



**SACE**

South African Council for Educators

*Towards Excellence in Education*



**RESPECT**

**DIGNITY**

**QUALITY**

**INTERGRITY**

**TOLERANCE**

**RESPONSIBILITY**

**SERVICE-ORIENTED**

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

**TRANSPARENCY**

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## VISION

Inspire a credible teaching profession.

## MISSION

To register fit to practice educators and lecturers, promote their continuing development, and maintain the profession's professional teaching and teaching standards.





## FOREWORD BY SACE

It is an honor to bring this publication to the profession, we are excited as the South African Council for Educators to bring this resource to you and hope that you will find it informative and useful. We asked some of our educators to contribute to this newsletter and narrate their reflections of how they have navigated the teaching and learning environment during the pandemic. COVID-19 brought some fears, grief, threats, disillusionment and concerns in the education system and the teaching profession in particular. Consequently, these had a bearing on educators as a collective and individuals. Therefore, it was important for SACE to allow teachers to reflect on their experiences and the lessons they now carry. From Principals, Heads of Departments and teachers, their reflections are inspiring and give the public hope that the teaching profession is really in good hands. The innovative ways in which our teachers have ensured that teaching and learning continues despite the disruptions brought on by the pandemic, which further exposed the vast inequalities in our education system was proof that when one applies themselves and commits to finding a solution anything is possible. As Council we continue to advocate for the values which are and should be the footprint to conduct ourselves in the profession and so the article on Upholding Ethical Standards in the Teaching Profession is a reminder of how we should continuously carry ourselves in our work environments and personal lives in order to inspire a credible teaching profession.

We then end of by detailing the journey of the handbook on Teachers Safety and Security in South African Schools which started with the Teachers' Rights, Responsibilities and Safety programme. The completion of the handbook would not have been possible without the support from our esteemed teachers', the profession is really rich with you in it. Teachers' safety is of paramount importance for a number of reasons, including but not limited to the fact that; teachers not only provide academic knowledge, they also play an integral part in promoting social cohesiveness among learners. Thus, the handbook was much needed in the profession. The South African schooling environment is currently volatile, the inequalities in our education system are of great concern. Other factors which cause further disruption in our system is crime and violence which cause a great risk to the safety of learners and teachers. We are also currently faced with the COVID-19 Pandemic which has further put immense pressure on the already struggling schooling system.

We would like to thank each and every teacher who contributed to this publication and those who participated in the Teachers' Rights, Responsibilities and Safety programme. You really do inspire a credible teaching profession. Stay safe!

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS: TEACHERS' REFLECTIONS ON THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The following reflections were written by teachers on how their experience in the teaching profession equipped them to navigate through the pandemic despite the challenges faced in the teaching and learning environment.



**MS MOKHUDU MACHABA**  
**LIMPOPO**

*“The teaching fraternity has totally changed due to the pandemic which puts a lot of responsibility on us as teachers to adapt to the change and find ways to teach our learners the way they deserve to learn.”*

I actually never wanted to be a teacher due to the fact that when I was growing up, I could see the challenges my teachers were going through, from lack of resources to overcrowded classrooms, until teaching was my only hope since it was the profession I could afford to pursue. Funny how life is, I have now been in the profession for the past 18 years and it has become the most fulfilling part of my life.

Being a top ten finalist for the Global Teacher prize in 2020 also solidified the hard work I have put in over the years in the profession. I started as a temporary teacher in Limpopo in 2003 after not being able to find a teaching position for 5 years! During my years as a temporary teacher, computers were donated to the school and that's when my love and passion for ICT was stimulated. I participated in implementing ICT strategies to assist the school in administrative tasks. In 2009 there was a training for teachers on ICT in Mogodumo circuit and a few schools were sampled to do the training and desktops were donated to the school I worked in as it was one of the sampled schools. I attended the training during school holidays in April and June which was hosted by the Coza Cares Foundation. At the end of the training, I was nominated as one of the top ten ISPA Super Teacher finalists in 2009. We then attend a series of trainings and workshops about implementing ICT in the classroom. That year I became the runner-up receiving a laptop as a prize which assisted in preparing my classroom lessons.

The Coza Cares foundation continued to mentor and support us by giving us more trainings and sponsoring us in teacher development. I took the initiative very seriously and in 2011 I started implementing a project-based teaching by implementing the 21st century skills in my classroom using the White paper number 7 as a driving tool. Coza Cares foundation paid for us to attend the SchoolNet conference which was held in St. Johns college in 2011. While attending this conference I was challenged by the educational and digital divide I witnessed at that institution. I told myself something has to be done and so I started showcasing my learners work on every platform possible because I believed that they had to compete with their peers academically even if they are coming from under resourced schools and deep rural environments.

After attending the SchoolnetSA conference for the second time, I also received an opportunity to showcase my learners work on project-based teaching. I then enrolled myself on the Microsoft Partners in learning, presently called Microsoft Educator Center. I started doing online courses on how to approach ICT integration in the classroom. Then from 2014 I engaged in training my peers within my circuit (Mogodumo circuit) so as to extend the skills I had acquired from all the years I got exposed to using ICT in the classroom. In 2015 I secured a spot to the E2 Microsoft Global Educator Exchange after being selected as the Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert. At the E2 we were placed in groups from different countries and were given tasks to develop a Global lesson plan among other things, that will cater for all learners globally. My group comprised of teachers from the following countries: Germany, Czech Republic, Canada, Vietnam and myself from South Africa. The lesson that we developed managed to put us as a group at position 2 out of 43 groups on overall performance and our topic was "Everyday Hero" I was also selected to sit with the Microsoft CEO Mr. Satya Nadella to discuss challenges relating to the teaching profession from our countries and it was only 12 teachers from more than 300 who attended the E2. From then I started taking online courses on the Microsoft education platform and other relevant platforms that aimed to develop my ICT Capacity. I continued to train my peers moving from school to school within my province on how to integrate ICT into their Curriculum. When I look back now, my love for ICT and the experience I received over the years was preparing me for the pandemic, as I ensured that the pandemic does not stop my learners from continuing with their studies under lockdown restrictions. They were able to access their materials through a WhatsApp group we created, but I also created a blog and a YouTube channel where learners could access resources.

Now with the pandemic and the obvious digital divide in the country, it has propelled me to be a problem solver, to find solutions. I was inspired by the winner of the Global Teachers Prize in 2020 Mr. Ranjitshn Disale who decided to share his winnings with us, which was a generous act for the love for education. That has given me a challenge to do more than what I used to do for the education of the black child. The teaching fraternity has totally changed due to the pandemic which puts a lot of responsibility on us as teachers to adapt to the change and find ways to teach our learners the way they deserve to learn.



**MS THEMBI BUSISIWE NKOSI**  
**MPUMALANGA**

*“Covid-19 struck unexpectedly and amid all the uncertainty it had caused, we had to put on brave faces and be ready to lead when we all had to return to school.”*

New regulations were released on how schools should operate under lockdown regulations which led to us asking ourselves many questions. You see, there are unique challenges for the rural school. These challenges include large learner/teacher ratios, inadequate resources/lack of resources, and many more. It was easy to become overwhelmed when thinking about everything, until you start doing it practically.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated some changes in the schools' day-to-day management. I needed to equip myself first so that I can be in a good position to sharpen my team. I read about the virus and I attended virtual workshops because I understood that life at work would never be the same as before. The workshops assisted me greatly when schools reopened because I was fully loaded with information.

Another factor that we had to deal with, was managing fear. Being well-informed guards one from being overtaken by fear and uncertainty. So, I confidently conducted workshops to my staff members and prepared my teachers to further spread the knowledge by educating both the learners and parents about the Covid-19 pandemic. Educating the community made our work a lot easier.

In rural areas we are denied helpful information, training, and skills development (which are the basics for community and personal advancement, and the battle against COVID-19), because of the lack of resources like connectivity, electricity, technology, etc. Therefore, I organised and conducted workshops/trainings for parents on COVID-19 to enable them to help in combating the spread of the virus. It was a fulfilling experience to provide information that parents were longing for, and it helped a lot in reducing the level of fear and anxiety. Parents were seeing the confidence in my teachers during the course of the trainings and thus also gained confidence and they brought learners back to school without hesitation, knowing that their kids were safe. The parents' workshops afforded parents with an opportunity to come and visit the school to see how ready the school was to receive the learners; they were able to see how we improvised to enable hand-washing as it is a prerequisite for the prevention of Covid-19 since the school did not have enough running water at that time.

