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Deliberation, belonging and inclusion: towards ethical teaching in a democratic South Africa

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ABSTRACT

The teaching profession in South Africa, like elsewhere in the world, is regulated by the specific codes of conduct, as stipulated by the South African Council for Educators (SACE). While common criticisms against SACE include failing to ensure the registration of all teachers, and not adequately dealing with the unprofessional conduct of teachers, it is the question of whether SACE can act as an ethical regulator, which attracts the most attention. Seemingly, there exists a tension between the legalistic approach to ethical deliberation, as contained in SACE, and the real experiences of teachers, which teachers argue, are neither understood nor taken into account by SACE. In considering whether it is at all possible to teach teachers how to act ethically, or how to use their ethical judgement, the article turns its attention to the inter-related practices of deliberation, belonging and inclusion, as manifestations of ethical teaching.

KEYWORDS

Ethical judgement; identity; teaching profession; deliberation; belonging; inclusion

Introduction

Amidst already high levels of disillusionment and mistrust, South African citizens are yet again confronted with serious questions regarding the leadership of President Jacob Zuma. Hot on the heels of recalling a competent Finance Minister, without any clear justification, Zuma stands accused of not only soliciting (demanding) government favours on behalf of the Gupta family – who are controversial because of their questionable relationship with Zuma and his presidency – but also for allowing their direct involvement in the appointment of cabinet posts.

What does any of this have to do with teaching in a new democratic South Africa, you might ask? Well, as a number of political analysts have noted, it would be very difficult to prove whether the Gupta family indeed had any influence on Zuma and the decisions he has made, and continues to make, since the matter at hand has to do with the ethics of South African politics, rather than the legalities thereof. In quite a similar fashion, it would be hard to understand and navigate the professional expectations placed on teachers as purely legalistic, rather than framed and understood as a set of ethical endeavours. On the one hand, therefore, to determine whether a teacher has acted illegally, when he or she has caned a learner, for instance, would be quite straightforward in light of the prohibition of

corporal punishment in South African schools. On the other hand, however, when a teacher treats one group of learners differently from another, the issue of legality hardly enters the conversation. Rather, one would need to rely on the ethical dimensions through which that particular teacher has defined and understood his/her role and responsibility as a teacher. This is because teaching is a highly relational practice – in that it is largely shaped by how an individual's own sense of thinking and being gives shape to what it means to teach. As such, teaching ought to be subjected to critical scrutiny, which has, as yet, not unfolded in teacher training programmes in post-apartheid South Africa. Instead, in what appears to be some attempt to regulate the profession in relation to a particular code of conduct, all student teachers and teachers in South African public schools are expected to register with the South African Council for Educators (SACE). To the majority of newly qualified teachers, knowledge of, and belonging to SACE is an instrumentalist exercise, which merely facilitates the right to teach in South African schools.

This article will commence, therefore, by offering a brief discussion of, and critical look at SACE as the legalistic ethical framework of teacher professionalism. In noting that one of the key areas which the SACE framework neglects is that of a recognition of the identity of the teachers, the ensuing argument considers how identity develops and impacts upon teachers' ethical judgement. Following on this, the article turns to a discussion on how the ethical judgement of teachers might be better informed by practices of deliberation, belonging and inclusion, rather than a pre-determined set of ethical codes, as advocated through SACE.

The SACE

The duties of the SACE, according to Mosoge and Taunyane (2009, 3) generally encompass those of other professional bodies around the world – such as the General Teaching Council (GTC) in Scotland, which maintains a register of teachers, oversees the standards of entry to the profession, accredits and reviews courses of initial teacher education, supports teachers and exercises disciplinary powers (GTC, 1999); the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) in Canada, which is charged with regulating teaching and governing its members, developing, establishing and maintaining qualifications for members of the council, providing ongoing professional development of its members and establishing and enforcing professional standards (OCT, 1999); and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) in India, which determines the minimum qualifications for registration, co-ordinates and regulates teacher education programmes, provides academic support to teachers, and promotes and conducts innovation and research in various areas of teacher education (India, 1993). However, unlike professional councils around the world, which are controlled by the government, SACE, although partly funded by the government, and certain members of its executive are appointed by the Minister of National Education, remains an independent body of professionals (Mothatha 1998, 104).

