

# TEACHER PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

The road to better performance, development and accountability?



*The Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) has produced this report against the backdrop of a failing South African education system characterised by severe inequality, high drop-out rates, very low learner outcomes and ill-equipped teachers. It is widely recognised that improving the quality of teaching and learning is essential to address this education crisis and several initiatives are being undertaken to develop Teacher Professional Standards (TPS). As a contribution to these initiatives CDE commissioned research on the development of TPS in a range of developed and developing countries. Set within a theoretical framework of the South African schooling cycle, the research findings provide insights into the conditions under which TPS in South Africa might serve to raise school performance. Additionally, the experience of six countries in developing and implementing TPS offers valuable lessons for these processes in South Africa. The countries are the USA, England, Australia, Jamaica, Namibia and Botswana.*



## About CDE

The Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE), an independent policy research and advocacy organisation, is South Africa's leading development think tank. Since its establishment in 1995, CDE has been consulting widely, gathering evidence and generating innovative policy recommendations on issues critical to economic growth and democratic consolidation in middle-income democracies. CDE has a special focus on the role of business and markets in development. Drawing on a growing network of international think tank collaborators, CDE disseminates its research and proposals to national and international audiences of policy-makers, opinion formers and the wider public through printed and digital publications, which receive wide media coverage. Our track record of successful engagement enables CDE to bring together experts and stakeholders to debate the policy implications of research findings.

Series Editor: Ann Bernstein

This report is based on two research papers written by Dr Nick Taylor, Natasha Robinson and Dr Jane Hofmeyr for JET Education Services. The report was written and edited by Dr Kim Draper, Dr Jane Hofmeyr and Alexander Johnston.

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# Acronyms

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<b>BEd</b>	Bachelor of Education
<b>CAPS</b>	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
<b>CHE</b>	Council on Higher Education
<b>CPD</b>	Continuing Professional Development
<b>CPE</b>	Certificate of Proficiency in English
<b>DBE</b>	Department of Basic Education
<b>DHET</b>	Department of Higher Education and Training
<b>edTPA</b>	Teacher Performance Assessment
<b>EFAL</b>	English First Additional language
<b>ETSIP</b>	Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme
<b>GHS</b>	General Household Surveys
<b>HEQC</b>	Higher Education Quality Committee
<b>InTASC</b>	Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium
<b>IQMS</b>	Integrated Quality Management Systems
<b>ISPFTED</b>	Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development
<b>ITE</b>	Initial Teacher Education
<b>MRTEQ</b>	Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualification
<b>NBPTS</b>	The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
<b>NDP</b>	National Development Plan
<b>NFER</b>	National Foundation for Educational Research
<b>NICPD</b>	National Institute for Curriculum and Professional Development
<b>NSC</b>	National Senior Certificate
<b>NSSB</b>	National Standard Setting Body
<b>PD</b>	Professional Development
<b>PED</b>	Provincial Educational Departments
<b>PRODCO</b>	South African Council for Educators' Professional Development Committee
<b>PPS</b>	Professional Practice Schools
<b>PTEC</b>	Provincial Teacher Education Committees
<b>QCTO</b>	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
<b>QTS</b>	Qualified Teacher Status
<b>SACE</b>	South African Council for Educators
<b>SACMEQ</b>	Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
<b>SADTU</b>	South African Democratic Teachers Union
<b>TEI</b>	Teacher Education Institutions
<b>TS</b>	Teacher Schools
<b>TIMMS</b>	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
<b>TKPS</b>	Teacher Knowledge and Practice standards
<b>TLDCIP</b>	Teaching and Learning Development Capacity Improvement Programme
<b>TPS</b>	Teacher Professional Standards
<b>USA</b>	United States of America

# Executive Summary

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This report is based on commissioned research on the development of Teacher Professional Standards (TPS) in a range of developed and developing countries. Guided by the research findings, it assesses the potential for TPS to contribute to improving teacher quality in South Africa; it draws lessons from the experience of other countries, makes recommendations for the adoption of best practice in the field and identifies priorities for developing and implementing TPS effectively. The key to doing this is to recognise and address three key deficiencies in the South African education system: teachers are ill-prepared for teaching, they are not accountable and they do not receive enough support to equip them as competent educators.

The Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) has produced this report against the backdrop of an ongoing crisis in South African education. The symptoms, which are mostly found in the historically disadvantaged parts of the schooling system, include severe inequality, high dropout rates, low learner outcomes and ill-equipped teachers.

Much of CDE's substantial output of policy research in education has focused on teachers and teaching as the most important influences on student learning. This includes published reports on mathematics teaching, teacher supply and demand, induction, development and evaluation, both in South Africa and internationally for comparison. TPS are recognised and used in many countries as a benchmark to guide teacher preparation, professional development and evaluation. They provide a set of common standards that includes the professional knowledge, skills and conduct that characterise effective teaching, which research has shown to support improved learner outcomes.

Schooling is a cyclical process during which successive cohorts of learners progress through school and are able to go on to post-school education or training. It is widely recognised that in too many cases South African schooling does not equip a learner either for further study or the world of work. Furthermore, almost a quarter of a century since the end of apartheid, persistent educational inequality – inadequately-trained teachers, poor infrastructure, lack of educational materials, poor support and management, unmotivated learners and low educational outcomes – has resulted in what some education specialists label a vicious schooling cycle. In contrast, a virtuous schooling cycle is characterised by well-educated, well-trained and motivated teachers, appropriate infrastructure and materials, as well as the support of management and education departments. The result is generally more motivated learners who achieve well and are equipped for further education and training.

Getting South Africa out of the vicious schooling cycle and fostering a virtuous cycle is difficult, but better-trained and committed teachers would certainly improve the situation. As a step in this direction, initiatives are under way to develop TPS in South Africa and this report is intended to contribute to this positive movement by suggesting what to adopt, what to adapt and what to avoid in the experience of other countries.

Research shows that Teacher Professional Standards (TPS) can be applied to individuals, programmes or institutions and they are not necessarily the same in different countries. However, the basic framework and intentions are consistent worldwide. Those countries that use TPS have drawn up a set of guidelines for teaching standards, as well a set of standards for personal and professional conduct. Where the TPS strategy is successful, the standards in both categories are straightforward and usually comprise a list of between six and eight generic standards, with sub-points explaining what these mean. Simplicity in this case is important for understanding and commitment, and teachers at all levels, from newly-qualified to senior staff and head teachers, are required to adhere to them.

The need for such a basic framework in South Africa is clear and broadly recognised. However as yet, teacher education and development systems in South Africa are characterised by a lack of consensus on both a formal body of knowledge for framing teacher education and an evidence-base for what constitutes good teaching practice that supports learning gains. However, these deficiencies are being addressed in current initiatives involving the national education departments, quality assurance authorities, teacher unions and associations, as well as education faculties and researchers.

As a contribution to developing such a consensus on improving teacher quality, CDE has identified key lessons from six country case studies. In general these show that TPS hold significant promise as a means of improving teacher preparation and professional development, as well as pupil learning. They also provide examples of how TPS can be effectively designed and implemented to fulfil a wide range of purposes. However, at the same time the histories of each country's TPS also contain cautionary tales of failure at different stages and for a range of reasons. More specifically:

- TPS will not secure teacher buy-in if they are centrally designed and imposed by government: an inclusive and comprehensive consultation process is crucial for success. Consultation should be followed by a strategic communication and dissemination system so that TPS are known and fully understood by teachers.
- Teacher evaluation must support professional learning and not just accountability: while accountability is essential for parent, student and employer trust and confidence, performance based assessment should include formal development programmes and job-embedded learning opportunities linked to a teacher's individual development needs. Mentoring, coaching and knowledge-sharing among teachers are critical for effective development.
- Resistance to teacher evaluation can be provoked if accountability overshadows development, test scores are the only or dominant performance measure inadequate support is provided for teacher improvement, and there are severe consequences for poor performance.
- The introduction of TPS cannot be rushed: for a system to be credible, standards need to be evidence-based and properly tested in the sector before implementation on scale.



Developing and implementing TPS effectively in South Africa will not be a simple endeavour. It will require inclusive processes, research to establish an evidence base, careful formulation, extensive consultation, piloting, refinement, strategic communication, dissemination, training and embedding in the system, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

CDE offers the following broad recommendations as a contribution to this endeavour:

- The South African TPS should be linked to student learning standards, curriculum and assessment to create an explicit relationship between them and what teachers do in the classroom, how they are prepared, assessed and developed.
- The current TPS processes should be as inclusive and comprehensive as possible in developing generic standards, and in determining more phase- and subject-specific standards, the expertise of accomplished educators and university faculty is essential.
- Undertaking research must be part of the process of developing and implementing the TPS here. Research that links teaching practices to learning gains must be accessed to underpin the TPS if they are to build the knowledge base of the profession and earn credibility.
- Teacher evaluation in South Africa should be both formative and summative so that it can appraise teacher performance, strengthen accountability and support professional development.
- The current centralised Continuing Professional Development system should be rethought in terms of international evidence on what makes for effective professional development and support. The most effective professional learning is job-embedded: it happens in a school after standards-based performance assessment through monitoring, coaching and collaborative planning and feedback in peer groups.
- Given the lack of basic accountability and the significant degree of wrong-doing throughout the education system, it is essential that government takes bold steps to hold teachers, managers and officials accountable for their personal and professional conduct in fulfilling the basic functions and duties of their jobs.
- Equally, given the weak institutional functionality and limited capacity of many teachers, managers and officials, who have not been given the training and support they need, government must provide them with high-quality training and meaningful professional support and development opportunities to enable them to improve their performance. Unless this happens, they cannot be held accountable for what they have never been taught or had the opportunity to learn.
- Sufficient time must be allocated to the whole process of formulating the TPS, consulting widely, disseminating, piloting, refining and implementing them, with

sufficient training for teachers, managers and officials so that they fully understand them and can use them effectively. An initial voluntary implementation phase or staggered implementation before the TPS are made mandatory across all purposes has considerable merit.

- Before the TPS are implemented, the necessary policies and legislation must be in place. An appropriate mandate of the teachers' council needs to be negotiated with unions and other key stakeholders to ensure it is appropriately constituted and has the necessary powers to effectively implement the TPS.

