


The influence of ecosystemic factors on Black student teachers' perceptions and experience of Early Childhood Education


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9 April 2015, CICE seminar

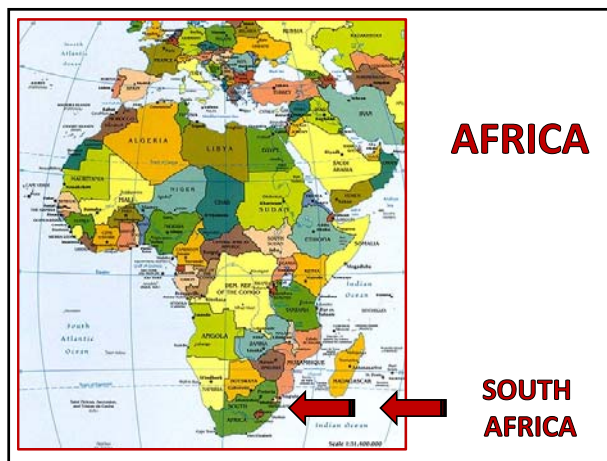


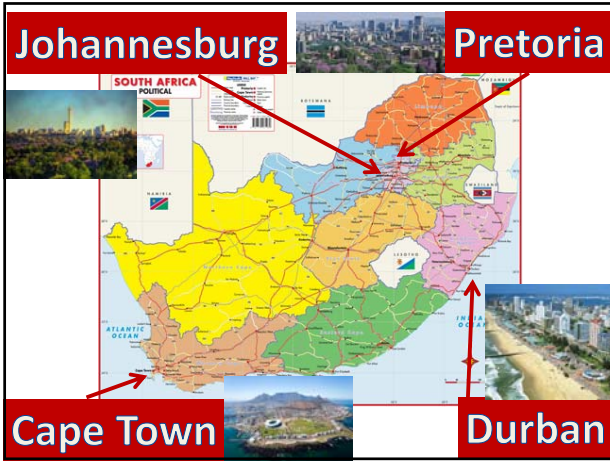
STRUCTURE

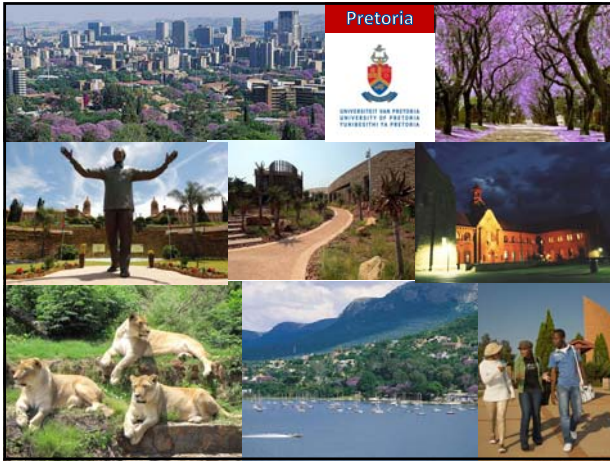
- Introduction
- History of teacher training in South Africa
- Statistics on early childhood teacher supply in South Africa
- Theoretical framework and methodology
- Findings and discussion
- Recommendations



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UP Faculty of Education in a Nutshell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLs8bzuAALQ&feature=youtu.be>

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History of teacher training in South Africa

- Teacher training evolved from the Apartheid system (1948-1994)
- Racially teacher training system. Deep racial and regional inequality.
- Discriminatory policy of separate ethnic "development"
- "In 1979, there were no White teachers without a matric-level (Grade 12) qualification, while one third of African teachers (32%) had no matric and not many had degrees" (Christie, 1994:130).
- Difference in qualification structure
- As a consequence of the above-mentioned, "...most currently serving teachers received their professional education and entered teaching when education was an integral part of the Apartheid project and organised in racially and ethnically divided sub-systems" (DoE, 2006)

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Political Reform in South Africa

- Transformation started 1994
- To provide a system of education that builds democracy, dignity, equality and social justice
- To broaden participation in HE so as to reduce the highly stratified race and class structure of the country
- Desegregation

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Early Child Education (ECE) Teacher supply

- Retention and training of teachers have not kept up with the growth rate of the school-going population.
- Currently, there are 23 higher education institutions in SA. However, only 13 universities offer initial ECE teacher education programmes resulting in a short supply of Black student teachers.
- 2009: 4147 ECE teachers were needed annually to meet the growing enrolment of children, yet the expected graduates for 2009 were only 1275. Of these expected graduates, only 168 were Black teachers speaking African languages (Green, 2010)
- 2013: 7.92% of ECE population were Black and only 1.5% (2 of 135) were expected to graduate in their 4th year. (Faculty of Education, 2013)

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Number of Students in Faculty of Education

