



FOCUS: teacher professionalisation



HOW CAN TEACHING BECOME MORE PROFESSIONAL?

Dr Nick Taylor, Research Fellow, JET Education Services, argues for a shared and coherent conceptualisation of education that supports demonstrably effective teaching practices as a critical step towards strengthening initial teacher education and professionalism in teaching.

Much has been written about the factors which set the professions apart from other occupational fields. A survey of this literature indicates that professional expertise consists of a combination of conceptual understanding and fit-for-purpose action. Taking the example of literacy instruction, the following questions must be asked of the current state of professional knowledge for teaching.

- Do we have a coherent theory of literacy instruction, or is the field still divided by ideological barriers, with no way of adjudicating the claims of competing assertions?

- Do we have well-defined reading pedagogies, derived from and feeding into the theory, that are effective in suburban, township and rural schools in South Africa?
- Are teachers able to operationalise this professional knowledge to teach reading effectively?

According to the definition above, teaching cannot be classified as a profession, in the first instance because practice is not reliably guided by a formal knowledge base. There are those who think that this is a good thing, that teaching is more of an art than a science, based largely on tacitly acquired routines. According to this view, attempts to formalise the knowledge base would undermine teachers and inhibit the autonomy required to respond to a myriad of contingent situations which arise daily in classrooms. There are others, like myself, who envisage the emergence of a theory of literacy instruction (pursuing this example) and associated pedagogical routines, the combination of which, in the hands of competent teachers, is effective in teaching reading in South African classrooms. Would this not be the most important step the ITE sector could take to dramatically improve the state of school learning? Would it be repressive of teacher autonomy to develop and advocate such a programme and make sure that all newly qualified primary school teachers are able to apply it effectively in real classrooms in real time, as a condition of graduation?

Across the multiplicity of views about how an occupational grouping like teaching could become more professional, two broad perspectives can be defined. There are those who adopt »

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JET Bulletin—The purpose of the JET BULLETIN is to share some of the knowledge and insights that are gained through various multifaceted projects in which JET is involved. JET is very active in education development and evaluation and we see a wide range of new learnings emerging which we believe would be of interest and value to other stakeholders in the sector and to education and training more broadly. We trust you will find the content of this edition of value. Going forward, each edition will share new ideas and new learnings around a chosen topical focus. The JET BULLETIN will be distributed primarily online, with a limited number of copies available in print.



what might be called an exogenous approach, which assumes that professional status is conferred from outside; that if the occupational field of teaching were treated with more respect and not subjected to so much monitoring and testing, teachers would have more space to exercise their full creative potential and behave more professionally. While agreeing that bureaucratic forms of accountability, as practised for example in the *No Child Left Behind* programme in the United States, are ineffective, I would argue that causality in this case works the other way around, that once the occupational field can demonstrate that its theories point to practices which are effective, which reliably do the job, then it will generate the kind of respect accorded to members of high status professions. This is the endogenous approach: social trust in an occupation derives from the ability of the field to demonstrate that its theories and practices are more effective in providing a particular service than those of competing groups. I don't think that it is too much to expect the ITE field to begin to demonstrate this more convincingly than it has in the past. That is the first marker of a professional field of labour.

However, it is one thing to achieve this first marker in one or more institutions, but it is quite another to achieve it as part of a collective endeavour, across the entire sector. This is the second mark of a profession: there is consensus on best practices. The requirement is not uniformity – which would allow no possibility of innovation, even revolt, or progress – but at least there should

be broad convergence on a limited number of minimum sets of practice protocols and how they can be understood in relation to the underlying theory.

A third condition of professionalism is that the knowledge and practice standards are maintained and jealously guarded by practitioners within the occupational field, not by government. This is professional quality assurance, as opposed to bureaucratic managerialism. It could not be any different, since only adepts within a field have the expertise to judge the value of new knowledge claims and to certify novice entrants into the profession. This is one of the most important characteristics of the strong professions.

