

**THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATORS POINT SYSTEM POLICY:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS IN  
GAUTENG**

**by**

**PRADHIKA MUNNHAR**

**Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of**

**MASTER OF EDUCATION (MED)**

**in**

**the subject of**

**EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**at the**

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**Supervisor: Dr S.S. Khumalo**

**(November 2019)**

## DECLARATION

Name: Pradhika Munnhar

Student number: 4613 026 8

Degree: Masters in Education

### **THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATORS POINT SYSTEM POLICY: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS IN GAUTENG**

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I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



SIGNATURE

2019-08-12

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## **GRATITUDE AND DEDICATION**

It is with a depth of gratitude that I wish to acknowledge every person who has supported me, inspired me and given me strength during the compilation of this study. I humbly thank God as it is only through His compassion that I have been able to complete my study.

I would also like to acknowledge and express my indebtedness to the following special people for their magnanimous support and contributions in the creation of this study.

For being a rock solid pillar of strength with his infinite wisdom, attention to detail and more importantly constructive criticisms, I sincerely thank Dr S.S. Khumalo, my adviser, guide, instructor and mentor. Thank you Dr Khumalo, for your never-ending support, encouragement, positivity and unwavering guidance.

The Gauteng Department of Education for opening their doors and granting me authorization to conduct research in their academic institutions. A very special thank you for the generosity of the participants who so willingly agreed to share their time and stories with me.

For his encouragement, his love and his continuing belief in me, a heartfelt thank you to Ricko, my husband. My two wonderful angels for your understanding, your positive attitude and persistent pushing especially during those trying days and extremely long nights. Together we have seen what the power of four can do!

This study is dedicated to my Dad who passed on in the second year of my research. He remains my role model, my master teacher and a positive influence even to this day! I will be forever grateful for the impact and influence that he's imprinted into my life.

## **ABSTRACT**

This work explores the continuous professional teacher development point system policy and the implications it has on the professional development of teachers. A qualitative study was undertaken in two secondary schools on the West Rand in Gauteng. Data was collected through document analysis, observations and semi-structured interviews. Results indicated that there is a mismatch between what is outlined in the policy and what the teachers are practising. It became evident that the majority of teachers in this study had limited knowledge of the policy although implementation of the policy began in 2014. It was concluded that the point system policy is not contributing effectively to the professional development of teachers in Gauteng.

Hierdie werk ondersoek die deurlopende professionele onderwyser-ontwikkelingspuntstelselbeleid en die implikasies daarvan op die professionele ontwikkeling van onderwysers. 'n Kwalitatiewe studie is onderneem in twee sekondêre skole aan die Wes-Rand in Gauteng. Data is ingesamel deur middel van dokument analise, waarnemings en semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude. Resultate het aangedui dat daar 'n wanverhouding bestaan tussen wat in die beleid uiteengesit word en wat die onderwysers praktiseer. Dit het duidelik geword dat die meerderheid onderwysers in hierdie studie beperkte kennis van die beleid gehad het, hoewel die implementering van die beleid in 2014 begin het. Daar is bevind dat die puntstelselbeleid nie effektief bydra tot die professionele ontwikkeling van onderwysers in Gauteng nie.

Mosebetsi ona o hlahloba ts'ebetso ea litsebi tsa ntswetsopele ea litsebi le liphehello tsa eona ho ntlafatso ea litsebi tsa matichere. Thuto e ntle e ile ea etsoa likolong tse peli tsa sekondari ho West Rand Gauteng. Lintlha li ile tsa bokelloa ka ho hlahloba litokomane, lithaloso le lipuisano tse sa tšoaneng. Lipatlisiso li bontšitse hore ho na le phapang pakeng tsa se boletsoeng polelong le seo matichere a se etsang. Ho ile ha totobala hore matichere a mangata thutong ena a na le tsebo e fokolang ea leano le hoja ts'ebetsong ea pholisi e qalile ka 2014. Ho ile ha fihleloa qeto ea hore leano la tsamaiso ea motheo ha le tlatse ka katleho ho ntlafatso ea litsebi tsa matichere Gauteng.

## **KEY TERMS**

South African Council for Educators, continuous professional teacher development, point system, management system, professional development, policy, schooling, learning, quality assurance, digital literacy, integrated quality management system.

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## **ACRONYMS**

CAPS – Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement

CPTD - Continuous Professional Teacher Development

IQMS- Integrated Quality Management System

ELSEN – Early Learning and Special Education Needs

INSET - In-service Training

NPFTED - National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development

NPTE - National Policy on Teacher Education

OBE - Outcomes Based Education

RNCS - Revised National Curriculum Statements

RSA – Republic of South Africa

SACE - South African Council for Educators

SADTU – South African Democratic Teachers Union

TALIS – Teaching and Learning International Survey

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The South African educational climate is in a perpetual state of transition. It remains characterised by spurts of change, followed by revisions and adaptations of that change. Some of these changes include the amalgamation of 19 segregated education departments into nine provincial departments, the implementation of the Outcomes-Based Education policy (OBE) where learning areas replaced the traditional subjects, and the change in semantics from the critical outcomes to the specific outcomes (Piccolo, 2004:69). Additional policy changes were also implemented. Some of these changes were a move away from Curriculum 2005 - to the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) (2002), which later became the refined curriculum policy (Piccolo, 2004:69).

There is never a time when the education system remains stable over a long period. The school environment including school culture and climate is very dynamic. "Changes continually take place in educational policy, curriculum and in a school's physical and social environment" (Singh, 2011:1626). Teachers are preparing learners to enter the adult world, but "is the teacher's three to four-year knowledge adequate to prepare learners for a world that has already changed by the time the teacher has completed his/her studying or the learner has completed his/her schooling?" It is no longer possible to know in advance the kinds of knowledge and skills learners will need when they enter adult life. In light of this, it becomes harder to know what expertise and current knowledge teachers need to have in order to equip learners for the world out there. To demonstrate this, Fullan (1993:9) argues, "The professional teacher, to be effective must become a career-long learner of more sophisticated pedagogies and technologies."

In addition, demographics in South Africa are still undergoing rapid change. Soudien (2013:89) argues that there has been a flight of children out of the former black

schools, but that there has been no movement whatsoever in the direction of black schools. He further argued that children of colour have moved in large numbers towards the English-speaking sector of the former white school system.

Teachers need to have mastery of their subjects as well as knowledge of their ever-changing learners. Teachers must always remain students and active learners. The National Policy on Teacher Education, section 48, argues that all teachers need to enhance their skills, not merely qualifications, for the delivery of the new curriculum (Republic of South Africa (RSA), 2011). This paradox reflects the difference between education and training. Education gives you the ability to think, innovate, and find solutions, whilst training merely equips you to do the same thing better. Fullan (1993:5) phrases it cleverly when he states that teacher education has the honour of being the worst problem and the best solution in education. In light of this, a monitoring body, namely the South African Council for Educators (SACE), had to ensure that this upskilling did in fact occur.

SACE (Act 31 of 2000) (RSA, 2011c) has been mandated to ensure quality assurance in the teaching profession. SACE implemented the Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) system to do just this. Unfortunately, due to the South African legacy of apartheid, any form of appraisal or evaluation has been viewed with distrust and apprehension. This premise provides the lens through which all current initiatives are viewed.

## **1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Considering the problem formulation, the overall aim of this study is to explore if the continuous professional teacher development point system ensures the professional development of teachers' in Gauteng. The objectives of the study are fourfold: analyse the functioning of the SACE point system; determine participant viewpoints regarding this system; ascertain the positives and negatives this system offers and determine the contribution of this system to teacher professional development.

### 1.3 BACKGROUND

Evaluation forms an integral pillar in any education system. Globally, various methods have been devised in all institutions to perform some form of evaluation or appraisal. Quinlan & Davidoff (2005:8) state that evaluation has come largely to be seen as a threatening, judgemental and summative exercise. They elaborate that appraisal is regarded as a positive, developmental and formative process, which has the professional development of the teacher as its most pressing concern. For the purposes of my study, I will utilize the word 'appraisal' instead of 'evaluation.'

In-service training (INSET) programmes were widespread in the 1970s as a form of appraisal. However, these programmes were not mandated by law. The linking of appraisal to promotion and pay has resulted in a resistance to this form of appraisal in the United Kingdom and United States of America (Walker & Jeppe, 1992:10). Similarly, in Wales, appraisal has been viewed as an imposition from the powers that be (Fidler, 1988:9). The Education Act (No. 2) was passed in the United Kingdom in 1986. Compliance with the appraisal process became a legal requirement. Local education authorities were established and they served an inspectoral or advisory role as appraisers (Fidler, 1988:10).

In contrast, teacher appraisal systems were already well established in some sectors of the United States of America, Australia and the Republic of South Africa (RSA) (Quinlan & Davidoff, 2005:9). In the Republic of South Africa, prior to 1994, due to the apartheid legacy, the education system was fragmented into 19 education departments (Walker & Jeppe, 1992:8). Appraisal in the various departments was unfair, uneven and unacceptable. In the Department of Education and Training, black teachers were appraised to ensure bureaucratic efficiency and social control. In the white departments, teachers were appraised on the basis of negotiation, consultation and participation (Walker & Jeppe, 1992:9). The appraisal system in the Republic of South Africa has been generally associated with fault finding rather than development.

Post-1994, the National Education Department of the Republic of South Africa had autonomous control. The main focus of professional development activities was compliance with the new curriculum framework. Gauteng in particular displayed a

distinct shift in professional development activities. The main focus post-1994 was to redress the inequities of the past and support teachers with a demanding new curriculum. In 2000, the Norms and Standards for Teachers including Curriculum 2005 emerged and placed increasing demands on teachers' knowledge. In 2005, a national framework was suggested to enable coherence, direction and focus in the education system. This call gave rise in 2007 to the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (NPFTED). In Gauteng, the Gauteng Department of Education introduced a triad of professional development activities (de Clercq & Shalem, 2014:136). These took the form of

- Curriculum-driven workshops
- District based ad hoc training
- Formalised programmes leading to a qualification.

Curriculum-driven workshops were mainly concerned with the transmission of an outcomes-based curriculum. The format of workshops followed the cascade model of disseminating information. When the curriculum changed to the Revised National Curriculum Statements, the same format was followed. Teachers exited workshops feeling "unsupported, overburdened with paperwork and frustrated by the 'one-size-fits-all' approach that the workshops took" (de Clercq & Shalem, 2014:134).

The District based ad hoc training took the form of two different forms of professional development activities. These were, firstly, formal courses and, secondly, teacher-driven informal cluster meetings. The formal courses were marred by complaints of presenters being of unequal expertise, handouts of poor quality and courses not being conceptualised as part of a continuum. The informal clusters also had their challenges with inadequate financial resources, inability to sustain themselves and absence of trustworthy mechanisms to ascertain teachers' priority needs. Professional development was concerned mainly about monitoring policy compliance rather than supporting teachers.

Formalised programmes leading to a qualification were offered by the tertiary institutions. These courses offered an academic focus and took the form of upgrading diplomas. Unfortunately teachers needed the practical competencies and tensions

arose. Tertiary institutions struggled to balance the academic with the practical competencies. Stemming from this, appraisal mechanisms have been viewed by the majority with distrust and anxiety. In fact, this legacy has set the benchmark by which most if not all emerging trends in appraisal systems are presently viewed (Walker & Jeppe, 1992:11).

From 2009 onwards, the focus shifted to the improvement of learner results. The Department of Basic Education created a standardised lesson plan as the new vehicle meant to achieve this. The Gauteng Primary Language and Math Strategy was the largest professional development activity undertaken by the Department of Basic Education.

Sayed, Kanjee and Nkomo (2013:410) contend that the SACE Act (no. 31) would ensure that quality standards of teachers are upheld. SACE has the backing of the Department of Basic Education, the nine provincial education departments, unions and other stakeholders in education. SACE is responsible for quality assurance in the teaching profession. In line with this, the SACE Act 31 of 2000 (RSA 2011c) approved the continuous professional teacher development implementation plan in November 2012. The programme is responsible for regulating and promulgating the continual professional development of teachers.

#### **1.4 WENGER'S SITUATIONAL THEORY AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK IN THIS STUDY**

This investigation will use the situated theory of Wenger (1998). This theory emphasizes two distinguishable concepts namely active and social involvement with "Communities of Practice." Wenger (1998, in Steyn, 2011:215) argues that communities of practice form when people learn collectively, sharing a common purpose. It is based on the premise that knowledge construction does not develop in isolation, but within a learning network. This theory is relevant to this study and is used as a lens because professional development largely does not happen in isolation and during the process of professional development, teachers are expected to be active and take charge of their own development. Secondly, it is critical that professional development takes place in a social environment. The social interaction



happens when teachers are professionally developed through workshops, seminars, education conferences addressed by experts in different subjects that teachers are teaching, engaging in informal dialogue with peers, visits to other schools and participating in a network of teachers. All these interactions constitute communities of practice.

## **1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

This investigation concentrated on whether SACE point system ensures the professional development of teachers. The education system in South Africa went through various phases of curriculum transformation, and this impacted negatively on the academic outcomes (Weber, 2008). A further challenge is that teachers have not realised that the continuous professional teacher development system as a policy imperative is not an option but an obligation (Gumede & Biyase, 2016). Schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> century also have to respond to the challenges of globalisation. Technological innovations are so fast paced that teachers cannot keep up. An additional burden due to decentralisation of schools are issues of accountability. Recording, reporting and assessment techniques have changed drastically. This transformation necessitated the need for the professional teacher. The Department of Basic Education considered continuous professional teacher development as a solution to the challenges around teacher professional development (RSA, 2011c).

SACE is the statutory body established for quality assurance in South African schools. The tool that is used to achieve this is the continuous professional teacher development point system (RSA, 2011c). Unfortunately, from its inception in 2012, there are still those teachers who either are not registered on the system or those who are not updating their points. This makes it difficult to achieve quality assurance. This study investigates the effect that the SACE point system has on the professional development of teachers. One of the challenges raised is failure to regularly update on the point system. I believes that this poses a serious challenge because if it is not timeously updated, the system will not provide appropriate data that will be useful to improve it and, secondly, assist in developing appropriate interventions where there might be professional development gaps. It questions whether another system exists

in the education sector to ensure professional development of teachers. It discusses actual professional development versus professional development for the mere accumulation of points. The disparity between the various professional development providers is highlighted. The study asks the question, does the point system policy ensure professional development of teachers? Professional development and educator workload is also considered. Teacher apathy with regard to registering under the professional development point system is also addressed.

Professional development should have the ability to advance teachers in their practice as teachers. In this study, I assume that the following are challenges related to the introduction of the SACE point system: the lack of adequate understanding by teachers, the role the SACE plays in their professional development, that teachers are not fully involved in the activities of the SACE point system, whether the SACE point system contributes towards teachers' professional development. It is also assumed that the management of the SACE point system is also questionable and seems to lack credibility as it is faced with matters such as updating and so on. Some of the challenges that this study intends to investigate are the digital knowledge of teachers in terms of engaging with the point system and quality assurance of the system by the education authorities.

The central and guiding research question is: Does the SACE point system ensure the professional development of teachers in the Gauteng Department of Education? In line with the central question, the guiding research sub-questions are:

- How exactly does the SACE point system work?
- What are the perceptions of teachers and other stakeholders regarding this form of evaluation?
- What advantages and disadvantages does this system offer to teachers?
- How effective is the SACE point system in ensuring the professional development of teachers?

## **1.6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The overarching aim of this research is to explore the effect that the SACE point system has on the professional development of teachers. The intention of this study is to understand the SACE point system and to determine how effective it is in ensuring professional development of teachers.

The objectives of this study are to:

- Understand how the SACE point system works;
- Determine participant perceptions towards the point system;
- Determine the advantages and disadvantages of this system of evaluation; and
- Determine the effectiveness of the SACE point system on teacher professional development.

## **1.7 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate the effect that the SACE point system has on the professional development of teachers. Furthermore, teachers' views and perspectives regarding this system of appraisal are considered. Knowledge and expertise gained will be shared with the professional development and research sector of SACE.

## **1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **1.8.1 Design and methodology**

The intention of this study was to determine whether the SACE point system contributes positively towards professional development of teachers. This investigation involved the in-depth focus on continuous professional teacher development for a fixed period of time. The aims were to:

- Gain the latest insights into this system;
- Develop unique concepts or theoretical perspectives about these phenomena; and
- Discover the challenges that abide within the phenomena.

The paradigmatic lens that this study was based upon is the constructivist philosophy. I constructed knowledge from the views and perceptions of the participants. Ontologically, teachers are assessed using the continuous professional teacher development point system. In this study, I attempted to get participant perceptions and views on continuous professional teacher development.

### **1.8.2 The population and sample selection**

Two public schools under the ambits of the Gauteng Department of Education were selected for this particular investigation. Teachers from various race groups at one urban secondary school and one Early Learning and Special Education Needs (ELSEN) School in Roodepoort, on the West Rand in Gauteng formed the participant sample together the deputy principals and one principal from the secondary school. Both schools were selected because they are public schools and teachers at these schools have registered with SACE and are licensed to teach. Secondly, the SACE point system policy affects all these teachers.

The sample in this study was obtained through purposeful sampling and this sampling was done to add to the utility of information procured from small samples (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:319). In addition, this study used purposive sampling because it assisted in selecting participants that would provide the important information about the topic under investigation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:95). The participants interviewed were teachers (i.e. the principal, deputy principals and ordinary teachers) at these institutions as well as other departmental officials involved with continuous professional teacher development at other Gauteng educational institutions. A prerequisite for participation was that all teachers sampled had to be qualified, have a valid SACE certificate and be registered on the continuous professional teacher development point system. The participant sample consisted of six teachers, one principal, two deputy principals, one district official from the Gauteng Department of Education responsible for continuous professional teacher development, and two officials from SACE.

### **1.8.3 The researcher's role**

I assumed the role of participant observer and interviewer.

#### **1.8.4 Planned data collection instruments**

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:346) state that, "Choosing data collection strategies is a process of deciding among available alternatives for collection and corroboration of data and of modifying one's decisions to capture the reality of the phenomena." Hence, the data collection strategies included in this study involved obtaining information from multiple forms of data. A triad of data collection techniques were used: observations, interviews, and document analysis. The intent to use multiple strategies enabled corroboration of data.

