of analysis, critical thinking, and integration of diverse perspectives in each section of the assignment. | Shows solid depth of analysis, critical thinking, and integration of different perspectives in each section of the assignment. | Displays reasonable analysis and critical thinking, though some sections may lack depth or thorough exploration of perspectives. | Offers basic analysis and critical thinking, with limited consideration of diverse perspectives in some sections. | Lacks meaningful analysis, critical thinking, and exploration of diverse perspectives in multiple sections. |
| Writing clarity and organisation | Presents the assignment in a well-structured, clear, and concise manner with impeccable writing in each section. | Communicates the assignment effectively with good organisation and clarity in each section. | Presents the assignment in a somewhat organised manner, but writing may be wordy or lack clarity in some sections. | The assignment is poorly organised in multiple sections, and the writing often obscures the message. | Writing is extremely disorganised and unclear in multiple sections, making it difficult to understand the analysis. |
| Use of evidence and sources | Demonstrates exceptional use of relevant and credible sources to support analysis and arguments throughout the assignment. | Utilises relevant and credible sources effectively to support analysis and arguments throughout the assignment. | Includes mostly relevant sources, but there may be minor issues with credibility or integration in some sections. | The use of sources is somewhat inadequate, with credibility or relevance concerns in multiple sections. | Relies on poor-quality or irrelevant sources that undermine the analysis in multiple sections. |
| Citation and referencing | Adheres to a consistent and accurate citation style, properly crediting all sources used throughout the assignment. | Follows a consistent citation style and gives proper credit to sources used throughout the assignment. | Includes citations, but there may be inconsistencies or minor errors in the citation style in some sections. | Citations are inconsistent or contain significant errors in multiple sections, impacting the credibility of the analysis. | Lacks proper citations and referencing of sources in multiple sections, indicating potential plagiarism. |

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# Appendices

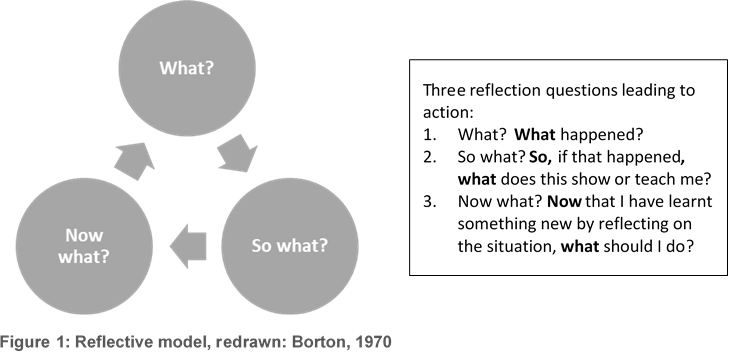
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## Appendix 1: Learning journal template

The Adv. Dip TVT module called [Reflective Practice](https://oerafrica.org/system/files/13691/assets/13702/advdiptvtmodulereflective-practice.docx?file=1&type=node&id=13702&force=0) covers the concept of reflection in the life of a TVET lecturer. The simplest reflective model in unit 2, is that of Terry Borton (1970).

Using a journal for reflection

Throughout the Advanced Diploma modules, we encourage you to use a learning journal. Start your learning journal at the beginning of the programme, and keep it regularly updated throughout. In each *activity* or *stop and think* reflect on the questions or problems raised.

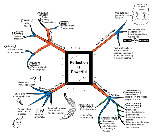
For your learning journal, you can use:

* an A4 notebook with at least 100 pages lined and blank, or
* this template.

In your journal write notes and reflections, complete activities, add drawings, letters, stick in pictures or objects, use pens or paint or do anything else that makes it meaningful for you. Record your thoughts verbally, using the voice recorder on your cell phone, or even take a video.

Journaling styles

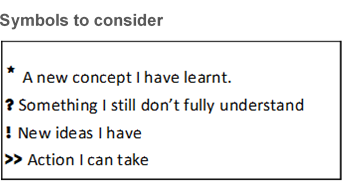
In the module on Reflective Practice in Unit 1 you can explore different ways to document your reflections and how to develop a reflection journaling style that suits you. Consider using mind maps, sketch notes and symbols too.