CDE sees the following as priorities for government action:

- Firstly, the DBE and provincial departments should hold teachers accountable for what they are able to do, for example, keeping strictly to the school timetable, because they frequently and habitually skip classes. Simply by instituting this level of managerial accountability and requiring teachers to be in class when they should, learners will have 40 percent or more teaching and learning time. Although such moves are likely to be met with union resistance in forums such as the ELRC, government must move from rhetoric to action on this matter, using the deadlock-breaking mechanisms provided for by law.
- The second priority is to concentrate on teacher preparation: the selection of students, curricula of initial teacher education programmes and teacher qualification requirements, as well as an induction process in schools before full registration as teachers. The most critical initial focus for improving learning outcomes is teaching student teachers explicitly, both in the theory and practice, the most effective forms of reading instruction, something to which South African universities pay little attention at present. This will assist in establishing a reliable knowledge base for teaching, the foundation of any profession, from which effective protocols of practice may be derived.
- The third priority is to improve the nature and quality of support, training and professional development opportunities for teachers and managers as discussed above, so that they are able to perform at higher levels and improve learner achievement.

The three priorities for government identified by CDE are critical for effecting a significant improvement in the quality of South African schooling. Strengthening the content and process of teacher preparation and addressing both the lack of accountability and lack of support in the system will maximise the benefits of intervention and effect the necessary change.



# Introduction

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The Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) has produced this report against the backdrop of an ongoing crisis in South African education. The symptoms of crisis are severe inequality in provision and outcomes, high dropout rates, very low learner outcomes and ill-equipped teachers. As a result the education system is failing the majority of the country's learners<sup>1</sup>. Despite efforts to target government education spending towards poor children, the "more resilient legacy from the past has been the low quality of education within the historically disadvantaged parts of the school system"<sup>2</sup> that serve the majority of black and coloured children in the country.

How to turn around this dire situation has become a national priority and one to which CDE has devoted considerable attention. Much of CDE's policy research over the years has focused on teachers and teaching as the most important influences on student learning. CDE's published reports have investigated mathematics teaching, teacher supply and demand, induction, development and evaluation, and alternative routes into teaching<sup>3</sup>, both in South Africa and internationally.

The lack of teacher accountability has been identified as a cause of the poor quality of South African education<sup>1</sup>. Thus, in 2014, CDE decided to investigate teacher evaluation more broadly across a wide range of countries, as well as in South Africa in order to explore the connection between accountability, teacher evaluation, teacher effectiveness and student achievement<sup>1</sup>. In 2015, CDE invited Professor Linda Darling-Hammond of Stanford University, an internationally recognised expert on many aspects of teacher policy and development, to South Africa to speak to a wide range of audiences. During her visit, she highlighted the importance of Teacher Professional Standards (TPS) as a "North Star" that could guide teacher preparation, professional development and evaluation. TPS can be broadly defined as a set of common standards that include the professional knowledge, skills and conduct that characterise good teaching. These standards provide an essential tool for improving teaching and learning.

Darling-Hammond's visit coincided with a growing interest in TPS among the national education departments, statutory bodies and academia, which has led to the current range of TPS initiatives in South Africa. As a contribution to these processes, CDE commissioned JET Education Services to undertake research on what South Africa could learn from international experience of developing TPS. JET produced two research papers. Dr Nick Taylor and Natasha Robinson investigated the conditions under which TPS might raise the quality of teaching and learning in South Africa, working within a theoretical framework on standards for schooling based on international experience, particularly that of the USA and Finland. Dr Jane Hofmeyr undertook case study research on the experience of six countries (USA, England, Australia, Jamaica, Namibia and Botswana) in developing and implementing TPS. Her paper assesses what can be learnt from the case studies to assist the South African initiatives. This report draws on the findings of both papers and of previous CDE research projects in order to present insights and lessons that could inform the work of the various groups engaged in producing TPS for South Africa.

The report begins with a discussion of the origin of TPS, what is meant by 'professional', and why teacher professionalism is important in raising learning outcomes. The theoretical justification for standards is

presented within alternative frameworks of vicious or virtuous schooling cycles. The report goes on to outline the various standards that exist within the schooling cycle and to discuss the roles that they can play in contributing to professionalism.

The body of the report provides empirical evidence from the case studies to describe how standards are commonly developed and evaluated, as well as the forms that they can take. The report goes on to place the discussion of TPS in the South African context, giving an overview of the state of South African education with a particular focus on teacher education and development, before discussing the opportunities and possible risks that TPS pose for South Africa. The report concludes with an overview of what can be learnt from the experience of other countries in developing TPS, which is used as a basis for CDE's recommendations.

## The Evolution of Teacher Professional Standards

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The development of formal teacher professional standards began in the USA in the late 1980s, stimulated by the view that higher expectations for student learning could be accomplished only by higher expectations of teaching quality. A group of analysts, policymakers, teacher educators and teachers argued for the need to build a more knowledgeable and skilful professional teaching force and made the case for TPS as an essential means to that end. The result was a range of policy initiatives to develop professional standards, strengthen teacher education and certification requirements, increase investments in induction, mentoring and professional development, all designed to transform the roles of teachers.<sup>4</sup>

In the USA the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) undertook pioneering work. The core mission of the NBPTS, a nonpartisan, non-profit organisation "Created by Teachers, for Teachers" in 1987, is to develop standards for accomplished teachers that are grounded in Five Core Propositions, and to articulate the actions that accomplished teachers employ to advance student learning.<sup>5</sup> The NBPTS offers voluntary testing for accomplished teachers, by which they have to demonstrate their proficiency through a comprehensive evaluation process against the defined teaching standards.

The NBPTS has had a profound influence both in the USA and abroad. For instance, the edTPA, the first standards-based assessment to become nationally available in the USA, was developed by educators for educators and is built on the NBPTS model. Today it is used by institutions in 35 states and the District of Columbia<sup>6</sup>.

Driven by the imperative of improving the quality of schooling through effective teaching, the development of TPS has become an international phenomenon, spreading from the USA to many other developed countries as well as a number of developing countries. The spread of TPS in Commonwealth countries has been assisted by the Commonwealth Secretariat's initiation in 2011 of a consultative and participatory process to develop a broad pan-Commonwealth framework for professional standards for teachers and school leaders that could guide countries in developing their own standards.<sup>7</sup>

TPS are based on the professional knowledge, skills and conduct 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) providers, registering new teachers, guiding the professional development of teachers, and constituting the standards by which teachers can be held accountable.

## Debates About Teacher Professional Standards

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### Professionalism and Accountability

The debate around TPS is anchored by the notion of professionalism and what this may mean for the education and management of teachers. Taylor and Robinson examine what we mean by 'professional'; and why teacher professionalism is important in raising learning outcomes.

The proponents of the professionalisation of teaching advocate the development of teacher professional standards as a crucial lever for improving the quality of education. However, Taylor and Robinson point out that not all schools of thought subscribe to an understanding of teachers as professionals. There is a body of literature that regards teaching not as a profession but a creative exercise that comes naturally to some and not others; good teachers are not academically trained, but rather 'found'. Some researchers claim that teaching does not require highly-specialised knowledge and skill and that such skills as there are can be learned largely on the job.<sup>9</sup>

Professions share three common features: 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.<sup>10</sup> This understanding 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. It supports a knowledge-centred view of professionalism. This means that 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.<sup>11</sup> It is this knowledge that 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'.<sup>12</sup> A well-defined knowledge base gives the profession an opportunity to play a stronger part in key decisions regarding the quality of the service its members provide, and to build their own professional learning systems.

According to this endogenous view of a profession,<sup>13</sup> 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'.<sup>14</sup>

In many countries occupations such as medicine, law, accounting and engineering all have common professional standards with which all practitioners must comply. These professions are characterised by a well-

defined and agreed-upon knowledge base, which grants them a certain amount of autonomy. Professions typically set and enforce their standards in three ways: through professional accreditation of preparation programmes; through licensing, which grants permission to practise; and through advanced certification, which is a professional recognition of high levels of competence.<sup>15</sup> Together, standards for accreditation, licensing and certification comprise a “three-legged stool” that supports quality assurance in the mature professions.<sup>16</sup>

Given the centrality of a profession’s knowledge base and the importance of professional policies governing the process of preparation and licensing, does teaching constitute a profession?

In a the 2017 report of the OECD, *Empowering and Enabling Teachers to Improve Equity and Outcomes for All*, this question is discussed and the argument is advanced that teaching is a semi-profession, rather than a mature profession, such as those described above. Important differences between the two are outlined in Table 1:

Semi-profession	Profession
Lower in occupational status.	There is a high level of public trust and confidence in the profession and in individual practitioners, based on the profession’s demonstrated capacity to provide service markedly beyond that which would otherwise be available.
Shorter training periods.	Preparation for and induction into the profession is provided through a protracted preparation programme, usually in a professional school on a college or university campus.
Lack of societal acceptance that the nature of the service and/or the level of expertise justifies the autonomy granted to the professions.	The members of the profession are involved in making decisions in the service of the client, and the decisions being made are in accordance with the most valid knowledge available, against a background of principles and theories, and within the context of possible impact on other related conditions or decisions.
A less specialised and less highly developed body of knowledge and skills.	Collectively and individually, the profession possesses a body of knowledge and a repertoire of behaviours and skills (professional culture) needed in the practice of the profession, and such knowledge, behaviour and skills are not normally possessed by the non-professional.
Markedly less emphasis on theoretical and conceptual bases for practice.	The profession is based on one or more underlying disciplines from which it draws basic insights and upon which it builds its own applied knowledge and skills.
More subject to administrative and supervisory surveillance and control.	There is relative freedom from direct on-the-job supervision and from direct public evaluation of the individual practitioner. Professionals accept responsibility in the name of their profession and are accountable to society through their profession.
Less autonomy in professional decision- making, with accountability to superiors rather than to professions/professional bodies.	Authority to practise in any individual case derives from the client or the employing organisation; accountability for the competence of professional practice within the particular case is to the profession itself.

Source: Adapted from Guerriero (2017)

Taylor and Robinson agree that teaching is not a profession, citing the absence of an agreed knowledge base upon which to develop standards. As an example, they point to the fact that educationalists in South Africa

as yet share neither a common theory of literacy instruction, nor well-defined reading pedagogies that are effective in suburban, township and rural schools in the country.<sup>18</sup>

Taylor and Robinson argue that because teaching lacks professional standards and a collegium of practitioners to regulate, teachers are regulated instead by the bureaucracy. Where an occupational field neglects its own knowledge base, governments tend to reach for regulations. 'What this can look 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.'<sup>19</sup> They believe that if there is strong professional teacher identity in a country, this can mitigate antagonism between teachers and governments.