Observations focused on the continuous professional teacher development management system at school level, school meetings that included continuous professional development as an item on the agenda, and the frequency of point reporting at school level. These observations assisted me to ascertain how the continuous professional teacher development policy is being implemented at school level. The complementary interaction of observations and interview data further added to the trustworthiness of my research. Interviews focused on the participants' perceptions of the continuous professional teacher development point system as well as the potential advantages and disadvantages of this system. Interviews corroborated data obtained from observations and document analysis and further validated the trustworthiness of the study. Document analysis focused on the SACE documents as well as relevant policy and legislation dealing with continuous professional teacher development. Document analysis allowed me to ascertain exactly how this system works and its possible advantages and disadvantages.

### **1.9 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY**

The entire study is organised into five chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction and includes the background, the statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. Chapter 2 focuses on a review of the literature. Chapter 3 expands on the

methodology of the current study. Chapter 4 explains the findings of the study and Chapter 5 elaborates on the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

It is imperative that all concepts in this study be thoroughly elucidated to minimise the effect of ambiguity. Diverse concepts may hold a host of meaning for different people; therefore it is imperative that these concepts be clarified. The concepts highlighted below are vital in understanding the discourse presented in this study. Greater detail is included under the relevant sections of the study.

### **1.10.1 Continuous professional development**

All professional bodies in different career spheres need to grow their members professionally. Continuous professional development refers to a system used to extend the skills, knowledge, attitude and values of teachers throughout their careers. The teaching profession requires in-depth knowledge which is constantly being upgraded to ensure relevance in the teaching profession. It involves the acquisition of complex skills that need to perpetually adapt to unique situations, new technologies and an evolving world (RSA, 2011c).

### **1.10.2 The South African Council for Educators (SACE)**

SACE is a statutory body that was constituted to uphold and strengthen the teaching profession. This body is governed by the SACE Act No. 31 of 2000 (RSA, 2011c). The council is responsible for developing a framework of professional standards for the South African teaching profession. The objectives of this body are to register teachers, promote their professional development, and defend the ethical and professional standards.

### **1.10.3 Continuous professional teacher development management system**

This is the system used for identifying all beneficial professional development activities. It approves quality and credible professional development providers and endorses applicable and effective activities and programmes. It allots professional

development points for these activities and also credits the teachers' professional development points' account (RSA, 2011c).

#### **1.10.4 SACE point system**

The terms 'SACE point system' and 'SACE management system' are used interchangeably. Even though the term 'management system' is the documented term, I will use the term the 'SACE point system' as it is a term well recognised and used by all teachers. The use of the term 'management system' may lead to confusion in the field.

#### **1.10.5 Teacher/Educator**

"An educator means any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons at an education institution" (RSA, 2011c). The term 'teacher' and 'educator' will be used interchangeably. Teachers are tasked with the profuse responsibilities of helping learners along the path of learning, understanding and growing. Teachers need to continuously renew their commitment to the profession, express their pride in its ideals of service and contribute to a just and thriving nation.

### **1.11 CONCLUSION**

The SACE point system arose to ensure quality control in the education sector. The point system is a tool used by SACE to quantify professional development of teachers and ensure accountability. Although there is abundant research on professional development, actual research on the continuous professional teacher development point system is a new field, still relatively unexplored. Through this research, I studied the continuous professional teacher development point system to ascertain whether it does in fact contribute significantly to professional development of teachers in Gauteng. As such, it is hoped that this study will contribute in some way to the existing body of knowledge.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**



The literature review presented in this chapter investigates the whether SACE point system contributes towards professional development of teachers. The literature reviewed culminated in an improved theoretical understanding of the given analysed data. The focus of the review assisted to dissect the term 'professional development' and get to the crux of what effective professional development is. In achieving this, I reached a theoretical understanding of the term 'professional development', delved into the statutory body that oversees professional development in South Africa and focused on the collaborative relationship between professional development and teacher work. I attempted to link theory to policy and practice in understanding the main research question: Does the SACE point system policy ensure professional development of teachers in Gauteng?

The concept professional development has traditionally been shrouded in negativity and suspicion. Unfortunately, professional development programmes have thus far left quite a few teachers unhappy, unfulfilled and uncertain. According to Ono and Ferreira (2009:60), "Nothing has promised so much and has been so frustratingly wasteful as the thousands of workshops and conferences that led to no significant change in practice when the teachers returned to their classrooms." If professional development does not equate to improved student performance, it is at best an exercise in futility and at worst another mechanism to disadvantage the South African learner.

The chapter has been demarcated into various sub-headings to give the reader deeper insight into professional development. The demarcations are as follows: a theoretical framework and competing models for continuous professional development of teachers, technology as part of professional development strategy, policy positions and the practice of SACE, the advantages and drawbacks of the continuous professional teacher development point system, the implications of professional development , and types of professional development. The assumption in this study was that if teachers are given quality professional development activities, the performance of learners in schools will improve.

Pre-1994, South Africa and the South African education system had been in turmoil. Marred by colonialism, the legacy of apartheid and a disjointed education system, the

country was in crisis. Post-1994, South Africa was desperate for educational reform. Morrow (2007:28 as cited in Botman, 2016:48) made an accurate assessment when he stated that although the causes of the crisis in the education system were political, “the remedy is going to have to be professional.”

A plethora of factors contributing to the obstacles facing the education system post-apartheid emerged. The Department of Basic Education considered continuous professional teacher development as a solution to the identified challenges. This investigation focused on the challenges around teacher professional development.

The concept of continuous professional teacher development had to undergo a major paradigm shift: from viewing only the student as learner, to now viewing the teacher as a learner as well. Timperley (2008:13) and Singh (2011:1628) both support the idea that the focus must shift from the learner child to the learner teacher as well. But, continuous professional teacher development cannot be merely looked at as a vehicle for reform. Scribner (1999:236); Ono and Ferreira (2009:63) argue that in order for professional development to be effective, it has to become embedded in the daily activities and functioning of the school.

## **2.2 THE PURPOSES AND THE OBJECTIVES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The quality of education provision has been of global concern over the past few decades. Tsotetsi (2013:89) suggests that professional development is the cornerstone for effective teaching and learning. Guskey (1994:3) concurs with Tsotetsi by agreeing that all educational reform efforts have professional development at their core. Professional development is viewed as the primary vehicle to bring about change.

In South Africa, the key objective of professional development is to ensure that teachers are appropriately furnished with the necessary skills and tools to deal with emerging challenges and demands. The Skills Development Act (1998:4) encourages employers to “use the workplace as an active learning environment and provide employees with the opportunity to acquire new skills.” Avalos (2011:10) elaborates

that the professional development of teachers is regarded as a highly complex process involving cognitive as well as emotional skills. He states that this development also entails the involvement of teachers both individually as well as collectively. Teachers must possess the capacity and willingness to examine where they stand with regard to their personal convictions and beliefs and they must be open to appropriate alternatives for improvement or change.

Professional development is the tool used to grow teachers professionally. This growth occurs in a particular education policy environment or school culture. Growth will differ depending on this environment as some environments are more conducive to learning than others. The particular instruments used to trigger development also depend on the objectives and needs of teachers as well as their students. Stemming from this, it becomes apparent that not all forms of professional development will be appropriate for all contexts. As Avalos (2011:10) states there is a constant need to study, experiment, discuss and reflect on teacher professional development. Policy makers, funding organisations, the education departments and parents are interested to note if growth has occurred. The recent trend has been to gauge the efficacy of professional development by measuring it against student learning.

### **2.3 CONCEPTUALISATION OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Continuous professional teacher development has a myriad of meanings and my focus was to get to the definition that was appropriate to this study. Avalos (2011:10) states that “professional development is about teachers learning, learning how to learn, and transforming their knowledge into practice for the benefit of their students’ growth.” Such a definition encompasses four crucial aspects of professional development. Firstly, it is about teachers’ learning. Jita and Mokhele (2014:2) state that South Africa faces the challenge of finding effective professional development that translates into students’ learning.

In accordance with the above, Zambak, Alston, Marshall, Jeff and Tyminski (2002:108) agree with Jita and Mokhele in that teaching practices will have to change, as will opinions and beliefs so that there is an improvement in students’ learning. De Corte

(2016:33) supports this line of thinking by mentioning the concept 'adaptive competence' which he defines as the flexible application of skills and knowledge in varying contexts. But how exactly do we gauge teachers' learning? What tool can be administered to ensure that teachers' learning equates to professional development? Is attendance for an hour at a professional development workshop adequate to qualify as teachers' learning? Herein lies the problem. A monitoring tool is needed to ensure accountability with regard to aspects such as quality control, policy implementation, skills and education development. SACE steps in to bridge this divide by introducing the continuous professional teacher development point system.

The concept 'teachers' learning' also has reference to content knowledge. Theorists Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman and Yoon (2001:923) and Steyn (2009:258) both focused on the mastery of content knowledge in their studies of continuous professional teacher development. In fact, although content knowledge is so important, one of the criticisms of professional development is the exclusive focus on content knowledge to the detriment of other educational constructs. Once again a problem arises: What tool can ascertain whether a teacher's content knowledge has been improved after attendance at a professional development workshop? The SACE point system once again steps in, attempting to bridge this divide.

Secondly, Avalos' (2011:10) definition focuses on "learning how to learn." This phrase is a clear reference to the pedagogical knowledge of teachers. De Clercq and Shalem (2014:130) further elaborate that the main focus of professional development should be on ways of teaching that equate to the learning of students. Similarly, Mashile (2011:175) proposes a few examples of pedagogical development such as workshops and seminars. He states that the focus of these interactions should be on aspects such as cognitive development or classroom management. Supporting this train of thought, Opfer and Pedder (2011, in Walton, Nel, Muller & Leboloane, 2014:321) state that, "Professional learning may be influenced both by the pedagogical features of the learning activity, and the teachers' orientation to learning, including their beliefs and prior learning." Ono and Ferreira (2009:61) pursue an alternative paradigm concerning the human brain and its search for meaning. This paradigm shift emerged in the 1990s. Once again, the question arises: What unit of analysis can be used to gauge that teachers have learnt how to learn?

Thirdly, Avalos' (2011:10) definition encompasses the aspect, "transforming their knowledge into practice." A significant aspect of continuous professional teacher development is the translation of theoretical knowledge into a practical situation. This speaks directly to the theory practice divide. The gap between these concepts has to be narrowed to ensure an efficient and effective continuous professional teacher development system. In spite of all the literature on the importance of narrowing the theoretical-practical gap, Botman (2016:58) still makes reference to "the inappropriate blend of theoretical, practical and experiential knowledge."

Lastly, Avalos (2011:10) incorporates "the benefit of their student's growth" in his definition. All professional development programmes have students' improvement as their ultimate benefit. Steyn (2009:260) shares the sentiment that the aim of continuous professional teacher development is to produce successful and productive citizens of a nation. Unfortunately, the definition proposed by Avalos (2011) omitted two important variables that I envisaged as important for this study: firstly, context, and secondly, networking. In contrast to Avalos' definition, Guskey (1994:5) states that there is no perfect solution to finding the perfect professional development activities. He further argues that there are many right answers and the challenge will be to find the optimal mix to suit a particular context. One must always bear in mind that the context is constantly changing.

In his studies, Singh (2011:1627) concurs with Guskey (1994) regarding the value of context. Like-minded theorists such as Petras and Jamil (2012:5); Guskey (1994:5); Scribner (1999:242); Singh (2011:1627); and De Corte (2016:36) all emphasise the importance of context as part of their studies. Context is also alluded to the use of the phrase "organization focused" (Mashile, 2011:175).

If continuous professional teacher development activities are context focused, this makes teachers' learning more meaningful. It allows teachers to adapt their techniques and knowledge to their current context. As with most aspects, knowledge also dates. In other words, due to technological advancements, innovations and current research in education, the knowledge we have currently may be outdated in a few years' time.

The Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) has formed the bedrock of teacher professional development initiatives in South Africa. The IQMS system encompasses various performance standards. Teachers are appraised yearly on the IQMS system and are appraised on a four point scale. The relationship between continuous professional teacher development and the IQMS system has been largely misunderstood. The IQMS identifies the gaps in professional development. It focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of teachers. The continuous professional teacher development system in contrast is an attempt to provide solutions to teachers to fill in those gaps. The continuous professional teacher development management system provides teachers with a database of SACE approved providers and a menu of SACE endorsed professional development activities/ programmes to address the needs identified by the IQMS process.

## **2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND COMPETING MODELS FOR CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS**

“Forms and models of teacher professional development evolve to adapt to changes which occurred over time in teachers’ work, professional status and development needs” (de Clercq & Phiri, 2013:78). This section focuses on models of professional development. One of the models, also incorporating context, was developed by Samuel and will be discussed in the Samuel’s Force Field Model. Singh (2011:1627), in his description of Samuel’s Force Field Model, criticises existing models of continuous professional teacher development by stating that education departments are primarily concerned with educating learners and not teachers. His focus was on teachers and perspectives of teachers. Four factors, which he identified as the key to the identity and role of teachers, were biography, context, the institutional setting, and the programmatic impact.

Samuel (2008:12) states that the key factor of biography cannot ignore the lived experience of the teacher. An individual teacher has undergone his/her own unique life history, as well as his/her own unique teaching and learning experiences. A teacher enters the profession with a rich store of experiences, not as a blank slate. These experiences may be gleaned from religious, cultural or social settings. A

teacher when faced with challenges often retreats to their biographical identity. This force gives teachers a degree of stability and comfort as it is familiar territory. Unfortunately, many initial teacher development courses do not pay sufficient attention to the impact that biographical forces yield.

Another factor which Samuel (2008:13) deems important is the contextual forces. The focus here is on the uniqueness of the cultural, as well as the political and macro-social environments. Apartheid education in South Africa was characterised by a period of pessimism as this system may have seemed unalterable and intolerable. Post-apartheid South African education was infused with euphoria, waiting for the keenly anticipated changes in policy. Contextual factors definitely alter the role and identity of teachers.

Another factor that has an effect is that of institutional settings. The ethos of various institutions in different historical time periods will have an impact on quality teaching and learning. Finally, the last factor that Samuel (2008:13) sees as important is programmatic forces, which he refers to as “curriculum intervention forces”. Important factors to consider here are the direction that teaching and learning follows and the sequence and content of teaching and learning. Although Samuel’s Force Field Model was an improvement on Avalos’ model in that context was included, it did have an important shortcoming: networking was also not included.

Avalos (2011:12) makes reference to the networking process by using the term ‘mediations’. The networking process entails facilitation, collaboration and interaction between and amongst educational institutions. These interactions can be structured or semi-structured, such as partnerships or collaborative networks. This networking can also take place in informal contexts such as the individualised workplace setting. According to Avalos (2011:12), the three main areas of networking in the educational arena are: school-university partnerships, teacher co-learning, and workplace learning. Networking is a critical aspect in teacher professional development. Jita and Mokhele (2014:1) concur with Avalos by stating that “networks, communities of practice and clusters are related concepts that describe forms of collaboration between schools and/or teachers that encourage such learning.”

Wenger's situated learning theory (1998, cited in Steyn, 2011) is an alternate theory, based on two distinguishable concepts. According to Steyn (2013:280), Wenger sees learning as both an active and a social involvement with "Communities of Practice" utilised as the unit of analysis. Wenger (1998, in Steyn, 2011:215) argues that communities of practice form when people learn collectively, sharing a common purpose. It is based on the premise that knowledge construction does not develop in isolation, but within a learning network. "There are two basic principles: active learning takes place as a function of the context, culture and activity in which it occurs, and social participation is a critical element of situated learning" (Steyn, 2011:215). Further support for this theory is by de Clercq and Phiri (2013:78) who state that learning is situation specific and socially constructed. This is an appropriate theory as both context and networking is taken into consideration. An added advantage is that the communities of practice mentioned above can be personally, locally, nationally, and globally constructed.

With context, networking, national and global perspectives being considered, Wenger's situated learning theory (1998, as cited in Steyn, 2011) ties in perfectly with my conceptions of the continuous professional teacher development model. It considers, firstly, personal and local circumstances, and then it encompasses national and global perspectives. This also perhaps tallies with Samuel's (2008) component of institutional settings. In other words, a learner learns, takes shape through his lived experience and continues being moulded by these experiences. Learning context and social participation cannot be divorced from each other. Closely linked to his theory, is the concept 'communities of practice'.

This theoretical framework was the lens through which this study was viewed. Wenger's theory was constructed 21 years ago, in 1998. In addition to drawing heavily from Wenger's theory of social learning, this study also linked social media platforms as social participation or communities of practice to the theory of social learning. Modern day technological innovations have undergone a metamorphosis compared to 21 years ago when Wenger's study was undertaken. The study is relevant, but the tools have evolved.



All age groups use technology for the benefit of updating, upskilling and upgrading current knowledge. Learners learn using technology and teachers learn and teach using technology. According to Jones and Dexter (2014:371), personal learning networks have increased due to the escalation of social media sites. Teachers are increasingly interacting on such sites. Twitter, Face Book, YouTube, together with professional learning sites, blogs, and podcasts are now forming the personal learning networks. The sites developed for teacher learning and empowerment are the very same sites that are contributing to teacher overload. Teachers must be adequately trained to participate in this mode of learning. A fine balance must coexist between the designed as well as the emergent aspects of this mode of learning. These personal learning networks are our past communities of practice. Personal learning networks have the advantage of an immense network of resources, updated and widespread information on technology innovation and provision is made for anonymous participation. Stemming from this, a predetermined professional development programme encompassing a 'one size fits all' approach to learning is doomed to failure. Context cannot be determined in advance and contexts are dynamic.

Technology is often used as a component to ensure that teachers remain current and relevant with regard to performance standards and modern methods of interaction in a particular learning area. School environments are dynamic and constantly adapt and adjust as the wheels of change, population diversity and new policies and practices come into being. Compounding this is the influx of groundbreaking new technologies and innovations, such as digital technology. Teachers now have the additional burden of marrying their traditional practices to match an advanced and technologically sophisticated Y-generation. "To accomplish this, teachers need opportunities to learn to teach in ways that differ from how they were taught and provide a technology rich environment for today's technology savvy students" (Jones & Dexter, 2014:368).

#### **2.4.1 Technology-driven Professional Development**

The SACE point system to a significant extent relies on technology and it requires the type of teachers or users who are able to benefit from the advantages of technology. Participation in the system by constantly updating points requires teachers who are

digitally literate. In the search for best practice regarding professional development alternatives, technology driven professional development arose as one of the most current and updated solutions. Technological innovations are so fast paced that even a current professional development programme based on technology has to be constantly reviewed. Jones and Dexter (2014:368) observe that, “The unprecedented growth of digital technologies and the rate at which technology now evolves creates a need for greater flexibility in teacher professional development.” Formal professional development activities are sadly lagging behind technological innovations. Jones and Dexter (2014:368) are of the opinion that mobile technologies and applications have extremely rapid development schedules, evolving at a much faster pace than traditional software.

