

A FESTSCHRIFT DEDICATED TO ROB SIEBÖRGER

A Teacher of History Teachers

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I had gone to the mountain to meet a man. I had hoped that our discussion would result in collaboration, one where he would allow me to learn from him. “Rob Siebörger is doing good work”. These were the words of Professor Chris Breen as we shared a cup of coffee up at the coffee shop at Rhodes Memorial in May 2009. I had gone to him to ask for advice with regard to doing a Master’s degree at the University of Cape Town. Until then I had no idea who Robert Frederick Siebörger was. Nor did I have any idea of the extent to which his work of the previous two decades had contributed to the shaping of the landscape of History Education in South Africa. This was to change over the following six years as the demands of our relationship allowed me glimpses of the man, of the academic but most of all of the History teacher.

However, the purpose of this Festschrift contribution is not to draw attention to the academic articles published by Rob. Instead I want to focus on his commitment as a teacher of teachers of History, especially primary school teachers. His legacy for me lay not in the number of publications attributed to him. For me it lay in the impact he had on those whom he taught and supervised.

His style of supervising appealed to me. Then, as an opinionated post-modernist I was eager to show my irreverence to accepted practice. My mission was to discredit grand narratives and the History class was an ideal vehicle to further my nihilistic project. He would allow me to exhaust my limited repertoire, much like George Herbert in *The Collar*. In one of our sessions I famously declared that I could teach History from a *Sunday Times*. Rob’s reply was more than equal to the task: not only did it expose mine for its short-sightedness, his also reflected the gaze required of someone who wanted to engage in a long-term relationship with History teaching. “But you cannot develop a curriculum around a *Sunday Times*”, was his retort. That was when I became aware of the connection between the intended, enacted and assessed

curricula. A chance remark, or so it seemed, succeeded in providing me with the lenses required to see the unintended consequences of my practice as a teacher of History.

Rob's knowledge of matters related to curriculum is confidence inspiring, especially to one who is attempting to engage with it at a theoretical level. As my supervisor I had hoped, wished that he would guide and chart my stuttering progress whilst writing my dissertation. When encountering a problem, which was often, I would in painstaking detail describe the cliff-face before me. Instead of showing me the way, and today I know he knew, he allowed me to find my feet. "So what are you going to do?" In that way he ensured that I make the effort. And his guidance from the wings has allowed me to become conscious of my growth, something I now do with my own learners. Where I previously might I have consciously, or not, tried to impress my high school learners with my second register, I now allow them to discover the complexity of our historical gaze. For I know the reward they will feel when they succeed.

Until I met Rob I was prone to becoming a disciple of one or other theorist, from Paulo Freire to William Doll. My practice as a teacher of History was characterised by an attempt to legitimise one or other "ism". Watching Rob move between "isms" and advancing the cause of the History Education made me rethink my relationship with theorists. I find using the writing and thoughts of Basil Bernstein extremely useful when trying to understand why my learners are struggling to make their school experience a meaningful one. Today I would say that I am a teacher of History and not a Bernsteinian: I find Bernstein useful, or as Rob would say "a toolbox".

My relationship with Rob continued after I completed my dissertation. He invited me to be interviewed by his PGCE students on two occasions. I am also aware that he has invited many other History teachers to serve a similar purpose. These teachers, too, have echoed similar feelings of affirmation of practice in being asked to share with future practitioners. This could only happen if the space was created, opened up, by the gatekeeper: in this case, Rob.

Rob Siebörger occupies a unique space in the community of History Education practitioners. We, who teach from textbooks shaped by a curriculum which bears his fingerprints, are not always aware of his efforts. Whilst other academics have dedicated their professional lives to publishing of academic articles Robert Frederick Siebörger has invested in teachers. Much of what he

has written has practical application. Of special significance is the *Turning Points in History*. It is a series of lessons which I have been able to use as a means to deepen high school learners' historical knowledge. At no point do the learners sense or even recognise Siebörger's hand. The consequence of their hour's efforts, however, bears Siebörger's hand.