Launched in September 1995, and officially recognised by the then Minister of Education (Prof. Bhengu), in January 1997, SACE initially had two functions: the registration and discipline of teachers. These two functions were extended to include the professional development of teachers in November 1997. In August 2000, the South African Council for Teachers Act No.31 was promulgated, and set out the following three objectives:

- to provide for the registration of teachers;
- to promote the professional development of teachers; and
- to set, maintain and protect ethical and professional standards for teachers by means of the functioning of the council.

In terms of the Code of Professional Ethics, as contained in SACE (Act 31 of 2000, SACE, 2002, 2000b, E-17), a teacher is expected to comply with a number of codes of conduct in relation to other teachers, learners, parents and the school as an organisation. These include, respecting the dignity, beliefs and constitutional rights of learners and in particular children, which includes the right to privacy and confidentiality; exercising authority with compassion; avoiding any form of humiliation, or abuse (physical or psychological) of learners; and is not negligent in the performance of his or her professional duties (SACE, 2002, 6).

SACE has been subjected to a number of criticisms in relation to its three primary objectives. Most pertinent among these appears to be the reality that while the registration of teachers by SACE is the only means of regulating and protecting entry into the profession, SACE does not have mechanisms and processes for dealing with employers who are continuing to employ unregistered teachers. Consequently, according to a position article, entitled, 'Redefining the Role and Functions of the SACE (South African Council for Teachers) (2011, 8), South Africa continues to have thousands of unregistered practising teachers in schools – revealing that there are approximately 40,000 teachers in public schools who have not yet registered with SACE and SACE cannot do anything to those teachers and/or their employers. In addition to this high number of unregistered teachers, there is the added concern about the significant number of teachers who are registered with SACE, but are in fact unqualified as teachers. The recognition of professionally unqualified people by SACE in the context of needs and shortages of teachers is in line with international practice. However, as highlighted in the position article, (SACE, 2011, 14), in order to put a stop to the use of professionally unqualified people, SACE needs to consider introducing what other teaching councils call a Limited Authority to Teach or Permission to Teach sub-register that is not linked in any way to the main register of qualified teachers or a sub-register of provisionally registered teachers who are in transition to full registration status.

Taking into consideration the high incidence of both unregistered and professionally unqualified teachers, serious questions about promoting teacher professionalism emerges, which continues to be a contested terrain in South Africa. In addition to the 21 public higher education institutions offering teacher education and development qualifications, there are also a number of private providers operating at different levels, providing various professional development programmes. These include service providers that are accredited by the Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP-SETA); those that are registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET); those that work in partnership with public higher education institutions and offer programmes leading to the qualifications of the public higher institution; those that offer their own qualifications once they have been registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the provider has been registered as a private higher education institution by the Department of Higher Education and Training; as well as a number of Non-Governmental Organisations, Community-Based Organisations and Professional Associations providing various kinds of developmental programmes to teachers (2011, 22, 23). The contested role of SACE has always centred on whether it provides and promotes professional development, or not. And while SACE has focused on training programmes around

professional development portfolios, ethics and values in education, ethics and legal training, the experiences on these training sessions have proven that very few teachers benefited from them, despite the fact that more resources were spent on them (SACE, 2011, 24). Certainly, from the perspective of the position article, SACE should 'identify and conceptualize programmes that will lead to enhancing and promoting the image and status of the profession and make those publicly available for the providers to develop programmes on the basis of those concepts' (SACE, 2011, 24).

The focus on the promotion of the image of the profession is embedded in intricate complexities, which speak as much to the dysfunctionality of schools, as it does to the unprofessionalism of teachers. On the one hand, schools in South Africa (particularly historically disadvantaged schools) are beset by unacceptably high levels of violence; high rates of learner absence; late-coming and learner attrition; and various enactments of discrimination, which include racism, sexism and homophobia (Leoschut and Bonora 2007; Burton 2008; Bhana 2013, 41; Burton and Leoschut, 2013). On the other hand, and in turn, teachers contribute to the normalisation of violence in schools through the perpetuation of corporal punishment (although it is illegal); and the perpetration of physical and sexual assault, particularly from male teachers. Moreover, teachers are often late for school or class; are unprepared to teach; have poor subject content knowledge; equally poor teaching methodologies; and commonly resort to practices of humiliation, exclusion and physical punishment to discipline learners (Gamble 2010; Mncube and Harber 2013)

Taking into account, therefore, the particular professional challenges encountered and perpetrated by teachers, and against the background of the regulatory function of SACE, the concern of this article is twofold. Is it possible to teach teachers how to act ethically, or how to use their ethical judgement? And if so, how should this be done?

