

Opinion

The South African Council For Educators and the General Teaching Council For Scotland: A Comparative Analysis of Aspects of Professionalisation of Teaching

*Simeon Maile, Department of Education Management and Policy Studies,
University of Pretoria, South Africa*

Abstract

For many years, public expectations that educators were functioning as professionals have lulled educator's complacency about ethical dimensions of teaching. It was assumed that educators possessed the qualities necessary to conduct themselves personally and professionally according to accepted moral standards. However, in recent years such an assumption has become seriously questionable. Consequently, the South African Council for Educators (SACE) was established to address the anomalies in teaching. In this article I will not deal with the anomalies in education per se, but I will refer to them to substantiate my argument that the establishment of SACE is a clear indication that the state of affairs in teaching can no longer be tolerated. For this reason SACE should be seen as a means to address the anomalies, and thereby define what it means to be an educator in a professional manner. Nevertheless, it is expected that the Council may falter.

This article indicates that the South African Council for Educators can be successful in its endeavour of professionalisation of teaching. In its functions, powers and roles, the South African Council for Educators needs to look elsewhere for comparison and contextualisation of activities and programmes. Hence the Scottish General Teaching Council is invoked to draw from its experiences, to share in its success and to be alert to problems it has encountered. The Scottish model has rich experiences which can benefit the South African Council for Educators. The comparative analysis is based against the background of aspects of professionalisation of teaching.

Introduction

It is no accident that the South African Council for Educators (SACE) was established as per Government Gazette No. 16037 of 17 October 1994. The main purpose of this Council is to transform teaching to meet professional standards; hence its motto *Towards Excellence in Education*. The issue of excellence and standards gained momentum when the *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery* (Batho Pele) was published with the sole purpose of improving service delivery processes. Batho Pele is a relentless search for increased efficiency and the reduction of wastage in public service delivery.

In the same vein the establishment of SACE is a deliberate attempt at taking teaching out of the ruins of laxity and unproductivity that has plagued education for a long time. SACE is still in its infancy. However, the practice of professionalisation of careers is not new and alien in South Africa. For instance, the medical profession is regulated and controlled by a professional body – the South African Medical Council. Nevertheless, professionalisation of teaching is a new concept, which emerged from organised teaching and collective decisions.

Therefore, the activities of and the direction that SACE will take may not be easy. Its development as an organisation involved in education needs to be compared with other sister organisations in the same field elsewhere. In this article SACE is compared with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC). The backgrounds of these organisations are compared. How they address problems of professionalisation is also scrutinised. The writer believes it would be beneficial for SACE to look elsewhere for experience of challenges and successes. Through a comparative perspective one is able to see where one stands in a global village.

Problem Statement

An analysis of the prominent aspects of professionalism in teaching raises the question about the influence of the South African Council for Educators on educators professionalism: To what extent can the South African Council for Educators (SACE) contribute towards teachers' professionalism?

The issue of professionalism in teaching comes at the time when there are allegations that 'educators and even principals ... spend school days basking in the sun, ignore timetables' (Venter, 1997:241). The biggest challenge is to return professional practice into schools. Professional practices seem to indicate that it is possible to accomplish normality in teaching. Thus, the practices of the General Teaching Council for Scotland will be taken as an example for this purpose. A comparison of the South African Council for Educators and the General Teaching Council for Scotland will reveal whether the direction SACE is taking is good or bad.

Background

The crisis of educators' lack of professionalism can be traced to the past inadequacies that affected the education system. Many committed educators joined the struggle against apartheid. The struggle against apartheid education took different forms but the most notable form of struggle was defiance of authority. As a result of the defiance campaign most schools became chaotic (Fleisch, 1999:61).

The decay of institutions of learning has been accompanied by many teachers losing a sense of the distinctive kind of service they should be offering to the community, to a serious impoverishment of the understanding of the essential responsibilities of educators. In despair some educators have embraced the image of themselves as exploited workers and, while this might be understandable, it is in direct conflict with the idea of educators' professionalism (Morrow, 1994:28). Without being unsympathetic to those many educators who work in appalling conditions and struggle to maintain professional standards against overwhelming odds, there is a need honestly to face the unpalatable fact that there are also many educators who have given up trying to fulfil their responsibilities as educators. Hence the anomalies such as:

- Absconding from classes.
- Ignoring timetables.
- Absenteeism.
- Drug peddling.
- Child abuse (de Villiers, Wethmar & van der Bank, 2000:9)

While professionalism is explained in terms of the Republic of South Africa's political history and struggles waged in order to address the disparities existing in education, the education system is now faced with the acute problem of how to cure the decline in teaching and learning culture. The question that comes to the fore is: is teaching a profession? There are two answers to this question. On the one hand, it can be stated that teaching is not a profession because educators have no power to control their own practice, have no code of conduct or ethics and are not familiar with new methods and their participation in educational research is often at a low level (Badenhorst & Scheepers, 1995:69). On the other hand, it can be stated that teaching is a profession because of recent developments in this direction.