Now, Professor Emeritus, he still shapes the landscape. He is active in shaping the response of the South African Society for History Teaching (SASHT) to pertinent issues of the day.

I had gone to the mountain that day in May 2009. I owe Professor Chris Breen a tremendous debt of gratitude for pointing me in the direction of the unassuming man who to this day is shaping History Education in South Africa. We who follow in his wake will find the waters calmer for he has cleared the sandbars.

A MAN OF HISTORY

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I first met Rob Siebörger a year or so after he took up his post at the University of Cape Town, School of Education and have now known him and valued his friendship for close to thirty years. The invitation to contribute to this Festschrift has given me a welcome opportunity to reflect on some key moments of those years.

Rob's contribution to History Education in South Africa has been wide-ranging and invaluable. This has included:

- teacher education at UCT;
- scholarship in the field of History Education, in particular curriculum – making a significant contribution to the academic debate around the curriculum changes between 1990 and the present;
- materials development in the field of History Education – a key text being *'What is Evidence? South Africa During the Years of Apartheid: a Skills-based Approach to Secondary History'* published in 1996;

- assessment expertise – including *Transforming Assessment. A Guide for South African Teachers*, Juta, published with Henry Macintosh and in the assessment group for the Revised National Curriculum Statements;
- active involvement in national curriculum initiatives;
- extensive professional development work with teachers and curriculum advisers.

While all aspects of Rob's long and distinguished career have made a significant difference, I am focussing on just three "moments" at which our work intersected: the period of transition between 1990 and 1994; his co-direction of a Nuffield-funded Primary History Programme (PHP); and in his involvement in the national curriculum development processes.

During the years of transition between 1990 and 1994, the School History "community" was in a state of excited anticipation. During apartheid, Afrikaner Nationalist historians had controlled School History. Alternative History textbooks had been produced, but had never received official approval. Now that an ideological space was opening to challenge the Afrikaner Nationalist interpretation, the "progressive" History community, who had felt that they had been in the 'wilderness' for too long, were pushing to open up the debates. Rob played a central role in organising the platform for that to happen. Three teacher conferences were held in 1992 in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban to debate a new History curriculum for South Africa (Siebörger, 2000). This was groundbreaking in opening the way for teacher involvement in thinking about and debating History Education. It was also the first time teachers from all of the apartheid education departments had come together as equals. The general emphasis in all of the conferences was on History as a discipline, on how it should be taught in order to reflect the skills and processes of historians, and on a more inclusive History (Siebörger, 2000).

In 1993 two textbook colloquia on "School History Textbooks for a Democratic South Africa" sponsored by the Georg Eckert Institute (GEI) Braunschweig, Germany, took place. Again Rob played a significant role in the organisation. The colloquia brought together historians and History educators with diametrically opposed views on the nature and purpose of History and History Education. Given these opposing views, outside facilitation was thought necessary to facilitate the dialogue between the Afrikaner nationalist historians and textbook writers and historians and writers representing the progressive History community. The GEI had had

experience in textbook revision in post-conflict societies. A statement released after the second colloquium took positions on the construction of curriculum as well as on school textbooks. This included that the role of School History should be “inclusive and democratic”; that a new History curriculum should not “exclude, diminish or distort the History of particular groups, classes or communities”; and that it should reflect “cultural diversity while reconciling national unity” (Siebörger, 1994). Although these processes did not influence the first post-apartheid curriculum changes, they laid a firm foundation for the thinking that became integral to History within the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS).

A primary school programme co-directed by Rob and Jacqui Dean¹ (Leeds Metropolitan University, United Kingdom), was to impact not only on the teachers and advisors in the Western Cape, but was also to have a direct influence on the Outcomes and Assessment Standards of History within Social Sciences in the RNCS.

In 1994 the Nuffield Foundation funded a pilot teacher education and curriculum development project in South Africa. In 1997 the Foundation extended its support by awarding a major grant for a four-year Primary History Programme (PHP) in South Africa. This project directed by Jacqui Dean in the UK and Rob in Cape Town, operated in partnership with the Western Cape Education Department. It focused on working with teachers from mainly from disadvantaged schools and with curriculum advisers working in the General Education and Training (GET) phase.

