Towards Teacher Professional Knowledge and Practice Standards in South Africa

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October 2016

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ACRONYMS

BEd	Bachelor of Education
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CPE	Certificate of Proficiency in English
DBE	Department of Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
edTPA	Teacher Performance Assessment
EFAL	English first additional language
ETSIP	Education Training Sector Improvement Programme
GHS	General Household Surveys
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management Systems
ISPFTED	Integrated Strategic planning framework for Teacher Education and Development
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
MRTEQ	Minimum standards for Teacher Education Qualification
NBPTS	The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
NDP	National Development Plan
NICPD	National Institute for Curriculum and Professional Development
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSSB	National Standard Setting Body
PD	Professional Development
PED	Provincial Educational Departments
PRODCO	Councils professional development committee
PPS	Professional Practice Schools
PTEC	Provincial Teacher Education Committees
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SACMEQ	Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
TEI	Teacher Education Institutions
TS	Teacher Schools
TIMMS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TKPS	Teacher knowledge and practice standards
TLDCIP	Teaching and Learning Development Capacity Improvement Programme
TPS	Teacher Professional Standards
US	United States of America

1   INTRODUCTION

This paper occurs against the backdrop of a failing South African education system, characterised by the inequitable distribution of resources, ill equipped teachers, and low matriculation rates. This situation arises from the highly inequitable distribution of resources to education, structured along racial lines, and is a major factor in the reproduction of what former President Mbeki (1998) referred as the 'two nations' dichotomy. The state of education in South Africa and internationally has generated much debate and activity on the topic of standards for schooling. Almost invariably this activity is directed towards raising school performance: it is argued that Teacher Professional Standards in particular are an essential tool to improve teaching and learning.

Teacher Professional Standards (TPS) are broadly defined as the common standards, agreed upon by the teaching profession that characterise good teaching. They may serve a range of purposes, including the development of a professional teaching identity, informing the course development and accreditation of Initial Teacher Education (ITE), as well as constituting the standards by which teachers can be held accountable. It is worth noting that all assessments of teachers and pre-service teachers imply standards which qualified teachers are expected to meet; however what TPS refers to is an explicit standardisation of those standards, usually on a national scale.

As South Africa grapples with the question of TPS, the present report aims to offer direction for decision making around this important subject, contextualized by the relevant constraints. Drawing on the experience of a range of countries most notably the US and Finland, as well as academic literature on TPS, it situates TPS within a theoretical framework of the schooling cycle, helping to elucidate the conditions in which TPS serves to raise school performance.

The structure of the report is as follows:

Part One discusses the theoretical justification for standards, within the framework of a vicious or virtuous schooling cycle. It examines what we mean by 'professional', and why teacher professionalism is important in raising learning outcomes. It furthermore outlines the various standards that often exist within the schooling cycle, and the role that they can play in contributing to professionalism.

Part Two takes a more practical look at how standards are commonly developed and evaluated, and the forms that they take. This section draws heavily from the experience of other countries, and aims to outline some of the common options available when designing TPS. It ends with a discussion of what other countries have learned from their experiences of using TPS.

Part Three helps to contextualise the discussion of TPS within the South African context, giving an overview of the state of South African education with particular focus on teacher training and development. It uses the framework of a vicious schooling cycle to elucidate some of the key challenges that South Africa currently faces, before discussing both the opportunities and risks that TPS pose. This is followed by a detailed discussion of how far South Africa has progressed on the development of TPS, and the various stakeholders involved.

The report ends with a conclusion which draws together lessons from the international experience of the use of standards to improve the quality of schooling, and speculates how these may be applied in the South African context.

2 PART ONE: WHAT ARE STANDARDS FOR?

In Part One we discuss how and why the debate around teacher standards has arisen, before outlining a framework for understanding the role of standards within the schooling cycle, and what this implies for standards development.

2.1 Standards and Professionalism

The debate around TPS is foregrounded by the notion of professionalism and what this may mean for the education and management of teachers. It is worth noting that not all schools of thought ascribe to an understanding of teachers as professionals. Indeed, there is a substantial body of literature which advocates that teaching should not be considered a profession but rather a creative exercise that comes naturally to some and not others; good teachers are not academically trained, but rather 'found'. Seen in this light the main value of ITE programmes is the selection of teachers rather than their education. While not without merit, this report does not ascribe to such a view and, as described in section 4.2 below, neither does the current policy regime in South Africa. Rather, it is understood that the professionalization of teaching is a crucial requirement of quality education.

The South African Council of Educators (SACE) sees the development of TPS as an important step in the professionalization of teaching (SACE, 2016a), which is currently lacking in the South African educational landscape.

Darling Hammond and Hyler (2013) list three features common to professions:

> *They are morally committed to the welfare of those they serve; they share a common body of knowledge and skills that they use to advance the best interests of their clients; and they define, transmit, and enforce standards of professional practice. (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2013, p. 2)*

It is worth noting that the above definition implies that the formulation of a common body of knowledge and skills is a prerequisite for advancing the best interests of the clients, in this instance the students. This knowledge-centric view of professionalism is the one championed by Abbot (1988) and others: at the heart of any profession lies a shared theoretical and empirical knowledge base, from which protocols of professional practice are derived, continually tested and improved. Gamble similarly argues that it is this knowledge which affords professional autonomy: "… the notion of autonomy is indelibly linked to control of the knowledge base on which a profession's claim to autonomy rests" (Gamble, 2010, p. 13). A well-defined knowledge base gives the profession an opportunity to play a stronger part in key decisions regarding the quality of their service, and to build their own professional learning systems. Without a demonstrated capacity to define and apply evidence-based standards of what one should know, a profession is defenceless against policies that may run counter to quality practice and conditions that enable practitioners to do their best.

We refer to this as an endogenous view of a profession (N. Taylor, 2014). According to the endogenous model, society grants professional autonomy over the standards that regulate the procedures and ethics of practice to a defined group of practitioners because the group possesses a knowledge base that is a more reliable guide to practice than that of any contending formulations. Put succinctly, 'the authority of knowledge is central to professionalism' (Freidson, 1994, p. 36).

It is worth noting that in many countries occupations such as medicine, law, accounting and engineering all have common professional standards to which practitioners and teacher educators must comply. They are characterised by a well-defined and agreed upon knowledge base, which grant these professions a certain

amount of autonomy. Seen in this light some question why the teaching profession should not have the same.

However according to the definitions offered above, teaching in South Africa is not a profession, evidenced by the absence of an agreed upon knowledge base upon which to develop standards. As an example, it has been argued that educationalists in South Africa do not even share a common theory of literacy instruction, or well-defined reading pedagogies that are effective in suburban, township and rural schools in the country (N. Taylor, 2016; Reed, 2014; Soudien, 2008). Rather, the discipline struggles to unite across ideological barriers, all the while failing to develop a coherent system of teacher professional development.

There is a strong argument to be made that in the absence of professional standards and a collegium of practitioners to regulate the teaching profession, teaching is instead regulated by the bureaucracy. Where an occupational field neglects its own knowledge base, governments tend to reach for the regulatory stick. As Darling-Hammond and Hyler explain:

> *The extent to which an occupation is micromanaged by rules from without is directly related to the extent to which it fails to maintain high, common standards of competence and professional practice. (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2013, p. 1)*

What this looks like in practice are strong dictates from government concerning what teachers should do in the classroom, accompanied by continual assessment of teachers, and often leading to a patronising or defensive relationship between the two. We may understand the development of strong and defensive teacher unions as emerging from an antagonism between teachers and governments which a strong and respected professional teacher identity might have mitigated. The tension between teacher unions and government within South Africa illustrates this point well, and will be developed further in Part Three.

