

## **WORKING PAPER 3: Development Discourses: Higher Education and Poverty Reduction in South Africa, October 2008**

### **Strengthening professionalism for the public good: implications for professional education**

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#### **Abstract**

The project 'Developing Discourses: Higher Education and Poverty Reduction in South Africa' explores how university-located professional education might contribute to South Africa's transformation priorities, in particular poverty reduction, which we conceptualize as the expansion of human capabilities. This working paper builds on the idea that the project is developing (drawing on the work of Amartya Sen [1999] and Martha Nussbaum [2000]) that 'pro-poor professionalism' can be identified as a set of professional functional capabilities, encouraged by a range of curriculum and pedagogic indicators, which would educate professionals to function in the interests of the poor.

We propose that the discourse of professionalism might be employed as a resource to elaborate and illuminate the task that faces the educators of professionals in a transforming South Africa. Across the world there is evidence that ideal-typical professionalism, defined as working for the public good, is in crisis: self-interest and technical rationality are prevailing, and there are histories of collusion with corrupt states (including apartheid South Africa). Nevertheless, we argue that the integrity of professional life is necessary to the health of civic culture everywhere; and, that there are some grounds for believing that a concept of professionalism that is linked to social functions and the common good can be revived to be of service in any democratic society in the contemporary world, and in South Africa in particular.

One of the circumstances that makes possible progressive versions of professionalism is the potential offered by education and training. Professional education university departments<sup>1</sup> are charged with a public mission to educate professionals for performance, for ethical judgment and for a disposition towards society and clients; such departments institutionalize distinctive cultures through their pedagogical and research practices. We make some proposals about pedagogic practices that might indicate human development professional capabilities, or to put it another way, indicate strengthening professionalism for the public good.

#### **1. Introduction**

*'[...]what makes one free and renders life worth living is finally neither satisfying one's desires nor accomplishing one's purposes, valuable as these are, but instead learning to act with the good of the whole in view, building life act by act, happy if each deed, as far as circumstances allow, contributes to general welfare. Anyone who has been stirred and inspired by a committed teacher, an attentive health care provider, a dedicated pastor or rabbi; anyone who has experienced a well-functioning business firm or public agency, school or cultural institution*

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<sup>1</sup> Here the moniker 'department' is stands in for 'faculty' and 'school'.

*has glimpsed the enlivening possibilities inherent in communities of professional purpose.'* (Sullivan, 2005, p.290,)

The project 'Developing Discourses: Higher Education and Poverty Reduction in South Africa' aims to explore how the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) might be achieved through the equity trajectory of universities, in particular through policies and practices for professional education and training. The reason for the focus on professional education is that it is at the nexus of universities and the societies they serve, pointing inwards to institutional transformation, and outwards to social transformation. University-based professional education is where academic knowledge, practical skills and values meet the social world and interact with the people who are the recipients of professional services.

If in South Africa universities are essential to processes of cultural and social transformation, then professional education is a key arena to put this to the test. This paper builds upon two previous working papers designed to provide contexts and conceptual bases for the project. The first<sup>2</sup> introduces a tension that applies to our discussion about the potential of the discourse of professionalism. The tension is the pull, on the one hand, 'towards an ethos of individual competition and the reproduction of a hierarchy of social advantage' (Jonathan, 2001, p.48) and, on the other, towards social transformation.

Our first working paper shows how South Africa's universities have been influenced by worldwide economic policies that prioritise markets and free trade so that the value of higher education is linked predominantly to its role in enhancing national economic competitiveness within a global economy. This tendency has led to a cluster of shifts in universities, evident across the world: responsiveness to markets for students and incoming-generating schemes; closer links with industry and business; curricula which emphasise 'employability' rather than general development; and, erosion of autonomy as accountability regimes bite. While these shifts tend to emphasise narrow, individualistic economic goals at the expense of social goals and the public good, in South Africa, since 1994 when the system of apartheid (which rendered professional education deeply racialised) officially came to an end. there have been demands for universities to address themselves to national and local needs for reconstruction and transformation to a democratic, equitable society

As many scholarly commentators remind us, everywhere universities and the professional education located within them have the potential, enshrined in their histories, to pursue either reproductive or transformative goals (for example, Bok,2003, 2006; Bourdieu, 1996; Habermas, 1989; Hall, 2007). Our discussion about strengthening professionalism for the public good is located in the White Paper on Higher Education (1997) which identifies the purposes of higher education in South Africa as contribution to the process of societal transformation originally outlined in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which combined economic priorities with the need to support a democratic civil society.