Identity and developing teachers' ethical judgement

To be a 'competent' teacher in South African schools – one which demonstrates an ability to integrate theory and practice in teaching – requires the fulfilment of seven roles. These are the teacher as: 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; learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist (DoE (Department of Education) 1998, 52–55). The sheer complexity of these roles is seemingly only surpassed by the constant ideal that is 'the teacher'. Because, while it might be possible to assume the shuffling masks of assessor, researcher or pastor, the idea of who or what 'the teacher' is, has remained largely unexplored in post-apartheid politico-educational reform. Every education policy document, says Jansen (2001, 242) contains powerful images of the idealised teacher – 'Whether explicit or implied, whether conscious or unconscious, policymakers hold preferred and cherished images about the end-user of an education policy i.e. about the teacher' – predominantly without any direct consultation or conversation with 'the teacher'.

Yet, we know, that any idea of 'the teacher' cannot exist, and as Carrim (2001) points out, because the notion of 'the teacher' continues to homogenise teachers and teaching, it means that we are unable to analytically address the specific realities experienced by teachers or the complexities of their identities. That teachers are continually approached and couched through a homogenous lens not only undermines the complexities, which constitute their

identities, but continues to compromise making sense of teachers' experiences in relation to ethical judgements.

One purpose of adopting a particular identity, states Appiah (2007, 24) is that it provides a source of value through which to structure or pattern one's life. However, particular values are specific and internal to particular identities – meaning that they might not be shared by those with different identities (Appiah 2007, 24). In South Africa, ideas of who 'the teacher' is, are deeply entrenched in identities of race and culture. These identities manifest themselves not only in relation to teacher professionalism, and curricular contestations, but also in relation to divergent views on learner discipline, which often sees the justification for corporal punishment as stemming from particular religious and cultural imperatives. Teacher identities are brought into further disarray by a post-apartheid climate, which has seen not only the desegregation of schools, since 1992, but also the questioningly slow process of teacher migratory patterns across historically constructed racially based school divisions. In this regard, the profoundly different understandings of what and how to teach, emanates not only from how teachers attach themselves to the value of a post-apartheid society, but also from the historical imagery that has given shape to their identities as teachers. To Weldon (2009, 185), the historical imagery of teacher identities has been largely 'traumatic'. Apartheid utilised teachers – both black and white – as key role-players in the promulgation of an unequal education. When a collective memory, is 'traumatic', explains Weldon (2009, 177), there is 'tension in societies emerging from conflict between those who feel it is better to forget a traumatic past than remember it, and those who feel that it should be remembered'.

For teachers, managing the tensions that accompany the diverse communities which constitute a class is particularly complex, not only in terms of how they relate to curriculum content, such as the teaching of the historical impact of apartheid, but also in terms of how they relate to learners – especially in schools, where demographics have shifted racially, ethnically and culturally. These tensions spill over into questions of what it means to act in an ethical manner, and what it means to be an ethical teacher. In this regard, a teacher might advocate honesty, fairness and just actions when teaching her learners, but then assigns marks to assignments without actually reading the content. Similarly, a teacher might be aware that a particular learner is being bullied by others, but chooses not to do anything about it. It is possible, therefore, to have knowledge of ethical values and judgements, but then choose not to actualise them. And so, the concern is less to do with knowledge of ethical judgement, than it is with the actualisation or reification thereof. And yet the difficulty of developing teachers' ethical judgement, is seemingly not limited to whether it is possible to impart these judgements or not. The greater concern is whether one should rely on a set of codes – as encased in SACE, for instance – in order to ensure that teachers indeed act ethically.