COMMUNITY



Time management is essential – the priority status of a task is what is critical when handling multiple roles, as now in schools we are managing the spread of COVID-19 in addition to the management areas we had before. I have learned to present my work-life conflict management tactics, such as establishing boundaries between work and family.

I realised that for me to remain relevant during this time of crisis, I need to become a life-long learner through knowledge acquisition programmes, such as reading and engaging in seminars and online courses. I became a strong reader of policies, especially the new ones that are relevant for the present situation. I have developed a circuit-based technical development network that will have a neutral support forum for women leaders to cope with the regular pressures and stresses that come from leading schools. I am a big fan of the idea that sharing and learning jointly appears to be a method of improving anyone's leadership.

Being the head of the school does not mean only managing and helping the school; it means being mindful of problems and always ready to tackle a variety of obstacles that might occur. I'm always striving to be a concrete example of courage regardless of negative circumstances. It is vital to make decisions about the school based on the best interests of learners, colleagues, parents, and other interested parties, not simply on authority. This allows for joint decision-making and problem solving that leaves enough room to move away from the more hierarchical leadership and to focus on finding the finest solution to the majority of matters in the interest of the greater good, especially during this time of crisis.

I also understand that my style of leadership affects the performance of the entire team. Therefore, I am always careful of the approach I choose in dealing with different situations which arise due to the challenges that are posed by the pandemic. I adopted inclusivity, generative practices, and accomplishment of goals that improve the state of people within the school. I am showcasing my ability to be more proactive, independent, and participatory in nature because the situation we are faced with requires everyone to be an active role-player. The present situation taught me to be mindful, fostering and community oriented since the school operates within a community and the pandemic is affecting the community as well. I personally strengthened my ways of supporting learners, teachers and all staff members during this time of uncertainty and this required me to deal with my fears first and appear to people as a strong leader.

During this time of Covid-19 I realised that skills such as collective intellect, social awareness, and empathic precision seem to emerge, although this is not exclusive; skills such as being compassionate, cautious and patient are crucial. This is the reason that drove me to undertake a research project where I investigate the impact of Covid-19 in rural primary schools in the female principals' perspective with the University of Johannesburg. The purpose of this study is to help me learn how colleagues navigate through the whole crisis, learn the challenges they face as leaders during the pandemic, learn about the strategies they put in place to ensure effective teaching and learning is taking place in their schools during the lockdown. I further want to understand how their leadership has been influenced during this time. I believe that the results that I will get will assist the entire education system in improving service delivery in rural schools.

Times like these of Covid-19 pandemic require a visionary leader that will keep focused to the goals of the school and always strive to be on top of every situation despite the circumstances while prioritising the safety of learners, teachers, members of support staff and parents towards the virus.





**MS LUCIA THULI SHUNGUBE**  
**MPUMALANGA**

*"I have learnt that one needs to be very committed and passionate in one's profession.  
The impact that teachers have is greater than we think."*

In 2009 I was appointed as Principal at Mbuzini Primary School, where I had been an educator since 1991. I was a “BBT” by then, meaning “Born Before Technology”. I am saying that because it was my first time to touch a mouse of a computer in that year. I then decided to develop myself professionally by doing a computer course for two years and became computer literate. I encouraged my educators who were also computer illiterate to do the same.

The school had a computer centre without computers. I then made partnership with an organisation and requested them to sponsor the school and was successful – the organisation bought 25 computers for the school. Educators and learners from Grade 3 were able to make use of the computers. So, it was easy for us to engage in our professional development activities. As a school we were able to be up to date and were also able to earn a target number of points every three years. As a leader I realised that other nearby schools were struggling as they did not have resources. I then asked the SGB to accommodate them every Thursday. We all came for an hour and engaged in collaborative learning and in that way, as far as CPTD is concerned, we were on top of our game.

As a passionate educator, it makes me feel sad the way things are happening these days. Due to the sudden disruption of normal teaching and learning as a result of the Corona virus (Covid-19) outbreak, schools have had to run online platforms to continue with lessons. I have seen that there are identified gaps, like the lack of resources and skills for both educators and learners who need to be capacitated to go digital. These challenges have made students move away from a physical class where a teacher can be able to teach and answer questions immediately, where a teacher can be able to read the body language and facial expressions of his or her students or learners, meaning now the personal touch and building of relationships is gone. This is sad to me.

I have learnt that one needs to be very committed and passionate in one’s profession. The impact that teachers are having is greater than we think. As a visionary leader, I wanted to get everyone on board with the school’s vision. I had to be confident and be approachable so that they can be able to be free around me. I have also learnt to ensure that I focus on what is always important rather than what is urgent in that school. I used to employ people who were more intelligent than myself so that I can learn from their personality and their learning styles, and in that way, I was achieving or yielding good results. to that of issuing out food parcels either to parents or learners coming to collect themselves.





## MR WANDA **MPISI** **KWAZULU-NATAL**

*“The outbreak of Covid-19 which forced us into remote teaching and learning may have ushered in the role of a parent from peripheral to a more central role in supporting the child in the future, with the school playing a facilitator role.”*

The outbreak of Covid-19 in our country and across the world compelled our national government to close schools for more than two months in 2020. These developments brought about in our school three main challenges which continue to persist even after easing of lockdown protocols by the government:

1. A need for learners to continue receiving education in the midst of national lockdown to prevent the spread of Covid-19
2. A need to do this responsibly to protect learners, teachers and staff from exposure to risk of infection
3. In line with government's programme of feeding learner's hot meal daily, and for our partners to continue to supply breakfast porridge, there was a need for learners from poor households to continue to benefit from these programmes while at home.

Our school prioritized key areas in supporting education and well-being of our learners. We identified Grade 1 and Grade 7 as two grades that needed urgent intervention especially in Mathematics and Languages of learning and teaching (English in grade 7 and IsiZulu in grade 1). Grade 1 had just started school and still grappling with basic foundational skills necessary for their academic development in subsequent grades. Grade 7 learners, this being their last year at primary school, were on the verge of starting their secondary school education with very little opportunity for content and skills gap remediation in subsequent grades.

Grade 1 and Grade 7 Language and Maths teachers started to develop worksheets which were going to be sent to learners via parents to complete at home. With the support of the school, teachers communicated with learners/parents through WhatsApp and local community Facebook group chats and even making direct phone calls to parents to collect work from school. Grade 7 Maths worksheets were also uploaded on these platforms for parents to guide their children. While these strategies only reached an average 50% response of targeted parents/learners initially, referrals by the same group helped in reaching a further 20% of targeted parents/learners. The purpose at this stage was to keep learners occupied with some meaningful work while at home.

While the schools were closed, the Department of Education directed schools to continue feeding learners from home. Our school responded by preparing hot meals and communicating through community structures (Ward committees and councillors) to have parents collect food from school every day. This strategy proved not to work effectively when compared to that of issuing out food parcels either to parents or learners coming to collect themselves.

As part of compliance with standard protocols for curbing the spread of Covid-19, when all grades started to phase in in August 2020, the school adopted a daily rotational model of learner attendance in the intermediate and senior phases and the bi-weekly model in the foundation phase. In terms of these, learners across all grades/divisions are divided into two groups: blue and green group. These groups then attend school on daily and weekly rotational basis as the case may be. This has proved to be a working strategy that we have followed even into the year 2021.

