Transformation of the South African schooling system

Teacher Professionalism and Education Transformation

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List of Acronyms

ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
CEPD	Centre for Education Policy Development
CPTD	Continuous Professional Teacher Development
DAS	Developmental Appraisal System
DETU	Democratic Teacher's Union
DoE	Department of Education
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
ETDP	Education and Training Development Programme
GCE	Graduate Certificate of Education
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa
NEUSA	National Education Union of South Africa
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NPDE	National Professional Diploma in Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OBE	Outcomes-based Education
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PGCE	Post-graduate Certificate of Education
R&R	Redeployment and Redistribution
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SAOU	Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysers Unie
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
TAC	Teachers Action Committee
WSE	Whole School Evaluation

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About the Publication

In 1997, the CEPD and its partner organisations (the Education Policy Units based at the Universities of the Witwatersrand, Natal and Fort Hare) embarked on a major longitudinal study – Education 2000 Plus. The study sought to track and examine the transformation of the schooling system in South Africa, focusing on the policies and programmes of the new government. The study was undertaken over a period of five years, and several intermediate reports emerged as the study progressed.

Towards the end of the study, the team spent a year examining and analysing the data, with a view to sharing the findings of the study with regard to the extent, nature and direction of education transformation in South Africa, specifically in relation to the schooling system.

The papers in this series – *Transformation of the South African Schooling System* – reflect on that process. The papers in this series have undergone a several review processes. Firstly, they were all presented at a national conference that was held in 2004. Following comments that were received at the conference, the papers were revised. The papers were then given to two independent reviewers.

The ten papers in the series have all undergone the review processes discussed above. Each of these papers provides an account of the transformation processes relating to the schooling system. The titles in this series are as follows:

1. Change Agents in the South African Schooling System: Challenges and Prospects, *George Moyo*
2. "Transformation" Revisited, *Enver Motala*
3. Transformation in the School Environment: An Analysis of Photographs from One Rural Secondary School, *Jenni Karlsson*
4. Exploring the Mutability of School Ethos during South Africa's First Post-apartheid Decade, *Jenni Karlsson and Sandile Mbokazi*

5. Prospects and Challenges of Doing Social Justice Research: Experiences from the Education 2000 Plus Study, *Madumetja Kgobe and George Moyo*
6. Policy Change and the Experiences of Learners in Post-apartheid Schooling, *John Pampallis and Princess Tabata*
7. The Fault-lines in South African School Governance: Policy or People?, *Veerle Dieltiens*
8. Districts: Looking for a Place in the Education System, *Hersheela Narsee*
9. Teacher Professionalism and Education Transformation, *Julie Douglas*
10. Selected Macro-indicators of Education Transformation, 1991-2001, *Monica Bot*

Each of these papers reflect the multiple dimensions of the change processes, and the many aspects and features of transformation. Collectively, the papers suggest that important achievements have been made in driving education transformation towards an open, democratically organised quality for all, although major challenges remain.

1. Introduction

In 2004 then Education Minister Kader Asmal announced a teacher recruitment campaign and new measures to make teaching more attractive for those leaving school or seeking a career change, because teachers lost to natural attrition and the AIDS pandemic were not being replaced quickly enough (Asmal, 2004). Few students were registering to train as teachers (Makhanyana, 2004), and many newly qualified teachers were seeking work in other countries or out of teaching (Wasserman, 2003). The decline in the status and desirability of teaching has been compounded by poor conditions in many schools, new policies that place extra demands on teachers, and media reports blaming teachers for poor examination results due to lack of "professionalism".

This paper uses the Education 2000 Plus data and macro-indicators from 1998-2002 to explore teacher professionalism. To contextualise the data and issues, the meaning of teaching as a "profession" and contemporary discourses of "professionalism" in education will be examined. To provide background for the data, local and broader historic influences will be reviewed, circumstances will be set out that raised questions about teacher professionalism, and policy events to improve the professional standing and quality of South African teachers will be discussed.

2. Teachers and professionalism

Teaching is normally referred to as a profession and teachers as professionals. Professionalism is the quality of being a professional, and holds certain expectations of standards and standing and connotations of an ethical and personal mission (Page and Thomas, 1977; Nixon, 2001). However, two competing discourses are obvious when we consider how the term professionalism has been used traditionally and how it is currently being used.

Page and Thomas (1977) portrayed teaching as one of the most prestigious occupations, founded on systematic knowledge, lengthy academic and practical training, high autonomy and a code of ethics. Ethics for teachers were more implicit than formalised, and teachers possessed far greater autonomy then in what and how they taught than today. In fact, teacher autonomy was expected, but teachers were also expected to possess a sense of vocation similar to that of priests, nurses, social workers or other occupations regarded as professional but characterised by low salaries, moderate status and high expectations of service. Makau and Coombe (1994:2), writing about teachers in Africa, pointed out an implicit professional satisfaction, stemming in part from the esteem and respect teachers were awarded, to compensate for "poor salaries and workplace conditions and limited advancement opportunities".