The issue of accountability lies at the heart of a discussion of professions, because all they are all required to be accountable in various ways for the quality of the service they render – to their clients, to the public and to their fellow professionals. Over many years Darling-Hammond has explored the topic of accountability in education generally and teacher accountability in particular. She makes a distinction between professional and bureaucratic accountability for teachers, and indicates that both have a place in teacher professionalism. She argues that professional accountability is far better suited to meeting the needs of learners and parents than bureaucratic accountability, which only holds teachers to account for the faithfulness with which they have followed standard procedures and implemented policies.<sup>20</sup>

She explains the differences between the two types of accountability and the implications of each. The goal of bureaucratic accountability is uniformity and standardisation: state and district education departments establish rules and regulations to ensure that schools and teachers meet standards and follow procedures to foster equal and uniform treatment of learners and standardisation of products or services. The promise that bureaucratic accountability makes is that compliance with these rules will be monitored and those who violate the rules will be identified and consequences will be administered. Teacher accountability is achieved by inspections and reporting systems intended to ensure that the rules and procedures are being followed. This system of accountability does not hold teachers accountable for meeting the individual needs of their students; they can be held accountable only for following standard procedures. Thus 'the standard for accountability is compliance rather than effectiveness.'<sup>21</sup>

On the other hand, professional accountability requires that teachers and other school staff must acquire specialised knowledge, pass certification examinations and uphold professional standards of practice. Unlike bureaucratic accountability, professional accountability allows practitioners to make their own decisions on how to meet the educational needs of individual students. A telling point made by Darling-Hammond is that 'professional accountability means that professionals are obliged to do whatever is best for the client, not what is easier, most convenient, or even sometimes what the client himself or herself might want.'<sup>22</sup> Darling-Hammond argues that professional accountability should be driven by the profession rather than by external forces, and that the profession should be the developers and the custodian of professional teaching standards.

## Standards and the Schooling Cycle

Taylor and Robinson provide a theoretical framework for understanding the role of standards within the schooling cycle. They argue that in order to understand in greater depth the various roles and the potential value of TPS, it is necessary to contextualise standards within the ensemble of actors, processes and institutions which comprise the school system and the role that they can play in contributing to professionalism. They discuss these within the framework of a vicious or virtuous schooling cycle.

Schooling is 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 emphasises the fact that the end of school is the beginning of higher education: the quality of a nation's teachers cannot be divorced from the quality of its learners exiting schools.

At various stages of this cycle, practising 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 graduates 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 careers. 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.

Taylor and Robinson comment that the school cycle described above does not necessarily remain static. Instead, 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 rise or fall. The direction of the cycle depends at least in part on the standards that the system can afford to expect from its teachers.<sup>23</sup>

A virtuous schooling cycle is characterised by high standards of entry into ITE, which enable 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, a large pool of high quality school graduates who wish to become teachers is required. Preconditions for this are high quality basic education and a sufficiently high perceived status of teachers in the eyes of secondary school graduates to motivate aspiring teachers. A country with competitive and challenging ITE programmes will not only contribute to a higher quality of school graduate, but will raise perceptions of teacher status. Teaching 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.<sup>24</sup> It is characterised by low levels of inequality, careful selection of student teachers from the top tenth percentile of school graduates,<sup>25</sup> rigorous and lengthy theoretical and practical training, and intensive mentoring in early professional life. Selection of students into ITE programmes is also a rigorous process involving a national entrance examination based on selected articles on teaching and education, followed by a consideration of the candidates' graduating scores and out-of-school accomplishments.<sup>26</sup> The education of candidate teachers is similarly thorough, culminating in a Master's degree with a strong research focus.

Finland scores consistently highly on international comparative tests of student achievement, even though its only national or regional testing systems are at the end of the final school year.<sup>27</sup> Needless to say, the teaching profession is ranked by graduates as one of the most desirable career paths. This in turn, allows the selection of the most promising prospective teachers from the most able and motivated school leavers.

By contrast with the virtuous cycle of Finland, the USA embodies a vicious schooling cycle. In a vicious cycle, ITE programmes are unable to attract a high quality of graduates 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 rigour of their training. Poorer quality teachers are then deployed to schools, contributing not only to the overall reduction in the quality of school graduates, but also to lowering the perceived status of a teaching career.

The USA's vicious schooling cycle is illustrated by public dissatisfaction over the state of schooling, which has been vociferously expressed since the *A Nation At Risk* report more than 30 years ago.<sup>28</sup> In a 2016 report published by the National Center on Education and the Economy<sup>29</sup> inadequacies were identified along every step of the teacher education pathway. Most notably, the report argued that teacher education programmes were relatively unselective, meaning that candidates' pre-existing mathematics, science and literacy capabilities were not generally strong. ITE programmes did not then develop deep knowledge or skills, particularly in subject areas, and the examinations and assessment required for certification were only minimally challenging. This is not surprising if ITE programmes are limited to the capacity of their pre-service teachers. Furthermore, the 2016 report noted that many teachers in the USA work without sufficient professional support, or opportunities to develop further 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, despite 85 percent of pre-service teachers being unable to demonstrate conceptual flexibility and mastery in mathematical concepts that are considered 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 USA, which then results in low investment in the necessary skills.

Taylor and Robinson argue that there are two common consequences of a vicious cycle. The first is the emergence of alternative teacher certification programmes (ATCs); these seek to fast-track students through an ITE programme and to offer teacher certification without the lengthy three to five year course some systems require. ATCs serve to address a teacher shortfall, and research has found that they succeed in attracting candidates who might not otherwise enter teaching. Numerous studies have produced very mixed results about the comparative effectiveness of ATCs and traditional routes on student achievement, given the many confounding variables.

Indeed, evaluations of ATCs and traditional routes have shown that the differences between ATC and traditional university programmes are greater than those between these two types. There are low and high quality traditional ITE programmes and the same is true of ATCs. Overall, students of the Teach for All alternative programmes that are available in many developed and developing countries have been found to perform better in mathematics than a control group of teachers, although in reading no difference was found.



However, a review of ATCs argues that, in terms of teacher professionalism, they carry with them 'the potential to communicate an understanding of teacher education that discounts the complex nature of teaching, in that the fast-track approach implicitly suggests that few special skills are needed to teach.'<sup>30</sup>

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 penalising teachers whose students do not perform well. Unfortunately for the teaching profession, these regulatory standards and testing have reportedly served to further de-professionalise careers and turn the best school graduates away. Indeed, regulation can occur at some cost, educationally, professionally and financially.<sup>31</sup> While the British government-funded *Cambridge Primary Review* found that the drive to raise standards in literacy and numeracy in England's primary schools since 1997 had undoubtedly yielded positive gains, it 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.*

In countries that have achieved a virtuous schooling cycle, where teaching is a prestigious and attractive profession which recruits the brightest and most motivated school graduates, who feel challenged by a rigorous and scientifically evidenced ITE programmes, the continual monitoring of teachers is comparatively 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.

Taylor and Robinson recognise that Finland, Singapore, Japan and South Korea - the countries most often cited for their virtuous school cycle - exhibit stark differences from South Africa. This is shown in terms of their size, stage of socio-economic development, governance systems and heterogeneity of their populations. This in turn raises questions as to what extent the hallmarks of their education systems can be applied to countries such as the USA, England and South Africa, which are characterised by the vicious cycle.

For that reason, Taylor and Robinson emphasise that a country's schooling system must be looked at in its entirety and that an examination of one element, such as TPS, in such a vastly complex set of processes cannot be undertaken in isolation from related elements. Therefore the role of teachers and TPS should be investigated within the context of the standards that can be applied at all stages of the schooling cycle, as they do in the next section of this report.

They understand that the purpose of TPS is to contribute towards a virtuous cycle, specifically to a strong performance of the school system, which produces high-quality, motivated school graduates:

- the recruitment of high quality, motivated school graduates into ITE programmes;
- the provision of high quality, evidence-based ITE programmes;

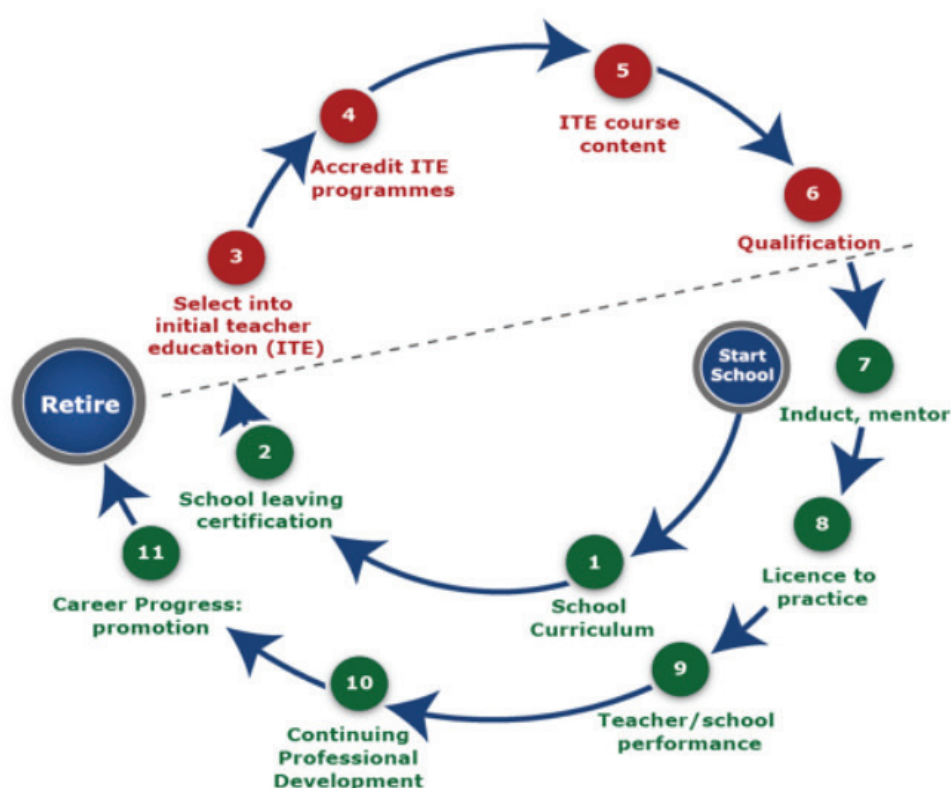
- the rigorous assessment of trainee teachers;
- the perception of teaching as a desirable and high-status profession;
- high morale among teachers;
- confidence in the competence of the teaching profession which reduces the need for cumbersome and generally ineffective accountability mechanisms;
- teachers' professional development.