In the face of such an enormous task which will be decades in the making, how could we make a start that has a good chance of success within a reasonable time horizon? I want to suggest that we take the case of literacy and numeracy and commit ourselves, as a field rather than a postmodern scattering of individuals, to developing effective literacy and numeracy programmes within 10 years. This would require the participation of government, statutory bodies and the unions and it would require significant changes with respect to policy, regulation and the resourcing of ITE. I hope I have made a convincing case that the initiative should come from and be led by ITE practitioners within the universities. □

A CLOSER LOOK AT TEACHER EDUCATION

The Initial Teacher Education Research Project is designed to take a closer look at ITE curricula at South Africa's higher education institutions and the extent to which the current system equips novice teachers to tackle the challenges of teaching.

Lead Researcher: Dr Nick Taylor
Project Manager: Aneesha Mayet

The South African school system is beset with many problems, including, in many instances, poor management and leadership and the inefficient distribution of resources. But even where institutions are well managed and teachers have access to sufficient resources, the quality of teaching and learning cannot rise above the ceiling imposed by teachers' capacity to teach. In the large majority of schools teaching is often ineffective and learners fall progressively behind the expectations of the curriculum with each passing year.

Evidence has accumulated over the past two decades to suggest that in-service interventions have been largely ineffective in addressing this problem, despite the many millions of rand



There is a growing realisation that the greatest opportunity for improving the quality of schooling lies with ITE programmes.

CONDITIONS IN SCHOOLS

A number of research studies, at large and small scale, have found the following conditions pervasive in schools across the country.

- Low levels of English proficiency among teachers and learners.
- Lack of adequate reading pedagogies: large numbers of learners reach Grade 5 essentially illiterate.
- Lack of adequate pedagogies for basic numeracy: learners up to and beyond Grade 7 use 'stick counting' methods to perform relatively complex arithmetic operations.
- Low levels of subject knowledge among teachers.
- Primary schools tend not to recruit and deploy teachers according to subject specialisation, but to assume that all qualified teachers can teach all subjects. Thus, at some stage of their careers, most primary school teachers will be required to teach maths and English. Across all phases there are too many teachers teaching subjects in which they did not specialise.

spent in this area. This in turn has led to the question as to what extent the current system of initial teacher education (ITE) is meeting the demands of South African schools. Are we preparing teachers adequately to tackle the challenges of schooling? At the same time, there is a growing realisation that the greatest opportunity for improving the quality of schooling lies with ITE programmes.

The Initial Teacher Education Research Project (ITERP) was initiated by JET to take a closer look at ITE curricula at South Africa's higher education institutions (HEIs) and the experience of novice teachers during their first two years of teaching practice. The project is being carried out in collaboration with the Education Deans' Forum (EDF), the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Department of Basic Education (DBE).

The aim is to inform these key stakeholders about the state of initial teacher education and the early teaching experiences of newly qualified teachers in South Africa. The study is intended to contribute to debate on the nature, quality, content and duration of ITE programmes, to help shape policy in this area and to inform discussion on the design and delivery of ITE curricula most suited to reforming the country's school system.

While the research programme is ongoing, findings from the first component have been reported, and discussion on these is continuing in various forums. A full report on findings related to the different aspects of the curricula examined in this component is available at www.jet.org.za. Some of the key findings are shared here to broaden the thinking around initial teacher education and to contribute to the conceptualisation of teacher professionalism and professional development.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The ITERP is a five-year study, running from 2012 to 2016. It is structured around four components designed to complement each other.

- A review of the overall coherence and conceptions of teaching which underlie the ITE programmes and curricula in use at five HEIs, followed by a detailed examination of the intended and assessed curricula for mathematics and English for teachers specialising in the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6).
- Case studies of a group of students from their final year of study at the five HEIs and through their first two years of teaching, including an exploration of the attained curriculum – what newly qualified teachers actually know about the subjects they are required to teach and how to teach them.
- A large-scale survey, across all 23 HEIs in the country, of ITE students in their final year of study (4th year BEd and PGCE) and tracking their progress over two post-graduate years.
- Recommendations for ITE curricula for teachers specialising in the Intermediate Phase.

Looking at ITE programmes and curricula

Five HEIs were invited to participate in the first component of the research study. Collectively these five represent the major institutional types that deliver ITE. In 2012, as reported in *Trends in Teacher Education 2012* published by the DHET in 2013, these five HEIs produced 49% of all Bachelor of Education (BEd) graduates in the country and 61% of Post-graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) graduates.