Contemporary professionalism, however, is linked to social structure and economic reward rather than prestige and ethics. Also, teachers are state functionaries and as such increasingly politically controlled, which calls into question their autonomy as a body. In Latin America and Japan, teaching is regarded as an occupation rather than a profession, and teachers are referred to as workers or civil servants (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Villegas-Reimers summarised reasons for the dichotomy that also hold true for South Africa:

- Too great a number of teachers are in practice for high status to be automatically accorded.
- Although teaching is becoming a graduate occupation, qualifications needed to enter teaching in the past were not as high as those required for other professions such as medicine or law.
- Teaching is viewed as a feminine occupation, because of the growing number of women teachers.

Ball (1999, 2003) noted how the change in the meaning of professionalism was affected by managerialism in education and its emphasis on performativity and corporate culture. Nixon (2001:183) iterated how professionalism had become "a structured feature of the social and economic landscape" rather than a quality identified with a personal mission for excellence and vocation as in the past.

Bearing in mind the contemporary and traditional meanings, professionalism is explored through the Education 2000 Plus data, using Hoyle's framework of social function, knowledge, practitioner autonomy, collective autonomy and professional values (Hoyle, 1995; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). A further criterion of job satisfaction and morale is added, because in the Education 2000 Plus reports a decrease in morale existed concurrently with measures to make teachers more "professional". Also**,** without job satisfaction none of the vocational, non-material rewards for being a teacher are present.

3. Historical background

The history and background to the current situation are rooted in the deep influence of race on education policies and teacher training. Today's body of teachers was constituted through the following circumstances:

- In 1953 closure of most mission schools and teacher training facilities forced all teacher training into racially separated government training colleges, geared to extending the mass base of Bantu Education (Kallaway, 1984:176). Because other professions were closed to them on racial or economic grounds, many people of colour became teachers by default. Under-qualified, unqualified and even un-matriculated teachers were employed, so engendering a body of poorly qualified and unmotivated teachers with a diluted sense of professionalism that provided a limited professional model for those entering teaching.

- Many black schools became sites of overt and covert resistance, and strict surveillance was kept on teachers. Because of this, much opposition was disguised, many teachers were forced to comply with the system for financial or social reasons, and autonomy among teachers became eroded by growing state control (Soudien, 2002).

- Christian National Education alienated many teachers from their traditional value system culture of care and communitarianism, causing ethical disorientation and moral alienation (Brijraj, 2004).

- When resistance came to a head in 1976, teachers became increasingly politicised and polarised. Organisations such as the Teachers Action Committee (TAC), the National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA) and the Democratic Teacher's Union (DETU) rejected traditional teacher associations and what they stood for.

- Parker (2002:17) describes the period from 1990 to 1994 as one of "structural stasis and cultural malaise", where the entire racially segregated system was reviewed in an attempt to "construct an inspirational and viable vision of post-apartheid South Africa's education and training system" (Parker, 2002:18). But political expediency and the need for consensus led to trade-offs that gave a neo-liberal direction to policies of decentralisation and managerialism.

- The National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA), established in 1991 on the principle that members of its organisation were teachers rather than politicians (Kihn, 2002), reflected racial divisions between the two dominant unions. The dichotomy still exists between teachers who see themselves as separate and autonomous from the state, potentially politically oppositional, or those who serve the interests of the state without becoming involved in political issues (Govender, 2004).

4. Policy background

A simplified overview of the main trends in policy development from 1994 to 2004 showed an initial focus on fostering democratic participation in schools and introducing the outcomes-based curriculum. Resources were directed towards reintegration of

fragmented departments and building infrastructural systems to administer the emerging national and provincial departments (Bot, 2003). Teachers were the human capital of the education system, to be redistributed and redeployed according to perceived need. A competitive, results-driven climate that blamed teachers for poor results in external examinations gave rise to a discourse of deficit for schools and teachers, and "teacher professionalism" became a recurring notion in that discourse. Attempts were made to remedy poor learner results at the level of the school, through school effectiveness and school improvement interventions that culminated in the development appraisal system (DAS) and whole school evaluation (WSE).

