

# PROFESSIONALISATION OF TEACHING IN SOUTH AFRICA

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## ABSTRACT

*Teacher education is a global profession that needs to be understood properly. It is essential to grasp a global perspective of the profession as it is today, to make assumptions about it in the near future and to utilize the best thinking and instructional models available in the present times. Professionally, teaching is very important and increasing in our contemporary society as a result of the stream of dynamic initiatives of human development and evolution. Due to the recent developments and the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), standards of learning would be higher in the 21<sup>st</sup> century than they have been in the 20th century. As a result, teachers would need to acquire additional knowledge and skills, both general and specific, to be able to survive and be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century school environment. Professionalization is the social process by which an employee cultivates, purify, explore, and continuously dedicate themselves towards excellence in their profession. The purpose of Professional development or Professionalization of education is related to academic development of teacher student and management of learning environment for self-regulation in the perspective of accountability.*

**Keywords:** Teacher, Education, Professional Development, Professionalization, Professional Ethics.

## INTRODUCTION

In the Apartheid Dispensation, minimal efforts were done to dignify the teaching profession and the introduction of Bantu education which an inferior quality compared to the education in white schools and government schools did not help the situation either (Armstrong, 2015). Historically, the teaching profession has had handicaps that hampered the progress of the professionalization of teaching. These developments have had obvious implications for education and teacher professionalism.

The rationale underlying this view is that upgrading the teaching occupation will lead to improvements in the motivation and commitment of teachers, which in turn, will lead to improvements in teachers' performance, which will ultimately lead to improvements in student learning. Professionals are naturally organized, trained, qualified or regulated, and creative. By identifying these characteristics of professionals that appear to have fairly universal application through activity we can get to grips on the process of professionalization (Jovanova-Mitkovska, 2012; Hornby, 2013).

According to Mizell (2014), teacher education is a profession- indeed a noble one, conceptually and apex. It is also related with other professions because of its multiple dimensions. Teachers are the greatest professional power involved in holistic human development. Generally, the concept that good teachers are born, has been rejected and it is accepted that most of them are made, as product of good teaching, and learning processes. This is because it has now been considered that teaching is not a job, but is an inspired profession or we can say a passion. The Education in 21<sup>st</sup> century has become more and more complex and puts most of responsibilities on the shoulder of a teacher and teacher educators.

Mizell (2014) further stated that highly competitive environment comes having great promises for career development of aspirant professionals, with many career choices specialized education to match the other ones' necessity. Education not only raises area of any stream but is one of the most popular channels linking the new world with society at large, where excellence has no limits and intelligence is an endless path of growth (Mizell, 2014). Training of the practitioners is thought to be one of the most important merits of a profession. Therefore, in order to capacitate teachers for their roles, a healthy professional training is needed.

The primary aim of this article is to highlight and discuss the benefits of professionalizing teaching within the South African context. This will be done through consulting previous studies on this subject from various sources within South African parameters and also to an extent of other few international studies on this topic. The article will give in-depth presentation on the topic under the sub-themes; professional development of educators, professional ethics, the benefits of professionalism, professionalism and the implications of professionalization within the education system and making suggestions on how best could teachers improve their professionalism within the education sector. Finally, conclusions will be drawn from the presented discussions of the article and make possible recommendations.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

I have located the research of this paper within a qualitative approach (Gay 1992; Babbie 1998; Leedy & Ormrod 2013). This decision was informed by the fact that this paper is not interested in the quantification of data. But its main interest lies in the painting of qualitatively rich picture of the phenomena being studied within the context of limited respondents (Hall 2007; Maserumule 2011; Baugh & Guion 2016). To this end, the problem of this study is explained descriptively and theoretically for the purpose of generating a crispy understanding of the benefits of professionalization of teaching in South Africa. In terms of data collection, the author sourced and reviewed literature on the topic. Among others, these sources included journal articles, books, magazines and newspapers in the area of teacher professionalization.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATORS**

### **Professional Development Landscape in South Africa**

Professional development of teachers continues to be a contested terrain in this country. There are a number of organizations and institutions involved in the development of teachers in many ways. It is important to locate South African Council for Educators (SACE's) professional development landscape in South African because it has a direct bearing on the professional development role of SACE. Again this will assist in finding the distinct role that SACE should play with regard to professional development (SACE, 2011).

### **Department of Basic Education and Higher Education and Training**

The department of basic education and higher education training, and the provincial education departments, as employers of teachers, have legal responsibility and obligation to develop all teachers in the country. The departments' professional development provisioning programmes take place mainly in the form of workshops, skills programmes funded through skills development funds, full qualifications through higher education institutions, and others (SACE, 2011).