Mind map



Sketch notes



Begin your journal on the next page, if you are using this template.

Module name:

Unit #

Remember to put a date each time you write in your journal.

Activity #

## Appendix 2: Reading

Rearranging the furniture? Shifting discourses on skills development and apprenticeship in South Africa

Volker Wedekind (2013)

*School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, Private Bag X01, Scottsville 3209, South Africa*

**Summary:** Some of the earliest recorded references to formal apprenticeships in South Africa date back to the early 1800s and are associated with the rights of settlers to take on black children as unpaid apprentices. Today’s debates about skills training, apprenticeship and development continue to link to this racialised colonial and apartheid history that shaped the social structures of South African society today. Using an historical sociology approach, the paper examines the shifting discourses on skills development and apprenticeships in South Africa over time, and how these discourses continue to shape policy and the public understandings of these concepts. The paper shows how the current attempts at reinvigorating the skills system in South Africa have worked largely with a rational and linear view of policy, and this has not adequately taken account of both the historical traces and complex overlapping domains of interest that mark out the terrain today.

**Keywords:** Apprenticeship history; South Africa; Policy

Introduction

Skills development has been a key feature of the South African policy landscape over the past two decades. Some of the earliest legislation passed by the first democratically elected parliament focused on education, training and the complete reorganisation of the system. The recently released National Development Plan locates education and training as central features of the strategy to accelerate development in South Africa and overcome the legacies of the divided past (National Planning Commission 2012). Within a wider focus on improving vocational education, significant emphasis has been placed on reinvigorating the apprenticeship system in South Africa, often looking to international examples for inspiration. Significant steps have already been taken and recent data on apprentices passing their trade tests suggests that the system is on an upward trajectory and that numbers of graduates are reaching the levels achieved during the 1980s (van Rensburg 2012). However, concerns and contestation remain around quality, funding, employer commitment and the general public perception of technical work.

Taking insights from the historical sociology approach of Norbert Elias (1978) this paper attempts to look back historically, to understand the ways in which apprenticeship has become understood in South Africa. It tracks the ways in which the apprenticeship system and the perceptions of technical work have been constructed. The argument I make is that the system and its problems are intricately connected to the development of the society and the economy, and any attempts to reform the system need to understand the discourses that shaped the society. Furthermore, by reflecting on the historical futures (Green 2012) that the policy makers envisaged when they reformed the system, we are better placed to understand the outcomes of those policies, but also understand the complexities associated with any future innovation. These complexities signal warnings for, amongst other things, any simplistic notions of policy transfer between countries.

A Note on Methodology

This paper draws on two distinct sociological approaches for its analysis. Firstly, the paper draws on the historical processes approach to sociology developed by Norbert Elias (1978). Elias developed his understanding of contemporary problems on the basis of analyses of the social processes that lay behind these problems (1924, 1991a). He was specifically interested in the emergence of national identities in Europe. Nationally distinct processes resulted in forms of socialisation, embedded in the processes and practices of ongoing interaction, which led to the development of distinct national characters. Particular forms of social life are the unintended outcome of social processes, which may or may not have been planned. Elias, like other leading social theorists, alerts us to the need to understand both historical continuity as well as the ruptures, breaks and ‘spurts’ that occur in the formation of societies (1996). Where there is a break at one level, not all dimensions and levels of social life change in neat correspondence, and there is a need to understand historically the residual forms of social life when ‘society’ appears to have changed. This is particularly important for making sense of social relations in a society where over three hundred years of colonial conquest, racial privilege, and patriarchal power relations lie beneath the veneer of rapid social change.

The second theoretical approach that this paper draws on is the more discursive orientation of the work of Boltanski and Thévenot (1999). They argue that social life can be analysed in terms of justifications for action, that is the criteria used to justify actions. Since there can be a plurality of modes of justification, and that these modes can be mutually incompatible, it is necessary to understand which rules are being invoked and which are applied. In the context of this paper, the central argument drawn from this work is the notion that different modes (or discourses) of justification may be invoked at different points by different people around the same set of practices. It is possible that at times these different discourses may appear to be addressing the same social action, but are drawing on completely different modes of justification and are thus incommensurable.