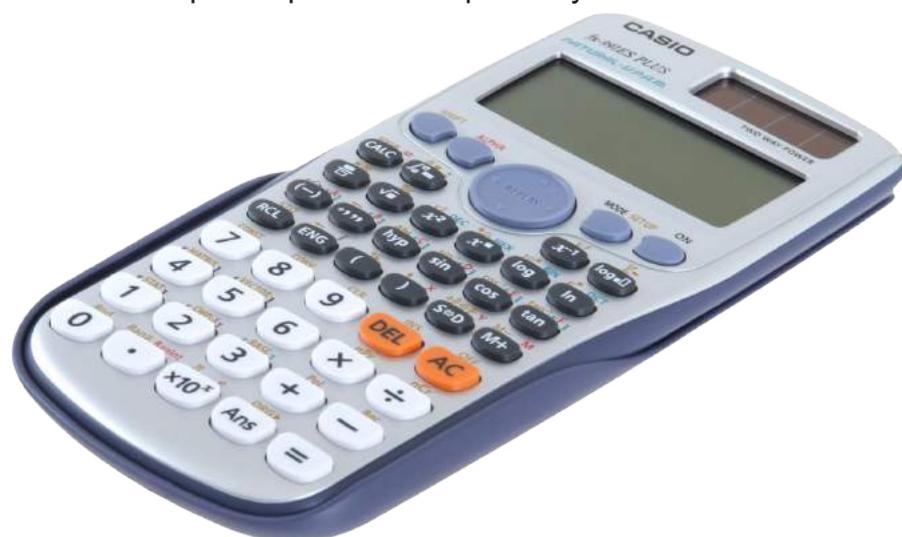
The challenges brought by leading and managing a school in the midst of a pandemic has presented me with many opportunities to develop my organisational and management skills. Key amongst these are effective communication, planning and problem-solving. Due to uncertain times, the Department of Education issues directives on various programs (e.g. protocols, policy amendments/initiatives, routines, etc) to schools almost on a daily basis. The suspension of all peripheral programs (e.g. extra-curricular) left management of Covid-19 protocols and curriculum delivery/teaching and learning program as only two parallel activities at the centre of a daily school life.

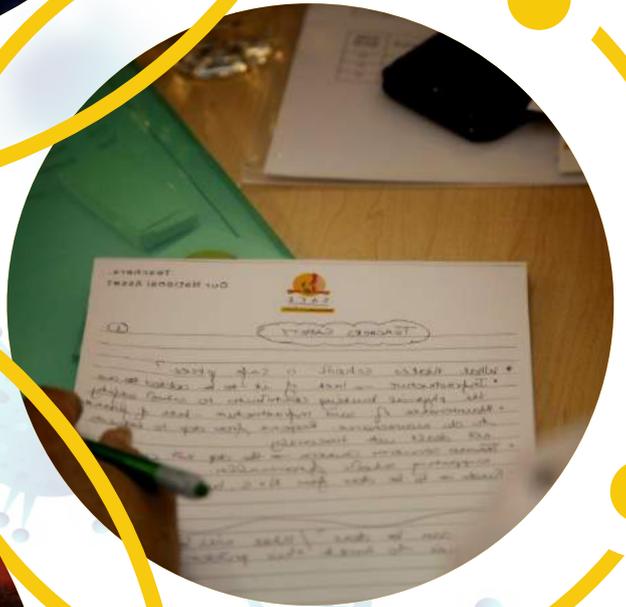
This places upon the principal a responsibility to interpret these directives, communicate them to role-players (e.g. SGB, SMT, educators, parents, etc) and lead all towards effective implementation in school. In the initial stages this proved very daunting because of anxieties and fears that teachers and parents, in the main, had. These anxieties were also fuelled by different messages coming from social media platforms, medical experts and teacher unions, among others. As a principal, this helped me develop my skills in managing conflicts and problem-solving.

The outbreak of Covid-19 which forced us into remote teaching and learning may have ushered in the role of a parent from peripheral to a more central role in supporting the child in the future, with the school playing a facilitator role. It will be interesting to see how education changes to accommodate the use of technologies to facilitate learning at home and bringing parents' and guardians' support of education of their children.

For many years the teacher has been at the centre of the education of the child. As a school, there is a huge challenge in communicating with parents for the purposes of educational support to learners and the school. This should be among key strategic goals for school management to consider in the future especially with the persistence of Covid-19 and advancement in technology in general that requires more independent learning by all our learners. This project revealed that, while the majority of our learners come from impoverished backgrounds, a large majority of households have at least access to one mobile phone, albeit with limited access to internet due to cost of data. The school can take advantage from this and enhance teacher-parent communication to facilitate learner education even in the future.

In terms of the SACE professional development system, all teachers must engage in continuous professional development to sharpen their expertise to effect classroom performance. The sudden need for remote learning brought about by the effects of Covid-19 has presented an ideal opportunity for all our teachers to sharpen their skills in using online educational resources, communicating with parents and even improving their skills in learning programme design. In my capacity as an ambassador of SACE, promoting the development of teachers is at the core of my ambassadorial work. This project has presented me an opportunity to assist our teachers and direct them towards SACE-endorsed programmes and approved providers that will enhance their development and help them accumulate professional development points as required by SACE.







## MS LOUISE **FULLARD** **MPUMALANGA**

*"...To teach with technology involves a lot of planning and preparation. A passionate teacher will be driven to get this done in order to meet our Z-generation on their level of technological expectation."*

Secondary school education is globally facing unmeasurable educational challenges due to the devastating impact of COVID-19 which resulted in undetermined periods of interrupted education where learners cannot attend schools. To ensure continuous teaching and learning at schools in South Africa, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) adopted a reconstruction approach that involves the promotion of online tuition for educators and learners.



A “Learning Management System” (LMS), according to Anjali (2021), improves education’s quality and quantity by providing an interface for learners where computer-based instructions and blended learning can take place. Furthermore, the LMS has basic management functionality as well as assignment grading and assessment options in the different courses which enable the educator to give proper personal feedback on results to learners. LMS is valuable for integrated online secondary school education to improve productivity.

The day that schools closed for lockdown in March 2020, our principal encouraged staff to attend a brief training session to utilise the LMS during lockdown. Due to the complexity of the LMS, I could only touch on some basic functionality to at least equip teachers to connect and work with their learners online. I continued my training by preparing training videos on different aspects and plug-ins of Moodle and publish it on our Moodle help desk. In the meantime, I had regular zoom meetings with Mr. Pule on the practicalities around the execution of this project on secondary school level. I also assisted Mr. Pule in designing a practical CAPS-aligned template for courses which could be utilised by any school and any subject as well as facilitating volunteer teachers to develop full online courses in their subjects. These projects are now available on the DBE website. Another method of mine was to train and equip my language department on regular zoom sessions throughout lockdown. I also assigned various activities to each of them to explore and encouraged them to prepare online training videos which we published on our Moodle site for other teachers.

Throughout lockdown, Bergvlam’s teachers had the opportunity to engage and maintain teaching and learning. Some teachers recorded their Zoom lesson sessions where learners actively participated in, and published it on their Moodle courses, others posted written assignments which needed to be uploaded when it was completed. The language department completed oral videos, which the learners had to record based on very specific instructions and uploaded the assignments on Moodle. Quizzes were also set as tests for some portfolio tasks which were opened at a specific timeslot and needed to be completed in a precise time. Teachers also engaged with their learners on the Moodle chatroom or WhatsApp groups and was actually 24/7 available to assist.

Lockdown Moodle functionality did not go without any challenges. We experienced a number of issues which were eventually all sorted out and could we learn from these experiences. Teachers began to know that when they design their activities, they should carefully choose the options in each activity available to ensure that learners have easy access to them. Also, the manner in which they published content on their courses effected the easy access to information. As administrator, I learned that many default settings on the platform needed to be adjusted for our school’s unique preferential style. Most of our settings are now perfectly in order although we still come across some interesting aspects that need adjustment.



When we partly returned to school in June 2020, I was given the opportunity to do refresher courses and properly train the teachers on utilising our school's Moodle platform. My language department formed part of my training structure where I assigned different subject departments to each and after I conducted the formal training sessions, they continued the small group sessions where they acted as Moodle mentors for them. This was a very effective strategy that allowed individuals to learn at their own pace and got comfortable with the LMS's functionality. Still, we were challenged. Learners quickly adjusted to the new integrated online education model whilst some individual teachers were still apathetic towards the system.

To ensure constant accessibility to the Moodle LMS platform for our learners, our school established a 'drive through' hotspot, where learners on their 'off-day' (due to 50% school capacity) could access the school's student internet at the bus stop and when they at school, they access the internet at various hotspot areas. This allows them to update the application and download all content to be embedded on their devices and as a result, learners can access their academic documents, audio, visual and assignment files offline.

Thereafter, it was noticeable that when more and more learners returned to school, that less teachers utilised the LMS actively. The default brick-and-mortar setting was a comfort zone for most educators which they preferred rather than to use the LMS as an integrated online education system which allows for 'blended learning' as well as the execution of a perfect 'flipped classroom'. As a teacher and an administrator, I pursued the quest to test and trial the effectiveness of the LMS during normal circumstances and not only as a survival mode of teaching and learning. The more I utilised the platform as a teacher and manager of various entities, the more I discovered and became aware of its value. Today, I am occupying a Moodle classroom for my subject as a full-integrated online education tool, where I present opportunity for my learners to fully engage in a blended learning flipped classroom set up. This way, my learners have the prospect to gain pre-knowledge about a topic before we engage in class discussion, which offers them the chance to participate with courage where after they extend their learning by completing various activities such as quizzes.