However, it must be acknowledged that professional regulation is not new in South Africa. In the past the Teachers' Federal Council (TFC) was a statutory body established in terms of Act No. 39 of 1967 to regulate the profession. Nevertheless, its weakness was that it was applied to the white educators only. The advent of the new dispensation brought a new era in which standards and quality are required in the entire public service. According to Batho Pele – *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery* - the introduction of quality service cannot be achieved in isolation from fundamental management changes within the broad public service. Even more important is the general sense of public and professional concern about the education service. Professional and public confidence has been damaged. Accusing fingers pointing in of all directions harm the morale even further. Something very different was needed. Hence the African National Congress (1995:62) envisaged that:

The desirability otherwise of an additional regulatory mechanism such as a Professional Council, which might deal with such matters as the regulation of entry to the profession, professional norms, standards and codes of conduct will be reviewed in consultation and negotiated with the organised teaching profession.

It is against this background that the South African Council for Educators was established. To professionalise the work of educators and establish professional standards for its own members. The Council is a statutory body established as per *Government Gazette Notice* No. 16037 of 17 October 1994. The Council is completely independent of the Department of Education. However, it has some links with the Department and works closely with departmental officials on matters of mutual interest.

It appears that the development of the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC) is in some respects different from the South African Council for Educators. According to Sutherland (1998:205) the General Teaching Council for Scotland emerged from the need to raise standards and promote quality in the teaching profession. The GTC was set up following a period of considerable disquiet and unrest in the Scottish teaching profession, which arose from:

- a chronic and worsening shortage of teachers;
- concern about standards of entry to the profession;
- dissatisfaction with the consistency of standards of teaching;
- low educator morale;
- salaries which did not stand comparison with those of other professionals;
- a perception that the profession was consistently undervalued and lacking in status and prestige; and
- feelings that scant regard was paid to the views of teachers who were given little opportunity to control or even influence their own professional affairs.

The escalating professional discontent reached its peak in 1961. The Secretary of State responded to these many expressions of concern by setting up a Committee on the Teaching Profession in Scotland. In 1963 the Committee recommended that:

New machinery should be devised for the teaching profession and that these should be established a General Teaching Council for Scotland, broadly similar in scope, powers and functions to the Councils in other professions.

This recommendation was accepted and the Council was formally established by the *Teaching Council (Scotland) Act 1965*. Therefore, GTC is a statutory body like SACE. Similarly, both the GTC and SACE are not involved with salaries, pensions or conditions or service, which are matters for employing authorities and unions. Both organisations are not directly involved in negotiating curriculum and examinations, other than for the education and training of educators, although SACE seem to be cascading in its role in the latter function. However, because SACE is still in its infancy more lessons can be drawn from GTC's achievements.

Powers and Functions

The powers and functions of SACE were to a greater extent influenced by its background. As a body established through a collective agreement in the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), SACE was perceived to be an appendage of the ELRC. Therefore it was not regarded as a professional body which promotes and controls the profession. However, the inclusion of SACE in the *Employment of Educators Act 1998* was an attempt to move away from the influence of the ELRC. The recent *South African Council for Educators Bill 2000* enhances the status and recognition of SACE according to national and international models. Therefore, SACE as a statutory body has the following functions in terms of section 5(1) of the SACE Bill, 2000:

- 5(1) Subject to this Act and the *National Education Policy Act 1996*, the council –
 - (a) with regard to the promotion and development of the education and training profession –
 - (i) must promote, develop and maintain a professional image;
 - (ii) must advise the Minister on matters relating to the education and training of educators, including but not limited to –