By bringing these two separate traditions together, I hope to show that the discourses circulating around skills development and apprenticeship are shaped by the historical traces from which they emerge, but also need to be understood in terms of the multiple modes of justification which underpin the diverse sets of action that shape policy and responses to it. I attempt to do this by first tracing in broad strokes the development of the concept of apprenticeship in South Africa, then examine the policy changes over the past two decades, and conclude by looking at the implications of these insights for any attempts to innovate in the field of apprenticeship today.

Many of the insights in this paper draw on my experiences of engaging with the development of policy variously as a consultant, a member of ministerial committees, as a researcher and a member of advisory committees. These insights are necessarily partial, and I use them primarily for illustrative purposes rather than as historical facts. The paper must be read as tentative and exploratory.

Apprenticeship in South Africa

**Early forms of apprenticeship**

A pamphlet promoting apprenticeship issued by the Department of Labour describes the origins of apprenticeship as follows:

The apprenticeship was born hundreds of years ago (the Middle Ages) in other countries, when young people worked under a master craftsman to learn trades. This was a form of inexpensive work in exchange for learning and the young men often lived in the craftsmen’s houses. Women were taught in embroidery and silk-weaving. (DoL n.d, 2)

The pamphlet then makes the extraordinary leap to the 1980s when the basic structure of current apprenticeship was put in place by the Manpower Training Act of 1981. What is elided in this account is the fact that from the arrival of the first European settlers in the 1600s to the 1980s, South Africa and all its social institutions were shaped by the forces of colonialism and (more recently) apartheid. The concept of apprenticeship therefore cannot be divorced from a broader social history, and that history remains embedded in the discourses that shape the system today.

Apprenticeship in South Africa was in fact linked directly to the system of slavery, rather than being an importation of the ‘middle ages’ European tradition. The Dutch traders and early settlers had imported slaves to carry out semi-skilled and skilled artisanal labour in the towns and farms that developed in Southern Africa after 1652. Over 60 000 slaves were imported into the colony from various parts of Africa and Asia, with their origin being linked to a particular type of skill or characteristic. The offspring of European and slave liaisons were particularly prized as slaves (Giliomee and Mbenga 2007). In 1775 the concept of apprenticeship was introduced to allow slave owners to ‘apprentice’ the children of male slaves and free Khoisan or Hottentot women till their 25th year. As labour pressures increased, this practice was extended to any ‘Hottentot child’. While these practices were abolished in the late 1790s, they were reintroduced with respect to free ‘coloured’ children between the age of 8 and 18 if they were deemed to be destitute, orphaned or simply if they had grown up on the employer’s farm. Thus, right from its earliest incarnation, apprenticeship in South Africa was a coercive and exploitative relationship, rather than a benign relationship between a master craftsman and a novice.

When the British Empire abolished slavery in 1834, apprenticeship was the mechanism through which this change was managed. In order to deal with the transition from a slave based labour system to a market based system, slaves were first indentured to their former owners, and could be retained as apprentices for a period of four years, before they were freed. This amounted to little more than what van Schoor termed the transition from “chattel slavery to wage slavery” (1951, p.8).

As the South African economy expanded and changed, particularly after the mineral revolution, the relationship between labour and skills shifted. Waves of new British and other European (particularly Jewish) immigrants arrived throughout the 1800s. Many came with trades and skills that competed with the former slave population. Policies were put in place to protect the interests of the white traders, artisans and farmers by restricting access to land and capital for black South Africans. While the expansion of the South African economy after the discovery of minerals had resulted in acute labour shortages, resulting in policies designed to force local people off the land and allow for the importation of skills from China and India, the subsequent doubling of the white population and the impoverishment of urban Afrikaners resulted in protectionist policies designed to restrict the type of work that black labourers were allowed to do.

