

# Teacher Education for Responsible senior Decision-making

*Prof. A. de Muynck  
and  
Prof. J.L. van der Walt\**

## Samevatting

*Onderwysersopleiers behoort so elke nou en dan na te dink oor waarheen presies hulle met die voornemende onderwysers op weg is. Versuim om hieroor te besin kan mettertyd lei tot oneffektiewe en onbeholpe besluitneming deur onderwysers wat veronderstel is om 'n beter insig in die eise van hulle professie te hê. Deur gebruik te maak van perspektiewe voortvloeiend uit Alisdair McIntyre se deugde-etiek en normatiewe praktykmodel, ontwikkel die outeurs 'n benadering tot onderwysersopleiding waarin kernwaardes soos die onderwyser se vermoë om deurlopend na te dink oor sy/haar professie, en om kennis, vaardighede en gesindheid effektief te integreer, 'n betekenisvolle rol speel. Hierdie benadering tot onderwysersopleiding verleen diepgang aan kerngedagtes soos waardes, deugde, kompetensies en uitkomst. Onderwysersopleiding gegrond op hierdie beginsels sal op die lang duur lei tot verantwoordelike en pedagogies regverdigbare besluitneming deur toekomstige senior opvoeders. Die outeurs pas hulle bevindinge toe op die situasie in Suid-Afrika.*

## 1. Background and statement of the problem

After their initial education (training), the most competent educators (teachers) tend to move up the promotion ladder, some of them even reaching

---

\* Corresponding Author.

the summit of their profession. In these highly responsible posts, they are expected to take decisions that are not only pedagogically justifiable but also advantageous to the communities that depend on education for improving the quality of their lives. Despite these high expectations regarding education managers, it is an unfortunate fact that some of the decisions made by such senior officials leave much to be desired from a pedagogical point of view.<sup>1</sup> Because of how the South African school system has been managed in the last decade or two, some 80% of the schools in South Africa have now been found to be dysfunctional.<sup>2</sup>

Senior managers' decisions resonate at the lowest levels, in the schools and in the communities, where flesh and blood people have to deal with the effects of inefficient schools and teachers, large dropout numbers, unemployment and the constant introduction of new curricula for which no provision is made in terms of teacher education and support materials. The South African educational system is indeed in crisis: it is replete with derelict teachers, violence and apathy in schools.<sup>3</sup> Although, as Larrabee (1998: 4) observed, educational processes are fundamentally political, they are also usually reflective of social purposes such as democracy, equality, social efficiency and individual opportunity. If this were indeed the case, what could be the reasons for incompetent decision-making apart from inadequate teacher education (training)? Perhaps the words of Goodlad in his book *A*

- 
- 1 A case in point was the decision made by Eastern Cape education officials to allow 37 000 learners who had failed grade 11 at the end of 2006 to be promoted to grade 12 (matric). This decision opened the door for other South African provinces to follow suit and promote another 160 000 learners who had failed that grade. The decision was justified by the remark that the "learners (now) have an opportunity to work hard and complete matric in 2007" (Cohen, 2007: 12). This meant that pupils who had not achieved even the minimum promotion requirement of 33% for grade 11 could write matric in South Africa in 2007, where the standards will be significantly higher. The decision to promote undeserving candidates to grade 12 was condoned by the highest official in the National Department of Education; it was up to the Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, to eventually repudiate it. She correctly based her opposition to the decision on the fact that it would be detrimental to the standard of the matriculation examination (SAPA, 2007: 2). Chairmen of education trade unions and other responsible educationists supported her (Olivier, 2007: 3).
  - 2 Of 1 234 formerly advantaged schools that had been functioning very well, only 380 still functioned well at the end of 2004, 254 fared relatively well and 600 fared dismally. Of 4 884 formerly disadvantaged schools, only 34 fared well, 573 fairly well and 4 277 badly, it was found in a transformation audit by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (Rademeyer, 2006: 7). There is talk in some circles that education in South Africa 'has collapsed' because of the low quality of education that is being dished out in schools (Rademeyer, 2006b: 2).
  - 3 The failure of (inter alia) the schools in effectively discharging their pedagogical duties can be detected in the wider communities. The crime levels of the so-called 'social fabric'-category crimes, e.g. rape, assault, drunken-driving, sexual-molestation and assault, have increased significantly by between 2% and 7% per year since 1994 (Marais, 2005).

*place called school* (1984:xvi) regarding the state of schooling in the United States of America two decades ago, hold true for the situation today in South Africa: ‘There are disturbing signs that individuals and groups *who should know better* have learned little about the complexities of schools and educational improvement ...’

The purpose of this article is not to focus on the ineptitude of education officials as such, but rather on the duty of teacher educators to consistently produce teachers with the knowledge, skills and attitude that will help them develop into competent future decision-makers and leaders in education departments.<sup>4</sup> This is not only a concern in a developing country like South Africa, but also in developed countries. In 2006, Jochemsen, Kuiper and De Muynck (2006) published a book on education as practice, in which they asked, among others, what the essence of teacher education at the higher education level in the Netherlands should be. A year before them, Lagerweij and Lagerweij-Voort (2005: 11) published a book in which they concentrated on helping prospective as well as practising teachers to “understand the everyday processes in education”. We find a similar approach in the work of Helsper (2006:15-35) in Germany in which he discusses some of the tensions in which a teacher finds him-/herself, such as between autonomy and external powers, between organisation and interaction, the tensions emerging from cultural pluralism, between nearness and distance, the unfolding of children’s nature and disciplining, and between general education and social usefulness.