However, they caution that while TPS can contribute towards a virtuous cycle, they may serve to undermine it.

## Teacher Professional Standards in the Schooling Cycle

Standards, including TPS, can be applied at various points throughout the schooling cycle (Figure 1).<sup>33</sup> Their effects differ depending on how and where they are applied.

Taylor and Robinson point out 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 those in another. Seen in this light it is not possible to separate the quality of the teacher, school graduate, or pre-service teacher from the institutions and programmes that they both shape and are shaped by. They explain the different types of standards in the schooling cycle, using examples from the USA, Finland and South Africa.



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 curriculum development.

South Africa has a long history of centrally determined curricula, as currently embodied in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS).<sup>34</sup> The USA, 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 several 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. School graduation standards help to determine the quality of candidates entering ITE programmes.

At point 3, **ITE entry standards** constitute the standards that aspiring student teachers must meet in order to be accepted into teacher training programmes. In Finland 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 teacher 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, which means that, in general, school leavers with the lowest grade of degree-entry passes in the NSC are accepted. 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 trainee teachers 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 may lower standards in order to certify enough teachers to meet schooling needs. In the USA, where there are no national standards, states have been known to certify teachers with no classroom experience in order to supply teachers for difficult-to-staff schools. In South Africa, broad criteria are given for the form and content of Bachelor of Education (B Ed) and Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) courses by the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ).<sup>35</sup> 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 professionalisation project, Taylor and Robinson argue that the standards occupying Point 5 in Figure 1 are primary to the entire standards cycle. These are **the standards relating to the curricula of ITE programmes** that should develop the content and pedagogical knowledge, skills and attitudes required for good teaching. They are most directly related to the theoretical and empirical knowledge base of teaching. 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 profession. The developments in this regard in South Africa are examined in a later section of this report. Currently Points 7 and 8 are also poorly developed in South Africa, but here too initiatives are under way, which are discussed later in this report.

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 assess the quality of ITE programmes; appraise teacher performance; inform the retraining or firing of incompetent teachers; assess pay scale or salary bonuses; decide on promotions; and guide teachers' professional development. As in the USA and Chile, they are often used in education systems where there is a lack of confidence in teacher quality, generally as a result of low-quality ITE programmes.

Taylor and Robinson point out that teacher evaluation standards are contentious, especially if applied in a top-down fashion and used to question the quality of teachers. They can serve to make teachers feel attacked and lower teaching morale, thus contributing to another vicious cycle. It is also unclear to what extent teacher competence can be accurately evaluated solely through inadequate instruments, such as the IQMS.

Research conducted by CDE in 2015 found that well-designed performance-based assessments, which assess on-the-job teaching based on multiple measures of teaching practice and student learning, can measure teacher effectiveness. Moreover, an integrated teacher evaluation model that combines these assessments with productive feedback and professional learning opportunities can additionally increase teacher effectiveness and thus also raise student achievement.<sup>36</sup>

Standards for **Continuous Professional Development (CPD)** (Point 10) and **Career Progression** (Point 11) are currently areas of debate and activity in South Africa, and developments in these areas are described later in this report.

From this brief discussion of where standards fall within the schooling cycle, Taylor and Robinson propose several important points for consideration.

- **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 school graduates who seek more challenging paths of study. Standards, if too high, result in a teacher shortage. Standards too loosely enforced fail to maintain consistency, while standards 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 are valuable and in what contexts.
- **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 that merely manage teachers. Countries with a history of poor teacher quality, such as South Africa, England and the USA, tend to emphasise the use of standards as frameworks within 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 of incompetent teachers on the lives of young people because they filter out the worst teachers. However, it is important to note that these standards do not contribute to the goal of teacher professionalism, and

may even serve to undermine it. While TPS standards may be considered to constitute best practice in teaching, 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, focusing on the quality of student teachers and the programmes designed to nurture them into professional teachers.

- **The third point 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 school graduates into its ITE programmes, those standards will only create a shortage 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. To be valid, teacher professional standards need to be based on evidence about the practices that foster purposeful and worthwhile student learning. Increasingly, research is identifying the teaching practices and conditions that are associated with student learning gains and this is contributing to a growing consensus about what teachers should know and be able to do in order to help students learn.<sup>37</sup> Knowledge-based standards can serve to professionalise teaching by engaging teachers in conversations about knowledge generation in their field, as well as drawing broader attention to the weight of high-quality research that has defined the finer points of teaching.
- **Fifth, it is important to be mindful that influences from outside the schooling cycle may profoundly shape the schooling cycle.** For example, the status of teaching which influences the quality of school graduates who are attracted to the profession is partially determined by teacher salaries and working conditions.

## Developing Teacher Professional Standards

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Hofmeyr's 2017 case study research shows that the six countries adopted different forms of TPS and approaches to their development, used them for fewer or more purposes, and evaluated them to a greater or lesser extent.

### Forms of Teacher Professional Standards

The TPS in the six countries that Hofmeyr researched cover very similar domains of what good teachers need to know and should be able to do.<sup>38</sup> Essentially, they encompass the areas of professional knowledge, professional practice and professional commitment that teachers should command.

Researchers have made two important points about the nature of TPS:

- Professional teaching standards should be based on research evidence and expressed in performance terms: what the teacher should know and be able to do to support student learning, as opposed to how many hours they should sit in classes or workshops to gain credits. They need to describe practices shown by research to be associated with student learning and concrete enough to guide observations and feedback to teachers.<sup>39</sup> The emphasis on teaching quality has resulted in a number of analysts and countries preferring the term, 'professional teaching standards' to 'professional teacher standards'.
- Teaching quality must be distinguished from teacher quality. Darling-Hammond explains that 'If teaching is to be effective, policymakers must address the teaching and learning environment as well as the capacity of individual teachers.'<sup>40</sup> That is, while teacher quality is a collection of personal traits, knowledge, skills and dispositions of a teacher, teaching quality refers to strong instruction that enables a wide range of students to learn. Teaching quality is influenced by teacher quality but also strongly by the context of instruction: the curriculum, the match between teachers' qualifications and what they are actually teaching and the teaching conditions.

The forms that TPS take can be classified into two large categories according to their degree of specificity.<sup>41</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup> The TPS of California and England provide examples of generic standards.

**California's** Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP) consist of six standards reflecting a developmental and holistic view of teaching as a practice that comprises interdependent domains:

- Engaging and Supporting All Students in Learning
- Creating and Maintaining Effective Environments for Student Learning
- Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning
- Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for All Students
- Assessing Students for Learning
- Developing as a Professional Educator.

The Teachers' Standards in **England** are similarly concise. The approach to their development is well described in Coates' foreword to the report of her review committee.

*Ultimately, we have aimed not to produce an exhaustive and prescriptive list of skills, knowledge and understanding, but a clear and powerful expression of the key elements of great teaching, which I am confident that all schools will recognise and will want to adopt as a part of their commitment to giving pupils the best quality education.*<sup>43</sup>

The Standards are divided into three parts: the Preamble summarises the values and behaviour that all teachers must demonstrate throughout their careers; Part One comprises the Standards for Teaching; and Part Two contains the Standards for Personal and Professional Conduct.<sup>44</sup> The Standards for Teaching are short and generic, simply presented as a list of eight brief statements:

1. Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils
2. Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils
3. Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge
4. Plan and teach well-structured lessons
5. Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils
6. Make accurate and productive use of assessment
7. Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment
8. Fulfil wider professional responsibilities.<sup>45</sup>

Each of these is followed by a few specific pointers to explain and amplify their scope.

The Standards for Personal and Professional Conduct require that

*Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school (this is elaborated further).*

*Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.*

*Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks that set out their professional duties and responsibilities.<sup>46</sup>*

In contrast to these concise examples, the 2006 National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) in **Namibia** comprise 30 Key Competences that are grouped in four domains and elaborated through competences, scope of performance, values, performance criteria and theoretical underpinnings. These TPS are very detailed, comprising 129 pages that outline what every component means and its impact on ITE curricula, programmes and qualifications.<sup>47</sup>

Generic standards cover a number of domains, but operationalising the standards 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 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.<sup>48</sup>



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 those of the **NBPTS** and Chile.<sup>49</sup>

The standards of the NBPTS for accomplished teachers are field-specific: they cover 25 certificate areas, representing 16 different subject areas and four developmental levels and are applicable to most teachers in US public schools. Each standards document represents a professional consensus on the attributes of practice that distinguish accomplished teaching in that field.

**Chile** provides an example of a country with generic and specific standards, according to subjects and grade levels, which are based on a solid research foundation. The Good Teaching Framework (GTF) of 2003 contains generic standards for teacher performance clustered into four key categories: creating a conducive environment for classroom learning; teaching for learning outcomes; preparation for learning, based on the content of student learning; and professional responsibilities.<sup>50</sup> In addition, these four categories have been further developed into specific standards in different subjects for recently-graduated teachers.

While standards should be specific to subject and age range, they should be context-free and allow a diversity of possible teaching styles.<sup>51</sup> Standards 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. This consideration might be central to understanding why California, England and Australia have opted to develop generic rather than specific standards.

Given that valid standards should be evidence-based, Taylor and Robinson point out that it is problematic that institutions in charge of developing standards often do not report the research on which the standards are based. Notably, Mexico and the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) in the USA do so: Mexican standards make explicit the assumptions and constructs on which they are built, and the InTASC standards are made available to the public with summaries of the research that underpins the standards.<sup>52</sup>

## The Development Process

The development of TPS 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 to achieve that learning among their students. Achieving such a consensus necessarily involves teacher educators, teachers, researchers and government departments, all of whom must reach agreement on the basic principles, scope and nature of teaching work.

Taylor and Robinson argue that if designed in this way TPS have the opportunity to significantly contribute towards the professionalisation 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.<sup>54</sup>

A critical issue is who is involved in the development process and how inclusive it is. Perhaps the most important point that emerges from all the case studies is that TPS cannot be centrally designed and imposed by government if they are to enjoy any credibility and acceptance among educators.