The PHP was set up at a crucial time of curriculum change in South Africa, when Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was being introduced. It continued for four years. C2005 had a strong values framework but emasculated School History. The challenge for the programme was how to develop History as democracy within C2005, infusing the values of the new curriculum while developing the skills and processes of History in the primary school classroom. Teachers and advisers were inducted into “Doing History” – an approach alien to traditional History teaching in the majority of South African schools. “Doing History” (Hexter, 1971) is a process of enquiry, evidence-based interpretation and construction of the past, a debate and the study of the human condition. Participants were provided with procedural knowledge and skills, within the context of appropriate propositional knowledge, as the medium for the fostering of changes in attitudes and detailed pedagogy so that they would be

¹ Thank you to Jacqui Dean for contributing to this section of the Festschrift.

able to implement Curriculum 2005 (Dean, 2000).

The PHP involved an annual two-week visit to the UK during which the teams were introduced to new approaches to History teaching, and alternative sets of models of education to use, where relevant, within their own teaching contexts (PHP final report, December 2003). Rob organised and facilitated the on-going in-service and developmental support in South Africa. The whole Programme operated within an action research and reflective practice framework, with team members keeping a reflective journal on issues and problems identified in their own practice and the strategies developed to address those problems. The journal was written up as a formal assignment which was submitted to Leeds Metropolitan University in the UK for a professional development diploma course, customised for the Programme (PHP, 2003).

The Programme's action research/reflective practice focus provided a framework for building bridges between team members' situated, familiar models of History teaching, the models of good practice they saw in the UK and a new model of good practice that could be realised in the South African context (Dean 2003).

Two of the programme teachers won national awards for their teaching portfolios; several team teachers were promoted within their schools. In 2015 one of the team members who had been appointed as head of his primary school, won the top Western Cape leadership award for primary school principals. The programme also developed a teaching video and materials in conjunction with the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) using actual lessons taught by team members in their classrooms.

The PHP had influence beyond that of the teachers and advisers who took part in the programme. The "Doing History" approach became the foundation for History within the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). Three members of the PHP, including myself, were involved in the RNCS GET and Further Education and Training (FET) curriculum processes. Through this, History as a process of enquiry, based on disciplinary knowledge was built into the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards for GET and FET History. Through the participating teachers, the PHP had demonstrated the possibilities of excellent History teaching in ordinary, crowded South African classrooms, which encouraged the writing of good practice into the curriculum.

Rob has played a significant role in the curriculum processes from C2005 to the current Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) History curriculum. As a member of the Human and Social Sciences (HSS) Learning Area writing group he made a strong bid to retain History as a recognisable strand of the learning area. Unfortunately time pressures of the process undermined his efforts and the political imperatives meant that History was in fact removed from the HSS learning area (Siebörger, 2001). Rob was a member and then leader of the Assessment Group for the RNCS. When I was asked to reorganise the NCS FET History for the current CAPS curriculum, I turned to Rob for help. His input was invaluable in shaping the content and the conceptual frameworks. Not everyone has been satisfied with the NCS or the CAPS curriculum frameworks, but as Rob himself noted, there is “one inescapable truth: that it will never be possible to create the ideal History content, nor to satisfy all the members of a committee, let alone the academic or teaching professions or general public” (Siebörger, 2012).

What is not in question, is that because of his dedication and his contribution to the cause of History Education in South African schools, Rob has ensured that School History is in a better place now than it was when he entered UCT.

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AN IRISH TRIBUTE TO ROB SIEBÖRGER

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I first met Rob at a Standing Conference of History Teacher Educators' conference at the University of Oxford in 1996. It was the morning after a very rough night on the streets of Belfast and I was the focal point of enquiries into what exactly was going on. Very quickly I developed an affinity with Rob. We talked the same language as reluctant members of once dominant communities coming to terms with the loss of privilege and position. Rob was the first South African educator that I had met face to face (with the exception of his colleague Jackie Dean who by then was working in England). South Africa has a particular hold on me in that as a result of reading Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country* and Mary Benson's *Struggle for a Birthright* in my mid-teens I had become politicised around the anti-apartheid movement and, consequently, this provided a critical lens of "distance" through which to objectify the mayhem that was developing on the streets around me as I moved to adulthood and a professional career in teaching. Also, living in the midst of conflict I realised the complexity of such situations and the vital importance of avoiding naïve judgments by probing the realities with those who experienced events from within.