The first step was to undertake a broad overview of all BEd and PGCE courses offered by these five HEIs. The second step was to look in more detail at course content. In order to make this step manageable, the focus was narrowed to the curricula for English and mathematics offered to BEd students specialising in the Intermediate Phase (IP).

The data collected through these two phases related to curricula in use in 2013. Most HEIs have since been redesigning their curricula to align with the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) issued by the DHET in 2011. Nonetheless, the findings offer valuable insights into the content and quality of the ITE programmes examined.

A broad overview

Generally, all ITE programmes at the five universities aspire to produce knowing, caring and committed 'reflective practitioners'. Strong subject content knowledge is central to this conception of teachers and teaching, together with a nurturing attitude and ethical behaviour.

BEd curricula are organised around at least three years of subject content and methodology modules, a range of general theoretical and pedagogic modules, as well as language, literacy, »



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ICT, curriculum and teaching practice modules. PGCE curricula are largely concentrated versions of BEd curricula, without subject content modules.

Variations in content

One of the main findings of the broad overview of the ITE curricula is that the content of modules and hence of programmes varies widely among institutions.

Teaching practice is the area with the greatest variation, in factors such as: total time students spend in schools (ranging from 10 to 35 weeks); where teaching practice takes place (mostly in suburban schools); and exposure to diverse teaching experiences (these are generally encouraged but not required). It is also noted that most supervisors are not subject specialists and, in some institutions, it is possible for students to pass teaching practice even if they perform poorly in a classroom, or even without being assessed on their classroom expertise.

Low entrance requirements

ITE programmes have low entrance requirements compared with most other disciplines. Many students are accepted without any reference to what motivates them to become

teachers. Teacher educators' low expectations of the academic quality of students (including weak subject content knowledge, lack of proficiency in English and generally poor reading and writing skills) are not always counterbalanced by any structured attempt to transform poor quality entrants into good quality 'reflective practitioners'. In some institutions the focus seems to be on producing more teachers rather than better teachers.

A coherent theory of education

Most programmes seem to lack a strong underlying logic and conceptual coherence. There is in some cases an overemphasis on bureaucratic compliance and on the practice of teaching (how) at the expense of a coherent theory (why). This is exacerbated by a lack of staff collaboration and module integration.

However, at some institutions the overall programmes display more structural and conceptual coherence than most. They emphasise the development of deep subject and pedagogical content knowledge, together with strong awareness of the theoretical principles and purposes of education. The basis for this coherence seems to be a clear intra- and inter-programme set of beliefs about initial teacher education, grounded in respected theoretical models and shared by most of the staff.

Variations in teaching practice assessment instruments

Although teaching practice assessment instruments form a small part of ITE programmes, they do convey to some extent the respective institution's conception of what constitutes competence in student teaching and in newly qualified teachers.

While there are common terms of reference used in assessment across the five institutions, there are significant differences in the relative weighting given to each criterion, in how each criterion presents teaching, and in what is expected of students in relation to each measure of assessment.

Further variations are evident in who assesses what, in the use of different types of rating scales for assessing levels of competence, and in the sense of whether teaching is viewed as reducible to a collection of learnt technical skills or, by contrast, as a practice that involves a required level of knowledge, understanding and thinking as well as effective classroom practice.

English courses for BEd IP students

The English courses offered to Intermediate Phase (IP) students at the five case study campuses are all described in terms of subject knowledge, school knowledge – related to the curriculum to be taught in schools, and pedagogic knowledge – covering different approaches to teaching a language and for speaking, listening, reading and writing. However, across the different institutions the courses vary substantially in the content and duration of the various components. In English subject knowledge for IP students specialising in English, for example, courses range from between five or six semesters at some institutions to four years at others.

All the institutions also offer some support for academic reading and writing (Academic Literacy). This endeavours to address the low levels of competence in English and academic writing ability common among students. These courses also vary substantially in content and duration.