Logically, professional development programmes have to evolve at a similar rapid pace. Internal and external dynamics affecting professional development are constantly at work. Classroom dynamics and technology in the classroom are also changing constantly. Updated applications and new technologies are evolving much faster. Schools have entered the race and the technology savvy Y-generation is coping well in this new and still relatively unexplored terrain.

Technology-driven professional development has the added advantage of allowing for virtual asynchronous communication. This negates the time constraints usually needed for teachers’ traditional professional development activities. According to Stevenson’s study (2004, cited in Jones & Dexter, 2014:369), teachers engaging in technology driven professional development reported “immediate support, new idea generation and brainstorming opportunities as key components of informal collaboration” (Jones & Dexter, 2014:369).

Globally teachers are now utilising social media to report successes and failures using these new innovations. The benefits of technology are that teachers have unlimited access to current and relevant resources, they can be pioneers in any field due to the quantity and quality of current information available and they have the added benefit of privacy. Unfortunately, those responsible for these innovations usually ignore the teachers’ voice and do not capitalise on teachers’ vast experience. Professional

development programmes have to constantly narrow the gap between innovation and expertise.

## **2.5 POLICY POSITIONS AND THE PRACTICE OF SACE**

It is apparent that the professional development needs of South African teachers are not being adequately addressed. Although policy initiatives have been conceived in an attempt to narrow this gap, this study focused on whether the continuous professional teacher development point system ensures professional development of teachers. Policy initiatives taken by the South African government fall into two categories:

1. The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (NPFTED)
2. Integrated strategic planning framework.

NPFTED gave birth to the continuous professional teacher development policy and SACE was tasked by law with the overall responsibility to oversee this system of professional development. “The ultimate aim of the continuous professional teacher development is to enable learners to ‘learn well and equip themselves for further learning and for satisfying lives as productive citizens, for the benefit of their families, their communities and our nation” (Steyn, 2009:261). In essence, SACE is the statutory body mandated to bridge the divide between professional development and effective professional development. Professional development could occur but may not necessarily equate to any significant change in teaching practices. Effective professional development is achieved as SACE provides a database of approved providers to ensure that professional development is adequate and adheres to quality control mechanisms.

Steyn (2009:261) notes that “SACE, as a statutory body for professional teachers will have the overall responsibility for the implementation, management and quality assurance of the Continuous Professional Teacher Development system.” SACE will be bestowed with the necessary resources and support to bolster that role. All teachers, irrespective of whether they are state-employed, employed by the School

Governing Body or are teaching at independent schools, are required to register with SACE. The ultimate responsibility of this body is to ensure quality control in the South African teaching profession, thereby regulating and strengthening the profession.


“The SACE Act (No. 31 of 2000) granted the Council its statutory status to implement its mandates of compulsory registration, promotion of professional development and implementation of the Code of Ethics” (RSA, 2011c). The Basic Laws Amendment Act (RSA, 2011c) further authorized SACE to manage the continuous professional teacher development system.

According to this policy, SACE allocates professional development points for professional development activities undertaken by teachers. This is in accordance with a schedule of points approved by SACE. All teachers are required to sign up for professional development points by completing a profile form. SACE keeps a record of all points accrued on a personal professional development points account. A minimum of 150 professional development points must be achieved by teachers on their personal professional development points account in a three-year cycle. A certificate of achievement is issued by SACE if the target is achieved.

150 points:	A bronze certificate of achievement
151-300 points:	A silver certificate of achievement
300+ points:	A gold certificate of achievement

There is no carry over and after three years the personal professional development points account is reset to zero.


The phasing in of the continuous professional teacher development system began in January 2014. The first cohort to register was principals and deputy principals. The second cohort started in January 2015 with Head of Department’s registering. The third cohort began in January 2016 with the registration of the level 1 teacher. Presently, all new teachers are being registered.



January 2014

December 2014 (Year 1)

- 1st Cohort starts the 1st year of the three-year continuous professional teacher development cycle.
- 2nd Cohort engages in the continuous professional teacher development orientation and sign-up processes.
- Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation.



January 2015

December 2015 (Year 2)

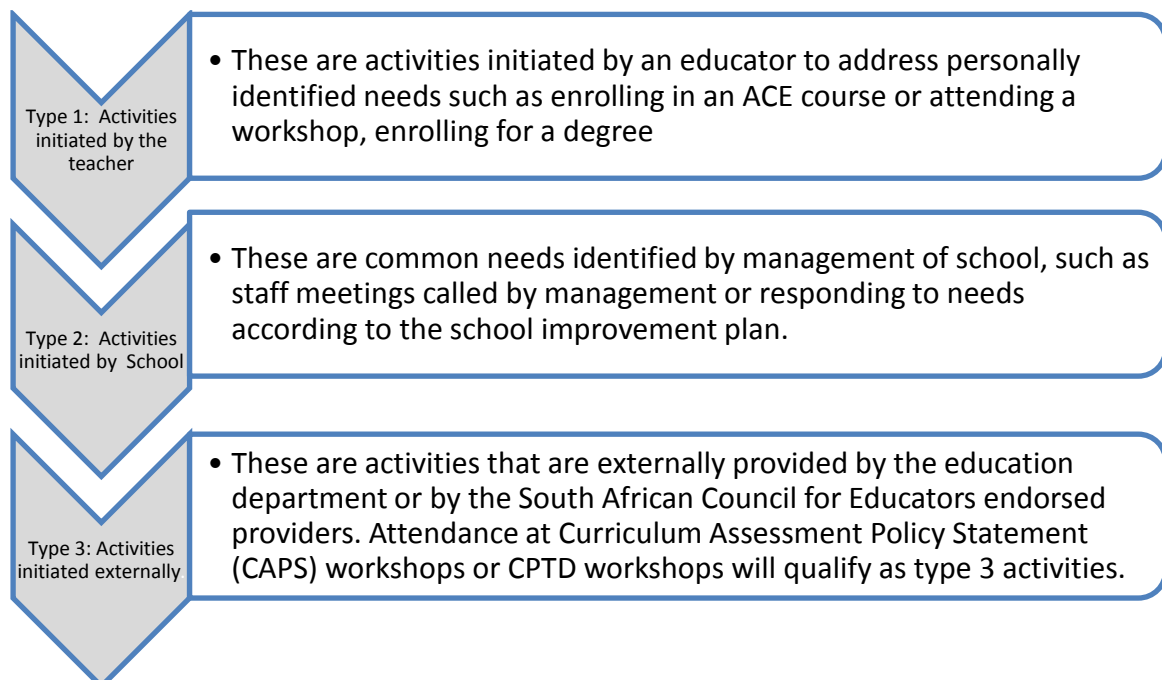
- 1st Cohort starts 2nd year of the three-year continuous professional teacher development cycle.
- 2nd Cohort starts 1st year of the three-year cycle.
- 3rd Cohort engages in the continuous professional teacher development orientation and sign-up processes.
- Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation.



- 1st Cohort starts 3rd year of the first three-year continuous professional teacher development cycle and earns 150 points by the end of December 2015.
- 2nd Cohort starts 2nd year of the first three-year cycle.
- 3rd Cohort starts 1st year of the first three-year continuous professional teacher development cycle.
- Impact study of the 1st cohort's first three-year cycle.

**Figure 2.1 Illustration of the first continuous professional teacher development cycle (RSA 2011c)**

According to policy, in January 2017 the 1st cohort's 150 points lapses and they start their 2<sup>nd</sup> three-year cycle from 0. The continuous professional teacher development management system is represented in Figure 2.2 below. Three types of professional development activities are allocated points.



## **Figure 2.2 The continuous professional teacher development management system (RSA:2011c)**

Type 1 and Type 2 activities are recorded in the educator's personal development portfolio. Type 3 activities, which are endorsed by SACE, are captured on an online system and points are awarded for these.

As is evident from the dates above, continuous professional teacher development is in its infancy and as such may experience many teething problems as it undergoes development. No penalties for non-compliance will be imposed from 2014-2019. According to policy, in 2019, SACE will review the continuous professional teacher development points system and make recommendations regarding sanctions for non-compliance. The issue that continuous professional teacher development is compulsory still remains contested. Although SACE states that continuous professional teacher development is mandatory, one of the key criticisms of continuous professional teacher development is that SACE remains silent on the issue of sanctions for non-compliance.

Unfortunately, traditional continuous professional teacher development programmes have left quite a few teachers dissatisfied. Apart from perceived time wastage, the duration of continuous professional teacher development activities is also problematic. One-hour workshops are not adequate to ensure a significant change in classroom practices. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002:948) affirm that, "Most professional development consisted of one-shot workshops aimed at teacher mastery of prescribed skills and knowledge."

The forms and models of teacher professional development cannot stagnate and need to evolve with changing trends. Traditional continuous professional teacher development initiatives such as workshops and lectures have to give way to alternate forms of continuous professional teacher development. Mundry (2005, in Steyn, 2009:263) is of the opinion that we should "abandon outmoded approaches to staff development and invest in these more 'practice-based' approaches to professional learning for teachers." The paradigm shift from the "period, teachers were treated as workers with basic technical competencies" (de Clercq & Phiri, 2013:78) to teachers

as mediators of learning has not translated into continuous professional teacher development programmes. Teachers are professionals and as such should be allowed to exercise their professional judgement.

Teachers express a wish to be included in active and participatory learning as opposed to passive learning. De Clercq and Phiri (2013:78) state that teachers should be “treated as high professionals, encouraged to grow and improve their professional practices by sharing and reflecting together on their experiences and practices.” Mashile (2011:174) contends that “commercialization of continuous professional teacher development in a free market is unavoidable and the outcome is that quick fix solutions relating to a wide range of professional development issues are often surreptitiously being offered.” Schools have now become niche markets for non-traditional continuous professional teacher development partners. Providers of professional development activities are mushrooming. This places teachers and teaching institutions at risk. These providers may have personal gain or profit as their aim and may therefore financially abuse the teachers and the academic institutions. Their costs could be exorbitant if there is no controlling body to monitor these providers.

Teachers highlight the lack of feedback as one of their stumbling blocks. Guskey (1994:388) comments that, “Continued follow-up, support, and pressure following the initial training are even more crucial”. Learner population is diverse and so is the educator population. Mashile (2011:174) suggests that “a diversity of programmes be on offer to cater for the variety of divergent needs experienced by professionals each in their particular context.”

## **2.6 THE ADVANTAGES AND THE DRAWBACKS OF CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TEACHER DEVELOPMENT**

The continuous professional teacher development system facilitates professional development by focusing professional development activities, encouraging teachers to become experts in their field and enhancing the education sector as a whole. But unfortunately, as with any other system that is newly conceived, it is marred by its fair share of criticism.



### **2.6.1 Advantages of the continuous professional teacher development point system (SACE, 2016:6)**

- The ultimate aim of continuous professional teacher development is to increase the capacity of teachers and thereby extend the capacity of learners. The continuous professional teacher development point system is a tangible tool by which educational reform can be measured and improved.
- It has the ability to be teacher specific. Teachers can be developed on the “day to day” activities that are characteristic of the teaching profession (Guskey, 1994:3). This ensures the relevance of new knowledge.
- Change is not forced upon teachers. Change can happen gradually and in stages. “The uniqueness of the individual setting” (Guskey, 1994:20) can be taken into consideration.
- Contexts are dynamic, therefore the “optimal mix” (Guskey, 1994:23) of professional development activities to gain professional development points will also lose its relevance and have to be revisited. This ensures continual learning.
- Professional judgement is enabled, where individual teachers and on-site personnel take ownership for their own learning. Teachers can choose the professional development activities that they wish to engage in. In November 2000, the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) formulated a position paper for SACE regarding continuous professional teacher development (Mashile, 2011:177). In this paper, SADTU highlights the fact that teachers need to be treated as professionals. “SADTU regards professional judgement as a central notion and an essential feature in continuous professional teacher development” (Mashile, 2011:177).
- SACE has the opportunity to use benchmarking in their search for best practice. Mashile (2011:179) states that, “Benchmarking ... is the search for best practices that lead to superior performance.... It is an improvement process in which an organisation compares its performance against ‘best in class’ organisations, determines how those organisations achieved their performance levels, and uses the information to improve its own performance.”

## 2.6.2 Disadvantages of the continuous professional teacher development point system

- South Africa is considered a developing nation and, as such, economic and fiscal constraints are a reality. Botman (2016:52); Ono and Ferreira (2009:60) and de Clercq and Shalem (2014:131) put forward an argument against the high costs of continuous professional teacher development. Ono and Ferreira (2009:60) state that “professional development of teachers has been neglected because of budget constraint.”
- Ono and Ferreira (2009:2) and de Clercq and Phiri (2013:80) collectively disagree with the cascade approach of disseminating information. In this method, knowledge ‘flows down’ from the upper levels. Usually the result is a dilution and/or incorrect interpretation of crucial information. This is the ‘one size fits all’ model and individual competencies are not taken into account. The teacher is also viewed as a sponge and does not actively engage with material or facilitators.
- Knowledge that is disseminated using the cascade approach can lose its authenticity due to differing competencies of trainers. The filtering of knowledge occurs as it disseminates down the line.
- Continuous professional teacher development focuses on individual learning as individual teachers receive points. Points are awarded merely for attendance at workshops, courses, etc. This leads to rewarding of passivity. No reflective dialogue occurs and no collaborative learning occurs. A scramble for points ensues, resulting in the main teaching responsibilities being neglected.
- This awarding of points can also be negatively viewed by teachers, as indicated by Vemić’s study (2007, in Steyn, 2011:220). Some sectors view continuous professional teacher development as an imposition rather than for purposes of improvement. As such, is it surveillance or support? This results in lack of ownership by teachers. “Vemić’s study shows that requiring professional development points may also have a negative impact. The personnel in Vemić’s study viewed continuous professional teacher development as an imposed requirement rather than an approach to improving their potential” (Steyn,

2011:220). Timperley (2008:14) is of the opinion that if there is a perception that continuous professional teacher development is a reflection of teachers' competence, or in any way puts their job, pay or reputation at risk, they are unlikely to participate in an open and meaningful way.

- Five years after implementation, schools have not yet been tasked to create a policy regarding continuous professional teacher development. A lack of policy is contributing to abdication of accountability. This is a barrier to educational reform.
- Globalisation has put all our schools at risk. Continuous professional teacher development providers are scanning the schools looking “for a niche market, irrespective of capacity or skills to deliver” (Mashile, 2011:179). These providers may range over the spectrum and are no longer the schools' traditional providers such as universities. Some are only motivated by profit, resulting in:
  - ❖ Poor quality programmes
  - ❖ Cost considerations
  - ❖ Incorrect incentives
- The theory-practical gap is widening. Theoretical, practical and experiential knowledge is not being integrated correctly. Opportunities to capture teachers' experience and build on capacity within organisations are being lost.
- Diversity of programmes are becoming a challenge.
- South African teachers are already under a huge administrative burden. Continuous professional teacher development may further add to this burden.
- Continuous professional teacher development is an individualised learning system and does not take networking into account. Steyn (2011:225) comments that, “Although the continuous professional teacher development does not explicitly mention collaborative learning, certain methods can be considered to enhance a culture of learning among teachers in schools.”
- Teachers must have internet access to log onto the SACE website. Compounding this is that even with internet access, some teachers are still

experiencing difficulties logging onto the SACE website due to technical difficulties in order to record points.

Steyn (2011:217) describes continuous professional teacher development as “the bridge between where (we) are now and where (we) need to be to meet the new challenges of guiding all students in achieving higher standards of learning and development.”

The continuous professional teacher development point system is being used as a tool to monitor the professional development of teachers. This study has considered how effective the system is in ensuring the professional development of teachers.

## **2.7 IMPLICATIONS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Teachers in the South African educational sector need to be highly equipped, adequately skilled and possess the necessary tools to compete in a dynamic and challenging educational environment. Professional development can be the master key to unlock these integral but necessary skills required of a successful teacher. The implications of professional development on the South African education system and on the nation holistically are astounding.

### **2.7.1 Implications of professional development on novice teachers**

In South Africa, the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications document, gazetted in 2011, outlines the 11 basic competencies demanded of a beginner teacher (RSA, 2011c). It is imperative that professional development addresses these 11 competencies.

In Kenya, there is an expectation that novice teachers are mentored by experienced teachers. These mentors are the so-called experts and the novice teachers are treated as a ‘tabula rasa’. These novice teachers are not questioned on professional requirements. The unfortunate outcome is that novices are mentored on aspects that they sometimes do not require. A large exodus away from the teaching profession is the result. Compounding this is the fault-finding attitude and policing function of the

educational sector. Pedagogical content knowledge has been ignored at the expense of lesson plans and schemes of work (Tsoetsi, 2013:89).

Tsoetsi (2013:91) further elaborates that in contrast to Kenya, Botswana experiences a related but unique problem with regard to mentoring of novice teachers. Mentors are unfortunately usually not available. Novice teachers are left to fend for themselves, resulting in their feelings of isolation and abandonment. The teaching profession once again loses qualified teachers.

### **2.7.2 Implications of professional development on schooling and learning**

Schools have the potential to “enhance or hamper professional development” (Steyn, 2009:270). Schools are tasked to break that feeling of isolation that teachers experience. A school culture is very important for effective professional development. According to Timperley (2008:9), teachers who participate in professional learning take greater responsibility over student learning. As new techniques result in positive changes in their learners, their confidence levels increase. The school must step in and support teachers in their endeavours.

Timperley (2008:11) further maintains that professional development school initiatives must take teacher diversity into account, just as student diversity is considered. He goes on to state that schools must be cognisant of the fact that time is required for professional development. A supportive school will result in effective professional development measures.

Paton (2006) and Beeld (2008:16) argue that the South African schools are “in crisis” and according to Steyn, (2011:211) in “a state of disaster” with more than enough reason to be discouraged. Fullan (1993:15) is of the opinion that educational institutions must take ownership for their current reputation as laggards.

Unfortunately, the sad reality is that teacher education is not tailored toward continuous learning. Fullan (1993:5) captures this when he states that teacher education has the honour of being the worst problem and the best solution in

education. According to Fullan (1993:16), the effective teacher must be a career-long learner.

Ongoing debate abounds about the effect that quality teachers exercise over learners' academic performance. Regarding learners' performance, everyone wants to measure it, reward it, or improve it (Kutame, 2011:85). The dominant thinking is that, if it can be measured, then surely it can be changed. Appropriate and effective indicators would be the tool used to indicate quality teaching. The education system had to develop an appraisal instrument that could ascertain the value of professional development.