2.2 The Schooling Cycle

In order to understand the various roles and potential value of TPS in more depth, it is necessary to contextualise standards in the ensemble of actors, processes and institutions which comprise the school system. In this section we outline the theoretical framework for this report, to which we will refer throughout.

The present report understands schooling to be a cyclical process during which successive cohorts of learners progress through school, enter university as student teachers, and graduate as teachers into the world of work where they nurture the next cohort through the cycle. This broad conception of schooling as a cyclical set of processes emphasises the fact that the end of school is the beginning of higher education; we cannot divorce the quality of a nation's teachers from the quality of its students. The quality of entrants into ITE is dependent on the quality of matriculants exiting schools.

At various stages of this cycle teachers, pre-service teachers, or those who wish to become teachers, are held to a set of standards and selection criteria. For example, high school matriculants must reach certain selection criteria to enter into an ITE programme, pre-service teachers must reach a certain standard to graduate as certified teachers, and teachers are often held to certain standards in order to retain their teaching certification or to enjoy progress and promotion throughout their career. In some countries these standards and criteria are consistent across ITE programmes, but in South Africa they are not. The lack of consistency contributes to the inequality of education quality suffered within the education system.

The cycle of schools described above and illustrated in Figure 1 does not necessarily remain static. Rather, the decisions that are made along the way can contribute towards a vicious or virtuous cycle; one in which

education quality and teacher morale either rises or falls. The direction of the cycle depends at least in part on the standards that the system expects, and can afford to expect from its teachers.

A virtuous schooling cycle is characterized by high standards of entry into ITE, which enables a rigorous and challenging ITE programme, and a strong and supportive system of continuous development for teachers. However, in order to make high standards of entry into ITE feasible, there needs to be a large pool of high quality matriculants who also wish to become teachers. High quality matriculants are preconditioned on high quality basic education, and their teaching aspirations are dependent on the perceived status of teachers in the eyes of high-school graduates. A country with competitive and challenging ITE programmes will not only contribute to a higher quality of matriculant, but will be perceived as higher status. It will therefore be more desirable to the top graduates, and in turn enable a more rigorous ITE programme.

Finland is a good example of a virtuous schooling cycle. Finland is commonly cited as having one of the best schooling systems in the world (see, for example, Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012). It is characterised by low levels of inequality, careful selection of student teachers from the top 10 percentile of matriculants, rigorous and lengthy training, and intensive mentoring in early professional life. Selection of students into ITE programmes is a rigorous process involving first a national entrance exam based on selected articles on teaching and education, followed by a consideration of the candidates' matriculation scores and out-of-school accomplishments (Sahlberg, 2013). The education of candidate teachers is similarly thoroughgoing, culminating in a Masters degree with a strong research focus:

> *Teacher education is now research-based, meaning that it must be supported by scientific knowledge and be focused on thinking processes and cognitive skills employed in conducting research… A particular principle… is systemic integration of scientific educational knowledge, didactics (or pedagogical content knowledge), and practice… (Sahlberg, 2013, p. 6)*

Finland scores consistently highly on international comparative tests, even though it has no national or regional testing systems at levels lower than matriculation (Sahlberg, 2013). Needless to say, the teaching profession is ranked by matriculants as one of the most desirable career paths, which in turn provides for the selection of the most promising prospective teachers from the most able and motivated school leavers.

The virtuous cycle, exemplified by Finland, can be contrasted to a vicious cycle, as embodied by the US. In a vicious schooling cycle, ITE programmes are unable to attract a high quality of matriculant due to the low status of teaching in the public eye, forcing these programmes to recruit a lower quality of pre-service teacher, which in turn requires a reduction in the rigor of their training. A poorer quality of teacher is then deployed into schools, contributing both to the overall reduction in the quality of matriculants, but also decreasing the perceived status of a teaching career. The cycle reproduces itself in its inability to recruit quality pre-service teachers.

The US's vicious schooling cycle can be evidenced by public dissatisfaction over the state of schooling, which has been vociferously expressed since the *A Nation At Risk* report more than thirty years ago (National Commssion on Excellence in Education, 1983). In a report recently published by the National Center on Education and the Economy (2016) inadequacies were identified along every step of the teacher education pathway. Most notably, the report argues that teacher education programmes were relatively unselective, meaning that candidates' pre-existing maths, science and literacy capabilities were not generally strong. Initial teacher education programmes did not then develop deep knowledge or skill, particularly in subject areas, and the exams and assessment required to certify were only minimally challenging. This is not surprising if initial teacher education programmes are limited to the capacity of their pre-service teachers.

Furthermore, teachers in the US work without sufficient professional support, or opportunities to develop subject expertise.

Worryingly, the authors reported that "too many people assume that it is not too difficult to possess the necessary subject expertise to teach elementary school students" (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2016, p. 5), despite 85% of pre-service teachers being unable to demonstrate conceptual flexibility and mastery in mathematical concepts that are thought to be vital throughout elementary and secondary education. What this points towards is an underestimation of the skills that teachers require to be effective in the classroom in the US, which then results in low investment in the necessary skills.

There are two common consequences of a vicious cycle. The first is the emergence of alternative teacher accreditation schemes which purport to fast-track students through an ITE programme and to offer teacher certification without the lengthy 3-5 year course some systems require. Alternative accreditation courses serve to address both a teacher shortfall, and the alienation of high quality candidates who are put off by what is perceived to be an over-burdensome training in relation to a low-status career. Alternative accreditation programmes however serve to reinforce the belief that teaching is easy and does not require rigorous training. Teaching is relegated to a low-skilled profession or apprenticeship.

The second consequence is the need for tighter regulation and 'standardisation' at the school level. Since ITE programmes are in a weaker position to ensure that their graduates are high quality teachers, governments often take it upon themselves to hold teachers accountable, at times through chastising teachers whose students do not perform well. Unfortunately for the teaching profession, these regulatory standards have reportedly served to further de-professionalise the career and turn the best matriculants away. In countries like New Zealand, the UK and the US there is evidence that the reform promised by standards which manage teacher performance has not always had desired outcomes ; Delandshere & Petrosky, 2004; Thrupp, 2006). Indeed, Robin Alexander (2010) refers to 'collateral damage', where regulation has occurred at some cost, educationally, professionally and financially. Summarising findings from a British government-funded *Cambridge Primary Review*, Alexander (Alexander, 2010, p. 7) argues that:

> *…in many primary schools a professional culture of excitement, inventiveness and healthy scepticism has been supplanted by one of dependency, compliance and even fear; and the approach may in some cases have depressed both standards of learning and the quality of teaching.*

Comparatively, in countries that have achieved a virtuous schooling cycle, where teaching is:

1. a prestigious and attractive profession, which
2. recruits the brightest and most motivated matriculants, who
3. feel challenged by a rigorous and scientifically evidenced ITE programmes,

the continual monitoring of teachers is less necessary. Instead, ITE programmes have equipped teachers with an internalised template of the knowledge and practice standards to be achieved at successive grade levels; teachers are trusted to offer a high quality service. Notably, teachers in these contexts may be compared to lawyers and accountants, who are also trusted to offer a high quality service without government intervention or regular monitoring.

The above theoretical framework encourages us to look at schooling in its entirety and be wary of the idea that examining one element of such a vastly complex set of processes can be undertaken in isolation from a number of related elements. For the purposes of this report we are focussing on the role of teachers within

the education system, and how teacher standards may impact the improvement of education quality. It is also worth mentioning however that while teachers are the life-blood of the schooling cycle, they are often constrained or empowered by factors entirely outside of their control, and for which they cannot be held responsible. Considerations such as school resources, student backgrounds, and curriculum also define the teaching experience, and contribute both towards teacher professionalism and either a vicious or virtuous schooling cycle.

