Understanding pre-service teacher education discourses in *Communities of Practice*: A reflection from an intervention in rural South Africa

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Pathways to Education

Drawing on an evaluation experience of a teacher education preparation project in a rural area of South Africa, this paper attempts to explore the possibility of using Communities of Practice (CoP) in teacher preparation. The paper concludes that the concept of CoP is powerful in providing spaces for self-reflection to pre-service teachers and challenging the dominant urban-based teacher education discourses in relation to rural schools. However, the CoP is also problematic, especially with regard to the issues of social differences among the members of the CoP and the sustainability of the broader influence of a CoP on marginalised rural communities.

Keywords: communities of practice, pre-service teachers, teacher preparation, self-reflection, rural communities.

Introduction

Today teaching is even more challenging than before, as learners in schools all over the world are becoming increasingly diverse with regard to culture, language, learning needs and social class. Global movements to improve education, such as *No Child Left Behind* in the United States of America, *World Fit for Education* in Europe or *Education for All* in other parts of the world, are focused on dealing with the diverse learner population in schools. Schools, and teachers, are now under constant pressure to play a key role in dealing with the changing landscape of the learner population (Dillon, Mitchell & Strong-Wilson, 2007). A critical element within the school system relates to how teachers are prepared to address the diverse needs of learners. However, there are concerns that traditional models of teacher education are not fully capable of producing teachers for changing times (Tsui, Edward & Lopez-Real, 2009; Lieberman & Miller, 1990). Time and again, educators have advocated the importance of linking teacher education with the local context and have contended that many of the current practices lack context-based reflective preparation for teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Kincheloe, 2003). Schulz (2005), for example, asserts that traditional teacher education programmes fall short in preparing teachers, and states that contemporary teacher preparation practices need to go beyond transferring the techniques from university-based settings into school settings. Similarly, Lieberman and Miller (1990) draw attention to the fact that many contemporary approaches to teachers' professional development have focused on a 'deficit model', emphasising that teachers need to learn from experts to overcome their 'deficits'. With no links to ground realities, this makes it difficult for teachers to teach effectively in a challenging context.

In light of the aforementioned backdrop, this paper draws lessons from a case of a school-university partnership project, Rural Teacher Education Project (RTEP), designed to improve teacher education discourses in rural areas of South Africa. The paper is divided into the following sections: The first section briefly describes the issues and gaps in teacher education in South Africa, the second section discusses the concept of *Communities of Practice* as identified by Lave and Wenger (1991) and its linkage with RTEP, the third section informs the methodology of the paper and is followed by a section on the findings and limitations of the CoP.

Issues and gaps in teacher education in a South African context

Teacher development has been regarded as central to transforming the South African educational system inherited from apartheid. The apartheid ideology has systematically suppressed the provision of a desired number of quality teachers to the black majority. The teachers were trained in racially defined institutions to serve the needs of a specific geography, race and ethnicity. When the first democratic government came into power, the crises of teachers, both in relation to quantity and quality, were considered to be some of the most critical challenges for post-apartheid South Africa (Sereto, 2004). However, many difficulties have been encountered, including a shortage of qualified teaching staff, especially in rural areas. Both teaching and learning in rural schools are challenging, confronted with the issue of a lack of equipment and infrastructure (South African Department of Education, 2005). Furthermore, the HIV and AIDS pandemic has exacerbated the situation and schools in rural areas are confronted with the additional issues of gender violence, sexism, bullying and corporal punishment, with many of the issues direct consequences of the apartheid legacy. All of these factors have contributed significantly towards the quality of education and lack of interest in education and teaching in rural schools (Motala, Dieltiens, Carrim, Kgobe, Moyo & Rembe, 2007). Despite major policy shifts, the restructuring of the education system, the enactment of a new curriculum, and the transformation of the teaching landscape in the post-apartheid era, many argue that the quality of education across South Africa has not significantly improved (Kruss, 2009; Morrow, 2007; The Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005).