The discovery of significant gold in 1886 and technological innovation that made deep-level mining possible altered the labour market dramatically. Because of a skills shortage, artisans were recruited from Britain and Australia who brought skills and, crucially, union experience. In the early period, these skilled labourers were able to demand high wages. However, while deep-level mining required skilled labour, it also required thousands of unskilled labourers to dig the shafts. The mining corporations set about recruiting migrant workers from rural parts of the country that had been badly affected by ongoing conflict and this set up the particular pattern of migrant labour supply that continues to affect the mining industry to this day. What the mining houses also did was import Chinese labour that undercut the more expensive, unionised white labourers. Political pressure and extensive industrial action on the part of the white workers in the first two decades of the twentieth century resulted in a complex system of classification that linked certain types of work to certain racial categories. Essentially the more skilled and better paid work was reserved for whites. This is best illustrated by the Juvenile Affairs Act of 1921 and the Apprenticeship Act of 1922 which set up mechanisms for the placement of white youth in employment and put the minimum requirements for entry into apprenticeships out of the reach of the majority of coloured youths (Giliomee and Mbenga, 2007). With the rise of Afrikaner nationalism and the affirmative action strategies targeting poor whites after the Great Depression, South Africa’s labour force had been formally linked to racial categories.

Throughout most of the 20th century this basic structure to the labour market remained in place. By the late 1970s there were signs that the skills system was no longer able to provide for the requirements of the increasingly diverse economy. The economy had stalled with a zero growth rate in 1977. This coincided with growing urban unrest amongst the black population, symbolised by the 1976 school student uprising in Soweto but evident throughout South Africa’s cities into the 1980s. The strategy adopted by the nationalist government was to try and reform the system in order to win over a small African middle class while marginalising the rural masses (Giliomee and Mbenga, 2007). Central to this strategy was education reform, and in particular the promotion of vocational education for black South Africans previously excluded from semi-skilled and skilled occupations. The new Manpower Training Act of 1981 governed a new apprenticeship and skills development system that opened up opportunities for blacks to enter into skills training and apprenticeships. In addition, a significant expansion of vocational schools and training centres for blacks occurred in the 1980s (Chisholm 1983).

While the detail and the inevitable contestations of the history cannot be pursued here, what is central for the discussion that follows is that apprenticeship has a very specific history linked to slavery, indenturing, protection of white labour and, more recently, the role of state enterprises in dealing with unemployment. History is not just a matter for the record, but has shaped the perceptions of apprenticeship and the values associated with being an apprentice. These perceptions and values run deep in communities, and the ways in which the system benefited, exploited, excluded and included various categories of citizens have shaped those communities. Four standout features need to be noted: apprenticeship has on numerous levels been exploitative and a form of modern slavery; apprenticeship has been used as a vehicle for social engineering; apprenticeships have been associated with a limited set of (primarily technical) trades and occupations; and technical occupations have tended to be viewed as being on lower levels of the status ladder in comparison with white collar work. These understandings and experiences run deep in individual and community understandings of the concept and shape their reactions to change.

**Recent developments**

There has been much public misunderstanding of the reforms to the training system since the advent of democracy. A central complaint was that the government had allowed an effective system of apprenticeship to collapse. The reality was that already since the mid 1980s the system of work-based or dual apprenticeship had gone into serious decline, both in terms of quality and quantity.

Table 1: Numbers of apprentices in selected years

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1985 | 1990 | 1996 | 2011 |
| Passing trade tests | 13 500 | 7 000 | 3 000 | 13 168 |

(Data extracted from van Rensburg, 2012)