Within this cyclical framework of schooling, we understand the purpose of Teacher Professional Standards as contributing towards a virtuous cycle, specifically: a) the recruitment of high quality, motivated matriculants into ITE, b) the provision of high quality evidence-based ITE programmes, c) the rigorous assessment of trainee teachers, d) the perception of teaching as a desirable and high-status profession, e) high morale among teachers, and f) a confidence in the competence of the teaching profession which reduces the need for cumbersome and generally ineffective accountability mechanisms. The following section will seek to outline how Teacher Professional Standards can contribute towards a virtuous cycle, as well as the points at which they serve to undermine it.

2.3   How do standards fit in the schooling cycle?

The previous section outlined the theoretical framework for this report, unpacking the various mechanisms and processes that contribute towards a virtuous versus a vicious cycle of schooling. Standards, including Teacher Professional Standards are debated and applied at various points throughout the schooling cycle (Figure 1). Their effects differ depending on how and where they are applied. It is important to note that standards can be applied both to individuals and to programmes or institutions, and that the standards in one part of the schooling cycle influence standards in another. Seen in this light it is not possible to separate the quality of the teacher, matriculant, or pre-service teacher from the institutions and programmes that they both shape and are shaped by.
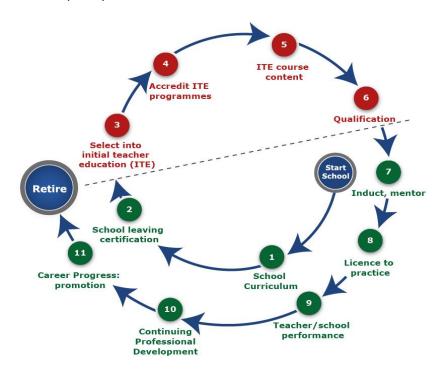

Figure 1: The School Cycle

This section will discuss the various points at which standards are applied, and the effects that they have. It is worth noting that not all countries employ explicit or nationally standardised standards at all levels.

Point 1 in Figure 1 is occupied by what are referred to in the standards literature as **Learning standards**, which describe what students should be learning in school, and thus impact primarily on curricula development. South Africa has a long history of centrally determined curricula, as currently embodied in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) (DBE, 2011). The US, on the other hand, has a history of decentralised curricula, although this has begun to change in recent years with the development of the Common Core Standards, and their adoption by an increasing number of states.

At point 2 **School leaving standards** specify what learners should know and be able to do by the end of high school. It is a key node in the curriculum cycle for a number of reasons, not least of which is because it explicates the standards described in the curriculum statements, providing examples of the types of tasks and levels of cognitive skill embodied in the curriculum. In South Africa, the annual examination papers for National Senior Certificate (NSC) shape and give direction to what is learnt in schools. Matriculation standards help to determine the quality of candidates entering ITE programmes.

At point 3 **ITE entry standards** constitute the standards which aspiring student teachers must meet in order to be accepted into teacher training programmes. In Finland and Singapore ITE entry standards are some of the highest of any profession and this contributes towards a virtuous schooling cycle; the competitive nature of ITE entrance increases their status and results in the opportunity to have more rigorous teacher training. In South Africa ITE entry standards are highly variable across institutions, and among the lowest of any profession, generally taken by school leavers with the lowest grade of degree-entry passes in the NSC. These low standards contribute towards a vicious cycle, where mediocre school performance is reflected in low public regard for teachers.

Point 4 is occupied by **ITE accreditation standards,** the standards which teacher-trainees must meet in order to become certified teachers, and are thus closely related to the standards occupying Point 6. In the absence of enough high quality teacher-trainees, ITE programmes lower standards in order to certify enough teachers to meet schooling needs. In the US, where there are no national standards, alternative accreditation programmes have been known to certify teachers with no classroom experience. This contributes towards a vicious cycle by reinforcing the idea that teaching is an unskilled profession. In South Africa broad criteria are given regarding the form and content of BEd and PGCE courses by the Minimum Standards for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) (DHET, 2015). Approval of such programmes is a double accreditation process, involving both the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Council on Higher Education (CHE).

For the teacher professionalization project, the standards occupying Point 5 in Figure 1 are primary to the entire standards cycle. They are most directly related to the theoretical and empirical knowledge base of teaching; they embody, in set curriculum specifications, **the content and pedagogical knowledge, skills and attitudes required for good teaching**. As we have discussed above, in the strong professions this knowledge base is research-based and explicitly defined, and its under-developed state in the field of teaching is centrally implicated in the highly uneven performance of teachers and the low status of the occupation. We return to an examination of developments in this regard in South Africa in section 4 below. Currently Points 7 and 8 are also poorly developed in South Africa, but here too initiatives are under way, which also receive attention in section 4.

At point 9 **Teacher evaluation standards** are standards by which teachers are evaluated in order to ascertain their professional performance. They are represented in South Africa by the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), administered annually to evaluate teachers. Teacher evaluation standards can be used for a range of purposes; to justify firing or retraining ineffective teachers, to assess pay scale or salary bonuses, to decide upon promotions, and/or to assess the quality of ITE programmes. They are often utilised in education systems where there is a lack of confidence in teacher quality, often as a result of low-quality ITE programmes. Teacher evaluation standards, especially if enacted in a top-down fashion, and used to question the quality of teachers, are contentious. Not only can they serve to make teachers feel attacked and decrease teaching morale thus contributing to a vicious cycle, it is also unclear the extent to which teacher competency can be accurately evaluated.

Standards for **Continuous Professional Development** (Point 10) and **Career Progression** (Point 11), are also areas of debate and activity in South Africa, and we return to a discussion of current developments in these areas in section 4 below.

From this brief discussion of where standards fall within the schooling cycle, a number of important points should be considered.

The first is that standards are not inherently valuable in creating a virtuous schooling cycle. Much depends on what the standards constitute, the level at which they are pitched, and the way in which they are enforced or regulated. Standards, if too low, make quality education difficult and alienate high quality matriculants who seek more challenging paths of study. Standards, if too high, result in a teacher shortage. Standards if too loosely enforced fail to maintain consistency. Standards, if too strictly enforced make teachers feel attacked and undervalued, detracting from a sense of professional pride and competency. Standards which lack consistency across the education system undermine the notion of professional knowledge. The question is not therefore *whether* standards are valuable, but rather which standards, and in what contexts are they valuable.

The second point, which is an extension of the first, is that standards do not inherently professionalise teaching, even when they are necessary; there is a need to distinguish between standards that help to professionalise teaching, and standards which merely manage teachers. Countries which have a history of poor teacher quality, such as South Africa, the UK and the US tend to emphasise the use of standards as frameworks with which to hold schools and teachers accountable. In other words, they tend to neglect ITE and the upper hemisphere of Figure 1, and focus attention on the lower hemisphere. These standards may make intuitive sense when one considers the damaging effects on the lives of young people of incompetent teachers, school leaders, and system-level officials; they filter out the worst teachers. However, it is important to note that these standards do not contribute towards teacher professionalism, and may serve to undermine it. While professional standards may be considered to constitute best-practice in education, management standards should reflect the basic criteria of what is acceptable in an educator's work. In contrast, virtuous cycle countries tend to emphasise the upper hemisphere of Figure 1, focussing on the quality of student teachers and the programmes designed to nurture them into professional teachers.

The third point, following from the first two, is the recognition that standards cannot be the same in every country; they are necessarily context and culture specific. For example, South Africa may aspire to have the same ITE entry standards as Finland, but if South Africa cannot attract that quality of matriculants into its ITE programmes, those standards will only create a shortfall of new teachers. While it is important to have high standards, it is also important for those standards to reflect contextual reality.