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<sup>2</sup> The contribution of higher education to transformation, development and poverty reduction: Overview of the South Africa higher education context' (<http://nottingham.ac.uk/education/projects/mw-poverty-reduction/index.php>)

Our second Working Paper<sup>3</sup> begins the exploration of how a university education and training might form the values of professionals committed to poverty reduction, as well as develop appropriate skills and knowledge. The conceptual starting point is drawn from Amartya Sen's 'capability approach' to human development by which poverty is seen as a multi-dimensional erosion of human well-being and agency; and poverty reduction as the expansion of a range of human capabilities which are the freedoms or opportunities people have to be and do what they value (or function as they want). From here we have begun with colleagues in three universities in the Western Cape to agree (1) what might be comprehensive human capabilities; (2) to draw up a list of 'human development professional capabilities' which professionals gain through their education and training, and which will have the effect of orientating them to function as what we have called 'pro-poor' professionals; (3) to sketch indicators of professional education and training which are congruent with the capabilities and functionings to be developed; and (4) to consider what might be human development dimensions at the level of the university.<sup>4</sup>

This third Working Paper takes up the lens of 'professionalism for the public good' as a contribution to thinking about the education of pro-poor professionals. We suggest that theories of professionalism are resources that might elaborate and illuminate the pedagogical task. We start with a definition of professional work that reflects the tension between economic and social imperatives we identified in universities today; we go on to show that ideal-typical professionalism is in trouble across the world as it veers towards self-protection and self-interests; nevertheless, we argue, there are some grounds for believing that a particular form of professionalism could serve the needs of any democratic society in the contemporary world. Having set the scene we move on to see what kind of education this view of professionalism implies and connect this discussion to our framework of professional capabilities and functionings. Our arguments are strongly influenced by two prominent theorists of ideal-typical professionalism, Eliot Freidson (2004) and William Sullivan (2005).

## **2. A definition of professionalism**

The concept of 'professionalism' has always been slippery, and whether it is accepted as a public good depends on social definitions. For example, in connection with the academic profession Edward Said (1994) defines 'profession' as depoliticized in contrast to being an 'intellectual':

'By professionalism I mean thinking of your work as an intellectual as something you do for a living, between the hours of nine and five with one eye on the clock, and another cocked at what is considered to be proper, professional behaviour –not rocking the boat, nor straying outside the accepted paradigms or limits, making yourself marketable and above all presentable, hence uncontroversial and unpolitical and 'objective' (p. 55).

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<sup>3</sup> Choosing Dimensions of Human Development (<http://nottingham.ac.uk/education/projects/mw-poverty-reduction/index.php>)

<sup>4</sup> Examples of where we are in drawing up these three components in parallel can be found on the project website on the slides of a presentation 'Higher education, capability expansion and pro-poor professionalism in South Africa given by Melanie Walker and Arona Dison at the University of the Western Cape on August 21, 2008. (<http://nottingham.ac.uk/education/projects/mw-poverty-reduction/index.php>)

This is not the concept we promulgate here. We can see professionalism expressing a tension or, perhaps, finding the least uncomfortable place on a continuum: on the one hand, professions are always, more or less, dependent on the state, and government-imposed forms of 'expert professionalism' focused on skill and standards can strip professional work of its moral and creative aspects; on the other hand, there is a history of 'social trustee professionalism' (Mills, 2005) defined as moral vocation.

Within these two configurations of professional work, we want to propose what might be called an ideal-typical professionalism (Friedson, 2004; Sullivan, 2005) that expects professional groups to make accounts to the state and public, and, at the same time, retain the freedom to think, speak and act as they think right. In this sense, the ideology of professionalism can be used as a weapon in a struggle against compromises that are made in the face of socio-economic-political conditions, including market forces, which threaten it. A short history might highlight the possibilities.

The rise of professionalism was a response to the increasingly complex social and economic needs of modern society which called for specialised expertise; and professionals have now become integral to the modern welfare state. A literature has grown up which expounds an ideal type of professional occupation: autonomy and prestige granted by the state in return for expertise in areas central to the needs of the social system; and, in return for devotion to public service (Larson, 1977). Of course, reality is murkier; Gouldner (1979) points out that the 'flattering conception [of professions which stresses their] dedicated moral character [...] glosses their own self-seeking character as a status group with vested interests' (p.37). But the issue here is how this 'flattering conception' can be used to make a case for a particular construction of a professional oriented to public good.