It was clearly not the advent of democracy in 1994 or the post-1994 government policies that led to this seeming collapse in the system. Indeed, as the 2011 figures show (Table 1), the system has returned roughly to the state it was in 25 years ago. What then has been the problem? Firstly, the global downturn coupled with the effects of isolation and sanctions meant that the South African economy went into serious decline in the 1980s, precipitating in part the crisis that led to the negotiated political settlement. In that context the system was oversupplying artisans and there were insufficient places for apprentices. The second feature of the pre-1994 system was that state-owned enterprises and government departments (including local municipalities) essentially undertook ‘surplus’ training, with relatively few small and medium level enterprises doing training themselves. With the deteriorating economic climate and the advent of neo-liberal policies, most of the state enterprises were either sold off or restructured along commercial lines and, consequently, training was cut back as a cost-cutting exercise. An additional dimension, already noted in the introduction, was that apprenticeship in South Africa had been restricted to artisans in technical fields and there was no wider understanding of apprenticeship in other industries (with the exception of hair care and some hospitality related occupations). This meant that as the economy became more service oriented, there were no equivalents to apprenticeships for this new economic sector. Finally, the quality of the theory courses that serviced the apprenticeship system was at best uneven, at worst out-dated and poor.

The democratic governments have made the reform of the education and training system a priority. Promulgation of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was the first step towards a new system that sought to introduce a modern, innovative system with three Bands (General, Further and Higher Education) with most work-based and vocational education located in the Further Education and Training (FET) Band (Wedekind 2010). Because of the limitations identified in the apprenticeship system, a new concept of a learnership was introduced in the late 1990s which catered not just for artisans but all occupations. Besides being available in all fields, learnerships were designed to be modular so that they could be delivered through a range of modes of delivery, in colleges or on the job, and the work-based experience could be built up cumulatively in a number of different companies rather than through the traditional apprenticeship contract with one employer. To manage and fund this system, Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) were established and funded through a training and skills development payroll levy system that made significant sums of money available. In 2000 the then Minister of Labour established a Working Group to oversee the phasing out of the old apprenticeship system in favour of learnerships.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Higher Education | Universities | Universities of Technology | | | | PrivateProviders | HEQC |
|  | FETC (now NSC and  NCV) | | | | | | Umalusi |
| Further Education and Training | Grades 10-12 in Schools | | FET Colleges | | Workplace | |
|  | GETC (GEC)  ABET Certificates | | | | | |
| General Education and Training | Schools  Grade R – 9 | | | ABET Levels 1 – 4 | | |

A schematic representation of the NQF

The introduction of a Further Education and Training Certificate (FETC) was the original vision for the exit point at the end of both schools, FET colleges and the workplace training process. The intention, articulated in the Green Paper on Further Education and Training, was for a post-compulsory Further Education system (the FET Band) comprising schools that focused on an academic track leading in the main to university entrance, colleges (both public and private) that focused on a vocational pathway, and work-based learning through the vehicle of learnerships. All three pathways would ultimately lead to the same qualification (an FETC). It was anticipated that the majority of learners (as they were now called) would be found in the vocational stream, as the academic track leading to university entrance would cater for a relatively smaller segment of the learner population.

There are some parallels in this envisaged system with the FE system in the UK, or the differentiation between Grammar and Comprehensive schools, or indeed the distinction between Gymnasium and Volkschule in the Germanic system. The one pathway provides an academic preparation for university while the majority receive a rounded education that prepares people for work directly or for further vocationally oriented study. Because the NQF made provision for both recognition of prior learning (RPL) and transfer of credits horizontally and vertically, the pathways outlined in the policy were not intended to be terminal or restrictive. In this imagined future a learner could complete Grade 9 (the end of the General Education band), proceed into an apprenticeship, transfer to college and work toward a vocational FETC, transfer credits and return to schools in order to gain access to university and so forth.

Very little of this vision actually materialized. The notion of Grade 9 being an exit point from the system was never developed seriously. Colleges were not expanded or reconceptualised in the manner envisaged in the Green Paper, where they would accommodate the majority of mainstream learners. The National Certificate (Vocational) was not developed in conjunction with the NSC. Schools remained the institution of choice (or necessity) for more than 90% of learners enrolled in the FET Band.

Twelve years after the introduction of this new system, apprenticeships remain a growing feature of the skills landscape. Why this is so presents an interesting case study, which is discussed in the next section.

Scripts, sequencing, silos and suspicions

In this section I wish to explore the ways in which policy scripts, sequencing, silos, suspicion and nostalgia resulted in an educational landscape that has been through a significant reform process but has increasingly begun to resemble an earlier system.