For IP students specialising in English

For IP students specialising in English, as well as the broad variations in courses offered, there are some notable gaps at some or most of the institutions. For example, courses in New Literacy Studies which address diverse, cross-cultural, contemporary literacy practices are limited. This is a concern, considering the extent to which such literacies are created and used across South Africa and globally. Another gap is noted in the texts and genres chosen by lecturers where literature for children and adolescents is backgrounded or ignored. Given the importance of developing learners' interest in reading and the contribution reading can make to lexical and syntactic knowledge, this is also a cause for concern.

For IP students not specialising in English

Perhaps more concerning is that for IP students not specialising in English, but who will nonetheless be required to use English as the language of teaching and learning in the overwhelming majority of schools and who will likely be called on to teach

English at some stage in their careers, there is, in three of the five institutions studied, no subject knowledge English offered and in others, no pedagogic knowledge either. Thus, little attention is given to equipping these students to guide IP learners to become proficient readers and writers in English. In particular, across the sample institutions, little or no attention is given to reading pedagogies, a skill for which there is a dire need in the school system. It seems that such gaps in ITE persist despite the ubiquitous concerns raised around the many students entering university with weak English and the persistently poor levels of English among learners in South African schools.

English as the language of teaching and learning / first additional language

The language and literacy challenges experienced by many learners in the transition from learning in their home language(s) to learning in English and developing their knowledge of English as a subject, together with the challenges presented by the linguistic complexity of classrooms in many urban areas, appear to be insufficiently addressed across all the institutions, although some pay more attention to addressing them than others.

Mathematics courses for BEd IP students

For IP students specialising in mathematics

The research on courses offered to IP students specialising in mathematics reveals some significant findings. The numbers of IP students specialising in mathematics are generally small and highly variable, across and within institutions from one year to the next. There are no common entrance requirements for students choosing to specialise as mathematics teachers. The requirements range from, for example, achievement of 65% or more on a test given to all first year students at one institution, to a pass of at least 50% in mathematics in the »

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NSC exam at another, to an allowance for students to specialise as mathematics teachers even if they scored as low as 30% in mathematics literacy in the NSC. The proportion of the BEd degree given to mathematics courses varies from a low of 13% to as much as 25% across the sample institutions.

Overall the research suggests an emerging commonality in the mathematics content courses for prospective IP mathematic specialists. These courses deal mostly with mathematical topics taught to IP and SP learners, but at a deeper level and with a focus on the specialised mathematical knowledge a teacher would need. In contrast, there is much greater variability in the methodology courses which address the pedagogy related to teaching IP mathematics.

There remains a question as to whether students specialising in the subject are sufficiently equipped to lay the firm foundations in number facility, problem modelling and abstract reasoning required by learners to enable them to enter the field of mathematics, science and technology. Further, however effective they are as teachers, there are far too few of them to make a significant difference in the education system.

For IP students not specialising in mathematics

For IP students not specialising in mathematics, their exposure to either mathematics – in some cases mathematics literacy – or mathematics methodology courses is low and varies across the different institutions. For these prospective IP teachers, mathematics courses contribute from as little as 2.5% to a high of 13% to overall credits. This would seem to be woefully inadequate, given that most primary school teachers will, at some stage, be required to teach mathematics.

Concluding comments

The IP years (Grades 4-6) are a critically important period when most pupils move from learning in their mother tongue to using English as the medium of instruction, and all must make the transition from arithmetic based on counting to becoming proficient in the more sophisticated tools of mathematics. Currently, most learners are at least two years behind curriculum expectations by the time they reach Grade 5, in both language and mathematics.

The BEd degree forms the bridge between generally poorly prepared matriculants exiting the school system and newly qualified teachers embarking on a career of teaching. University education faculties thus occupy a key node in the system. This is the point that holds the most promise for breaking the cycle of mediocrity which bedevils schooling and exerts a heavy brake on the personal development of most citizens and the production of knowledge and skills needed for a more vibrant economy.

The findings of this first component of the ITERP reveal a wide variation in all dimensions of the curricula examined. While there are some excellent practices, it seems that none of the five institutions studied is rising fully to the challenge posed

While there are some excellent practices, it seems that none of the five institutions studied is rising fully to the challenge posed by the low quality of South Africa's school system, particularly with respect to those student teachers not specialising in mathematics or English.