Professions become communities expressing common (or vested) interests, identity and commitments. In practice, professional work is complex and mediated: constructions of the different professional groups are historically and socially situated; claims to moral and technical superiority are contested; and, gains in privilege and autonomy negotiated with the state can always be withdrawn, so have needed to be defended. So 'professionalism' has never been neutral and apolitical and can be understood as a discourse, as part of an ongoing politics of knowledge, power and social organisation. Sullivan (2005) provides a definition with which we can start; he identifies three inter-related constituent features:

'[...] (1) professional skills is human capital that (2) is always dependent for its negotiability upon some collective enterprise, which itself (3) is the outcome of civic politics in which the freedom of a group to organize for a specific purpose is balanced by the accountability of that group to other members of the civic community for furtherance of publicly established goals and standards.' (p. 184)

We can build on this tripartite by using Friedson's (2004) definition which places public good in a more central position:

'Individual disciplines are concerned with different aspects of that good, in some cases the immediate good of individual patients, students or clients, in others of firms or groups, and in others the general good. But such service must always be judged and balanced against a larger public good, sometimes one anticipated in the future. Practitioners and their associations have the duty to appraise what they do in light of that larger good, a duty which licenses them to be more

than passive servants of the state, of capital of the firm, of the client, or even of the immediate general public' (p.?)

For our purposes, the concept of professionalism, in all its historical and social complexities, offers a range of identities. The one we are offering here to professionals bound up with transformation in South Africa is founded on ideas about human development that emphasise capability expansion for both professionals and their clients. This particular definition of professionalism carries with it a special emphasis on responsibility, in South Africa's context, for poverty reduction. Sen (2008) calls this feature of human development a social justice imperative 'linking responsibility to effective power'. He explains that within the human development approach is an implicit call to people to take responsibility 'to bring about the changes that would enhance human development in the world' (p.335). The important issue is why people should take on this responsibility. Sen (*Ibid.*) points out that most theories of justice propose that social cooperation as a form of mutual obligation is reasonable because it brings joint benefits. The view he proposes differs: 'It is based on the argument that if someone has the power to make a change that he or she can see will reduce injustice in the world, then there is a strong social argument for doing just that.' (*ibid*) This social reasoning obliges anyone with the power to do so to help others, even if it is asymmetrical.

We are conceptualising professional education as a process of capability expansion that will open up freedoms for individual students to be a particular kind of professional. For Sen (2008) capability expansion constitutes advantage, which 'inescapably' generates obligations to be responsible for acting to promote democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights: '...capability is a kind of power, and it would be a mistake to see capability only as a concept of human advantage, not also as a concept in human obligation' (p. 336). This notion of responsibility towards others chimes perfectly with ideal-typical professionalism.

Whatever the conceptualisation of professionalism in specific professions and specific socio-historical circumstances, we can make a couple of generalisations based on the history of professions. First, as William Sullivan (2005) puts it, professionalism is 'an evolving social enterprise' (p. 283) which can be shaped by those involved. Secondly, there is a close relationship between the integrity of professional life and the health of civic cultures.

### **3. The possibilities of strengthening professionalism for the public good**

Both Freidson (2004) and Sullivan (2005) detect a worldwide crisis in the professions. They point out that professionals have a history and tradition of two sets of contradictory trends. The first concerns the *telos* of professional work: towards civic duty and responsibility, on the one hand, and, on the other, towards self-interest. The second concerns emphasis in everyday professional practice: on the one hand, an explicit focus on ethical and moral dimensions; and on the other, an exclusive focus on technical expertise. At present, the conditions produced by an emphasis on neo-liberal policies and practices appear to have led to professions tending to converge on self interest and a technical-rational approach which has eclipsed or muted other aspects of professionalism (Brint, 1994; Drydal Solbrekke and Karseth, 2006; Freidson, 2004; Sullivan, 2005) and led to a sharp decline in public trust in professionals, despite forms of accountability, which, it is argued, exacerbate the situation by distorting professional work (O'Neil, 2002).

Public service is an inherent value of ideal-typical professionalism, even if each profession has a different focus and offerings. Yet all around the world, it seems that professionalism for the public good is losing ground. Freidson (2004) argues that this is partly because the 'logics' of the market and managerialism have encroached on its territory, and partly because professionals themselves have not properly defended the 'soul' of professionalism.