Teacher educators are not expected to only produce teachers to fill vacancies at the lower levels such as in primary and secondary schools; they have a duty to prepare students to become competent education officials in the future, officials who will be able to govern, manage and lead the education system with policies and decision-making based on professional pedagogical insight. The fact that the South African school system has now been ‘managed’ to levels of inefficiency and doubtful standards is a wake-up call for all teacher education institutions in South Africa. The evidence seems to suggest that teacher educators have so far failed in their duty to provide officials and decision-makers with the required pedagogical insight and competences.

- 
- 4 The argument in this article tends to alternate between higher and tertiary education. This is because teacher training or education is a function of tertiary or higher education, whereas the products of this training/education (i.e. the educators, teachers) typically ply their profession in the primary or secondary education system. Those educators who do not deviate into the tertiary system tend to move up the promotional ladder in the secondary system and can become senior managers.
- 5 This statement is generally or generically true of teacher education wherever it occurs or is presented. The statement accrues deeper and more profound meaning if reinterpreted from a particular life- and worldview. Time and space constraints prevent us from invoking all

The question that we address is: What should teacher educators at institutions of higher education concentrate on for the long(er) term in teacher education? What practical knowledge, skills, attitude and competences should their students acquire to ensure that they will be effective managers of education once they get promoted to such posts (e.g. those of principal, inspector, department official, director-general)?

The authors approach this problem from a Dutch-South African vantage point, i.e. from the vantage point of both a developed and a developing country. The problem remains essentially the same for both. In both developing and developed education systems, senior managers with the required competences and professional pedagogical insight should be produced, a process that commences with initial teacher education. We shall attempt to provide certain guidelines for attaining this ideal. The guidelines will have to be reinterpreted by teacher educators to make them relevant for their own circumstances, including how they see the future in general, but specifically the future and role of teachers, educational managers and leaders in their particular education system.

The authors begin the discussion by reflecting on terminology, and then advance arguments why the authors consider education as a professional practice. The authors then argue that education is a normative practice in which certain values, virtues and competences have to be realised. The

---

the perspectives flowing from, for example, a reformational theory of teacher education. Teacher education from a reformational perspective centres around a Biblical understanding of the office, the power and authority of the educator, of the purpose and aims of education, methodology and learning content, to mention only some aspects. More detailed expositions can be found in Fowler (1991), Fowler, Van Brummelen and Van Dyk (1993), Stoker and Gerber (1997), and Henning and Van der Walt (2000).

- 6 This process should obviously also include contemplating the process of teacher education from the vantage point of one's personal life- and worldview. A worldview, according to Van der Walt (1994: 39), is an integrated, interpretive set of confessional perspectives on reality which underlies, shapes, motivates and gives direction and meaning to human activity, in this case the business of teacher education. Reformational teacher educators therefore tend to view their work in terms of their relationship with God (responsibility, accountability, stewardship), their fellow human beings (brother- and sisterhood, caring, guiding, unfolding, equipping, enabling, ethical relationships), creation (cultivating, subjecting, subduing, understanding, using responsibly, stewardship, caring), and themselves (caring, loving, self-value). Reformational teacher education, like all other forms of teacher education, is inspired and driven by a dynamic set of 'thickened' values. 'Thickening' refers to the process of interpreting a value in terms of personal religious and spiritual understanding and experience. According to Zecha (2007: 55-59), a 'thin' value is only the name of a value. 'Social justice', for example, is only the name of the value. What we in fact wish to attain with this value depends on how we 'thicken' it on the basis of our personal religious and life-view convictions. By actualising a 'thin' value, a person creates a 'thick' value, i.e. one which according to Zecha (2007: 55) is 'a piece of life-furthering or life-supporting means'.

authors trust that they will succeed in making the point that if teacher education were conducted along the lines that we develop here, the authors can confidently expect the products of our teacher education programmes to be (come) responsible, insightful and competent decision-makers as education managers, also in future senior positions. While the authors contrive to present a case that would be valid in any teacher education practice, the authors also make extensive use of endnotes to show that teacher education in South Africa (as elsewhere) does not occur in a cultural, political and life-conceptual void.

## 2. Conceptual framework

### 2.1 The terms ‘professional educator’, ‘teacher’, ‘learner’, ‘student’

In Dutch and Afrikaans, different words can be used for education in the broader sense (Dutch and Afrikaans *opvoeding*) and education in the more restricted sense of teaching (Dutch *onderwijs*; Afrikaans *onderwys*). A similar distinction can be made in German between *Erziehung* (education in the broadest sense) and *Unterricht* or *Bildung* (education in the sense of teaching). In English, the word ‘education’ tends to be used for both meanings (see ‘educate’ in Sinclair, 1999:454). In order to avoid confusion, the terms ‘teach’ and ‘teaching’ will be used for referring to the professional work of an educator involved in schooling, which refers to “the education you receive at school” (Wehmeier, 2002:1051). The focus here is not on educators in general, including parents, but rather on professional educators in the context of schooling, in other words professional teachers. The authors agree with the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (2005:6) that we have to “retrieve the word ‘teaching’, and understand it as the practice of organizing systematic learning”. The authors will therefore henceforth refer to professional school educators as ‘teachers’.