Concurrent attempts were made to stabilise, improve and standardise qualifications and amplify the professional standing of teachers. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act of 1995 and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) were precursors to the *Norms and Standards for Teacher Education, Training and Development, 2000*, which set out seven roles a teacher, then defined as an educator, should perform:

- learning mediator;
- interpreter and designer of learning programmes;
- leader, administrator and manager;
- scholar, researcher and lifelong learner;
- assessor;
- a community, citizenship and pastoral role; and
- a learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist role
- (Department of Education, 2000)

These roles notably expanded the individual autonomy and social role of teachers and prepared for them to engage in ongoing development in line with doctors and lawyers. The Employment of Educators Act of 1998 attempted to standardise conditions of service such as appointment, promotion, transfer and termination of service, as well as setting out strategies to deal with incapacity and misconduct (Motala, 1998). The South African Council for Educators (SACE) was established as a statutory body for registration of all teachers. In 2000, SACE started working collaboratively with the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) to upgrade teacher

qualifications through the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE), an interim INSET qualification for the 22% of teachers who did not hold the required formal M+3 (REQV 13) qualification level (Narsee, 2002).

Initial teaching qualifications were raised to M+4 (REQV 14), making teaching a post-graduate profession (Narsee, 2002:8), and entry qualifications became the four-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) or the one-year Higher Diploma in Education, also known as the Post-Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE). A new package of incremental courses was introduced to upgrade those already teaching to M+3 (REQV 13) NQF level 5 through the National Professional Diploma in Education, or M+4 (REQV 14) NQF level 6 through the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and the Graduate Certificate of Education (GCE) (Hindle, 2002). Additional changes are expected when the new Higher Education Qualifications Framework, currently open for public comment, is eventually adopted.

The Higher Education Act of 1997 profoundly affected teacher education. Teacher training colleges merged with universities or technikons or closed down, dramatically reducing the number of institutions producing teachers. In 1994, 150 institutions provided teacher education to 200 000 students (Parker, 2002). By 2000 these had decreased to 82 institutions for 110 000 students. In 2002, as part of the large-scale rationalisation in higher education, the number was reduced to 23 institutions for 20 000 students (Bot, 2003).

In 1998 the Developmental Appraisal System (DAS) was accepted after a longstanding deadlock between teacher unions and the Department of Education (DoE) about the appropriateness of appraisal in education (Narsee, 2002). From the onset, apprehension was expressed that DAS might become a system of inspection and surveillance, echoing the past, although it intended to work with Continuing Professional Development:

> to facilitate the personal and professional development of teachers in order to improve the quality of teaching practice and education

> management ….It is based on the fundamental principle of lifelong learning and development (DoE, 1999:53).

Borne out by the Education 2000 Plus reports, DAS implementation was problematic despite its claims of accountability, needs assessment and individual development. Teachers described it as a dubious process that was intimidating, stressful and a waste of manpower

Similarly, despite the notoriety of OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) among teachers, and widespread criticism about it from educationists since its introduction in the UK in 1992 (Tosey and Nicholls, 1999), the OFSTED system was incorporated into South African policy as the *National Policy for Whole-School Evaluation (WSE)* (DoE, 2001), first mentioned in the National Education Policy Act of 1996. It was intended that WSE should link evaluations by schools themselves with external evaluation carried out by supervisors from OFSTED to ascertain the overall quality of teaching throughout the school, to judge levels of learner performance and attainment, and to audit the extent of in-service professional development.

Whole school evaluation, or "judgements" as the document significantly says, was viewed as cumbersome and disempowering for teachers, with 50% or more of the supervisor's time spent observing lessons and little time set aside for discussion and joint reflection. Despite claims to the contrary, the system appeared to be top-down and non-democratic. Although it was claimed that the policy of WSE was the outcome of discussions involving representatives from a range of stakeholders, it immediately met with resistance from unions and teachers who felt that there had not been sufficient consultation. Although large-scale WSE was not implemented, the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) was approved by all stakeholders at the Education Labour Relations Council in August 2003.

IQMS aims to bring together the development appraisal system, performance measurement and whole school evaluation into one process. Gardiner (2003:29) expressed deep concerns about IQMS,

which he advised “must be watched with careful attention. It monster on paper and could become a monster in schools”. He warns that “it must be resisted utterly because it will crush the growth of a democratic culture and a culture of human rights in education in South Africa”. Motimele (2003:18) also warns that the integrationist approach of IQMS seeks to bring together what are actually “very disparate appraisal activities” and claims that the overall circumstances of teachers remain unchanged, namely “overcrowded classes, inadequate learning support materials, unsafe working environments and uncertainties caused by looming retrenchments”.

The Review Committee investigating Curriculum 2005 implementation found, from teachers’ experiences and perceptions, that they were impotent to implement the new curriculum framework due to “lack of resources, inadequate training and being overloaded by myriad policies attempting to enact educational reforms in schools” (Carrim, 2003:315).

Carrim (2003:318) described the cumulative effect of policy overload, poor initial training and inadequate in-service training:

- Teachers do not feel a sense of professional autonomy or competence.
- Teachers do not own the process of change in South Africa, but are subjects within it rather than agents of change.
- Teachers experience ongoing controls of their roles and themselves, articulated here in terms of gender, age, autonomy and choice of place of occupation.
- There is a gap between what legislative texts project teachers as being and the ways in which they actually experience their own identities

The impact and significance of these many policy changes for teacher professionalism are examined through teacher experiences in the Education 2000 Plus case studies.