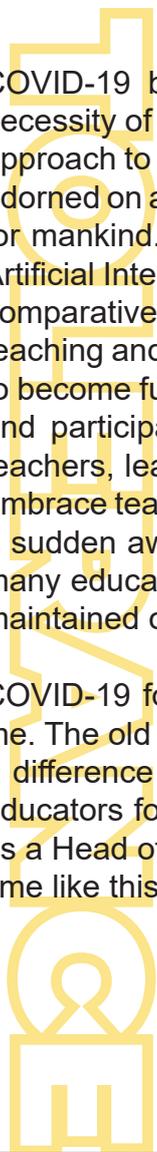
Of course, to teach with technology involves a lot of planning and preparation. A passionate teacher will be driven to get this done in order to meet our Z-generation on their level of technological expectation. Those learners who are not yet equipped to comfortably utilise technology, get the chance to learn and become knowledgeable to use it. As a result, we prepare global citizens who will eventually become global participants. Having said that, "our task is to provide an education for the kind of kids we have ... not the kind of kids we used to have ... or want to have ... or the kids that exist in our dreams." – M. K Utech. Therefore, as educationists, we have to learn, unlearn and relearn to be the best we can be at what we do and accommodate our 21st century Z-generation to be the best they can be.



Many educators in different social environments with different resources and facilities will have their own unique challenges to be able to adopt online integrated system options. For many it can become an excuse not to follow that discourse. One of my greatest motivators in life is the words of George Washington Carver, "Do what you can, with what you have and do it now!" This is a philosophy that I have adopted whilst realising that a 1000 km starts with one step. I would like to encourage educators on all levels to rather focus on what you have in your hand than to discard alternative or online integrated education options. I faced many challenges over a long time before I eventually got to this point of being able to engage in integrated online education.

COVID-19 brought an irreversible change in education globally. This pandemic reiterates the necessity of all schools, but especially secondary schools to consider a LMS platform as a futuristic approach to embrace the 4IR era and to counter crisis events such as the pandemic which suddenly adorned on all worldwide. Nothing will ever be the same as before 2020. History wrote a new chapter for mankind. The development of technology, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the internet were instantly pushed forward in time. In the framework of comparative and international education, for secondary schools to compete and survive as effective teaching and learning institutions in the future, schools must adopt paradigm shifts and revolutionise to become futuristic trends even in normal circumstances to prepare their learners as global citizens and participants. Through my pro-active 4IR approach/focus over years, I introduced equipped teachers, learners and myself for a time like this. We at our school were immediately equipped to embrace teaching and learning when a global crisis struck education. By default, COVID-19 brought a sudden awareness of the importance of online education. An educational survival mode forced many educators to reach out to means of online practices to ensure that teaching and learning are maintained over the past year and a half.

COVID-19 forced me to adjust my strategies and follow a new course of planning things around me. The old saying is so true: "To fail to plan is to plan to fail." I plan to succeed. My aim is to make a difference in education on a national level by conducting this research and to give hope to all educators for practical teaching and learning solutions for the 21st century. This approach of mine as a Head of Department (HOD) the past few years certainly equipped and prepared my team for a time like this, where we are globally faced with the COVID-19 pandemic





## MEMORY **DIZHA** **WESTERN CAPE**

*“South African teachers need more trainings and hands-on teaching equipment for a better education sector.”*

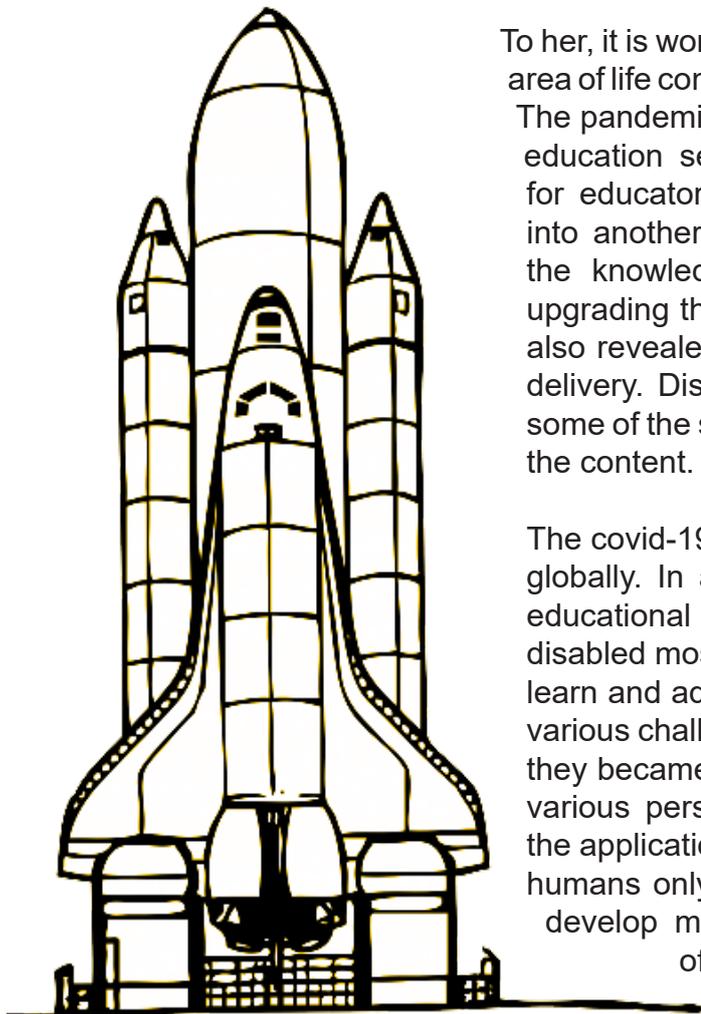
The education system has made a dramatic change due to COVID-19 pandemic. The education program has changed to maintain social distance. The current situation is quite challenging but it has brought the introduction of online teaching and learning in another turn. The online learning opportunities, virtual classes have made teachers to be connected to their students. Teachers are using Zoom, WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams, YouTube and many other platforms to interact with their students.



I received training on the use of these platforms through the Capitec Foundation where I mentor the teachers from different schools online. I was also trained by Digify Africa (Ilizwe Lam) on how to integrate technology in teaching. In addition, I also train other educators on how to use Zoom in teaching.

I have been interacting with learners since March 2020, when the lockdown started. Though it has had some challenges, I used WhatsApp to teach the learners as most of the learners find it difficult to access internet due to the disadvantaged nature of the school. Nevertheless, the teaching-learning process was a success. For me, the virtual learning has made me interact more with the parents since most of the learners did not have android phones; they used their parents' phones. The advantage of this is that the parents could see that their children have been given homework to do or assignments, and this assisted in monitoring their children. To some, however, it was a disadvantageous as some parents may not be anywhere close to their children until late in the night. When schools were reopened and classes moved from virtual to onsite, the rotation of classes to maintain social distancing started. The number of students per class had to be reduced, and the teaching hours had to increase. This was quite a challenging experience.

COVID-19 has also made it difficult for NGOs and NPOs that have been assisting learners to do so, as entrance into school premises were made difficult and restricted. Some organizations have been assisting with extra tutoring for learners and some providing some basic commodities. More so, learners are now deprived of the co-curricular activities due to limited time, and the idea of maintenance of social distance. This is a disadvantage for those learners who are academically challenged. So as a teacher, one has to think of ways to retain these learners in schools and avoid dropouts. The online learning dynamics are different compared to the onsite teaching dynamics. Traditional teaching depended mostly on the textbook, whereas, with the online technology, one has to be innovative and use different platforms to get the information across to learners.



To her, it is worthy to note that adopting new approaches in every area of life comes with both challenges and positive experiences. The pandemic and lockdown has changed the dynamics of the education sector. Although, the current situation is a battle for educators, one has to understand that we have moved into another world of industrial revolution, and this requires the knowledge of technology. Teachers have to continue upgrading their skills to have better world. The pandemic has also revealed a lot of gaps that are there in terms of content delivery. Disadvantaged schools still have a long way since some of the schools do not even have the technology to deliver the content.