SACE (2011) asserts that the department of higher education and training provides subsidy funding to public higher education institutions for initial and continuing professional development qualifications. This subsidy funding and the recognition and evaluation of qualifications for employment purposes are currently regulated by the norms and standards for educators (Gazette No 20844, 4 February 2000) and the criteria for the recognition and evaluation of qualifications based on the norms and standards for educators (Gazette No 21565, 22 September 2000).

Through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NASFAS), the Department of Higher Education and Training provides financial aid to initial teacher training. Both the Department of Higher Education and Basic Education interact directly with foreign donors, many of whom invest in professional development programmes. The Department of Higher Education are responsible for producing a national teacher education and development plan. They have, in coloration with their stakeholders, recently released the national integrated teacher development plan that ensures that teacher development provision takes place in the country in a coordinated manner (SACE, 2011).

### THE NEED FOR MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Professional ethics for teachers refer to the guidelines of morality, humanity which a teacher is supposed to adhere by in the teaching profession with the students, course-curriculum and their environment (Mizell, 2014; Hofmeyer et al., 2017). Teaching is a socially accepted profession that carries a great responsibility. It is expected to develop a set of values and ethical principles and norms to guide the human behaviour.

In 2009, aspects of the SACE Code of Professional Ethics were converted into a pledge (SACE, 2011), requiring teachers to uphold the quality of education with a promise to:

1. Advance the education and the development of learners as individuals
2. Respect the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice
3. Develop loyalty to, and respect for the profession
4. Be punctual, enthusiastic, well prepared for lessons and sober mind and body
5. Improve my own knowledge and skills base to be more effective
6. Maintain good communication between teachers and learners, among teachers themselves, and between teachers and parents
7. Provide information to parents on their children's progress on a regular basis
8. Eliminate unprofessional behaviour, such as teacher-pupil relationships, drunkenness, the use of drugs, assault, sexual harassment and other infringements, and
9. Make themselves available for extra-mural activities (SACE, 2011).

The code of professional Ethics enables SACE to hold teachers to account for violating the code. Formal disciplinary process may lead to the council revoking registration with it, which is required for employment as a teacher. According to Kimathi & Rusznyak (2018), the primary purpose of the code is to “provoke thinking, debate and discussion” about ethical issues in education, and it articulates a hope that teachers will engage with its contents “individually, in pairs, or in a group with their colleagues”. It therefore acts ethically in the context of their everyday professional life.

Kimathi & Rusznyak (2018) highlighted that the Ethical principle gives the base to distinguish between desirable and undesirable human behaviour. The feature of professional values may be explained as a set of self-imposed ethics and principles necessary for the acquirement of self-improvement and professional excellence.

## **BENEFITS OF PROFESSIONALISM**

Professionalization has a variety of benefits among teachers as this allows one to grow both personally and professionally as this is a continuous process that start from the beginning of preparation and continue until the end of life, a process that is realised in different ways which means the development of teachers with new knowledge, skills, abilities, and strategies in the respective areas of competence and application of modern technology.

Jovanova-Mitkovska (2012) illustrates the importance of professionalisation of teachers below:

1. Provide opportunities for acquisition or renewal of basic knowledge and skills in specific, thorough, professional and academic areas, the area of information technologies, foreign languages, technological culture and social relations;
2. High quality and accessibility of specific information, support and counsel given to the possibility of setting up and implementation of specific objectives and tasks;
3. Inclusion of representatives of relevant sectors, especially the young people in existing and future network structure in this area
4. Has an impact on the establishment of teacher connection, strengthening team-work and cooperation in the classroom, the school at local, national and wider;
5. Influence the determination of goals (specific, realistic and variables) and the tasks of teaching and learning;
6. Changes of teaching methods, forms, strategies;
7. Allows the creation of conditions for lifelong learning for all, of age, including special efforts directed of disabled persons, those not otherwise involved in the educational system and migrants as a tool for their social integration
8. Better teachers are capable of creating better educational standards and have the ability, capacity and capability to adhere to the best standards internationally and deliver on their promise.
9. Better teachers are able to better equip learners with the skills that they need to become better citizens and professionals.
10. Better teachers can help to develop the next crop of competent leaders (Jovanova-Mitkovska, 2012).

## **BENEFITS OF PROFESSIONALISING TEACHING**

Sayed & McDonald (2017) outlined some of the benefits professional teachers experience in their continuous career process below:

According to Sayed & McDonald (2017) all professions have a high social status enjoying regard and esteem conferred by the society upon them. This high esteem arises mainly from the higher social function of the work done by the practitioner, which is considered as vital to society as a perfect one and thus of having a special and more valuable nature.