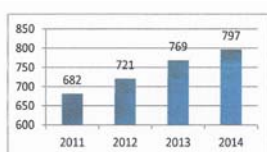


Figure 16: Black female undergraduate students

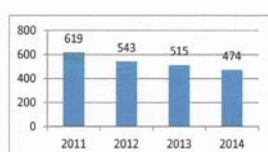


Figure 17: Black male undergraduate students

Total Black students: 1,271
Total faculty of Education: 3,500
ECE Students: 34

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ECE Black Student Enrolment

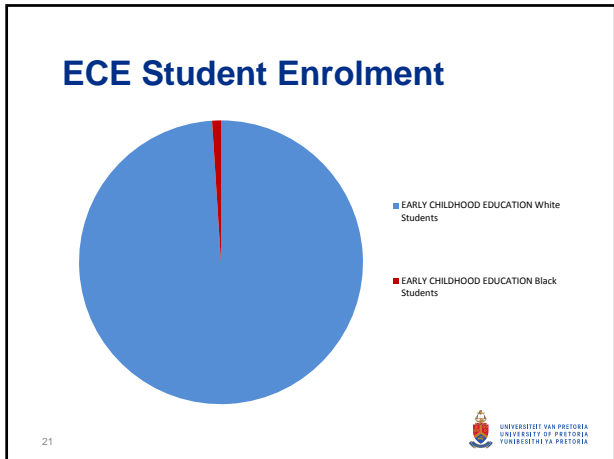
STUDENT ENROLMENT PER YEAR: JULY 2014

BEed: ECD & FP	1st YEAR	2nd YEAR	3rd YEAR	4th YEAR	TOTAL
Black students	13	6	10	5	34
Total students	283	220	173	142	818

Faculty Ed. AFR =1364 ENG =1998 TOTAL =3362



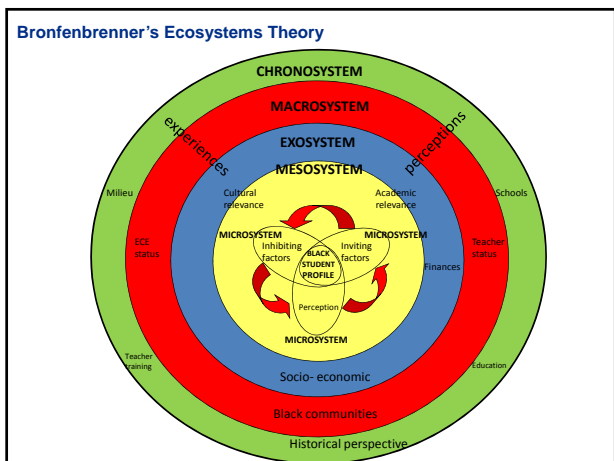
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Research Questions

Why do so few Black students enrol in early childhood teacher education and training?

- ❖ Which ecosystemic factors influence Black students' perceptions and experiences of Early Childhood Education?
- ❖ How do ecosystemic factors influence Black student teachers' enrolment and throughput in Early Childhood Education?
- ❖ How do ecosystemic factors influence Black student teachers' perceptions and experiences of the relevance and appropriateness of Early Childhood Education?



Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystems Theory

- Explains the relationships among people, communities and institutions
- Factors in the environment of the student
- Views different levels in the social context as "systems" where functioning of the whole is dependent on the interaction between various parts
- Looks at the interactions between these systems

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Method and Procedures

- Qualitative case study
- Focus group interviews
- Participants: Eight first-year students, 5 second year students, and 4 third year students participated

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Findings and Discussion

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Emerging Themes

- Personal (Microsystem)
- Community (Mesosystem)
- Institutional (Exosystem)
- History (Chronosystem)

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PERSONAL CHOICES

Choosing Early Child Education

- *“Yes, I knew all along I wanted to teach young children and not older children...Yes I’ve always wanted to teach and that’s why I initially applied for education.”*
- *“My parents were very supportive of whatever career I chose as long as I stick to it and finish it.”*
- *“Actually my dad encouraged me to do education because he was like always saying, “I don’t have money to pay for the other careers so how about you do education.””*

PERSONAL CHOICES

Choosing Early Child Education (continue)

- *“You know, as I started coming here, all the negative attitude that has been in my mind about teaching has just gone away. I’m just seeing how other people are so enthusiastic about teachers, you know, just, how can someone have so much passion? I thought I had passion; I don’t have that much passion. But then it kind of inspires you, you know?”*

PERSONAL CHOICES

Choosing an Institution of Higher Education

- *“Well for me, the University of Pretoria where I come from is this was considered one of the best, the best university you can come to.”*
- *“I’ve always wanted to come to a place where there’s a lot of White people, not because I wanted to be far away from Black people, just to experience a different culture, just to experience different lifestyles, just to experience different people, just how different our lifestyles are compared to people who live in town, mostly who are White.”*

PERSONAL CHOICES

Education and ECE in particular became a fall-back plan for many of the students we interviewed