The covid-19 pandemic has been a trying time for all teachers globally. In a sense, Africa has been hit the hardest in the educational sector as the issue of lack of infrastructure has disabled most learning centers in Africa. Teachers have had to learn and adapt to the new way of teaching – online – with its various challenges. Service providers also were not spared, as they became overwhelmed. Teachers have had to go through various personal development session (PDs), especially on the applications to use. Therefore, I concur with the notion that humans only stop learning when they die. I will continuously develop myself to keep in trend with new ways of teaching, as teaching and learning processes are highly broad.





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# SACE VIRTUAL LIBRARY

SACE has a vision to strengthen reading as part of supporting the President's goal of having a reading nation. The SACE virtual library presents the reading opportunity for the SACE-registered educators and stakeholders' access to various digital resources that will contribute to their knowledge, material development, and teaching and learning.

The SACE Virtual Library is furnished with a broad set of content covering everything from professional development, leadership and management, teaching resources and books for leisure reading.

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1. Go to <https://www.sace.org.za>
2. Just register a new account to get started.



# NAVIGATING THE SACE VIRTUAL LIBRARY

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2. If you don't already have a Snapplify account, click on the Not Registered link to create one.
3. Sign in using your account details- Username and password.
4. Navigate to Browse under the Library section in the toolbar on the left-hand side of the screen.
5. Click on the Favourites tab to view the e-books that are available in the SACE virtual Library for check out.
6. Once you've found a book, click on the Checkout button and click yes to confirm. The book will now be available in your Snapplify Reader application ready for download.
7. Sign into your Snapplify Reader application and click download to enable offline reading. Now you are able to read the ebook without using data or WiFi.

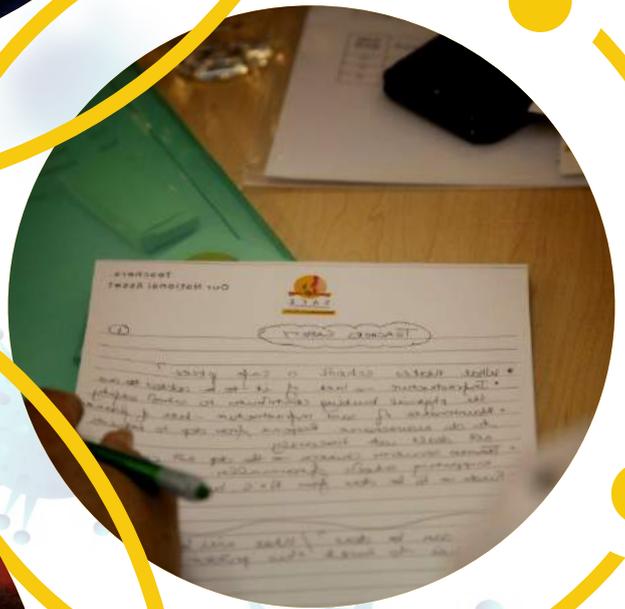
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# UPHOLDING ETHICAL STANDARDS IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION.

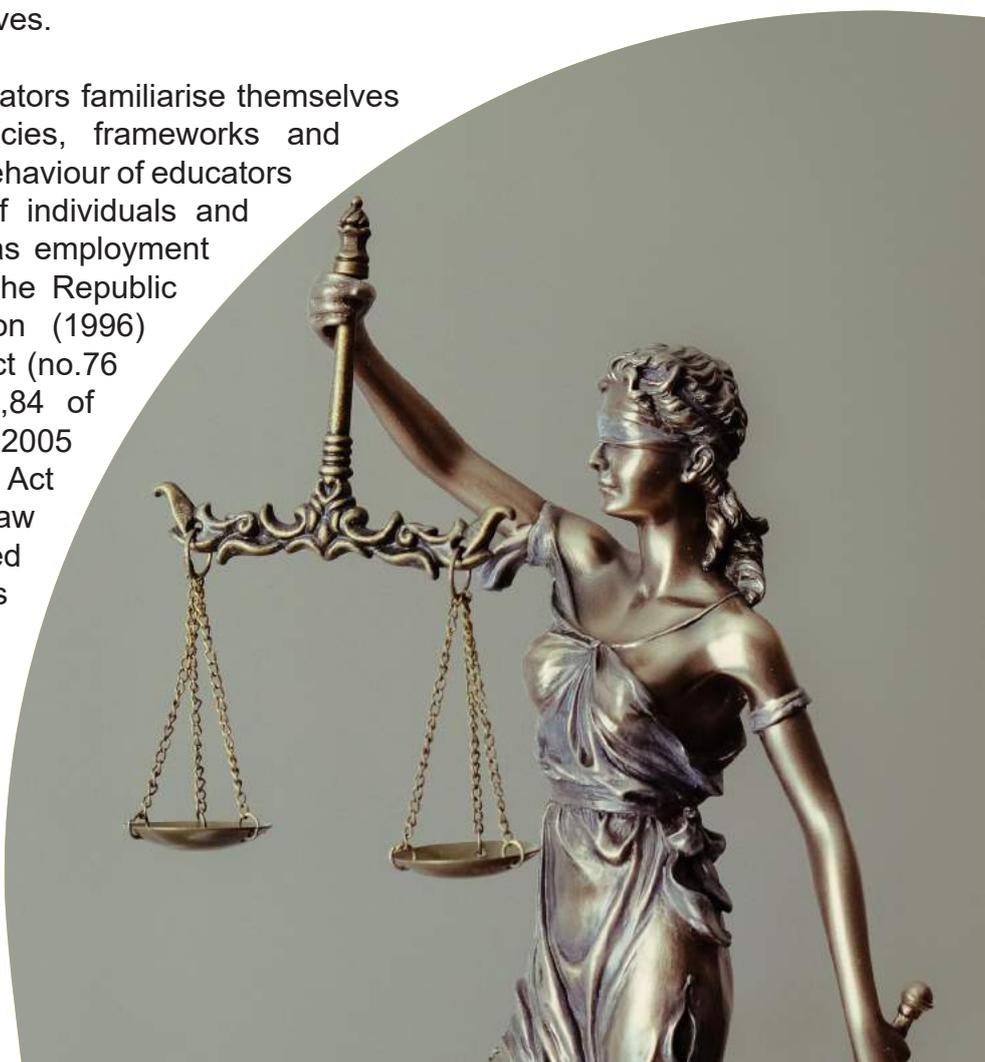
Professional self-regulatory bodies, like the South African Council for Educators (SACE), are established through enabling legislation that mandates them to set ethical standards, monitor compliance by the profession, and uphold them through enforcement processes, amongst others. These ethical standards are realised through the Code of Professional Ethics or Code of Ethics/Conduct and are fundamental to the governance and social regulation of professional educators who are key to the delivery of quality education in schools. In addition, these standards play a crucial role in promoting public trust in the teaching profession. Hence transgression of the code results in enforcement of varied sanctions that are preceded by strategies to uphold the ethical standards in the profession through the compliance and persuasion strategies and mechanisms.

Similarly, the SACE Act no. 31 of 2000 empowers Council to set, protect and maintain the ethical standards that are realised through the SACE Code of Professional Ethics (referred to hereafter as, the code).

The SACE Code of Professional Ethics was developed and agreed upon by all the unions and the employer in 1997. The Code was not “imposed” on educators. It was developed through a “bottom-up” process in which educators were directly involved. Therefore, the Code was developed by educators. This “social agreement or contract” gives the code powerful legitimacy and credibility from an ethical perspective plus empowers educators to assume responsibility in how they conduct themselves.

It is also important that educators familiarise themselves with other legislation, policies, frameworks and declarations governing the behaviour of educators and protecting the rights of individuals and children in particular, such as employment and others. For example, The Republic of South Africa Constitution (1996) Employment of Educators Act (no.76 of 1998), Schools Act (no,84 of 1996), Children’s Act (38 of 2005 as Amended), Child Justice Act (no.75 of 2008), Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Act no.32 of 2007 as Amended, and others.

In order to understand the importance of upholding the ethical standards through the code of professional ethics, this article outlines what the code is and its purpose.



# THE CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS?



It is important to note that often the concepts of code of ethics, code of conduct and the code of professional ethics are used interchangeably, despite their differences in meaning. The code of conduct is more specific and rule-based in nature. It also provides for moral prescriptive in terms of defining the kind of things to be adhered to (do's – obligated to do), as well as, moral proscriptive (don't – prohibited from doing) in terms of things to be avoided.