Teachers in South Africa often object to the stated aims of SACE as being the ethical regulator of the teaching profession – on the grounds that they do not have to be regulated, or subjected to unquestioning compliance. They voice these criticisms because they understand and experience the exercise of ethical judgements as necessarily coated in obscure contexts and interactions, which might not necessarily respond to measurable skills of how to respond. In turn, teachers are often confronted with issues, that lead to what Levinson describes as 'moral injury' – that is, 'the trauma of perpetrating significant moral wrong against others despite one's wholehearted desire and responsibility to do otherwise' (2015,

209). Consider the now commonplace occurrence in South African schools of a young girl confiding in a teacher that she is pregnant, that she fears the repercussions from her parents, society and cannot take responsibility for raising a child. The learner knows that she can approach the local clinic for an abortion – without parental consent. But the learner's confidence in her teacher places the teacher in a precarious situation: the teacher is privy to information, which, she believes, the parents should know, but she cannot betray the learner's trust or confidence. And yet, the teacher's moral contract with the learner might lead to the displacement of the teacher's own personal ethical judgement. How does she deal with knowing that a 14- or 15-year old has had an abortion? Will the learner be able to cope with the possible emotional aftermath or guilt that might arise? What if the parents find out that the teacher knew, and believe that the teacher should have informed them, or worse, that she somehow encouraged the learner to have the abortion? Seemingly, it would appear that, at times, enacting ethical judgement occurs when ethical judgement itself becomes questionable.

And while there is an important discussion worth having here, the point of this article is to make sense of how it is possible to teach ethical judgement – if it is indeed possible to do so. Carr (2006, 176), for example asserts, that 'At best, ethical codes, competence models and benchmark standards should be regarded as identifying no more than highly general categories of professional aim, value, responsibility and/or expertise for teacher development' – thereby leaving open the specificity of what it means to embody and live the judgements of an ethical being. From the above discussion, it becomes apparent that inasmuch as teachers are confronted with 'contextual injustices' – in the form of institutional and historical legacies, such as racism – and 'moral injury' – in the form of questionable ethical judgments – they are also susceptible to 'school-based injustices' – that is, a lack of resources, inadequate professional support for teachers or inappropriate school policies (Levinson 2015, 216).

Now, that I have offered some insight into how the regulatory approach adopted by SACE fails to take into account teacher identities, in the ensuing discussion I will consider how the ethical judgement of teachers might be better informed by practices of deliberation, belonging and inclusion. To my mind, such practices will not only ensue inclusive participation, but will also connect teachers to the desired ethical practices of their profession.

Ethical judgement as deliberation

If we accept as Levinson (2015, 220, 221) does, that people 'make decisions in contexts rather than vacuums, embedded in webs of relationships, sensitive (perhaps overly so) to particularities and nuances, adopting roles and perspectives that are situational rather than universal', then we have to consider that identity and reifications of identity are always in response to one's social condition. Following on Levinson, one becomes aware not only of the contextual base of decision-making and judgement, but the inherent plurality within this base. The prevalence of 'webs of relationships' necessarily implies views of similarity, difference and even disruption – as would commonly be encountered within any classroom setting. To navigate these webs, it becomes necessary for a teacher to not only acknowledge these differences, but to give credence to these differences through recognising the importance of deliberation. Teachers in South Africa, for instance, are expected to conform to a code of conduct, which is aligned to a set of prescribed norms in SACE. While teachers might

have a say at school level to influence the content of this code, there are no opportunities for teachers – at policy level – to share the real ethical dilemmas they experience with learners, parents or peers. The only time that SACE is made aware of problems confronting, or relating to teachers, is when these teachers are reported for unprofessional conduct – at which stage the unfolding narrative is one of a remedial or disciplinary form.