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The research points to a need for urgent and serious discussion among teacher educators in all sub-disciplines and particularly in mathematics and English. The sector needs to reach a much greater degree of convergence concerning the competencies, in both subject knowledge and pedagogy, required by teachers, the curricula most suited to achieve these standards and how the outcomes should be assessed.

Discussions to date with the project partners have revealed, among other things, some surprise at the gaps in teacher education curricula highlighted by the research, as well as a concerning disjunction between the perspectives and preoccupations of teacher educators in universities and the practical realities that teachers face day-by-day in classrooms around the country.

From JET's perspective, teacher education needs to be grounded in a generally recognised theory of education which would give rise to protocols of practice that are effective in classrooms across the country. This would provide the foundation and framework for systematically building professionalism in teaching – from initial teacher education, to teaching in practice and through continuing professional development. □



UNION SUPPORT IN TEACHER PROFESSIONALISATION

JET's partnership with the SADTU Curtis Nkondo Professional Development Institute has seen the rollout of a programme of complementary interventions which support the work of the DBE in teacher development and the drive to build professionalism among practising teachers.

Project Manager: Lesley Abrahams

The formation of the Teacher Union Collaboration (TUC) programme in 2010 signalled a major breakthrough, opening the way for all the teachers unions to become actively involved in teacher professional development and enabling the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to harness the unions' capacity, reach and influence to strengthen the teaching profession.

The TUC was established by the DBE with budget savings that were ring-fenced and channelled through the TUC specifically into teacher training and professionalisation. All the teachers unions signed the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the DBE, endorsing this initiative.

In committing themselves to participate in the TUC, the unions stepped beyond their traditional mandate of dealing only with labour-related matters and recognised the opportunity arising for them to take up an active role in developing their members professionally through planned and sustained programmes.

This led to the individual unions establishing their own professional development institutes to carry forward the professional development agenda among their members and in the schooling sector generally. To date, all but one of the five signatories to the MOA have formed their own institutes (NAPTOSA, SAOU, NATU and SADTU), with the PEU still to launch its professional development wing. »



In order to access funding from the TUC, the unions are required to develop planned interventions and submit their proposals to the DBE. These are reviewed against DBE criteria which include, among others, training in priority subjects, programmatic content and budget. Increasingly we are seeing the unions collaborating to focus support in the DBE's priority training areas and to avoid duplication of efforts and the risk of overloading teachers with training interventions that place excessive demands on them over and above their working commitments.

From SADTU's perspective

The SADTU Curtis Nkondo Professional Development Institute (SCNPDI) was established in 2010 to serve as the vehicle through which SADTU would contribute to teacher professionalisation and continuing professional development for teachers.

In its 2013 Annual Report the Board of the SCNPDI reflects on the alignment between the institute's aims and achievements to date and the broader SADTU vision. SADTU recognises the role it can play in strengthening the teaching profession's contribution to the national development agenda and nation building and thus supports the drive to advance the professionalisation of teachers and teaching.

Like SADTU, the SCNPDI operates from the belief that the primary responsibility for advancing economic and broader social development outcomes is shared by teachers (individually and through their organised formations) and the departments of education at national and provincial levels. Teachers are seen not only as major role-players but as central to these development imperatives. Thus, by contributing to teacher professional development SADTU, through the SCNPDI, can support government in achieving its national development aims, as set out in the National Development Plan and the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (2011–2025).

SADTU further advocates that teachers' professional development can be effected from within the profession. The SCNPDI is thus mandated to enable teachers to play a more active role in their own professional development, to create the networks that can assist them to identify best practice in teaching and learning, and to bring SADTU to the centre of teacher professional development activities nationally.

In its 2013 Annual Report the SCNPDI indicates that it has reached about 62 000 teachers through its various interventions through 2012 and 2013. This is a clear indication that SADTU is taking teacher professional development seriously. The work of the SCNPDI has also shown that with the support of SADTU structures at national, provincial, regional and branch levels, as well as in schools, it has the capacity to support the DBE through the provision of credible programmes for teachers and school management. Some examples below illustrate the range of work being done by the institute.