The metaphor of 'soul' refers to the core value of professionalism of public service, what Habermas [1985] might call the 'lifeworld', which is likely to 'break-through': in Sweden, for example, Drydal Solbrekke and Karseth (2006) did find evidence among student professionals for a shift from 'social trustee professionalism' to 'expert professionalism', nevertheless, societal responsibility and a wish to do good was embedded in their constructions of professionals.

If the public good 'soul' of professionalism is to be strengthened, the education of professionals is the critical starting point (Sullivan, 2005). The South African context for educating and training professionals is quite specific, and at present the transformation agenda might to some extent protect professionals from the complacency of those in more established democracies<sup>5</sup>. Nevertheless, the many legacies of apartheid (which include current anxieties about unfulfilled promises after 1994), as well as some of the effects of globalisation, call for professionals both firmly oriented to public good, and who possess a determination to resist colonisation of the professional lifeworld (Habermas, 1985). In this context it might be useful for educators of professionals to turn to theoretical resources, which clarify professional goals and the means of achieving them. Progressive versions of professionalism can be exploited to make claims about service and the public good.

#### **4. The education of professionals oriented to the public good**

It is not our intention here to pre-empt discussions with colleagues in South Africa about indicators of pro-poor professional education and training, but rather to contribute material which might clarify or enrich the process of identifying indicators. The education and training of professionals inducts the individual into a specific professional lifeworld, which, *pace* Habermas (1985), we define broadly as a complex of practices, customs and ideas common to a collective. The task of professional education and training can be expressed simply:

'The challenge for professional education is how to teach the complex ensemble of analytical thinking, skilful practice, and wise judgement upon which each profession rests.' (Sullivan, p. 195)

In practice, however, there is a complex of conditions which influence whether or not the challenge can be met. We shall comment on three levels of context for professional education and training: the university; the professional department; and curriculum processes<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Though nothing democratic can ever be taken for granted- see footnote 19.

<sup>6</sup> We have already sketched the global and national context for professional education and training in South Africa. What we are setting aside for the present, in the interests of a general discussion, is the context of specific professions embodied in the histories, policies and cultures of professional bodies.

### ***Universities as sites of professional education and training for the public good***

As Friedson (2004) points out 'Professional training is explicitly vocational in character but presupposes the advanced general education connected with the university' (p.86). Like professionalism itself, the 'idea of the university'<sup>7</sup> expresses many ideals connected with freedom, democracy and the public good (Barnett, 2003; Bok, 2006; McLean, 2006). Habermas (1989) points out that one of the important social functions of the university is the academic preparation of professionals because it is, as Sullivan (2005) puts it, the 'pivotal point at which social needs and economic and political imperatives meet advancing knowledge and aspiring talent.' (p.201)

Universities are charged with a range of functions that should contribute to the public good: in addition to the preparation of professionals, there is research, teaching for general education, and the general enlightenment of the public –broadly the cultivation of mind (Habermas, 1989). In practice, however, despite high-minded functions, the academy has often been complicit with oppressive and corrupt regimes; Habermas (1989), for example, reminds readers of the complicit role of universities in Germany during the Nazi regime. In South Africa itself universities have different histories, some - 'islands of white social privilege'<sup>8</sup>- have a history of exclusion, while others were 'sites of struggle'<sup>9</sup> during 1970s and 1980s. Now, all universities are taking on the equity challenges that face a transitional democracy in a highly differentiated society with a traumatic and violent history<sup>10</sup>. The transformation agenda set out in the 1997 White Paper is a resource; it declares:

[An] enabling environment must be created throughout the system to uproot deep-seated racist and sexist ideologies and practices that inflame relationships, inflict emotional scars and create barriers to successful participation in learning and campus life. Only a multi-faceted approach can provide a sound foundation of knowledge, concepts, academic, social and personal skills, and create the culture of respect, support and challenge on which self-confidence, real learning and enquiry can thrive (DoE, 1997, quoted in Badat, 2008, p.12).

But there are huge challenges. Max Price, University of Cape Town (UCT) vice-chancellor, points out that, while everywhere universities are called upon to deal with diversity, they are not expected to change fundamentally (Kassiem, 2008). A recent symposium that addressed the role of South African universities in local and broader society identified three specific challenges: 'a catch-up' challenge posed by the lack of investment during the 1980s and 1990s; even more rigorous transformation efforts in terms of admissions; and, having a presence internationally (Samodien, 2008).