- *“I applied for criminology, and then I was advised to put education as my fall back plan, so I did. But then the university answered me for my education application. So then, a week later they answered me for criminology and said I didn’t get space due to the fact that the Humanities Faculties is full. Instead of staying at home for a year, I’ll just take this for a year or a single semester.”*
- *“Yeah, I just think a lot of people, they just do education as a starting point. Most of them will tell you that, “Ah! We had no choice. They have a lot of bursaries for education. Now let’s just do education as a way out. At least we can afford to get a degree.” But they are not passionate about it. If you’re passionate about it, it’s very interesting. If you’re a teacher by heart, not even ashamed to say, “I’m doing education,” like others do. They just hide what they’re doing.”*

COMMUNITY INFLUENCES

ECE has a low status

- *“Well, for Blacks being an ECE teacher, it’s like, I’d say not the lowest but one of the lowest occupations, careers that you could choose.”*
- *“Why would you want to study to teach kids when you can actually study another degree? So they actually look down upon us. I mean in our areas, they just open a preschool, they just come in to teach school. They get the granny next door to come teach the children. So now, why would you want to go study to teach children? They don’t have the knowledge of why you need to learn to teach children.”*

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

English as academic language

- *“But with most Black students it’s the language barrier because you know when we’re doing our research, the information, the English, is of a higher standard and the people have trouble with that. And you have to go through an article of 50 pages and understand all the words... yeah academic writing, people struggle with that.”*

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

Financial costs for ECE program

- *“You have to know where to buy them [paints and learning resource supplies], places to laminate, places to photocopy. You look at this project for maths and then just look at the materials they used. They’re beautiful. You can tell that they spent a lot. And then you wonder, how am I going to do that without transport and money.”*

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

The Cost of University Education

Most of the Black students in this program receive financial aid through bursaries that are repaid through service to rural and urban areas.

- *“Yeah, the first year our parents had to take out money. Then the second year we learned how to save our money from the dining hall, eat once a day and get change.”*

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

Cost of ECE program

- *“...my mom because she’s a single parent and she didn’t have money for me to go to school because she’s a domestic worker...So the challenge that I’m facing is sometimes I think Early childhood education needs us to have money for laminating, for activities we do, we have to buy stuff, we have to laminate, we have to do all that, so that’s one challenge that I have because they don’t have money.”*

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

Cultural differences

- *“The university has so many things that are different from our schools and new to us. You need to work hard because tests are difficult and it is difficult to cope.”*
- *“It is very different for us here. Hard work, expensive and sometimes we do things then we wonder why because it is different from us at home.”*

PERSONAL CHOICES

Positive attitudes toward the ECE program (continue)

- *“You know, as I started coming here, all the negative attitude that has been in my mind about teaching has just gone away. I’m just seeing how other people are so enthusiastic about teachers, you know, just, how can someone have so much passion? I thought I had passion; I don’t have that much passion. But then it kind of inspires you, you know? “*
- *“With me I think it had definitely lived up to my expectations because we learn so much... You feel like you are going to develop the child holistically.... I really feel that our lecturer are really dedicated to the program.”*

Factors for low completion rate

Most Black students who enter the university face multi-dimensional obstacles:

- economically disadvantaged
- prejudices about teaching
- culturally irrelevant curricula
- language demands
- Cultural alienation and diverse cultural environment
- Inadequately prepared/underprepared for studies at HEI
- More rigorous performance requirements
- Institutional factors that may unintentionally or overtly exclude these students due to the prevailing ideologies and westernized expectations of the student population

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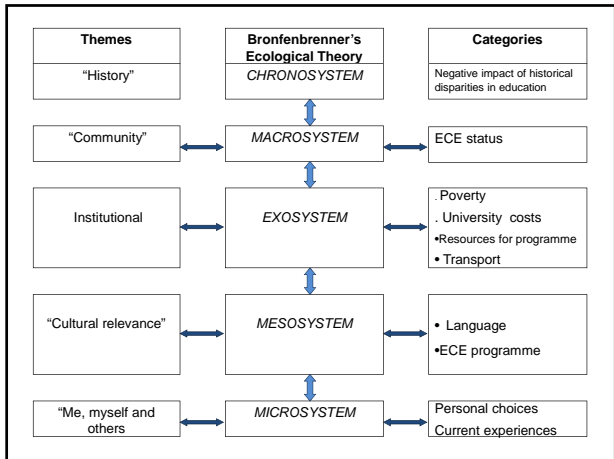
History

The purposeful historical disparities in education have contributed to the low status that Blacks afford to the teaching profession

- *“ECE teachers have no status at their schools”*
- *“It seems they are not qualified and their salaries are low”*
- *“ old ladies teaching ECE”*

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Recommendations

Higher education institutions should:

1. orientate and prepare Black students for specific (language, contextual, cultural) programmes (ECE)
2. have strategies to recruit and retain Black students
3. address the cultural relevance of the ECE programme as well as institutional
4. examine the financial support offered to Black students in ECE

In the context of this study, the implication is that although former White universities opened their doors to Black students, the expectations based on a specific ideology and culture still remains.



Welcoming Day and Orientation Week





Thank you

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