Fourth, and most important, is that the need to develop consistent standards across the education system requires a comprehensive understanding of the evidence-base within education. This is why Point 5 in Figure 1 is central to professionalising the teaching field: it is here that the knowledge base of teaching is defined and elaborated, in the light of emerging evidence. Darling-Hammond (1998) suggests that current initiatives to establish standards reflect the growing knowledge base about teaching and a growing consensus about what teachers should know and be able to do in order to help students learn. To be valid, teacher professional standards need to be based on evidence about conditions that foster purposeful and worthwhile student learning. Standards, if knowledge-based, can thus serve to professionalize teaching. They do this both by engaging teachers in conversations about knowledge generation in their field, as well as drawing broader attention to the historical weight of high-quality research which has defined the intricacies of teaching as we currently understand it.

3   PART TWO: TEACHER PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DEVELOPEMENT AND EVALUTION

Having outlined the schooling cycle and the role that standards can play in promoting a virtuous or vicious cycle of schooling, we now turn to a more detailed discussion on the ways in which standards are designed and evaluated. This section focuses specifically on teacher professional standards, which are standards that focus on what teachers should know, believe, and be able to do, e.g. ITE accreditation standards, and teacher evaluation standards. It aims to give an overview of the approaches taken by a number of different countries, and their implications for the schooling cycle.

3.1   How are standards developed?

If TPS are to contribute to the empowering of the teaching profession, their development ultimately rests on a professional consensus about what counts as quality learning and what that implies for what teachers should know, believe, and be able to do in order to achieve that learning among their students. Achieving such a consensus necessarily involves teachers, researchers, and government departments, who must reach agreement on the basic principles, the scope, and the nature of teaching work.

If designed in this way and for these purposes, teacher professional standards have the opportunity to significantly contribute towards the professionalization of teaching. By developing consensus on what is most worthy and most desirable to achieve in teaching knowledge and practice, groups of teachers come to discover, understand and feel collegial around the most distinctive features and aspirations of their profession. The recognition of the complexities and particularities of the teaching profession through the description of best practice in standards helps to enhance the profession's prestige by changing the public perception about teaching (Ingvarson, 2009).

Kleinhenz and Ingvarson (2007) point out that in addition to the need for teacher participation, valid standards should be based on evidence or research about teaching practices that have impact on student learning outcomes. In other words, stating that teaching standards reflect what is valued as good practice is not synonymous with saying that standards can be developed only on the basis of opinions and views not supported by research. It is therefore problematic that institutions in charge of developing standards often do not report the research on which the standards are based. In this regard the standards developed in Mexico and the US (InTASC) deserve special mention. Mexican standards make explicit the assumptions and constructs on which they are built, while InTASC standards are made available to the public with summaries of the research that underpins the standards (OECD, 2013a).

There is also a question as to *who* should be involved in the developing of TPS. The consultation process for developing teaching standards in Australia for example, have been very broad, with participation from researchers, teacher educators, federal, state and territorial government experts, regulatory authorities, professional bodies, teacher unions, schools, teachers, and teacher educators. During the consultation process some 120 stakeholder proposals were received. The development of the TPS included a synthesis of the descriptions of teachers' knowledge, practice and professional engagement used by teacher accreditation and registration authorities, employers and professional associations. Each of the seven Standard Descriptors were informed by teachers' understanding of what is required at different stages of their careers. The involvement in the validation and testing process of almost 6000 teachers in hundreds of schools across Australia ensured that each Standard Descriptor was shaped by the profession (AITSL, 2011). Namibia took a similar, albeit less democratic approach, when they commissioned external consultants to draft the standards, before engaging in a broad consultation process under the direction of the National Standard Setting Body (NSSB) (UNESCO, 2013).

The development of standards in England marked a trend towards teaching defined as practical, relevant and focused around contemporary, experiential knowledge of schooling (Beauchamp et al, 2013). Instead of involving those traditionally deemed experts, such as university faculty, new standards were developed by a review committee of practitioners set up by the Secretary of State for Education at the time, Michael Gove, in what has been described as a move "towards a school-based and school-led system of teacher education" (C. Taylor, 2013). The standards currently used in England are the outcome of reviews carried out by two separate panels comprising leading head teachers, teachers and education specialists in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders; ITE providers, induction co-ordinators, teachers' professional associations, serving teachers, head teachers and other education experts. The draft standards were tested in the schools sector in England through a process of drafting, testing and redrafting in the light of feedback.

An alternative approach can be found in the US, which has no national teaching standards. Instead TPS have been developed either at the state level, by various nation-wide institutions and bodies, or different teaching associations for specific disciplines. A significant example of teaching standards led by the profession is the pioneering work of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), which is a non-partisan, non-profit organisation. The NBPTS prides itself on its close relationship to the teaching profession ("Created by Teachers, for Teachers"), and as such has created field-specific standards for accomplished teachers that articulate the actions that accomplished teachers employ to advance student learning.

The inclusive approach to the development of TPS outlined above can be contrasted to Chile, where teachers had little or no input. Chile's standards were first developed by the Ministry of Education with input from the Teachers' Association, and the Chilean Association of Municipalities. Between 2009 and 2011, two Chilean universities were commissioned by the Ministry to further develop the four categories into specific standards in different subjects for recently graduated teachers (OECD, 2013b). Rather than using TPS as an opportunity to develop consensus and a collegiate identity among teachers, Chile prioritized the expertise of those who knew the evidence base for effective teaching. While this approach may have saved a great deal of time, the extent to which the products are accepted by all constituencies remains to be seen.

3.2   What different forms do standards for schooling take?

3.2.1   Coherent education focus

The forms that the standards take inevitably depend on the purpose for which they are designed. One consideration in this regard is the extent to which TPS influences various aspects of the schooling cycle.

Namibia offers an example of TPS which were designed in such a way as to encompass all aspects of teacher development (UNESCO, 2013). The Education Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) envisaged the alignment of teacher training, curricula, programmes and qualifications to meet the requirements of professional standards as a suitable model for teacher development in the country. As such, the TPS were extensively detailed, comprising 129 pages which outlined what every component meant and its impact on ITE curricula, programmes and qualifications. However, the huge challenge of implementing such standards in a developing country context is evidenced by the fact that although the NPST were published as early as 2006, by 2013/2014, they had still not been fully implemented. This is not surprising given the ambitious objectives and many purposes that they were designed to fulfil: from guiding and accrediting the providers of ITE programmes; assessing novice teachers competences, as well as those of professional teachers for licensing (and its renewal) ; and providing the basis for regular teacher evaluation. The foreign consultants did thorough job in producing the NPST but perhaps not for the realities of Namibian schooling and the nature of its teaching force. The detail and sheer length of the document containing the standards must make them daunting for novices and teachers and school leaders to come to grips with and implement.

Chile, by contrast, has different standards for different purposes (Santiago et al, 2013). In addition to generic standards for all teachers, the Graduating Teacher Standards are used as the reference for an initial pedagogical excellence examination (INICIA test). This is a diagnostic test for students about to graduate from ITE programmes. These standards define a set of basic competencies and knowledge that all graduates should acquire during their initial teacher education. The standards have been developed for pre-primary education, primary education, and secondary education.

England's standards arguably take a narrow form. Rather than aspirational, the standards published by the Department for Education set a clear minimum baseline of expectations for the professional practice and conduct of teachers, from the point of qualification. The teaching standards are short and generic, simply presented as a list of eight brief statements followed by specific pointers to explain and amplify their scope. The most significant change effected by the new standards was a direct link to a teacher evaluation system. The standards are used to assess all pre-service teachers working towards Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), those completing their statutory induction period, and the performance of all teachers' subject to the Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) Regulations of 2012. There is a danger with this approach that instead of professionalising teachers through forms of TPS that speak to the highest aspirations of the work force, they instead are used as management tools which teachers view as weapons of attack. However, the English system is subject to the vicissitudes of changing government policy with each general election, and the latest developments, signalled in a White Paper published in March 2016, indicates a stronger recognition of the importance of research evidence in defining standards designed to guide best practice (DfE, 2016).

