

Teacher Attitudes, Professionalism and Unprofessionalism in Relation to School Violence

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ABSTRACT In South Africa, teaching and learning are increasingly being undermined by a growing culture of violence in schools. Rethinking how we act as teachers at school will influence both ourselves and learners as transformation agents. Teachers are viewed as beacons of hope by the learners in their care. However, teachers' professional ethical disposition is constantly questioned owing to the violence in our schools. This article aims to investigate the impact of violence on teacher professionalism and how lack of professionalism is a factor in increasing school violence. Data were collected through document analysis, individual and focus group interviews. Participants selected were secondary school learners and principals. Four schools in the six provinces in South Africa were deliberately selected to participate in the study. This study found that teachers are perpetuating violence in schools by the use of derogatory comments, bullying, and verbal violence, all of which is targeted at the learners. In addition, the study revealed that teachers are sometimes victims of violence in schools. The study emphasised professional ethics during pre- and in-service teacher training. Furthermore, the study recommends that in-service training and on-going support be given to both teachers and learners to enable them to deal with violence.