In most education systems, the term ‘student’ is used to refer to those who attend school. In South Africa, however, the term ‘learner’ has enjoyed the widest use since 1994, mainly because of its use in official documentation. ‘Student’ and ‘learner’ are synonymous in this discussion.

### 2.2 The term ‘practice’

The word ‘practice’ has at least six different meanings or applications, one of which is the exercise of a profession, and another the exercise of a skill or activity through repetition. It is derived from Latin *practicare* (to practise), which in turn is derived from Greek *praktike* (practical work), the root of which is *prattein* (to do) (Sinclair, 1999: 1162).

In Dutch parlance, the term ‘practice’ used to refer to the contact over the gangplank between sailors after having being quarantined on their ship, and the people on land. The meaning of the term ‘*practica*’ (practice), originally used for the restoration of contact between the sailors and the people on land, has since been broadened to cover also the transition between, for instance, students’ training period and their entry into a profession (Jochensen *et al.*, 2006:7). In the process, the term ‘practice’ has acquired several secondary applications, such as in the expression ‘practice comes after theory’.

The professional education or training of for instance teachers usually has a practical component. Teacher education, like the training for most professions, is not restricted to theory or book learning but is also the mastery of and introduction to competences and skills associated with the profession that have developed over a period of time. The prospective teachers learn to master the secrets, values, traditions and competences of the trade, among others by practising some of them under the watchful eyes of mentors and by observing experienced practitioners plying their trade.

Professions find their roots in their practices, but practices change. From time to time, new ethical considerations come into contention. Because of changes in the environment, practitioners are forced to reflect about their practices and the challenges they have to contend with. They have to constantly position themselves in the different contexts in which they ply their trade. This has to be done from the vantage point of their life- and worldviews.

### **2.3 MacIntyre’s concept of ‘practice’**

The authors take their point of departure in Alisdair MacIntyre’s definition of ‘practice’: “By a practice I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the goods and ends involved, are systematically extended” (MacIntyre, 1984:187). Each practice has its own standards of excellence by means of which it can be determined whether a person is a good practitioner or not. Each is also driven by the ideal of growing in quality and in realising its goals and values. Practitioners do not only want to become good professionals; they also wish their practices to be effective and meaningful.

MacIntyre’s broad definition of ‘practice’ forms the basis of a normative practice model. Each practice has a certain tradition, is a cooperative activity, and is based on the norms, values and virtues characteristic of the

specific practice. MacIntyre's (1984:181-203) view of practice should be seen in the context of his ethics. According to his virtue ethics, the emphasis is on the attitude of a person and not on the results of his or her actions. This is an important insight: when we ask what should be striven for in educational practice, the emphasis is on the person and his or her actions as a teacher, and not so much on the results of his or her actions. The work of a teacher should exude a certain degree of virtuousness.

A practice, according to MacIntyre's definition, is a complex social activity, such as we typically find in a profession. Football is an example of a complex social activity or practice. Being able to kick a ball is not sufficient; the ability to play the total game is required. The ability to draw a house is similarly not a practice; the architect's ability to design a house based on technical knowledge and skill is a practice. Being a professional teacher is similarly a complex social activity, and therefore a practice.

#### ***2.4 Practices characterised by tradition, values, excellence and the application of rules***

Each practice is characterised, according to MacIntyre (1984:194), by its own specific traditions and customs, internal and external values (MacIntyre, 1984:190), criteria or standards of excellence (also see Jochemsen, Glas & Hoogland, 1997:69) and rules. During the education of a prospective teacher he or she has to be inducted into the long tradition behind teaching and schooling. A teacher entering the profession should understand its codes, the meanings of specific actions and the importance of reckoning with the school as a total institution. "To enter into a practice is to enter into a relationship not only with its contemporary practitioners, but also with those who have preceded us in the practice, particularly those whose achievements extended the reach of the practice to its present point."<sup>7</sup> (MacIntyre, 1984:194.)

Internal values are those inherent in an activity (such as the virtuosic playing of the violin), and external values are the effects of realising internal values (such as winning a prize for playing the violin) (MacIntyre,

---

7 The fact that the South African primary and secondary education system has been managed to the point of collapse can therefore be interpreted as counter-historical (see footnote 2). Those responsible for managing the system in the last few decades have not built on the achievements of the past. It is important, also, to note that a substantial part of the system had already been scurrilously neglected by pre-1994 apartheid governments, especially since 1948 when the National Party took power. The South African primary and secondary education system is still suffering from the neglect of the schools in the politically and economically deprived non-white areas (so-called Bantustans). It is clear that also the pre-1994 education managers did not build on Occidental and Oriental achievements as far as education, particularly teacher education, is concerned.

1984:190). Internal values are more important since they point to the intrinsic meaning and purpose of the practice, of which teaching is an example. According to Jochemsen, Glas and Hoogland (1997:68), the internal goods or values of a practice refer to its ‘destination’. The ‘destination’ of a practice embodies its goals as well as the actions to attain them. Teacher educators educate prospective teachers with the aim of helping them understand and reach the ‘destination’ of the teaching profession (to be discussed in more detail below).