3.2.2 Subject and age-range specificity

The forms that TPS take can also be classified into two large categories according to their degree of specificity (OECD, 2013a). Generic standards describe good teaching practices in general terms without detailing how these are to be demonstrated in the different teaching disciplines, distinct student grade levels or stages of professional development. Specific standards typify good practices for teachers of different subjects, grade levels (pre-school, primary, or secondary teachers) and even for different stages of their professional development (graduating standards, full registration, advanced teaching practice, leadership roles).

Generic standards are useful as a general reference framework that allows the development of more specific standards by subjects or disciplines as well as setting out the main domains involved in good quality teaching (OECD, 2013a). Generic standards are applicable to a number of domains while operationalisation of these general aims in any one domain (or specific point in the School Cycle depicted in Figure 1) requires more detailed specification. If learning processes are specific to particular disciplines and for specific ages, the same is true of the practice of teaching that promotes such learning. What a good early childhood teacher knows and does when using play to develop a young child's fine motor skills is different from what a good science teacher knows and does when engaging students in a productive discussion about cloning. If standards and methods of assessing teachers against standards are to be valid, they must be sensitive to the differences in teachers' knowledge and practice in different subjects and different year levels (Kleinhenz & Ingvarson, 2007).

However, standards that describe teacher performance by subject and grade level are rare. Examples of specific teaching standards according to the subjects and grade levels being taught are found in Texas, Chile and those in the United States developed by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (OECD, 2013a).

Kleinhenz and Ingvarson (2004) assert that, while standards should be specific to subject and age-range, they should be context free and allow a diversity of possible teaching styles. Standards help to create a consensus about good teaching practices, but they should not prescribe or over specify specific teaching styles. To do so may stifle creativity and innovation in the classroom, and thus undermine teachers' professional judgment and responsiveness to contextual demands. Teachers with quite different approaches and classroom strategies can achieve the same quality of teaching and learning. This requirement might be central to understanding why some of these countries (Australia, England and INTASC in the US) have opted to develop generic rather than specific standards (OECD, 2013a). It requires high levels of professional knowledge to determine what constitutes the underlying principles of good teaching without dictating the form.

Educator development frameworks

There is a debate as to whether standards should reflect educator career development (novice teacher, master teacher, head of department, etc.) as they progress through the profession. According to some, well written standards have a sound underpinning theory about the nature of teacher development from novice to expert (Kleinhenz & Ingvarson, 2007): they are clear about structural framework of what effective teachers get better at, such as knowledge of their students. The ability to chart experience and progress may contribute to feelings of job satisfaction and professionalism on behalf of the teaching community; it encourages teachers to aspire to improve teaching skills. The Australian Professional Standards for Teaching provide a framework of the knowledge, practice and professional engagement required through four career stages: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished, and Lead. In Victoria standards were tied to performance appraisal and processes of annual performance review that are linked, through industrial agreements, to career progression and salary (Kleinhenz & Ingvarson, 2007).

However, many countries do not specify teacher development. In Chile for example, although different levels of performance are assessed, presently there is only one job category for a teacher and no career steps in teacher development. Indeed, writing standards that reflect the nature of professional development is difficult and limited by current research. Many standards that attempt to represent stages of development "simply play with adverbs", or resort to adding more 'bits' to the teachers' role or duties: 'graded' indicators at the different stages often appear forced and artificial and can be misleading, and the elements of

teachers' work do not readily lend themselves to this kind of treatment (Kleinhenz & Ingvarson, 2007). A great deal of what teachers can be expected to know and do can be applied from the first to the last day of their working lives. The issue is not only about what they know and can do – that is, adding to their repertoires as time goes on – but of the breadth and depth of their professional knowledge and the extent of their ability to carry out essential teaching tasks. This kind of learning depends on insightful feedback about one's own practice in relation to the standards. The best way to ensure this is through cycles of self-assessment and peer assessment (Kleinhenz & Ingvarson, 2007).

3.3   Evaluating Teacher Professional Standards

The topic of teaching standards and their impact is still quite new in the specialised literature (OECD, 2013a) (OECD, 2013a). Indeed, it can be difficult to ascertain the exact causal effects of teacher professional standards, since they exist in webs of interrelated functions and drivers, all of which contribute to either the virtuous or vicious cycle outlined in Part One of this report. The development of teaching standards should not be considered as an isolated strategy in itself, and thus it is hard to evaluate it without taking account of the character of the particular school system to which the standards are intended to be applied. It is worth noting that the dilemma of evaluating TPS carries an ethical weight if teachers are held accountable to standards which carry no evidence of improving teacher quality or learning outcomes, a criticism to which South Africa's IQMS have been subjected (DOE, 2009).

Sergiovanni and Starrat (2002) suggest that rather than being evaluated as a tool of teacher accountability, professional standards can provide a useful framework for teachers to reflect on their practice and talk to each other about their work. Ingvarson (1999) describes how the process of preparing portfolio entries for National Board certification necessarily engages teachers in the kind of practice-based professional learning that is consistent with research about the conditions for effective professional learning (Hawley & Valli, 1999). Darling-Hammond (2001), Pyke and Lynch (2005), and Danielson and McGreal (2000) have all found that the formative purposes of standards-based teacher evaluation systems lead to enhanced professional learning because they allow teachers to play an active role in self-directed enquiry. Elmore (1996) makes the point that, for teachers to learn effectively, they need to look beyond their immediate experience to measure themselves against 'challenging conceptions' that have found expression in external 'norms' about what constitutes good practice across the whole profession. Notably, interim reports conducted in evaluation of Australian teacher standards found that although the standards are used differently by educators in different roles, their most effective use is for reflective and collaborative practice.

In the UK, NFER on behalf of the Department of Education conducted a study into the extent to which teachers believed that standards had positive impact (Walker, Jeffes, Hart, Lord, & Kinder, 2011). The methodology included a large-scale postal and online survey of head-teachers, teachers, NQTs/2nd year teachers, induction tutors, local authority staff, and governors to establish how and to what extent schools were implementing the standards. The extent to which the standards were reported to have contributed to impacts in school was varied. While the majority of head-teachers and teachers surveyed 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that use of the standards had helped to improve teaching and learning practices (65 per cent and 53 per cent respectively), a notable minority were not sure or disagreed (34 per cent and 47 per cent respectively). Similarly, about half of the teachers reported that using the standards had helped to contribute to whole school improvement or had led to improvements in their pupils' outcomes/progress. However, more than one in ten teachers 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' that the standards had impacted on either area (12 per cent and 15 per cent respectively). In Chile, teacher professional standards were also

generally seen as useful, although they were not recognized as an important policy lever to improve student learning.

A distinction also needs to be made between having teacher professional standards, and the use of those standards. In Victoria (Australia), for example, school-based interviews showed considerable variation in the ways in which the various processes, especially classroom observations and the summative evaluation, had been carried out. It became apparent that the quality of learning in schools that had followed a more laissez faire approach was lower than in schools that had, for example, followed the Standards and Professional Learning branch's advice that observers should use the standards when making formative assessments of classroom teaching. It took time for some mentors to understand that 'formative assessment' still meant 'assessment' in relation to the standards, and that this was an important factor affecting the value of the feedback they gave to beginning teachers (Kleinhenz & Ingvarson, 2007). In this regard it is necessary to emphasise the importance of training educators to use and implement the standards, as well as producing standards, in order to improve the quality of education. Similarly, in Chile a serious deficiency was that the contents of the TPS were not well disseminated. They were not taught in some ITE programmes, nor used by teachers on a regular basis. In fact, most teachers were unfamiliar with the levels of performance as reflected in the rubrics for the different criteria.