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JET'S PARTNERSHIP WITH SADTU AND THE SCNPDI

JET's partnership with SADTU began in 2010 when the union approached JET to assist it with setting up the SADTU Curtis Nkondo Professional Development Institute. SADTU was one of the 21 founding organisations of the Joint Education Trust, predecessor of JET Education Services, and JET embraced the idea of a partnership with the country's biggest teachers' union: SADTU has a membership of some 260 000 teachers, representing close to 70% of the total 375 000 registered teachers in the country.

JET's role in the partnership was to assist with recommendations on the organisational structure for the institute, to set up its governance structures and to assist with securing funds. Together with the institute it developed a proposed programme of action and this was approved by the SCNPDI Board. Implementation began in 2012 and is ongoing.

The programme comprises a range of complementary components which can be broadly termed as:

- professionalisation of teaching;
- teacher development;
- management development; and
- district-based professional development.

Further supporting activities are related to systems and planning training, labour relations management and research and evaluation. The programme is directed at attaining key objectives that support and strengthen the work of the DBE, provincial departments of education and education districts in the field of teacher development and building professionalism among practising teachers.

As the managing agent for SCNPDI, JET's role is defined in the Memorandum of Understanding that governs the partnership and sets out the partners' respective roles and responsibilities. SADTU maintains an oversight role on all matters.

The relationship allows for lessons to be shared between the union, the institute and JET while it also enables JET, drawing on its own experience in the education development arena, to add value to the institute and the education sector more broadly.

The SCNPDI has acknowledged its partnership with JET as fundamental to the institute's stability and the progress it has made since it was established in 2010.

Professionalisation of teaching

Looking specifically at teacher professionalisation, the SCNPDI has sought first to establish a clear and common understanding of what teacher professionalism and teacher professionalisation mean for SADTU and its members. It commissioned a task team, under the leadership of Professor John Volmink, to prepare a literature review and to conduct focus group discussions with teachers across the provinces in order to gain clarity on the concept and develop a clear conceptual framework. The review is due to be presented to the SCNPDI Board and will inform the institute's future programmes aimed at advancing teacher professionalisation.

Teacher development

During 2012 the institute assisted the DBE with orientation training for Foundation Phase (FP) and Grade 10 teachers on the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). It worked initially in KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga and subsequently across the other seven provinces as well, as part of the national programme to introduce the CAPS.

It has also implemented its Assessment for Learning programme which is aimed at developing teachers' skills in using assessments to improve teaching and learning in their classrooms. The first phase of this programme was carried out through a series of two-day workshops for teachers, facilitated by a team from the Tshwane University of Technology.

Management development

With support from the ETDP SETA, the SCNPDI conducted school management training in Instructional Leadership, targeting 400 principals and deputy principals across four provinces: Eastern Cape, Gauteng, Limpopo and Western Cape. Run over two days, the training programme covered school governance and management and school-based labour law and was delivered by a team of facilitators from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

Further training for school managers is under way, aimed at improving the level of understanding of labour law and proactively supporting stable and peaceful labour relations. »





A major advantage of the model is that it is driven by teachers and responds directly to teachers' needs.

District-based professional teacher development

The District-based Professional Development Programme (DBPDP) for teachers provides a good example of the SCNPDI's model of teacher-led development and identifying and developing lead teachers. The DBPDP model allows for the institute to focus its training on smaller numbers of teachers. These lead teachers then extend their learnings to other teachers and provide support for continuing learning through the structures developed as part of the programme. The structures are in turn supported by both SADTU and DBE district officials.

While the SCNPDI has chosen to focus this programme initially in three identified underperforming districts, providing a sustained level of training and support in these, the challenge of dysfunctional districts is widespread. The DBPDP would serve well as a model for upskilling teachers and improving district performance more broadly.