5. Methods

The Education 2000 Plus project, where schools were visited from 1998 to 2000, gives us a view of transformation in the schools affected by post-1994 policy and events. Twelve schools were selected to examine professionalism issues, each visited in four consecutive years to gain insight into how policy events were enacted throughout the whole period. Teacher professionalism was not a main category in the reports, and so indicators about teachers and the issue of teacher professionalism were taken from other sections of school reports that covered:

- rationalisation and redeployment;
- the grievance procedure;
- development appraisal;
- whole school evaluation;
- management support and development; and
- teacher support and development.

The reports were examined and re-examined for information that might yield more insight into where and how teachers worked. Information from each year was synthesised, a brief report was written for each school, and tables were compiled to analyse the data. Information included details about the context and physical condition of the school, access to services and teaching materials, details about the body of teachers and learners, and the experiences of teachers related to policy events.

6. Analysis and discussion

6.1 Overview

In this section findings from Education 2000 Plus school reports are analysed and discussed using the framework of criteria articulated by Villegas-Reimers (2003). These criteria include social function,

knowledge base, practitioner autonomy and collective autonomy. Information emerging from school reports imply that job satisfaction and morale are vital for the professional aspirations and confidence of teachers, and so these are included as a sixth criterion.

6.2 Social function

Villegas-Reimers (2003) linked the position of teachers as professionals to their beneficial social function, taken for granted in most countries, including in South Africa, where their role is defined in terms of their community, citizenship and pastoral function (Department of Education, 1999).

Teachers in the Education 2000 Plus schools indicated the support they needed, and this fell into two categories. The first related to pastoral issues of managing discipline, dealing with troubled children, those with special needs or from different cultures, and coping with parents. The second category was to help teachers cope with work-related pressures: of stress, insecurity, demotivation and coping with large multi-grade classes. Teacher development and support was related to policy and function rather than for subject content or social function, and delivered through workshops or seminars focused mostly on curriculum, followed by development appraisal, school finance or job descriptions.

Teachers are in the front line and often the first point of recourse for traumatised children and those in need of social support. Fullan (1993:10) pointed out that teachers must deal with “poverty, especially among women and children, racism, drug abuse and horrendous social and personal problems”. The Education 2000 Plus teachers, however, felt ill-prepared to cope with their social role, and no effort was made to equip them for it except for occasional HIV/AIDS awareness workshops. Few schools had counselling teachers. In an economic climate where most resources were necessarily channelled towards learner performance, school counsellors, along with school librarians, were not seen as important for service delivery and were among the first to be declared in excess during the redistribution and rationalisation exercise. In some wealthier schools, counselling teachers were employed but paid by the School Governing Body.

Bot (2003) cites a Department of Education report from 2002 that predicts a huge impact directly and indirectly on schools, learners and teachers. She notes that currently 12% of South African teachers are HIV positive. HIV/AIDS is believed to contribute to a noticeable drop in the number of teachers in the 25-29 year age group. As more succumb to AIDS, those teachers remaining will be under pressure to cope with larger classes and sick and traumatised children. Such increased pastoral functions coupled with the many changes in policy are both demanding and stress-inducing for teachers, and it was obvious from Education 2000 Plus that more recognition and greater support should be provided for this social role. Data from Education 2000 Plus illustrates that South African teachers have not been well-prepared for this role and find their community and pastoral functions onerous and stressful. Ball (1999) noted how teachers' social role became sidelined when productivity and service delivery were emphasised, rather than social and public good.

In terms of social function for teachers, according to Villegas-Reimers (2003), the low acknowledgement and support for their social role ranks them low as professionals and high as workers.

6.3 Knowledge base

Villegas-Reimers (2003) links professional standing of teachers to the knowledge base required to fulfil their role, which encompasses content knowledge as well as pedagogical know-how. It is generally accepted today that content knowledge alone is insufficient for effective teaching, but over-emphasis on technique and classroom management at the expense of content can equally impoverish teaching. Teachers require balanced training in content and teaching methods.

South African teachers who qualified through teacher training colleges learned to teach in a particular prescribed way, and their content knowledge was often not extended beyond the standards expected from learners. In many schools, especially those for black learners, many teachers were trained to the level of M+2 or M+3

(REQV 13) and unqualified and even un-matriculated teachers were common. Poor and uncritical training encouraged teachers to teach as they themselves were taught, often resulting in a mechanical and uncreative process. Professional development opportunities were, and still are, few and costly for teachers, and do not necessarily reward or support a career path for them.

