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Professor Irma Eloff
Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria, South Africa

Abstract:

Teacher education in South Africa has always been intricately interwoven with the history of the country. From the first antecedents in small Protestant missions, which were established in colonial South Africa, through the ravages of racially separate education systems under apartheid, to the pioneering educational models within an emerging democracy, teacher education has always been made to conform with prevailing political dogmas and aspirations. Its effectiveness as a vehicle for political and social transformation, demonstrates just how well teacher education in South Africa has adapted itself to ideologues and policy makers with different social and political agendas. While enormous challenges such as the closure of teacher training colleges, inadequate investment in language diversity, and questions about the status of the profession remain, teacher education at universities is characterized by high levels of responsiveness to societal demands and a deep commitment to quality. This address reflects on some of the key historical moments of teacher education in South Africa, ponders the current challenges in an emerging democracy, and shares some thoughts about the future of teacher education and educational research in the global context.