All professions involve specialized, technical and highly skilled work referred as professional expertise. The training for this work involves acquiring degrees and professional qualifications, which is essential for the entry to the profession without which it is barred. Training also needs regular updating of skills by continuing education (Sayed & McDonal, 2017).

Sayed & McDonald (2017) postulate that professions have some special power. This power is used to regulate its area of expertise and interests and also controls its own members. A profession tends to dominate worthiness and protect its area of expertise and conduct of its members. It exercises a dominating influence on its entire field which means

that professions can act and behave as monopolists, buffering competition from subordinate trades, occupations, as well as ancillary and controlling related trades. The profession is characterized by the power and the high prestige it has in society holistically. It is the prestige, power and value that the society confers upon a profession which more clearly defines it.

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## **PROFESSIONALISM AND IMPLICATIONS OF PROFESSIONALISM**

### **Deacon (2012) Offers 12 Criteria of Professionalism**

1. Theoretical knowledge and concomitant skills: Professional are assumed to have extensive theoretical knowledge and, deriving from that, skills that are exercised in practice
2. High quality pre-service academic and professional preparation: professions usually require at least three years' academic accreditation plus professional induction, together with a requirement to demonstrate professional competence in the workplace.
3. Legal recognition and professional closure: professions tend to exclude those who have not met their requirements nor joined the appropriate professional body.
4. Induction: a period of induction and a trainee role is a prerequisite to being recognised as full member of a professional body together with continuous upgrading of skills through continuing professional development
5. Professional association: professions usually have professional bodies organised by their members, intended to enhance their status together with carefully controlled entrance requirement and membership.
6. Work autonomy: professionals retain control over their work and also have control over their own theoretical knowledge.
7. Code of professional conduct or ethics: professional bodies usually have codes of conduct or ethics for their members and disciplinary procedures for those who infringe the rules (Deacon, 2012).

While most of these categories do indeed apply to teachers as commonly understood, there are a number of categories where teachers' professional status is weak. While teachers' professional associations may have legal recognition, their power to exclude those who do not meet requirements and to control entrance requirements are often counter-balanced in practice by government's power to regulate teacher qualifications and universities' ability to recruit and prepare all who might apply through traditional channels and even some through alternative routes. Teachers' work autonomy is often exceptionally weak, in that what passes for their work and theoretical knowledge is also usually regulated. Finally, public service and altruism may well characterize the work of many, but not necessarily all teachers (Deacon, 2012).

## **PROBLEMS OF PROFESSIONALIZATION**

### **Lack of Skill Based Theoretical Knowledge**

Professionals have intensive theoretical knowledge and skills based on the knowledge related to the subject and they are able to apply in practice, but in the present scenario there is the absence of such properties (Deacon, 2012).

## **Professional Dissociation**

For any Professions, professional bodies are essentially organized by the members intended to enhance the status of them and carefully control entrance requirements but generally professionals are intended towards self-interest only (Deacon, 2012).

## **Problems in the Recruitments of Professionals**

Every one can't be the member of the professional body. Professionals should have specific characteristics. It is a requirement to qualify the prescribed examinations that are based on the attitude towards the theoretical knowledge but the problem is that the recruitment procedure is not fair. Thus politicization of education is a big problem (Deacon, 2012).

## **Distinction in Status and Rewards**

According to Adendorff et al., (2011), the successful professions should attain high status, rewards and public prestige for the members to influence the growth and success but it is a great misfortune that Status and Rewards are decided or influenced by those, who are unknown or little known to the education system. This creates distinction as well as demoralizes the teacher or educator.

## **Abnormal Mobility**

The skills, knowledge and authority of professionals belonging to the profession as individuals, as organizations for which they work, are needed to have the nature of mobility. However, in the case of its sustained condition new opportunities are not created and developments of new talents are barred. This abnormal mobility deteriorates the standardization of professional training and procedures (Adendorff et al., 2011).

## **Lack of Commitment**

Lack of commitment for students, his profession, and the education system is the main problem in the present scenario. It is not only limited to teachers but students and guardians are in some cases not committed towards education. The present need of everyone is only quantity, they do not mind about quality. The issue of responsibility and control of the society's Education: conflicts between the state and local Governments (Adendorff et al., 2011).

## **Narrow Mindedness**

Everyone is limited to oneself only, he/she wants a very few actions and results in a lot. There is the lack of thinking about the future, which creates insularity. The responsibilities are not taken as responsibilities but as a burden, their purpose is to remove burden any way. The reason behind it is that either that teacher is not interested in teaching or society. In such a case education can't grow (Adendorff et al., 2011).