What these country examples point to is an understanding that TPS can be useful both in influencing the curricula of ITE programmes, and in structuring teacher reflection. However, a common challenge faced is the dissemination of the standards to the point where teachers understand them enough to be useful.

4   PART THREE: STANDARDS IN SOUTH AFRICA

As has been argued above, the development of TPS cannot be achieved without due consideration for the national realities and constraints of the teaching profession. Part Three focusses on the education system in South Africa and what this implies for TPS, before detailing the steps that have been taken by various stakeholders to develop TPS.

4.1   Education in South Africa

Despite high rates of public investment in education (accounting for 6.8% of the gross national product and 20.6% of total government expenditure in 2012) education in South Africa, and in particular teacher education, faces a number of heavy constraints. These constraints largely result from the legacy of inequality left by the apartheid era.

Since 1994, South Africa has improved in terms of access to basic education. The OECD stated in 2008 that South Africa is "close to achieving universal basic education" (OECD, 2008, p 49). This is corroborated by the annual General Household Surveys (GHS) that consistently finds approximately 1-2% of children aged seven to 15 not attending an educational institution[1].

However, the high enrolment rate hides the fact that around 15% of learners do not complete Grade 9, and as many learners repeat grades and drop out at age 15 without having reached Grade 9 (DBE 2013a)[2]. Moreover, the likelihood of a child from a poor socio-economic background reaching matric by age 19 or 20 is 17%, compared to 88% for a child from a more privileged background (SAHRC & UNICEF 2014).

International standard measurements show South African learners lag behind their international peers. For instance, South Africa's participation in four TIMSS assessments (1995, 1999, 2002, and 2011) indicated that three-quarters of South African learners had not acquired the minimum set of mathematical or science skills (benchmark of 400) by Grade 9. Only 24% and 25% of learners achieved more than 400 for maths and science respectively (Reddy et al. 2015).

One explanation for these poor learning outcomes is teacher quality. The results of SAQMEQ 2007 for Grade 6 mathematics teachers illustrate that the average math teacher's percentage correct on Grade 6 Math test was only 46% (SACMEQ, 2007). This is of great concern, not only given the strong evidence that teacher subject expertise has a significant impact on student outcomes (Jensen, et al, 2016), but also considering how it reflects poorly on the status of teachers.

The recruitment of quality teachers in South Africa currently faces a number of challenges pertaining to demand and supply (van Broekhuizen, 2015). The overall picture indicates that South Africa faces a problem of rising enrolments and static teacher supply. A recent estimate using a multivariate model suggested that there will be a negative gap of Foundation-phase teachers of between 15,220 and 42,135 by 2020, accumulating over the years from 2013 to 2019 (Green, Adendorff, & Mathebula, 2014) Furthermore, the presence of graduates does not automatically translate to them entering the profession. Rather, teacher shortages intersect language, phase, subject, as well as urban-rural disparities. For example, since most learners have an African language as their mother tongue, but very few student teachers are specialising in

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[1] 2011 census reports a lower enrolment rate, for example 95.5% for 14 years old. The DBE's Action Plan of 2019 (2015b) explains why the DBE uses GHS data for planning.

[2] The percentage of youths who by age 22 had completed Grade 9 improved from 80% in 2003 to around 85% in the years 2009 to 2011 (DBE 2013a). This shows improvement, but more analysis is needed (by example race and socio-economic status) on the 15% of learners who fail to complete Grade 9.

the teaching of African languages, there exists a significant mismatch between graduates in relation to the language requirements of learners.

Of those teachers who do graduate, attrition poses another challenge to teacher deployment and recruitment. This is partly explained by poor teacher salaries. Qualified teachers often have the opportunity to earn more in non-teaching roles, particularly in key subjects such as maths and science (Armstrong, 2009). "Teacher disadvantage" or the opportunity cost of teaching increases with the number of years of experience, so that the longer a teacher remains in the teaching profession, the less they earn in proportion to their non-teaching counterparts. It would seem that the status associated with being a teacher does not mitigate the cost.

As a result of poor teaching quality, the National Development Plan (NPC, 2012) emphasised the importance of accountability within the education sector. Accountability includes schools and teachers being held accountable to the Education Department and education authorities. In addition, the NDP addressed weaknesses and gaps in teaching, administrative support, and management. However, despite effort at implementing accountability mechanisms, the Ministerial Committee Report found that the accountability systems are weak because there is a resistance towards accountability in the South African schooling context. Access to conducting inspections and observations in classrooms varied and were, in the end, uneven.

A number of reasons for this evasion of accountability exist. The first is that schools and teachers cannot adhere to the standards that are expected of them. The 2013 NEEDU report made a distinction between "teachers who can't and teachers who won't" and explained why schools in many cases are not doing what is expected. The second is a history of school inspections under Apartheid that were "closed, top-down, hierarchical, and authoritarian" (Naidu 2011: 1), and which therefore have an association of intimidation and undermining teachers. The third is a failure of teachers to buy in to the rationale behind the accountability measures. And the last is a further credibility crisis, created by the number of developmental follow-through actions which are not carried out.

What this brief overview of education in South Africa points to is a vicious cycle of schooling which faces the following challenges:

1. The recruitment of enough teachers from the appropriate demographic to meet schooling needs.
2. The qualification of teachers with sufficient content knowledge from ITE programs.
3. Poor teaching working conditions and salaries.
4. Poor morale and motivation among teachers.
5. High attrition rates of teachers.
6. Poor learning outcomes among students.

With this in mind, the development of teacher standards needs to be considerate of the following:

1. There are not be enough African first-language speakers who are qualified as teachers to meet schooling needs, particularly in the Foundation Phase, nor sufficient teachers of mathematics and science through all school phases.
2. ITE programs attract students with insufficient content knowledge.
3. Given the spatial inequality within South Africa, it is likely that the African first-language speaking regions are also regions with the lowest education quality.
4. Teaching is perceived as a difficult, poorly paid profession.
5. Many South African teachers will be working in over-crowded and under-resourced schools.

4.2   Current efforts in developing Teacher Professional Standards in South Africa

There is currently a great deal of activity in and around the idea of standards for schooling in South Africa, involving a variety of organisations. Integration of this activity is provided for by the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (ISPFTED), a comprehensive plan covering all aspects related to teacher education, development and management issued jointly by DHET and DBE in 2011 (2011).

The primary outcome of ISPFTED is to improve the quality of teacher education and development in order to improve the quality of teachers and teaching. Toward this goal, ISPFTED addresses the career of a teacher through a number of phases set out in Figure 1: recruitment of potential teachers, preparation of new teachers, induction into the world of work, and career-long (continuing) professional learning and development.

ISPFTED allocates specific roles to DHET, DBE, Provincial Education Departments (PEDs), SACE, universities and teacher organisations. In this section of the report we detail the most pertinent of these functions to the present discussion. Progress was ascertained by conducting email interviews with senior officials at DHET, DBE, SACE and JET, all of whom provided additional unpublished literature. In some cases, these were accompanied by face-to-face and/or telephonic discussion.

4.2.1   Department of Higher Education and Training

DHET has been allocated many responsibilities in the ISPFTED, including:

1. Ensuring a sufficient supply of new teachers for all teaching specialisations;
2. Ensuring the development and provision of qualification-based CPD programmes for all types of teachers;
3. Establishing a network of viable, accessible Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs), Teaching Schools (TSs) and Professional Practice Schools (PPSs);
4. Establishing Provincial Teacher Education Committees (PTECs) that will assist to inform enrolment planning for teacher qualification programmes.