- (aa) minimum entry requirements to the profession;
- (bb) the standards of programmes of pre-service and in-service teacher education;
- (cc) requirements for promotion within the education system;
- (dd) educator professionalism;
- (iii) must promote in-service training of educators;
- (iv) may develop resource materials to initiate and run, in consultation with an employer, training programmes, workshops, seminars and short courses that are designed to enhance the profession;
- (v) must compile, print and distribute a professional journal and other publications;
- (b) with regard to registration –
 - (i) must establish minimum criteria and procedures for the registration or provisional registration of educators
 - (ii) must consider and decide on any application for registration or provisional registration;
 - (iii) must keep a register of the names of all persons who are registered or provisionally registered;
 - (iv) must decide on the form of the registers and certificates to be kept, maintained or issued under this Act, the reviewing thereof and the manner in which alterations thereto may be effected;
 - (v) may prescribe the period of validity of the registration or provisional registration of an educator;
- (c) with regard to professional ethics –
 - (i) must establish, maintain and review a code of professional ethics for educators which applies to all educators registered or provisionally registered with the council;
 - (ii) must establish a fair and equitable enquiry procedure;
 - (iii) subject to subparagraph (ii) has the power to –
 - (aa) caution or reprimand;
 - (bb) impose a fine not exceeding one month's salary on; or
 - (cc) strike from the register the name of,
 an educator found guilty of a breach of the code of professional ethics; and
 - (iv) may suspend for such period and on such conditions determined by the council, a sanction imposed in terms of subparagraph (iii)(bb) or (cc);
- (d) with regard to fees –
 - (i) subject to the approval of the Minister, must determine fees payable to the council by registered educators or educators applying for registration;
 - (ii) may require from employers to deduct fees from the salaries of educators;
 - (iii) has the power, after a fair and equitable enquiry procedure, to –

- (aa) caution or reprimand; or
 - (bb) strike from the register the name of
an educator found guilty of failing to pay the fees set by the council; and
 - (iv) may suspend for such a period and on such conditions determined by the council, a sanction imposed in terms of subparagraph (iii)(bb);
- (5) in general –
- (i) must advise the Minister on any relevant educational aspect requested to do so by the Minister;
 - (ii) may appoint staff and determine their conditions of service;
 - (iii) may establish committees and assign functions to them; and
 - (iv) must perform any function which is necessary for the proper functioning of the council.

These powers and functions of SACE are not completely similar to those of the GTC. In terms of the *Teaching Council (Scotland) Act 1965* the GTC as a statutory body has the responsibility for maintaining and enhancing the quality of teaching in Scotland by

- maintaining a register of qualified educators;
- overseeing standards for entry to the profession;
- accrediting and reviewing courses of initial educator education;
- exercising disciplinary powers in relation to registration;
- supporting probationer educators by means of seminars, visits, and publication;
- advising on the supply of educators; and
- exercising the right to comment upon and to approve all new courses of educator education
(Archer & Peck, 1989:223).

It appears that there is a marked difference with regard to accreditation and reviewing courses of initial educator education. This means that the GTC is an authoritative body which, through stated procedure, gives formal recognition that an institution, body or person is competent in terms of education provision. Therefore, the function of promoting and developing education and training profession by SACE seem to be inadequate in the light of the above statement. Seemingly SACE needs to address issues of educator training to succeed in its mission. Likewise, SACE should include the management of the probation process in its primary functions.

Measures to Restore Professionalism

Professionalisation of teaching is a new experience in South Africa. It is important to note that the issue of professionalisation begins with registration which is done according to certain procedures to regulate entry into teaching. This is done to ensure that the entrants have specialised knowledge which allows them to be in the teaching profession. In this way professionalism draws from issues of competence (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993:48). Registration of educators is a means to ensure that practising educators are experts who are committed to practise

- in an exemplary way,
- toward valued social ends, and
- with the ethic of caring

These elements of registration invoke the codes of SACE which I will discuss later. There are many measures to deal with professional matters envisaged by SACE. In this section I will discuss registration procedures and probation as aspects of professionalisation. I have chosen to discuss probation simply because expertise as a condition for registration are not enough for an educator to earn a mantle of professionalism. There is a need for a caring and supportive environment for educators to sustain professionalism (Main, 1985:94). This approach is important to improve performance of incompetent educators and is a legal procedure in the management of educator retention (Bridges, 1992:5 & Castetter, 1981:467).