## **Teachers/Educators are Not Updated**

Changing is the rule of nature, there is spontaneous change in every field. There is the need to understand the change and behave accordingly. In education system various new

technologies, new recommendations, innovations are emerging. But for most of the teacher educators they are not well known i.e. update (Adendorff et al., 2011).

### **Use of old Methodologies**

The world has evolved yet in most of the school's/colleges old methodologies are used, some of them are not suitable according to the present situation (Adendorff et al., 2011).

### **Lack of Resources**

The growth of institutions is prohibited if it has no resources. The growth also depends to a greater degree on the amount of the resources available. The growth is proportional to the resource available. In the education system there is the huge problem of the resources. Since the majority of the poor are the black South Africans who were previously disenfranchised under the apartheid dispensation this implies that numerous poor black South African students are also in large numbers but teachers, school's colleges, infrastructure, facilities are not available in that ratio. Scarcity and prohibitive cost of books, poorly-equipped libraries, laboratories and subject rooms are the problems that limit the possibilities for successful teacher Professionalisation (Adendorff et al., 2011).

## **SUGGESTIONS**

To better develop higher standards of professionalism among educators in the country, I suggest that there should be greater convergence between professional preparation and continuing professional development of teachers at all stages of education. Considering the complexity and significance of teaching as a professional practice, it is imperative that the entire enterprise of teacher education should be raised to a university level and that the duration and rigor of programs should be appropriately enhanced.

### **Value Education**

A teacher is devoted to the society without any self-interest. Hence, it is imperative for stakeholders including the society and the state to recognise the heroic nature of the teaching profession by investing in teacher education and investing more financial resources in the remuneration of the same. In present scenario professionalization also advocate for the devotion but in exchange of money (Armstrong, 2015).

### **A Periodic Evaluation**

A periodic evaluation enhances the capability of the institution as well as the teacher and students. Similarly, there is need to evaluate teachers so that they can competently utilise concurrent technologies and utilize their knowledge for the welfare of the students as well as society (Armstrong, 2015; Cross & Ndofirepi, 2013).

### **Equal Rewards and Status**

The education system alters from province to province, institution to institution, religion to religion and society to society. This is the large problem; at least there should be a common pattern. On the basis of this pattern the status of the teachers and rewards should be

the same. It is evident that salaries of different level teachers in different states are different (Armstrong, 2015).

### **Broad Mindedness**

For any unethical or illegal involvement narrow mindedness is responsible. Therefore, there is need to develop a broad mindedness (Lumadi, 2012).

### **Punishment for Illegal or Unethical Acts**

Since corruption has emerged in every field in different amount, in other fields it has not cost in that amount as in the case of Education, because education affects present and a long future, not only an individual but whole society too. Therefore, there should be proper punishment for illegal acts (Lumadi, 2012).

### **Rewards for Committed Teacher without any Political Influence**

There should not be any political or administrative influence for the rewards. Mostly it is seen that many of the rewards are given to the related persons. Such cases should be stopped by a well committed group of devoted persons (Lumadi, 2012).

### **Directional Education System**

A directional education system will help the students as well as teachers (Lumadi, 2012).

### **A Periodic Change in Curriculum and Teaching Methods**

Since the new innovations are carried out on a new product in form of the new curriculum, teaching methods, and teaching technologies, there should be periodic reforms in curriculum and technologies as per the change in society (Lumadi, 2012).

### **A Continuous Training**

In the changing society, changes in curriculum and technologies are a norm and a teacher should also be acquainted with new trends, therefore, there is a need to do continuous training (Lumadi, 2012).

### **Fulfilment of Necessary Resources**

The necessary resources should be availed so that desired outcome can be obtained. There is need to increase schools, colleges, teachers, and infrastructures.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the above discussion, there is a need to innovate some special models of teacher education to reduce problems in professionalization of education within the country, more especially looking at the fact that education has increasingly become important to the success of both individuals and nations. Therefore, educators should be encouraged to take up different major or minor research projects, since we have learned that they play an important role in the improvement of the quality of education. In any assessment of the educational system, it is important to know the adequacy of teachers, who are not only well qualified, but



are also able to adjust with the changing curriculum and growth in knowledge. It is important to know about the facilities for upgrading and improving their knowledge and their skills of teaching. The professional development of teachers has garnered a great deal of attention in all countries, including India. In comparison, the attention that teacher education has garnered in South Africa is marginal. Even when research and policy initiatives are directed towards the professionalization of teacher education, the focus is on instructional resources, institutional development, program structure, curriculum reform and the like. Teaching is a profession. Teacher 's training is an important component of teacher education. Profession is a vocation founded upon specialized educational training

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