The education system has been tasked to embed continuous professional teacher development in school practices. This support could include contextual factors and school-community dynamics. Contextual factors are internal and include factors affecting the school culture and climate whereas school-community dynamics deals with the impact the school can have on uplifting the surrounding community. Steyn (2011:218) states that a definite link exists between school development and learning. The implication for effective professional development is the sharp focus on content knowledge, pedagogical skills and learning outcomes. The education system has to obtain irrefutable evidence that continuous professional teacher development has in effect taken place. The continuous professional teacher development point system is the tool used to monitor and manage this accountability reporting. The education system must take steps to advance a culture that exalts teachers' learning. (Steyn, 2011:218).

## **2.8 TYPES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Sustained improvement in the educational sector will remain a challenge until and unless our types of professional development are revisited and revised. In order to identify the types of professional development activities dominant in schools, the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), which is a comprehensive survey of teachers, teaching, and learning based on questionnaire responses by individual teachers and their school principals, conducted a survey of lower secondary teachers in 23 countries worldwide between the years 2007 and 2008 (OECD, 2009).

Even though South Africa was not included in the survey, it was important to this study. The following professional development types, which also feature in South Africa as part of professional development, were identified: informal dialogue, courses and workshops, reading professional literature, conferences and seminars, professional development networks, individual and collaborative research, mentoring and peer observation, observation visits to schools and qualification programmes.

### **2.8.1 Courses/Workshops**

The traditional format of all professional development activities has usually taken the form of short courses and workshops. A benefit of this type of professional development is that it allows for dissemination of information to a widespread target audience in a relatively brief space of time. However, this type of professional development has been criticised extensively in the literature. Botman (2016:53) comments that the cascade training model had its main focus on delivering a new curriculum. De Clercq and Shalem (2014:132) refer to this cascade model as the “One-size-fits-all” model. Some of the criticisms are centred on the courses being too curtailed, being too information-driven and being divorced from classroom realities. In South Africa, from 1998 onwards, the Gauteng Department of Education focused on curriculum-driven workshops (de Clercq & Shalem, 2014:133). The training took the form of broad orientation workshops. The focus was essentially on an Outcomes Based Curricula. These workshops concentrated on getting to grips with new terminology, becoming familiar with the new curriculum and values and philosophy of the educational rationale.

### **2.8.2 Education conferences or seminars**

Education conferences and seminars are considered traditional approaches to professional development. These forums enable teachers to present research results and discuss the implications thereof. Although fewer than 50% of teachers surveyed opted for this type of professional development, it still remains a relatively popular choice amongst teachers. On the downside however, according to Steyn (2009:263), these approaches do not significantly change pedagogical skills and subject knowledge. Mundry (2005, cited in Steyn, 2009:263) says that the cry has been to

“abandon outmoded approaches to staff development and invest in these ‘practice-based’ approaches to professional learning for teachers.”

In South Africa, the teacher unions are at the forefront of educational seminars which are usually held yearly and are open to teachers at a cost. Topics dealing with a host of aspects are covered, including a specific learning area or general aspects such as discipline.

### **2.8.3 Qualification programmes**

De Clercq and Shalem (2014:134) state that tertiary institutions were tasked to offer a large number of formal upgrading diplomas with an academic focus. “In Gauteng, the objectives of the diplomas were set to broaden and deepen teachers’ subject and pedagogical content knowledge and improve reflective abilities” (de Clercq & Shalem, 2014:134). The Further Diploma in Education and the National Professional Development for teachers arose. Unfortunately most teachers, when engaging in professional development activities, were looking for more practical competencies and not a strictly academic focus. In South Africa this created tensions as it was extremely difficult to balance the practical competencies against the academic focus.

### **2.8.4 Observation visits to other schools**

A limited number, only 28%, of teachers surveyed partook in observation visits to other schools. Unfortunately schools in South Africa, although sharing a common purpose of providing good quality education for all, differ in a host of aspects such as their vision, mission and ethos. This translates in the effect of observation visits to other schools being quite rare and unpopular.

### **2.8.5 Participation in a network of teachers**

The history of teacher clusters can be traced back to Latin America in the late 1960s (Jita & Mokhele, 2014:3). The cluster model has mushroomed globally under a variety of names. These names range from communities of practice, teacher learning committees or even professional learning networks. An emerging trend in professional development is participation in professional learning communities. Steyn (2011:213)



is of the opinion that like-minded teachers need to band together in order to learn together.

In South Africa, teacher-driven informal cluster meetings arose. These clusters were platforms for teachers to share best practice and generate ideas for improvement (de Clercq & Shalem, 2014:134). Continuous professional teacher development has been criticised as it does not explicitly recognise collaborative learning as a key in developing individual teachers (Steyn, 2011:223). However, a contradiction exists. Research has revealed (Opfer & Pedder, 2011:754) that there is a weak connection between participation in clusters and improved student outcomes.

Teachers are responsible for providing supportive environments for the induction and mentoring of novice teachers. The National Policy Framework deals with “sustained leadership and support” for quality education (RSA, 2011:3) and continuous professional teacher development acknowledges “school-led programmes” for professional development (RSA, 2007:18), but the role and active involvement of school leaders in continuous professional teacher development are not explicitly explained or encouraged. Steyn (2011:227) describes how teachers are able to indicate participation in multiple activities. These activities encompass three categories: Type 1, type 2 and type 3 activities. A wide range of options are available in all three categories such as reading electronic material (type1 activity), attending staff meetings (type 2 activity) or CAPS training (type 3 activity).

### **2.8.6 Reading professional literature**

Teachers have to be actively engaged in ongoing personal, academic and professional growth through reading professional literature. Professional literature includes documents such as journals, evidence-based papers and thesis papers. Realising that Curriculum 2005 in South Africa had supplied very thin material, elaborate documents were produced for the Revised National Curriculum Statements. A criticism of this material was that it was too laborious to read, too generic and unhelpful (de Clercq & Shalem, 2014:133). The result was that teachers felt “unsupported, overburdened with paperwork and frustrated” (de Clercq & Shalem, 2014:133).

### **2.8.7 Engaging in informal dialogue with peers**

Collaboration is key to ensuring the wellbeing of learners and their learning. Teachers, parents and guardians must be engaged in continuous dialogue on strategies to enhance teaching and learning. This is by far the most popular type of professional development, with 93% of teachers surveyed engaging in this type of activity.

## **2.9 TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INTERNATIONALLY**

In Malaysia, primary and secondary school education is governed by two separate ministries (Petras & Jamil, 2012:55). This poses a serious impediment to the ideal of a single educational vision. Policy is student centred and Malaysian teachers are seen as professional lifelong learners. “The Malaysian teacher professional development system consists of formal training programs, a professional support network, and several types of allowances and incentives” (Petras & Jamil, 2012:55). The goals of professional development are to enhance teacher professionalism, ensure that curriculum support programmes are available, further the career of the educator by improving qualifications, and also to publicise the achievements of teachers.

Tsotetsi (2013:88) observes that Pakistan shares a very similar socio-economic background as South Africa. Tensions are created in Pakistan as the school principals are not involved in the professional development of teachers. The sustainability and continuity of any programme for professional development is in danger due to the lack of overt support from principals. The teacher that attends the professional development course is empowered and the information gained remains with the educator concerned. There is no obligation to cascade the information.

The backbone of Egyptian professional development is the distance training system. Exchange programmes are also used for training large numbers of teachers abroad (Singh, 2011:1630). The crux of this system is based on developing teachers’ knowledge in the hopes of improving their teaching. The culture of the Egyptian people influences teachers’ confidence and value towards their practice.

## **2.10 CONCLUSION**

The teacher in the classroom is the key to quality education for all. SACE is currently building an enabling environment with the ultimate focus being on promoting and upholding the teaching profession. This process of professionalising the teacher profession begins from initial teacher education, continues during in-service training and only culminates upon retirement.

Teacher professionalisation has been marred by many challenges along the way. SACE has to enable and encourage a major paradigm shift regarding professional development. This Council has to ensure that professional development is contextually appropriate, underpinned by theory and widely accepted by stakeholders. SACE is promulgating career-long learning and promoting this as the dominant ideology.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Leedy and Ormrod (2010:2) define research as “a systematic process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information (data) in order to increase our understanding of a phenomenon about which we are interested or concerned.” McMillan and Schumacher (2006:9) concur with Leedy and Ormrod’s definition. The research discussed in chapter 3 is an endeavour to elevate and deepen knowledge involving current and relevant aspects in the educational sector and to communicate these findings to the larger scientific community.

The reader will be exposed to an in-depth insight into the research methodology, research design, and the research methods including procedures, tools and techniques used to gather and analyse data. Issues such as trustworthiness of the study and ethical considerations will be considered. The significance of this particular study will also be highlighted.

The intention of this study was to ascertain whether the SACE point system contributes positively to the professional development of teachers. As this investigation involved

the in-depth focus on continuous professional teacher development for a prescribed period of time, a case was identified and studied. The aims were to:

- Gain new, cutting edge insights into the education system;
- Develop new conceptual frameworks or theoretical perspectives about these phenomena; and
- Discover the challenges that exist within the phenomena.

### **3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:9), refers to systematic and purposeful ways in which data are collected and analysed. Leedy and Ormrod (2010:12) define research methodology as “the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project; to some extent, this approach dictates the particular tools the researcher selects.” What is important is that the chosen methodology has to suit the particular research question. In gathering evidence on the phenomena under investigation, a methodical and systematic approach was pursued. This eliminated any confusion or ambiguity. This chapter delves more deeply into research methodology incorporating specific procedures that were undertaken to accumulate and analyse the data captured.

For research to be qualitative, according to Yin (2011:7), it is characterised by five features, discussed below. Qualitative research encompasses:

- the study of the meaning of people’s lives, under real-world conditions;
- the diverse views and perspectives of individuals;
- a focus on contextual conditions within which people live;
- making valuable contributions and insights into existing or emerging concepts that may help to explain human social behaviour; and
- the use of multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on a single source alone.

In this study, a qualitative research approach was undertaken. A correlation between this study and the four main purposes of qualitative research, namely that of description, interpretation, verification, and evaluation exists (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:136). In addition, this study fulfils the five criteria mentioned above.

I looked at human nature and listened to and interpreted all that was seen and heard. Therefore, logically, the paradigmatic lens that this study was based on was the constructivist philosophy. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:315) state that this philosophy “assumes that reality is a multilayer, interactive, shared social experience that is interpreted by individuals.” The participants in this study ascribed meanings to their lives based on their perceptions of reality and this guided their behaviour in all future interactions. Edwards and Holland (2013:16) agree with this train of thought stating that constructivism entails understanding social phenomena from participants’ perspectives. Thus, knowledge creation concerns gaining information from an individual perspective.

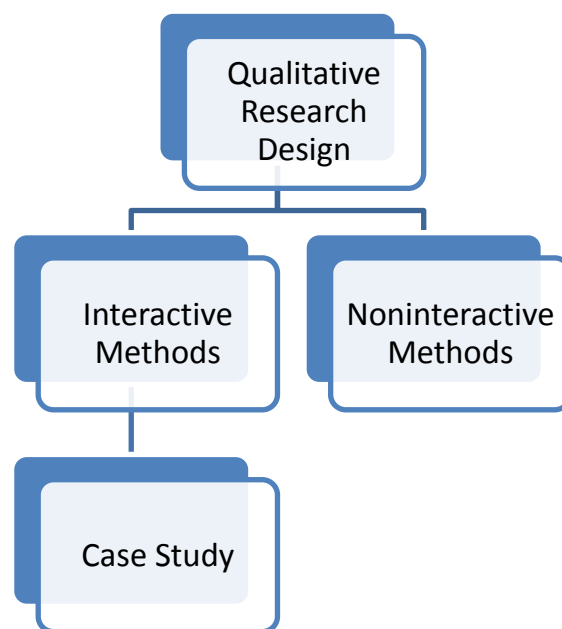
In this study, I interviewed participants in an effort to get participant perspectives and views on continuous professional teacher development. The IQMS and continuous professional teacher development system share a common feature in terms of the developmental aspect. IQMS appraises individual teachers with a view to determining areas of strengths and weaknesses, and to draw up programmes for individual development. The continuous professional teacher development management system addresses the needs as identified by the IQMS process.

This chapter will unfold as follows: The first section will concentrate on the research design, which will focus on the population and sample selection, the researcher’s role, data collection instruments, an analysis of data and the interpretation thereof. The second section will deal with technical adequacy as well as issues of trustworthiness, validity and ethical considerations. The significance of the study as well as limitations will be discussed with in the third section. Section four will give details as to how the study was meticulously organised and conducted.

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A research design is a comprehensive description of how the study will be conducted. This design includes a general plan: the formulation of research, what happens to the participants and the various methods of data collection used. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:22) state that a research design “summarizes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, for whom and under what conditions the data will be obtained.” This design provided empirical evidence to answer the research question: Does the SACE point system policy ensure professional development of teachers in selected schools in Gauteng?

The qualitative researcher searched, examined and explored a host of methods until an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon was achieved. Figure 3.1, below, provides a description of the qualitative research design that was the focus for this particular study.



**Figure 3.1 Qualitative research designs (adapted from McMillan & Schumacher 2006:26)**

The figure above indicates that qualitative research designs may be classified as either interactive or noninteractive (McMillan & Schumacher 2006:26). The case study design is an interactive design. The focus of the case study is the examination of a bounded system. In other words, a case is studied in detail over time using a variety

of sources found in a particular setting. Interactive methods in this study took the form of observations and interviews which are dealt with in detail in subsections 3.3.4.1 and 3.3.4.2.

In contrast, noninteractive methods may also be termed analytical research. Document analysis formed part of this study. It is a data collection tool and will be explained in subsection 3.3.4.3 as it forms a key part of the noninteractive methods.

### **3.3.1 Site selection and mapping the field**

Choosing an appropriate site is a negotiation process. Information about a feasible site is obtained well in advance. Mapping the field entails forging rapport with all stakeholders at the proposed research site. Data on the social, spatial and temporal relationships that exist at the site have to be obtained to get an accurate indication of contextual factors. The site of research was two public schools on the West Rand under the ambits of the Gauteng Department of Education. Teachers from various race groups at one urban secondary school and one Early Learning and Special Education Needs (ELSEN) school in Roodepoort, on the West Rand in Gauteng formed the participant sample together with the principal of the urban secondary school and deputy principals from these respective schools. Both schools were carefully chosen because they are public schools and teachers at these schools have registered with SACE and are licensed to teach. Secondly, the SACE point system policy affects all these teachers.

### **3.3.2 Sampling procedure**

A sample refers to an assemblage of participants from whom the data are obtained. An important sampling decision has to be made as the types of sampling techniques are quite varied. According to Edwards and Holland (2013:6), the sample selected has to provide data in order to provide clarity.

Purposeful sampling is a type of sampling technique whereby the researcher chooses “information rich cases for in-depth study” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:319). These participants are chosen based on their possible knowledge or information about the investigation being conducted. Purposive sampling, according to Maxwell



(2005:235), is a unique strategy whereby particular settings, persons, or events are exclusively selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be obtained as effectively from other choices.

Purposeful sampling has many important uses (Maxwell, 2005:235):

- It can represent or typically mimic the settings, individuals, or activities selected. This technique of sampling can provide more confidence than a sample obtained through random or accidental variation.
- The heterogeneous nature of the population can be captured. The complete range of variation can also be obtained.
- Cases can be examined that are critical for this particular study
- Comparisons can be drawn to highlight reasons for differences that exist between individuals and settings.

The sample in this study was obtained through purposive sampling. The rationale for choosing this technique was that participants were 'information-rich'. Those interviewed had in-depth knowledge of the focus of the investigation.

A population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalise the results of research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:119). Teachers from various race groups (including deputy principals and a principal at one urban public school) in Roodepoort, on the West rand in Gauteng formed the participant sample. One district official selected from the Gauteng Department of Education and two SACE officials formed part of the sample to be interviewed. Prerequisites for participation were that all teachers sampled had to be professionally qualified with a recognised teaching qualification, have a valid SACE certificate, be registered on the continuous professional teacher development management system and have adequate experience as teachers.

### 3.3.3 Sample size

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:321), no rule exists for purposeful sampling sizes but guidelines can be followed. These guidelines incorporate aspects such as the purpose of the investigation, the research problem under investigation, the key strategy utilised for data collection and the accessibility of information-rich participants. Edwards and Holland (2013:7) concur with this line of thinking. They state that no formula exists in qualitative research to determine sample size. Twelve participants formed the sample size of this particular investigation.

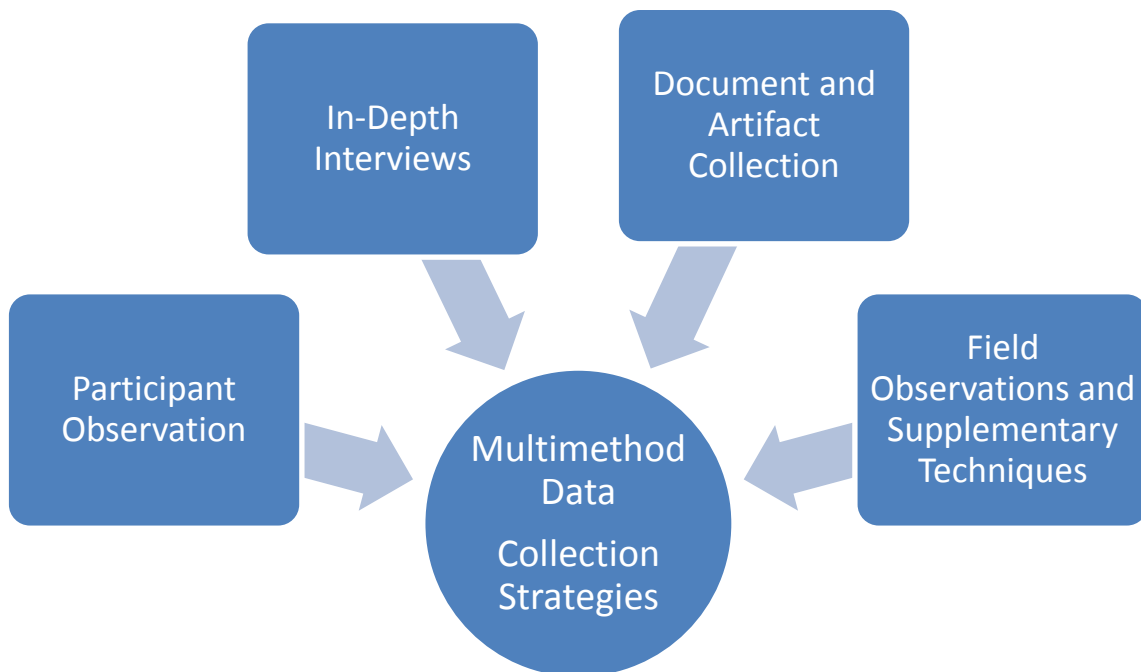
**Table 3.1 The sample size of the study**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Teachers	6	50%
Principal	1	8%
Deputy Principal	2	17%
GDE Official	1	8%
SACE Official	2	17%
Total	12	100%

### 3.3.4 Data collection techniques

Data collection pertains to the various techniques used in order to obtain information to answer the question under investigation: Does the SACE point system policy ensure professional development of teachers in Gauteng?