The first dimension is the matter of policy scripts. South Africa’s approach to educational reform has tended to focus in the first instance on policy development. Expert committees are constituted, study tours undertaken and new policy promulgated, often with limited regard for the resource implications or the current state on the ground. Inevitably policy is linked into wider global processes and there are instances of borrowing, lending, attraction, contestation and indigenization (Steiner-Khamsi 2004). In the case of apprenticeships and artisan training, the new policy landscape sought to locate these processes within a wider national system of qualifications and widen their definition, modes of delivery and institutional linkages.

Once the policy was in place, the implementation began. However, as different responsible agents took up the process and began implementing, there was quickly a disjuncture in the sequencing of the various parts. Thus, while the imagined system was a complex unity, with different components supporting and linking to each other, these components of the system were either differently able, unwilling or non-existent. As each component of the system evolved within the policy frame, increasing disjunctures appeared. In the case of the transition from apprenticeships to learnerships, SETAs needed to be established, educational service providers needed to develop capacity and curricula, employers needed to understand and embrace the new approach, and learners needed to be persuaded that this was worthwhile. Each of these dimensions evolved in very different directions and at different speeds, at times leading to serious policy failure.

What exacerbated this problem of sequencing and divergence was the creation of silos and vested interests as the institutional landscape developed. Decisions as to whether institutions were linked to one or other government department and vagueness in the delineation of responsibility which led to ‘overlapping mandates’ created both confusion and paralysis. The FET Colleges were seen as the key vehicle for delivering the curriculum for the new system. However, while apprenticeship and learnerships were driven by the Department of Labour and the SETAs, the colleges remained aligned to the provincial education departments. This governance arrangement was changed in order to give colleges more autonomy and make them more responsive to the local economy’s needs, by establishing councils that ran the college. These institutions developed their own priorities that were not aligned to the strategies being developed by the Department of Labour and the SETAs. Indeed, since the FET colleges were an education responsibility, the then minister of education sought to orient colleges away from skills courses and towards a fully-fledged vocational parallel to the academic high school. What was left out of the equation was the teaching of core components of the artisan’s theoretical training. Indeed, the old NATED courses that were designed with an apprenticeship in mind, were to be phased out and colleges we informed that they should shift their resources toward offering a new full time National Certificate Vocational (NCV). However, industry and officials in the Department of Labour wanted to retain the NATED courses, and so colleges continued to run parallel curricula.

Once institutions had been established to manage parts of the system, they inevitably guarded their responsibilities and would not give up their authority without significant contestation. In addition, bureaucratic requirements that enforced hierarchical relationships would restrict or prevent communication at horizontal levels in the system. Thus, even within the same department, different branches or directorates would pursue their specific targets with little cognizance of the consequences for other parts of the system. For example, within the Department of Education’s own FET Branch there was little coordination between the work of the directorate responsible for schooling and the directorate responsible for colleges. Thus there was almost no alignment between the reforms in the schooling system and the reorientation of the colleges into vocational institutions that were parallel to the schools.

Within this evolving and uncoordinated landscape, relationships of trust were in short supply. This was in part a consequence of the upheaval that was a necessary consequence of the reorganisation of the post-apartheid landscape. As new people, from different ideological and political backgrounds, entered institutional spaces, old cultures and networks no longer dominated in all spheres. This meant that the tried and trusted ways of doing things were no longer valued by everyone. Suspicion about motives, abilities and capacities added further dynamics to the already complex landscape. For instance, proposals to do away with an apprenticeship system were no longer understood in terms of the critiques of the failures of the system articulated in the 1980s, but were seen as misguided and high handed actions by a new political elite wanting to dismantle systems for the sake of change. In that context, passionate defence of old systems based on nostalgia coloured the discourse of the day.