In developing the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) **Australia** achieved a broad consensus through an extensive, inclusive consultation process, 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<sup>55</sup> was 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.<sup>56</sup>

**Jamaica** and **Namibia** pursued another route: foreign consultants developed the TPS initially and then a process of consultation with teachers and stakeholders was undertaken.<sup>57</sup>

In **England** the first Professional Standards for Teachers were introduced in the late 1990s. These were centrally imposed, proved to be controversial and attracted significant resistance from ITT providers. Since then the development process has become more consultative and inclusive. The TPS have been modified and re-issued several times, most recently in 2013.

The 2011 Teachers' Standards (modified in 2013) were developed by a review committee set up by the Secretary of State for Education at the time, Michael Gove. The review team, chaired by Dame Sally Coates, consisted of leading head teachers, teachers and education specialists (but notably no faculty from universities), and consulted with a wide range of stakeholders, ITT providers, induction co-ordinators, teachers' professional associations, serving teachers, head teachers and other education experts. Gove's stated view of teaching was that it is a craft best learnt on the job rather than a profession.<sup>58</sup>

The trend in the development of the English TPS has been towards teaching defined as practical, relevant and focused around contemporary, experiential knowledge of schooling.<sup>59</sup> They have been described as part of a move towards a school-based and school-led system of teacher education and a downplaying of the role of research and theory, in ITT.<sup>60</sup> However, the 2015 independent Carter review of ITT<sup>61</sup> gathered a wide range of evidence and views including those of researchers and universities, and both the Report and the 2016 DfE White Paper<sup>62</sup> emphasise the critical importance of research and theory in ITT and evidence-based practice. In the White Paper, the DfE also recognised the importance of disseminating research findings on effective teaching practices, as well as the value of an independent professional body for teachers. Hofmeyr points out that it is difficult, therefore, to argue that it is opposed to theory and research in ITT, to the detriment of the profession, as critics of the school-led approach have complained in the past.<sup>63</sup>

An alternative approach can be found in the **USA**, 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. The NBPTS provides a significant example of teaching standards led by the profession. While the profession plays a central role in developing the standards, the NBPTS also uses a very wide process of consultation with all stakeholders, and a sophisticated process of continuous refinement of the standards. It engages pertinent disciplinary and specialist associations at key points in the process and collaborates closely with appropriate state agencies, academic institutions and independent research and education organisations.<sup>64</sup>

The inclusive approach and central role of the profession in the development of TPS as outlined above can be contrasted to **Chile**, where teachers have had limited input. The Ministry of Education first developed Chile's standards 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.<sup>65</sup> Rather than using TPS as an opportunity to develop consensus and a collegiate identity among teachers, Chile prioritised the expertise of those who knew the evidence base for effective teaching.

## The Purposes of Teacher Professional Standards

Darling-Hammond argues that professional teaching standards should be linked to student learning standards, curriculum and assessment, creating a seamless relationship between what teachers do in the classroom and how they are prepared and assessed.<sup>66</sup> This raises the question of the extent to which TPS in the six countries are linked to and influence their schooling cycles.

The case studies show that the purposes for which TPS were initiated differ across the six countries. Some were developed to fulfil a broad range of purposes and others for limited purposes. However, even those countries that had initially introduced TPS for limited purposes expanded over time the uses to which they were put.

**Namibia** offers an example of TPS that were designed in such a way as to encompass all aspects of teacher development.<sup>67</sup> 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. Accordingly, the NPTS were designed to fulfil the objectives of guiding and accrediting the providers of ITE programmes: assessing novice teachers' competences, as well as those of professional teachers for licensing (and licence renewal) and providing the basis for regular teacher evaluation.

**Chile**, by contrast, has different standards for different purposes.<sup>68</sup> The generic standards for teacher performance are contained in the Good Teaching Framework (GTF) standards and were introduced to fulfil two purposes: to assess the disciplinary and pedagogic knowledge of new teachers, and for a teacher performance evaluation system within the municipal school sector. The GTF standards are clustered into four key categories: creating a conducive environment for classroom learning; teaching for learning outcomes; preparation for learning, based on the content of student learning; and professional responsibilities. Teacher performance is rated in these categories using defined indicators (poor, basic, proficient or outstanding).

In addition to these standards, there are the specific Graduating Teacher Standards developed by university experts that are used as the reference for an initial pedagogical excellence examination. 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 and are divided into pedagogical and disciplinary standards. The standards have been developed for pre-primary education, primary education and secondary education.<sup>69</sup>

In **England** a guidance document<sup>70</sup> supplied with the Teacher's Standards indicates that the standards define the level of excellent practice expected of trainees and teachers from the point of being awarded Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Providers of initial teacher training should assess trainees against the standards in a way that is consistent with what could reasonably be expected of a trainee teacher prior to the award of QTS, and that they need to ensure that their programmes are designed and delivered in such a way as to allow all trainees to meet these standards. The Standards are also used to assess those completing their statutory induction period and to appraise teachers' performance. In addition, the guidance document indicates that the Standards set out the key areas in which a teacher should be able to assess his or her own practice and receive feedback from colleagues.

The most significant change effected by the Teachers' Standards was a direct link to a teacher evaluation system, with the agreement of the teacher associations. The Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations of 2012 set out new appraisal and capability arrangements that give schools more freedom to manage teacher performance in the way that they see fit, removing unnecessary prescription.<sup>74</sup>

There is a debate as to whether standards should reflect the career development of educators (e.g. novice teacher, master teacher, head of department etc.) as they progress through the profession. According to some, if well designed, TPS will have a sound underpinning theory about the nature of teacher development from novice to expert and promotion positions.<sup>72</sup> This is the rationale behind the current Teachers' Standards in **England** as expressed in Coates' foreword above. The DfE guidance sheet addresses this issue explicitly: 'The standards apply to the vast majority of teachers regardless of their career stage'.<sup>73</sup> Additional guidance given indicates that "Teachers applying to access the upper pay range will be assessed as to whether they are highly competent in all elements of the Teachers' Standards and whether their achievements and contribution to an educational setting or settings are substantial and sustained".<sup>74</sup>

Other countries use descriptors to grade the level of teacher performance. 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. The ability to chart experience and progress may contribute to feelings of job satisfaction and professionalism on behalf of the teaching community and encourages teachers to aspire to improve teaching skills.

However, many countries do not specify performance levels or pathways for 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 (e.g. beginning; classroom teacher; experienced teacher) that would permit a better match between teacher competence and skills and the tasks to be performed at schools. This was identified as a significant weakness in the 2013 OECD evaluation because it could possibly

undermine the potentially powerful links between teacher evaluation, professional development and career development.<sup>75</sup>

As can be seen in the countries discussed above, using TPS to evaluate teacher performance is a common purpose. Internationally and in South Africa this is one of the most contested purposes of TPS because it raises the issue of teacher accountability. The lack of teacher accountability has been identified as a cause of the poor quality of South African education.<sup>76</sup>

In its broadest interpretation, teacher evaluation refers to the processes of assessment of a teacher's performance and competence and includes both formative and summative components. Formative evaluation is aimed at the personal growth of a teacher and is designed to provide a teacher with information that she can use to improve her practice by identifying her professional development needs. Summative evaluation is usually undertaken as part of a performance review and focuses on teacher accountability.<sup>77</sup> However, achieving the right balance between the formative (improvement) and the summative (accountability) functions in teacher evaluation is recognised as a key challenge, albeit one that is often underestimated.<sup>78</sup>

CDE's international research revealed that reliance on TPS as a framework and reference against which teachers are evaluated is consistently identified as critical for building fairness and reliability into a teacher evaluation system.<sup>79</sup> A 2015 OECD report on teacher evaluation found that not all countries had teaching standards in place, but those that did not, such as Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Spain, had indicated that it was difficult to conduct teacher evaluation in the absence of an understanding of what constitutes good teaching.<sup>80</sup> Typically in these countries, teacher appraisal takes place at the local or school level, with considerable freedom to determining the model used. In Finland for example, the guidelines for teacher appraisal are defined in the contract between the local government employer and the teachers' trade union as a part of labour-market negotiations.

Whether teacher evaluation can reliably determine teacher effectiveness is key issue in the debate. As Taylor and Robinson note, evaluating teachers carries ethical implications weight if teachers are held accountable to standards which carry no evidence of improving teacher quality or learning outcomes. This is a criticism to which South Africa's IQMS has been subjected.<sup>81</sup> CDE's research found that numerous studies in the USA have shown that well-designed performance-based assessments, which assess on-the-job teaching based on multiple measures of teaching practice and student learning, can measure teacher effectiveness in terms of student achievement. These include the assessment used by the NPTBS, as well as standards-based teacher evaluation systems used in some local districts in the USA, such as the San Mateo district in California.<sup>82</sup> What is significant is that they evaluate teacher performance using multiple sources of evidence and not only student results.

Despite the differences in how countries' teacher evaluation systems are designed, implemented and evolve, CDE's research revealed that the dominant international approach is the integrated model that aims to appraise teacher performance, strengthen accountability and support professional development.

The use of TPS for teacher evaluation in **England** offers some useful insights. The TPS are in two parts: teaching practice standards and professional and personal conduct standards. Headteachers appraise teachers' performance against the teaching practice standards and their personal objectives for improving the education of pupils. Their professional development needs are also identified and schools take the lead in the training and development of their teachers. Schools have been given flexibility to manage teacher performance and capability. In the case of a complaint of unprofessional conduct, the professional and personal conduct standards are used and the matter is reported to, and investigated by, the NCTL and an independent panel. In this way different levels of the system are involved in appraising teachers against these two sets of standards.