Human actions and activities can be judged by applying quality criteria or standards of excellence. To give form to a practice, one has to first formulate the rules that govern it, and these rules can be used as criteria for assessing the performance of a practitioner. A practitioner, for instance a teacher, who performs according to the rules can be adjudged competent, say Jochemse *et al.* (1997:69). An excellent teacher is one who is competent in following both the explicit and implied/implicit instructions of the teaching profession, and in contributing towards realising its internal values or goods. Competences define the areas in which an educator ought to achieve excellence. For instance, he/she can be regarded as competent if he/she succeeds in being highly responsive towards her learners, or in providing appropriate guidance to them. Competences reflect the key or core areas of the practice. Experience has taught, however, that excellent teachers perform some of these key actions instinctively, without being able to actually say what they are doing. They possess the ‘know-how’ without necessarily ‘knowing that ...’<sup>8</sup>. This can be observed where a mentor leads by example without necessarily being able to attach technical labels to the actions.

### **3. Is professional education (teaching) indeed a practice?**

In the years after the publication of his book *After virtue* (1984), MacIntyre did not explicitly attend to teaching as a practice. It therefore came as somewhat of a surprise when he opined in the course of a discussion in the *Journal of philosophy of education* (2002-2003) that it could *not* be regarded as a practice.

His opinion seems to have risen from concerns about the quality of teaching. According to him (see his dialogue with Dunne in MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002:9), teaching seems to depend on knowledge external to itself, such as that supplied by other disciplines or practices. It prepares novices to enter practices; “teaching itself is not a practice, but a set of skills and

---

8 This might be one of the key problems in the education system in South Africa. Many teachers feel uncomfortable with their own understanding and mastery of outcomes based education. Even some managers are not *au courant* themselves with the demands of this system introduced by the Department of Education in 1996.



habits put to the service of a variety of practices” (MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002:5). Teaching is based only on external values; it has no internal values or goods: it always has a purpose external to itself, MacIntyre contended.

Although Dunne (in: MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002; Dunne, 2003) and Noddings (2003) do not agree with MacIntyre’s view, they concede that there is reason for concern about the quality of teaching. They argue, on the other hand, that teaching can indeed be regarded as a practice in its own right by applying MacIntyre’s own criteria to it (as the authors have done in the previous section of this article). They base their view on three arguments that also cast light on what teacher education should aim at and focus on.

According to Dunne (in his dialogue with MacIntyre, cf. MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002:6), teaching is a practice because it has its own internal goods or values, *viz.* that teachers have to interest the learners in their subject. Inspiring such interest is inherent in teaching. By creating learner interest in her subject, the teacher creates links with the different practices for which she prepares (educates) the learner. Dunne (2003:355) also argues that, apart from caring for the subject, teachers also care for the learner/student. This is achieved by helping learners master the knowledge and learning content, in the process helping them acquire the basic knowledge they will need as future adults. Teachers do not, however, only focus on the mastery of knowledge but also on the well-being of the learners as future adults. The goods of skill and understanding and the goods of individuals are the internal goods or values of teaching as a practice in its own right (Dunne, 2003:356). In Dunne’s opinion, MacIntyre paradoxically seems on the one hand to defend the richness of teaching while on the other narrowing its scope by emphasising learning content and overlooking its total process character.

The second argument in favour of teaching as a practice in its own right, according to Dunne (MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002:7-8), is that it is, in MacIntyre’s own words, a complex form of socially established cooperative human activity. As such, it complies with all the criteria for a practice as formulated by MacIntyre himself. Teachers are fully involved in their practice, to such an extent that they have to reflect from time to time on how to relate the good of teaching to other goods in their own lives and more narrowly, in their intellectual lives (MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002: 8). Being a teacher, in other words, is a way of life; there is a close relationship between how one lives one’s life in general and how one practices one’s profession as a teacher. For example, a teacher cannot read a newspaper without also reflecting about what about the news he/she should share with his/her students/learners.

The third argument in favour of teaching as a practice revolves around the perceived needs of the learners. Noddings (2003:*passim*) develops this

argument in detail. Teaching, according to her, should be structured around the perceived needs of the learners, and this can be done only on the basis of prolonged engagement with the learners. There is a close link in teaching between goal and means (which is a characteristic feature of a practice, according to Noddings). The aim of teaching is the total development of the learner, and the means to achieve this is a close relationship between teacher and learner (Noddings, 2003:243). The mastery of learning content is not the final aim of teaching. Effective teachers always seek to discover the specific needs and interests of their learners and try to adapt their teaching to the perceived needs and interests. In some cases, the subject matter is put aside completely in the interest of helping the learners understand issues central to everyday life. A teacher is, therefore, not in the first place an expert in a particular subject such as mathematics or languages but rather a professional educator who serves the interests of education (i.e. someone who guides, equips, unfolds and enables those in need of such guidance et cetera).