With respect to the debate on standards for schooling, DHET's most important task is described in Activity 4.1 of ISPFTED: *Develop teacher knowledge and practice standards (TKPS)*. The TKPS follow on from Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ), which describes standards at a generic level that should be met by all teacher education qualification programmes, regardless of their level, purpose or target group.

The intention of the TKPS is to provide greater detail to the standards expressed in MRTEQ: they are envisaged as statements that describe what teachers need to know and be able to do to carry out their core functions professionally and effectively. It is specified that the statements will be specific to a subject area and school phase or to a specific extended role, for example, school leadership, and that they should not be tied to a particular school curriculum statement, but relate more to the academic and practical knowledge required to teach a particular subject or discipline well. It was envisaged that DHET would facilitate the process, but that development would be done by those working in the teacher education sector. This activity occurs at Point 5 in Figure 1, and as we argued, is primary to the development of standards at many other points in the school cycle, in the interests of moving teaching toward a firmer professional base.

TKPS will be designed to be used by the stakeholders for a range of purposes:

- Universities will be able to use them to inform the development of curriculum in teacher education programmes.
- The National Institute for Curriculum and Professional Development (NICPD) located in the DBE will use them to inform the development of teacher diagnostic self-assessments, and the development of the content-rich, pedagogically sound short courses for teachers.
- They can inform the development of viable teacher induction programmes.
- They can be taken into account in development appraisal and performance management processes.

In 2014 a review of the first three years of the ISPFTED, issued jointly by DBE and DHET, described how the idea of the TKPS was being piloted at North West University to develop knowledge and practice standards for Foundation Phase teacher education (DBE & DHET, 2014). The report revealed that the next step in this process would involve the establishment of expert-based subject groups to assist in developing TKPS for the main subjects taught in the schooling system. This process is in progress at the time of writing. It is intended that a national initiative involving all 23 faculties which offer ITE will be directed towards formulating curricula for the teaching of literacy and numeracy in primary schools. Toward this aim, the purpose of the Teaching and Learning Development Capacity Improvement Project (TLDCIP) is to develop:

> *… research-informed knowledge and practice standards for [BEd programmes in primary literacy and mathematics, including] curriculum frameworks, course/module outlines, assessment tools, pedagogical models, materials, and tools for work-integrated learning…. (DHET, 2016, p. 2)*

Working groups have been established, incorporating teacher educators from across the country, in five areas:

Project 1: Developing new teacher graduates' ability to teach literacy in African languages with a special focus on reading.

Project 2: Developing new teacher graduates' ability to teach literacy in English First Additional language with a special focus on reading.

Project 3: Developing new teacher graduates' ability to teach number sense and early algebra.

Project 4: Developing new teacher graduates' ability to teach geometry and measurement.

Project 5: Developing new teacher graduate's ability to think mathematically and to infuse their own teaching with a mathematical thinking approach….*(ibid, p. 3)*

The products of the groups will be integrated into new curriculum frameworks for primary school teachers in training. The overall outputs of the project are:

> *Teacher graduates from the strengthened BEd programmes are able to competently work with children to develop language, literacy and mathematical competences at the appropriate level. (ibid, p. 2)*

4.2.2   Department of Basic Education

The ISPFTED allocates a number of tasks to DBE, perhaps the most important of which regards the standards debate concerning the establishment of a National Institute for Curriculum and Professional Development (NICPD). This involves the development of content frameworks to describe the content (theory and practice), specifically related to the school curriculum, that teachers need to know in order to teach the curriculum effectively, before using the frameworks to inform the development of diagnostic self-assessments and

quality short courses for teachers. Such courses should be endorsed by SACE and where appropriate accredited through the QCTO or HEQC. As noted above, it is the intention of the ISPFTED that the work of the NICPD will be given direction by the teacher knowledge and practice standards under development by DHET.

In 2016 the DBE reported that the work of the NICPD is progressing, with 487 EFAL and 653 Grade 8 Mathematics teachers assessed to date, and a target of 20 000 to be assessed in 2016/17 (DBE, 2016c). Furthermore, assessments tests have been uploaded in 80 web-connected Teacher Centres around the country. It is intended that content deficits shown by the tests will be mapped to existing SACE-endorsed programmes, and new programs developed where necessary. A great deal of teacher training was also reported.

While, teacher development cannot wait for the finalisation of the teacher knowledge and practice standards, CPD programmes will need to be aligned with the TKPS once these have been completed and the curriculum frameworks currently under construction by the TLDCIP finalised.

Regarding the assessment of teachers' work, the DBE (DBE, 2016a) announced its intention to declare the QMS as policy on 1 July 2016, in the face of refusal by the unions to sign the four-year old draft agreement. Here too, theoretical considerations indicate that the QMS should also be aligned with the TKPS where appropriate.

A press statement released in April 2016 (DBE, 2016a) reported that the DBE is working with SACE to professionalise teaching through standard setting, and strengthening the induction of new teachers before licencing. The proposal is to provide newly qualified teachers with provisional registration and to require them to meet teacher professional standards upon completion of an introductory three-year programme (Point 7 in Figure 1) in order to obtain full registration (Point 8).

4.2.3   South African Council for Educators

Regarding standards for schooling, the SACE Act (Republic of South Africa, 2000) includes the following among the roles and responsibilities of the Council: advise the Minister on matters relating to the education and training of educators, including but not limited to:

- the minimum requirements for entry to all the levels of the profession
- the standards of programmes of pre-service and in-service educator education
- the requirements for promotion within the education system
- educator professionalism

In other words, the SACE mandate could cover all the points in the school cycle shown in Figure 1, excluding the school curriculum and school-level assessment.

As part of SACE's legislative mandate, the ISPFTED elaborates the Council's quality management role in promoting and supporting a comprehensive CPD system for identifying and addressing teacher development needs:

- ensuring that the providers of teacher development programmes are fully *approved*,
- ensuring that the professional development courses available for teachers are *endorsed* and lead to the accrual of Professional Development (PD) points on successful completion. As discussed in our theoretical frame above, the criteria used by SACE to endorse CPD programmes will need to take account of the Teacher Knowledge and Practice Standards (TKPS) currently under development through DHET's TLDCIP initiative.

The process of establishing a comprehensive CPD system is well under way. In the face of over two decades of disappointing results regarding the impact of CPD programmes on teacher knowledge and teaching quality, the quality assurance of such programmes should be of primary concern to SACE. In this regard, the Council's Professional Development Committee (PRODCO) has established a 29-member CPTD Task Team which commissions evaluations to registered evaluators. These evaluators then make recommendations regarding endorsement (SACE, 2016b, no date).

SACE has located this work within a larger teacher professionalisation project: a *Teacher Professionalisation Discussion Paper* recommends that the setting of standards be prioritised:

> *If SACE is serious about enhancing teacher professionalisation and regulating the profession holistically, then the issue of setting standards for entry into the profession and progression should be prioritised along with the necessary resource allocation. (SACE, 2016a)*

More particularly, the SACE *Discussion Paper* (SACE, 2016a) maps out a proposed professionalisation path followed by a teacher, from being selected into ITE (Point 3 in Figure 1), through receiving provisional registration and graduating as a beginner teacher (Point 6) being inducted and mentored into the profession during a one-year probationary period (Point 7), receiving full registration as a professional teacher upon successful completion of a Portfolio of Evidence for induction (including a Competence Assessment) (Point 8), to retaining full registration status upon successful accumulation of the required number of Professional Development points with a three year cycle (Point 10). Thus, a 'standards package' or suite comprises standards for provisional registration, full registration, career-long professional learning, leadership and management. But the first task is to develop the **standards framework**, which, according to the *Discussion Paper* should be a collaborative effort among key stakeholders (HESA's Education Deans Forum, DHET, CHE's HEQC, DBE, and SAQA), and should precede and inform the development of *actual* professional standards for provisional, full, and retention registration.