In addition to the many discrepancies, one key reason for this failure relates to the gaps in teacher education itself. Johnson, Monk and Hodges (2000), for example, observe the lack of a supportive environment (physical, social and political), which minimises the potential of teachers to act and apply all that they learnt in their practice. Buthelezi (2004) observes the same, but in the context of HIV and AIDS. While reflecting on teacher training programmes, she asserts that many of the existing programmes are unable to address the context in which teachers are teaching in the classrooms.

Samuel (1998) contends that teacher education, especially pre-service teacher education, has to de-link itself from the apartheid ideology. He suggests wider collaboration between teacher preparation institutions and the learning sites (i.e. schools) not only to equip teachers with the required tools, but also to provide the needed skills to teacher educators so that they can challenge their apartheid-dominated ideologies, culture and history. Barasa and Mattson (1998) noted that most South African teachers who were trained in the apartheid era lack the values, commitment and competencies to improve their professional development. One way to improve teachers' commitments towards their professional development is to provide them space for self-reflection and self-reflexivity. Indeed, one of the best places to provide such space is in the schools themselves. Thus, the participants of the Teachers Development Summit 2009, convened by the Department of Education in collaboration with other stakeholders representing educators, educators' unions and agencies responsible for teacher development strongly observed that teacher development is both a right and a duty of the teachers in schools, and on-site in schools are the best places to develop teachers (Teacher Development Summit, 2009).

Teachers as *Communities of Practice*

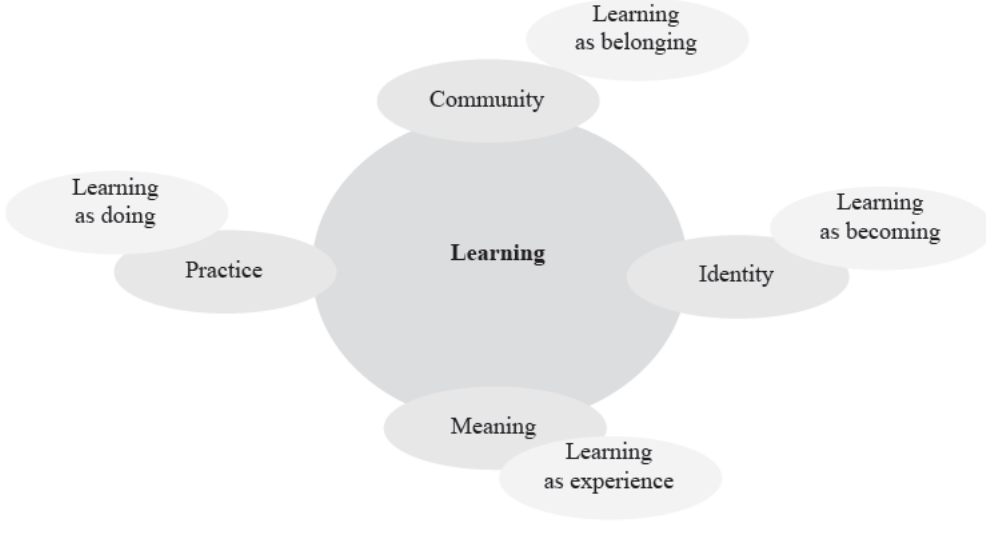
In light of strong disenchantment with the current approaches to teacher preparation, a call for a renewed focus on teacher education with strong connections to the local context is reiterated (Islam, Mitchell, de Lange, Balfour & Combrinck, 2011). In relation to South Africa, it is critical that such a focus on teacher education has to link with broader socio-political and cultural perspectives, given the apartheid history of segregating the education system, including teacher education, on the basis of race, ethnicity and language and now on the basis of social class (Chisholm, 2004). Thus, it is important that teacher education be seen within the wider context of social theories of learning and frameworks. One such theoretical framework, as initiated by Lave and Wenger (1991) and later developed by Wenger (1998), is *Communities of Practice* (CoP). The term was initially derived to denote apprenticeship learning of novices from the existing community of practice until they become part of the CoP. Lave and Wenger (1991:98) defined the term as follows:

> *A community of practice is a set of relations among persons, activity, and world over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice. A community of practice is an intrinsic condition for the existence of knowledge, not least because it provides the interpretive support necessary for making sense of its heritage. Thus, participation in the cultural practice in which any knowledge exists is an epistemological principle of learning. The social structure of this practice, its power relations, and its condition for legitimacy define possibilities for learning (i.e. legitimate peripheral participation).*

Later, Wenger (1998) broadened the term to embody a group of individuals participating in communal activity and experiencing/continuously creating its shared identity through engaging in and contributing to the practices of their communities. The CoP framework emphasises that learning is a social process which is constantly shaped, re-shaped and mediated by the members of the community within a broader socio-cultural environment.

With its antecedents in Vygotsky's theory of learning (see Vygotsky, 1978), which asserts that people connect with the socio-cultural environment in which they act and react in a shared experience, the learning in CoP takes place in mutual engagement with other members of CoP and with the broader environment where the CoP works. Wenger's notion of learning in CoP (1998) is centrally focused on community (a group of people, in pursuit of their shared interest, engage in joint activities to share and learn from each other); practice (the act of living and actively being involved in the social experience or social enterprise); identity (the systems of relationships produced and reproduced in the community); and meaning (how the community makes sense of its experiences and practices). The following figure best describes the above discussion related to learning in CoP.

Figure 1: Components of the social theory of learning in CoP



Source: Wenger (1998:5)

In essence, the CoP develops a dynamic environment wherein learning becomes an ongoing process driven by the forces of reflection and learning from others. CoP has been used in a variety of settings; however, learning in CoP through a school-university partnership for teacher education has been under-researched until recently (Tsui, Edward & Lopez-Real, 2009).

Rural Teacher Education Project (RTEP) and *Communities of Practice*

The Rural Teacher Education Project (RTEP) (2007-2009) is a school-university partnership for teacher preparation involving two rural schools in the Vulindlela District of the province of KwaZulu-Natal and the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). Its aim was to study how teaching and learning can become significant and a means of professional development when cohorts of pre-service teachers along with in-service teachers interject with one another in a broader social space in rural areas (Mitchell, de Lange, Balfour & Islam, 2011). Over a period of three years (2007-2009), three cohorts of pre-service teachers (n=22 in 2007; n=19 in 2008; and n=20 in 2009), BEd undergraduate students from the Faculty of Education at UKZN were selected to participate in the project and to do their four weeks of professional practicum in schools in the Vulindlela District under the mentorship of in-service teachers (mentors) from the rural schools. Each year, pre-service teachers lived together close to the rural schools, performed their teaching practicum in the schools, and were involved in doing research, mainly with learners and school staff members in the area, in order to connect their teaching to the local context.

RTEP helped the cohorts of pre-service teachers develop a social space, which led to the creation of CoP. Though spearheaded by the pre-service teachers, the CoP developed in the RTEP represents different levels of participation and different groups of people, including interaction with mentors and RTEP coordinators, who themselves were graduate students from foreign universities and interned with the pre-service teachers. Since the pre-service teachers lived together and worked together in the schools, they had many intense opportunities to share and learn through formal and informal ways. The most important formal means of learning was exhibited in the daily de-briefing sessions. As a part of RTEP, each evening during the teaching practicum, the pre-service teachers met and reflected upon their daily experiences. They discussed and shared their frustrations and achievements in the groups, some of which were based on their "at the end of the day" experiences and some of which were organised to talk about broader issues such as addressing HIV and AIDS and urban-rural inequalities. Some pre-service teachers described how the CoP enriched their experiences and learning.