#### 4. Teaching as a normative practice

Based on the arguments of Dunne and Noddings as well as on the fact that the authors themselves succeeded in applying MacIntyre's criteria for a practice to teaching, the authors conclude that teaching is indeed a practice in its own right.<sup>9</sup> This means, according to the normative practice model, that it is a complex and socially embedded human activity, that being a teacher is a way of life, and that it has a set of unique internal goods or values. In this section, the authors shall concentrate on the latter because, as the authors have seen from Dunne's and Noddings' arguments, they form the core of a practice.

What can be regarded as the foundational value of teaching, in other words what is typical of the profession? An analysis of teaching reveals *asymmetry* and the *initiating activity* of the teacher as its fundamental features. Teaching is always characterised by some degree of asymmetry between teacher and learner. Learners depend on their teacher to help and guide them in mastering knowledge, information and skills, and to provide an appropriate learning climate for doing so (see Blomberg, 2005:*passim*). As will be explained below, the guidance provided by the teacher should contribute towards the moulding of the learner. The educator initiates activities towards this end. Examples of such initiating activity is the creation of an appropriate learning

---

9 It has to be kept in mind that the main focus of this discussion is on teacher education. This discussion of teaching as a profession is unavoidable for showing what is expected of teacher educators at the tertiary level. In brief: teacher educators cannot educate prospective teachers, and prospective teachers cannot understand what the future holds for them, if all of them did not have insight into the essence of the teaching profession.

environment and the selection of appropriate learning content.

What, on the other hand, can be regarded as the final added value of teaching apart from aiming at external values such as a good examination pass rate or preparation for a future job? An analysis of teaching points to the fact that *moulding of the learner* is the central or qualifying internal value of teaching (Dutch and Afrikaans: *vorming*; German: *Bildung*). The purpose of teaching is the moulding of learners by those called to the task (Kohnstamm, 1951:107). The teacher has to involve all the available actors and factors, including societal influences in the process of moulding his/her learners (Roeleveld, 2006:*passim*). The moulding of the learner refers to the unfolding of the potential of the learner as well as to the learner's appropriation of aspects of the surrounding culture and other practices. It also refers to making reality more accessible to the learner (Van Woudenberg, 1992:92). The learner is helped to understand both nature and culture and their inherent potential, and to participate in their further unfolding. It is aimed at helping the learner become a relatively independently functioning agent in different social contexts. Moulding, in MacIntyre's phraseology, concerns both the development of the goods of skills and understanding and the goods of individuals.

The other values and norms that come into play in teaching, such as the educator's juridical responsibility towards his/her superiors and the parents of the learners, his/her psychological awareness of the learners' stages of development, their desires, passions (Hargreaves, 1995: 21, 27-28), interests, well-being and their need for security, care and trust and for meaningful relationships (Noddings, 2003: 247, 249, 251), his/her sociological insight into group dynamics, his/her economic handling of a budget, his/her analytical efforts to activate the learners' cognitive abilities, his/her efforts to make learning materials accessible, to create learning contexts and meaningful encounters with other learners and reality (Kalkman, 2005:*passim*), and so on, are all framed by these foundational and qualifying values of the profession. All other values attain meaning only in the context of asymmetry and teacher initiative as well as the aim of moulding the learner.

## 5. Competences and values redefined as virtues

Virtues are central to MacIntyre's virtue ethics and normative practice model. According to this model, each value internal to a practice such as a profession can be seen as a virtue. In contrast to the Greek word *poiësis* that refers to aims and values beyond the practice, *praxis* refers to activities related to the internal values and goals of the practice itself (Van Tongeren, 2004:20-21). In the case of teaching, *praxis* activities all relate to the qualifying value of moulding the learners.

A teacher needs certain competences in order to attain the internal goods or values of his/her profession. Based on his comparison between

competences and virtues, Van Tongeren (2004:22; 2005:*passim*; 2006:*passim*) concludes that competences can also be regarded as virtues needed to practise a profession (Van Tongeren, 2004:57). A virtue is an attitude that flows from one's choices which in turn predisposes one towards making further good choices. In a self-reinforcing process, a virtue predisposes one to make excellent choices, and the resultant virtue leads to further good choices.

Competences play a key role in teacher education (see RSA, 2005:30-31; RSA, 2000:10; RSA, 2007:3). In the South African system, competences have been subsumed under the outcomes for the different levels of education, i.e. that which is regarded as essential at a particular level for all learners to do successfully at the end of their learning experiences (Spady, 1994:1). The exit level outcomes for teacher education embrace the seven roles and associated competences of a competent teacher (RSA, 2000:12-14). These are the roles of learning mediator; interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials; leader, administrator and manager; scholar, researcher and lifelong learner; community, citizenship and pastoral role; assessor and learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist. The seven roles can be broken down into three competences: practical, foundational and reflexive (RSA, 2000: 14).<sup>10</sup> According to a virtue ethics and normative practice model, these outcomes (competences) can all be seen as self-reinforcing virtues, and as such have to be cultivated in the process of teacher education. As will now be argued, each of these roles and competences acquires more depth of meaning if also approached from a reformational-educational perspective.

## 6. Implications for teacher education

What should teacher education as a tertiary education activity focus on to ensure competent, efficient and pedagogically insightful decision-making at all levels, including later on in the higher echelons of departments of education (role three above, as well as the reflexive competence/virtue)? What competences/virtues should be developed and brought home to prospective teachers to ensure this? How and to what extent can these perspectives also be enhanced with a depth-perspective on the basis of a reformational/ Biblical view of education? The following perspectives that surfaced in the discussion so far can serve as answers to these questions.