Qualitative data collection techniques are characterised by using multiple forms of data in a single study. These are referred to as multimethod strategies. The potential sources of data in qualitative research are also not limited. On the negative side, a qualitative data collection method is time intensive. However, it is imperative that all data be accurately and systematically recorded.



**Figure 3.2 Multimethod data collection strategies**

(Adapted from McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:339).

The figure above is a representation of the data collection techniques that were exploited in this study. In the section that follows, I will give an explanation of these instruments and finally an explanation of how these were employed in the study will be provided in the discussions.

### **3.3.4.1 Participant observation**

Participant observation entails becoming totally immersed in the day to day life of the people being observed (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:139). As the study unfolds, the researcher observes, interviews, interacts and listens. The researcher also takes extensive field notes. Significant events may be recorded as well. An advantage is that the observer gains valuable insights into the group that would have been a challenge to gather using any other technique. The disadvantage is that the observer may unknowingly assess the situation inaccurately.

In this study the researcher, who is an educator, was present in the field for an extensive time period. Limited participation ensured that I remained unobtrusive and ensured that her presence in the field was accepted. By engaging in field observations without interaction, I directly observed and noted aspects relating to the problem under investigation. Some of the aspects observed were attendance of meetings and frequency of these meetings relating to continuous professional teacher development. I also observed whether feedback was given after attendance at these meetings. I also gained valuable insights into the perspectives of teachers. Opinions and views expressed were jotted down (either immediately on the site or in private later in the day).

#### **3.3.4.2 *Semi-structured interviews***

Interviews fall into a range of categories. They form a continuum ranging from the formal structured to semi-structured or even the unstructured interviews. The structured interview is usually undertaken by quantitative researchers, whereas the latter two types of interviews are usually a qualitative researcher's tool of choice (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:148); the latter being noted for their flexibility levels and generalised lack of structure. According to Yin (2011:134), the overwhelming dominant mode of interviewing in qualitative research is qualitative interviewing.

Mason (2002, cited in Edwards & Holland, 2013:3) argues that certain core characteristics exist in qualitative interviewing. These characteristics are:

- The interactional nature of the exchange of dialogue. Yin (2011:133) concurs with Mason stating that all interviews require an interviewer and interviewee.
- A narrative approach where specific topics need to be covered.
- The fact that knowledge is viewed as situated and contextual.

Patton (1990) cited in Sewell (1998:1) focuses on three basic types of qualitative interviewing, namely, the informal conversational interview, the interview guide approach, and the standardised open-ended interview. Each type varies in structure and format, but they share certain commonalities. Responses from participants in qualitative interviewing are open-ended and this allows for flexibility. These basic

interviewing types each possess their own strengths and weaknesses and suit somewhat different purposes, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:350).

Semi-structured in-depth interviews of secondary school teachers and ELSEN teachers employed by the Gauteng Education Department, as well as both department and SACE officials were undertaken. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Twelve interviews of participants were conducted and tape recorded. Interviews allowed me to:

- Understand the perceptions of secondary school teachers, Gauteng Department of Education officials and SACE officials regarding the continuous professional teacher development point system as a form of appraisal;
- Gauge the effectiveness of this form of appraisal directly from the field; and
- Contribute to the improvement of the system by suggesting recommendations for development.

I interviewed participants over two terms in the calendar year of the school. Personal interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview schedule. I made appointments with the teachers and conducted the interviews at the school. A venue that was suitable and where potential disruptions would be minimised was chosen. Interviews were tape recorded, upon obtaining written permission from the participants. Interviews with the Gauteng Department of Education official and the SACE officials took place at their respective offices.

During the interview I put the participants at ease by establishing and maintaining rapport. The participants viewed me as compassionate and trustworthy as my personality and approachable nature put the participants at ease. Participants also thanked me as I was willing to reschedule their appointments due to unforeseen occurrences on their side. They were grateful for my empathy and shared this with me. Once responses had been recorded, they were transcribed verbatim by me.

#### **3.3.4.3 Document analysis**

According to Yin (2011:148), “collecting” is concerned with the accumulation of documents related to the study under investigation. Most of this collection occurred in

the field. For this study, extensive visits to the library and electronic-based resources were used. Invaluable data regarding policies and procedures were also analysed. The documents required were SACE documents as well as other relevant documents that focused on the continuous professional teacher development point system, professional development and appraisal of teachers. Documents were obtained electronically, although many hard copies were also obtained from the library. In addition to the interviews, these documents helped me to analyse the questions posed.

#### **3.3.4.4 Field observations**

This technique involves direct in the field eyewitness accounts of everything that is seen and heard. These take the form of field notes, which are detailed descriptive recordings. Observations of a programme have several advantages which, according to Patton (1990, as cited in Sewell, 1998:280), are:

- The researcher can acquire an understanding of the context in which the programme operates. This is essential for a holistic perspective.
- The researcher can be inductive in approach. The observer, by being on the site, can rely less on prior conceptualisations and directly experience the programme at hand.
- The observer is able to see things that may routinely escape the participants as they may take routine nuances for granted.
- Direct observation which opens the door to information that may not have otherwise been available due to participant unwillingness to share.
- The interviewer can move beyond selective perceptions.
- First hand observations which make provision for reflections and introspection. This enables the observer to access personal knowledge and direct experience.

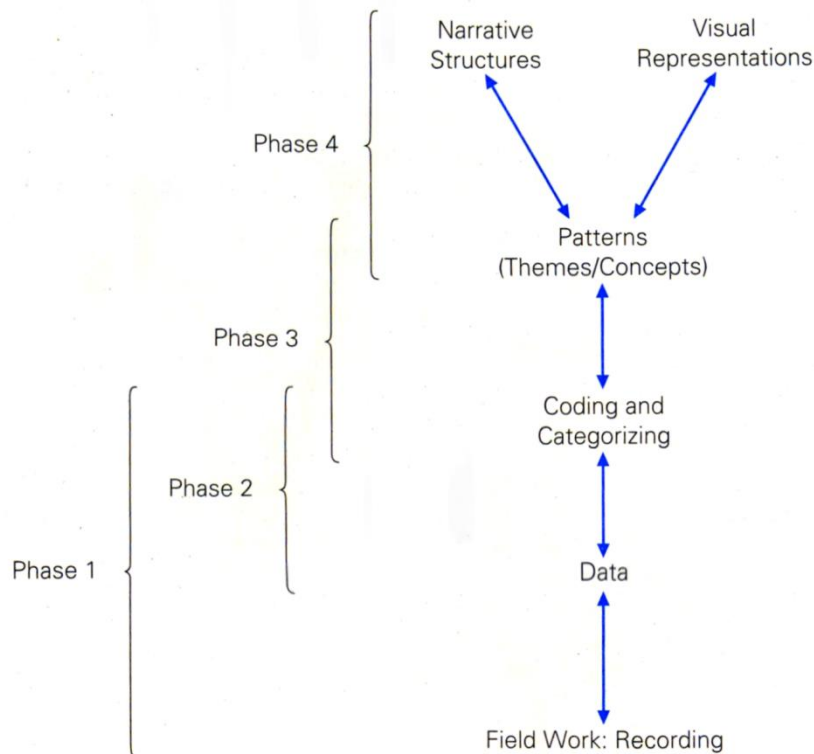
Field observations allowed me to ascertain whether teachers were actually updating their online portfolios and interacting with the SACE system. I tried to observe instances of educator interaction on the SACE system. Participant observation was a

more direct observation technique which entailed the educator being more active and discussing openly the professional development programmes attended. In contrast, field observations were more personal. This was done quietly in the confines of the computer lab.

Field observations are descriptions of objects, events, actions and people in a defined setting. This technique is a key component of both participant observation and in-depth interviewing. I observed the professional development activities offered at schools, and teachers who volunteer or are forced to attend these courses, as well as the time and duration of these courses. I also noted whether teachers were updating their online profiles. I was cognisant of the attitudes and perceptions of teachers regarding professional development. In this particular study, the main aim of the research was to examine the impact that the SACE point system policy has on the professional development of teachers.

### **3.3.5 Data analysis**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:364), qualitative data analysis entails a process of coding, categorising, and interpreting data to provide an explanation of a single phenomenon of interest. Using inductive analysis, patterns and categories began to emerge from the data collected. Maxwell (2005:236) concurs with McMillan and Schumacher and goes on to further elaborate on three groups of qualitative analysis. These are categorising strategies (such as coding and thematic analysis), connecting strategies (such as narrative analysis and individual case studies), and memos and displays.



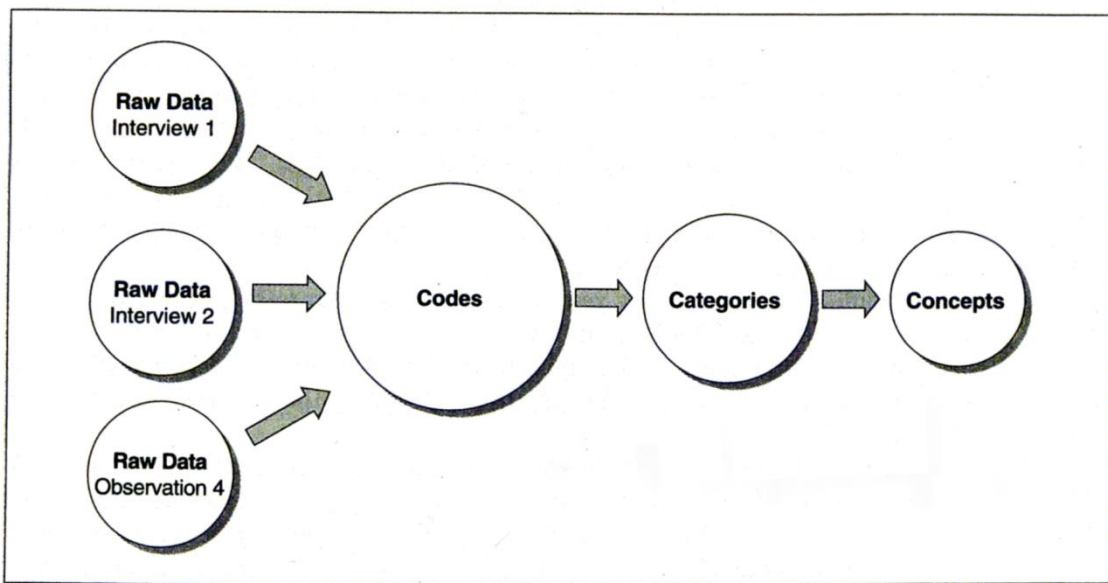
**Figure 3.3 The general process of inductive data analysis** (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:365)

As Figure 3.3 depicts, qualitative data analysis consists of four overlapping phases. Researchers progress from the simpler fields to the more abstract fields of analysis. However, there is persistent refining and double checking of analysis and interpretation. It is imperative that certain components be present in the data or analysis will be marred. On occasion, researchers may seek permission to re-enter the field. Most qualitative researchers do concur that no one set procedure exists and making sense of data usually falls to the intellectual rigour of the researcher.

In investigating the problem in this study, empirical evidence gathered was analysed in relation to current continuous professional teacher development and its value. As I collected and analysed the information, I looked for emerging issues to explore. All data were coded and data was then categorised and re-categorised and evaluated as the need arose. Through the process of inductive analysis, observations and inferences were made and the emerging patterns were recorded.



Then the process of coding began. Corbin and Strauss (1990:57) make it clear that “Coding represents the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways. It is the central process by which theories are built by data.” Lichtman (2014:328) agrees with Corbin and Strauss and visually represents this relationship as in the figure below.



**Figure 3.4 The three Cs of data analysis: codes, categories, concepts (adapted from Lichtman, 2014:328)**

The figure above graphically represents how concepts arose from the data. Initially, raw data from all the interviews were taken. Thereafter, every sentence was broken down into discrete incidents or ideas that represented a particular phenomenon. Further, I compared incident with incident and gave similar incidents a particular name. The eventual result was an overwhelming amount of codes.

Next, the data was categorised. I grouped codes that pertained to the same phenomena and gave that category a name. Related attributes or conditions formed a sub-category of the main category. Inductive analysis was used to make observations and inferences regarding each category. I was perceptive to patterns that were emerging. The category was further analytically developed to form new and meaningful themes with their related sub-themes.

### **3.3.6 Trustworthiness of the study**

In order to ensure that the findings of this study were trustworthy, participant responses were handed back to participants to check if what I had documented was what they had stated. The following objectives for building trustworthiness and credibility were followed, as identified by Yin (2011:19).

#### **3.3.6.1 *Technical adequacy***

The conclusions reached were as a result of triangulating the data from a host of sources. Convergence of data contributed to the study's credibility and trustworthiness. Yin (2011:19) concludes that there are three objectives for building trustworthiness and credibility. These are transparency, methodical considerations and adherence to evidence.

#### **3.3.6.2 *Transparency***

The issue of transparency is met if qualitative research is done in a publicly accessible manner, allowing other people to review your findings (Yin, 2011:19). Data must be accessible for inspection as well. Other researchers should be allowed to scrutinise your research and the evidence gained to support or refute findings and conclusions. Scrutiny can result in positive and negative criticism, support and/or refinement.

All participants involved in the study will be given access to a copy of the research findings now that the research has been concluded. A copy will be sent to the Gauteng Department of Education as well as the principal of the school. All findings will be communicated to the SACE professional development and research unit. SACE has encouraged teachers to use this forum to improve the continuous professional teacher development system.

#### **3.3.6.3 *Methodical considerations***

Qualitative research must be meticulously undertaken. Allowance must be made for discovery and emergence of unanticipated events. Being methodical entails adhering to a systematic set of research procedures and eliminating careless work. Unexplained bias or deliberate distortion must be avoided. Being methodical also

entails ensuring a sense of thoroughness to a research effort, including crosschecking the study's procedures and data. Eisenhart (2006, cited in Yin, 2011:20) is of the opinion that research will be methodical if the researcher is "really and fully present physically, cognitively, and emotionally—in the scenes of action under study."

Data and interpretations reached were also formulated within a particular context. Reporting was done in a self-reflexive manner. In order to be self-reflexive, I kept a journal of fears, complexities, problems and mistakes that emerged. Incongruence of data was not ignored.

#### **3.3.6.4 Adherence to evidence**

Evidence must be explicit and consists of participants' verbatim language as well as the actual context in which the language is enunciated. In this study the conclusions were based on the data. Multiple perspectives existed and an analysis of each perspective was undertaken. Consistency across the various data sources was sought with a concerted effort made to seek out contrary findings to strengthen the investigation even further. The context for this study was two schools in a thriving metropolitan area in Gauteng. It is anticipated that the findings of this study, although small, may be transferrable to other schools in a uniform context. As this study also took place in a real life setting, the requirement for transferability was met. I also addressed any assumptions, convictions, values and dispositions that may have influence data collection and interpretation.

#### **3.3.7 Ethical considerations**

This research observed the following ethical protocol: protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy, and honesty with professional colleagues (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:101). I first received the ethical clearance from the University of South Africa to conduct the study. In addition, in this study particular care was allotted to the above aspects.

### **3.3.7.1 Protection from harm**

All reasonable precautions were taken to ensure that participants were comfortable and unharmed. All participants remained anonymous as they were allocated numbers and names were safeguarded. Information gathered is stored safely in a password protected computer and hard copies are stored in a secured safe at my residence.

### **3.3.7.2 Informed consent**

Before any data was collected, permission was obtained from the Gauteng Department of Education and thereafter the principal of the schools. Permission was obtained from all role players involved in this study, including SACE. I drafted a letter seeking permission to conduct the interview and explaining the nature of the study and plans for using the results. I ensured that informed consent was obtained by requiring the participants to sign informed consent forms. I offered to provide a copy of the research report to the principal and SACE officials once the study had been completed.

Participation was optional and participants were briefed on the nature of the study. In this document, participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The following information was contained in this document (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:102):

- An elaboration on the nature of the study;
- An elaboration of exactly what participation would entail, time needed as well as the type of interaction required of the participant;
- The fact that participation was voluntary with the option of termination and that no penalty would be imposed if the option of termination was taken;
- Confidentiality and anonymity would be assured;
- Personal contact details of the researcher;
- Participants were assured of access to the research once it had been finalised;
- The signature of the participant and date indicating willingness to participate.

### **3.3.7.3 *Right to privacy***

Responses of participants remained anonymous. Each participant was assigned a unique, arbitrary code number and all documents were labelled with this number. The information would be kept securely for five years in a locked safe and on a password protected computer. Thereafter, this information would be destroyed. Only I would have access to this research.

### **3.3.7.4 *Honesty with professional colleagues***

Findings were communicated in an honest unbiased manner. I am an teacher and thus was even more attentive in reporting the findings in an unbiased way.

### **3.3.8 Conclusion**

Chapter 3 outlined the diversity of frameworks that guided this study. The methodological processes and procedures I adopted to generate and analyse data were delved into in depth. My aim was to investigate whether the SACE point system ensures teacher professional development of teachers in Gauteng. The tools used in this qualitative study were document analysis, observations, and semi-structured interviews. Efforts to ensure the technical adequacy of these findings were achieved through the variety and the rigour through which data were collected. The next section will focus on the analysis and interpretation of the data collected.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The main focus of the preceding chapter was on the research design and methodology that was utilised to acquire information pertaining to this investigation. The following research question was approached: Does the SACE point system policy ensure professional development of teachers in Gauteng? The approach undertaken in this study was qualitative. This chapter has as its core focus the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data received. The data collection techniques included observations, document analysis and semi-structured interviews. The data are presented indicating the link between the research questions asked and the interview analysis. This approach is further elucidated in this section.

