

ESTABLISHING TEACHING SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa: 2011-2025 (date of publication: 05 April 2011) aims to: *“Strengthen the teaching practice/school experience component of teacher education programmes through the development of Teaching Schools”*.

Teaching schools (TSs) are described in the Framework as “teaching laboratories”, where students can engage in learning-from-practice, for example by observing best practice, participating in micro-teaching and taking subject methodology courses. TSs may also be used as centres for research into teaching and learning. Furthermore, staff at TSs will be developed as mentors for student teachers and will be able to teach methodology courses. It is stated in the Framework that TSs will be located close to each teacher education delivery site and will consist of one primary school and one secondary school per site. The Framework also states the need to develop national norms and standards for TSs.

In response to this, a research group from the Faculty of Education has been tasked by the Department of Higher Education and Training (with sponsorship from European Union funding) to research the establishment of teaching schools at teacher education institutions in South Africa. The Faculty already has experience in this regard with its Funda UJabule School on the Soweto campus. The school is a partnership between the Gauteng Department of Education and UJ. It is a public school, serving children and parents in Soweto; it is also a research/training school, a first of its kind in South Africa.

The research focuses on developing an understanding of the preconditions for establishing TSs, the nature of the relationship between higher education institutions and TSs, the status of these schools in terms of the education legislation framework, and how TSs could serve as “teaching laboratories” and research sites. One of the outcomes of the research will be “norms and standards for TSs” as indicated in the “Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa”.

The aims of the research are to:

- a. develop norms and standards for TSs;
- b. identify the challenges to be likely faced in establishing such schools, and to suggest ways in which the challenges can be addressed;
- c. determine the steps to be taken to establish such schools;
- d. identify possible governance and management (including relationships, roles and responsibilities) models for such schools that would be appropriate for the South African context;
- e. Explore how the utilisation of the schools can be integrated into initial teacher education programmes and research programmes to benefit different stakeholders.

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