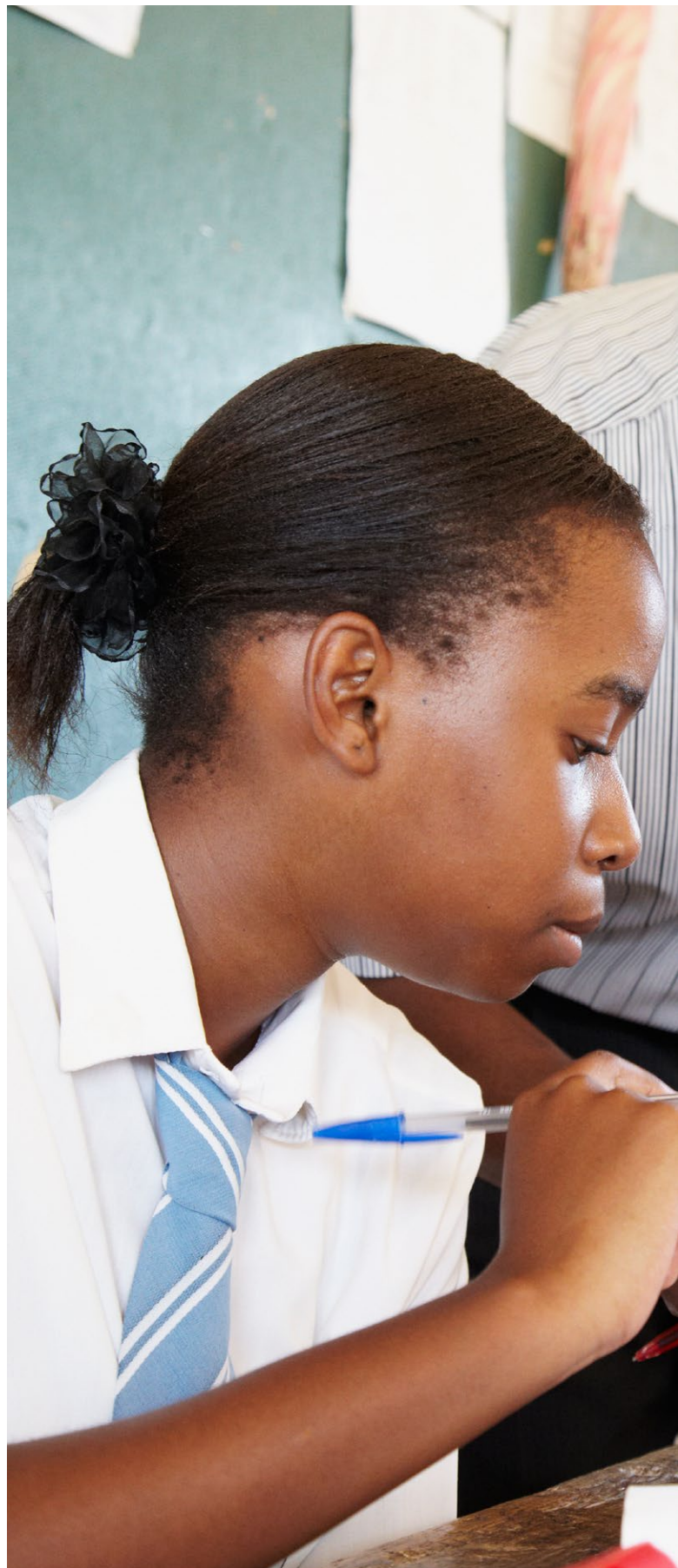
The programme was first piloted in Libode District in the Eastern Cape in 2012 and was subsequently launched in Mopani District in Limpopo at the beginning of 2013. Bohlabela in Mpumalanga is the third target district where the programme was introduced in 2014.

While the programme has been adapted to contextual conditions in each district, the core objectives and intervention strategies are consistent. The programme is designed to encompass:

- provision of content training, focused thus far on identified needs in FP mathematics and English first additional language;
- the setting up of functioning and coherent professional learning communities (PLCs) which are structured from district, to cluster to school level; and
- creating effective structures and support networks to enable teachers to engage in self-directed learning (SDL).

One of the drawbacks of the model is that it is both time and cost intensive. There is also a risk that teachers may feel overwhelmed by the added responsibilities introduced by the Professional Development Programme. However, a major advantage of the model is that it is driven by teachers and responds directly to teachers' needs. This greater level of involvement and sense of ownership also draws a greater level of commitment from teachers.