---

<sup>10</sup> A comparison with the Netherlands is interesting. Since 2006, law requires that prospective teachers be educated for seven competences: interpersonal, pedagogical and organizational; subject matter and teaching method; dealing with students, colleagues, the working environment and the self (*Stichting Beroepsbekwaamheden Leraren* - SBL, 2004).

Teacher educators first of all have to concentrate on reaching the norms and standards set by the education authorities. In the South African system, for instance, teacher education programmes should help prospective teachers master the seven roles and three competences mentioned above.<sup>11</sup> Mastery of these roles and competences will ensure that new teachers become truly reflexive professionals, a competence that will serve them well when they become senior leaders, administrators and managers later in their careers (role 3 of the teacher, mentioned above). However, adherence to these seven roles and three competencies as prescribed is not in itself sufficient for teacher education from a reformational point of view. Because teaching and schooling in South Africa has effectively been secularised (in the sense that both the Christian life-view in general and the church in particular have lost practically all their influence in the public realm), it is important for Christian teachers as well as for teacher educators (i.e. at the tertiary level) – also those working in the public sector (public or state schools) – to understand that mastery of the seven roles and of the three competences, though generically important in themselves, are mere stepping-stones towards answering a Christian teacher's calling to serve God and His Kingdom (i.e. to love and serve both God and the fellow human being). A teacher who has mastered the seven roles and three competencies has not yet been adequately prepared for the teaching profession; he or she should also be 'trained' to hear the voice of God calling him/her to serve Him and His Kingdom as well as the learners, the other teachers as well as the education system, and to respond appropriately to this call. Discipleship of Jesus Christ is to follow – responsibly and accountably – the voice of Jesus Christ. A Christian teacher should be educated to obey Biblically-founded norms and values; such values possess significantly more life-view depth and significance than the above-mentioned secular and 'thin' (i.e. poor in terms of life-view content) norms and standards for teacher education as prescribed by a department of education.

In the course of helping prospective teachers master their roles and competences, teacher educators or 'trainers', including those working from a reformational perspective, should approach competences as virtues that have to be attained in an existing practice. This implies that they should help their students understand and master insights such as the following:

- According to a reformational approach, the (prospective) teacher's acquisition of virtues involves more than simply transposing generic

---

11. In the Dutch system, prospective teachers should be equipped to master the competences outlined in publications of the Association for the Professional Qualities of Teachers (the SBL referred to above; for a critical assessment of competency learning in the Netherlands (see De Mynck & Roeleveld, 2005).

competences into professional virtues. A Christian teacher has to be guided to find virtue in, for instance, the Biblical injunction to love God above all, and the fellow human as much as the self. The mastery of competencies to such an extent that they become virtues with reformational life-view content is a prerequisite for professional teaching. Professional virtues therefore require (Christian) life-view grounding.

- Students (prospective teachers) have to understand that professions find their roots in their practices, but that practices change and new ethical considerations come into contention. They will have to constantly reflect about their practices and the concomitant challenges, and they should be able to effectively and thoughtfully position themselves in the different contexts in which they are expected to ply their trade. One of the challenges that South African teachers face is their personal mastery of the tenets and practices of outcomes based education. A Christian teacher should be 'trained' to bear in mind that mastery of the tenets and practices of a particular teaching-learning system only serves as a means to achieving a more distant goal, namely of educating the learners, i.e. equipping, leading and unfolding them to become optimally functioning members of adult society (where applicable, well-functioning members of the Christian community). Ethical relationships should be developed on the basis of loving care of the other person, as Stoker (1970:228) so appositely indicated a few decades ago.

- Students should also be guided to understand that as future professionals they should strive for their practice to be effective and meaningful. They should realise that in the practice of a teacher the emphasis is on his/her own personal virtues and actions as an educator, and not so much on the results of his/her actions. They also have to be mindful of the fact that 'effectiveness, significance and personal virtues' acquire more depth in meaning in a Biblical perspective. Christian teachers, including those plying their trade in the public/state sector, will understand that, for instance, effectiveness entails more than merely reaching secular objectives; it also involves achieving what one has been called by God to do in the profession, namely to educate (lead, guide, equip, discipline) learners to listen to the voice of Jesus Christ and to obediently follow His lead. This applies to every one of the norms relevant to the context of teacher education.

- Students, as prospective teachers, should be inducted into the long tradition behind teaching and schooling. A teacher entering the profession should understand its codes, the meanings of specific actions and the importance of dealing with the school as a total institution. The novice enters into a relationship not only with contemporary practitioners, but also with those who have preceded him or her in the practice, particularly those whose achievements helped develop the practice to its present point. Students should be guided to realise that an excellent teacher is one who is competent in following both the explicit and implied/implicit

instructions of the teaching profession, and in contributing towards realising its internal values or goods. For a Christian teacher, induction into the profession involves more than familiarisation with the secrets of a secular profession, however; it also entails understanding the background of a Biblically justifiable approach to teaching and learning – and to education in the broadest sense.