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<sup>7</sup> A phrase first coined by Cardinal John Newman in a book called 'The Idea of the University' (.1960)

<sup>8</sup> See Working Paper 1 'The contribution of higher education to transformation, development and poverty reduction: Overview of the South Africa higher education context' (<http://nottingham.ac.uk/education/projects/mw-poverty-reduction/index.php>)

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> This description was used by Patricia De Lille talking at All Africa House, University of Cape Town on 'Reflections on the Arms Deal and its implications for the current and future of South African Political Scene'.

#### **4.2 Professional education for the public good at the level of the School<sup>11</sup>**

The context of the professional Department is highly influential. William Sullivan (2005) describes the decisive impact of professional education at institutional level on professional identity as a 'deep effect upon attitude and character' (p.186) and this is because through a range of discursive practices the Departments 'structure attention and impose sanctions to reinforce the dispositions appropriate to their ends' (*ibid.*). He explains how this is done:

'Chartered for their public mission to train professionals, these Departments institutionalize a culture that is built up through pedagogical practices plus academic activities such as scholarship and research. As organizations, they aim at a goal that is in a profound sense holistic. Their mission is to educate for professional judgement and performance. They are charged to enable students to learn how to integrate specialized knowledge with a specific matrix of skills and know-how, within the professional community's characteristic disposition towards clients and society.' (Sullivan, 2005, p. 207)

Friedson (2004) expands this by emphasising the role of the professional School in developing 'commitment to the occupation as a life career and to a shared identity, a feeling of community or solidarity among those who have passed through it' (p. 84). He argues that this commitment is engendered within Departments because the students have freely chosen the occupation; are educated and trained in cohorts undertaking the same courses over a long period, so the cost is high. Then 'a distinct social identity, and a privileged official identity supports the inclination to make their work a lifetime career' (*ibid.*, p. 102).

However, the roles of the Department above could be fulfilled without reference to the public good. Furthermore, professional education can reproduce privileges of race, gender and social class, and retrogressive traditional practices. In all professional Departments new professionals are being formed who will reproduce the lifeworld of the profession. The individual professional's capabilities<sup>12</sup> can be developed and realised only as enculturation into a community of professionals, or as Sullivan optimistically puts it: 'only within the network of social capital, the expectations of competence, trustworthiness, and honesty generated by a community of practitioners through sustained cooperation.' (Sullivan, p.182)

So for novice professionals, the discursive practices and values of the Department in which they are studying represent the professional world to which they aspire. For practicing professionals returning to take higher degrees, the Department can provide a new lens on their everyday work. For both groups, professional expectations, standards and values are expressed in the overt and hidden curriculum, pedagogy and assessment to which we now turn.

#### **4.3 Professional education and training for the public good at the level of curriculum and pedagogy**

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<sup>11</sup> We use the term 'School' to cover 'Faculty' or 'Department' or another academic unit where professional education and training takes place.

<sup>12</sup> Sullivan refers to 'human capital', an arguably narrower conceptualization, than capabilities.



Within our capabilities approach framework we have begun to identify human development professional capabilities<sup>13</sup>: specifically, the examples we are working with at present are the capabilities to be a change agent; to form affiliations; and, to be 'strong evaluators'<sup>14</sup>. Each of these capabilities has generated sets of functionings (what we might hope pro-poor professionals would be and do) a selection of which include: forming a reasoned conception of what is right and good and acting on it; acting on behalf of the poor; integrating theory and practice in a critical manner in professional work; acting as effective leaders and networkers; acting ethically and judging what it is ethical to do; and, entering imaginatively into the world of the poor, and showing them respect and concern. Then we have drawn up lists of features of curriculum and pedagogy, which might assist the development of the human development capabilities, which we call 'indicators'. These indicators encompass: teaching/learning both critical knowledge and the orientation to act to reduce injustice; pedagogies of discussion, dialogue, deliberation and collaborative work; respectful relations between staff and students, and students and students; teaching/learning how to identify and listen to the 'better' argument; teaching/learning to live with and value diversity; teaching/learning how to act/be interculturally aware and competent, and to act and communicate in anti-sexist and anti-racist ways (the lists are indicative and can never be exhaustive for the capabilities approach demands that practitioners participatively define their own lists through debate and dialogue).