The model allows for the SCNPDI to combine its responses to teachers' priority needs (FP Resource Development Training,





for example) with professional development directives issued by the DBE (such as the requirement for CAPS orientation). This means that national directives can be implemented within specific needs-related programmes that offer teachers more value and are not seen as 'just ticking the compliance box'. The already established structures also allow for activities to be organised and completed in much shorter timeframes.

Evaluating impact

All the SCNPDI's programmes have an evaluation component built into them. Data is collected and reports are generated on a regular basis. However, as the interventions are still relatively new it is not yet possible to present any comprehensive measures of impact. Anecdotal feedback from the districts suggests an improvement in teachers' attitudes to their work and the potential for improved learning outcomes. The fact that teachers are attending development sessions diligently and express their appreciation for the support they are receiving from the union and the institute also points to a positive impact. But any advances in teachers' and learners' performance cannot at this stage be attributed solely to the work done through the institute without taking other factors into account. Comprehensive evaluation reports will be prepared for the institute in due course.

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Continuity in the TUC

The TUC has established an effective operating framework that enables the teachers' unions to make a valuable contribution to professional development among their members and for all teachers. It is anticipated that the TUC will continue to secure funds through the DBE to support the unions in assisting government with its drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning in South African schools. There are clear synergies between the work being done by the TUC and the unions and that of other initiatives in the education sector, such as the National Education Collaboration Trust. Thus there may be opportunities for new alliances to emerge, enabling the unions to play an even greater role in teacher professional development. Already the unions have demonstrated their willingness and capacity to move beyond their representation of members' interests in bargaining chambers to lend their support to professional development for teachers – and hence to contribute to the country's social and economic progress. □

BULLETIN BOARD



Dr James Keevy, new CEO at JET

Dr James Keevy joined JET Education Services as its new Chief Executive Officer in September 2014. We welcome him on board and already have a sense of the fresh thinking and new dynamics that he brings to the organisation.

Dr Keevy succeeds Godwin Khosa who, after five years at the helm, left JET earlier in the year to lead the newly established National Education Collaboration Trust. Dr Keevy comes to JET from the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) where he had served in various roles since 2003 and as Director: International Liaison since 2009. He brings with him extensive regional and international research expertise, including leadership of large multiyear and multinational research consortia in education. His work on national, regional and international qualifications frameworks in Africa and further afield, and his research into qualifications, recognition of prior learning, and the professionalisation and migration of teachers have been published and presented widely.

In welcoming him to JET, Nathan Johnstone, Chairman of the JET Board of Directors, said, "Dr Keevy's experience will stand JET in good stead in pursuing its objective of providing practical, evidence-based solutions to learning challenges in the South African schooling system and the post-school education and training sector."

Some of you among our partners, colleagues and fellow stakeholders in the education sector may already have met with Dr Keevy since he took up the leadership of JET. We look forward to our continuing work with you in pursuit of our vision of quality education for every child in South Africa.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mr Nathan Johnstone (Chairman)
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JET is moving

In the next few months JET will be moving to new premises at Victoria Gate, 6 Blackwood Avenue, Parktown. We will then be just across the road from the School of Education campus of the University of the Witwatersrand and close to a number of other non-governmental organisations and agencies active in the education development sector. This location is also conveniently close to the M1 highway, providing easy access to our new offices for staff and visitors.

Having spent its whole history in Braamfontein, JET has grown significantly over the past several years and the need for more space in a building designed to suit our own needs were key motivators for the move. We are also planning to lease part of the building to other education institutions and NGOs. We are expecting to leave Braampark and be in our new premises by April 2015 and will keep you informed on progress. We will be glad to welcome you there.

Acronyms – in this edition

BEd	Bachelor of Education
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education & Training
EDF	Education Deans' Forum
ETDP SETA	Education, Training & Development Practices Sector Education & Training Authority
FP	Foundation Phase
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IP	Intermediate Phase
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
ITERP	Initial Teacher Education Research Project
MRTEQ	Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications
NSC	National Senior Certificate
PGCE	Post-Graduate Certificate in Education
PLC	Professional Learning Communities
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SCNPDI	SADTU Curtis Nkondo Professional Development Institute
SDL	Self-Directed Learning
SP	Senior Phase
TUC	Teacher Union Collaboration