At that point Northern Ireland and South Africa were ahead of others in addressing conflict through History teaching. Soon, our conversations explored each other's social and professional contexts. As liberals within our communities we knew the scorn of diehards as well as the distain of those from other backgrounds who impatiently advocated the tearing down of the existing order. As teacher educators we were wrestling with the challenges of bringing History teachers to a place where they are committed to social justice and equipped to confront the difficult past with sensitivity, compassion and inclusivity. As proponents of History Education we were also very conscious of the tension between preserving the rigour of the discipline and using teaching to promote social change. In the years that have followed Rob and I have carried on these conversations at intermittent intervals, sometimes by email, but particularly at HTEN (the successor to SCHTE) and History Educators International Research Network (HEIRNET) conferences.

Indeed, on three occasions, at an HTEN conference in 2001, then a Nuffield sponsored seminar on Teaching History in Divided Societies in 2002 and lastly at a HEIRNET conference in 2011, Rob visited Northern Ireland, thus giving our discussions even more vitality. It was during the last encounter that I discovered that we had even more in common than I had thought. Given Rob's gentle and understated manner, it had never occurred to me that despite his heritage, he might share my passion for rugby. At the end of the last day of the conference I found him impatient to travel to Ravenhill in Belfast to watch three of his beloved Springboks, Ruan Pienaar, B.J. Botha and Johann Muller play for Ulster that evening. Possibly, it is good that this was a belated discovery in our relationship as, had it happened earlier, it might have truncated our more cerebral discussions! It is a personal regret that I was unable to travel to Cape Town for the HEIRNET conference hosted by Rob in 2009. It is likely that my first visit to South Africa will have to become an essential pilgrimage as part of my own retirement.

In this brief tribute it is only possible to pick out aspects of Rob's contribution to History Education scholarship and practice. My perspective is an international one but I am very aware that he has had a considerable impact within South Africa. Three aspects stand out for me. The first relates to the period of political transition. At a time when new political arrangements were emerging in Northern Ireland, and educators were appreciating the possibilities of working in an environment free from daily violence, I found his clear and undemonstrative accounts detailing the responses and vacillations of History Education policy in South Africa informative and revealing (Dean & Siebörger 1995; Siebörger 2000; Siebörger & Dean, 2002). The 1995 article articulates sharply the dilemmas facing History educators who wish to contribute to democratic nation-building while preserving the critical dimensions (and discomfort of discovering inconvenient evidence) of an enquiry based discipline: there is a tension between the political aim of nation-building and the educational aim of teaching students to think historically. In support of his critique Bundy quotes John Slater, who warns that History does not seek either to sustain or devalue tradition, heritage or culture. It does not assume that there are shared values waiting to be defined and demanding to be supported. It does not require us to believe that a society's values are always valuable. If History seeks to guarantee any of these things, it ceases to be History and becomes indoctrination. However, given the divided nature of South Africa's past, the desire to build a cohesive nation is both strong and widespread. It can be argued that only countries with a long History of

nationhood and an established democratic tradition can afford to be purists; do South African political and social imperatives make the harnessing of History in their service acceptable? Can the ends justify the means? Many, perhaps most, people in South Africa today would answer in the affirmative (Dean & Siebörger, 1995:36).

Twenty years into Northern Ireland's faltering political transformation I continue to wrestle with this dilemma. Indeed, recently I have become uneasy at the blurring of History and Citizenship Education and advocate that teachers should be clearly aware of the different, but complementary, contribution each can make.