It is in this context that many current attempts to reactivate and reintroduce apprenticeships must be seen. For many, this process is driven by an attempt to recreate a system that was remembered as effective and functional. The fact that the system had in fact collapsed and that the conditions have significantly altered is conveniently forgotten. The demand for skills and the available places for traditional apprentices is completely mismatched and if the old models are reintroduced without critical interrogation, there are bound to be difficulties. Similarly, there has been an attempt to retain and reactivate the old NATED courses to support apprenticeships. Although there has been recognition that the NATED courses lacked some of the generic skills, there hasn’t been sufficient interrogation of how apprenticeships might be linked to the modern curriculum of the NCV (with the exception of some innovative pilot programmes).

The details of these processes cannot be unpacked in this paper, but what is significant are the broader patterns. Reflecting on the ‘historical future’ (Green 2012), rather than the history as it unfolded, reveals a policy that envisaged a completely restructured and integrated education and training landscape with high levels of mobility for learners, a wide range of learnerships in every field, and a strong orientation toward vocational education. The reality of the process as it unfolded reveals multiple competing discourses and processes, that resulted in an endpoint that is very far from the imagined future. The competing discourses draw on a range of modes of justification informed variously by competing visions and memories.

One particular strand uses the lens of comparison for its justification. More specifically, the successes of the continental traditions are invoked as an example of what we should be striving for. Policy makers, officials and researchers have studied the ways in which the Germanic and Scandinavian countries have structured their training and have tried to introduce policies and practices that emulate the successes. While there is great value in learning from other contexts, it is crucial to recognise that the differences between these societies are so significant as to make an simplistic transfer very problematic. Besides different institutions, South Africa also has a very different history (as discussed earlier) and social understanding of apprenticeship, employers are not generally persuaded that training is their responsibility, and the categories of occupation that are linked to apprenticeship are quite restricted. In that context, using the mode of comparison to justify policy is clearly problematic.

Conclusion

What this paper has attempted to show is that there are two related but discrete influences on the outcomes of policy interventions. The first relates to the historical understandings of a concept such as an apprenticeship and how this plays itself out in the different communities in the present. In South Africa apprenticeship is still tied to a history of slavery, colonialism and apartheid that shaped the understanding of apprenticeship as raced and classed in particular ways. Depending on the community one visits, apprenticeship is either not understood because there has been minimal exposure, or it is viewed as a form of exploitation because the links to slavery and race based job segregation remain in the community memories, or it is remembered nostalgically as secure employment. Each of these (and other discourses of memory) remain very much a part of what is associated with the concept of an apprentice.

In addition, the particular understanding of apprenticeship as artisan trades-based remains very strong. Shifting such an understanding is not as simple as changing a name and hoping that people are able to imagine a work-based learning system that is not about technical work. South Africans have tended to eschew manual ‘dirty’ work whenever possible. The concept of dignity in labour has not been one that resonates amongst the youth. Their overwhelming preference is for white-collar work in clean, air-conditioned offices. This is not unique to South Africa, but is particularly acute here because it was precisely white collar jobs that were not available under apartheid, and there is an understandable reaction to engaging with categories of work that were perceived to be beneath the station of whites.

In addition to these historical discourses, the process of reforming the system has not simply been about scripting and implementing a new future, but also about managing the sequencing, pacing, resourcing, public relations of the process and unpacking the modes of justification of the different agents and institutions (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006). As the process unfolded, competing contemporary discourses linked to out-of-school youth, skills shortages, transformation of the economy, international models and so forth all pull the discussion in different directions.

Ultimately, through the haze of these competing discourses, processes and institutions, a different landscape has emerged that is different to the policy makers’ intentions but also different to the past. Any future attempt to innovate or reform should recognise the complexity of these processes (Ramalingam et al 2008) and the power of the discourses in constraining what is possible and what is sensible.

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1. The word “master” is often understood in gendered terms as representing a man who is in charge. I use it in the non-gendered sense of someone who has mastered something, or has developed mastery in a particular area. This can be a woman or a man. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The term “Journeyman” dates back to apprenticeships in the Middle Ages. After an apprentice had completed their training, they were free to sell their skills day by day. The term is associated with the journey to different workplaces, before the person opened their own business and became a master. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)