If teachers, however, were to be invited to participate in, and provide input into the aims and norms of SACE, it would put into play two processes. Firstly, it would encourage inclusive participation – which would, on the one hand, serve to bridge the gap between what SACE expects, and teachers do, and on the other hand, provide the spaces for the engagement of views that otherwise might not be heard. Secondly, such participation will open the doors necessary for free and open deliberation, as well as set the tone for public and moral equality between policy-makers (of SACE) and teachers. The establishment of moral equality is especially pertinent in light of teachers' concerns and criticisms that policies, such as the SACE's code of ethics for teachers, creates the impression that SACE holds the moral high ground in determining this code, and that teachers need this code to be determined for them. In this regard, Benhabib's (1996, 70) conception of public deliberation is significant in that she argues that participation is, firstly, governed by the norms of equality and symmetry such that all participants have the 'same chances to initiate speech acts, to question, to interrogate, and to open debate', and secondly, that all participants have the right to initiate reflexive arguments about the very rules of the discourse procedure and the way in which they are implemented. In turn, she continues, there are no *prima facie* rules governing the agenda of the conversation, or the identity of the participants (1996, 70). In this sense, deliberation does not only offer the space necessary for engagement, and debate, but also the space necessary for critical reflection on what might be considered as ethical norms, and what teachers, in fact experience in relation to 'contextual injustices' and 'school-based injustices'. To Benhabib (1996, 72), because the practice of deliberation is governed by the art of persuading others, certain decisions or particular understandings are not fixed, but are subject to being re-examined, and hence revised. To this end, Benhabib argues that a conclusion remains valid 'until challenged by good reasons by some other group' (1996, 72). This is an especially worthwhile consideration of deliberation as a democratic endeavour in that it brings to the fore that codes of ethical conduct should always be subjected to a process of reflexive thinking, whereby both policy-makers and teachers offer and subject their particular views to critique and hence the possibility of revision.

Ethical judgement as belonging

The practice and process of deliberation facilitates a sense of belonging in that it offers opportunities for engagement inasmuch as it assigns worth and consideration to the views of others. So, if teachers feel included in the deliberation of what constitutes the ethical norms by which they ought to conduct themselves, they will have a sense of ownership of the unfolding process and decisions, which in turn moves to a sense of belonging to a particular way of thinking and being. Yuval-Davis (2011, 12) clarifies that belonging can take many different forms, which not only varies from person to person in a concrete or abstract way, but also in a stable, contested or transient way. In clarifying her understanding of the notion of social and political belonging, Yuval-Davis (2011, 12) differentiates between three

major analytical facets in which belonging is constructed – which are interrelated but cannot be reduced to each other.

The first facet of social locations, says Yuval-Davis (2011, 12, 13), refers to a particular sex, race, class or nation, age group, kinship group or a certain profession, to which people belong.

Social locations, she explains, even in their most stable format, are virtually never constructed along one power vector of difference. The second facet relates to people's identifications and emotional attachments to various collectivities and groupings. Yuval-Davis (2011, 14) maintains that identities are not just personal, but also collective, and collective identity narratives provide a collective sense of order and meaning. Similarly, Appiah (2007) agrees that collective identities provide what might be called scripts – that is, narratives that people might use in telling their life stories. To this end, teachers might find it worthwhile to consider their personal histories in relation their own and others' ethical judgements, since as Yuval-Davis (2011, 16) explains, identity is not only constructed in dialogue (that is between the individual and others, or the collective), but the dialogical construction of identity is both reflective and constitutive. The third facet relates to ethical and political value systems with which people judge their own and others' belonging. In this regard, Yuval-Davis' (2011, 18) maintains that belonging is not just about social locations and constructions of individual and collective identities and attachments; it is also concerned with the ways these are assessed and valued by the self and others.

While teachers in South Africa might share a common social location of teaching, their sense of belonging to this location remains a contested one. Largely due to historical legacies of widely disparate physical resources, funding and most importantly, quality of teachers, the experiences that teachers live in relation to where they teach and the conditions under which they teach are incredibly diverse and especially controversial. Existing on extreme ends, schools are either characterised by historical privileges of expansive schools grounds, which include facilities, such as, libraries, media centres, science and language laboratories, swimming pools, rugby fields and tennis courts, or, by historical burdens of prefabricated structures, pit-latrines, no electricity, with no additional infrastructure. In turn, schools at the top end of this continuum are distinguished by low teacher–learner ratios, highly qualified teachers and high parental involvement, while those at the lower end contend with overcrowded classrooms, often under-qualified or unqualified teachers, and poor to no parental involvement and an unacceptably high incidence of violence. Against this background, the collective identity that assigns teachers to the social location of teaching is not only unequal, but necessarily relegates teachers into disparate dialogues of identity construction.