- Teacher educators at institutions of higher learning should guide (educate or ‘train’) their students to understand both the foundational and the destination values of schooling, *viz.* respectively asymmetry and initialising, and moulding of the learners. Prospective teachers need to understand that all their competences (virtues) as educators as well as all other pedagogical values are framed by these core values of the profession. They should furthermore be equipped to involve all the available actors and factors, including societal influences, in the process of moulding the learners. They should also understand the need to interest the learners in their subject. The ‘moulding’ of the learners is no mechanical process, however, but rather one of lovingly unfolding and unlocking the God-given potential in the learners for the purpose of helping them serve God and their fellow human being. ‘Moulding’ moreover does not find its final destination in passing the highest school grade; it entails a continuous process of equipping the learner for service in the Kingdom of God.

- Prospective teachers have to learn to care for their own specialist subject as well as for their learners. They have, on the one hand, to learn to help their learners master prescribed knowledge and content, as well as what they would need as future adults. On the other hand, they should also focus on the well-being of their learners as future adults. Their approach should be based on the insight that both the goods (values) of skill and understanding and the goods of individuals are the internal goods or values of teaching as a practice. Teacher educators have to let their students understand that effective teachers always seek to discover the specific needs and interests of their learners and try to adapt their teaching to these perceived needs and interests. In some cases, the subject matter has to be put aside completely in the interest of helping the learners understand issues of everyday life. A teacher is, therefore, not in the first place an expert in a particular subject such as mathematics or languages but rather a professional educator who serves the interests of education (i.e. someone who guides, equips, unfolds and enables those in need of such guidance *et cetera*). Though mastery of a subject and focus on the needs and the requirements of learners are important for expert teachers, these virtues gain in significance and content when viewed by the Christian teacher as the means for answering the call of God’s Kingdom, of which the teacher has been called to be an obedient servant.

- All of these insights have to remain part and parcel of educators’ professional equipment, even when they have reached the top rungs of the

professional ladder as educational managers. This requirement is in our opinion a *sine qua non* for responsible decision-making at senior levels. Officials in the topmost rungs of the professional ladder will realise that they have been entrusted by God with great responsibility towards all those whose futures they hold in their hands, and finally to God. Every competence, virtue, personal ability referred to above should consequently remain an integral part of the professional equipment of the senior educator in a lofty position. His or her responsibilities to others and accountability to God are indeed far-reaching.

## 7. Concluding remarks

The authors found the virtue ethics and normative practice model of Alisdair MacIntyre useful for determining what prospective teachers should learn from their mentors during their own education as professional educators. MacIntyre's views inspired philosophers of education including ourselves, to reflect on what it means for a teacher to become a true professional, one that will be able to take pedagogically viable and justifiable decisions – also as a senior decision-maker later in his/her career.

Teacher education will gain qualitatively by looking at competences and values as virtues that need to be brought home to the students in the course of teacher education. Every prospective teacher should be equipped with those virtues, since they are the core qualities of a true professional. One example of such a core virtue is the ability of a teacher to effectively integrate the knowledge, skills and the professional attitude associated with the profession. These core qualities or virtues serve as the starting point from where the novice teacher can begin developing into a fully fledged authentic professional educator and future decision-maker whose decisions will always be pedagogically sound and justifiable. All of these tasks, duties, virtues, as well as the responsibility and accountability of a senior professional educator and decision-maker acquire greater depth of meaning if looked at from a reformatational point of view. The task of the (senior) Christian teacher-educator is indeed both demanding and fulfilling.

## Bibliography

- BLOMBERG, D. 2005. Teachers: the living curriculum. Paper presented at the international symposium of the Association for reformatational philosophy, Hoeven, The Netherlands. August.
- DE MUYNCK, A. & ROELEVELD, M.E. 2005. *Competentiegericht leren, opleiden en begeleiden*. (Learning, education and guiding competencies.) Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn Motief.
- DUNNE, J. 2003. Arguing for teaching as a practice: a reply to Alisdair MacIntyre. *Journal of philosophy of education*, 37(2):353-369.