This section takes up the list of curriculum and pedagogic indicators and asks what can the rather different lens of professionalism and professional education illuminate for practical purposes. In the sub-sections below we introduce some ideas from literature on professional education, which might have purchase on strengthening professionalism for the public good.

#### *4.3.1 Evaluating pedagogy and curriculum: 'signature pedagogies'*

We hope that our project will stimulate debate about indicators of curriculum and pedagogy, which will be of use for evaluation and further debate. In this respect, Lee Shulman's influential concept of 'signature pedagogies' (2005) provides a tool. The concept refers to the taken-for-granted pedagogic discursive practices of different disciplines, including education and training in professional fields, they:

[...] implicitly define what counts as knowledge in the field and how things become known. They define how knowledge is analyzed, criticized, accepted, or discarded. They define the functions of expertise in a field, the locus of authority, and the privileges of rank and standing.' (*ibid.*p.54)

Signature pedagogies can be explored through curriculum documentation; discussions with teachers and students; and, direct observation in classrooms. Shulman argues that it is of critical importance to understand signature pedagogies because 'they teach us a lot about the personalities, dispositions, and cultures of their field [...] they [shape] the character of future practice and [symbolize] the values and hopes of the profession' (pp 52-3). The most important part of professional socialisation which forms

<sup>13</sup> For the worked example see the slides of a presentation 'Higher education, capability expansion and pro-poor professionalism in South Africa given by Melanie Walker and Arona Dison at the University of the Western Cape on August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008. (<http://nottingham.ac.uk/education/projects/mw-poverty-reduction/index.php>)

<sup>14</sup> Drawn from Taylor??

'consciousness and character' (Sullivan, 2005, p.217) is often tacitly embedded in taken-for-granted ways of teaching and assessing students. So signature pedagogies might provide a starting point for mapping taken-for-granted pedagogic and curricular offerings against what, theoretically, might be construed as professional education oriented towards the public good.<sup>15</sup>

#### *4.3.2 An apprenticeship model that promotes integrity in professional education*

We need ways of conceptualising professional education that will strengthen the public good holistically. William Sullivan (2005) points out that while there is no general generic professional education, there are 'common themes and issues that all forms of professional preparation must address and try to resolve' (p. 225).

The most pressing common issue that Sullivan identifies is how to scaffold students' learning for them to become able to act with integrity as professionals. He has a quite specific definition of integrity: professional work has cognitive, technical and ethical dimensions and 'integrity' is the integration of these three. This integrity has proved elusive:

'The unmet need is to ensure that [...] forms of work and education recognise that there is no successful separation between the skills of problem-solving and those of deliberation and judgement, no viable pursuit of technical excellence without participation in those civic enterprises through which esoteric knowledge and skills discover their human meaning.'(Sullivan, 2005, p33)

Of critical importance to his thesis is that in all professional practice these three dimensions are always combined only in conditions of 'competing imperatives', which professionals must learn to manage.

Sullivan's pedagogic solution is to emphasise the apprentice-like nature of professional education and training in which modelling and coaching are central features. In this construction of professional education, the task of professional educators is 'inventing articulations of performance through which novices can be brought more effectively to share the knowledge of a particular community of practice' (Sullivan, 2005, p.205). (The assumption here is that the culture of 'community of practice' itself is one in which the professionals aspire to work with integrity.) More specifically, Sullivan (2005) proposes a tripartite 'apprenticeship' which reflects the three dimensions of professional practice and in which students are 'coached through imitation and appropriation of various aspects of expert performance' (p.206). Each element of the apprenticeship is addressed through different pedagogies. First is 'cognitive apprenticeship' through which students must learn the theoretical underpinnings of their particular professional discipline and analysis, argumentation and logical reasoning; secondly is the 'tacit body of skills shared by competent practitioners' taught through case studies and workplace practice; and, thirdly, 'values and attitudes shared by professional community [which are] taught through dramatic pedagogies of participation [...] through which the student's professional self can be most broadly explored and developed' (p. 208)

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<sup>15</sup> The Carnegie Foundation Study has conducted a series of studies on signature pedagogies in the professions under the guidance of Lee Shulman. The result is a series of booklets for which propose how to influence pedagogies to build in civic professionalism.