Experts point to the value of a teacher evaluation system that supports professional learning, not just accountability.<sup>83</sup> A professional development system closely aligned to teacher performance-based assessment should support effectiveness for all teachers at every stage of their careers, beginning with recruitment.<sup>84</sup> To improve teaching quality, professional development should include both formal development programmes and job-embedded learning opportunities linked to a teacher's individual development needs.<sup>85</sup> High-quality support, including mentoring for teachers needing assistance, coaching and opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing with their peers, are essential.<sup>86</sup> Research has found that peer learning among small groups of teachers appears to be the most powerful predictor of improved student achievement over time.<sup>87</sup>

Professional standards can provide a useful framework for teachers to reflect on their practice and talk to each other about their work.<sup>88</sup> For example, 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 on the conditions for effective professional learning.<sup>89</sup> It has been 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.<sup>90</sup> The point has been made 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.<sup>91</sup>

The state of Victoria in **Australia** provides a useful example of how TPS can be used in CPD. For the annual renewal of their registration, teachers are required to link their professional development activities explicitly to the APST. In undertaking their 20 hours of CPD as part of the annual renewal process, teachers are advised that:

*Thinking about professional practice in terms of the APST will help you select PD activities that will keep your knowledge and practice updated. When selecting PD activities consider asking: 'How does this activity contribute to my professional knowledge and how will I apply that knowledge to my practice to support the learning of those I teach?'*<sup>92</sup>

## Evaluating Teacher Professional Standards

The development and ongoing evolution of global formal professional teaching standards is a recent phenomenon. This means that in most countries, even the developed ones, they are so new that the achievement of their aims and impact cannot yet be adequately assessed. Taylor and Robinson also make

the point that 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 the first section of this report.

Evaluations are initiated to appraise the thoroughness of the dissemination of the TPS to all levels of educators, the extent of their use, their effectiveness and impact.

**Australia** is a frontrunner in commissioning an independent, rigorous three-year evaluation of the usefulness, effectiveness and impact of the implementation of the APST on teacher quality. The evaluation, which began in 2013, is carried out by the AITSL in collaboration with the Centre for Programme Evaluation of the University of Melbourne and the Australian College of Educators. The process brought together stakeholders from the education profession as well as system leaders and policymakers. The evaluation includes a theoretical framework, theory of change and the use of multiple methods and instruments to obtain information

To date three interim reports have been published at different stages of the evaluation. The key findings are that although educators in different roles use the standards differently, their main use is for reflective and collaborative practice. The majority of educators have knowledge of the standards (70 percent) are positive about them (82 percent) and engage with them regularly (61 percent).<sup>93</sup>

In **England**, the draft Teachers' Standards were tested in the school sector through a process of drafting, testing and redrafting following feedback, rather than by piloting them in use. In addition, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), on behalf of the Department for Education, conducted a study into the extent to which teachers believed that standards had a positive impact.<sup>94</sup> The methodology included a large-scale postal and online survey of head teachers, teachers, newly-graduated teachers/second-year teachers, induction tutors, local authority staff and governors to establish how and to what extent schools were implementing the standards.

The findings indicated that the vast majority of teachers were aware of the new Teachers' Standards and the new appraisal regulations, but awareness was greater among senior leaders than among classroom teachers. The majority of schools had made changes to their performance management/appraisal policy since the new regulations were introduced. In terms of the impact of TPS the majority of head teachers and teachers surveyed 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed'<sup>95</sup> that use of the standards had helped to improve teaching and learning practices, but a notable minority were not sure or disagreed.<sup>96</sup> 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.<sup>97</sup>

Evaluations and experience show that the dissemination and implementation of TPS is the 'Achilles heel' of many countries. TPS should be thoroughly disseminated to all levels of educators, and especially to teachers. Training should also be given to all educators on how to implement and use them, if TPS are to improve the quality of education. This is particularly important for the appraisers of educators' performance.



In the case of **California**, Darling-Hammond, who was intimately involved in the development and implementation of the CSTP, has explained the inclusive process through which they were developed, and refined through testing them in practice. They were implemented gradually, initially on a voluntary basis and ultimately made mandatory. This whole process took some 10 years.<sup>98</sup>

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 were they 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. Hence the OECD report stressed the importance of the GTF becoming a 'common language' in Chilean education.<sup>99</sup>

In **Namibia**, although the NPST were published as early as 2006, by 2013/2014 they had still not been fully implemented. The foreign consultants did a thorough job in producing the detailed NPST but perhaps not for the realities of Namibian schooling and the nature of its teaching force. The detail and sheer length of the NPST document would make it difficult for teachers and principals to come to grips with and implement. Namibia's small population, spread over a huge area, could only have made the task of disseminating and implementing the standards more difficult. However, an assessment by UNESCO with the support of the Namibia Ministry of Education in 2013 identified another barrier: the necessary legal framework was not in place for a national regulatory body to implement the new licensing requirement for teachers, or to make the attendant changes to teachers' employment conditions.<sup>100</sup> A similar problem occurred in **Jamaica** where the bill establishing the Jamaican Teaching Council, which has to implement the TPS and all the associated processes, has been delayed for many years.<sup>101</sup>

Clearly there is much that South Africa can learn from the experience of these other countries in developing and implementing their TPS and the main insights and lessons they provide are presented in a later section of this report.

## Standards in South Africa

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As has been argued, the development of TPS cannot be achieved without due consideration for the national realities and constraints of any given teaching profession. This section focuses 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.

### Education in South Africa

Despite high rates of public investment in education, 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, access to basic education has improved greatly in South Africa and the country is close to achieving universal basic education.<sup>102</sup> However, the high enrolment rate hides the fact that around 15 percent of learners do not complete Grade 9, and only around half achieve the National Senior Certificate after 12 years

of schooling.<sup>103</sup> Moreover, the likelihood of a child from a poor socio-economic background reaching matric by age 19 or 20 is 17 percent, compared to 88 percent for a child from a more privileged background.<sup>104</sup>

There is convincing evidence that the performance of the school system is improving, with substantially rising scores (although off a low base) and the inequality gap on international tests appeared to be shrinking in 2011. Yet South African learners continue to perform below expectations and there is dissatisfaction with performance, particularly in schools serving the poor from many sources, including senior members of government.<sup>106</sup>

One explanation for these poor learning outcomes is teacher quality. The results of SAQMEQ 2007 for a nationally-represented sample of Grade 6 mathematics teachers indicated that 79 percent showed mathematics content knowledge levels below the grade 6/7 band.<sup>107</sup> This is of great concern, not only given the strong evidence that teacher subject expertise has a significant impact on student outcomes,<sup>108</sup> but also considering how it reflects poorly on the status of teachers. In general, the quality of ITE programmes has been poor and most teachers have not been adequately educated or trained in the past, as discussed in CDE's 2015 research report, *Teachers in South Africa: Supply and Demand 2013-2025*.<sup>109</sup>

In addition, the recruitment of quality teachers in South Africa currently faces a number of demand and supply challenges.<sup>110</sup> The overall picture indicates that South Africa faces a problem of rising student enrolment and static teacher supply. The Annual Performance Plan 2016/17 of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) indicates that for the last few years the production of teacher education graduates has stalled at around 19,000 per annum and the projected future annual supply until 2020 is not expected to rise above that.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, the presence of education graduates does not automatically translate into new teachers. Many graduates, and even those who were given Funza Lushaka bursaries that are available from the state for student teachers are unable to obtain positions in schools. Consequently, the DBE aims to increase the number of qualified teachers aged 30 and below entering the public service from 8,000 in 2014/15 to 10,800 in 2018/19.<sup>112</sup>

CDE's 2015 research found mismatches between the supply and demand for teachers in phases and subjects (especially languages and mathematical literacy).<sup>113</sup> The most acute shortage is in the Foundation phase. A recent research estimate 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.<sup>114</sup> This situation is compounded by the fact that very few Foundation phase graduates speak African languages, the mother-tongue of most learners, or have specialised in teaching them.<sup>115</sup>

Increasing teacher attrition<sup>116</sup> and a high turnover pose other challenges to teacher supply and deployment.<sup>117</sup> One contributing factor is the perception of poor teacher salaries, although 'teacher pay relative to per capita GDP in South Africa is exceptionally high by international standards'.<sup>118</sup> However, qualified teachers often have the opportunity to earn more in non-teaching roles, particularly in key subjects such as mathematics and science.<sup>119</sup> '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.

According to the National Development Plan, part of the reason for poor teaching quality is a weak accountability system: there is a resistance towards accountability in the South African schooling context and access to conducting inspections and observations in classrooms is uneven.<sup>120</sup> Accountability includes schools, teachers and officials being held accountable to the education departments and education authorities. Researchers at Stellenbosch University in a 2016 report concluded that:

*...the root causes of South Africa's low educational outcomes, while multifaceted, generally fall into one of two categories: (1) a lack of accountability, and (2) a lack of capacity. Consequently any proposed solution would need to address both of these elements to gain traction.*<sup>121</sup>

Research results identified four binding constraints to improved educational outcomes for the poor. These are: "(1) Weak institutional functionality, (2) Undue union influence, (3) Weak teacher content knowledge and pedagogical skill, (4) Wasted learning time and insufficient opportunity to learn".<sup>122</sup> The researchers identified five mechanisms through which undue union influence undermines the functionality of provinces and the learning outcomes of children:

- "(1) Compromised post-provisioning processes and consequent overspending on teacher salaries,*
- (2) Compromised design and implementation of accountability systems,*
- (3) Compromised independence and accountability function of the South African Council of Educators,*
- (4) Compromised bureaucratic accountability and*
- (5) Compromised levels of citizen trust in the public education sector.*<sup>123</sup> "

Points 2 to 5 carry significant implications for the design and implementation of the TPS in South Africa and their use for accountability purposes.

The DBE in its Annual Performance Plan 2016/17 has also identified 'Poor teaching, leadership and lack of accountability' and 'no consequences for poor performance and wrongdoing' as major challenges:

*"Wrongdoing, failure to comply with legislation, underperformance and poor financial management are just some of the areas that need tight accountability by those in charge, and this is lacking in a number of institutions, districts and schools."*<sup>124</sup>

Taylor and Robinson offer several reasons for this evasion of accountability. The first is that schools and teachers cannot adhere to the standards that are expected of them. The 2012 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.<sup>125</sup> The second is a history of school inspections under Apartheid that were 'closed, top-down, hierarchical and authoritarian',<sup>126</sup> and which therefore are associated with intimidating and undermining teachers. The third is a failure of teachers to buy into the rationale behind the accountability measures. The last is a further credibility crisis, because many professional development initiatives to support them have not been carried out, or have been of poor quality.

