

The Lack of and Need for Academic Depth and Rigor in Teacher Education, with Special Reference to South Africa

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ABSTRACT Increasing apprehension worldwide about the rigor and depth in teacher education programs gave rise to this paper. The objective of this paper was to identify factors that detract from depth and rigor in teacher education programs, particularly in South Africa. An interpretive-constructivist approach was employed to build a conceptual-theoretical framework. The research found seven sets of factors detracting from academic rigor in teacher education. These include the student-staff ratios in faculties/schools of education, poor student intake, trends in teacher education curricula and program design, development and implementation, the pragmatic slant and poor funding of education-related research, the relative short history of education as an academic discipline at universities, the poorly structured state of specialization fields of education, including the incoherent state of the field(s) of education-related knowledge, as well as the non-accumulative nature of education-related research. It is recommended that teacher training colleges are reinstated and that university faculties of education concentrate on the core mission of strengthening education scholarship.