The tripartite apprenticeship is offered as an analytic tool for professional educators to evaluate whether or not justice is being done to the full range of dimensions of professional work. However, this is not easily achieved -the 'competing imperatives' operate in the professional School as well at work. As Sullivan (2005) identifies: 'The blending of analytic and practical habits of mind that professional practice demands represents a complex pedagogical challenge' (p.199). In practice, there are numerous approaches to this particular challenge including the provision of placements in work places, the use of case studies in teaching and assignments that require the student to relate theory and practice. Nevertheless, in practice, too, either analytic considerations are abstracted from knowledge generated by practice; or, practical considerations overshadow the applicability of theory and analysis; and, in general, often ethical dimensions are neglected<sup>16</sup>. So we turn now to a discussion of what pedagogic and curricular processes might assist the development of an integrity oriented to the public good in relation to the three dimensions.

#### *4.3.3 Pedagogic and curricular processes directed at professionalism for the public good*

For this section we have selected three pedagogic/curricular elements that strike us as worthy of consideration within our discussion. The selection is to provoke debate and to provide some concrete examples. The three are (1) the relevance of students knowing about and understanding socio-economic-political-historical contexts in which they (will) work (2) the central place of developing a sense of professional community (3) the meaning of transformative learning. This selection focuses on the functionings of professionals who will face unyielding systems and will need the capabilities to 'keep going' in difficult circumstances. Our approach is to keep the discussion brief outlining our rationale for including the element and asking where and how it might appear in curriculum or pedagogy.

#### Contextual knowledge and understanding

Professionalism in general requires constant management of competing imperatives. Specifically, it is indisputable that professionals in South Africa work and will continue to work in challenging circumstances. A broad, critical and reflective understanding of context in which they will be working will assist in thinking about possibilities as well as what is needed to make changes.<sup>17</sup> A sense of history in general and an understanding of the history of specific professions<sup>18</sup> can develop a sense that things need not be as they are now. South Africa has numerous inspiring narratives from its own history of professionals working under the hardest of circumstances to bring about change and improve lives. We need only think of Nelson Mandela, trained as a lawyer, but also many unsung teachers, nurses and social workers. Is there

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<sup>16</sup> Sullivan (2005) uses the example of American Law Departments to illustrate the distortion: first year students are advised to put considerations of justice aside in case it should inhibit the development of habits of 'thinking like a lawyer'.

<sup>17</sup> Damon Galgut's bleak novel *The Good Doctor* reflects the tensions in a new South Africa and the huge difficulties in overcoming inequalities and corruptions that the apartheid past has generated. The two central characters are doctors who represent, on the one hand, a jaded and cynical view of what can be done and, on the other an idealistic but naive view. Neither view results in action that improves matters.

<sup>18</sup> For example, for social workers there is the inspiring story of Jane Addams who, in late nineteenth century, set up a settlement for work which became what is recognisable as social work today: '[Her] philanthropy had a civic, political, end: the formation of citizens through the repair and promotion of public life.' (Sullivan, 2005, p.113).

a place in the curriculum where students can consider and debate where they are located as professionals in a new South Africa? And what particular challenges they will face?

#### Developing identity, commitment and community

Professionals oriented to the public good in South Africa cannot afford to become domesticated; nor can the country afford them to be. They will need to raise strong and principled voices in policy-making forums and in the communities where they practice. Courage and resilience will be needed. The work of change agency cannot be left only to individuals, however, as Friedson (2004) propounds 'the most influential source of evaluation and protest comes from a collegial body which provides authoritative support to individuals and expresses forcefully the collective opinion of the discipline' (p. 217). In this respect the capability to make affiliations is crucial. Making alliances within one's own profession and with progressive groups in society will be a sustaining part of professional work (how difficult interaction with each other and with the public is will depend 'upon the extent to which qualities of civic cooperation prevail in the larger social environment'. [Sullivan, 2005, p. 285])

The first affiliations should be made in the professional Department (Freidson, 2004); and for this the students need to experience 'participation in the development of a shared culture which includes their fellow student-professionals' and their teachers' dialogue and contention with each other' (Sullivan, 2005, p 271). It is here that drawing on ideas about specific pedagogies can be useful for knowing how to put general principles into practice. For example, Waghid (2006) proposes that for the transformation of society South Africa needs to substitute for the transmission mode, which dominates, a pedagogy of deliberation and mutual respect, in which students are fully participative.