The social and cultural spaces in which teachers at historically disadvantaged schools find themselves, inherently expose them to a different political and ethical value system that teachers at historically advantaged schools might not encounter. While issues of violence and violating others, for instance, are prevalent at the majority of schools in South Africa, the types of violence are not only different, but receive different social and ethical responses. So while cyber-bullying might be more prevalent at historically advantaged schools than at historically disadvantaged schools, children are more likely to encounter violence at historically disadvantaged schools than within their homes or communities (Leoschut and Bonora 2007; Burton 2008). And while historically advantaged schools might respond to drug and alcohol abuse among learners by drawing upon specifically designed programmes, and offering on-site counselling, learners at historically disadvantaged schools do not have access

to any school-based interventions, and either drop out of school, or are often expelled – with not safety-net in place. The types of support and resources available at schools often have a direct impact on the types of ethical responses teachers are in a position to offer. Stated differently, the collective identity narratives or ethical judgement through which teachers respond to various conditions are contestable because these collective identities are collective only within the context of a shared or collective social location (that is, teaching).

The enactments of that collective identity are pluralistic to the extent that they might not necessarily be reconcilable with a shared social location or a collective identity. As such, collective identity, or rather, identities, like the power vector of difference inherent in the social locations of teachers, does not imply collective consensus about that identity, or about the ethical value systems at play. Hence, Yuval-Davis (2011, 18) argument that belonging is not just about social locations and constructions of individual and collective identities and attachments; it is also concerned with the ways these are assessed and valued by the self and others. Deliberations, therefore, would need to take into account not only the social locations of teachers, but the inherent contestation within constructions of collective identities, so that ethical value systems and judgements might be subjected to critique in relation to the lived experiences of teachers. Certainly, from a dialogical perspective, such an account has the potential of offering greater inclusion of all experiences.

Ethical judgement as inclusion

Young (2000, 52) describes inclusion as a normative ideal of democracy or communication among citizens (teachers) and public officials (policy-makers), ‘where they make proposals and criticize one another, and aim to persuade one another of the best solution to collective problems’. Democratic norms, she explains, mandate inclusion as a criterion of the political legitimacy of outcomes: ‘Inclusion increases the chances that those who make proposals will transform their positions from an initial self-regarding stance to a more objective appeal to justice, because they must listen to others with differing positions to whom they are also answerable’ (2000, 52). If teachers are to account for their own narratives, as they live it, and not as policy deems to understand it in relation to a predetermined set of norms, then not only do they need to be included in terms of presence or numbers, but, says Young (2000, 56), they need to be internally included on the basis of deliberative engagement and democratic inclusion.

Democratic inclusion, states Young (2000, 65), is attained through rhetoric, and is concerned with the manner in which content is communicated usually in a way that produces specific effects on listeners – such as, the emotional tone of the discourse, or other embodied and stylistic aspects of communication. Young (2000, 66, 67) explains that not only does rhetoric help to get an issue on the agenda for deliberation, but it motivates the move from reason to judgement. Moreover, rhetoric offers spaces to understand the experience of others, but also counters preunderstanding; it reveals the sources of values, priorities or cultural meanings; and assists in constituting the social knowledge that enlarges thought (Young 2000, 73–76). By acknowledging and including participants, such as teachers, in deliberations about the construction of ethical norms, teachers are granted the spaces, to articulate their narratives, stories and experiences. Through engaging with others, teachers are able to reflect on how their personal histories shape their responses and ethical

judgements in relation to themselves and others, thereby producing what Young (2000, 76) refers to as a collective social wisdom, not available from any one position.

Towards ethical teaching

Thus far, I have shown that ethical judgement is not merely informed by ethical knowledge; rather ethical judgement is informed by particular situations and contexts, and by those with whom one interacts. Indeed, while ethical judgement is necessary to, and for, teaching, this is only a starting point. Of course, teachers might rightfully say that they recognise what is going on – by way of the unethical conduct of either teachers or learners – but, there is only so much that they can do, that their particular ethical judgement and actions might not necessarily alter an unethical situation or action. Similarly, there might be teachers who recognise the intricacies of ethical judgement, and who are managing and responding to particular experiences in very different ways. Taking these into account, it becomes important to recognise how meaning emanates from practice. That is, by reflecting on one's particular enactments of ethical judgements, one attaches meaning to what one does, and why one does it. In this sense, the striving towards a particular ethical code, or judgement, can be said to be meaningful, if there is a justification for it. Teaching, and its entrenched complexities, because of who a teacher is, and who learners are, and what both bring, justifies the need for an ethical approach and response. In this way, the possibility always exists that one is able to make a difference, or that one is able to alter a particular situation through the practice of ethical judgement.