In relation to this, though we may differ on how far History, alone, might go in pursuit of supporting democratic practice, Rob's second contribution has been to insist on the key importance of enquiry based, disciplinary teaching in societies emerging from conflict. This has involved students understanding that historical interpretation is constructed not only through the examination of evidence but from the vantage point of the interpreter, and that debate is crucial to the clarification of ideas: A key issue is whether students can learn that there is more than one view of the past, but that the views which exist take account of each other, and inform and react against each other (Siebörger, 1995:33).

This thinking he applied to his critique of existing textbooks and to the production of new textbooks for the post-apartheid era. The 1995 *Teaching History* article provides a perceptive analysis of differing textbook approaches of the time which continues to provide insight for History educators working in post conflict reconstruction.

The third contribution I wish to highlight is perhaps the most valuable one from an international perspective. That is, the recognition that teachers themselves have to engage with personal transition before they are in a proper place to work effectively with their students; that teachers, too, are products of conflict affected societies and carry with them emotional baggage associated with its traumas. Rob's encounter work with Jackie Dean on the Nuffield sponsored *South African Primary History Programme* was of great significance in exploring how teachers might, through intensive shared experiences, find common points of reference thus "playing a crucial role in forging links between people historically divided" (Siebörger & Dean, 2002:87). My own work convinces me that this type of work is of critical importance if teachers are to overcome the emotional barriers that face them in classrooms in divided

societies. However, the follow-up work of Gail Weldon and others suggests that South African educators have often been bolder than us in pursuing the liberation of teachers from their pasts.

In 1995 Rob and Jackie wrote that defining of the purpose of History teaching was not an academic debate but ‘a fight for the soul of the new South Africa’ (Dean & Siebörger, 1995:37). My understanding is that History teaching in South Africa is again at a crossroads with the distinct threat of a move back to a single narrative, nation-building approach. It would be wise council to refer back to Rob Siebörger’s calm but decisive writing with its emphasis on criticality, inclusivity and discourse as pillars of effective History teaching in contributing to a socially cohesive society.

I wish Rob a long and healthy retirement.

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THE ETHOS OF COLLEGIALLY

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It gives me great please to honour Rob Siebörger as one of the most consistent and dedicated trainers of teachers that I have met during my career and someone who has been a major influence in the field of History Education in South Africa since the 1980s. He stands out for his selfless and

unassuming dedication to his students and to the teaching profession in a world where such values are increasingly rare. In an academic world where all the stress is currently placed on research output and policy networking, Rob always identified the needs of students and schools as his primary concern in the School of Education and in the broader professional context, without neglecting his research commitment. Only when he retired did the School realize that he had been assuming responsibility for a wide range of tasks that had thenceforth to be redistributed among a number of colleagues.

While we all realised the limitations of Colleges of Education in the apartheid era, we had to admit to an ethos of commitment to education in these institutions that is seldom to be found in Universities. Many of us had hoped that the new post-1994 era would provide the space for an enhanced commitment to that ethos with the addition of greater academic rigour. The closure of the Colleges without any consultation with the profession was something that none of us anticipated. Whatever their limitations, the Colleges represented professional commitment to the teaching profession and an ethical dedication to the tasks of education. The closure of the Colleges sapped the profession of that essential ethos at a crucial time and many of the problems in South African education at the present time can be traced to those disastrous policy decisions. Only in the person of individual teacher educators does that ethos live on – and Rob Siebörger is a beacon of inspiration in that regard. Rob has been responsible for admissions and for the Secondary PGCE Programme in the School of Education at the University of Cape Town (UCT) for as long as most of us can remember and was for many years in charge of the Advanced Certificate of Education (ACE). Most significantly he was responsible for the training of History teachers from the early 'eighties until 2014. Aside from the task of mentoring students, he participated in a range of research activities relating to the complex area of the teaching of History, curriculum reform and assessment. Key elements of those initiatives at the time when I worked with him were his work on the History Education Group (HEG), the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) investigation of *The Teaching of History in the RSA* (1992),¹ the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) *Curriculum Report*; the Magaliesberg conference sponsored by the Georg Eckert Institute to support the transformation of History Education in South Africa, and a variety of interventions related to the shaping of a new History curriculum for South Africa after 1994. His