Specifically writing about education in Africa, Makau and Coombe (1994) point out that unqualified teachers cost less to employ than highly qualified ones, making a body of teachers with lower qualifications cheaper for a nation to employ. Apartheid decisions and circumstances forced many untrained or poorly trained teachers into classrooms at a low cost to the economy. The knowledge base that underpins better qualifications and professional status was an obvious focus for transformation and redress in post-apartheid South Africa, and many teachers were able to upgrade their qualifications through the SACE and ELRC initiative. Between 1999 and 2002 un-qualified and under-qualified teachers were reduced from 25% to 16% of the teacher body. Under-qualified principals were reduced by almost a quarter from 4 427 to 3 430. The 353 311 teachers listed on Persal in 2002 comprised 78% classroom teachers and 22% in management, whereas in 1999 only 19% were in management and 81% were teachers. The slight improvement in the ratio for higher-ranked staff signifies improved professional support within schools for teachers (Bot, 2003).

The first set of Education 2000 Plus data in 1998 compared to the last set in 2002 shows the extent of improvement. For example, un-qualified or under-qualified teachers practiced in six of the 12 schools at the beginning of the research, but by the end only three schools had under-qualified teachers. One school that had five un-matriculated, seven under-qualified and only three qualified teachers at the level of M+3 (REQV 13) at the beginning of the study, had only six under-qualified teachers at the end of the study, and the remaining nine were all qualified at M+4 or REVQ 14 (Bot, 2003).

Nonetheless, many teachers appeared to feel inadequately prepared for classroom management, teaching methods, or for changes in their subject or learning areas. Traditionally, in-service training provided teachers with opportunities to improve their skills and

content knowledge and reflect on their practice. However, between 1998 and 2002, INSET in the Education 2000 Plus schools was mainly about keeping teachers abreast of policy. Most training was conducted through workshops or seminars, often by cascading, which was a technique found by recipients to be insubstantial and unsatisfactory. Some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) provided teacher and management support and development, but again this tended to consist of workshops.

The move to outcomes-based education (OBE) was the most significant change experienced by teachers during the study. In-service OBE training and training support materials were described as inadequate and minimal considering that teachers were expected to implement a new methodology and curriculum. Of the 12 schools, two received no OBE training, seven felt they received inadequate training and three received training from a colleague who had attended a workshop.

A traditional way for teachers to share their knowledge has been through mentoring of new teachers by those more experienced. However, in the Education 2000 Plus schools, induction and mentoring were not prioritised, and occurred on an ad hoc basis (Rembe, 2003). In the 12 schools studied, three conducted no mentoring at all, and only two had a formal mentoring strategy.

NGOs, private companies or donors, often sponsored by foreign agencies, were active in the field of teacher support and in-service training, but impact tended to be limited. Similarly, higher education institutions provided some programmes in 2002 to 2 372 teachers (Bot, 2003). Ongoing professional development of teachers through departmental, non-departmental and other partnership initiatives was shown by the data to be minimal.

The Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) policy being prepared will provide a structured accreditation system to allow teachers to keep abreast of developments in both content and pedagogy, to recognise their efforts for self-improvement, and to allow them some control over their own professional development and career path (Samuel & Morrow, 2004). However, the extent to which the teacher body will be in a position to take responsibility for

its own professional development is not yet clear, nor is it clear how state organisations such as the Department of Education, ETDP-SETA, SACE and institutions involved in pre- and in-service teacher training will work together with teachers and be guided by their real needs. It is imperative, though, that professional development becomes more substantial and relevant than the policy-related workshops and seminars that were haphazardly conducted in the Education 2000 Plus schools.

The knowledge base of South African teachers improved during the period of research in that a significant number of teachers up-graded their qualifications through further study. However the in-service training that should respond to needs and provide teachers with up-to-date knowledge was shown to be insubstantial and not needs-driven.

6.4 Practitioner autonomy

Practitioner autonomy, a further criterion for professional status, refers to the right of teachers to make independent judgements that affect their day-to-day practice rather than being limited by bureaucratic decisions and supervisory structures. The main indicator for practitioner autonomy from the schools data was the redeployment of teachers. For the period of the redeployment process, from 1998 to 2001, temporary and permanent teachers could be declared “in excess” and moved from their school to another where they were perceived to be needed. Responses from Education 2000 Plus schools indicated that redeployment severely curtailed practitioner autonomy.

Nationally 25 175 teachers were redeployed from schools that either had teachers surplus to enrolment figures, or surplus for a particular subject or learning area. By the end of the process in July 2001, many well-qualified and experienced teachers had left teaching. Some did not wish to travel long distances between their homes and their new schools, and others were transferred to poorly equipped schools in distant rural areas. Many took voluntary severance packages. All twelve Education 2000 Plus schools reported adverse effects from the process. Many lost valued and well-established teachers. One school lost six teachers and another lost four to

redeployment. One farm school with three teachers lost one to redeployment, reducing the staff to two and necessitating classes of multiple grades. Another brand new school was completely staffed by redeployed teachers from other schools, and a year later four of these teachers were redeployed again.