This brief overview of education in South Africa points to a vicious cycle of schooling, which faces the following challenges:

1. An inadequate supply of teachers to meet the demand, in all school phases and subjects;
2. The recruitment of enough teachers from the appropriate demographic group to meet schooling needs;
3. Increasing attrition rates of teachers;
4. The insufficient content knowledge and pedagogical skills of ITE graduates and current teachers;
5. Poor working conditions for teaching in many overcrowded and under-resourced schools;
6. The perception that teaching is a difficult, poorly paid profession;
7. Poor morale and motivation among teachers;<sup>127</sup>
8. Poor learning outcomes among students;
9. Wasted teaching time;
10. Poor levels of accountability of teachers, managers and officials;
11. A lack of effective leadership and management in the system.

These are the realities of the South African education system that must be considered in the development and implementation of TPS.

## **Current Efforts in Developing Teacher Standards in South Africa**

Numerous organisations are currently involved in a great deal of activity in and around the idea of standards for schooling in South Africa. The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (ISPFTED), issued jointly by DHET and DBE in 2011, provides guidelines and a stimulus for the work on schooling standards. It is a comprehensive plan, covering all aspects of teacher education, development and management.<sup>128</sup>

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 the 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. Broadly speaking, current initiatives in the field of TPS fall into two categories, those pitched in the upper hemisphere (ITE) and those concerned with activities in the lower hemisphere, including the continuing education, deployment, management and promotion of educators. To distinguish these two respective domains, James Keevy, who worked on the standards framework of the Commonwealth Secretariat, uses the terms Content Standards and Professional Practice Standards.<sup>129</sup>

## **Content Standards**

Content Standards, according to Keevy, are best developed by expert and stakeholder groupings. They inform qualification design and form the basis for learning programmes and curriculum; they focus on knowledge, skills and competences and are used to screen qualified students before they access the practice. In Figure 1, the area of influence of Content Standards includes points 3 to 6.

These ITE activities take the school curriculum as their starting point: here learning standards specify the knowledge, skills and values (KSV) to be nurtured in learners during their school years. The current South

African school curriculum, which underwent a three-year phased implementation from 2012, is generally accepted as adequate; there is agreement that wholesale changes would be counter-productive at this stage and that attention should be focused on non-curriculum issues inhibiting implementation. Low teacher capacity and poor institutional functionality are frequently cited as major factors influencing the quality of learning in schools.<sup>131</sup>

Point 2 in Figure 1 assesses the extent to which learners have achieved the targeted KSV. An area of the curriculum requiring close attention is English First Additional Language (EFAL) studied by 80 percent of the country's learners. A Ministerial Task Team set up to investigate the standard of the NSC examination papers reported that most students leave school with very low language skills, both in English and their mother tongue. This does not adequately equip students for the cognitive rigour demanded by tertiary-level study. The Task Team concludes that the low level of the NSC examination in EFAL is at the heart of low survival rates in the higher education sector.<sup>132</sup> This represents a priority point for raising the standards of schooling and hence improving the efficiency of the tertiary sector.

At point 3, ITE entry standards constitute the standards which aspiring student teachers must meet to be accepted into teacher training programmes. In 2013 a national survey conducted among fourth-year BEd students confirmed that admission requirements for ITE programmes are generally lower than for most other entry-level degree programmes. However, almost 40 percent of final year student teachers who responded to the survey had been admitted to their ITE programmes without having achieved a matriculation pass with the required degree of endorsement (Bachelor pass).<sup>133</sup> As a result of the Funza Lushaka bursary programme for student teachers, the number of applicants has greatly exceeded the number of places in ITE. This means that point 3 represents a key lever for raising entry standards into the teaching profession, thereby contributing to the processes needed to move the South African school system closer to professionalisation.

As indicated above, points 4, 5 and 6 in Figure 1 are closely related, and strengthening this field is of critical importance to achieving a virtuous schooling cycle. Recent South African research indicates that standards across this field are not only very varied, reflecting inequalities in the quality of school outcomes, but also generally inadequate for the task of preparing prospective teachers to meet the demands of the school curriculum.<sup>134</sup> The most direct response to these findings comes from the Primary Teacher Education (PrimTEd) Project, initiated by DHET,<sup>135</sup> whose purpose 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.*<sup>136</sup>

Occupying point 5 in the theoretical framework, PrimTEd is of fundamental importance to the professionalisation project. Its purpose is to formulate knowledge and practice standards, curriculum frameworks and course outlines in literacy and mathematics for prospective primary school teachers, based on both the research literature and experience of effective educators. In other words, it aims to begin the task of codifying what is known about effective teaching, supported by consistent research outcomes and the practices of successful teachers.

The prognosis for building a solid knowledge base to promote professional expertise and responsibility among educators is good, with key stakeholders explicitly endorsing the idea. Both the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) and the South African Council of Educators (SACE) have issued discussion documents supporting knowledge-centric views of teacher professionalism.<sup>137</sup>

Point 5 is a key relay in the cycle of schooling: while standards governing this field take the school curriculum (points 1 and 2) as their starting point, they provide the framework for standards developed later in the cycle, including the induction (point 7), licensing (point 8), management (point 9), and promotion (point 11) of educators. It also follows that the standards set for the education of student teachers (point 5) should form the basis for continuing efforts to maintain these skills (point 10). Finally, standards set at point 5 elaborate and give flesh to the formulation of standards for accrediting ITE programmes (point 4), and graduating new teachers (point 6): point 4 is governed by official policy in the form of the MRTEQ, while universities set their own graduation standards (point 6).

One of the tasks allocated to the DBE by the ISPFTED is the establishment of a National Institute for Curriculum and Professional Development (NICPD).<sup>138</sup> This involves the development of content frameworks to describe the content (in both theory and practice), specifically related to the school curriculum, which teachers need to know in order to teach the curriculum effectively. It is the intention of the ISPFTED that the work of the NICPD should be given direction by the teacher knowledge and practice standards under development at point 5.

## **Professional Practice Standards**

Keevy's second category is professional practice standards, which govern the behavioural, ethical and professional development aspects of teachers' work, and may be used to regulate access to the profession.<sup>139</sup> Professional Practice Standards for South Africa would consist of a widely-accepted set of behaviours and attitudes for teachers that are theoretically informed and workable within the extreme diversity of schooling in the South African context.

The DBE has made a start with set of standards governing the work of school principals.<sup>140</sup> To fulfil its mandate, SACE has also been active in this area. Late in 2016 it established a Standards Development Working Group (SDWG) to formulate a set of standards for professional teaching that are theoretically informed, contextually appropriate and widely accepted by stakeholders.

SACE is pursuing an inclusive development and consultation process. The SDWG represents all the major teacher associations/unions, both national departments of education, the Council for Higher Education, the South African Qualifications Authority, university education faculties, NGO representatives, donors and independent researchers.

Ultimately it is hoped that the impact of the TPS would be to provide greater synergies between the transition points that characterise a teacher's career, a greater degree of professional accountability, increased professional authority for SACE, an enhanced status of teaching as a professional practice, the refinement of teacher certification standards and minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications.<sup>141</sup>

SACE has located its work in the area of standards within a larger teacher professionalisation project: a Teacher Professionalisation Discussion Paper recommends that the standard setting 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.*<sup>142</sup>

More particularly, the SACE Discussion Paper maps out a proposed professionalisation path to be 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).<sup>143</sup>

The process of establishing a comprehensive CPD system (point 5) under the auspices of SACE is well under way. In the face of over two decades of disappointing impact of CPD programmes on teacher knowledge and pedagogy, the quality assurance of such programmes should be of primary concern to SACE. In this regard, SACE Council's Professional Development Committee (PRODCO) has established a 29-member CPD Task Team to commission evaluations for registered evaluators. These evaluators then make recommendations on endorsement of the programmes.<sup>144</sup>

While professional assessment of the quality of CPD programmes is a welcome development, CDE raised its concern about the current centralised system of CPD in South Africa in its 2015 report, *Teacher Evaluation in South African Schools*. The CPD system removes professional development from schools, which have no responsibility for providing educator support, leaving it instead to the initiative and self-reflection of the educator. The additional research for this report has reinforced CDE's previous finding that the weight of international research indicates that effective professional development flows from constructive feedback after a teacher's performance appraisal; following this, the school provides individualised, high-quality support, including mentoring for teachers needing assistance, coaching and opportunities to share expertise through collaborative peer-learning.

Regarding the assessment of teachers' performance, the tool currently in use, the IQMS, has met with considerable criticism; implementation of a modified instrument, the QMS, has been held up for a number of years in negotiations between government and the unions in the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC).<sup>145</sup>

CDE research on teacher evaluation in South Africa found that the QMS is problematic.<sup>146</sup> International best practice indicates that the separation of teacher performance assessment from professional development in the QMS is unlikely to achieve learning gains. The combination of performance assessment (based on evidence from a range of instruments) with productive feedback and individualised professional learning opportunities has been shown to increase both teacher effectiveness and student achievement. CDE



suggested that the reasons for this separation arose more from the legacy of the past and the flawed design and implementation of the IQMS rather than international research evidence. Although government and the teacher unions see the QMS as an improvement on the IQMS, CDE asked whether it was good enough if there are doubts that it will improve learning outcomes.

## Lessons

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The case studies indicate that TPS can potentially play a valuable, far-reaching role in improving teacher quality. They can be used to establish teaching as a profession, select student teachers, accredit ITE programmes, assess newly-graduated teachers, guide induction programmes, assess teachers for full registration/licensing (and registration renewal), recognise accomplished teachers, provide the basis for the evaluation of teacher performance, inform teachers' professional development and establish a teacher career ladder. In short, they can be used as the 'North Star' of every stage of teacher preparation and development, from student selection to the recognition of increasing teacher competence and career advancement.

However, as Taylor and Robinson point out, sober consideration must be given to the extent to which TPS can effectively play this comprehensive role in the context of South Africa's vicious schooling cycle. They caution that given the many challenges that the education system faces, particularly in teacher education and development, TPS could pose both opportunities and risks.

However, the international research provides many insights and lessons for South Africa that could serve to mitigate the risks and maximise the opportunities:

- **An inclusive comprehensive consultation process is critical in developing the TPS.** They cannot be centrally designed and imposed by government if they are to enjoy any credibility and acceptance among educators. The early TPS of the 1990s in England illustrate the dangers of this approach, while the very wide-ranging development process under the AITSL in Australia shows the value of national stakeholder bodies, independent of government, leading a very inclusive process in the development and testing of the TPS. The profession took the lead in the case of the NBPTS, but its members engaged closely with other experts, bodies and government in consultation, piloting and refining process.