Registration

The primary role of SACE is to maintain and enhance standards of teaching and learning. The Council seeks to protect professional standards by maintaining a register of educators. When the register is operating, it will be unlawful to employ an educator who is not registered with the Council (Oosthuizen, 1998:96). Scottish experiences reveal that voluntary registration, while it is a start and a step in the right direction, does not work in the long term. In order to give the right signals on the status and standards, registration has to be necessary condition for employment. Quality control cannot be assured if there is no absolute control of entry to the profession, registration must be the hallmark of the professional (Sutherland, 1998:207). Hence it will do SACE no good to make registration of educators in Further Education (FET) Nursery Schools, Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) not compulsory. Registration should be compulsory even for educators in colleges, technical colleges and universities. Furthermore, in order to succeed in its goal of influencing human resources in education, SACE must influence the number and quality of students to be admitted to programmes for educator education, the courses to be taken as a preliminary stage of setting requirements for registration.

Developments in the curriculum mean that it is increasingly possible for schools in certain circumstances to employ educators from the FET sector and the Council should therefore press for mandatory registration of FET teaching staff.

Provisional registration

Oosthuizen (1998:95) postulates that provisional registration is accorded to educators who do not qualify in terms of the following:

- a minimum post matriculation educator education qualification or three years (M+3 or REQV 13); or
- a two year certificate in educator education for the pre-primary phase (M+2 or REQV 12); or
- any other qualification recognised by the Council for the purpose of registration.

Such recognition may apply in circumstances where no other suitably qualified educators are available. Final year students at colleges, technical colleges and universities may apply for provisional registration with the Council.

In the same vein, registration with the GTC is a mark of professional recognition as an educator and is a requirement for teaching in all education authority nursery, primary, secondary and special schools in Scotland. Registration is offered in respect of a Educator Qualification in primary, secondary or further education. The registration of primary and secondary school educators with GTC is contemplated in the following categories:

(a) Provisional registration

It is used for new entrants to the profession and offers a period of time in which an educator's performance is monitored by fellow professionals, including the head-educator of the school. This will be covered further below.

(b) Conditional registration

The GTC allows for exceptional admissions to the register. In general terms, only those educators whose academic and professional qualifications are demonstrated to be of an equivalent standard to those expected of educators qualified and working in Scotland are admitted to the Register. The GTC receives thousands of enquiries from applicants of non-Scottish descent. Complex cases are considered by the Committee on Exceptional Admission to the Register.

(c) Full registration

This is recognition of educators' successful completion of the probationary period.

SACE can learn a lot from GTC registration arrangements. It is not adequate to keep one register of educators. There is a need to consider issues such as citizenship, level of education, probation and conduct.

Removal from the Register

According to section 5(1)(c) and (d) of the *SACE Bill*, 2000 the Council has the power to remove from the register the name of:

- (c) (iii) an educator found guilty of a breach of the code of professional ethics.

And section 23 of the *SACE Bill* contemplates that:

23(1) The council may direct the chief executive officer to remove from the register the name of an educator –

- (a) whose qualification by virtue of the holding thereof he or she was registered, has been withdrawn or cancelled by the higher education institution which issued it;
- (b) who has been registered in error or through fraud;
- (c) who has been found guilty of a breach of the code of professional ethics;
- (d) who fails to pay the prescribed fees; or
- (e) who dies.

- (2) Notice of the removal of his or her name from the register in terms of subsection (1)(a) to (d) must be given by the chief executive officer to the educator concerned by way of certified mail addressed to the educator at his or her address appearing in the register.
- (3) The name of an educator may not be removed from the register in terms of subsection (1)(a) to (d) unless the educator was given a reasonable opportunity to make representations to the council.
- (4) As from the date on which the notice contemplated in subsection (2) has been given a registration certificate issued to the educator concerned is deemed to be cancelled.

This remedy requires that the Council must establish a fair and equitable enquiry procedure. Furthermore, removal from the register would follow a failure to pay fees set by the Council. In some cases the registration may be withdrawn for some time when the educator is suspended for a specific period. There is a need to restructure the Disciplinary Committee and co-ordinate its activities within the broader Labour Relations disciplinary structures and procedures.

In cases of gross professional misconduct the GTC has the power to remove educators' names from the register. This means that they can no longer teach in a public school in Scotland. However, this power is exercised with great care by the Investigating Committee and the Disciplinary Committee, with the welfare of learners and public confidence in the profession being the primary considerations.