#### Transformative learning

The concept of 'transformative learning' mirrors the emphasis on transformation in South African society<sup>19</sup>. We use the concept of transformative learning to convey the idea of learning, which integrates individual and collective interests, which we think relevant to professional education for the public good. Our definition of transformative learning involves students being challenged at personal (values, assumptions, attitudes) and social or discursive (underlying assumptions or worldview) levels (Taylor and Fransman, 2004). Progressive educators have proposed versions of transformative learning which can be used as resources to develop indicators: for example, Paulo Freire's 'pedagogy of hope' (); while Jerome Bruner (2007) speaks of 'cultivating the possible' through pedagogies which emphasise showing students that there are always alternative ways of knowing and being.

Transformative learning must incorporate critical reflective enquiry (which has become a truism in much professional education), and it should take emotions seriously (Palmer, 2007). It might also include cognisance of the educational relevance of ideals in the formation of professional identity, what professionals 'care about and what they hold fast to is of pressing concern to them and the wider polity' (de Ruyter and Conroy, 2002, p.516). Beyond this, Taylor and Fransman (2004) propose the following radical indicators of a pedagogy of transformative learning, it should:

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<sup>19</sup> We could also draw on traditions of 'critical pedagogy' here.

- 'raise awareness of the dominant discourses of knowledge and power;
- incorporate a critical engagement with the subjective positions of learners and teachers alike;
- enable each learner to realise and to take responsibility for their knowledge, and
- allow for the transformation of its own discourse of education'

How far do the signature pedagogies of the different professions in our research project incorporate these features?

## 5. Conclusion

Worldwide there is a sense that universities are losing sight of social, cultural and intellectual objectives as commercial forces turn them into producers of commodities; added to that, in South Africa there is disillusionment with the entrenched continuation of poverty; increased inequality; and, the unearthing of corruption at high levels. Nevertheless, in any context there are options and constraints and there are some theoretical grounds for optimism: Harry Brighouse (2004) tells us that all theories of justice emphasize 'that human beings have a high order interest in being able to exercise and develop their capacities for a sense of justice and conception of the good' (p. 162). South Africa has one of the world's most inclusive constitutions and laws to establish full participation of the people and which 'enable the citizens to hold public servants to account' (Tapscott, 2008, p.15).

For professionals, steering a path between cynicism or disillusionment and naïve idealism might always be difficult. It is worth being mindful that, like democracy itself<sup>20</sup>, public-good professionalism is always precarious and needs defending and fighting for. In particular, in this paper we have emphasised the notion of 'integrity' which, while Sullivan wants to persuade his readers is a 'practical rather than utopian possibility for living' (2005, p. 282)<sup>21</sup>, is nevertheless:

'[...] never a given, but always a quest that must be renewed and reshaped over time. It demands considerable individual self-awareness and self-command. Yet, it also depends for its realization upon the availability of actual social possibilities'. (Sullivan, 2005, p. 220)

The hope is to produce professionals whose solidarity, rationality and reflection will make them 'agents for transformation' (Joseph, 2008) in a society and in a world, which faces serious political and social problems. The Finance Minister, Trevor Manuel, has publicly said that public servants, who should be the 'mainstay for transformation', have lost the passion for their work. Manuel continues: 'Our ability to deliver a deep and durable democracy focused on improving living standards will never be attained without the commitment of our public servants in the key social sciences' (Joseph, 2008, p.3). While there is no guarantee that professionals will want or, indeed, be able to use the full range of capabilities their education and training bestow,

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<sup>20</sup> Speaking at the Bath Literature Festival (29/2/08) the philosopher John Gray made the point very strongly: 'Elements of advance that we think are permanent never are.' His book is *Black Mass*.

<sup>21</sup> Sullivan (2005) gives 'moral exemplars whose personal dedication visibly strengthens the larger fabric of the community.' (p.283). For example, of an organization of professional community organisers who aim 'to establish "islands of political community, spaces of action and freedom in the sea of bureaucrats, political image mongers, and atomized customers.' (p. 281)

nevertheless, education for professionalism for the public good can be seen as a gift as well as an obligation:

'Meaning refers to the sense of value people experience when they understand their own lives to be linked in a significant way with the larger processes at work around them. It has both an inner and a public face. To discover meaning is to find a point to living by recognizing oneself as a participant in a worthwhile enterprise whose accomplishment calls out one's energies and whose purposes define and vindicate one's having lived.' (Sullivan, 2005,p.184)

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