Participants were observed and data were captured on an observation schedule form. Observations were keenly documented as per items listed on the schedule. Factors that influenced the observations were selected and comments noted. I commented on the instances when teachers were attending professional development workshops. I also made note of any instances when feedback regarding these meetings were given in the staffroom. I also regularly went into the computer lab to check if these teachers were updating their online SACE portfolios after attendance at a meeting. I attempted to do this by accessing the computer history in the computer labs to check if anyone had interacted on the SACE online portal. Unfortunately, it appeared that none of the school computers were used for updating online profiles.

My vigilance allowed me to assume that many participants were not familiar with the continuous professional teacher development system. This was confirmed by the interview data. A few participants initially delayed their scheduled appointments for the interview with a few excuses. All responses were marred by long pauses, hesitations and repetitions. Interview transcripts were handed to participants to clarify

that what I had captured is what they had indicated. The body language of most respondents indicated discomfort when they were unable to answer a question effectively. As an interviewer, I became aware of the sense of relief experienced by respondents when they were informed that responses would be anonymous. These observations enabled me to see that the respondents actually did understand that they should have been familiar with this system.

In addition to the observation technique, document analysis was also undertaken. These documents included various literatures on professional development, legislation governing professional development, as well as emerging trends relating to professional development. These aspects were thoroughly discussed in Chapter 2, the literature review.

The aim of this dissertation of limited scope was to explore the perceptions of teachers, and others on professional development in two selected schools in Gauteng. In light of the above, it became evident that the perceptions, opinions and experiences of the teachers, principal, Gauteng Department of Education official and the SACE officials became paramount to this investigation. The interview analysis provided rich data which was further discussed using verbatim quotations from interviews conducted.

The interviews were recorded on the cell phone. Immediately thereafter, I saved backup copies on the laptop and hard drive. The recordings ensured that I had obtained the data in its entirety and provided material for reliability checks. After repeatedly listening to the recordings, I initially obtained an overview of what the participants had to say. The final record contained accurate verbatim quotations. It also contained my notation of non-verbal communication.

Purposeful sampling was undertaken as explained in Chapter 3, subsection 3.3.2. The participants chosen were “information rich cases for in-depth study” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:319). A prerequisite for participation was that all the teachers, the principal and the deputy principals had to be registered with SACE, be in possession of a valid SACE certificate as well as be registered on the continuous professional

teacher development management system. The participant sample is represented in the table below

**Table 4.1 Participant sample**

Number	Participants
6	Teachers
1	Principal
2	Deputy Principals
2	SACE Officials
1	GDE Official

As indicated in Chapter 3 subsection 3.3.2, a variety of participants were purposely selected to respond to the interview questions. In total this investigation engaged 12 participants. These participants included six teachers, one principal, two deputy principals, one official from the Department of Education who directly deals with matters related to continuous professional teacher development and two SACE officials whose portfolio includes continuous professional teacher development. To maintain anonymity of participants, they were allocated numbers ranging from 1-12 and are represented in Table 4.2 below.

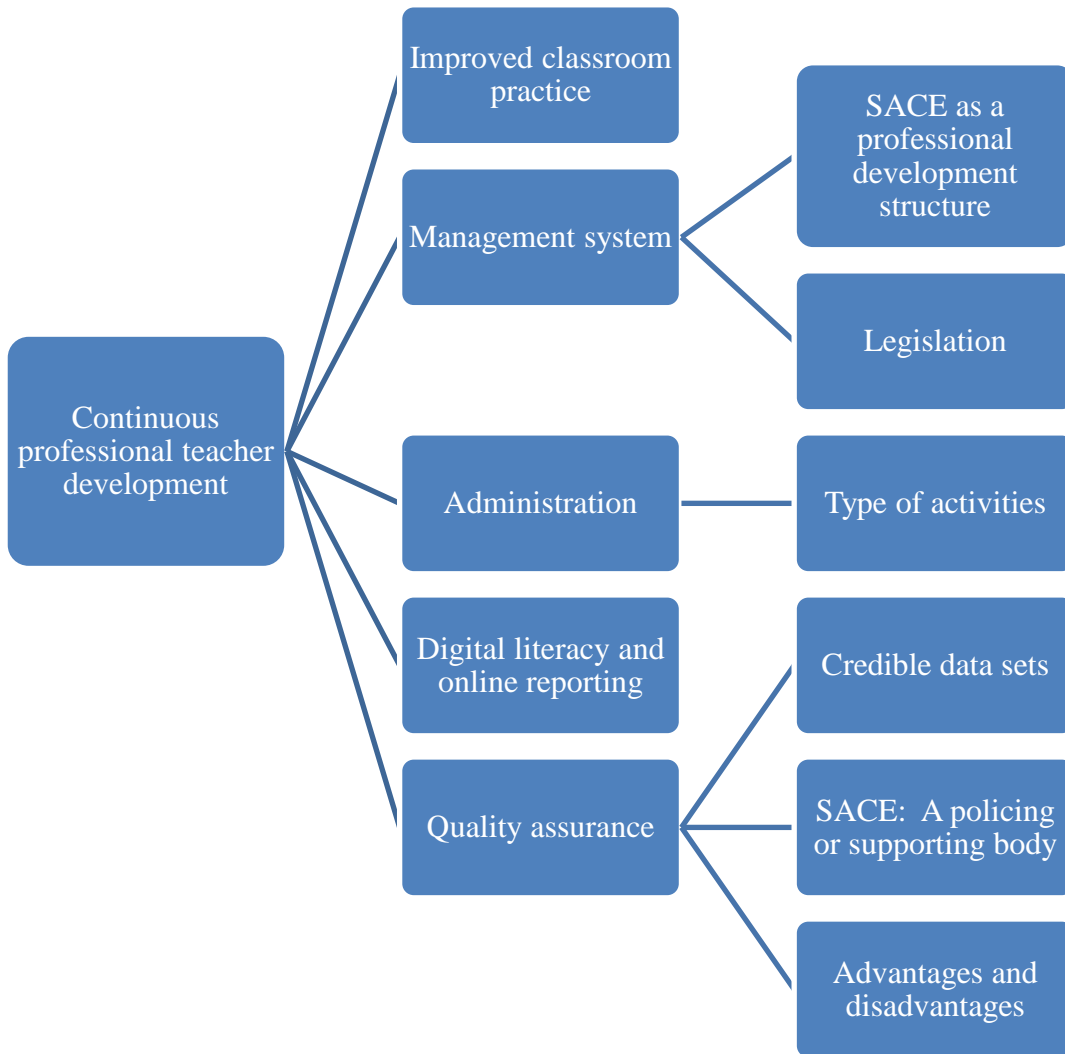
**Table 4.2 Table representing the participant sample**



	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Code</b>
Educator 1	Participant 1	P1
Educator 2	Participant 2	P2
Educator 3	Participant 3	P3
Educator 4	Participant 4	P4
Educator 5	Participant 5	P5
Educator 6	Participant 6	P6
Principal	Participant 7	P7
Deputy Principal 1	Participant 8	P8
Deputy Principal 2	Participant 9	P9
SACE Official 1	Participant 10	P10
SACE Official 2	Participant 11	P11
GDE Official	Participant 12	P12

#### **4.2 ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

In this subsection, I will focus on the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the data from semi-structured interviews. Five themes critical to this investigation emerged from the data. The thematic analysis highlighted a direct relationship between these five emerging themes and the aim of the research undertaken. Each major theme was also further disseminated into sub-themes. Figure 4.1 below presents a diagrammatic representation of the identified themes and subthemes.



**Figure 4.1 The five themes and sub-themes (compiled by the researcher)**

#### **4.2.1 Professional development for improved classroom practice**

As a starting point to this investigation, it became imperative to understand what the term ‘professional development’ essentially means for teachers. Therefore, one of my overarching aims in this investigation was to unpack the term ‘professional development’ as understood by educational professionals. Avalos (2011:10), in defining professional development, incorporates “the benefit of their student’s growth” in his definition. In fact, he elaborates and states that all professional development programmes have to encompass learners’ improvement as their ultimate goal. Scrutiny of the thematic analysis yielded critical information concerning a definition of

professional development. A host of definitions of professional development arose from interviews. From the sentiments expressed by participants 9 and 11, it was evident that participants view professional development as having improved classroom practice at its core.

*... all professional development activities respond to the needs that teachers are faced with in the classroom. (P11)*

*To make, to develop me to such an extent that I would be an asset to the profession that I am in, in all spheres... managerial, teaching, strategising, strategic planning so that in essence what I am saying is that it develops me so that I am an asset to the profession and in this case the teaching profession. (P9)*

A contradictory viewpoint, as stated in Boyle, Lamprianou & Boyle (2005:3) shows that “using student’s performance alone to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development programmes is not successful.” This view is also supported by Fletcher and Barufaldi (2002) as discussed in Boyle et al (2005:3). Some of the participants had a different understanding of what professional development means, as indicated by the response of participant 3. Participant 3 had an individualised focus on personal development rather than for the benefit of the child. She expressed herself as follows.

*Is when you constantly learning something... what I have already studied for and extending it to another level like improving myself in a way. (P3)*

The new buzz word in the educational sector is the term ‘lifelong learners’. Participant 9 expressed it clearly when he stated,

*That is extremely important if we are going to be lifelong learners. (P9)*

This acceptance of the teacher as a learner, and now a lifelong learner has come through quite strongly in the data captured. However, a cause for concern was that not all teachers actually realised that professional development has to equate to improved learner performance. Some teachers could have a personal agenda which could ultimately lead to the detriment of the learners. SACE as the legislative body in control has to put in place mechanisms that ensure that all teachers have improved

learner performance as their key aim of professional development. Stemming from this observation, the next crucial concept that emerged was: How is this relatively 'new' and definitely vast system managed? Therefore, the continuous professional teacher development management system came under scrutiny.

#### **4.2.2 The continuous professional teacher development management system**

The general view is that the effective and efficient management of continuous professional teacher development is essential. The SACE Act, No. 31 of 2000 (RSA, 2011c) granted SACE statutory status to ensure that this, in fact, does happen. SACE has been tasked to develop guidelines to ensure that there is a record of the educator's professional development journey (RSA, 2011c). Two sub-themes regarding this management emerged from the data captured. Therefore, my focus captured SACE as a professional development structure and legislation.

##### **4.2.2.1 SACE as an educator professional development structure**

It is very critical for teachers to have an in-depth understanding and knowledge of the body that is responsible for attending to their professional needs. One of the intentions of the interviews was to establish whether teachers are aware of the existence and the mandate of a structure such as SACE, which is responsible for the professional development of teachers.

The Basic Laws Amendment Act 15 of 2011 gave SACE overall control of the continuous professional teacher development management system (RSA, 2011b). Teachers must possess a sound and working knowledge of the body that is controlling their professional development needs. In examining the understanding and knowledge of the participants regarding SACE as the structure administering the professional development of teachers, participant 1 expressed herself as follows:

*I know that they are a professional ethics council and they also help us as teachers to improve ourselves. To continuously improve ourselves. And also they there for us to know exactly what we need to follow as teachers in a classroom. (P1)*

This response is significant as it implies knowledge of what is indicated in the SACE Annual report (2016b:27). This report states clearly that, “The aim of the programme is to promote ethical conduct among teachers and stakeholders through workshops, seminars, izimbizo and the distribution of material that sets the standard of professional conduct and to render support to schools, teachers and stakeholders on ethical matters.” The report elaborates that this is done in an endeavour to conscientise teachers on the mandates of SACE and the Code of Professional Ethics.

The comments of participants 5 and 11, below, further endorse this view of SACE as a body that renders support.

*I am assuming, you know the basic function as a unit is a body for teachers to fall back on, in need of support, in need of development. (P5)*

*... it was to support provinces and schools and teachers. Through some interventions, through the establishment of the support structures be it at provincial level, be it at district, circuit and school level. (P11)*

These views demonstrate that participants have a deep understanding of SACE. My observation during interviews also confirms that to a large extent the majority of participants, particularly teachers, do have an understanding of SACE. These views are further cemented by the fact that having gone through the minutes of the staff meetings it is clear that one of the schools that I visited had workshopped teachers on the SACE position regarding teacher professional development. The Department of Basic Education also conducted seminars, workshops, and further issued circulars where schools were informed of the SACE point system.

The bulk of responses analysed indicated an emerging pattern. It was discovered that many teachers considered SACE as a supportive structure. This is in direct contrast to how professional development structures were historically viewed in the past. Sayed, Kanjee and Nkomo (2013:103) indicate that “When South Africa achieved democracy status in 1994, it inherited an education system that was profoundly discriminatory.” Sayed et al. (2013:7) further elaborates that pre-1994, education resource imbalances were heavily skewed in favour of the minority white learners.

This resulted in educational structures being viewed with suspicion and distrust. This inequality was characterised by “unequal learner-teacher ratios, inadequate infrastructure and unqualified teachers” (Soudien, 2013:7). Morrow (2007, cited in Botman, 2016:248) states that although the cause of this education crisis was political, the “remedy is going to have to be professional.” Post-1994, SACE was conceived, launched in 1995 and began its configuration in 1996 under the auspices of the Education Labour Relations Council (RSA, 2011a). In terms of infrastructure, it was apparent that teachers are aware of SACE and its core purpose, and there seemed to be quiet acceptance of this structure.

Despite the views of the participants indicated above who demonstrated knowledge of SACE, there have been some who hold contradictory views. These views are represented by participants 3 and 4:

*All I know about SACE is that you have to be a part of it if you want to practice as a teacher in SA. But I don't know anything more about it. (P4)*

*You know what, it's out there but I don't know that much about it. (P3)*

In spite of the fact that some of the participants were apprised of SACE as a professional development structure, I discovered from some of the educator responses above that if SACE wants to be more effective and efficient, this body needs to be more accessible to the teachers they manage. Their advocacy and orientation programmes must undergo a metamorphosis. Perhaps this should start as early as tertiary institutions and not wait until teachers enter the school gates. SACE needs to actively and aggressively promote itself as a body with the interest of the educator at heart. This is what underpins their success.

#### **4.2.2.2 Legislation**

Legislation governing continuous professional teacher development was critical to this study. This study also sought to discern the legislative positions regarding professional development of teachers. Steyn (2009:258) posits that “to transform education in South Africa, it is necessary that teachers be appropriately equipped to meet the evolving challenges and needs of this developing country”. It became imperative that

a plan needed to be conceived to upgrade the largely failing South African education system. “The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (NPFTED) was an attempt to address the need for suitably qualified teachers in South Africa” (Steyn, 2009:259). The NPFTED gave birth to the Continuous Professional Teacher Development policy. In responding to issues related to legislation of professional teacher development, participants 10 and 11 had this to say:

*The distinction that we need to draw is that through Act 31 of 2008, we are a statutory body... But if you look in terms of the legislation again, it is very clear in terms of the role. If you look at the National Development Plan, it is very clear that SACE must be able to put in place the ethical standards. It must be able to put in place the teaching standards. It must be able to put in place quality assurance processes. Then there are other policies, the national bodies, the framework, the integrated strategy, they begin to articulate what professional development is and what is the role of SACE in that and that is why it has been centralised, for lack of a better word. (P11)*

*... in terms of the National Policy Framework on Teacher education and development, it says the overarching aim of implementing the system is to improve classroom practice. That is number 1. But number 2, I said it earlier on; in terms of code of professional ethics it is expected. It is mandated. It is obligatory for all SACE registered teachers to participate in continuous professional teacher development because keeping abreast with developments in your own area becomes an important thing as a professional. (P10)*

The continuous professional teacher development policy was uniquely devised to equip the teaching profession to confront the challenges and demands of a newly emerging democratic South Africa (Steyn, 2009:260). This fits in perfectly with the aims of the Skills Development Act of 1998. This act encouraged employers “to use the workplace as an active workplace environment” and “to provide employees with the opportunities to acquire new skills” (Steyn, 2009:260). The continuous professional teacher development policy is the key policy guiding my main research aim and relevant sub-questions. The SACE continuous professional teacher development system has the backing of policy and it is imperative that teachers understand this.

Non-compliance with relevant policy could have grave implications which teachers are presently unaware of or just ignore.

#### **4.2.3 Continuous professional teacher development administration**

The next theme that emanated from the rich textual data focused on the administration of this particular system. The question that arose is how exactly does this system of point allocation work? Never forgetting the principal aim of this particular research report was to discover how the SACE point system policy impacts the professional development of teachers, two sub-themes emanated, namely, the type of activities, and communication.

##### **4.2.3.1 Type of activities**

Another thematic perspective indicated that teachers can acquire professional development points by embarking on a variety of activities. The nature and scope of these activities can be quite varied. Perusal of the minutes of new educator meetings at one particular secondary school under investigation indicated that the above training of new teachers did in fact occur. This system of continuous professional teacher development, point allocation and the importance of obtaining a valid SACE certificate were explained to teachers. I sought to comprehend the engagement of participants on a number of these activities, as indicated below. These activities as restated here are categorised into three groups.

Type 1: Activities initiated by the teacher: These are activities spearheaded by an educator to address personally identified needs such as enrolling in an ACE course or attending a workshop.

Type 2: Activities initiated by the school: These are common needs identified by management of the school, such as staff meetings called by management or responding to needs according to the school improvement plan.

Type 3: Activities initiated externally: These are activities that are externally provided by the Education Department or by the SACE endorsed providers. Attendance at Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) workshops qualify as type 3 activities.



The SACE Act (No. 31 of 2000) granted the council its statutory status to implement its mandates of compulsory registration, promotion of professional development and implementation of the code of ethics (RSA, 2011c). The Basic Laws Amendment Act (RSA, 2011b) further commissioned SACE to manage the continuous professional teacher development system. This system was to be managed in a manner where teachers accrue points when they have engaged in an activity that is deemed important for their development, such as workshops. Engaging the participants on these aspects, participants presented a mixture of perceptions. The participants' views could be categorised into those that do not have any understanding, those who have little knowledge, and those who have a thorough understanding of the system. Some educator responses, as indicated below, depicted extremely poor knowledge of the functioning of this system.

*Really, I don't understand. (P2)*

*No idea. No idea at all. No idea. None whatsoever. (P5)*

Other responses indicated a fair knowledge of the system.

*I know if you go to certain workshops, then they accredit you. I think it's like 5 points. 5-10 points per workshop. (P3)*

*So I think if you attend certain meetings or workshops like the road show or the SIS meetings or anything that goes beyond your hours at school then you should be getting professional development points. (P4)*

*So, from my knowledge, every time that you attend a workshop or professional development course, points are entered which gains to your record and you have to have so many points during a cycle. (P1)*

In contrast, some teachers were extremely knowledgeable about the system.