Probation

Probation answers the question: When is a person ready to teach? This question carries with it implicit assumptions such as: teaching is a process that requires pre-conditions in order for it to occur successfully and that teaching is a human endeavour. The concept of readiness is tied to professionalism because not everyone can teach. Teaching is based on certain preconditions which must be met before one is given the professional mantle (Applegate,1989:79). Section 3(1)-(3) of *Employment of Educators Act 1998* provides, with regard to appointment of educators on probation, that:

- (1) (a) An educator shall be appointed on probation for a period of at least 12 months, which period may be extended, on good cause shown, for a further period not exceeding 12 months.
- (b) An employer may approve the transfer or promotion of an educator during his/her period of probation: provided that such transfer or promotion will be on probation and such probation may be for a period of less than 12 months if such period together with probation served in the former past, shall total at least 12 months.
- (c) The employer may, if it is deemed necessary, require that the promotion of an educator employed in a permanent capacity be on probation: provided that the conditions in paragraph (a) and (b) shall apply.

- (2) The probation period of an educator shall be extended by the number of days leave whatever nature taken by him/her during a probation period or any extension thereof: provided that a school holiday shall not be considered as leave for the purpose of this sub-regulation.
- (3) If the head of the relevant institution or office certifies that during his/her probation period or extended probation period, such educator has been diligent and his/her conduct uniformly satisfactory and that he/she is in all respect suitable for the post which he/she holds, the employer may confirm the permanent appointment, transfer or promotion in the educator has complied with all the conditions to which his/her appointment, transfer or promotion was subject.

This provision seems to be the prerogative of the employer not that of SACE. It appears that the ideal of professionalisation of teaching may be elusive to SACE if the Council itself does not manage probation. Research (Maile, 2000:67) reveals that currently it is a customary practice to grant permanent tenure after an individual has served a probationary period without establishing whether or not the employee meets the required standards. The use of the tenure process has serious loopholes that militate against professionalism. Teaching cannot afford to remain unprofessional. Consequently, tenure should be viewed in the light of the need for accountability, not to serve as an occupational haven for incompetent, unprofessional educators. Therefore, probation should form part of SACE's function to protect the interests of educators, the employer, the system and its clients. If SACE is to be able to control standards of entry into the profession, it must take control of probation.

Experiences from the GTC bear testimony to the above argument in that the GTC has control over standards of entry to the profession through the Probation Committee. This Committee oversees the management of the probation service. According to the GTC (1999) probationary service is a prerequisite for full registration. The probationary period allows a new educator to develop his/her skills and benefit from the support by the colleagues and the Council. During this period the educator is monitored so that the most appropriate form of support is offered. The probation period stretches over two years to allow the educator to take on all the demands and responsibilities of teaching.

The headmaster has to complete the appropriate form at the end of the educator's first year of service and again at the end of the second year. This report is sent to the Council. However the probationer is allowed to submit his/her comments to the Council separately, and must also sign to confirm that he/she has read and received a copy of the report. The educator's signature does not necessarily indicate his/her agreement with the contents of the report. The probationer then sends the report to the Council. If it is found the report is adverse, the educator's probationary service may be extended or his/her registration cancelled. However, he/she may appeal against either of these decisions.

The development of the GTC as a professional Council is not without limitations. The research undertaken by the GTC (1999:3) reveals four major concerns about the assessment of probationer educators:

- (1) Large number of probationers were dissatisfied with the procedures used in their assessment. Particular concerns identified were:
 - sources of evidence;
 - unsystematic procedures;
 - lack of feedback;
 - surprise at the content of the final reports; and
 - a consequent lack of confidence that they were developing expertise.
- (2) There were inconsistencies between head-educators' stated criteria for judging the probationer's success and the methods used to collect evidence.
- (3) Reports submitted to the GTC were frequently bland and did not give a picture of a new educator's development needs or next steps for learning.
- (4) Most head-educators were not confident that the standards they were applying in assessing educators were similar to standards applied by other colleagues.

Therefore, in the light of the GTC experiences and research, SACE should establish a portfolio of standards defined and expressed in competencies – which are a valuable source for reflection upon the educator's own performance. The competencies are useful in identifying an individual educator's strengths and weaknesses (Jirasinghe & Lyons, 1996:19). Consequently, the probationer's assessment criteria should be consistent with:

- job requirements or demands made on the individual educator;
- the characteristics or abilities which enable an individual to demonstrate appropriate actions; and
- the context of an organisation, encompassing internal factors such as organisational policies, procedures mission, culture and resources, and external factors such as the social, political and economic environments.