Philosophically speaking, states Todd (2001, 436), exploring the place of ethics in education often begins from this normative point of departure: 'what values are to be invoked in educational encounters?' And in this regard, the norm is necessary to make sense of what it is one hopes to achieve through education, for instance. It makes sense to expect teachers to teach with some moral ambience, which ultimately instils in learners that which is right or wrong. However, as already shown, the idea of offering a set of predetermined norms, without including the voices and experiences of teachers creates the impression, that if teachers simply follow these norms or codes of ethical judgement, then, as Todd (2001, 436) tells us, this will produce the desired behaviour. And yet, we know that this is not so – not only are teachers in South Africa confronted by ethical confrontations that lead to 'moral injury', but teachers themselves are often guilty of unethical practices. To Todd (2001, 436), by posing normative questions or setting up normative judgements, 'ethics comes to education from the outside'; it asks education, 'through appeals to empathy, or reason, or politics, or moral imperative, to become a better practice'.

What is forgotten, however, argues Todd (2001, 436), is 'the uncertainty and unpredictability of the pedagogical encounter itself'. In this sense, to expect teachers to ascribe to a set of normative ethical judgements, is to expect them to reify these judgements as if the pedagogical encounter is somehow always certain and predictable. And because we know that this is indeed not the case – that is, that the pedagogical encounter is an encounter because it happens by chance – ethical judgements cannot be instilled from the outside, or separate from the teaching experiences of a teacher. Todd offers the following description:

Pedagogy demands that its subjects 'learn to become', in practice there is a great deal of uncertainty and unpredictability to the pedagogical enterprise. People bring a host of idiosyncrasies

and unconscious associations that enable them to resist, transform and create symbolic attachments which pedagogy cannot predict or control. (2001, 436)

Inasmuch as pedagogy demands of its subjects or learners ‘learn to become’, so, too, pedagogy demands that teachers remain in a state of becoming. This means that if teachers are to respond to the uncertainty and unpredictability of the pedagogical encounter, which may or not be interspersed with ethical challenges, then teachers have to be prepared for the unexpected. To this end, a set of predetermined set of codes is not only insufficient, but belies the nature of the educative process. Instead, teachers can only be responsive to that which they have yet to encounter, if they are granted the opportunity to deliberate with regard to the types of the ethical challenges they encounter, and if they are granted the same chances as policy-makers ‘to initiate speech acts, to question, to interrogate, and to open debate’ (Benhabib 1996, 70).

It is through this practice of deliberation that teachers might feel included and, hence, a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging, however, should not be to a predetermined set of codes that come from the outside, but rather to a narrative of collective identities, which comprise at least three characteristics.

Firstly, these collective identities should be constituted through a convergence between the public and personal ethical values of teachers. In this sense, teachers have to make sense of their personal identity, so that it reconciles with the public role of a teachers – that is, so that ethical judgements come from the inside, rather than the outside, and so that there is no tension between a teacher and the school or policy. Secondly, the ethical teacher has to shape ethical teaching inasmuch as ethical teaching shapes the ethical teacher. This means that one identity cannot exist without the other. It is not as if one can consider teaching as a non-ethical practice. Thirdly, ethical teaching necessarily needs to be shaped by values of deliberation, belonging and inclusion so that these values necessarily buffer against any notions and practices, which might otherwise, be considered as unethical.

In concluding, this article has raised concerns not only about whether SACE can act as an ethical regulator of the teaching profession in South Africa, but, indeed, whether it is at all possible to teach teachers how to act ethically. In recognising the diverse plurality of teacher identities, this article has argued that the ethical judgement of teachers might be better informed if teachers are connected to the desired ethical practices of their profession through practices of deliberation, belonging and inclusion.

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