*There are 3 different things that people can do. You go to an outside provider and they will, they have to be registered and they are some of those people who are registered. So, just by going they will register you and you will earn*

*your points. The other thing is if we have meetings at the school and it's of proper content and if there's real value in it. I kind of registered and I can actually allocate to teachers and then the other thing is that teachers can do it themselves by doing other things, attending meetings or even reading certain things or whatever and that's how they can accumulate more. (P7)*

*... Professional development activities into 3 categories and that is why we have type 1, type 2, type 3 which we call teacher initiated, school initiated and external initiated... That is why when you look at your type 1, type 2, type 3 we say things that are readily available to this teacher that can be classified as professional development activities are the ones that can enable this teacher to earn professional development points. So we looked at what this teacher is doing in his daily tasks? What is he exposed to at school? That is where your type 2 will come in. Your type 3 is well, out of his control. Someone will have a programme. The Department will have a programme. The union will have this but this teacher cannot control that. (P10)*

The responses from participants 7 and 10 capture confirmation of coherence of theory and practice. The findings indicate that the empirical evidence and the literature review correlate. As indicated in Chapter 2, Figure 2.2, there are three types of professional development activities that are allocated points. The views expressed by participants 7 and 10 encapsulate these three types of professional development activities. Although participant 7 used different terminology, the word 'things' instead of types, the essence of what she meant was basically the same.

What became abundantly clear from the participants' views, above, is that knowledge of how this system is managed ranged on a continuum from very poor to average to actually quite good. As stated earlier, SACE needs to aggressively market this relatively 'new' system to teachers. It is obvious that what is being done presently is just not enough. Some teachers are on board, whereas others are being left behind. To be successful and achieve their ultimate goal of improved learner performance, SACE needs to do things differently to get a different result. What is being done presently is neither effective nor efficient. The system has been in place for six years, from 2014, therefore it can no longer really be considered a system in its infancy.

#### **4.2.3.2 Digital literacy and online reporting**

Technology is transforming society and the ways in which people interact, work and learn. Our schools are undergoing major changes and schools have to become flexible and adapt to these changes. “Teachers who collaborate with, learn from, and make use of the knowledge created by these networks are helping to recreate the meaning of scholarship itself, not only for learners but for themselves as well” (Lieberman, 2000:227). Jones and Dexter (2014:368) further comment that “rapidly developing areas such as digital technology add additional pressure on teacher professional development to assist teachers in preparing their students for a more technologically sophisticated society and workplace.” The point system has been up and running from January 2014 (RSA, 2011c). Critical to this investigation was the knowledge of whether teachers are actually reporting on activities undertaken. No reporting equates to no points being allocated, which possibly means that no professional development is being undertaken. This in essence will mean that the system is flawed and failing. Online reporting by participants is critical to the success of this system. Participants expressed their views as follows:

*I feel like when we have to go online to put in our points, it is a little bit complicated at the beginning. And it takes some time to get used to. (P1)*

*I haven't been on the online portal to see how many points I have ... and I am guilty of not logging in. (P4)*

*I have. Once or twice. It was user friendly but I didn't take much time to navigate through the portal. I didn't spend much time on it. I think it was just the process. Logging in but I didn't go back. (P5)*

*Yes, I have been on it. Sometimes, I can get on. Sometimes I can't get on. Last year, especially last year. It's not very user friendly in my opinion. (P9)*

As per the SACE handbook, the principal with the support of the school management team is responsible for monitoring educators' professional development. “The continuous professional teacher development point system is a tangible tool by which

educational reform can be measured and improved” (RSA, 2011c). Participants were asked about their status as regards reporting on the online portal. A disturbing pattern became evident. Participants 2, 4 and 6 stated the following:

*I've never because it doesn't really affect me. I'll have to work on this. (P2)*

*No because I forget. It's not something that I remember to do. (P4)*

*I think sheer neglect. Forgetfulness. That's like the last thing on my mind. Yes. Sheer neglect from my side. And I think with most of us. (P9)*

What is extremely concerning is that these participants are very apathetic and you get a sense that they view reporting of points as an option and not really an obligation. There is no sense of accountability, urgency or interest regarding point reporting. It became evident that at the level of the schools, there is no monitoring or supervision. The lack of an effective school based policy is actually hampering the ownership of this system.

“South African teachers are under a huge administrative burden and point reporting may add to this burden” (Steyn, 2009:262). Steyn (2009) adds that this could “contribute towards lessening the effectiveness of continuous professional teacher development.” Participant 3 encapsulates this; when probed about reporting, she says

*I try to. (P3)*

Even from this response, the sheer lack of accountability is evident. Unfortunately, from the evidence depicted above, it is undeniable that the reporting phase of continuous professional teacher development is not as efficient as it should be. There appears to be a disjunction between professional development and point reporting. Systems are in place, but many teachers have a relaxed attitude about reporting which can place this system in jeopardy. Many teachers are not exploring the possibilities that this system could offer.

The implementation of the system requires connectivity, electronic access and knowledge of the digital world. All responses elicited from teachers indicated that they were computer literate and had access to a computer. However, not all participants had continued access to the internet. Connectivity is key to point reporting. Participant 10 indicated that the education sector has a large component that is not technologically advanced.

*... we have the born before technology, who might say, this ICT thing is very difficult. You know young teachers they are ICT savvy. They can do anything with ICT but the old teachers don't know how to do this. I don't know how to get this. (P10)*

This point is further emphasised by Participant 11 who stated that,

*The technical part is signing up. (P11)*

Participant 10 encapsulated it perfectly when he stated,

*The Fourth industrial revolution is coming. (P10)*

Data analysis indicates that the foundation of this particular management system rests solidly on technology. Jones and Dexter (2014:368) state that “the unprecedented growth of digital technologies and the rate at which technology now evolves creates a need for greater flexibility in teacher professional development.” Technology driven professional development is the key to unlocking the most current and updated solutions to improve learner performance.

The basic foundation, online reporting, on which this entire system rests, is trembling. From the responses elicited, it is evident that the system is marred by obstacles. It is imperative that SACE reflect on the online system and perhaps ensure that there is a massive increase in technical support. If the system has been updated, then it is also vital that teachers be informed and interact with the new and improved system. Advocacy and outreach programmes must be relevant and widespread. If online reporting is not happening, then the domino effect could be that professional development is also not happening. This has negative connotations for the teaching profession as a whole.

#### **4.2.4 Quality assurance**

The implementation of the process of teacher professional development is extremely critical. Equally, implementation necessitates quality monitoring and is justifiably an imperative. “Monitoring means keeping a check on how the continuous professional teacher development management system is working so that improvements may be made along the way.” (RSA, 2011c). Evaluation, on the other hand, is an “unbiased assessment, by an external body, of whether the continuous professional teacher development management system is meeting its goals and targets” (RSA, 2011c). The Memo 106/17 (Gauteng Department of Education, 2017) that was circulated to schools on the 14 March 2017 was a document encompassing continuous professional teacher development audit sign up and points reporting. This document confirmed that quality assurance processes and procedures are actually in place. Mashile (2011:179) states that “Benchmarking is the search for best practices that lead to superior performance.” Three sub-themes emerged from this major theme: Credible data set; SACE: A policing or supporting body; and advantages and disadvantages.

##### **4.2.4.1 Credible data set**

Having credible data sets is central to quality control. SACE needs access to teachers’ particulars as SACE needs to be well-versed on the quality, calibre and status of teachers employed. Participant 10 supported the above statements by asserting,

*I think it also provides the council with a sense of what quality of teachers are there...we then have a more credible data set about our teachers. (P10)*

He further elaborated,

*Whatever information that we have, we don’t have to really go to the department to request information. Or go to the Department of Home Affairs to check who has passed on or not. Once we have those linkages, we know that whatever plans from the side of the council and whatever decisions are informed by a credible data set which is our continuous professional teacher development information system. (P10)*

Participant responses did in fact indicate that quality assurance processes and procedures are firmly embedded in this system. SACE has access to educator information literally at their fingertips. This access envelops all nine provinces. From this dominant position in the hierarchy, SACE can have an uninterrupted view of what is happening on the ground. From this position of authority, they can manage and control effectively, but as stated earlier, there appears to be a gap between what should happen and what is happening.

#### **4.2.4.2 SACE: A policing or supporting body?**

The current era with so many new developments in educational settings, particularly teaching, requires a system that is ready for any eventuality. The question that is critical is whether SACE is a body essentially for surveillance or support. Participant 8 expressed this as,

*It's a good thing but not to be used as a tool to police or to say that you did not do this and then you are going to get punished. (P8)*

Teachers were asked to remark on whether they knew of any sanctions if the required number of points were not gained in a cycle. Responses were as follows:

*They did say that they going to record it and they going to start going to schools and I'm not sure what they meant to do because that was under discussion ... obtain 150 points and if they didn't there were certain consequences with that. (P3)*

*I think if you don't get an increase but I don't think that's happened to anyone at this school. I'm not aware of anything. Maybe a disciplinary hearing. I'm not sure. (P4)*

*No idea about that either. (P5)*

*I don't know. I don't know any sanctions. No, I don't know. If there is, I'll be surprised. (P9)*

As is evident from the disparaging views expressed by participants, there appears to be no consequences for non-compliance. Teachers are confused and unsure. The SACE participant clarified this by stating:

*The intention is to acknowledge participation of teachers in continuous professional teacher development. And one way of acknowledging them, is when you have done something, you can earn professional development points... So, there are no punitive measures for now. At the end of accumulation of those points in a 3 year cycle, we allocate certificates. (P10)*

The response above indicates that SACE is there more for the support of the educator, rather than as a punitive body.

A system of professional development has been around from 2014, but it is evident that in-depth knowledge on the part of teachers is inadequate. SACE as a statutory body needs to reflect and introspect on their systems and try to ascertain the reason why there is such ignorance on the ground regarding this system. It appears that all systems and processes are in place at the pinnacle of the hierarchy but there is a serious disconnect as you go further down. This has serious implications for this system of quality assurance. This immediately places this system in jeopardy.

#### **4.2.4.3 Advantages and disadvantages**

Data affirms that professional development is in place to enhance the teaching profession. But, as is the case with any 'new' system, it is bound to be riddled with positive and negative criticism. Participant 9 expressed this as follows,

*I haven't really dissected the system to look at its pros and cons. (P9)*

The ultimate aim of professional development is to increase capacity of teachers (RSA, 2011c). It is there to assist teachers adjust and refine their development needs in order to achieve maximum advantage and recognition. This congruence between empirical evidence and literature is captured by the response of Participant 1.

*OK. It it's good because you continuously improving yourself as an educator. (P1)*



Mashile (2011:177) states that, “SADTU regards professional judgement as a central notion and an essential feature in continuous professional teacher development.” The Gauteng Department of Education official encapsulated this when she remarked,

*Their members in terms of training and giving points in terms of continuous professional development. They organise workshops, continuous professional teacher development and they encourage them to upload and everything. They really coming in. One union that I know is SADTU. (P12)*

Unfortunately, a system such as this is bound to have its fair share of criticism. The allocation of points could lead to the rewarding of passivity, as points are allocated merely for attendance at a course. According to Ono and Ferreira (2009:60), “Nothing has promised so much and has been so frustratingly wasteful as the thousands of workshops and conferences that led to no significant change in practice when the teachers returned to their classrooms.”

Participants expressed their disappointment with the system and in identifying some of the disadvantages, lack of accountability for non-compliance was noted as one. Participants 9, 4 and 3 captured this when they stated:

*The disadvantage is there are no consequences. (P9)*

*I'm not sure if it's much of a disadvantage. I mean if you get points, you don't get points, it doesn't really matter. (P4)*

*But what are the consequences if you don't? They don't stipulate anything. (P3)*

Upon analysis of the above data, you once again get a sense of teachers' apathy regarding this system. It seems that teachers want a consequence management division. They crave accountability management procedures. Although this system has the backing of legislation and teachers are bound by this policy, this is not deterring teachers from not actively interacting with the system.

### **4.3 CONCLUSION**

The focus of this chapter was on data analysis which resulted in the formulation of themes. Participant experiences, views and opinions were sought and these were reported using verbatim quotations indicated in italics. The overall findings were that this system of quality control has incredible potential, but it needs to be actively promoted at the level of schools. There is a lot of merit in this system and once the teething problems and technical issues are sorted out, this system can only get better. The final chapter focuses on the summary of findings, limitations and the significance of the study, suggestions and conclusions to this investigation.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter 4, data collected from interviews, document analysis, and observations were analysed, interpreted and reported. This chapter provides an overview of the findings to determine whether the study objectives identified in Chapter 1 were achieved. In particular, this chapter explores the summary of the study findings, draws conclusions, refers to the possible limitations of the study and makes recommendations for further research. The intention of this investigation was to determine if the SACE point system policy contributes positively to the professional development of teachers in two selected schools in Gauteng. Nine participants from

two schools, one Gauteng Department of Education Official and two SACE officials were involved in this study. The first section will focus on continuous professional teacher development and its impact in the classroom. This discussion will be followed by an elaboration of the management of the SACE system. Thereafter, a discussion of continuous professional teacher development administration, implementation and quality assurance will ensue.

## **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH STUDY**

This dissertation comprised five chapters. The findings will be addressed according to the themes that were developed in Chapter 4.

### **5.2.1 The continuous professional teacher development system for improved classroom practice**

Many teachers had a different understanding of the concept professional development. The participants were requested to elaborate on their understanding of this key concept in education. The literature review elicited an appropriate definition of professional development. Avalos (2011:10) in defining professional development incorporates “the benefit of their students’ growth” in his definition. This definition encompassed teachers learning for the ultimate goal of learner improvement. Teachers in this study did not unanimously agree with this definition. Teacher feedback serves as evidence that some saw professional development as merely individualised improvement. They viewed professional development as accumulating points for their self-gain rather than for the interest of their learners.

My observations at school level also led me to conclude that those engaging in professional development activities did not come back and workshop other teachers on new techniques and aspects that they had developed at their training. These teachers benefitted but they appeared not share their new skills with others, nor did it become evident that these skills were implemented in class.

The SACE officials interviewed displayed clarity with regard to the link between professional development and learner improvement. According to the two officials

interviewed, professional development has to equate to improved classroom practice and, therefore, improved learner performance. Apart from interviews, all the SACE documents studied also cement this connection between professional development and learner improvement.

### **5.2.2 The continuous professional teacher development management system**

The study reveals that teachers are aware of SACE as a professional development structure. This finding came as no surprise as one of the criteria for selection was that all teacher participants had to be registered with SACE. A disparity, however, became evident when it came to the operation of the system. Participant responses ranged on a continuum from little knowledge, fair knowledge, to being extremely knowledgeable about the system.

The above finding is extremely disconcerting as this point system of professional development has been in place since 2014. The SACE and National Professional Teachers Association documents that were studied attest to this fact. Six years on and a large proportion of participants displayed limited knowledge, interaction and engagement with this system. Many participants were unclear and unsure about this system.

The majority of participants show that they have a limited understanding of how the SACE point system operates. This was demonstrated when eight of the participants indicated that they do not understand how the system operates and nine participants indicated that they do not regularly update on the online portal for recording points. This finding has important implications for our main research question: Does the SACE point system policy ensure the professional development of teachers in Gauteng? Flowing from this, it can be concluded that this policy as it operates presently is definitely not ensuring the professional development of teachers in Gauteng.

#### **5.2.2.1 Legislation**

SACE is viewed as a supportive structure in the eyes of many educational professionals. Teachers are aware of the legislation and there is clear acceptance

that teachers can only practice in South Africa if they are affiliated to this statutory body. However, limited and sometimes incorrect knowledge about the point system marred perceptions of teachers. All teachers interviewed had signed up for point reporting, but evidence presented indicated that not all participants were actively reporting. This system has its challenges in that it is still being perceived by many as an option not an obligation. Teacher responses indicated that although the point system is mandated by legislation, teachers feel that they are not obligated to interact with the system. The lack of sanctions for non-compliance is a contributory factor towards this viewpoint. It is obvious from the responses obtained that teachers are not very knowledgeable about this system. They are aware that point reporting is a mandated requirement, but they display no urgency to familiarise themselves or engage with the system. A large proportion of the teaching fraternity believe that point reporting is a choice and not a mandated requirement.

### **5.2.3 The continuous professional teacher development administration**

Many participants indicated that they did not even report on type 1 activities (see subsection 4.2.3.1) which are within their control. From the responses obtained, only two of the SACE officials, the Gauteng Department of Education official and two teachers knew how these three types of activities operated. This is quite a disturbing trend as it once again brings the lack of exposure and knowledge of this system to the fore. I was unsuccessful in obtaining a school policy encompassing the continuous professional teacher development system. A national policy is in effect but no school policy exists, which also places this system in jeopardy. This leads me to conclude that the SACE point system policy is in fact not contributing positively to the professional development of teachers in the two selected schools in Gauteng.

### **5.2.4 Digital literacy and online reporting**

The study called into question the association between professional development and online reporting. This mismatch between professional development and point reporting is concerning and it therefore brought digital literacy and online reporting under scrutiny. The participants that formed part of the sample in this investigation indicated that they were all computer literate; however, this may not be the case in the entire educational sector. Therefore, lack of reporting in this investigation cannot be

attributed to poor digital literacy. A variety of responses from participants indicated that online reporting was not taking place due to indifference. Participants cited aspects such as forgetfulness or being extremely busy on other school related aspects to prioritise point reporting. Responses also indicated that the lack of sanctions for not reporting also contributed to this lack of engagement with the system. My observations at school level, where computers were made available to teachers, allowed me to observe that teachers were constantly busy with computers but were never interacting on the SACE online portal. This led me to conclude that the SACE point system policy is actually not contributing positively to the ongoing professional development of teachers although it definitely could and should be.

An in-depth study of all the SACE documents led me to see that implementation required electronic access, knowledge of the digital world and connectivity. Participant responses regarding the first two aspects were unanimous; all twelve participants had some type of electronic access and most had some knowledge of the digital world. One of the older participants had a lower level of computer literacy. However, not all teachers had connectivity due to lack of accessibility to Wi-Fi and data bundles. Some teachers only had connectivity at their place of work and this connectivity was not guaranteed. Connectivity is the key to success of this system as all reporting has to occur online. This culminated in the conclusion that the SACE point system if it remains as it is will not contribute positively to the professional development of teachers.

### **5.2.5 Quality assurance**

Conclusions on this section will focus on the following: SACE: a policing or supporting body? The advantages and disadvantages of the SACE point system will be discussed.