Therefore, it can be concluded that a successful probationer who is to assume tenure should exhibit a body of knowledge which makes him/her functional in the organisation, his/her competency should exist at various levels and must be context dependent.

Managing Initial Teacher Education

Earlier reference was made to the fact that the primary objective of SACE is to maintain and enhance professional standards. Most of the work of SACE can be linked to professional development. By advising on the training and qualifications of educators, SACE is attempting to manage initial educator education. Hence, section 14(1) of the SACE envisages the establishment of Professional Development Committee. However, it appears that the main thrust of SACE's role will be enmeshed in the Committee on Teacher Education Policy (COTEP). COTEP determines the norms and standards for educator education, and it is intended to inform the intellectual and

professional culture of educator education institutions (Department of Education, 1996:1). This leaves SACE as a more narrowly conceived body to regulate the conduct and discipline of school educators. This is often the case with organisations born out of collective agreement. Everything pertaining to its activities and composition would need consensus. Therefore, the role of SACE may be minimal and thus not effective enough to turn the image of teaching around because it only has advisory powers and no real decision-making authority. Furthermore, SACE's role in managing professional standards is disjointed by its absence in the South African Qualification Authority and its subsidiary bodies.

By contrast the GTC has a dual role in initial educator education – that of accreditation and review – which is done by the Accreditation and Review Committee. The GTC has the responsibility of accrediting all new pre-service courses and may require changes to be made where appropriate. It also has the responsibility of reviewing existing courses and if regularly undertakes visits to the educator education institutions. The Council is empowered to make comments to individual institutions and, if necessary, to make recommendations to the Government.

In a similar vein, the GTC has a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Programme which positions the Council on the development of the framework for and gives it a gathering and disseminating function regarding information about best practice, educators' development needs and the uptake of CPD.

Although disappointed that it has not been successful in securing a role in the accreditation of staff development courses at this stage, the GTC appreciates that this will be the subject of review in about five years time at which point the question of an 'active register will also be reconsidered'. The Council considers that an 'active register' can be viewed as a means of ensuring that educators do receive their staff development entitlement (GTC, 1999:2).

It appears that, if SACE is to play a meaningful and practical role in managing initial educator education, it has to find a clear position within the structures playing a role and its role must be clearly spelt out. The rhetorical function of advising does not suffice. It must seek a partnership which will place it on an equal and judicial footing with other bodies involved in managing initial educator education.

Professional Ethics

Towards a Definition

Teffo (1999:150) defines ethics as a general pattern or a way of life; a set of rules of conduct or moral code; and an enquiry about the rules of conduct or way of life. Professional ethics are invoked in SACE activities as a means used to determine what is good for teaching and right for teachers to do. It is an examination of educators' behaviour, to regulate relations and define the nature and limits of educators' duties, obligations and responsibilities. Professional ethics are aimed at professionalisation whereby the teaching occupation undergoes a dynamic process of change in crucial characteristics of what constitute specialised knowledge and understanding of theoretical structures that govern and control that knowledge (Jarvis, 1983:24).

The code of ethics entails a social responsibility that enables the professional to apply moral judgments to professional behaviours and decision-making. Stark, Lowther & Hagerly

(1986:63-64) argue that ethical behaviour as a specifically defined outcome for the profession is often ambiguous and abstract, because educators as adults are assumed to already know the basic difference between right and wrong. Therefore, the role of SACE and even that of GTC should be to enforce technical ethics. Consequently, there will be a balance between theory and practice such that moral ethics that undergirds human behaviour will be integrated in the professional requirements – that is skills, knowledge and attitudes that constitute the generally accepted foundational knowledge upon which the professional practice is based (Eraut, 1994:40).

Code of Conduct

In the light of the crisis mentioned above, there is a need for a code of conduct in teaching. In the same vein, SACE envisages in the preamble of its Code of Conduct that educators who are registered with it should:

- acknowledge the noble calling of their profession to educate and train the learners of our country;
- acknowledge that the attitude, dedication, self-discipline, ideals, training and conduct of the teaching profession determine the quality of education in this country;
- acknowledge, uphold and promote basic human rights, as embodied in the Constitution of South Africa;
- commit themselves to do all within their power, in the exercising of their professional duties, to act in accordance with the ideals of their profession, as expressed in this code; and
- act in a proper and becoming way such that their behaviour does not bring the teaching profession into disrepute.