The Jamaican experience indicates that not only is extensive consultation essential at every stage; equally important is providing substantive feedback to stakeholders in the drafting and finalising process so that they understand how and why changes are made after all their inputs.

- **There is merit in developing both broad generic standards and more specific knowledge and practice standards for educators in different schooling phases and for different subjects.** The development of a small number of generic standards, carrying detailed descriptors which explain what these mean in practice, should involve all stakeholders, expert practitioners and university faculty. The more specific ones require a greater role for expert practitioners and teacher educators. There might also be value in

distinguishing the teaching practice standards from those for personal and professional conduct as in England, and setting up separate processes at different levels of the system for appraisal of these two components of educators' performance.

- **Best practice is to base the TPS on the practices shown by research to be associated with student learning to express them in performance terms and describe what the teacher should know and be able to do to support student learning.** The standards need to be concrete enough to guide observations and feedback to teachers. Ideally the underpinning research evidence associated with the teaching practices should be published as are the InTASC standards in the USA.
- **The necessary policies and legislation must be in place before implementing the standards.** As the Jamaican and Namibian examples show, negotiation, consultation, communication and feedback on drafts of the legislation and policies at all levels of education and with all stakeholders - most critically with teacher associations - will be necessary to pass them.
- **Well-constructed, research-based, piloted and credible TPS can be used as the basis for the whole continuum of student selection, teacher training, registration, evaluation and professional development.** This has been shown to be the case in some states of the USA.
- **The dominant international approach to teacher evaluation is the integrated model that aims to appraise teacher performance, strengthen accountability and support professional development.** Numerous studies in the USA have found that well-designed standards-based assessments, which assess on-the-job teaching based on multiple measures of teaching practice and student learning, can measure teacher effectiveness in terms of student achievement gains. This has been proved in the case of the NBPTS assessment, as well as some of the teacher evaluation systems used by states and districts in the USA.
- **The teacher evaluation system must support professional learning, not just accountability.** To improve teaching quality a professional development system based TPS and closely aligned to teacher performance-based assessment should include both formal development programmes and job-embedded learning opportunities linked to a teacher's individual development needs. High-quality support, including mentoring for teachers needing assistance, coaching and opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing with their peers, are also essential.
- **Resistance to teacher evaluation arises if students' test scores are the only, or dominant, measure used to judge teacher effectiveness.** Opposition can also result if the managerial accountability purpose overshadows the developmental purpose; there are severe consequences for poor performance; inadequate opportunities and support are provided by the school and district for teacher improvement and teacher salary increases are dependent on the evaluation. However, to the extent that the performance appraisal is based on a clear national/school policy, where teachers understand the TPS, their personal objectives are linked to pupil learning, and multiple sources of evidence of performance are used, then it is likely to be less controversial.

- **A strategic communication and dissemination strategy for the TPS is needed so that they are known and fully understood at all levels of the education system, and especially by ordinary teachers.** The histories of the TPS in Chile and Namibia show this is a particular challenge in developing countries. The Australian example shows how the use of social media and other forms of electronic communication can be a real aid in the process, but conferences and workshops where teachers can personally explore and question them are also necessary.
- **Effective TPS implementation to fulfil all their intended purposes is a huge challenge in developed countries, and even more so in developing countries.** The Californian approach that rigorously tests the TPS in practice, refines them and gradually implements them, first as voluntary and then as compulsory, is a powerful example. Training educators and managers at all levels, as in Australia, close monitoring of the TPS from their inception, plus a rigorous, independent evaluation of their implementation and their use provides essential feedback to policymakers and stakeholders.
- **The process of development, testing, dissemination and implementation should not be rushed.** This is important if the TPS are to be credible, evidence-based, teacher buy-in secured and the standards properly tested in the sector before implementation. This takes more than a few years to achieve, as the Californian process shows.

## Recommendations

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As we have seen, both government's and researchers' analyses of the current state of South African education underline the huge challenges facing the country if it is to deliver quality education to all learners, especially those in poor and marginalised communities.

As Taylor and Robinson have argued, South Africa is in the grip of a vicious schooling cycle. In particular, the teacher education and development systems are characterised by a lack of consensus on both a formal body of knowledge for framing teacher education and on what constitutes good teaching practice. Accompanying this weak disciplinary base are generally poor and highly variable teacher education programmes, low respect for the teaching profession, poor morale and teaching expertise among a large majority of teachers and an ineffectual government accountability system. The country will also soon face a shortage of teachers that is already acute in certain phases and subjects. None of this facilitates the development of the high-quality school graduates and entrants into teaching, which the teaching profession so sorely needs.

Given this situation, in many constituencies TPS are recognised as a key step towards addressing the poor and variable quality of the schooling system. Accordingly, the national education departments, quality assurance authorities, teacher unions/associations, education faculty and researchers are engaged in developing TPS for South Africa. Processes to develop both generic and specific knowledge and practice standards are currently underway through the work of the SDWG and (PrimTEd) Project.

In seeking to contribute to these processes CDE offers the following broad recommendations in the hope that they can strengthen the development, implementation and impact of the TPS. The recommendations flow from the analyses of the causes of the education crisis, impediments to improvement and proposed remedies as discussed in this paper, as well as the lessons from other countries.

- The South African TPS should be linked to student learning standards, curriculum and assessment to create an explicit relationship between them and what teachers do in the classroom, how they are prepared, assessed and developed, to help strengthen performance in the whole schooling cycle and raise the quality of education. In this way TPS can provide a lynchpin or North Star for the education system.
- The current TPS processes should be as inclusive and comprehensive as possible in developing the generic standards, and draw on the expertise of accomplished educators and university faculty in determining them, particularly in the production of the specific knowledge and practice standards. In this regard, the inclusive composition of the SDWG and the participation of the teacher unions in the process and the PrimTEd Project are most positive.
- Undertaking research must be part of the process of developing and implementing the TPS here. Research that links teaching practices to learning gains must underpin the TPS if they are to build the knowledge base of the profession and earn credibility. Furthermore, as the findings from CDE's research show, other countries' experiences provide valuable lessons that can be used to inform every stage of the TPS process and help South Africa capitalise on their successes and avoid the pitfalls experienced by other countries.
- Teacher evaluation in South Africa should be both formative and summative so that it can appraise teacher performance, strengthen accountability and support professional development. A new well-designed teacher evaluation process and instrument that will be based on the TPS should be used to replace the IQMS, rather than the QMS that arguably suffers from a fundamental design fault and has not been informed by the TPS.
- The current centralised CPD system should be rethought in terms of international evidence on what makes for effective professional development and support, as well as the research into effective teaching undertaken for the development of the TPS. Numerous studies have shown that the most effective professional learning is job-embedded: it happens in a school after standards-based performance assessment through monitoring, coaching and collaborative planning and feedback in peer groups. High-quality formal training courses of adequate duration have a role to play, but they need to be more scientifically quality assured and endorsed by SACE using criteria based on research.
- Given the lack of basic accountability and the significant degree of wrongdoing throughout the education system, it is essential that government takes bold steps to hold teachers, managers and officials accountable for their personal and professional conduct in fulfilling the basic functions and duties of their jobs.

- Equally, given the weak institutional functionality and limited capacity of many teachers, managers and officials, who have not been given the training and support they need, government must provide them with high-quality training and meaningful professional support and development opportunities to enable them to improve their performance. Unless this happens, they cannot be held accountable for what they have never been taught or had the opportunity to learn.
- Sufficient time must be allocated to the whole process of formulating the TPS, consulting widely, disseminating, piloting, refining and implementing them, with sufficient training for teachers, managers and officials so that they fully understand them and can use them effectively. An initial voluntary implementation phase or staggered implementation before the TPS are made mandatory across all purposes has considerable merit.

In line with Taylor and Robinson's exposition of the state of South Africa education and discussion of the potential of TPS to contribute to improving the quality of the system, CDE sees the following as priorities for government action:

- Firstly, the DBE and provincial departments should hold teachers accountable for what they are able to do, for example keeping strictly to the school timetable, because they frequently and habitually skip classes. Simply by instituting this level of managerial accountability and requiring teachers to be in class when they should, learners will have 40 percent or more teaching and learning time. Although such moves are likely to be met with union resistance in forums such as the ELRC, government must move from rhetoric to action on this matter, using the deadlock-breaking mechanisms provided for by law.
- The second priority is to concentrate on teacher preparation: the curricula of the ITE programmes, the teacher qualification requirements and an induction process in schools before full registration as teachers. In strengthening ITE, Taylor and Robinson argue that the most critical focus for improving learning outcomes is teaching student teachers explicitly, both in the theory and practice, the most effective forms of reading instruction, something to which South African universities pay little heed at present. This will assist in establishing a reliable knowledge base for teaching, the foundation of any profession, from which effective protocols of practice may be derived.
- The third priority is to improve the nature and quality of support, training and professional development opportunities for teachers and managers as discussed above, so that they are able to perform at higher levels and improve learner achievement.

## Concluding Remarks

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The three priorities for government identified by CDE are critical for effecting a significant improvement in the quality of South African schooling. Strengthening the content and process of teacher preparation and addressing both the lack of accountability and lack of support in the system will maximise the benefits of intervention and effect meaningful change.

The six country case studies show that TPS hold significant promise as a means of improving teacher preparation, professional development as well as pupil learning. They also provide examples of how TPS can be effectively designed and implemented to fulfil a wide range of purposes. However, at the same time the histories of each country's TPS also contain cautionary tales of failure at different stages and for a range of reasons. Developing and implementing TPS effectively is not a simple endeavour and requires inclusive processes, research to establish an evidence base, careful formulation, extensive consultation, piloting, refinement, strategic communication, dissemination, training and embedding in the system, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

Darling-Hammond (2012) has aptly summed up the challenge for TPS:

*The critical question for the teacher standards movement, where it is emerging, is how the standards will be used, how universally they will be applied, and how they may leverage stronger learning opportunities and a more common set of knowledge, skills and commitments across the profession. Robust standards weakly applied can be expected to have much less effect than those that are used as in other professions as an inviolable expectation for candidates and institutions to meet (quoted in OECD, 2013a: 42).*

If all these stages and processes are addressed with the determination to get them right, the TPS are robustly applied in practice, and the priorities outlined above are executed with the necessary urgency and political will, then there is every chance that we can address many of the challenges in South African schools.

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