For the purpose of this article, the focus is particularly on the code of professional ethics in the teaching profession of which:

- Involves ethics and values in the roles of the professional educators and their conduct in the teaching profession, workplace and society;
- Contain set of guidelines that can be used by educators to make ethical decisions in and outside their workplace; and
- Set the standards and expectations on what is acceptable in the profession and how professionals should act when they are confronted with issues that require ethical decision making.

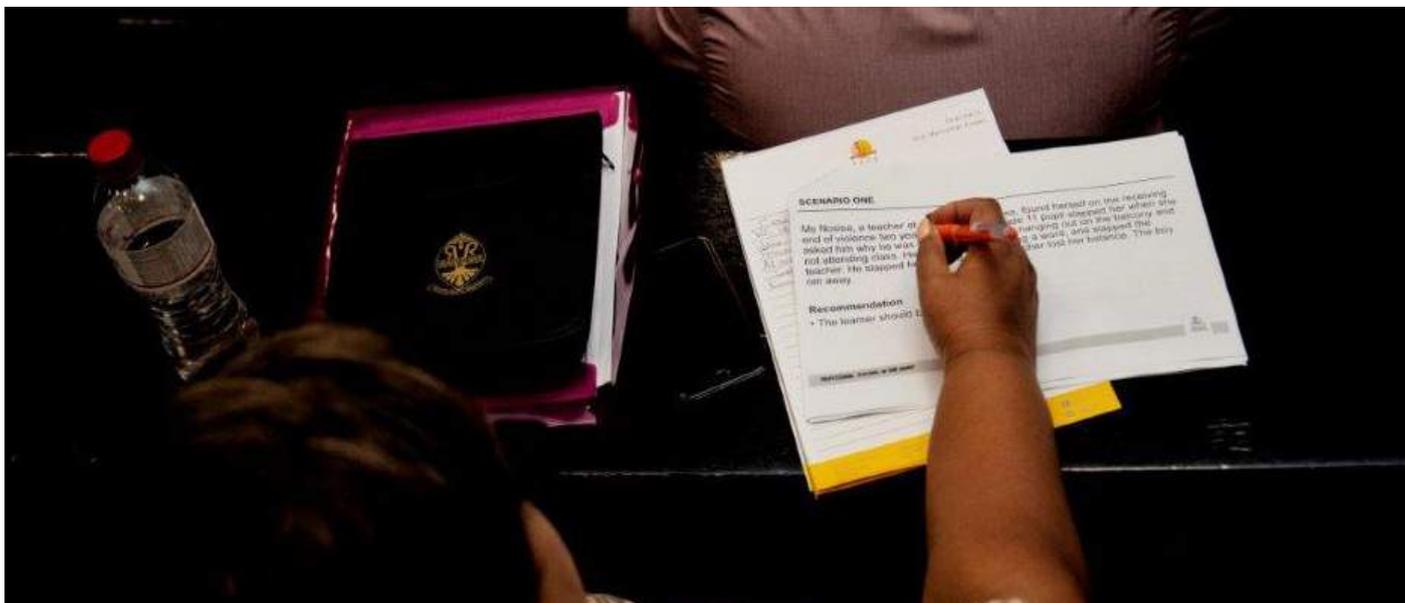
The code of professional ethics also has aspirational and non-disciplinary elements in terms of promoting certain values and ethical principles in the teaching profession.

Moreover, based on our values, the spectacles educators use to view issues in and outside their workplaces and in the profession as a whole, have some bearing on the ethical and moral compass guiding them to navigate through their ethical dilemmas confronting them daily and how they make ethical decisions in responding to them.

Figure 1 below indicates that **Good Ethical Evaluation and well-informed reasoning of right or wrong, by an ethically competent professional educator, should be informed by the following factors, amongst others:**

- **Values** promoting:
  - other people's well-being and human rights
  - treating them with dignity and respect
  - acting with integrity, honesty and self-discipline, and building harmonious relationships that forbids discrimination against race, sex / gender, religion, ethnic groups and others,
  - demonstrating commitment to our work,
  - acknowledging our responsibilities and obligations as professional educators
  - acting in a transparent and accountable manner; and
  - recognising legitimate authority;
- **Ethical principles** of human duty, approaches, and traditions by which a person is guided to make distinctions that have a moral weight;
- **Moral judgement** pertaining to the distinction between right and wrong, or good and evil, in relation to the actions, volitions or character of responsible beings;
- **Human rights** considerations;
- **Sound knowledge** informing one's reasoning;
- **Law and rules;** and
- **Code** of professional ethics.

Figure 1: Factors informing Good Ethical Evaluation and Reasoning



As we engage in ethical evaluation, we should also remember that values lie at the heart of professionalism. They express our basic orientation and how we see the world. We see the world “through” our values, or one can think of values as being like a compass guiding you through your personal and professional lives, which is why SACE promotes the following values in the profession:

- **ACCOUNTABILITY:** The fact or condition of being required or expected to justify actions or decisions: The Council and profession is willing to account for ethical/unethical conducts of its members.
- **DIGNITY:** The state or quality of being worthy of honour: The Council and profession strives to treat its staff, educators and members of the public with integrity, humanity and compassion.
- **INTERGRITY:** The state or quality of being worthy of honour: The Council and profession strive to treat staff, educators and members of the public with integrity, humanity and compassion.
- **QUALITY:** Provide quality and excellent service to educators and the profession as a whole.
- **RESPECT:** Due regard for the feelings, wishes, or rights of others: The Council and profession is committed to display due respect and consideration with regard to the feelings, wishes and rights of the members and public.
- **RESPONSIBILITY:** The state or fact of having a duty to deal with something or the power to influence or direct people's behaviour or the course of events: The Council and profession strive to take ownership of its action and influence direct behaviour of its members.
- **SERVICE-ORIENTED:** Ensure that the teaching profession in general and educators in particular are serviced satisfactorily at all times. Serving educators is priority number one for all SACE employees.
- **TOLERANCE:** The ability or willingness to tolerate the existence of systems, opinions or behaviours that one dislikes or disagrees with: The Council and profession is willing to accept, consider and understand different views and opinions regarding its professional and ethical standards.
- **TRANSPARENCY:** Honest and open communication and sharing of information between stakeholders.

As with the Code of Conduct, the SACE code of professional ethics has moral prescriptions and proscriptions which demonstrates to educators, from an ethical perspective, what to do in their relations with other people, as well. For example, in its preamble, the SACE Code of Professional Ethics tells educators that they “we ought to”:

- *Acknowledge the noble calling of their profession to educate and train the learners of our country;*
- *Acknowledge that the attitude, dedication, self-discipline, ideals, training and conduct of the teaching profession determine the quality of education in this country;*
- *Acknowledge, uphold and promote basic human rights, as embodied in the Constitution of South Africa;*
- *Commit themselves therefore to do all within their power, in the exercising of their professional duties, to act in accordance with the ideals of their profession, as expressed in this Code; and*
- *Act in a proper and becoming way such that their behaviour does not bring the teaching profession into disrepute.*

## **EQUALLY, THE CODE FORBIDS US AGAINST:**

- Causing harm and being violent
- Abusing others in various forms (physical, verbal, sexual, psychological, emotional, economic and others)
- Violating human rights
- Humiliation
- Harassment and others.



# MUST EDUCATORS CHOOSE TO BE ETHICAL?

As highlighted above, the code serves as a guideline that can be used by educators to make ethical decisions in and outside their workplace. Therefore, the Code by itself will not improve the way educators behave. Even the disciplinary Code enforcement measures that SACE can bring to bear on educators guilty of misconduct will not automatically bring about an improvement on an educator's behaviour.

Similarly, SACE cannot be able to monitor every educator all the time to see if they are acting in compliance with the Code. And even if SACE could observe everyone all the time and force them to act in accordance with the Code, we would want to believe that these educators are choosing to be ethical. This is because, there is a big difference between being forced to do the right thing and freely choosing to do so.

A crucial feature of ethical behaviour is that a person wants to act in the right way by doing something because it is the right thing to do is very different, morally, from doing something because we are being forced to do it. The SACE Code and the legislative power behind it does mean that professional educators must act ethically or they will be transgressing the Code and liable to punishment with legislated sanctions.