The Code of Conduct is invoked to overcome the complacency about the ethical dimensions of teaching that has lulled the profession into believing that educators are able to conduct themselves personally and professionally according to ethical standards without legal guidelines. This assumption has become seriously flawed. Lawlessness and mediocrity in teaching can no longer be tolerated. The loss of ethics has put learners at risk. The Code of Conduct of SACE attempts to bring together splintered realities that make educators part of a community of people who live in terms of certain rules and norms (Pityana, 1999:141). In this way morality will be returned when:

- the conduct of the educator and learner;
- the conduct of the educator and parent;
- the conduct of the educator and community;
- the conduct of the educator and his/her colleagues;
- the conduct of the educator and the profession;
- the conduct of the educator and his/her employer; and
- the conduct of the educator and the council

are regulated. The Act of regulating conduct in teaching is not alien. Practices in Scotland reveal that the GTC is silent about the standards of conduct expected of educators in professional matters. It draws some of the standards from professional associations, and has set up the necessary machinery for dealing with allegations of the breach of the code. Matters related to professional conduct are left to educators unions (Barrell & Partington, 1985:105).

It seems the GTC's laxness on a code of conduct in the professionalisation of teaching can be traced to the background of their problems in teaching. However, the Council welcomes the proposal that the range of available sanctions in disciplinary cases should be extended and it is comfortable with the three intermediate sanctions (registration, probation and assessment) that are suggested as possibilities to enforce proper conduct in educators.

Conclusion

Despite the arguments that teaching is not a profession because of points raised earlier, one can conclude by noting that there are:

- educators committed to the provision of service to the community; and that
- the majority of educators who are dedicated, well-trained and have more specialised knowledge.

Therefore teaching is a profession, although not fully fledged. In fact no profession is fully developed. Bondesio (1989:157) argues convincingly that all professions could be placed on a continuum between less and fully developed. However, teaching is certainly moving in the direction of professionalism as the activities of SACE demonstrate. The professionalisation of teaching seems to be a reality when considering that, while the sequence is invariable, there is some form of progression and it is necessary for educators to:

- (a) start doing full time that which needs doing;
- (b) adhere to a professional association which seeks;
 - self-conscious definition of the core tasks of the occupation;
 - a cosmopolitan perspective on the practice of the occupation; and
 - to compete with neighbouring occupations in order to establish the area of exclusive competence.
- (c) seek legal support for the protection of their job territory and to observe a code of ethics to indicate their commitment to the profession. This results in control of licencing and certification;
- (d) remove unqualified and bad elements from the fold of the profession.

(Jarvis, 1983:25)

The differences between SACE and GTC do not necessarily mean that SACE is going in a different direction of unprofessionalism. Contextual factors constrain any organisation. SACE is not an exception in this regard. However, SACE like GTC must conduct its affairs according to

sub-committees saddled with the responsibility for particular functions such as accreditation, professional practice, discipline, supply and training, development and research, external relations, finance and general purposes (Sayer, 1993:125) SACE must develop a governance structure which will enhance its capacity to manage, for instance, probation, staff development and educator performance. For this it must learn from GTC. Therefore, the development of SACE should be seen as a step in the right direction of making the South African education system a quality one.

Keywords

Professionalism of educators, legal regulation of teaching profession, South Africa, Scotland.