#### ***5.2.5.1 SACE: A policing or supporting body?***

From the responses obtained from interviews, all twelve participants regarded SACE as a supportive structure. This is in keeping with Chapter two sections 5(iv) of the SACE Act 31 of 2000 which states that SACE must promote the in-service training of all teachers (RSA, 2011c). However, SACE to some extent also has a monitoring

function. Interview data confirmed that many of the teachers including the Gauteng Department of Education official appealed for some type of monitoring and support. The absence of this support and monitoring is hampering the system from gaining momentum. In its efforts to improve visibility in the nine provinces, in May 2017 SACE kick-started its programme of visiting the various provinces (Boikanyo, 2017:6).

#### ***5.2.5.2 Advantages and disadvantages of this system?***

It is important to be aware that any 'new' system is bound to have its fair share of advantages and disadvantages. Teachers could not clearly comment on the advantages and disadvantages, and it once again became evident that not many teachers were accustomed to interacting with the system. All teachers expressed self-improvement as an advantage. Some teachers once again brought in the lack of penalty as a disadvantage. The system has an abundance of possibilities for the professional development of teachers, but these possibilities are being hampered by the sheer lack of commitment by most teachers. Engagement in professional development is obligatory for all teachers as it forms a cornerstone of the SACE code of professional ethics. Feedback from teachers was clear. Teachers are participating in professional development, however this is not being reported on the online portal. This hampers the quality control processes from the SACE perspective. During the interviews, teachers' sentiment regarding this management system tilted on a scale towards not effective at all.

Many teachers unfortunately did not give this system the required impetus that it should have received. The continuous professional teacher development system should by now have gained momentum as it is now six years after conception. This perception of the system not being effective correlates directly with the lack of engagement with the system. If teachers are not active on the online portal, it is obvious that they will perceive the system as being ineffective and holding no value. After all, they clearly do not understand the system as they are not interacting and engaging with it. Based on the findings, the views of participants indicate that if this system could be modified, it could be quite effective in ensuring the professional development of teachers.

### **5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This dissertation of limited scope focused on only two selected secondary schools in Gauteng; therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to other schools. In addition, only a small sample of participants was chosen, therefore the results cannot be generalised to the entire teaching fraternity. A further limitation is that although there has been an abundance of studies conducted on teacher professional development, there are however inadequate studies or none on the link between the SACE point system and the professional development of teachers in South Africa according to the literature reviewed.

In undertaking this research, I also became attuned to many other limitations of this study. Some of the challenges that I encountered included hesitations when answering some of the questions by some participants, some displayed discomfort which was evidenced by body language and delayed appointments in some instances. These limitations indicate that participants were not extremely keen to engage in this particular study. Although participants had initially agreed to participate, there was evidence that teachers were not overly enthusiastic about participation. In fact, my initial sample consisted of two school principals, but one declined to be interviewed. Instead, I interviewed one principal and two deputy principals.

### **5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE SACE POINT SYSTEM**

The implications and outcomes of the SACE point system policy are directly linked to the purpose for which they were initially conceived and administered. One of the cornerstones of SACE is to promote and expediate the ongoing professional development of teachers, in particular, the continuous professional teacher development management system. This system will advance and acknowledge teachers' professional development. The essence is to inspire and foster teachers to become experts in their field, and to embolden school hubs to become suitable centres of teaching, learning and development.

Regardless of its purpose, the continuous professional teacher development management system provides evidence that adequate professional development has



taken place. It is a tool used by SACE to keep a record of teacher's professional development. It also serves as a device to supervise and evaluate the continuous professional teacher development management system thereby ensuring the elevation of teachers' professionalism, and the upgrading and upskilling of teaching and learning in schools.

Being mindful of the interaction between professional development and point reporting can potentially enhance the efficacy of both. As a teacher develops professionally it is envisioned that the teacher is engaging in high quality, meaningful and relevant professional development. SACE will screen external providers to ensure that they meet the quality criteria. As the teacher reports the points, SACE can keep a record of teachers' professional development. A system of accountability is in place.

The results of this study impact both researchers and teachers. Viewed through the lens of a researcher, the link between professional development and point reporting is impelling and calls for further study. Potential future research could zoom in on the status of this relationship, functional or dysfunctional. From a practical perspective, teachers should be made aware of the potential this system possesses to transform education.

Secondly, stakeholders such as higher education institutions should emphasise the SACE advocacy and orientation programmes. This denotes that the current programmes need to be amended in order to adequately connect theory in training colleges to practice in the schools. Higher education institutions need to be customised to address the hurdles that teachers confront in the classroom while undergoing professional development. These pre-service teachers must have an effective working knowledge of SACE before they step into the schools. As novice teachers, they are dealing with a host of new information. The SACE policy should be something familiar and a tool that novice teachers are already interacting with prior to entering the schools.

Similarly, teachers who are already in the field should also have their knowledge and skills regarding continuous professional teacher development regularly updated. This system is attracting new providers and generally keeping abreast of the current changes in the education system. As such, the system will also be dynamic and be

revised as it goes into full operation. Therefore, in-service teachers must also be trained and updated as pre-service teachers are.

The above may have implications for the advertising and marketing departments of SACE. This policy has to be actively unpacked, aggressively marketed and brought down to the level of teachers. Having policies in place with no practical follow through, may be a failure. Non-compliance with policy could be merely due to ignorance rather than teachers being deliberately disobedient. SACE has to increase capacity to deal with emerging queries and technical glitches that may hamper the effective implementation of this system.

Thirdly, all schools should be tasked to create a school policy regarding continuous professional teacher development. The lack of school policy could be directly contributing to the deficiencies of this system. To ensure uniformity and consistency, all schools should be obliged to create their own school policies in keeping with the greater SACE policy regarding professional development. In this way, accountability and quality control is ensured from the ground upwards. A direct connection between professional development and point reporting can be immediately picked up. Schools can impose their own sanctions for non-compliance that are in keeping with the relevant legislation.

## **5.5 CONCLUSION**

My major finding emanating from this study leads me to conclude that the SACE point system policy is not contributing significantly to the professional development of teachers in Gauteng. This study has raised concerns related to the professional development of teachers that emanated from document analysis, observations and interviews in two schools in Gauteng. The professional development management system presents many challenges to teachers as many lack the advocacy and orientation that is a prerequisite for engaging constructively in these programmes. The challenge of effective professional development has to be met head on by all stakeholders in all fields of education. If teachers continue perceiving professional development as having an individualised focus, this will not equate to the overarching aim of improved learner performance.

These challenges cannot be left to SACE alone. SACE in conjunction with the Education Department incorporating school policies and procedures need to be overhauled to redress the issue of effective teacher professional development. The teacher preparation programmes carried out at universities and teacher training institutions need to be urgently reviewed in order to incorporate the emerging trends and the point system policy of professional development. It is imperative that the current focus on content knowledge and pedagogic skills be supplemented with information on the SACE management system initiatives.

SACE is accountable for quality control of the continuous professional teacher development management system. This body must increase the capacity of their accountability division to ensure compliance by all teachers in all provinces. Unfortunately, the nature of the system that is purely supportive and not punitive is not achieving its desired aim of continuing professional development.

The problems that have emerged and the challenges that have been identified warrant further research. These findings must be deciphered with care as a relatively limited number of teachers and schools comprised the participant sample. The results obtained from a larger sample could generate conflicting results.

## **5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The aim of this study was to investigate the SACE point system policy and its implications for the professional development of teachers in Gauteng. As this is a relatively 'new' system, further research in the following fields of study could be valuable to clarify some of the emerging issues raised in this study.

1. Further research could be done in both primary and secondary schools incorporating all nine provinces. A greater sample of participants and a greater number of schools could form part of future investigations. This research could be both qualitative and/or quantitative.
2. Research could be undertaken at the level of teacher training institutions. This is where all pre-service teacher training happens. Novice teachers are inundated

when entering a school institution; they are generally unprepared and overwhelmed by what they face. If teachers learn about SACE, their operations and procedures and obtain their valid SACE certificates prior to entering school institutions, they will be better placed to interact and engage with the SACE management system. These findings would be useful to the teacher development unit as well as SACE.

3. The digital divide, the global village and the fourth industrial revolution increase the contemporary challenges faced by teachers. Online point reporting has now become a prerequisite and a tool whereby SACE manages the professional development system. Internet connectivity has become a basic requirement. Further technological research in this area and the financial impact it has on teachers would be useful to the SACE research department.
4. The type of activities that teachers are engaging in to obtain professional development points could present information vital to improving the core function of a school, namely, teaching and learning. Teachers have three types of activities that they could engage in. Engaging in a particular type of activity to the detriment of others could have a huge impact on learners' learning. An example would be a teacher who only reads educational material to develop himself professionally. This is a type 1 activity. If he is not attending meetings as well, he may not be teaching the key concepts and his focus may be distorted. He is not engaging in type 2 activities. Compounding this, if he is not attending SACE endorsed meetings he may not be familiar with the updated changes to curriculum which constitutes a type 3 activity. Research in this particular area could improve educational standards. This could provide valuable information for the professional development and research department of SACE.
5. The foundation of this entire system is based on legislation and backed by policy. From 2014-2019, SACE has not imposed a penalty for non-compliance; however this will be reviewed from 2019 going forward. An interesting aspect for future research could deal with future policy imperatives regarding the continuous professional teacher development management system. These results could be invaluable to the policy makers, education departments and to the teachers they oversee.

6. The lack of concern and disregard for the system displayed by teachers highlights the nature of the entire SACE point system policy, the need to modify this system, and educational research to address teacher advocacy and orientation programmes. SACE has to actively and aggressively market this system and ensure that it is familiar to teachers.

This study may be considered a pioneer in the education field. The study has highlighted crucial information that could contribute to the improvement of the point system, of education and ultimately the improvement of the South African learner.

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**APPENDIX A: Ethical clearance from UNISA**

**UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Date: 2018/09/12

Ref: 2018/09/12/46130268/23/MC

Name: Mrs P Munnhar

Student: 46130268

Dear Mrs Munnhar

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2018/09/12 to 2021/09/12

---

**Researcher(s):** Name: Mrs P Munnhar  
E-mail address: Pradhika.munnhar@gmail.com  
Telephone: +27 66 535 9362

**Supervisor(s):** Name: Dr SS Khumalo  
E-mail address: ekhumass@unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: +27 84 613 4257

**Title of research:**

**The South African Council for Educators point system policy: Implications for the professional development of Educators in Gauteng**

**Qualification:** M. Ed in Educational Leadership and Management

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Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2018/09/12 to 2021/09/12.

*The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2018/09/12 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2021/09/12**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2018/09/12/46130268/23/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Claassens', with a horizontal line underneath it.

**Dr M Claassens**  
**CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC**  
[mcdtc@netactive.co.za](mailto:mcdtc@netactive.co.za)

**Prof V McKay**  
**EXECUTIVE DEAN**  
[Mckayvi@unisa.ac.za](mailto:Mckayvi@unisa.ac.za)



**GAUTENG**  
Department: Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**APPENDIX B: GDE RESEARCH  
APPROVAL LETTER**

2018/10/31

**GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL**

Date	31 October 2018
Validity of Research	11 February 2019 — 30 September 2019 2018/338
Name of	Munnhar
Address of	12 Santa During Road Honeydew, Roodepoort,
Telephone	066 535
Email address:	<a href="mailto:Pradhika.munnhar@gmail.com">Pradhika.munnhar@gmail.com</a>
Research	The South African Council for educators' point system policy: Implications for the professional
Type of	Master's in
Number and type of	One Secondary School. One
District/s/HO	Johannesburg West

**Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct  
Research**

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been

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Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge  
Management 99

1. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
  2. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.*
  3. *A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
  4. *A letter/ document that outline the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.*
  5. *The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.*
  6. *Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.*
  7. *Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.*
- B. *Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.*
9. *It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.*
  10. *The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.*
  11. *The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.*
  12. *On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.*
  13. *The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.*
  14. *Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.*

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

**Kind regards**

Mr Gumani Mukatuni

Acting CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 31/10/2018 .....

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**Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management** 100

7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001

**APPENDIX C: Certificate of edit**

Tel: 011 787 0797  
hannant@mweb.co.za

Mrs G Hannant  
28 Hillcrest Avenue  
CRAIGHALL PARK  
2196

26 July 2019

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

I certify that I have edited the Master of Education thesis:

**THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATORS POINT SYSTEM POLICY:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS IN  
GAUTENG**

by

**Pradhika Munnhar**

However, the correction of all errors/missing information remains the responsibility of the student.



G.C. HANNANT  
BA HED



## **APPENDIX D: Interview Schedule**

Thank you for your willingness to participate and be interviewed here. I am an educator with 25 years teaching experience and I am interested in the SACE point system and how it affects the professional development of teachers in Gauteng.

1. Are you part of a professional body?
2. What is your understanding of professional development?
3. What is your opinion about continuous professional teacher development today?
4. Could you describe in as much detail as possible the most recent situation in which you participated in a professional development activity?
5. How much do you know about SACE?
6. Can you explain how the SACE point system of CPTD works?
7. What are the possible advantages of this system?
8. Are there any disadvantages that you are aware of?
9. What are your perceptions regarding this form of appraisal?
10. Do you think that this method of monitoring professional development is effective? Why or why not?
11. Do you have any suggestions on how this system could be improved?
12. What don't you like about this system?
13. What are the points requirements in a three year cycle?
14. Are there any sanctions if you don't fulfil your points requirements in a three year cycle?
15. What is your experience of the online portal for recording points?
16. Are you computer literate?
17. Do you have access to a PC and internet:
  - a. At home
  - b. At work
18. Do you regularly update your point score. Why or why not?

Thank you for participating in this interview. I really appreciate your contribution.

**APPENDIX E: Request for permission to conduct research at Florida Park High School**

Title of research: The South African Council for Educators point system policy:  
Implications for the professional development of teachers in Gauteng.

Date: 2018-07-30

Mrs S du Preez  
Principal Florida Park High School  
011 472 1247/8  
0724351352  
fphs@global.co.za

Dear Mrs S du Preez

I, Pradhika Munnhar am doing research under supervision of Dr S.S. Khumalo, a senior lecturer in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management towards a Masters in Education at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: The South African Council for educator's point system policy: Implications for the professional development of teachers in Gauteng.

The aim of the study is to determine if the SACE point system ensures the professional development of teachers in Gauteng.

Your school has been selected because the research is based on a secondary school in the Johannesburg West district. An additional advantage is that the educators to be interviewed are currently on your staff and purposive sampling will allow the researcher to obtain information rich participants.

The study will entail interviewing six teachers, two deputy principals and one principal and one district official after school hours. The intention of this study is to determine whether the SACE point system contributes positively towards the professional development of teachers in Gauteng.

The benefits of this study are that it will add to the current body of knowledge, and hopefully contribute to existing policies and practices. The SACE will be notified of suggestions for improvement.

There are no potential risks in undertaking this study.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback procedure will entail giving the GDE, all participants as well as your school access via e-mail to all findings in the study as soon as the study is completed, which will be sometime in 2019.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pradhika Munnhar', written in a cursive style.

Pradhika Munnhar

Educator

## **APPENDIX F: Request for permission to conduct research at Roodepark School**

Title of research: The South African Council for educators point system policy:  
Implications for the professional development of educators in Gauteng.

Date: 2018-07-30

Mrs H.F. van der Merwe  
Principal Roodepark School  
50 Clarendon Drive  
Discovery  
Roodepoort

Dear Mrs H.F. van der Merwe

I, Pradhika Munnhar am doing research under supervision of Dr S.S. Khumalo, a senior Lecturer in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management towards a Masters in education at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: The South African Council for educator's point system policy: Implications for the professional development of educators in Gauteng.

The aim of the study is to determine if the SACE point system ensures the professional development of teachers in Gauteng.

Your school has been selected because the research is based on a school in the Johannesburg west district. An additional advantage is that purposive sampling will allow the researcher to obtain information rich participants.

The study will entail interviewing six teachers, three principals and one district official after school hours. The intention of this study is to determine whether the SACE point system contributes positively towards the professional development of educators in Gauteng.

The benefits of this study are that it will add to the current body of knowledge, and hopefully contribute to existing policies and practices. SACE will be notified of suggestions for improvement.

There are no potential risks in undertaking this study.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback procedure will entail giving the GDE, all participants as well as your school access via e-mail to all findings in the study as soon as the study is completed, which will be sometime in 2019.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pradhika Munnhar', written in a cursive style.

Pradhika Munnhar

Educator

## **APPENDIX G: Consent form for participants**

Date

Title: The South African Council for Educators point system policy: Implications for the professional development of teachers in Gauteng.

### **DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT**

My name is Pradhika Munnhar and I am doing research under the supervision of Dr S.S.Khumalo, a Senior Lecturer, in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management towards a M Ed at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled The South African Council for Educators point system policy: Implications for the professional development of teachers in Gauteng.

### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

This study is expected to collect important information that could add to the current body of knowledge, and hopefully contribute to existing policies and practices. SACE will be notified of suggestions for improvement. In doing this study, the researcher hopes to make a contribution to policy.

### **WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?**

You are invited because you are a qualified educator who has registered on the continuous professional teacher development management system (CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL TEACHER DEVELOPMENT-MS) and are receiving points for professional development undertaken.

I obtained your contact details from the school you're teaching in. Five other participants will also be interviewed.

### **WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?**

The study involves audio-taping of *semi-structured interviews*. The type of questions will be as indicated on the interview schedule. The researcher will need approximately an hour and a half of your time after school hours at a time convenient to you, to complete interviews.

### **CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?**

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

### **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate the effect that the SACE point system has on the professional development (PD) of teachers. It will reflect on the impact that the point system has on ensuring the professional development of secondary school teachers in Gauteng with the aim to make recommendations for the improvement of the system. Furthermore, teachers' views and perspectives regarding this system of appraisal will be sought. Knowledge and expertise gained will be shared with The Professional Development and Research Sector of SACE

### **ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?**

There are no potential risks involved in participating in this study.

### **WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

All information will remain confidential and participation will be anonymous. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. Records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records. *A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.*

### **HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?**

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard at the researcher's residence for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and

approval if applicable. After five years, information will be destroyed if necessary. *Hard copies will be shredded and or electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme.*

**WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?**

There will be no financial reward or costs incurred for participating in this study.

**HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL**

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Education, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

**HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Pradhika Munnhar on 0665359362 or email Pradhika.munnhar@gmail.com or website. The findings are accessible for five years. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Pradhika Munnhar on 0665359362 or email Pradhika.munnhar@gmail.com or website. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Dr S. S. Khumalo on 0126134257/0846134257 or email ekhumass@unisa.ac.za

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.  
Thank you.



Pradhika Munnhar

**CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)**



I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the semi-structured interviews.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print) Pradhika Munnhar



\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date