4.2.4   Teacher Unions

The ISPFTED proposes that the unions have a responsibility to:

- promote teacher professionalism through advocating, supporting and encouraging teachers to access opportunities to identify and address their development needs;
- promote teacher professionalism through advocating and supporting the establishment of PLCs and encouraging teachers to participate actively and meaningfully in these; and
- assist in growing the profession by enhancing the status and image of teaching and teachers, and so encouraging new people to enter the profession.

In a *Research Report* commissioned by SADTU to investigate ways of strengthening the professionalization of teaching, it is proposed that DBE and DHET have a crucial role to play in establishing professional standards and communicating these effectively through policies, practice and compliance; it is further recommended that SACE assist in professionalising the system, defining professional development and career pathways, and becoming more active in encouraging teacher professional development (SADTU, 2014).

4.2.5   Universities

According to the ISPFTED, universities that provide teacher education programmes have the following responsibilities:

- programmes are responsive to national, provincial and individual teacher priorities and needs;

- programmes are of high quality and lead to meaningful development for teachers.
- in particular, universities will need to implement innovative mechanisms to strengthen the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) component of teacher education programmes, e.g. through the effective use of Professional Practice Schools (PPSs) and Teaching Schools (TSs).

The TLDCIP is explicitly designed to address these priorities, and teacher educators from all 23 universities involved in ITE programmes for prospective primary school teachers are participating in the 5 work groups established under the programme. This is a five year programme which is targeting the following results matrix (DHET, 2016: 3):

1.1 Teaching standards (knowledge and practice) for the component of mathematics or languages /literacy teachers that are the focus of the working groups are developed.

1.2 The standards are used to develop curriculum frameworks for the component. These are guidelines which indicate how the component should be addressed in initial teacher education programmes for primary teachers.

1.3 Well-designed comprehensive materials that support the delivery of the language/literacy and mathematics components of initial teacher education programmes for primary school teachers, including the work-integrated learning component of the programmes.

1.4 Assessment tools that enable the reliable assessment of initial teacher education students and newly qualified teacher's ability to teach children to read, write and do mathematics, including assessment tools that can be used in the work-integrated learning component of initial teacher education programmes.

1.5 Capacity development opportunities for teacher education academics involved in these two areas of primary teacher education are made available.

1.6 Quality research to inform the development work that the working groups undertake.

1.7 Ultimately, the main result must be strengthened initial teacher education programmes that enable new primary teacher graduates to competently teach languages, literacy and mathematics in primary school settings.

5 CONCLUSION

In light of South Africa's failing education system, and the low morale of many of its teachers, the importance of developing effective TPS is felt by all working in the field. This report has sought to offer guidance and direction for the future of TPS in South Africa and as such has drawn on valuable lessons from countries who have already taken this step, interpreted within the framework of a vicious or virtuous schooling cycle.

This report has argued that South Africa is in the grip of a vicious schooling cycle, characterised by a lack of consensus around both a formal knowledge for framing teacher education and what constitutes good teaching practice, low respect for the teaching profession, an inadequate supply of quality teaching candidates, poor morale and teaching expertise among a large majority of teachers, and a government-enforced accountability system that leaves teachers feeling disempowered. None of this facilitates the development of high quality matriculants which the teaching profession so sorely needs. This report furthermore argues that TPS can, if designed and implemented correctly, help to reverse the vicious schooling cycle, and that the value of TPS should be conceptualised in this way. To this end, the report makes a number of suggestions and observations:

1. Teacher Professional Standards is a catch-all term for a range of different types of standards. The form and content of any set of standards, together with processes for its construction and administration, will differ depending on where it is located in the schooling cycle. Not all standards will contribute to a virtuous schooling cycle, nor do they all have the same requirements; it is therefore important to be specific when discussing their purpose and development. For example, content standards for ITE programmes (point 5 in Figure 1) should, among other considerations, be based on research regarding the most effective strategies for teaching particular topics. It follows that such standards are best developed by researchers in the field of teacher education, and experts in pedagogy. In contrast, standards developed for the assessment of teacher performance (point 9), must enjoy ownership from teachers, school leaders and systems managers, and be developed through and iterative process between researchers, academics, expert practitioners, government officials and union leaders with extensive stakeholder engagement. The requirement of inclusive development makes the development of teacher performance standards a lengthy process. It is instructive to understand that development of the edTPA in the US involved more than 1000 teachers and teacher educators from 29 states and 400 institutions participating in an extensive, multi-year process including pilots and field tests with thousands of candidates.

2. Standards must be contextually appropriate and reflect awareness of the realities and constraints of the system in which they are being used. When standards are not reflective of the reality, usually because they require more than those in the system can give, it results in blockages within the schooling cycle. For example, ITE entrance standards which are too high result in a deficit of teachers, while teacher performance standards which are too high results in the disempowerment of many teachers. This is not to say that we should be content with low standards, but rather that standards should incrementally help the teaching profession to aspire to more.

3. One set of standards cannot be seen in isolation from others, and they therefore should be consistent with one another. For example, standards designed to approve CPD programmes (point 10) must rely on those which specify the content of ITE programmes (point 5). The validity of both ITE and CPE programmes, in turn, is determined by the extent to which they draw on research regarding what teachers need to know and be able to do, and the kinds of pedagogical strategies that are effective in

different contexts with children exhibiting a variety of learning trajectories. Ultimately, the school curriculum (Point 1) is the starting point for the development of standards at subsequent points in the school cycle.

4. It is important to find the balance regarding how specific TPS are, and this will depend on the place and purpose of standards within the schooling cycle. The more closely standards are specified, the less ambiguity inheres in their interpretation, and the greater will be the reliability of their application. At the same time, specification can lead to fragmentation and the portrayal of teaching as the sum of the parts, and an internal coherence is lost, emphasising the need to balance specificity with an overall sense of coherence. According to Kleinhenz & Ingvarson (2007), application of specific standards involves developing accurate scales and scoring rubrics, weighting different tasks and sources of evidence, identifying benchmark performances, and training assessors. Specific standards are particularly valuable in guiding teachers through a process of self-reflection, or for designing ITE programmes that require consistency. However, standards which are too specific, or which are used to hold teachers accountable to a strict regime, run the risk of stifling creativity in regards to teaching style. In this regard there needs to be flexibility in what constitutes quality teaching, and assessors which are confident in interpreting the spirit of the standards.

5. While agreeing with Alexander (2010) that we should protect students from poor quality educators, we also need to heed his warning to avoid the 'collateral damage' inflicted on a number of countries by crude standards-based accountability systems. Summative decisions must be made – such as who to promote to positions of curriculum leadership in schools, and when to fire a truant teacher – but, in the absence of reliable measures for making valid decisions, we should consider our instruments to remain under construction and continue to work at reducing the margin of error. In this regard it might be safer to think of standards are reflective tools, which promote self-appraisal and teacher-led growth, rather than instruments of performance management.

With this in mind, a final point is necessary. We must take heed of the limits of policies and regulatory procedures and the power of institutional culture – from the level of the smallest classroom to the school system as a whole – in inhibiting or facilitating systems change. Standards can be helpful in professionalising teaching, creating a positive teaching identity, inspiring teachers, and setting clear expectations of what is expected at each stage. However, if South Africa is to achieve a quantum leap in school performance then the culture of nepotism and corruption (DBE, 2016b), weak leadership and lack of consequences for the most egregious transgressions (NEEDU, 2013, 2014) must be converted to one in which honesty, a strong sense of personal agency, and individual expertise are prized above all other attributes in the recruitment, promotion and management of educators. Without a sea change in the human resource culture of schooling, the best standards in the world will not bring about change.

6   ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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