- FOWLER, S. 1991. *A Christian voice among students and scholars*. Potchefstroom: IRS.
- FOWLER, S., VAN BRUMMELEN, H.W. & VAN DYK, J. 1993. *Christian schooling: Education for freedom*. Potchefstroom: IRS.
- GOODLAD, J. 1984. *A place called school. Prospects for the future*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- HARGREAVES, A. 1995. Development and desire. A postmodern perspective. In: Guskey, T.R. & Huberman, M., *Professional development in education: new paradigms and practices*. New York: Teachers College Press. 9-34.
- HENNING, O.A. & VAN DER WALT, J.L. 2000. Kurrikulum 2005: Christelik-opvoedkundige perspektiewe. *Tydskrif vir Christelike wetenskap*, 35. Spesiale Uitgawe. Bloemfontein: Die Vereniging vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys.
- HELSPER, W. 2006. Pädagogisches Handeln in den Antinomien der Moderne. (Acting pedagogically in the context of the antinomies of modern times.) In: Krüger, H. & Helsper, W. (Eds.), *Einführung in Grundbegriffe und Grundfragen der Erziehungswissenschaft*. Opladen: Barbara Budrich.
- JOICHEMSEN, H., KUIPER, R. & DE MUYNCK, A. 2006. *Een theorie over praktijken*. (A theory about practices.) Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn Motief.
- JOICHEMSEN, H., GLAS, G. & HOOGLAND, J. 1997. De normatiewe struktuur van de mediese praktijk. (The normative structure of medical practice.) In: Jochemsen, H. & Glas, G., *Verantwoord medisch handelen. Proeve van een christelike mediese etiek*. Buijten en Schipperheijn: Amsterdam.
- KALKMAN, B. 2005. De betekenis van het genetiese onderwys by Martin Wagenschein. (The meaning of genetic education in Martin Wagenstein's thinking.) In: Kalkman, B., Veldman, J., Kool, R.F. & Reijnoudt, W. (Eds.), *Onderwijskunst. Handboek voor exemplarisch onderwys*. 20-27.
- KOHNSTAMM, P.H. A. 1951. Pedagogiek, personalisme en wijsbegeerte der wetsidee. (Pedagogics, personalism and the philosophy of the cosmiconomic idea.) In: *Feestbundel prof. dr. J. Waterink 1926 - 1951*. Amsterdam.
- LAGERWEIJ, N. & LAGERWEIJ-VOOGT, J. 2005. *Anders kijken: de dynamiek van een eeuw onderwijsverandering*. (Looking differently at things: the dynamics of a century of educational change.) Antwerpen: Garant.
- LARRABEE, D.F. 1998. Educational researchers: Living with a lesser form of knowledge. *Educational researcher*, 27(8):4-12.
- MACINTYRE, A. & DUNNE, J. 2002. Alisdair MacIntyre on education: In dialogue with Joseph Dunne. *Journal of philosophy of education*, 36(1):2002.
- MACINTYRE, A. 1984. *After virtue. A study in moral theory*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.
- MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON TEACHER EDUCATION. 2005. see RSA 2005.
- NODDINGS, N. 2003. Is teaching a practice? *Journal of philosophy of education*, 37(2):241-251.
- MARAIS, C.W. 2005. Safety and security in South Africa. *Statistics for 2005*, 2:241-251. *Crime research in South Africa*, 3(3).
- OLIVIER, R. 2007. Kommer oor graad 11 druipele. (Concern about those who failed grade 11.) *Die Burger*, Jan., 29:3.
- RADEMEYER, A. 2006. Kenner pleit dat SA skole beter presteer. (Expert pleads that schools should do better.) *Die Burger*, Des., 1:7.
- RADEMEYER, A. 2006b. Vreemde onderwys striem jeug. (Unfamiliar education difficult for young people.) *Die Burger*, Des., 27:2.

- ROELEVELD, M.E. 2006. Wat is vorming? (What is moulding?) In: De Muynck, A. & Vos, P.H., *Vorming en christelijk onderwijs*. Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn Motief.
- RSA. 2000. National Education Policy Act, 1996: Norms and standards for educators. Pretoria: Department of Education. Government Gazette no. 20844, vol. 415. 4 February.
- RSA. 2005. A National Framework for Teacher Education in South Africa. Pretoria: Department of Education.
- RSA. 2007. National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa. *Government gazette*, 502(29832). Pretoria: Department of Education. 26 April.
- SAPA. 2007. Failed grade 11 pupils should not be promoted. *The Herald*, Feb., 13:2.
- SINCLAIR, J.M. 1999. *Collins concise dictionary*. Glasgow: HarperCollins.
- SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION. See SAPA.
- SPADY, W.G. 1994. *Outcome-based education: Critical issues and answers*. American Association of School Administrators.
- STICHTING BEROEPSBEKWAAMHEID LERAREN (SBL). 2004. *In bekwame handen. Bekwaamheidseisen voor leraren*. <http://www.lerarenweb.nl/lerarenweb-english.html>
- STOKER, H.G. 1970. *Oorsprong en Rigting*. Kaapstad: Tafelberg.
- STOKER, P.H. & GERBER, J.M. 1997. *Voed hulle op. Grondslae vir Bybelgefundeerde primêre en sekondêre volksee skoolonderwys*. Bloemfontein: Die Vereniging vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys.
- VAN TONGEREN, P.J.M. 2004. *Deugdelijk leven. Een inleiding in de deugdethiek*. (Living virtuously: an introduction in virtue ethics.) Amsterdam: SUN.
- VAN TONGEREN, P.J.M. 2005. Competenties en relaties. (Competences and relationships.) In: Van Duyvenbode, P. (Red.), *Competent talent*. Den Haag: Socires/Federatie Christelijk BVE.
- VAN TONGEREN, P.J.M. 2006. Competenties en communicatie inzake waarden in het onderwijs. (Competences and communication with respect to values in education.) *Reflexief. Forum voor Katholiek onderwijs*, 5/1.
- VAN WOUDEBERG, R. 1992. *Gelovend denken. Inleiding tot de christelijke filosofie*. (Thinking according to faith: an introduction to Christian philosophy.) Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn.
- WEHMEIER, S. (Ed.). 2002. *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary*. Oxford: University Press.
- ZECHA, G. 2007. Opening the road to values education. In: Aspin, D.N. & Chapman, J.D. (Eds.). *Values education and lifelong learning. Principles, policies, programmes*. Dordrecht: Springer. 48-60.

**Key words:** teacher education, teaching, teaching profession, virtues, values, Alisdair McIntyre, practice