> *One of the best things about the project is that we lived together, worked together and shared our rooms with different partners. It taught us how to interact and learn from others. Whenever we dealt with any problems [while teaching], we found that others were also facing the same problems. This encouraged us to find solutions by ourselves (Focus group discussion, 2009).*

Another pre-service teacher described how he felt about the strength that he received from the group. He said:

> *There are [a] lot of things which can cause stress but because we worked as a group and we understood each other, we were able to conquer everything (Individual interview, 2007).*

The CoP also exposes the challenge of organising active participation of all group members in relation to internal dynamics and the diverse attributes of the group around their social capital. One of the project coordinators, who stayed with the pre-service teachers and coordinated their practica, described how race and ethnicities played out in the formation of the CoP. She writes in her journal:

> *At times the lines that divide the group run deep. For example, most times the dining room is split exactly in half: white people on one side, black people on the other. Other times it is one cohesive group, with shared experience overpowering any differences.*

One pre-service teacher expressed his concerns about how his lack of language proficiency hampered him in his ability to effectively participate. He stated:

> *[Due to my deep rural background] My English is very weak, and by listening to others [pre-service teachers] I realised that I have to improve my language to fully participate in the discussions. My main learning came out of listening to others and meeting with my friends informally (Individual interview, 2007).*

Through RTEP, pre-service teachers formed a CoP with a shared understanding of learning to teach. The CoP provided an opportunity to the participants to share and learn from the experiences of other members

of CoP. However, it also poses the challenge of offering equal opportunities of participation across all CoP members. This will be discussed in the findings section of the article.

Methodology

The data was collected using participatory evaluation for each of the three RTEP phases (2007-2009) and the reports were submitted to the RTEP research team. The data presented in this article is drawn from 61 pre-service teachers, who were contacted during the course of three years. The data was collected in two steps. In the first step, the author reviewed the journals of the pre-service teachers, which they maintained regularly to document their daily experiences in and out of school. The journals served as a major source of data and laid the foundation for the second step, in which the pre-service teachers were contacted through two participatory workshops, thirteen focus group discussions and twenty in-depth interviews during 2007-2009. The data was analysed using the abductive method and constant comparison method. The abductive method, as described by Coffey and Atkinson (1996), is an exploratory and interpretive framework, which relates a particular phenomenon to a broader context. This method is an important research approach in qualitative analysis, especially when not all the research variables are known in advance (Levin-Rozalis, 2004). Using abductive inference, the key phrases from pre-service teachers' narratives were identified, for example, *My experience [in rural schools] is an eye-opener; I am astonished to see the plight of students; It has changed my life*; and *I never expected that rural schools are so different*, and coded to make broader categories. These categories, during the second stage of evaluation, were brought to the group discussions, interviews and participatory workshops with the pre-service teachers, in-service teachers and the RTEP to further investigate the factors that caused the pre-service teachers to think this way. Since the study involves three diverse partners (i.e. pre-service teachers, in-service teachers and RTEP management), the cross-case analysis of the above-mentioned categories were conducted using what Glaser and Strauss (1967) called the constant comparative method, a method that constantly compares the categories and their properties until they are fully integrated.

Key findings and discussion

The setting created through the CoP provided an opportunity to the pre-service teachers to share their experiences with one another, devise their strategies in consultation with one another and constantly reflect upon their strategies. It helped them to contest the dominant perception about rural schools, look back at their pedagogical practices in relation to the needs and demands in the rural schools, and to study the self and question the way in which they were trained to teach, particularly in rural schools. More specifically, the pre-service teachers pointed out the following:

Dispelling the myths and misconceptions about rural schools

The direct experience of teaching and learning in rural schools in groups coupled with their full-time residence near the school provided a space for the pre-service teachers to challenge some of the myths about rural schools and education. One such misconception, as identified by some in-service teachers from the rural schools, is that students in rural schools lack a learning culture (Islam, 2007). The pre-service teachers, when connecting themselves more broadly to the wider context, began to challenge those perceptions. In doing so, they highlighted the importance of a passion and commitment to teaching. One group of pre-service teachers contends:

> *We very soon realised that students are very enthusiastic to learn. During our first few classes, some of us found that students were misbehaving and were not attentive. But when we kept teaching them with commitment, they [students] also became committed to learn (Focus group discussion, 2008).*

Another prevailing notion, which the pre-service teachers challenged, is the perception from many in-service teachers from RTEP rural schools that effective teaching is not possible in a low-resourced environment (Islam, 2007). Although pre-service teachers believe in the importance of appropriate

materials and resources for effective teaching, they also lamented that a lack of resources should not be used as an excuse to teach ineffectively. One pre-service teacher noted:

> *The poverty is no excuse, really; it's the poverty mindset that is crippling the school (Pre-service teacher reflective journal, 2007).*

While pre-service teachers challenged the prevailing concepts of teaching and learning that many in-service teachers hold in the rural schools, they also contested the dominant negative portrayal of rural areas. Rural areas are generally seen through the lens of poverty, hardship, backwardness and deprivation. However, the experience of RTEP provided an opportunity to the pre-service teachers to see the rural idyll through a very different dimension, characterised by a sense of community, local efforts and pastoral work. Amid the challenges in rural areas, many strengths of the rural setting – for example, how people act as a homogenous group in support of one another – sometimes go unnoticed. One of the schools in which the pre-service teachers were placed for practicum has taken some initiative to help students affected by HIV and AIDS through support from local community and school staff. In their journals and focus group discussions, some pre-service teachers called their mentors (in-service teachers in rural schools) "mothers," "social workers" and "counsellors" to the learners. Other pre-service teachers were deeply impressed by the pastoral work of some teachers. Given that the schools were under-resourced and teachers' pastoral work had not accrued any professional or personal rewards, pre-service teachers clearly saw signs of empathy:

> *I managed to speak to one of the teachers who was selling snacks [that] she sells because [the money raised] helps needy students and [she] also organises clothing and shoes [for the students]… [I also] observed three teachers who were repairing the door for a toilet. They just took the initiative to do it themselves … I was so impressed (Pre-service teacher reflective journal 2007).*

Understanding the broader role of teachers

CoP explored the broader role of teachers by going beyond the classroom boundaries. It provided them with the opportunity to acknowledge the importance of empathy in teaching as well as to understand the complex task of teachers. Since two of the cohorts (2008 and 2009) were also involved in conducting after-school activities such as sports, drama and role-play, speech contests and poetry, they had more opportunities to interact with the learners in informal ways. Pre-service teachers construed these informal spaces as opportunities to understand the students' needs and interests as well as to build trust and relationships with students. One pre-service teacher reflects:

> *There is another side of teaching which I didn't notice before. Learning and teaching [not only happens] in classrooms, but also in the informal interaction between students and teachers … Teachers often did not realise their power. [There is the] power to make a big impact on the lives of pupils no matter how difficult the situation is (Individual interview, 2007).*

The above demonstrates that the pre-service teachers explored multiple dimensions of a teacher's work. It gives them an orientation that helped them understand the broader role of teachers, delimiting them from formal interaction with learners through classroom settings to in-formal socialisation with the real lives of the learners. This enriched their vision of teaching and broadened their view on teaching and learning, especially in a rural context.

Reflecting on 'self' and developing professional identities

The participation in CoP through RTEP helped the pre-service teachers to re-imagine the self and start thinking about themselves as teachers. In particular, they confronted if and why they want to teach, especially in rural areas, and what teaching means to them. One pre-service teacher expressed his optimism toward bringing about a positive contribution through his prospective career in education. He stated:

> *I discovered a very good teacher in myself. I am confident that I can bring a positive change and hope in the lives of the students affected by poverty, gender violence and HIV and AIDS (Individual interview, 2007).*

The optimism is not only limited to what teachers can do in schools, but also finding a way to pay back those communities, which were systematically marginalised during the apartheid period. One pre-service teacher situates himself in a place-based education with a sense of responsibility to take on the challenge and play his role in discourse on rural education. He contends:

> *I will teach in the rural schools. I have to fill the gap. If I don't go, no one else will go ... and the rural schools will remain deprived (Individual interview, 2009).*

Not all pre-service teachers see the things this way. Despite sharing some sense of responsibility and eagerness to contribute, it appeared as if some pre-service teachers were hesitant to play their part. Overwhelmed by the inequalities between the urban-based, privileged schools and the rural-based, under-privileged schools, one pre-service teacher provided an honest opinion as to why she was not yet ready to teach in rural schools. She describes:

> *I am discouraged to see that rural schools do not have electricity, drinking water and sanitation. I cannot teach in this situation (Individual interview, 2007).*

The participation in CoP enriched the understanding of pre-service teachers and allowed them to re-imagine the self by contesting their pre-existing perceptions about rural areas. They started thinking about where they would like to situate themselves with respect to their teaching career. Some of them openly shared their intention to teach in rural schools, while others took a cautionary position. It also indicates that a lack of an enabling physical and professional environment is also a significant factor in dissuading many of the young teachers to pursue their teaching careers in rural schools.

Challenging the existing teacher education programmes

A constant process of gaining new experiences, sharing them with the group members in CoP and relating it with their existing skills and knowledge helped the pre-service teachers to contest how they are taught and prepared by the teacher education programmes. One pre-service teacher highlighted the lack of relevance in theory and practice. She observes:

> *Most of the modules that are being offered at the Faculty of Education are irrelevant to what I have seen in the rural areas (Individual interview, 2007).*

Another pre-service teacher goes further by identifying how the rural education discourse is missing in the existing dominant curriculum and teaching practices. She points out:

> *None of my courses so far have prepared me to teach a student in a rural school who needs emotional support. Not even my professors know how to deal with this, as they've never been to rural areas (Individual interview, 2008).*

One more pre-service teacher commented how teacher training institutions failed to recognise the urban-rural disparity and uneven distribution of resources. He asserts:

> *We have been taught at the [university] campus that all the schools in South Africa are fully equipped with basic resources and technology. But this is not the case in rural areas (Individual interview, 2007).*

The above experience of pre-service teachers also challenged the way the teachers are prepared at the faculties of education, a key to negotiating and contesting pre-existing identities. It illustrates how pre-service teachers reflected upon their teacher training experiences in relation to schools in the rural areas. The pre-service teachers compared the existing classroom practices on the campuses with their experiences in RTEP and questioned their relevance in connection with the schools in rural areas. They further questioned the relevance of the modules that are offered at the faculty in comparison to what they

saw at the rural schools. Similarly, they were also disappointed to note that the classroom practices at the faculty overtly neglect the ground reality of the schools in the rural schools.

The above findings demonstrate that RTEP's CoP provided the spaces to pre-service teachers to negotiate and contest what Terrance Carson called authoritative discourses (Carson, 2009:351). Comprising university courses, subject areas, teaching standards and the discourses of veteran teachers, authoritative discourses shape teachers' identities and influence them in taking a particular side on teaching (Carson, 2009). Concerning the RTEP experience, authoritative discourses were challenged at different levels. Grounded in lived experience, the CoP attempts to disrupt the traditional orientation of teaching and learning in rural areas, provides opportunities for self-study and revisits pre-existing identities, and questions the relevance of urban-based teacher education programmes to rural areas.