The Education Laws Amendment Act, passed in September 2002, gave provincial departments of education the right to "match applications to vacancies" so that they could place teachers in schools without school committees playing a role. A revised post provisioning model is currently being implemented to distribute teachers according to a formula where:

- Learners are to be weighted according to learning areas, disabilities, whether more than one language of instruction is used in a particular grade, the school size and level.
- Educators are to be distributed proportional to the total number of weighted learners.
- An additional 5-10% redress allocation will be made once the total number of weighted learners in each school is determined, so that poor schools may gain and wealthier schools may lose one or two posts (Bot, 2003).

Though these new measures were intended to redistribute teachers of quality to needy learners, the process may lead to a further decline in teacher numbers if more experienced teachers leave teaching as a result. Though many believe the Act was passed with good intent, it underlines the centralised, controlling role played by the Department of Education, further eroding teacher autonomy and increasingly detracting from their sense of belonging to a profession of status or standing. Initial reports from principals suggest a further deterioration of school morale from another set of teachers declared "in excess".

Practitioner autonomy also equates to professional freedom for teachers from limitations placed on their day-to-day lesson content and classroom practice from, for example, national and provincial departments of education, the principal and management of the school, and other administrative functionaries. Extreme control was exemplified by the standardised curriculum of Christian National

Education where at one time more or less all teachers were teaching a prescribed syllabus from the same prescribed textbooks.

The OBE syllabus, Curriculum 2005, was intended to allow greater creativity, individuality and autonomy for teachers, despite being constrained by the framework of a national curriculum with prescribed outcomes. However, data from Education 2000 Plus portrays OBE as a hindrance to autonomy and creativity. It was poorly understood and teachers perceived it as a technique to be learned rather than enabling and empowering to their teaching. Adverse effects from the introduction of OBE could have been mitigated by better training in the principles that supported it for teachers and a broader grasp of its potential by trainers.

Working in deprived or constrained material conditions also limits teachers' autonomy. All schools in the Education 2000 Plus study, even the relatively affluent ones, reported the day-to-day struggle to manage their limited resources. Three of the 12 schools reported an almost complete lack of access to essential services such as water and electricity and a scarcity of material resources. One school with no access to services whatsoever reported that they could not afford to buy toilet paper and had to use the school "concert money" to buy cleaning materials. The teachers responded to such privation by carrying on with a daily ritual of "education" concerned with matters of survival for themselves and their learners. Many teachers, obliged to use their own resources, were only autonomous because of their obvious isolation from official or mainstream support.

Decentralisation of state responsibility, increased state prescription and control of schools and teachers have been strong features of post-apartheid education, and place teachers more into the category of civil servants than autonomous professionals.

6.5 Collective autonomy

Collective autonomy for teachers means having their own self-governing professional body that determines its own entry criteria and conditions of membership, and that generates policies and ethical standards for its members, free from outside intervention. To

some extent the South African Council for Educators is positioned as a professional body for teachers, though it was originally initiated by state policy in consultation with unions, rather than by teachers themselves (SACE, 2000; Govender, 2004).

Unions have provided collective, autonomous voices for teachers and exerted a strong influence on policies. More recent collaboration, rather than confrontation between right- and left-wing teacher unions, has meant that polarities between them have diminished, resulting in a trend to professional unionism, itself signalling a strengthened role for unions as professional bodies. Govender (2004) describes the potency of the teacher-union movement today as combining SADTU's clout and NAPTOSA's and SAOU's professional expertise. This trend is borne out in the school reports, where union activity was benign rather than activist in most schools, except for resistance to DAS and WSE. Otherwise, unions provided advice to teachers on grievance procedures, and they provided some development workshops and seminars.

Villegas-Reimers (2003) did not see professionalism and unionisation sitting well together on the professional-worker spectrum, although she noted a trend in Canada and the United States of unions helping teachers respond to policy demands through professional development. Obviously an overlap exists between SACE as a professional body and professional unionism in South Africa. However, the growth in union strength and influence creates a public impression of teaching as labour rather than a profession (Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Govender, 2004).

Carrim (2003:318) calls South African teachers "reproducers of the state's agenda rather than formulators of policies". On balance, despite union influence and SACE support, the possibility of collective autonomy for teachers seems questionable while education remains controlled and prescribed by central government and policies are driven by political factors or constructed by outside experts.

Initial teacher education, in-service training and the development of professional ethics and values are set out as strategies to enhance teacher professionalism in the Department of Education's 1999

Annual Report. Professional ethics are embodied in the SACE code of conduct intended to provide teachers with implicit values and standards for their behaviour and a grievance procedure for work-related conflict and disagreement. However, this "professionalisation" of teachers, according to Govender (2004), is part of the discourse of managerialism and means raising standards of performance and delivery rather than conferring collective autonomy.