For the Code to be effective it has to be something that educators believe in and want to achieve, not something that is forced down their throats. It has to have the consent of educators and they must freely choose to act in compliance with the Code and the principles and values that underpin it. This is one reason it was so important for SACE to construct the Code in a consultative manner leading to a 'social or intangible contract'.

Educators as members of the teaching profession, share the social contract with the public, parents and learners. In doing so, the professional regulatory bodies like SACE, use the social contract to instil confidence and trust, commitment, respect and assurance to the public and parents of quality professional behaviour along with sanctions of unprofessional behaviour by the educators.

As a reciprocal declaration, in return the public bestow a high degree of status and respect to the teaching profession and expect sound professional and ethical decisions and conduct by members. Consequently, the professional regulatory body has an obligation to monitor the maintenance of the profession's ethical standards and ensure that members abide by the intangible or social contract. It is through the process of being accountable to the public that a statutory professional body keeps its self-regulation privilege, authority and responsibility.



# PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CODE

Professional ethics do not happen in a vacuum. They happen in and through our relationships and interactions with other people. Similarly, teaching is inevitably a relationship-focused profession and therefore, the SACE Code of Professional Ethics describes how educators ought to relate to learners, parents, colleagues, the employer, the profession and the Council, as reflected in figure 2 below:

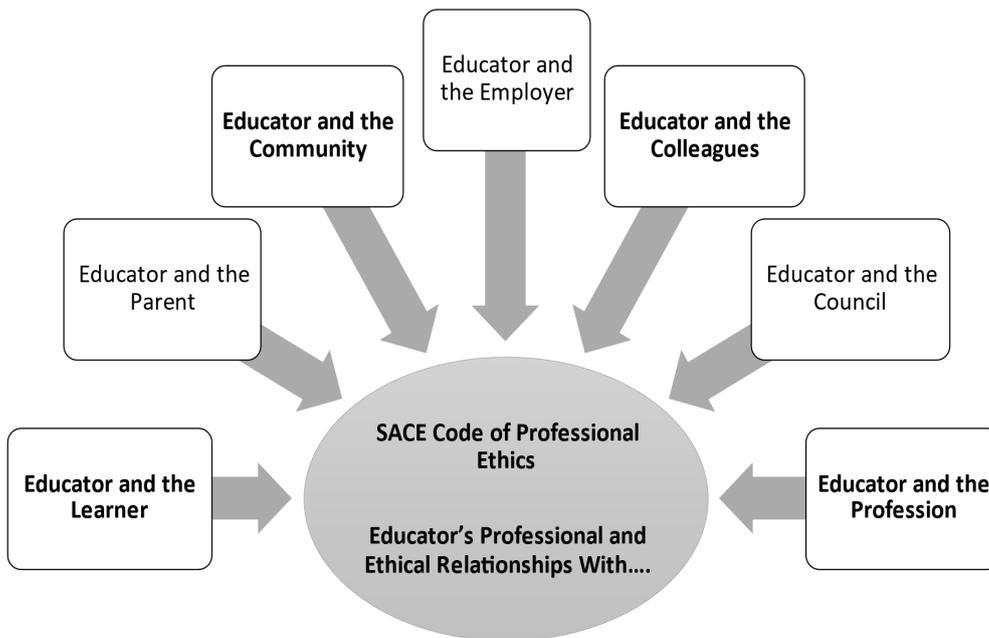


Figure 2: Professional and Ethical Relations as Reflected in the Code of Professional Ethics

All these different ways of relating to other people are demonstrated in the way we behave. The way we talk to the parents or to our learners might show how we “feel” towards them and what attitudes we have to them as people.

For example, two learners come to you to ask for an extension on a task. You may like the one student who works hard, and so you treat her/his request kindly. The other student is disruptive in your classes and you find her aggressive. You don’t take time to hear her/his story and refuse her/his request. These different ways of relating are linked to the judgements we make of our own and other people’s behaviour and character.

As educators, we make these kinds of evaluations all the time. Most of the time our judgements are unconscious, and seem to come naturally – we do not spend time thinking through them carefully. If somebody were to promise me something and then breaks the promise, I would judge them to be dishonest and probably not trust them in the way I did before. Equally, I would not trust an educator who always arrives at work drunk, never prepares, misses classes, shouts at and beats the children.

In each of the above examples we are “evaluating” these actions in respect of their ethical or moral character. Is keeping promises a right or good way to act? Is breaking promises a wrong or bad way to act? Is it bad or wrong to beat learners? So, all the time we are making evaluations about people’s behaviour. However, not all the evaluations we make are ethical. Figure 1, in section 2, have provided some guidance on things to consider in making ethical evaluation when confronted with a situation as an educator.

# PURPOSE OF THE CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Code of professional ethics serves the purpose of:

- Guiding and clarifying expectation of behaviour,
- Holding professional educators responsible and accountable for their actions,
- Creating and maintaining professional identity,
- Maintaining or upholding the ethical standards in the teaching profession,
- Protecting the interests, rights and welfare of the public and children and the SACE Code of Professional Ethics is committed to a human rights approach as well,
- Signalling to society the high standards the profession is aspiring to achieve,
- Enhancing teachers' professional identity, and
- Enhancing the status and image of the teaching profession

It is important to also note that many teachers' unions in the teaching profession have codes of ethics or conduct as well. The Education International (EI), an internal umbrella body for teacher unions across the world, argues that "codes greatly contribute to ensuring the prestige of the profession and the exercise of professional duties in accordance with agreed principles" It also produced a Declaration of Professional Ethics with the following as its objectives:

- To raise awareness about the norms and ethics of the teaching profession;
- To help increase job satisfaction in education,
- To enhance status and self-esteem; and
- To increase respect for the profession in communities.

Furthermore, SACE believes that developing the ethics of the profession means making the Code a part of every educator's professional life. To achieve this, the Code must be more than just a piece of paper; it must influence the way educators act in their relations with other people. SACE also believes that the best way to do this is to stimulate educators to start talking to one another about ethics in the profession.



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**The code of professional ethics and disciplinary procedure document can be accessed by the educators on the SACE website – [www.sace.org.za](http://www.sace.org.za)**

# TEACHERS' RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND SAFETY PROGRAMME: THE JOURNEY

While violence may be largely viewed from a physical force perspective, its broader definition includes psychological and emotional injury as well. There are a number of different reasons provided for the scourge of violence including poor parenting, learners' rights, ill-disciplined learners, dysfunctional schools and unsafe teaching and learning environments amongst others. Schools are undeniably microcosm of the society, and so all these issues replicate themselves and bring complexity, unsafe teaching environment, low teacher morale and burnout in schools and a sense of teachers feeling disempowered and hopeless. The system is deemed to be dealing with generation Z that is different from the millennials and pre-millennials and thus assumed that this group brings a different set of challenges. The reported high rate of violence in South African schools is of great concern. The school environment is supposed to be a place for mental and physical stimulation for children, but most importantly a safe environment for all parties involved in the schooling system. Teachers play a major role in ensuring that children are provided with a safe and conducive learning environment at school but more often than not also find themselves in uncomfortable and dangerous situations in and outside the classroom. SACE believes that human rights are amongst others a response to violence against teachers. Teachers' rights are human rights and human rights are against violence. Teachers are entitled to the right to dignity and protection. One of the United Nations declarations is that human rights are based on mankind's increasing demand for life in which the inherent dignity and worth of human being will receive respect and protection. As much as children should be provided with a safe learning environment, teachers also need to be provided with a safe work environment, in order carry out their duties with confidence. The gross violence happening in schools make teaching and learning in a safe environment difficult.