1 See in particular: "The Assessment of History in the Senior Secondary Phase" (with P. Kallaway, J Bottaro and D Hiscock), in a report for the HSRC Education Research Programme, No 27, (Pretoria, HSRC, 1992).

contribution to a key international publication on History Education mapped out the important initiatives that marked the transition from apartheid to the new processes that characterized the curriculum development in a democratic South Africa.² In more recent years he was involved with History curriculum reform and was one of the authors of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum statement of 2011. He was also involved in the writing and editing of a range of school textbooks and teacher aids which sought to meet the exacting demands of the new curriculum revisions. Notable amongst these was his contribution to *Turning Points History* (with Jeff Guy and Peter Lekgoathi) and his work with Gail Weldon on *What is Evidence?*

Rob has produced a number of academic publications since 1990 mainly associated with the field of School History, curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation in relation to secondary and primary schools, and has focused on issues such as citizenship and education and values and education.

He participated enthusiastically in the building of a new community of History educators, nationally and locally, and helped to establish the networks that today make up the South African Society for History Teachers (SASHT). He was also regularly attended the meeting of the History Educators International Network Conference (HEIRNET). He was also an enthusiastic participant in the Kenton Education Conferences and the Southern African Comparative and History of Education Society (SACHES). I will be forever grateful to him for his tireless work on the World Congress of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES) held in Cape Town in 1998.

The hard truth is that Rob leaves the profession at a time when the teaching of History in schools has to confront difficult times. Many changes in the curriculum crafted without any consultation with the teachers and teacher educators who have to implement it, have often left teachers bewildered and vulnerable. The distance of School History from the practices of the discipline of History have led to a good deal of confusion about what teachers are trying to achieve in the classroom – and to a mass defection of students from the field!

The current initiatives to make History a compulsory subject in high school under some misguided notion that this will promote a patriotic nationalism among the youth might be a death-knell for much good History teaching.

² R Siebörger, “The History Working Group and Beyond”, T Taylor & R Guyver (eds.), *History Wars and the Classroom: Global Perspectives* (Charlotte, IAP, 2011).

In this context of apprehension it is with sadness that we have to bid you farewell from your formal role at UCT where you will be direly missed. But we look forward to your future work in a field that you have contributed to so generously and unstintingly!

ROB SIEBÖRGER: REIMAGINING THE FUTURE AS HISTORIAN AND EDUCATOR

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Rob Siebörger views historical study as an opportunity to challenge the status quo and reimagine the future. With this belief, he has helped to create a new History for schools in South Africa. In post-apartheid South Africa, the place of History was questioned. Yet Rob argued that the study of History would be critical to the ability of pupils – and society – “to cope with the complexities that South Africa presents today” (Siebörger, 2008b). Essential to this endeavor has been the way that Rob combines the mind of an historian with the heart of an educator. In even the most challenging of situations, he perceives possibilities for discussion and the transformation of perspectives and ideas.

I first met Rob in 1998. Sight unseen, Rob agreed to take me on as a research Masters student. He took a risk on me – here I was, arriving in South Africa fresh from finishing my undergraduate degree in the United States and determined to understand how History was being taught in post-apartheid South Africa. Did I have a lot to learn! I was fortunate to have an excellent teacher.

With Rob as my guide, I became immersed: in literature, in on-going debates, and, most importantly, in daily experiences of students and teachers in schools. It was a time when it was easy to get caught up in the excitement of change – in rhetoric, in policy, in beliefs about how the future would be different. But Rob challenged me, gently but constantly, to focus on how these dialogues translated into classroom experiences. Rob worked from the

position that transformation is woven into the daily experiences of children and teachers.

I know that Rob's constant and gentle reminders were not only for his students. Rob did the work of connecting *talk* of change to *acts* of change tirelessly over the past five decades. His leadership in the South African Primary History Programme (PHP) was one example. The late 1990s introduction of Curriculum 2005 and its outcomes-based education approach left teachers feeling stranded. This massive shift in educational practice occurred in the midst of social and political change in post-apartheid South Africa "without anything like the human and financial resources necessary" to realize its goals (Siebörger & Dean, 2002).