Categories from the Education 2000 Plus data included job descriptions and grievance procedures, and these provide a useful measure both of individual and collective autonomy for teachers. Job description documents and written grievance procedures limit autonomy, standardising and reducing teaching to a series of tasks, bringing it more into the realm of work than profession.

According to national policy, job descriptions should have been provided to all teachers, giving a framework of their duties and formalised and documented grievance procedures should have been disseminated to schools. Data showed that teachers, principals and district officials alike regarded them as trivial formalities and not really to be taken seriously.

Of the 12 schools, five never received job descriptions. One principal was puzzled that such a document should be necessary. In two schools, teacher roles were viewed as common sense and commonly understood. In another two, job descriptions were received by principals but not distributed to teachers. Generally, job descriptions were reported as "understated" and most teachers reported that they performed in excess of them. One district official explained that job descriptions were not provided because of the high cost of duplicating the relevant documents, confirming their tenuous relevancy.

Similarly, with regard to the expectation that schools formalise and document grievance procedures, only three schools had compiled a formal procedure. In other schools, five used an ad hoc or informal procedure and two consulted SADTU about grievances. The official grievance procedures were described generally as time-consuming and costly.

Despite their poor implementation by schools, job descriptions and grievance procedures appeared to be control mechanisms for teachers and as such limited their autonomy.

6.6 Professional values

The nature of professional values for teachers is difficult to identify. This rests in some ways on the dual understandings of professonalism and responsibility of teachers to the state rather than the client, and is governed by a state-initiated code of conduct. The issue of professional values was key and controversial in the early years of post-apartheid education when dysfunctional conditions in schools led to questions about shortcomings in teacher behaviour, and more recently when teachers were blamed for poor learner performance in public examinations. One media report, which is an example of many published in the South African press following poor matriculation results, noted widespread and regular absenteeism and failure to prepare lessons or complete the syllabus by Mpumalanga teachers (Bot, 2003). Robinson (2002) cited statistics from the Auditor-General's Report: "A total of 612 809 school hours was lost between January and March 1999 due to teacher absences in the seven provinces investigated".

More serious teacher misconduct included physical assault, corporal punishment and sexual abuse of learners. The Medical Research Council released a study in 2002 revealing that one-third of rapes committed on school girls under 15 were by teachers (Bot, 2003). Public reports about the minority of teachers who committed offences gave rise to general criticism of teachers as a body, which has both damaged their standing and generated public demands to improve professional values through better management and policing of teachers.

SACE responded by developing a code of conduct for teachers. A code of conduct differs from a code of ethics in that professional practice based on ethics has by implication a pro-social bias, whereas a code of conduct has connotations of prescriptiveness and reactivity. Of the 12 schools studied, eight did not have a copy of the official code of conduct, and the reports tell us that teachers and

principals found it puzzling and incomprehensible to have such measures imposed on them in the light of their own sense of accountability.

A prescribed code of conduct for teachers is in tension with the code of ethics implicit in professional practice. In South Africa a code of conduct represents a reactionary managerial response to control a perceived lack of professionalism among teachers and as such does not enhance their professional status.

6.7 Job satisfaction and morale

Job satisfaction and morale, or rather lack of it, came across very strongly in the case study reports. Complaints from teachers about their work and more general negative factors related to working in schools added up to an epidemic of dissatisfaction and low morale.

Job satisfaction and morale are not directly related or attributable to teacher professionalism. However, a decrease in job satisfaction for teachers in South Africa has coincided with measures to make teaching more professional. The category is added as a heuristic to explore the link between job satisfaction, professionalism and causes for the recent low popularity of teaching. Currently few young Grade 12 leavers (1.4% to 3 %) want to become teachers, and many enter teaching as a second or third choice career. Student-teacher enrolment declined from 100 000 in 1990 to only 13 000 in 2001 (Bot, 2003). Recent research showed 70% of one group of final-year students intended to teach in other countries (Wasserman, 2003)

Public reports about the status and stability of the teaching body reflect contradictions. On the one hand, a shortage of teachers is predicted, while on the other hand teachers are declared in excess and encouraged to take severance or are retrenched. An April 2004 report states:

> The school year in KwaZulu-Natal would be disrupted by the movement of excess permanent teachers from school to school and the provincial Education Department's refusal to renew the short-term contracts of temporary

> teachers. A head count at all schools in the province showed many schools had teachers in excess of the post-provisioning norm for 2004, and teachers, including those in management positions, would have to be moved. Temporary teachers (a term which includes substitute, unprotected and protected teachers) would have contracts terminated (*Sunday Tribune*, 4 April 2004).

In May, 2004 a conflicting report stated that:

> Despite measures taken by DoE to draw school leavers into the profession the educational needs of South Africa will not be met without drastic measures. It is estimated that over the next four years 16,000 teachers will be needed for KwaZulu-Natal alone, whereas only 320 teachers from UKZN will graduate at the end of 2004 (*The Mercury*, 31 May 2004).