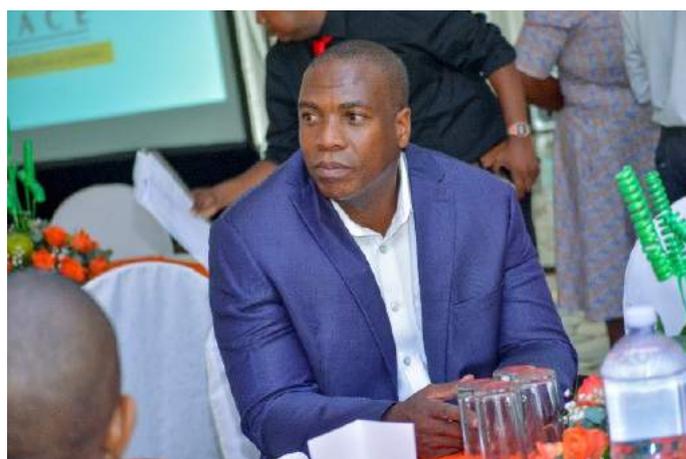
The Department of Basic Education (DBE) emphasises the importance of creating safe schools that encourage respect for human rights and dignity. Students have a responsibility to respect education and their teachers, co-operate fully with teachers, and adhere to rules and the school's code of conduct. In the same breath, teachers also have the responsibility of promoting social cohesion through education for their learners (Mail & Guardian, 2016). There are many documents that support teachers engaging in teaching in safe and secure environments but what is good on paper may not necessarily always translate in practice. For example, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) has provided a framework for a whole-school approach, a strategy advocated for in the 2008 National School Violence Study (NSVS) following the recognition that a school comprises of several interdependent components. According to this framework, principals and educators are held accountable for school safety, and schools need to develop and maintain a safe, welcoming, violence-free learning environment. It is then essential that Educators are properly guided and given clear directives on how to handle violent incidents in schools but most importantly ensuring their own safety as well. For teachers to understand and be equipped on how to handle violent incidents and be in a safe working environment, it is crucial that they know and understand their rights and responsibilities as educators which in turn will assist in ensuring their safety.

# TEACHERS' RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND SAFETY PROGRAMME: HOW IT STARTED

The Programme aims to bring to the fore, the plight educators face on daily basis in relation to their rights and safety being eroded, and their dignity and respect being compromised in the schools. The Programme includes a research study to inform the broader conceptual process, and the handbook that will be produced for teachers. During October 2018, the Department of Basic Education convened a National School Safety Summit. Delegates from the education fraternity and other government institutions attended this summit. During the summit declarations were made. The National School Safety Steering Committee was to implement declarations and recommendations that were made. Teachers' safety was one of these recommendations. As a Council for Educators, we then conceptualized and committed to drive the initiative of Teachers' Rights Responsibilities and Safety. On the 5th March 2019, the Council hosted a National Launch at Saint George Hotel which was attended by 350 delegates from all over the country. The slogan of this launch captured the teaching fraternity as a whole #HOOT which means 'Hands Off Our Teachers'.

The Council then hosted three provincial launches in KwaZulu-Natal, North West and the Western Cape. The launches aimed to introduce the programme, create awareness on the issue but also gain perspectives from educators on what they perceive to be the issues exacerbating the violence in schools but also find possible solutions. During the provincial launches commissions were held where views on the scourge of violence in schools and teachers' rights, responsibilities and safety were discussed and the likely measures that can be taken to curb violence and ensure safety in schools. The programme went through various processes, starting with the conceptualizing of the programme with an intense look at the literature behind the violence in schools, locally and internationally and possible ways of mitigating this crisis.

## TEACHERS' RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND SAFETY NATIONAL LAUNCH 5TH MARCH 2019: IN PICTURES



The Programme comprised of a research study to inform the broader conceptual process, and the handbook that has been produced for teachers. It followed an important three step process as depicted below:



## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

After the national and provincial launches, and an intense literature review process council then proceeded to partake in focus group discussions around the country in various provinces. Again, SACE ensured that educators and its stakeholders were well represented during the group discussions. The group discussions sought for participants to share their lived experiences of the environment in schools and offer possible solutions on how this crisis can be resolved. As depicted in the pictures, teachers came in numbers and were readily eager to participate



Limpopo 20th May 2019



Free State 18th May 2019



Northern Cape 29th May 2019



North West 24th April 2019

## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

The process of the launches, literature review and focus group discussions led to the first draft of the Teachers' Rights, Responsibilities and safety handbook. The draft handbook was then followed by the nation-wide roundtable discussion drive to obtain feedback from educators and SACE stakeholders regarding the handbook. This next process was implemented differently from the launches which took place in KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape and the North West. The roundtables afforded educators to further participate in discussions and provide input on the content of the draft. Roundtable sessions per province were conducted as to ensure that the draft handbook reaches as many educators as possible for inputs. Participants from hotspot Schools and non-hotspot Schools (e.g., independent and special Schools) with one representative from each school/district including unions respectively were represented in these discussions. Our teachers had a lot to say and contributed immensely! As you will observe from the pictures, the discussions were engaging and insightful.

### ROUNDTABLE: GAUTENG



### ROUNDTABLE: WESTERN CAPE



### ROUNDTABLE: MPUMALANGA



## ROUNDTABLE: **FREE-STATE**



## ROUNDTABLE: **LIMPOPO**



## ROUNDTABLE: **EASTERN CAPE**



## **THE FUTURE: 2021-2025 DELIVERABLES**

Council is committed to ensure that this programme achieves its goal to bring to the fore, the plight educators face on a daily basis in relation to their rights and safety being eroded, and their dignity and respect being compromised in schools with the slogan of #HOOT which means 'Hands Off Our Teachers'. In reaching our desired goal, Council is working closely with VVOB to further assist with the development of the facilitators' guide, participant workbook and self-study online programme based on the Teachers Safety and Security Handbook content. The intention is to use these materials to further capacitate educators on issues concerning their safety and security, in addition, this will form part of the bigger vision in developing a teacher support programme. These materials and the online Programme will be a part of the Continuing Professional Teacher Development System and will be uploaded on the SACE website and CPTD-IS portal for easy accessibility. SACE provincial coordinators will also play an integral part in ensuring that educators are aware and capacitated on these resources so that they are utilised as a tool that will benefit educators in the profession. The handbook will also be reviewed every two years to ensure that it is current and relevant to what is happening in the South African context.

# THE FINAL PRODUCT: TEACHERS' SAFETY AND SECURITY IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS: A HANDBOOK



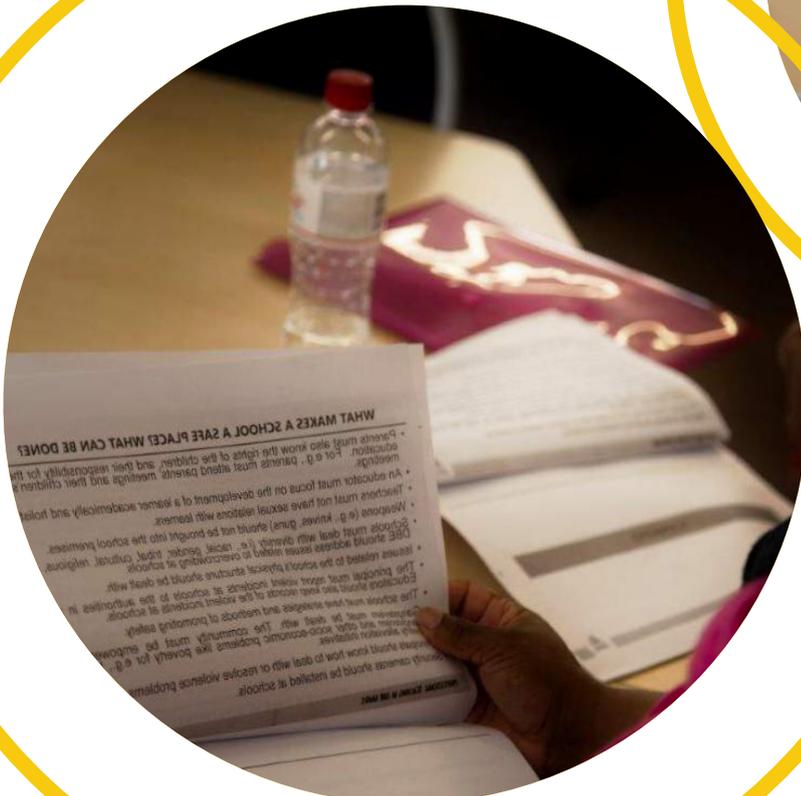
## Teachers' Safety and Security in South African Schools: A Handbook



The purpose of the handbook is to:

- Sharpen educators' understanding of rights, responsibilities and safety issues and their ability to act and respond appropriately when their rights and safety are being eroded;
- Provoke thinking, debate and discussion about teachers' rights, responsibilities and safety in the broader education field and teaching profession; and
- Serve as a guideline inside a classroom when an issue of violence arises.

The handbook is meant to act as a tool that teachers can use within the school environment as a guideline when confronted with a potentially unsafe or violent situation. The Handbook provides various guidelines for teachers' and things that teachers should be aware of when they are confronted by school-based violence.







**SACE**

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