References

- African National Congress (1995) *A Policy Framework for Education and Training*. Manzini: Macmillan.
- Applegate, J.H. (1989) Readiness for teaching. In M.L. Holly & C.S. McLoughlin (eds.), *Perspectives on teacher professional development*. New York: The Falmer Press.
- Archer, E.G. & Peck, B.T. (1989) *The teaching profession in Europe*. Glasgow: Jordan Hill College of Education.
- Badenhorst, J. & Scheepers, L. (1995) *School Management Training*. Pretoria: Kagiso.
- Barrell, G.R. & Partintn, J.A. (1985) *Teachers and the law*. Cambridge: Methuen.
- Bondesio, M.J. (1989) *The teaching profession: Legal requirements*. Pretoria: J.P. van der Walt.
- Bridges, E.M. (1992) *The incompetent teacher: Managerial responses*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Castetter, W.B. (1981) *The personnel function in Educational Administration*, 3rd ed. London: Macmillan.
- Department of Public Service and Administration, RSA. (1997) *The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele White Paper)* Notice of 1459 of 1997.
- Department of Education, RSA. (1994) *Education Labour Relations Act, 1993*. Government Notice No. R.1804. 17 October 1994.
- Department of Education, RSA. (2000) *Draft South African Council For Educators Bill, 2000* Notice 211 of 2000.
- De Villiers, E., Wethmar, M. & van der Bank, A. (2000) *Ethics for partners in education*. Pretoria: CELP.
- Eraut, M. (1994) *Developing professional knowledge and competence*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Fleisch, B. (1999) *School Management and Teachers Accountability*. In Education Africa. Forum. Education Africa Pinegowrie.
- The General Teaching Council (1999) *Constitution Paper: Key Issues for the Council*. Unpublished.
- The General Teaching Council (1997) *Conversion Courses (Secondary)*. Report to The Secretary of State for Scotland. December 1997. Unpublished.

- The General Teaching Council (1997) Report of the Working group on Partnership in initial teacher education. March 1997. Unpublished.
- The General Teaching Council (1998) Further Education Seminar: Further Education and Secondary School Partnerships. Held on Friday 22 May 1998 at Clerwood House. Unpublished.
- The General Teaching Council (1996) One-term conversion courses. Report to the Secretary of State for Scotland. January 1996. Unpublished.
- The General Teaching Council (1992) Primary post-graduate review. Final report of the working group on the implementation of a scheme of enrichment training for PGCE (Primary) probationers. Unpublished.
- The General Teaching Council (1996) Probationer Teacher Support. (Secondary). Unpublished.
- The General Teaching Council (1992) Policy review 1992-93. September 1992. Unpublished.
- The General Teaching Council (1997) Policy Statement: Accreditation and review of courses of initial teacher education. October 1997. Unpublished.
- The General Teaching Council (1999) Local Authority Probationer Support in a seminar held at Clerwood House on 25 June 1999. Unpublished.
- The General Teaching Council (1992) Response to the report of the policy review of the GTC 1992-93. Unpublished.
- The General Teaching Council (1999) *Assessing Probationers. An opportunity for professional development*. Moray House: GTC.
- Jarvis, P. (1983) *Professional education*. London: Croom Helm.
- Jirasinghe, D. & Lyons, D. (1996) *The Competent Head. A job analysis of heads tasks and personality factors*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Maile, S. (2000) Recognition of Competence. An empowerment model for the Retention of excellent teachers in the classroom. PhD Thesis Unpublished. University of Pretoria.
- Main, A. (1985) Educational staff development. London: Croom Helm.
- Morrow, W. (1994) Introduction: Restoring the culture of teaching. In DSA in depth. February 1994.
- Oosthuizen, I.J. (ed.) (1998) *Aspects of Educational Law*. Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik.
- Pityana, B. (1999) The renewal of African moral values. In M.W. Makgoba (ed.), *African renaissance. The new struggle*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Republic of South Africa (1998) Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Sergiovanni, T.J. & Starratt, R.J. (1993) *Supervision: A redefinition*. 5th ed. London: McGraw-Hill, Inc.
- The South African Council of Educators (1994) Mission Pretoria: SACE.
- The South African Council of Educators (1994) *Code of Conduct*. Pretoria: SACE.

- The South African Council of Educators (1994) *Registration procedures disciplining powers and procedures*. Pretoria: SACE.
- Sayer, J. (1993) *The future of Governance of Education*. London: Cassell.
- Stark, J.S., Lowther, M.A. & Hagerty, B.M.K. (1986) *Responsive professional education. Balancing outcomes and opportunities*. Washington, D.C.: ASHE.
- Sutherland, D.I.M. (1999) Recent developments in Education Management in Scotland. A paper presented at University of Pretoria – Department of Education Management 21st Anniversary conference held on 18 September 1999.
- Sutherland, D.I.M. (1998) An international perspective on the movement towards The professionalism of teaching: some principles, tensions and dilemmas. A paper presented at the SAELPA's annual international conference held on 18-20 September 1997.
- Teffo, L. (1999) Moral renewal and African experience(s). A paper presented at the 1999 African Renaissance Conference.
- Venter, L. (1997) *When Mandela Goes. The coming of South Africa's second revolution*. Johannesburg: Doubleday.