Extreme variances in such reports about the need for teachers are confusing to the public, a deterrent to potential new teachers, and demoralising to existing teachers.

Redeployment and redistribution (R&R), OBE and development appraisal were strong and recurring reasons for lack of job satisfaction and low morale in the Education 2000 Plus schools. In ten schools R&R had caused a serious lowering of morale because of extra pressure placed on the remaining teachers. Fewer teachers meant increased class numbers and overcrowding in classrooms, with large classes having to be divided into two when using computers or laboratory and workshop equipment. Teachers declared in excess and waiting to be redeployed prevented timetable finalisation. In some instances long-standing and highly valued teachers were redeployed to other schools. In schools that lost teachers, a pattern developed of learners being sent to schools with better staffing ratios. The resulting decrease in learner numbers caused a new set of teachers to be declared in excess and redeployed.

Data tells us that, for teachers, this meant widespread instability because many were placed on the excess list and faced

redeployment to other schools. Some teachers opted for voluntary severance rather than redeployment. In one high school the entire management team, including the principal, opted for voluntary severance. Another school lost seven teachers to voluntary severance before, and a further five during, the study. A third school lost three valued teachers to voluntary severance, who then went on to be employed by private schools. Uncertainty and anxiety about job security among teachers raised stress levels and fuelled dissatisfaction, heightening tension and conflict in staffrooms.

Curriculum 2005, introduced into schools during the research process, was cited by teachers as playing a large role in their demoralisation. One teacher described OBE as heavy with workload and administration, with many penalties and no rewards. DAS and WSE, other policy measures intended to contribute towards teacher development, also impacted negatively on teacher morale. DAS was seen as stressful, with much paper work. It was described by teachers as a dubious process, not honest or well understood, and without a reward component for hard work and excellence. Many teachers found the required peer assessment and observation to be intimidating and problematic although a few teachers reported positive outcomes of helping and mentoring each other and being helped to identify and resolve shortcomings. WSE was not widely implemented because of union opposition. Teachers were cynical about its potential to improve schools, describing the process as intimidating and judgemental and “a very ugly threat”. One group of teachers likened it to an investigation by the Scorpions, motivated by an assumption from the Department that they did not work hard.

The processes of R&R, DAS and WSE, together with the problematic introduction of OBE, compounded to reduce job satisfaction and morale to an alarming extent, and to undermine any sense teachers had of being proactive, autonomous professionals. Similarly, media reports about poor teaching and dysfunctional schools, coupled with conflicting reports about an oversupply of teachers but high projected needs for more to be trained, have also contributed to lack of respect and sympathy for them and a sense that they are not proactive as a body in protecting their own standards of behaviour and professionalism.

7. Conclusion

Professionalism is problematic in the light of the two meanings identified and their separate and somewhat conflicting discourses. On the one hand, the traditional meaning of professionalism imbues professionals with high levels of autonomy, social standing and self-determination. On the other hand, the new meaning of professionalism, identified by Ball (1999) and Nixon (2001), has more to do with diminished autonomy and status and the demand for "performativity" from the state down to the principal or "school manager".

The Education 2000 Plus data provided a means for looking at teachers' experiences over a four-year period, and making some judgement about their position as professionals. Professionalism was not a category directly addressed by the data and so a set of criteria, broadly accepted as being commensurate with professional standing, were used as a framework for discussion

The data illustrated how efforts to transform education through re-professionalisation of teachers were hindered both by existing contextual circumstances and by a series of policy-driven school episodes. Together these accumulated to diminish job satisfaction, lower morale to an unprecedented extent and cause an adverse shift in public sympathy for teachers. On most counts it was found that teachers were treated more as civil service workers than as autonomous professionals. Recent attempts to enhance teacher qualifications, however, moved them slightly towards the traditional category of professional by improving their specialised knowledge base and training. In-service training, however, was found to be insubstantial and driven by policy change rather than by teacher and learner needs.

Education 2000 Plus provided a warning about the next phase of re-professionalisation for teachers through implementation of the CPTD policy. An independent body should survey development needs expressed by teachers themselves, evaluate courses, and guard against opportunistic service providers who are not experienced in

education or rooted in its practice. SACE could provide this body, though its independence is limited by its state origins and administration.

Data from Education 2000 Plus illustrated how misunderstandings about OBE resulted in mediocre and confused classroom practice and how redeployment and voluntary severance curtailed careers of teachers. It is useful to consider the advice from Hargreaves (1992), cited by Makau and Coombe (1994), that a positive climate is vital for restructuring teaching. They list the consequences of not providing sufficient support to teachers as low teacher morale, disenchantment, cynicism and lack of commitment and enthusiasm.

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