Problematising CoP: The issues of participation, social difference, and what stays in rural areas

The RTEP's experience suggests that the group dynamics within the CoP play a key role in the success, failure and effectiveness of the CoP, an area that has not been explicitly attended to in the literature on CoPs. The tensions among race, culture, social class and language have a crucial influence in shaping the group dynamics. It appears that a lack of social capital hampers some pre-service teachers from gaining the most out of the CoP. For example, one of the pre-service teacher participants specifically pointed out that a lack of fluency in the dominant language has limited him to participate fully in CoP settings. He said:

> *[Due to my deep rural background] My English is very weak, and by listening to others [pre-service teachers] I realised that I have to improve my language to fully participate in the discussions. My main learning came out from listening others and to meeting with my friends informally (Individual interview, 2007).*

In addition, the patterns of social assembly within CoP on the basis of race and ethnicity were also noted. White pre-service teachers tended to fraternise with other white pre-service teachers and black pre-service teachers felt more comfortable with black pre-service teachers. Even in the second stage of evaluation, the same pattern was observed when white pre-service teachers met and sat together in focus group discussions and workshops and, similarly, black pre-service teachers also preferred to remain in the social spaces marked by their racial background. In relation to South Africa, this model of association is in line with what Jansen (2009:136) observes more broadly, that "no adult modeling of alternative ways of being together" exists.

To ascertain as to how this pattern of socialisation has affected the CoP, a more careful investigation is required, as my involvement was only in the second stage of the evaluation and did not allow me to witness and fully observe how racial patterns of socialisation have shaped the dynamics of CoP. However, so far a significant difference was observed in the creation of a professional identity on the basis CoP as the black pre-service teachers were noticed more enthusiastic and inspired to teach in the rural areas after their graduation than the other groups.

CoP has the potential to strongly influence the impoverished local context. However, the complexities arise in sustaining the influence. In the case of RTEP, the CoP brings resources, at least pertaining to human capital in the form of young, energetic and skilful cohorts, with a strong backing from the project coordinators, RTEP staff and an accredited university, for a period of one month. The influx of unprecedented resources within the context of historically ignored and disadvantaged schools in rural areas has greatly enriched the entire environment in and around the schools, changing the teaching and learning environment. Learners were observed to be more engaged with the qualified, disciplined and committed strangers in an environment that seldom witnesses such an experience. Some in-service teachers were bought into being part of a CoP by disciplining themselves and changing their attitudes for a short time. The influence was noticed by the parents and the local department of education. However, as the cohorts departed, the impact of CoP on the broader environment has also started to dissipate. In a sense, things

started to get worse when the locale realised the constraints and limitations due to new exposure, but lacked the means to remove the systematic barriers. Thus, it remains unclear as to how CoP can sustain the impact and influence the dominant social patterns, which are systematically induced through a history of marginalisation and impoverishment.

RTEP's CoP is also a reminder of the importance to explore the larger impact of CoP on individual members once they are separated from the cohort. Through cohesion, stability and interdependence of the RTEP's CoP, the pre-service teachers overcome many challenges and influence the broader environment while working together. However, it is important to investigate more broadly how the pre-service teachers address those challenges once they leave the RTEP's CoP. More research is needed to understand the full scope of CoP, for example, how a CoP that emerges in a supportive environment through inter-agency partnerships or collaborations is different from a CoP that emerges through indigenous efforts of the teachers themselves.

Conclusion

The experiences of living and working together and constantly sharing experiences with one another through formal and informal means within a broader domain helped the cohorts of pre-service teachers emerge as a powerful CoP. The learning produced in CoP is informed by the knowledge produced through mutual engagement and is constantly mediated in the larger associated social context. The RTEP's CoP experience influenced many pre-service teachers' views on teaching and learning in rural schools, especially in breaking some common misconceptions about teaching and learning in rural areas. More importantly, it also challenged the teacher preparation discourses in South Africa and pointed out the dearth of voices from rural areas in these discourses. The RTEP experience also problematises the concept of CoP with regard to whose perspective is dominant in the CoP, especially when working with those who are systematically marginalised, how a flow of resources from a powerful setting to a less powerful environment influences the local domain with no evidence of a lasting change, and how learning in an organic but permanent CoP is different from a temporarily created CoP. The idea of providing a social space to learn within the local context through CoP has the potential to influence many of the teaching preparation practices. A critical point, however, remains as to how such practices can contribute to reducing the urban-rural gap and finding lasting changes in rural education discourses.

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