Rob's questions in this context focused on the spaces in which the new educational approach was enacted on a daily basis: by teachers in classrooms who, as he wrote, "would be primarily responsible for the implementation of the new curriculum and its values" (Siebörger & Dean, 2002). The PHP "aimed to provide participants with a support and educational structure which would introduce them to new models of teaching and learning, while providing education and support for their own development as reflective practitioners and action researchers" (Siebörger & Dean, 2002). It did so by creating shared experiences of "doing history"; teachers mutually supported each other in creating History lessons, researching their own practice, and collectively reflecting on the processes and outcomes.

Quite by happenstance, I had the opportunity to work with one of the teachers who participated in PHP and taught at a primary school in one of Cape Town's largest townships. His excitement about History teaching was palpable. He arrived at school daily with armfuls of primary source materials he had gathered; he drew a map of South Africa on outdoor play area with chalk and brought all of his Standard 7 pupils outside to physically experience the movement of the Mfecane across the geography of the modern nation-state; he called me in the evening to discuss how to design lessons that would allow his pupils, mostly recently arrived in Cape Town from the former Transkei Bantustan, to see themselves in the "new South Africa".

Rob described how the PHP worked at the micro-level toward the transformation of the practice of History teaching and the experience of History learning, with the larger goal of building a democratic society. He quotes from one participant: "In this country, we can't expect racism to disappear just because we have an excellent constitution and a new government.

We can't throw open schools and expect everything to be fine and not put support structures in place. Just as there is a gap between education policy and practice, there is a gap between a constitution and the lived experiences of the people" (Siebörger & Dean, 2002). The PHP was one way of bridging this gap between the Constitution and lived experiences in schools.

Rob also connected talk of change to acts of change through the Turning Points in History project of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation and what was then the South African History Project, located in the Department of Education. Rob's work again underscored the role of teachers as agents of change. He wrote the teachers' guides to the series of books and co-created a set of classroom modules to demonstrate how the books could be used. In addition, Rob led workshops on the books and their classroom use for the Education departments of all of South Africa's provinces. *Turning Points in History* was winner of the 2008 UNESCO Prize for Peace Education.

As with the Primary History Programme, Rob perceived the training of teachers in Turning Points to be a space for the sharing of personal narratives. Rob argued that "fundamental to being able to understand the purpose and workings of democracy are a strongly formed sense of personal identity and a tolerance of the standpoints of others" (Siebörger, 2008b). In the workshops, as in the curriculum, participants are asked to identify turning points in their own lives and to discuss and deliberate them together. For Rob, these were important moments both professionally and personally to "invite conversations about race in history education" and to reflect on his own identity as "an older, white, professor who had been around in the apartheid years" while the "participants were, with very few exceptions, black South Africans" (Siebörger, 2008a). As had motivated previous work, Rob found that the Turning Points trainings provided a springboard for the sharing of experiences and processes of coming to understanding across lines of race and previous and current social and political positions.

A true historian and educator, Rob brings to his scholarship, his teaching, and his mentorship questions shaped by historical methods *and* by pedagogy. He begins with the substance – What historical events will get children excited to learn? What dilemmas of the past will turn their assumptions upside down? What narratives of people – famous and not – will allow children to put themselves in others' shoes? He also listens to the kinds of puzzles young children grapple with. When his seven year-old son David asked "Has it happened yet?" about a house that was built in 1655 or his four year-old

daughter Kathy asked “Daddy, was it here yesterday?” about a prehistoric landmark (Siebörger, 1991: iii), Rob did not take it as a sign that History was beyond grasp but rather that History probed kids to ask great questions. Rob believes that children can do sophisticated and complex thinking and analysis, and he has helped to lay the foundation for future generations of South African children to do just that.

Rob invites others to think with him. He excitedly explores ideas that are not yet fully formed, working together with others to build understandings that, together, are greater than the sum of their individual parts.

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